

Culture: Functions, Characteristics and its Influences in Education

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Abstract

Culture is the behavioral traits of a group. Education can be the way those traits are passed on to members of the group who are not sufficiently aware of those traits. Education may also be a way a method of passing on paradigms that allow for the group's greater efficiency. Culture is just habits and practices of people in essence. Culture can be seen as cultivated, but not necessarily. Education is of course good, but also not necessarily (bad education). It goes too far to say millennia/centuries old tribes in the amazon have no culture, while they have no education in our notion of the word. They might have other forms of education that helps them survive.

Keywords: Education; Culture; Influence; Relation.

1. Introduction

Cultural and education cannot be divorced from each other. They are interdependent. The cultural patterns of a society guide its educational patterns. As for example, if a society has a spiritual pattern of culture, then its educational procedures will emphasize the achievement of moral and eternal values of life. On the other hand if the culture of a society is materialistic, then its educational pattern will be shaped for the attainment of material values which promotes pleasures of senses and material comforts. A society devoid of any culture will have no definite educational organization. Hence, the culture of a country has a very powerful impact on its educational patterns. Education as a part of culture has the twin functions of conservation and modification or renewal of culture. It is the culture in which education germinates and flourishes and exerts a nourishing influence. Human being receives from society the gifts of family life, community life, education, vocation, legal rights, safety and protection in the same way he/she inherits from the culture the gift of cultural heritage. The present chapter discusses the relationship between culture and education.

2. Culture

In anthropological literature the term culture is used in many senses, but in general writing it is used to indicate social charm and intellectual superiority. Culture is a collective term for socially transmitted behaviour patterns. In ordinary language culture means good manners and good taste. Taylor defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, and law, custom and any other capabilities and habits, acquired by man as a member of society." Ellwood says that "culture includes man's entire material civilization, tools, weapons, clothing, shelter, machines and even system of industry." According to Brown, both material and non-material are dependent upon each other. But culture cannot be defined. It is better to describe it. The culture of a people is the way of life of that people, the things its people value, the things they don't value, their habits of life, their work of art, what they do and what they like. By material elements is meant the whole of man's material civilization, tools, weapons, clothing, machines and industry. By non-material elements is meant language, art religion, morality, law and government."

Sometimes an individual is described as "a highly cultured person", meaning thereby that the person in question has certain features such as his speech, manner, and taste for literature, music or painting which distinguish him from others. Culture, in this sense, refers to certain personal characteristics of an individual. However, this is not the sense in which the word culture is used and understood in social sciences.

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Sometimes culture is used in popular discourse to refer to a celebration or an evening of entertainment, as when one speaks of a 'cultural show'. In this sense, culture is identified with aesthetics or the fine arts such as dance, music or drama. This is also different from the technical meaning of the word culture.

Culture is used in a special sense in anthropology and sociology. It refers to the sum of human beings' life ways, their behavior, beliefs, feelings, thought; it connotes everything that is acquired by them as social beings.

Culture has been defined in number of ways. There is no consensus among sociologists and anthropologists regarding the definition of culture. One of the most comprehensive definitions of the term culture was provided by the British anthropologist Edward Tylor. He defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits Characteristics of Culture:

3. Culture and its Characteristics

3.1. Learned Behavior

Not all behavior is learned, but most of it is learned; combing one's hair, standing in line, telling jokes, criticizing the President and going to the movie, all constitute behaviors which had to be learned.

Sometimes the terms conscious learning and unconscious learning are used to distinguish the learning. For example, the ways in which a small child learns to handle a tyrannical father or a rejecting mother often affect the ways in which that child, ten or fifteen years later, handles his relationships with other people.

Some behavior is obvious. People can be seen going to football games, eating with forks, or driving automobiles. Such behavior is called "overt" behavior. Other behavior is less visible. Such activities as planning tomorrow's work (or) feeling hatred for an enemy, are behaviors too. This sort of behavior, which is not openly visible to other people, is called Covert behavior. Both may be, of course, learned.

3.2. Culture is Abstract

Culture exists in the minds or habits of the members of society. Culture is the shared ways of doing and thinking. There are degrees of visibility of cultural behavior, ranging from the regularized activities of persons to their internal reasons for so doing. In other words, we cannot see culture as such we can only see human behavior. This behavior occurs in regular, patterned fashion and it is called culture.

