

## **Chapter – I**

### **THEORY OF PERCEPTION AND ITS APPLICATION IN MUSEUMS**

The word “perception” comes from the Latin word “perceptio” means receiving. In education psychology “percept” is the mental content of a person in a particular case or situation. A percept is our consciousness of a particular object or our interpretation of a particular sensory stimulation. Perception is the interpretation of the sensory experience in such situation. Perception is the interpretation of sensory stimuli, and interpretation is the process of associating the stimulus with past experiences that make it meaningful. As a rule the greater the number of associations we make with past experience, the more meaningful becomes the perception. The more associations the observer makes, the greater is the significance of these associations that form a part of the perception. Different members of a class though having same experiences can derive different meanings from the same situation.

#### **Meaning of Perception in Psychology**

Perception is one of the oldest fields within scientific psychology and refers to the process of acquiring, interpreting, selecting, and organizing sensory information. Many cognitive psychologists hold that, as we move about in the world, we create a model of how the world works. That is, we sense the objective world, but our sensations map percept, and these percepts are provisional, in the same sense that scientific hypotheses are provisional. As we acquire new information, our percept shifts.

The philosophy of perception concerns how mental processes and symbols depend on the internal and external world to the perceiver. Our perception of the external world begins with the senses, which leads us to generate concepts representing the world around us, within a mental framework relating new concepts to pre-existing ones. To develop an understanding of perception some definitions given by scholars are discussed here.

Lindsay and Norman (1977: 161) define perception as “the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world.” Here, sensation refers to the immediate, relatively unprocessed result of stimulation of sensory receptors in the eyes, ears and nose, tongue, or skin, whereas perception describes one's ultimate experience of the world and typically involves further processing of sensory input. In practice, sensation and perception are virtually impossible to separate, because they are part of one continuous process.

According to William James (2008: 279), “Perception is the consciousness of particular things presented to senses.” Our senses are described as the gateways of knowledge or windows of the mind or soul. The essential quality of a sense organ is that it must have the property of responding to certain stimuli outside itself. A sensation is a response aroused in us by stimuli. Perception is sensation in addition to meaning. We sense qualities and we perceive objects. Sensation is merely a part of perception.

Muralidhar Dash (1988: 344) defines perception as “The process of interpretation of stimuli proceeding from the environment and acting upon the individual.” It is through this process of perception individuals are able to maintain contact with environment.

According to Robert S. Ellis (1975: 164), “Perception is the interpretation of sensory stimuli and interpretation is the process associating the stimulus with past experiences that makes it meaningful.”

From the above definitions we observe that all of them have certain things in common. All the definitions describe perception as the process or phenomenon by which a person perceives any object and interprets it. This involves our five sense organs and the brain, which help in interpreting and organizing the whole process. Thus, all the definitions commonly define “Perception” as the process in which an individual receives information through the sense organs. The incoming stimuli interact with the stored information in brain (memory) to give rise to perception. It is the process by which an individual interprets various stimuli received and forms a picture of the world. The stimuli are received through the sense organs namely eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin and are organized by brain. It is then stored as information. While doing so the individual’s brain colours and tags the information using its own logic and previous memory and experience, if any.

Perception is thus based on assumptions about the construction of reality. Each individual is believed to develop a restricted set of perceptions through his/her unique dealings with the environment to handle the unlimited variety of possible sensory images which s/he receives. So,

perception is a learned act of constructing reality to fit one's assumptions about it. The reality of the world and everything that surrounds is merely the perception of the individual. Therefore, there is a possibility that different individuals perceive different realities of a single event or object.

### **Scientific Accounts and Theories of Perception**

The science of perception is concerned with how events are observed and interpreted. There are various theories of perception which suggest dreams, imaginings and perceptions of similar things are accompanied by activity in some areas of brain. The 'realist' theories of perception can be divided into two types of realisms: direct realism and indirect realism.

**Direct realism:** According to Thomas Reid, a Scottish philosopher and one of the founders of the "common sense" school of philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reid/>) sensation is composed of a set of data transfers which are in some ways transparent. There is a direct connection between perception and the world. This idea is called direct realism and has become popular in recent years. It holds that the representation of an object is located next to, or is even part of, the actual physical object. It proposes some as yet unknown direct connection between external representations and the mind.

**Indirect Realism:** The succession of data transfers that are involved in perception suggests that somewhere in the brain there is a final set of events, in which data about the perceiving subject is available, which is the substrate of the percept. It proposes some form of brain activity where some part of the brain would be able to perceive signals provided

by some other (or the same) part of the brain. This concept is known as indirect realism. In indirect realism it is held that we can only be aware of external objects by being aware of representations of objects. Indirect realism provides an account of issues such as: dreams, imaginings, hallucinations, illusions, the resolution of binocular rivalry, the resolution of multi-stable perception, the modelling of motion that allows us to watch TV, the sensations that result from direct brain stimulation, the update of the mental image by sensation of the eyes and the referral of events backwards in time.

