Sensation vs. Perception

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Did you know that the most sensitive cells present at the rear of an eye can detect the flame of a candle far from thirty miles (Okawa & Sampath, 2007) and in a quiet place, the sensory receptors of the hair cells can perceive the impulse of a clock from twenty feet apart (Marks & Stevens, 1968). This is due to the extraordinary ability of sensory receptors to receive stimulus which is interpreted in the higher centers of the brain where they are perceived. It is quite evident that sensation and perception are related to each other, however, both of them play distinct characters in our interpretation of the world. The process of recognizing our surroundings via various stimuli such as touch, sight, sound, smell, and the taste is termed as sensation. Perception plays its part when these stimuli go to the higher centers in a brain where they are interpreted. Our interpretation of these signals is mainly termed as perception according to which we make sense of everything in our surroundings.

One way of looking at this paradigm is that Sensation is a physical process while perception is recognized as a psychological process. For instance, when you walk down to the kitchen and smell the odor of brownies baking in the oven, you might think "whoa! The smell seems similar to the brownies mama used to make on the day of Christmas". This is recognized as perception while the receptors in nose detecting the scent of brownies are termed as sensation.

Another factor affecting sensation and perception is attention. In assessing what has been sensed vs. what has been perceived, attention plays a crucial role. Assume that you are at a party filled with gossip and Joy. You are engaged with a companion in an interesting debate and you ignore all the ambient noise. You will not be able to answer the question if someone asks you about the music that we're playing earlier.

**References**

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