3.3. Culture is a Pattern of Learned Behavior

The definition of culture indicated that the learned behavior of people is patterned. Each person's behavior often depends upon some particular behavior of someone else. The point is that, as a general rule, behaviors are somewhat integrated or organized with related behaviors of other persons.

3.4. Culture is the Products of Behavior

Culture learnings are the products of behavior. As the person behaves, there occur changes in him. He acquires the ability to swim, to feel hatred toward someone, or to sympathize with someone. They have grown out of his previous behaviors.

In both ways, then, human behavior is the result of behavior. The experience of other people are impressed on one as he grows up, and also many of his traits and abilities have grown out of his own past behaviors.

3.5. Culture includes Attitudes, Values Knowledge

There is widespread error in the thinking of many people who tend to regard the ideas, attitudes, and notions which they have as "their own". It is easy to overestimate the uniqueness of one's own attitudes and ideas. When there is agreement with other people it is largely unnoticed, but when there is a disagreement or difference one is usually conscious of it. Your differences however, may also be cultural. For example, suppose you are a Catholic and the other person a Protestant.

3.6. Culture also Includes Material Objects

Man's behavior results in creating objects. Men were behaving when they made these things. To make these objects required numerous and various skills which human beings gradually built up through the ages. Man has invented something else and so on. Occasionally one encounters the view that man does not really "make" steel or a battleship. All these things first existed in a "state nature".

Man merely modified their form, changed them from a state in which they were to the state in which he now uses them. The chair was first a tree which man surely did not make. But the chair is more than trees and the jet airplane is more than iron ore and so forth.

3.7. Culture is shared by the Members of Society

The patterns of learned behavior and the results of behavior are possessed not by one or a few person, but usually by a large proportion. Thus, many millions of persons share such behavior patterns as Christianity, the use of automobiles, or the English language.

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Persons may share some part of a culture unequally. For example, as Americans do the Christian religion. To some persons Christianity is the all-important, predominating idea in life. To others it is less preoccupying/important, and to still others it is of marginal significance only.

Sometimes the people share different aspects of culture. For example, among the Christians, there are – Catholic and Protestant, liberal or conservative, as clergymen or as laymen. The point to our discussion is not that culture or any part of it is shared identically, but that it is shared by the members of society to a sufficient extent.

3.8. Culture is Super-organic

Culture is sometimes called super organic. It implies that “culture” is somehow superior to “nature”. The word super-organic is useful when it implies that what may be quite a different phenomenon from a cultural point of view.

For example, a tree means different things to the botanist who studies it, the old woman who uses it for shade in the late summer afternoon, the farmer who picks its fruit, the motorist who collides with it and the young lovers who carve their initials in its trunk. The same physical objects and physical characteristics, in other words, may constitute a variety of quite different cultural objects and cultural characteristics.

3.9. Culture is Pervasive

Culture is pervasive it touches every aspect of life. The pervasiveness of culture is manifest in two ways. First, culture provides an unquestioned context within which individual action and response take place. Not only emotional action but relational actions are governed by cultural norms. Second, culture pervades social activities and institutions.

According to Ruth Benedict, “A culture, like an individual is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action. With each culture there come into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. In obedience to these purposes, each person further consolidates its experience and in proportion to the urgency of these drives the heterogeneous items of behavior; take more and more congruous shape”.

3.10. Culture is a Way of Life

Culture means simply the “way of life” of a people or their “design for living.” Kluckhohn and Kelly define it in his sense,” A culture is a historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designed members of a group.”

Explicit culture refers to similarities in word and action which can be directly observed. For example, the adolescent cultural behavior can be generalized from regularities in dress, mannerism and conversation. Implicit culture exists in abstract forms which are not quite obvious.

3.11. Culture is a Human Product

Culture is not a force, operating by itself and independent of the human actors. There is an unconscious tendency to defy culture, to endow it with life and treat it as a thing. Culture is a creation of society in interaction and depends for its existence upon the continuance of society. In a strict sense, therefore, culture does not ‘do’ anything on its own. It does not cause the individual to act in a particular way, nor does it ‘make’ the normal individual into a maladjusted one. Culture, in short, is a human product; it is not independently endowed with life.