Apart from the realist theories of perception there are also anti-realist theories. There are two varieties of anti-realism: Idealism and Scepticism. Idealism holds that reality is limited to mental qualities. Scepticism challenges our ability to gain knowledge of any reality external to our mind.

A third theory of perception attempts to find a middle path between realist and anti-realist theories, called enactivism. The theory proposes that reality arises as a result of the dynamic interplay between an organism's sensory motor capabilities and its environment. Instead of seeing perception as a passive process determined entirely by the features of an independently existing world, organism and environment are structurally coupled and codetermining. The theory was first formalized by Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch in their book *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* published in 1991.

## Categories of Perception

Perception is categorized as internal or external.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy\\_of\\_perception](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_perception))

- **Internal perception** (proprioception) tells us what's going on in our bodies. We can sense where our limbs are, whether we're sitting or standing; we can also sense whether we are hungry, or tired, and so forth.
- **External or Sensory perception** (exteroception), tells us about the world outside our bodies. Using our senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, we discover colors, sounds, textures, etc. of the world at large.

The philosophy of perception is mainly concerned with exteroception. When philosophers use the word *perception* they usually mean exteroception, and the word is used in that sense everywhere.

## Level of complexity in perception

Perception has three levels of complexity:

- Detection
- Recognition and
- Discrimination

Detection refers to whether people can sense that they are being stimulated by some form of energy. For example, a light may be so dim

they can barely detect its presence. Recognition means being able to identify as well as detect a particular pattern of stimulation. Discrimination means being able to perceive one pattern of stimulation as different from another. For example, a person may hear slight differences between two similar musical tones.

The field of study that deals with levels of perception is called psychophysics. Experimental psychologists investigate the relationships between the physical properties of stimulus patterns and the perceived effects of the stimuli. For example, they may study the relationship between sound frequency and the perceived pitch of sound.

### **Principles of Perception**

There are various principles of perception such as:

- Principle of closure - One of the most important principles of Perception is the principle of closure. It tells us that we have the general tendency to perceive things as complete and unified. We tend to "fill in" parts that are missing, or parts that conform to an overall impression of an object.
  
- Principle of constancy - It states that despite changes that occur in stimulation, we have a strong tendency to perceive objects as constant in size, shape, colour, and other qualities. For example, an orange will be perceived with its characteristic colour under different kinds of light. The opposite of the principle of constancy is also important. Sometimes an object or pattern of stimulation will remain constant, but the perceived effect will vary.

➤ **Perceptual context** - This principle relates to perceptual context which suggests that perception of an object or event depends in part on the context (surrounding conditions). Background intensity and colour may affect the colour and intensity of elements upon it. To most people, grey surrounded by black appears brighter and somewhat larger. This effect is called visual induction. For example, In case of labeling in museums, white fonts with black background will appear brighter to some people and have more intensity of element than any other combinations.

### **Factors Affecting Perception**

Various factors influence what and how we perceive any object. Our perceptions are influenced by the way our bodies are structured to receive and process stimuli from the environment. Our perceptions also reflect our emotions, needs, expectations, and learning. A new idea or object acquires a meaning as it is linked with anything familiar. The more associations the observer makes using his sensory system, the more significant these associations become and the brain is able to better interpret the meaning that forms a part of the perception. Thus, the factors that influence perception are:

**Receptors:** Each sensory system, such as vision, hearing, or touch, has its own specialized body parts. These parts are called receptors, and they change energies from the environment into nervous impulses. The human eye, for example, has two major kinds of receptors in the retina (the light-sensitive part of the eye). These receptors are called rods and cones. The rods respond to the intensity of light, but not to different frequencies of

light (different colours). The cones do respond to different frequencies of light, and are called colour receptors. The rods allow us to see in dim light, and the cones enable us to see colours and sharp detail in bright light. Thus, the particular ways that receptors are structured and functions help determine the perceptual effects related to them.

**The brain:** Certain physical and functional features of the brain also determine some aspects of perception. The part of the brain that serves vision has different kinds of cells that respond only under certain conditions of stimulation. Some of these cells respond only when a light goes off. Others respond when a light comes on, but they stop responding if the light stays on. Such cells also are arranged in special ways in the brain, and this fact is related to how we perceive. For example, some cells are arranged in columns or in clusters. Such arrangements are related to how we perceive edges and forms. Experiments suggest that some cells in the brain allow us to perceive movement. Thus, the structure of the brain is an important element in perception.

**Learning, emotion, and motivation:** It is a general belief among people that early experience, learning, emotion, and motivation are important in defining what and how we perceive. Part of this accumulating evidence comes from experiments that compare how people in different cultures perceive things. The perception of such things as form, colour, pain, and touch may differ from culture to culture, depending on habits and customs, and training of children.

