

COGNITIVE BIASES

Selective Perception Bias

KEY WORDS

filters | distortion | perception | judgment



Every day we make choices, perceive information, and assign importance to what surrounds us. However, we're not always objective. Our brain, always at work, is constantly engaged in simplifying and organizing what it receives. Selective perception bias is exactly this: a tendency to focus only on what interests or concerns us, ignoring or forgetting everything else. It's like wearing glasses that only let us see what we want to see!

A Common Example?

Imagine you have a friend who, in the past, missed a few school projects or was always a little late for study sessions. If you start thinking of them as unreliable, you might begin to focus only on the times they don't show up or forget to complete tasks. You may completely overlook the moments when they've been on time, or when they've worked hard on assignments and exceeded expectations. This is the **Selective Perception Bias** at play, where we focus on information that supports our **initial judgment**, ignoring other positive behaviors that might challenge our view.



"We see what we want to see."

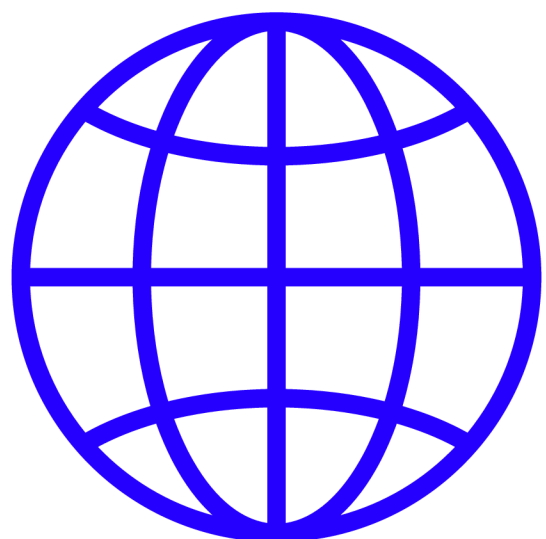
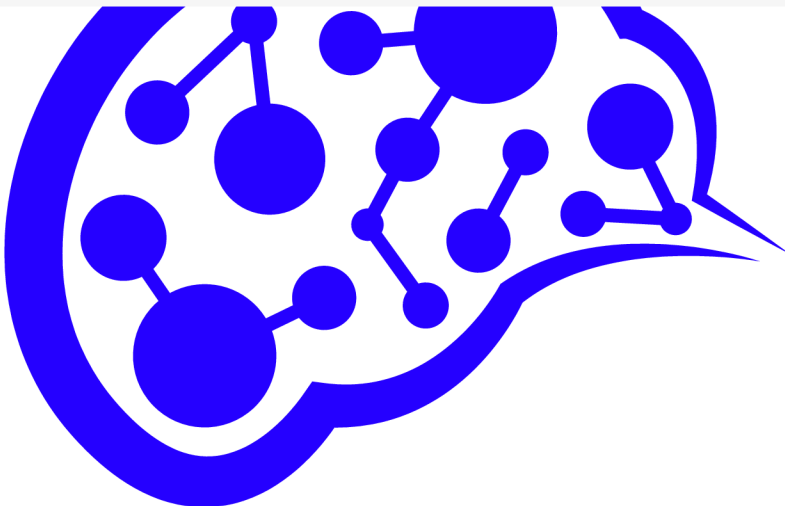
This bias doesn't only affect our interactions with friends or classmates. It also shapes how we engage with broader information, like the news.

When we read an article or watch a TV program, our perception is inevitably influenced by our **pre-existing beliefs**. If we have strong political opinions, we tend to look for news that confirms what we already think. This bias makes us ignore information that doesn't fit our worldview. If we watch a news report promoting a different perspective from ours, we often feel uncomfortable or even frustrated. This is a very common phenomenon: in practice, our brain selects only what aligns with our perception of the world.

The risks of living in our own bubble

Selective perception bias can lead us to see a distorted version of reality. For instance, if we only talk to people in our social circles who share our ideas and opinions, we end up reinforcing our point of view without ever questioning it.

This prevents us from opening up to new ideas, limiting our personal growth. But it's not just in political discussions or consumer choices that this bias plays a role. It influences how we respond to feedback, criticism, and even our daily experiences.



“See Beyond Our Filters”

The first step to tackling selective perception bias is recognizing that we all have mental **filters**. These filters shape how we see the world, based on our past experiences and beliefs. Once we accept this, we can start challenging our own assumptions.

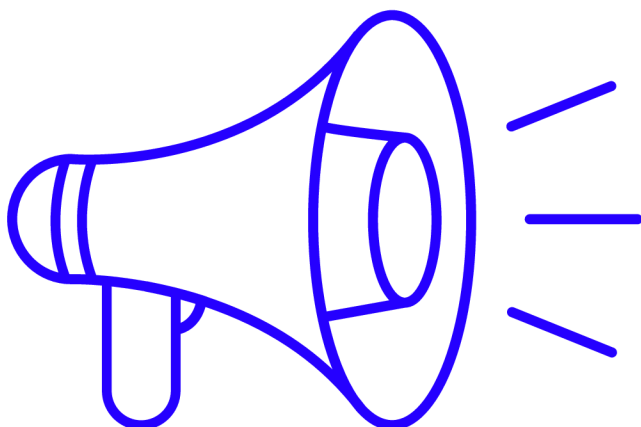
A powerful way to do this is by seeking out different perspectives. Instead of simply hearing opposing views, engage with them: ask yourself, “What can I learn from this?” It’s also helpful to pause before making judgments and ask, “Am I only noticing what confirms my beliefs?”

Broadening our experiences is another key step. Expose yourself to new ideas, people, and situations - whether through travel, books, or conversations. This helps break free from our usual thought patterns.

By questioning our biases, we can open our minds, make better decisions, and connect more meaningfully with the world around us.



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