

SOCIAL INTERACTION

-process by which people act and react in relation to others.

-language, gestures, and symbols are used

-Herbert Blumer noted that the distinctive characteristics of social interaction among people is that **“human beings interpret or define each other’s actions.”** This means that our response to someone’s behavior is based on the meaning we attach to other’s actions. Reality is shaped by our perceptions, evaluation, and definition of such reality.

Sensation- the activation of our sensory organs by a source of physical energy

Perception- the sorting out, interpretation, analysis, and integration of stimuli by the sense organs and the brain

Factors that affect perception: (listen to recording)

- a. Context
- b. Previous Experience
- c. Preference

Benefits of Social Interaction:

- a. Improved Health – in one study, medical students who were assigned to work in pairs had lower stress levels than those who were assigned to work alone.
 - Another study reported that elderly people who like to eat out, go to movies and take part in other social activities live an average of two and a half years longer than people who spend most of their time alone. The physical health benefits of socializing were equal to physical exercise, even though the social activities involved almost no physical exertion. It wasn't physical activity or physical health but feeling worthwhile that led to longer life. Good health and eating counted, but it was social interaction that was responsible for the results.

Types of Social Interaction

- a. Cooperation – refers to collaborative efforts between people to achieve a common goal
- b. Conflict - Sociologists stress that conflict is significant in social life. It involves direct struggle between individuals or groups over commonly valued resources or goals.
 - Positive sociological effects include group cohesion

(listen to recording re: 5 dysfunctions of a team)

- c. Competition – form of conflict in which there is an agreement on the means that can be used to pursue an end. There are more rules and limits that are imposed on the interaction.
- d. Negotiation - People may negotiate the term under which they agree to social exchange, social cooperation, or competition. In the process of negotiation, two or more competing parties reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. When negotiation fails, conflict or coercion sometimes occurs.
- e. Coercion (bullying) – one party is imposing an action or behavior on another, such as through the use of physical force
 - “is the practice of forcing another party to act in an involuntary manner by use of intimidation or threats or some other form of pressure”

What is important in Social Interactions? **Communication, Connectedness, Vulnerability** (watch TedEx)

Elements of Social Interaction:

- a. Status – a position in a social structure; any position that determines where a person “fits” within a society.
 - We can have multiple positions in the society

Ascribed Status – position that is received at birth or involuntarily assumed later in life

Achieved Status – position that is assumed voluntarily and that reflects a significant measure of personal ability and efforts

- b. Roles – every status carries with it socially prescribed roles, that is, expected behavior, obligations, and privileges.
 - It may be referred to as the dynamic expression of a status
 - Ex. Friend- helpful, caring, loyal, understanding Mother- caring, nurturing, handles money/budget., takes care of kids when they get sick Manager- effective communicator, good interpersonal skills

Role Strain – when people find it difficult to perform the role expected of them

Role Conflict – occurs when carrying out one role results in the violation of another

Role Exit – when people disengage from social roles. Ex. priest decides to marry

What influences Social Interaction?

- a. Goals and Motivations
 - Goal: state of affairs one wishes to achieve
 - Motivation: is a person’s wish or intention to achieve the goal; what causes the person to continue striving for the goal
- b. Situation or Context – context refers to the conditions under which an action takes place.
 - physical setting or place; social environment; activities or events surrounding the interaction
- c. Norms or Rules - specific rules of behavior that are agreed upon and shared and prescribe limits of acceptable behavior. Ex. beach (swimsuit vs shorts); greeting (handshake vs kiss on the cheeks); eating (fork & spoon vs fork & knife); (wait to be seated vs finding a seat directly)

THE HUMAN GROUP

Culture – refers to that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society.

– An organized body of conventional understandings manifested in art and artifacts, which, persisting through tradition, characterizes a human group.

– Culture is the social heritage of a society that is transmitted to each generation. It is learned behavior that is shared with others.

– Consists of patterns, explicit or implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and their attached values.

– May be thought of as a design for living or a roadmap that guides the behavior of members of a society, permitting them to live together in an organized, orderly manner. It is part of his environment which man himself has created.

Characteristics of Culture

- a. Learned and acquired - Culture is not instinctive. It is acquired by each person through the senses and from experience. Each individual must learn from himself
- b. Shared and Transmitted - Shared and transmitted to and among members of a social group.
- c. Social - Is a product developed by many persons interacting in a group. It is a result of the group's accumulation of knowledge and expectations.
- d. Ideational - Man forms ideas and uses them to assign meanings to his environment and experiences. Within any given culture are patterns of habits and expectations which every member is expected to follow.
- e. Gratifies human needs - An individual is likely to utilize habitually a cultural technique which gratifies him in some way. The patterns of culture continue to persist if they continue to satisfy man's needs.
- f. Adaptive - All cultures are dynamic. They change over time and these changes are adjustments to the prevailing environment.
- g. Tends toward integration - Over a period of time, any culture will exhibit a tendency toward a coherence of its elements.
- h. Cumulative - Through the ages, the people of any given place are able to retain certain features of their culture that are significant in their relationship and interaction with other fellow human beings.