3.12. Culture is Idealistic

Culture embodies the ideas and norms of a group. It is sum-total of the ideal patterns and norms of behaviour of a group. Culture consists of the intellectual, artistic and social ideals and institutions which the members of the society profess and to which they strive to confirm.

3.13. Culture is transmitted among Members of Society

The cultural ways are learned by persons from persons. Many of them are “handed down” by one’s elders, by parents, teachers, and others [of a somewhat older generation]. Other cultural behaviors are “handed up” to elders. Some of the transmission of culture is among contemporaries.

For example, the styles of dress, political views, and the use of recent labor saving devices. One does not acquire a behavior pattern spontaneously. He learns it. That means that someone teaches him and he learns. Much of the learning process both for the teacher and the learner is quite unconscious, unintentional, or accidental.

3.14. Culture is Continually Changing

There is one fundamental and inescapable attribute (special quality) of culture, the fact of unending change. Some societies at sometimes change slowly, and hence in comparison to other societies seem not to be changing at all. But they are changing, even though not obviously so.

3.15. Culture is Variable

Culture varies from society to society, group to group. Hence, we say culture of India or England. Further culture varies from group to group within the same society. There are subcultures within a culture. Cluster of patterns which are both related to general culture of the society and yet distinguishable from it are called subcultures.

3.16. Culture is an Integrated System

Culture possesses an order and system. Its various parts are integrated with each other and any new element which is introduced is also integrated.

3.17. Language is the Chief Vehicle of Culture

Man lives not only in the present but also in the past and future. He is able to do this because he possesses language which transmits to him what was learned in the past and enables him to transmit the accumulated wisdom to the next generation. A specialized language pattern serves as a common bond to the members of a particular group or subculture. Although culture is transmitted in a variety of ways, language is one of the most important vehicles for perpetuating cultural patterns.

To conclude culture is everything which is socially learned and shared by the members of a society. It is culture that, in the wide focus of the world, distinguishes individual from individual, group from group and society. Acquired by man as a member of society”.

4. Important Functions of Culture

4.1. Culture Defines Situations

Each culture has many subtle cues which define each situation. It reveals whether one should prepare to fight, run, laugh or make love. For example, suppose someone approaches you with right hand outstretched at waist level. What does this mean? That he wishes to shake hands in friendly greeting is perfectly obvious – obvious, that is to anyone familiar with our culture.

But in another place or time the outstretched hand might mean hostility or warning. One does not know what to do in a situation until he has defined the situation. Each society has its insults and fighting words. The cues (hints) which define situations appear in infinite variety. A person who moves from one society into another will spend many years misreading the cues. For example, laughing at the wrong places.

4.2. Culture Defines Attitudes, Values and Goals

Each person learns in his culture what is good, true, and beautiful. Attitudes, values and goals are defined by the culture. While the individual normally learns them as unconsciously as he learns the language. Attitudes are tendencies to feel and act in certain ways. Values are measures of goodness or desirability, for example, we value private property, (representative) Government and many other things and experience.

Goals are those attainments which our values define as worthy, (e.g.) winning the race, gaining the affections of a particular girl, or becoming president of the firm. By approving certain goals and ridiculing others, the culture channels individual ambitions. In these ways culture determines the goals of life.

4.3. Culture Defines Myths, Legends, and the Supernatural

Myths and legends are important part of every culture. They may inspire, reinforce effort and sacrifice and bring comfort in bereavement. Whether they are true is sociologically unimportant. Ghosts are real to people who believe in them and who act upon this belief. We cannot understand the behavior of any group without knowing something of the myths, legends, and supernatural beliefs they hold. Myths and legends are powerful forces in a group's behavior.

Culture also provides the individual with a ready-made view of the universe. The nature of divine power and the important moral issues are defined by the culture. The individual does not have to select, but is trained in a Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim or some other religious tradition. This tradition gives answers for the major (things imponderable) of life, and fortuities the individual to meet life's crises.

4.4. Culture Provides Behavior Patterns

The individual need not go through painful trial and error learning to know what foods can be eaten (without poisoning himself), or how to live among people without fear. He finds a ready-made set of patterns awaiting him which he needs only to learn and follow. The culture maps out the path to matrimony. The individual does not have to wonder how one secures a mate; he knows the procedure defined by his culture.