In learning to perceive words and sentences, we learn not to perceive each

letter and word separately. Instead, we become able to scan the overall pattern and "fill in" the remainder. A poor reader is more likely to see the duplicate word in each phrase than a good reader.

Some illusions are related to learning and past experience. An illusion is not a false perception, as many people believe, but one that is inconsistent with another perception. Since perception does not literally reveal the environment, no sensory system is closer to some absolute truth than any other. We tend to check visual illusions against touch, but touch can involve illusory effects too.

Emotions and motivation can have an important effect on perception. Sometimes a severe emotional disturbance can prevent perception completely, as when emotional shock causes individuals to lose their hearing temporarily. We are more likely to perceive those aspects of our environment that are related to our motives. For example, motivation can affect the perceived characteristics of objects. To hungry people, food may appear larger or more colourful than usual.

In the cultural context, perception is concerned with the effects of social and cultural factors on an individual's cognitive structuring of his or her physical or social environment. In cultural psychology, efforts have been made to demonstrate that perceptual phenomenon embedded in a cultural context do not require for their explanation, a set of principles distinct from those used in general perceptual theory.

## **Importance of Study of Perception in Psychology**

Perception is the study of mental processes and behaviours. The human behaviour is affected by genetics, perceived behavioural controls, attitude and societal norms. The Gestalt psychologists have studied extensively the ways in which people organize and select from the vast array of stimuli that are presented to them, concentrating particularly on visual stimuli. There is no such thing as a fact; all that exists is a perception. Even a fact would be irrelevant in one's life if one did not perceive it as such. How we perceive a situation determines a different reaction and each reaction creates a different outcome. A perception can ruin our lives, and allow opportunities to pass by. Another can take us to incredible new possibilities.

## **Role of Consumer Perception**

Basic concepts or theories of perception have been used by marketers also. Some of the theories to define perception in marketing are discussed below. Although basic theory of marketing is universal, but marketing practice varies from country to country. For marketing to operate properly buyers and sellers need to find and satisfy each other. Thus, anticipation of demand through consumer research is required by any company on a regular basis to develop and introduce offerings desired by consumers. The "new" concept of marketing which started evolving in 1960 shifted the focus of marketing from the product to the customer. "Information" is the primary raw material the marketer works with to influence the customers. Therefore, an understanding of the perception process is an essential guide to marketing strategy.

According to Lindquist and Sirgy (2003: 219) "Perception is the way in which an individual gathers processes and interprets information from the environment." In this definition consumer perception is formed in three stages. The first stage refers to receiving information through sensory modalities, which effects the five senses of the consumer on the way in which products are perceived. In second stage, consumers process information within and as part of the context in which it is presented. In third, consumer interpretations of perceptions add an abstract dimension to the study of perception. Interpretation involves such intangibles, as brand image, risk, and attribution in the way consumers perceive products.

Mooij (2004: 195) defines perception as "The knowledge of the surrounding world. Perception of what a picture depicts depends on both the picture and the perceiver. Failures to recognize a picture and its meaning are related to unfamiliarity with the picture itself and the context." In this context perception is the study of what is being perceived by people. If people see or recognize a color or a picture, they may like or dislike what they see.

According to Leon G. Schiffman and Leslie Lazar Kanuk (2007: 152) perception is "the process, by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world." Perception describes how we see the world around us. How each person recognizes, selects, organizes and interprets these stimuli, is a highly individual process based on each person's own needs values and expectations. In marketing the stimuli includes brand names, advertisements, colours, sounds and packages etc.

