

**D(I)H Paper I-Basic Psychological Processes Topic:
Perceptual Defense**

Perceptual Defence:

The process by which stimuli that are potentially threatening, offensive or unpleasant are either not perceived or are distorted in perception, especially when presented as brief flashes in a tachistoscope. The whole process is called perceptual defence.

Not only do per absolute threshold vary from person to person, they also vary from time to time for a single person. The type of stimulus, the state of one's nervous system, and the costs of false "detections" all make a difference. Emotional factor are also important. Unpleasant stimuli for example, may raise the threshold for recognition. This effect is called perceptual defence.

In other words, the tendency of perceivers to protect themselves against ideas, objects or people that are threatening to them is called perceptual defence. It is a function of selective perception which protects the individual from threatening

or contradictory stimuli (Runyon, 1972).

Perceptual defence occurs when a person's value orientations act as a barrier to stimuli that are threatening (Runyon, 1977). For example, an alcoholic may avoid anti-drinking and drinking campaigns in fear of what could happen because they know they drink and drive sometimes. They fear what could possibly happen if they actually accepted the message.

Postman, Bruner & McGinnies (1948) gave the concept of Perceptual Defence. According to them perceptual defence increases the perceptual threshold for certain stimulus (Anxiety promoting and threatening stimulus). According to McGinnies Perceptual defence is based on conditioned avoidance of unpleasant or dangerous stimulus/objects, individual actually discriminates the stimulus before recognition.
