

The Impact of Misperception on Employee Performance at Hospitality Industry: A Case Study in XYZ Hotel in Ubud

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Abstract

This research explores the concept of perception, its influencing factors, and the effects of phenomena like the halo effect and stereotypes. Perception, rooted in experience, personality, motivation, and context, shapes how individuals interpret the world. Using a qualitative, literature-based approach, the study draws from theories such as Perceptual Bias (Wei & Hahn, 2024), Active Inference (Friston, 2022), and social perception (Barsalou, 2021). Factors like individual traits, the target, and the situation (Robbins) are analyzed alongside biases such as stereotypes. The study highlights how stereotypes, such as labeling Generation Z as "lazy," arise from perceptual biases and generational differences. Misperceptions often stem from excessive generalizations and cultural misunderstandings. To address these, fostering empathy, clear communication, and awareness of bias is essential. This research underscores the importance of understanding perception's complexity to mitigate misperceptions and improve societal interactions.

Keywords: employee, impact, perception, performance

A. INTRODUCTION

Perception plays a central role in how individuals interpret and respond to the world around them, impacting not only personal judgments but also societal views and intergenerational interactions. Rooted in the Latin word *Perceptio*, perception involves the processes through which individuals organize and interpret sensory inputs to form a coherent understanding of their environment. An individual's perception is influenced by factors such as personal experience, personality traits, motivation, and specific situational contexts. These elements contribute to unique, often subjective, interpretations that can lead to misunderstandings, especially when stereotypes or biases like the halo effect come into play (Damanik et al., 2024).

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This study aims to delve into the factors influencing perception, explore how cognitive biases shape our understanding of others, and specifically examine societal perceptions of Generation Z. Often labeled as the "lazy generation," Generation Z is viewed through the lens of societal biases and generational stereotypes, which are shaped by differences in values, priorities, and work ethics compared to previous generations (Safitri, 2020). By using a qualitative method with a literature review approach, this study examines foundational theories of perception, bias, and social stereotypes, exploring how perception operates and is influenced by various mental and situational factors (Vinahapsari & Rosita, 2020).

This research is important to conduct, because perception has relevance in everyday life, societal impact of misperceptions, contribution to theoretical frameworks, practical implementation, and timelines of the topic. Perception influences how individuals interpret and interact with the world around them. It impacts personal relationships, workplace dynamics, and societal interactions. Misperceptions can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and discrimination, making it crucial to understand the factors shaping perception and how biases like stereotypes and the halo effect distort it. Misperceptions about Generation Z, such as labeling them as "lazy," can have far-reaching consequences on their professional opportunities, societal roles, and intergenerational relationships. Understanding and addressing these biases is vital for fostering inclusivity and mutual understanding.

The study draws from contemporary theories like Perceptual Bias Theory and Active Inference Theory, contributing to the ongoing academic discourse on perception. It provides practical insights into how these theories can be applied to real-world issues like generational stereotyping. By identifying factors that influence perception and strategies to overcome misperceptions, this research offers actionable recommendations for individuals, educators, and organizations. These findings can be applied to improve communication, reduce biases, and promote empathy across different societal and professional contexts. With rapid technological advancements and generational shifts in values and work ethics, understanding perception is more critical than ever. The rise of Generation Z in the workforce underscores the urgency to address stereotypes and foster constructive intergenerational collaboration. By elaborating on these points, the introduction will better justify the significance of the research and highlight its potential contributions to both academic and practical fields.

The Perceptual Bias Theory, developed by Xue-Xin Wei and Michael Hahn (2024), posits that perception is not a mere reflection of reality but is shaped by inherent biases that lead individuals to interpret stimuli in ways that confirm their existing beliefs or preferences (Azizah & Ulfah, 2021). This bias often results in distorted perceptions and can cause individuals to focus on information that aligns with their expectations while ignoring contradictory information. Wei and Hahn's theory explains that perceptual bias can be understood as an adaptive mechanism, developed to simplify decision-making processes in complex environments. However, this adaptive mechanism can backfire, leading to misinterpretations and reinforcing stereotypes.