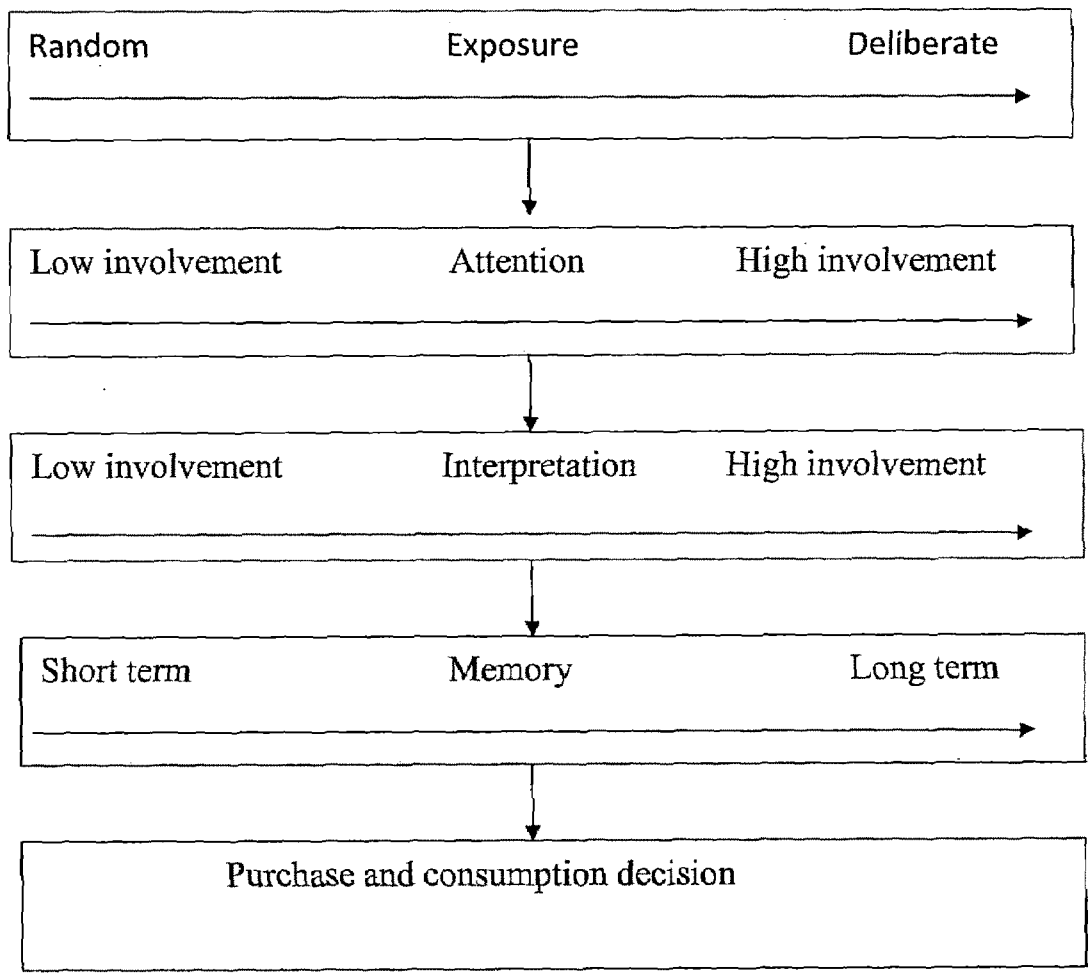
Bovee and Thill (1995: 97) define perception as “the process of being exposed to a stimulus, paying attention to some degree, and then interpreting the received message.”

According to Ramanuj Majumdar (2010: 26) perception can be related to different concepts like taste, smell and touch. People have a sensation when they try a product, this perception depends on the experiences that people have had with the products and also of any prior knowledge about a product that they may have gained from others. In essence, perception consists of those activities by which an individual acquires and assigns meaning to stimuli. Perception begins with stimulus exposure. This occurs when a stimulus comes within range of one of the individual's primary sensory receptors. People are exposed to only a small fraction of the available stimuli and this is usually the result of self-selection. Attention occurs when the stimulus activities of one or more of the sensory receptors and the resulting sensations go to the brain for processing. Because of the amount of stimulus they are exposed to, people selectively attend those stimuli that physically attract or personally interest them.

Stimulus factors are physical characteristics of the stimulus itself, such as contrast, size, intensity, colour, movement, position, isolation and format and information quantity. A stimulus is any unit of input to a sensory receptor. These in marketing include brand names, advertisements, colours, sounds, packages etc.

Individual factors are the characteristics of the individual, such as interest and needs. Both these factors are moderated by the situation in which

they occur. Program involvement and the degree of interest the consumer has in any product about which the advertisement is published, is a situational factor of particular interest to the consumer. Non-focused attention occurs when a person takes in information with deliberate effect.



**Figure 1 – Linear Flow from Exposure to Memory**  
(The above figure suggests a linear flow from Exposure to Memory)

A useful information-processing model is depicted in Figure 1. This model suggests four major steps or stages: exposure of consumers from random to deliberate; low involvement of their attention to high involvement; interpretation by consumers ranging from low to high involvement; and short term memory to long term memory of consumers

which affect their purchase and consumption decision. The first three factors named above contribute to perception.

A) Exposure

It occurs when a stimulus such as banner advertisement, a brand name or a package comes within a range of person's sensory receptor nerves. Exposure can range from random to deliberate.

B) Attention

It occurs when a stimulus is seen (the receptor nerves pass the sensations on to the brain for processing). It can range from low involvement to high involvement.

C) Interpretation

It is the assignment of meaning to the received sensations. Interpretation is the assignment of a meaning to stimuli that have been attended to. It is a function of individual as well as stimulus and situation characteristics. Cognitive interpretation appears to involve a process whereby new stimuli are placed into existing categories of meaning. Effective interpretation is the emotional or response triggered by the stimulus. Interpretation ranges from low involvement to high involvement.

