

The Lecture Contains:

- ☰ Let us participate in Activity One!
- ☰ Let us participate in Activity Two!
- ☰ Conclusions from the two Activities
- ☰ Impression formation: cognitive approach
- ☰ Use of exemplars or abstractions

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Let us participate in Activity One!

- Let us read the following two sets of adjectives used for a person and try to infer their qualities :

- SET ONE :

intelligent-skillful-industrious-warm-determined-practical-cautious

- SET TWO :

intelligent-skillful-industrious-cold-determined-practical-cautious

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- So, what were your impression about the person represented by SET ONE and SET TWO?
- In his study of formation of first impression, Solomon Asch (1946) used these sets of words in his experiments to understand the process of impression formation :
 - The SET ONE consists of a word, 'warm' and SET TWO, 'cold' and rest of the words in the both the sets are same. However, this difference in only one word created the difference in the impression formed the persons who read the two sets. Asch reported that the participants who read the SET ONE were more likely to interpret the person to be generous, happy, good-natured, sociable, popular and altruistic than were those who read the SET TWO.

Let us participate in Activity Two!

- Similar to the process followed in Activity One, let us now consider the following set of adjectives and infer the qualities of the person :
- SET ONE :
intelligent-industrious-impulsive-critical-stubborn-envious
- SET TWO :
envious-stubborn-critical-impulsive-industrious-intelligent

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- So, what were your impression about the person represented by SET ONE and SET TWO?
- Through these above mentioned set of words, Solomon Asch (1946) tried to develop more insights into process of impression formation :
 - As we could notice, the SET TWO consists of the words that were in a reverse sequence of SET ONE. This difference in the sequence created the difference in the impression formed the persons who read the two sets. Asch reported that Only 5% of the participants who read SET TWO described the person as 'happy' as against 32% of those who read SET ONE. Similarly, only 21% of the participants who read SET TWO described the person as 'humorous' as against 52% of those who read SET ONE.

Conclusions from the two Activities

- Solomon Asch (1946), with the help of his studies such as the ones reported above, concluded that impression formation is a result of evaluating qualities in relation with one another rather than simply summing the qualities up. In other words, as Gestalt psychologists say, the whole of the person's qualities (represented in the adjectives) is more than the sum of the sum of its parts.

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Impression formation: cognitive approach

- As we saw above, the weighted average of information decides the impression formed.
- Important factors leading to this relative weighting:—Trustable source: The source of information should be trustable.
 - Negative information : It is weighted more heavily as seen in case of Activity One above.
 - Unusual or extreme behaviour or trait : It attracts more attention and weight in forming attention.
 - Primacy effect : As observed in Activity Two above, the adjectives (or events related to and behaviour of the persons that are encountered by another person in real life situation) that are read first in the sequence, has more weight in impression formation.

Use of exemplars or abstractions

- Sherman and Klein (1994) tried to explore whether exemplars (or examples of person's qualities) or abstractions (or definitions of traits) constituted the impression formed. His experiment showed that exemplars are used to form impression when used when lesser information is available with observer and abstractions used when more information is available.

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