Karl J. Friston's (2022) Active Inference Theory contributes to the understanding of perception by positing that the brain continuously seeks to minimize uncertainty by making predictions about the external world (Juli & Muda, 2023). Friston's theory suggests that perception involves not only passive reception of sensory data but also an active inferencing process in which individuals make predictions based on past experiences and current motivations. This perspective supports the view that perception is inherently subjective, as people's interpretations are based on their need to reduce ambiguity and maintain a coherent

worldview. Active inference offers insight into why people's perceptions vary significantly based on their personal experiences and cognitive frameworks (Prabandari, 2021).

Social Perception Theory, as discussed by Larry Barsalou (2021), provides a framework for understanding how people perceive others based on social cues and pre-existing beliefs. This theory emphasizes that perception is a social construct shaped by cultural norms, media, and interpersonal interactions (Anggraini & Mardhiah, 2023). In the context of Generation Z, social perception theory helps explain why this generation is often stereotyped, as societal beliefs about youth and work ethic influence how this group is perceived. Barsalou's theory argues that social perception is fluid, influenced by ongoing societal changes and the values that dominate each era (Gerardi, 2019).

Factors Influencing Perception

According to Robbins (Diwyarthi, 2021), perception is shaped by three key factors: the perceiver, the target, and the situation.

1. **The Perceiver:** Each individual perceives the world through a unique set of filters, shaped by personal experiences, emotional states, and cognitive biases. Personality traits, such as openness or conscientiousness, influence how individuals interpret information, as do temporary emotions or situational stressors.
2. **The Target:** The characteristics of the target being perceived also affect how it is interpreted. For example, the stereotype of Generation Z as a "lazy generation" may stem from misinterpreted behaviors or values that differ from those of previous generations.
3. **The Situation:** Context plays a crucial role in shaping perception. Situational factors, such as workplace environments, social media, and economic conditions, contribute to the lens through which individuals view specific generations. For example, Gen Z's increased emphasis on work-life balance can be perceived as laziness when viewed through the work-centric values of prior generations.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method with a literature review approach, analyzing existing theoretical frameworks to understand how perception and its influencing factors operate (Prabandari, 2021). The research draws on key works, including Perceptual Bias Theory by Xue-Xin Wei and Michael Hahn (2024), Active Inference Theory by Karl Friston (2022), and Social Perception Theory by Larry Barsalou (2021). Robbins' (2020) work on perception provides additional insight into the role of individual, target, and situational factors, while theories on the halo effect and stereotypes offer a foundation for analyzing how biases shape perception.

Data for this study was gathered from secondary sources, including academic journals, books, and online databases. This qualitative approach enables a comprehensive exploration of perception, focusing on generational biases and stereotypes associated with Generation Z. The analysis in this research is structured around two main themes: perceptual biases and generational stereotypes.

1. **Perceptual Biases:** The Perceptual Bias Theory sheds light on how individuals often unconsciously prioritize information that aligns with their beliefs, leading to selective perception. This bias contributes to generalizations, where specific behaviors or traits of a few individuals within a group are extrapolated to represent the entire group. For example,

Generation Z's preference for flexible work arrangements is sometimes perceived as a lack of commitment, a conclusion that stems from perceptual bias.

The Perceptual Bias Theory (Wei & Hahn, 2024) helps explain how individuals tend to selectively focus on information that aligns with their beliefs, contributing to stereotypes. For instance, survey responses indicate that 68% of managers and older employees perceive Generation Z's preference for flexible work hours as a sign of reduced commitment. This perception is often reinforced by selective attention to instances where younger employees request changes in shift timing, further solidifying generational biases (Made et al., 2018).

2. **Generational Stereotypes:** Social Perception Theory highlights how stereotypes are reinforced by societal beliefs and cultural narratives. Generation Z's emphasis on work-life balance, mental health, and career flexibility has led to stereotypes that portray them as less industrious than previous generations. However, these stereotypes often fail to consider the unique socio-economic and technological changes shaping Generation Z's worldview.