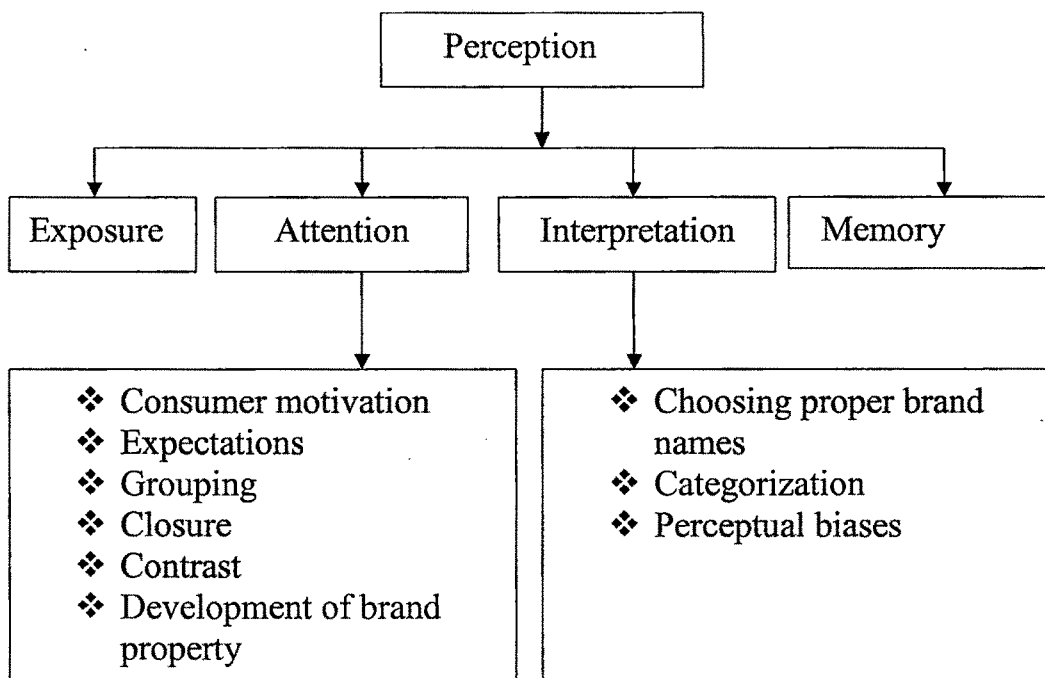
D) Memory

It is the short-term use of the meaning for immediate decision making of the longer-term retention of the meaning. It can range from short term to long term.

### E) Purchase and consumption decision

A purchasing process involves strong purchase intentions. It involves a series of selection of brands and services, their purchase, outcomes of these products. The outcome can lead to satisfaction, thereby, developing belief about the brand. Confirmation of consumption happens if the expectations of performance are met.

Other outcomes are dissatisfaction and post-sale doubt which can generate a desire for additional information and problem recognition. If the consumers are dissatisfied they are likely to exhibit less favourable post purchase attitudes, lower or non-existent purchase intentions, brand switching, complaining behaviour, and negative word-of-mouth.

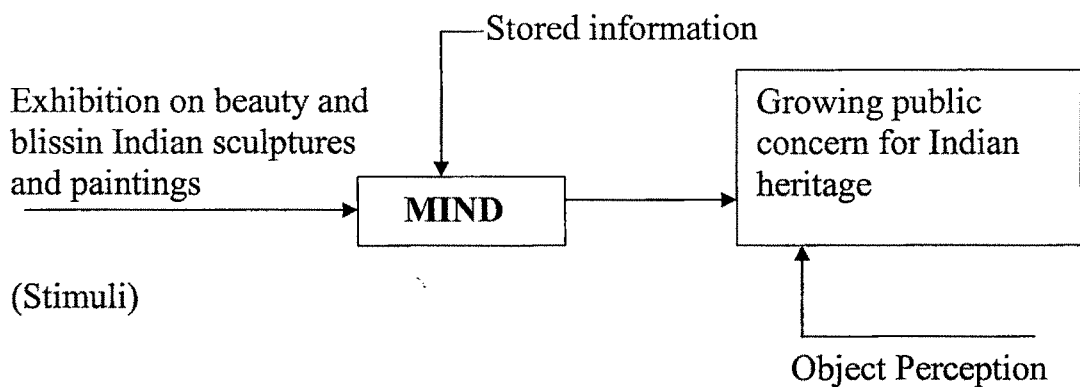


**Figure 2 – Factors impacting Perception**  
(Adapted from Consumer Behaviour by Leon G. Schiffman and Leslie Lazar Kanauk)

As is shown in Figure 2, perception of consumer is affected by exposure, attention, interpretation and memory which are explained below.

### 1) Exposure

It only requires presence of a stimulus within an individual's relevant environment; we are exposed to only an extremely small fraction of them. It must physically reach the consumers/ common public. As represented in the Figure 3, stimuli affect perception of people of an object.