If men use culture to advance their purposes, it seems clear also that a culture imposes limits on human and activities. The need for order calls forth another function of culture that of so directing behavior that disorderly behavior is restricted and orderly behavior is promoted. A society without rules or norms to define right and wrong behavior would be very much like a heavily travelled street without traffic signs or any understood rules for meeting and passing vehicles. Chaos would be the result in either case.

5. Education

This is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university. Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and

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habits. Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, however learners may also educate themselves. Education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. The methodology of teaching is called pedagogy.

5.1. The Functions of Education

Education is an aspect of socialization which involves the acquisition of knowledge and learning of skills. It shapes our beliefs and moral values through a systematic formal transmission. Education is said to be an integral function of society, as it provides a contributory characteristic which helps to maintain and adapt society and its values.

Before the 1960's, education was taught through a system known as the 'Tripartite' system. This involved all children at the age of eleven undertaking an exam in order to ascertain individual ability in order to separate the children into streams of ability and assign them to what was believed to be the most appropriate ...show more content.

The Comprehensive was intended to reduce class differences in educational attainment. It allowed children to mix from all social backgrounds and therefore provided equal opportunity.

5.2. Characteristics of Education

- a) Meaning is social constructed and contextually reinvented
- b) Technology is everywhere (digital universe).
- c) Teaching is done teacher-to-student, student-to-student, and people-technology-people (co-constructivism)
- d) Schools are located everywhere (fully infused in society)
- e) Parents view schools as a place for them to learn, too
- f) Teachers are everybody, everywhere
- g) Hardware and software in schools are available at low cost and are used (strategically)
- h) Industry views graduates as co-workers or entrepreneurs

6. Education and Culture

Education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills and also something less tangible but more profound: the imparting of knowledge good judgement and wisdom.

Durkheim sees education as the socialization of the younger generation. It is a continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing, feeling and acting which he could not have arrived at spontaneously.

Education has as one of its fundamental goals the imparting of culture from generation to generation. Culture is a growing whole. There can be no break in the continuity of culture. The cultural elements are passed on through the agents like family, school and other associations. All societies maintain themselves through their culture. Culture here refers to a set of beliefs, skills, art, literature, philosophy, religion, music etc. which must be learned. This social heritage must be transmitted through social organizations.

Education has this function of cultural transmission in all societies. The curriculum of a school, its extra-curricular activities and the informal relationships among students and teachers communicate social skills and values. Through various activities school imparts values such as co-operation, team spirit, obedience, discipline etc. Education acts an integrative force in the society by communicating values that unites different sections of society. The school teaches skills to the children which help them later to integrate within the culture of the society. Education in its formal or informal pattern has been performing this role since time immemorial. Education can be looked upon as a process from this point of view also. Education has brought phenomenal changes in every aspect of man's life.

7. Influences of Culture in Education

- a) Influence on Curriculum: The curriculum is prepared according to the culture of the society. The system of education tries to realize the cultural needs of society.
- b) Influence on methods of teaching: Culture and method of teaching are intimately related. Cultural conditions generate the teaching methods.
- c) Influence on discipline: Cultural values influence the concept of discipline.
- d) Influence on Text books: Curriculum is contained in text books. Those textbooks are welcomed which can promote more cultural values.
- e) Physical development: In general, education was restricted in listening, reading, writing and the process of doing math. There was no option of physical movement. But the new system of physical exercises help a student a lot. This change is the impact of culture.
- f) Mental development: There are so many institutions which help to development of mental development. Having a clear concept, helps for the mental health.
- g) Development of balanced personality: Social development: Culture works vitally for the social development of a student. Their culture impacts.

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- h) Making values:
- i) Controlling the lifestyle:
- j) Making cultural life:
- k) Increasing of eagerness of the students: There are many cultural institutions which increases the eagerness of the students.
- l) Making hobby and making the best use of pastime.
- m) Expressing brilliancy.

8. Conclusion

In my opinion, education is the way to live in society and to be the integral part of it. Education provide us the understanding of the society and culture. Between education and the level of culture in society is close connection. It is explained by that one of aims of education is an increase of culture in society. Education is one the most important values of civilized society. Culture reflects the educational level, behavior and moral values of society members. Education help us to upgrading the cultural and civilizational level of society.

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