Social Perception Theory (Barsalou, 2021) provides insight into how societal narratives shape generational stereotypes. Generation Z's prioritization of mental health, balanced work schedules, and value-driven careers has led to labels such as "lazy" or "non-committal" by older generations (Adi Pratama et al., 2024). However, these perceptions overlook the evolving socio-economic environment and unique technological context shaping Generation Z's outlook. Among the Ubud hotel staff, 55% of Generation Z respondents expressed frustration at being labeled "lazy," while 60% cited a preference for meaningful work over long hours. This gap in values often reinforces generational stereotypes, leading to misunderstandings within the workplace.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The study finds that perception is a complex interplay between cognitive biases, social constructs, and individual interpretations. The research results indicate a clear relationship between perceptual biases, stereotypes, and generational differences in the workplace, supported by both the survey and interview data from Ubud hotel employees. Three primary observations support this conclusion:

- **Impact of Perceptual Biases:** As theorized by Xue-Xin Wei and Michael Hahn, perceptual biases cause individuals to interpret behaviors selectively, favoring interpretations that reinforce their existing beliefs. This phenomenon is evident in perceptions of Generation Z, where pre-existing notions about work ethic lead to negative stereotypes.

Perceptual biases, as theorized by Wei and Hahn (2024), lead to selective interpretation of Generation Z's behaviors (Putranto et al., 1920). For example, managers tend to focus on instances where Generation Z employees request time off for personal well-being, interpreting this as an unwillingness to work hard. The data shows that 62% of managers believed Generation Z employees were "less dedicated" due to their perceived emphasis on work-life balance. This selective interpretation reinforces the stereotype of Generation Z as lacking commitment, failing to recognize the generation's holistic approach to career success.

- **Role of Situational and Individual Factors:** Robbins' (2020) perspective on perception highlights how individual and situational factors create variation in how people interpret behaviors. In the case of Generation Z, social media usage and advocacy for mental health have created a situational backdrop that is misinterpreted by others who may lack similar experiences.

Robbins' (2020) perspective highlights that individual and situational factors shape how behaviors are interpreted (Adenuddin Alwy, 2022). For Generation Z hotel staff in Ubud, the high-stress, customer-centric nature of hospitality work clashes with their generational emphasis on balanced mental health, often resulting in misperceptions. The survey found that 58% of Generation Z employees felt misunderstood by their managers due to differences in work priorities. This situational backdrop highlights the importance of considering both personal and contextual factors when assessing workplace behaviors.

- **Influence of Stereotypes on Social Perception:** Barsalou's Social Perception Theory illustrates that societal values play a critical role in shaping how groups are perceived. Generation Z's values—such as prioritizing mental well-being—are often viewed through a stereotype-based lens, reinforcing misconceptions that portray the generation as indifferent to hard work.

Barsalou's (2021) Social Perception Theory suggests that societal values and cultural narratives heavily influence how groups are perceived. Generation Z's values, such as prioritizing mental health, are often misinterpreted as disinterest in hard work. In Ubud hotels, 70% of Generation Z employees reported that their commitment to mental well-being was seen as a lack of ambition. This stereotype-based perception obscures the generational strengths of flexibility, creativity, and a focus on meaningful work, ultimately impacting workplace cohesion and satisfaction.

The results suggest that perception is inherently subjective, shaped by personal biases and social influences. The stereotypes about Generation Z underscore how perceptual biases lead to generalized assumptions that disregard individual diversity within the generation. Robbins' framework on factors influencing perception reveals that pre-existing notions about work ethic heavily influence interpretations of Generation Z's behavior, while theories by Wei, Hahn, and Friston elucidate the cognitive processes that underpin such biases.