**Figure 3 – Effect of Stimuli on Perception**  
(Adapted from Conceptual Issues in Consumer behaviour by S. Ramesh Kumar)

### 2) Attention

It occurs when one or more stimuli activate one or more sensory nerves and the resulting sensations reach the brain for further processing. The attention of consumer is influenced by external environment, their own expectations their needs which motivates them motives, association of an

object with an image or symbol and learning based on earlier experiences.

a) Consumer motivation: Consumers tend to perceive those things that are topmost in their need and want list. For example, a person who is contemplating to buy a computer is more likely to notice ads of computers and ignore other ads irrelevant to his needs. It is the particular interesting theme or object which stimulates the selection of a person.

b) Expectation: Consumers often perceive products and product attributes according to their expectations. In many instances stimuli that are in sharp contrast to expectations attract more attention than those that meet our expectations. Perception is thus the outcome of interaction of physical stimuli from external environment and an individual's expectations, motives and learning based on earlier experiences.

c) Grouping: It is not only important to attract attention of the public through advertisements, it is even important to ensure that association with people/public is created by grouping stimuli in such a way that public associations are developed when public associate sets of stimuli. Grouping is extensively used to shape the perception of brands. For example, "Titan Fast Track" is associated with a can of soft drink implying a trendy, young and westernized life style. Individuals have an inherent tendency to grouping a variety of information or items close to each other in time or space and form a unified picture. The tendency to group stimuli results advertisers to associate products, symbols and imagery close to the product.

d) Closure: The concept of closure is associated with incomplete stimulus. Individuals express the need for closure by organizing their perception to form a complete picture. When an individual is exposed to an incomplete stimulus, there is a built up of tension which motivates him/her to complete the picture. If a portion of a circle is left incomplete it is mostly perceived as a complete circle and not an arc. Closure leads to a very interesting application in marketing. For example, the audio track of a TV commercial can be used in FM to create an incomplete perception of the TV commercial, which the consumer will complete by recalling the visuals associated with the jingle.

e) Contrast: Contrast between the objects can also be used to attract attention. Advertisement of a museum can be placed in proximity to a magazine article in such a way that people get into such advertisements immediately after reading the article.

### 3) Perceptual Interpretation

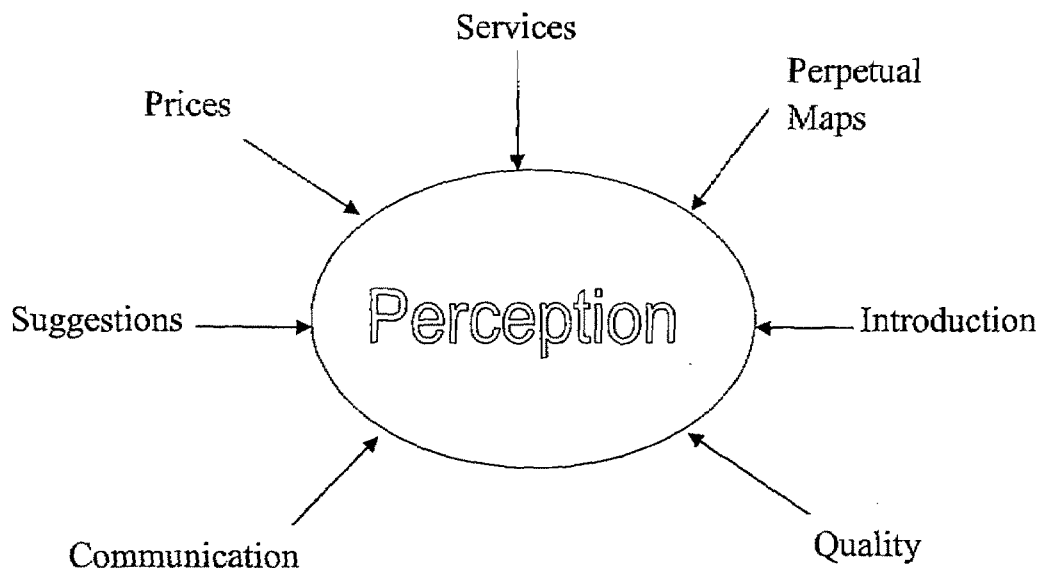
It is unique to an individual as adding meaning to what he has sensed based on the individual's experience. For example, Sunlight Dish Washing liquid producing co. found to its shock that a cross section of consumers were using the product as tea-additive as the packaging had a photograph of lime in it.

a) Choosing proper brands:

Museum personnel should be careful while choosing brand names for their exhibitions or exhibits to provide an idea of the offering.

### b) Categorization:

It is an extended concept associated with the interpretation of stimuli. People tend to associate a stimulus with a group of stimulus they are familiar with. For example, people generally associate museums with dead, old, discarded things. Museum personnel should be careful while designing their exhibition advertisement and branding to avoid categorization in the minds of the common man. Perception matters, as categorization is the process of understanding something by relating to prior knowledge.