Types of Culture

- a. Material Culture - refers to the concrete and tangible things that a man creates and uses.
 - includes physical objects or artifacts, the things that human beings create by altering the natural environment. Examples of these are dwelling units, clothing, tools, weapons.
- b. Non-material Culture – words people use, habits they follow, ideas, customs, behavior, of any society profess and to which they strive to conform

Components of Culture

- a. Norms
 - Folkways – customary ways.

- Repetitive or the typical habits and patterns of expected behavior followed within a group of community. They are followed until they become self-perpetuating. Examples: taking a bath every day, shaking of hands, not drinking liquor in church, shave armpits
- **Mores** – Are seen as extremely important and are considered vital for the group's welfare and survival. While folkways specify socially correct and proper behavior, mores define what is morally right and morally wrong.
 - Includes standards on sex behavior (ex. pre-marital sex), family relations (ex. monogamy), attitudes toward authority, religion, (ex. suicide, honor killings), etc.
 - As a consequence, violations result in strong disapproval and even severe punishment
- **Laws** – Norms that are enforced formally by a special political organization. They are formalized social norms enacted by people who have been vested through the machinery of the state. Enforcing agencies are the police, courts, etc. Examples: no jaywalking, theft, murder, trespassing, no spitting, no chewing gum
- b. **Values** – Unlike norms which constitute standards for behavior, values represent the standards we use to evaluate the desirability of things. By analyzing the norms of a society, one can determine the basic values of that society.
 - In a study by Jaime Bulatao, these are the values held highly by Filipinos:
 - Emotional closeness and security in the family
 - Authoritative value
 - Economic and social betterment
 - Patience, suffering, endurance
- c. **Language**
- d. **Fashion, fads, craze**

Adaptations of Culture

- a. **Parallelism** - refers to the independent development of a culture characteristic in two widely separated cultures. Ex: dwelling places, weapons/ tools, way of farming, means of transportation
- b. **Diffusion** - is the much more common process of patterns and traits passing back and forth from one culture to another; spreading the cultural patterns and behaviors across a wide area. Ex: food, customs, religious practices, rituals, festivities
- c. **Fission** - is a process that can be traced historically when a long established society breaks up into two or more independent units. Ex: North American Indians, Eskimos, Aetas of Zambales, Igorot of Bontoc
- d. **Convergence** - the fusion of two or more cultures into a new one which is somewhat different from its predecessors. Ex: fusion of the Moorish and Spanish cultures

Modes of Acquiring Culture

- a. **Imitation** - The process of imitation becomes possible because of the examples set by the social environment. And the individual continually undergoes the process of imitation from childhood until adult life. Ex: "ate"/"kuya", mano po
- b. **Indoctrination** - This may take the form of formal teaching or training which may take place anywhere the individuals finds himself interacting with his fellow humans. Ex: SCHOOL- learning formal language, traditional dances, values, religion WORKPLACE- being on time, handling meetings
- c. **Conditioning** - Through the social norms prevailing in one's social and cultural milieu, the individual acquires a certain pattern of beliefs, values, behavior, and actions through the process of conditioning. He acquires behaviors that are rewarded by society than those behaviors that are punished. Ex: high grades/ education, white skin vs dark skin

Functions of Culture

- Culture as a category.
- Culture as a tool in prediction
- Culture serves as a “trademark” that distinguishes one society from another.
- Culture brings together, contains, and interprets the values of a society in a more or less systematic manner.
- Culture provides basis for social solidarity.
- Culture provides a blueprint of social structure.
- Culture is the dominant factor in establishing and molding the social personality.
- Culture provides behavioral patterns.
- Culture provides individuals with the meaning and direction of his existence.

Other Concepts on Culture

■ Subcultures

- Provides a sense of belonging and identity
- Develops unique features (ex. language, way of dressing, etc.)
- Even if they are ridiculed by other groups in society, subculture members know that upon returning to their own group, they will receive the social support and approval they need.
- Special signals such as language, dress, handshake/ gestures, etc.
- The feeling of “us” against “them”

Ex:

Social classes (ex. LGBT, Jeje-mon, etc)

Religion (ex. Mormon, etc)

Occupation (ex. military, lawyers, etc)

Other interests (ex. rock/punk culture, cosplay/otaku, etc)

■ Ethnocentrism vs Cultural Relativism

■ Culture Shock

■ Cultural Lag

■ Cultural Dualism (listen to recording)