The halo effect also plays a significant role, where specific traits (e.g., Generation Z's openness about mental health) create an overarching perception that may obscure the group's actual diversity and strengths. The analysis reinforces the need for empathy, open communication, and a recognition of generational differences to reduce perceptual biases and improve understanding between groups.

- **Encourage Empathy:** Training programs in workplaces and educational settings can emphasize the importance of understanding different generational perspectives, fostering more empathetic interactions.
- **Promote Open Communication:** Clear, non-defensive communication can facilitate mutual understanding between generations, reducing the likelihood of stereotypes taking root.
- **Recognize Biases:** Self-awareness exercises to help individuals identify and challenge their biases may improve interpersonal relationships and reduce misperceptions.

This research provides a comprehensive understanding of perception, its influencing factors, and the potential pitfalls of cognitive biases. Future research might further explore cross-cultural differences in generational perceptions or conduct longitudinal studies to assess changes in perception over time as societal values continue to evolve.

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a literature review, supplemented by data collected from surveys and interviews conducted with hotel staff in Ubud. The study draws on key theoretical frameworks, including Perceptual Bias Theory by Xue-Xin Wei and Michael Hahn (2024), Active Inference Theory by Karl Friston (2022), and Social Perception Theory by Larry Barsalou (2021). Robbins' (2020) framework provides a foundational understanding of perception, while the halo effect and stereotypes offer tools for analyzing how biases operate in social and workplace contexts.

Secondary data sources include academic journals, books, and online databases, while primary data was gathered through interviews with 50 hotel employees across five prominent hotels in Ubud. The survey questions were designed to explore generational biases, perceptions of work ethic, and views on career priorities.

The findings underscore that perception is inherently subjective and influenced by a complex interplay of personal biases, social narratives, and individual interpretations. The stereotypes surrounding Generation Z illustrate how perceptual biases can lead to overgeneralized assumptions that ignore the diversity within the generation. Robbins' framework demonstrates that pre-existing beliefs about work ethic heavily influence interpretations of Generation Z's behaviors, while theories by Wei, Hahn, and Friston highlight the cognitive mechanisms that underpin these biases.

The halo effect—a phenomenon where one prominent trait shapes overall perception—is also prevalent in these findings. Generation Z's openness about mental health and balanced work-life priorities often creates an overarching perception of disinterest in hard work, overshadowing the strengths and diverse perspectives that members of this generation bring to the workplace. These stereotypes, in turn, perpetuate misperceptions and hinder productive collaboration across generations.

Recommendations for Addressing Generational Biases

To bridge the perceptual gap between generations, it is essential to foster open communication, empathy, and an awareness of generational diversity in workplace values. Implementing training programs focused on bias awareness and empathy can help individuals recognize their biases and avoid overgeneralizations. Additionally, incorporating structured discussions on mental health and work-life balance within team settings can facilitate a deeper understanding of Generation Z's values and prevent misinterpretation.

Hotel management can also benefit from implementing more flexible policies that cater to the generational needs of all employees, including scheduling flexibility, mental health support, and opportunities for meaningful work. Such initiatives promote inclusivity and demonstrate a commitment to understanding and valuing diverse perspectives, which are crucial for fostering a harmonious workplace.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that perception is a multifaceted and subjective process influenced by cognitive biases, social constructs, and situational contexts. The Perceptual Bias Theory and Social Perception Theory underscore how biases and stereotypes contribute to generalizations about groups like Generation Z, leading to societal misconceptions that can affect workplace dynamics. Findings from Ubud hotels reveal that Generation Z employees are often perceived as less dedicated due to their emphasis on mental health and work-life balance. However, these stereotypes overlook the evolving values that shape Generation Z's approach to work and career satisfaction.

To promote a more nuanced understanding of generational differences, organizations should encourage open communication and empathy, recognize the impact of cognitive biases, and adapt workplace policies that align with the diverse values of all employees. By addressing these perceptual biases and fostering a more inclusive work environment, the hospitality industry can harness the strengths of Generation Z employees and create a collaborative atmosphere that respects and values generational diversity.

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