**Figure 4 – Elements of Perception**

(Adapted from Consumer Behaviour by Leon G. Schiffman and Leslie Lazar Kanauk)

### **Importance of Study of Consumer Perception**

Marketing is the human activity directed at satisfying wants and needs through human exchange processes. It is the process by which companies create customer interest in their products. Marketing is used to identify the customer, to keep the customer, and to satisfy the customer.

Marketers often use intriguing headlines or attractive commercials to attract attention to their advertisements of the target audience. This information processing happens in a series of activities by which stimuli are perceived, transformed into information, and stored. Thus, exposure, attention and interpretation mainly constitute perception.

In marketing, perception is concerned with understanding how the consumer views a product or service. The five senses of a person help him in this process. The marketer uses various props to stimulate the consumer, that is, through the use of colours, sound, touch, taste, or smell to observe the product. The marketer must distinguish his message from the competitor's message. Marketers thus use stimuli to grab customer's attention and most often these efforts are clearly visible and are known to the customer. Of all the stimuli a consumer comes into contact with, he pays attention to only a few and interprets the messages that he remembers.

This is called the process of perception and has the three steps:

- 1) Exposure
- 2) Attention
- 3) Interpretation

How well the consumer pays attention will depend on the stimulus and also the consumer's interest and need for that product.

The consumer interprets the information in two ways:

- The literal meaning or the semantic meaning and

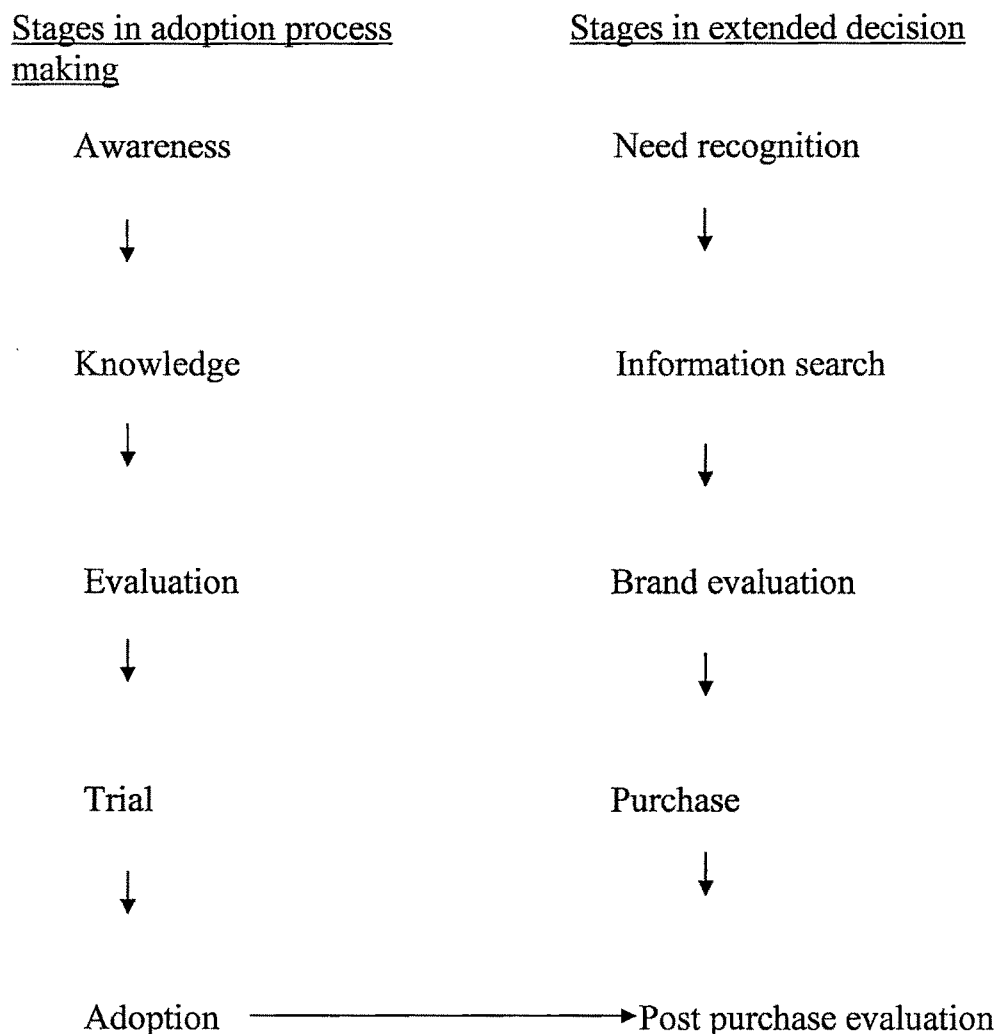
- The psychological meaning

Hence, we are guided by our learning as well as the semantic meaning of a word. A consumer also interprets the symbols and other physical features of the product on the basis of his experience and cultural beliefs. This is called semiotics.

Marketers make use of perception to formulate marketing strategies. The marketers use a perceptual map, wherein they find out the attributes or the characteristics that the consumer associates with the product and they create the product accordingly. Thus, development of a brand, packaging, pricing and promoting of a product, etc., has to be made keeping the consumer's perception in mind. The ability to develop a new product is critical to a company's sales, future growth and long-term survival. There is no universally accepted definition of "product innovation" or "new product". Ideas and product attributes can also be regarded as innovations. Innovations bring about changes in consumer's consumption patterns. Some innovations influence how, when, where, why or whether public acquire products.

An innovation is an idea, practice or product perceived to be new by the relevant individual or group. The adoption of an innovation by an individual or a group of consumers effects the decision of buying a new product. Adoption process is a term used to describe extended decision making by consumers when a new product, service, or idea is involved. Extended decision making occurs when the consumer is highly involved in the purchase. High purchase involvement is likely for discontinuous

innovations such as the decision to purchase an electric car. However, most continuous innovations trigger limited decision making. As consumers we don't put much effort before deciding to purchase soap or a T-shirt. The adoption of an innovation is a reasonably involving decision for those who are among the first to buy the product. The various stages of adoption process and extended decision making are depicted in Figure 5.



**Figure 5 – Adoption process & Extended Decision Making**  
 (Adoption process and extended decision making by Satish K Batra, S H H Kazmi, 2003: 335)

The above stages of the adoption process are being used by many marketers (Del I Hawkins, Roger J Best, Kenneth A Coney, 1983: 249; David L Loudon & Albert J. Della Bitta, 2002: 272)

#### A) Awareness

The adoption process shows that the consumer first becomes aware of a product and starts to recognize it. At this stage the potential adopter finds out about the existence of a product but has very little information and no well informed attitudes about it.

#### B) Knowledge

Then to gain more knowledge about the product s/he tries to acquire more information about the product.

#### C) Evaluation

Then he tries to evaluate the product and develops favourable or unfavourable predispositions towards it. The adoption process terminates if attitude of the consumer is not favourable towards the product. If the consumer becomes convinced that the product should be adopted then he tries to gather additional information about the product to reach a decision.

#### D) Trial

Next trial of the product is done before making a purchase decision. Trial may take place cognitively, where an individual uses the product in a hypothetical situation, or it may be used in limited or total way, depending on the innovation's nature. But trial method cannot be done in some cases like the various services. Certain types of products or services

are difficult, or even impossible, to try on a sufficient basis such as eye surgery, expensive goods or an exhibition of museum.

E) Post purchase evaluation

Finally, the consumer does post purchase evaluation to decide whether to adopt the product or not. At this stage the consumer decides whether to use the product or not. The outcome of this whole process can be either adoption or rejection of a product by the consumer. Continued purchase or use of the item fulfils the adoption process.

Perception “is the act of discerning, realizing, and becoming aware of through the senses”. Thus, customer’s perception is what counts. This can be explained in Table-1 categorizing perception into (4) quadrants.

Table I.1 Category of Perception

How a company views itself?	How the customer views the company?
The “real view” of the company.	How a company thinks the customer views the company?

By 1990s, strategic concept of marketing developed which shifted the focus of marketing from customer or the product to the customer in the context of the broader external environment. Now knowing customers is not enough. To succeed, marketers must know the customer in context of government policy and regulation, economic, social and political forces that shape the evolution of markets. The art of marketing is the ability to

differentiate products and services in a way that attracts and retains customers. In order to do this well, “having a handle on” how the customer thinks and feels is essential. There is no substitute for gauging how customers think and feel than by assessing customer perception through intelligently designed and unbiased initiatives. Assessing customer perception is useless unless the information leads to actionable feedback.

### **Methods to Gather Consumer Perception**

Information about consumer perception can be gathered through the following methods:

- 1) Surveys
- 2) Face to face interviews

### **Importance of Study of Perception in Museums**

Marketing is very important to non profit organizations, and museums, being non profit making organization, need to consider different market segments when designing and implementing their strategic and marketing plans. They are faced with complex and heterogeneous markets or a multitude of consumer segments. Marketing has traditionally been linked to concepts of profitability and providing a competitive edge, however with non profit organizations, marketing needs to focus on customer service. To achieve the best customer service, the organization needs to know what the customer wants.

In marketing the consumer's are asked to rate a particular set of brands on given attributes or benefits or they may be asked to judge, by pairs,

how similar or dissimilar the brands are. Various techniques are used for such perceptual mapping like Factor analysis, Multidimensional technique or Profit charts etc.

The study of perception of the people will give an insight into the motivation – based values, individualistic values, socially oriented values, education and knowledge of the public which will help the museum organization to target their desired segments or groups. The museums can design their exhibitions and galleries with quite different exhibits that will appeal different target groups.

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