

The Concept of Culture in Educational Management

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ABSTRACT: There can be no effective education if it fails to present to those involved in the education process a clear vision of God and life, starting from the aspirations and needs of those in a particular cultural context and depending on them to organize the learning process. Such education, without a prospect based on the teaching of Sacred Scripture and without adaptation to the cultural context, would be a vain attempt and promotion of empty values.

Those involved in Christian education must be prepared to confront contemporary pluralism, to take into account the cultural context and to affirm without reservation the Absolute Truth, which is the Word of God. In order to do this, we need well-trained people, able to understand the current context and willing to engage actively in the formation of tomorrow's generation. To take an attitude of indifference to what is happening in these times means to abandon the mandate that was entrusted by Christ to all who are called Christians (Matt 28: 19-20).

This article will present the role of culture in the management of education, emphasizing the impact it has in the educational process. The experience of the past in education must inspire caution and reserve towards the new theories, thus avoiding the present pedagogical chaos.

KEY WORDS: person, culture, education, value, behavior.

It is known that each person is the bearer of ways of thinking, feeling and manifestations acquired throughout life. All these individual peculiarities come from the social environment in which that person grew and gained life experience. The term defining this aspect is that of culture.

According to Barnouw, “*culture is a whole complex of knowledge, beliefs, art, legislation, morals, customs, and any capacities and skills acquired by a person by identifying him as a member of a particular society*” (Barnouw 1963, 5). The definition presented by UNESCO in 1982 in Mexico, at the World Cultural Policy Conference, highlighted the following:

By culture, we now understand all the distinctive, spiritual, and material, intellectual and emotional traits that characterize a society or a social group. It includes, in addition to art and literature, the modes of living, the fundamental rights of the human being, the systems of values, traditions and beliefs (Weber 2003, 101-102).

E. Schein defines culture as “a set of fundamental norms that a given group has invented, discovered, or built to solve problems of adaptation to its environment and internal integration” (Schein 1983, 13-28). On the other hand, Bouyer defined culture as “the coherent set of common attitudes of employees in the context of their productivity” (Bouyer 1984).

One of the definitions of culture, which is most often referred to in literature, belongs to Hofstede. According to him, “culture is a collective program of the mind that distinguishes members of a group from categories belonging to another group or another category” (Ciascai and Marchiş 2008, 8).

Culture includes significances, values, beliefs, norms, and artifacts. In addition, Liliana Ciascai and Iuliana Marchiş stated: “culture is the core of individual and social identity and is a major component of the reconciliation of group identities in the context of social cohesion. The analysis of culture refers to all the factors that shape the individual modes of thinking, behavior, feeling and action (of individuals as members of society)” (Ciascai and Marchiş 2008, 9).

The term culture is therefore a collective phenomenon that develops over time and implies a fluid past-present-future. It represents “the total knowledge, skills, and common patterns of behavior that they have in common and which the members of a society transmit” (Ralph Linter).

Any effective management must take into account several dimensions of culture, namely:

- Objective culture the totality of cultural values that determine the style of a period
- Institutional culture comprising the State, the Church, the School
- Personal culture is related to the attitude and behavior of each one towards culture

Although defining and understanding culture is important, how it shapes us as people is more important. In this respect, Aurelia Balan stressed that:

The real value of culture is stated in its relationship with civilization, [...] the substance of culture is formed by its spirit, its needs, while the substance of civilization is the matter: the biological and the satisfaction of its requirements and needs [...] The two components of history, culture And civilization, must be constantly in an interaction, similar to that between the soul and the body, to be mutually dependant. [...] The civilized man is indeed the one who is educated, the cult man, self-mastery and noble behavior, a nobility acquired through culture, not only through the simple family descendance, with noble blood (Bălan-Mihailovici 2001, 11).

Regardless of how culture is defined, more specific elements can be identified, as evidenced by the majority of specialists in the field:

- ***Culture is a collective intellectual phenomenon.*** It consists of a set of values, behaviors and symbols that distinguish the members of a group from those of another group. It is acquired through learning and experience and characterizes man as a social being. It is the spiritual reflection of the inter-human relations and of the relations between society and nature. It is transmitted on the background of gradual accumulations from one generation to the next. It changes over time, adapts gradually and continuously, even if the individual or social forces are trying to oppose change.
- ***Culture is influenced by the action of several factors,*** which clearly delimit the spheres of culture:
 - National culture - defined by reference to a determined national space, interacts with regional and subregional cultures, geographically defined, historical, political and economic factors, language and religion
 - Industrial culture - highlights the specificity of a branch or sub-branches, being determined by factors such as the nature of the decision-making process, the technological dynamics, the degree of innovation, etc.
 - Functional culture - it expresses the values of a certain functional splicing within the organizations: production, accounting, marketing, financial, etc.
 - Professional culture - expresses how the person is educated, trained, trained and motivated to achieve a specific work effort
 - Organizational culture - is determined by a system of beliefs and values shared by all members of an organization that is formed within it and guides the behavior of employees

- Culture must be regarded as an integrated one, as a multi-level system.
 - ✦ On a first level are the **symbols**, that is, those expressions, images, objects that have a specific significance for those belonging to a particular culture.
 - ✦ Another level consists of **behavioral norms**, such as address/greeting formulas, ways of achieving interpersonal relationships, traditional habits, rules to be observed in intergenerational relationships.
 - ✦ On a deeper level, the **values**, respectively the knowledge acquired and assumed in a community, are placed on the basis of which the members interpret the reality and define their social behavior.

A successful educational management will therefore also take into account the concept of culture, given the impact it has in the educational process. Christian education must pursue the preparation of man both for this life and for eternal life. To achieve this, the emphasis should not only be on information but also on training. Despite the aggressive invasion of humanistic thinking, Christian education must focus on Christian values based on a living relationship with God, on a biblical view of the world and life, and on living in accordance with Christian principles and values in the current cultural context.

Christian education must be based on well-defined finalities aimed at a well-defined outcome. Depending on these goals, the values to be transmitted will be determined; the most suitable methods, organizational strategies will be chosen to best transmit and receive these values, and the most effective evaluation methods will be chosen to determine the degree of assimilation of these values.

The way people choose to express themselves can, therefore, bear the fingerprint of the culture that determined their education. Personal experiences, the family and collective framework, the culture in which a person develops as an individual, etc., will determine the type of behavior. The complex processes of organizing society in different human communities cannot be understood without taking into account the aspects of cultural integration. The culture of a society is its memory; it constitutes the totality of the values that must be transmitted from generation to generation.

As can be seen, education cannot be dissociated from culture, with human behavior developing and expressing itself in various socio-cultural contexts. In this respect, in order to understand how culture influences the educational process, the similarities and differences existing in intercultural relations must be analyzed and understood starting from the identification of the essential elements, but also from the way of organizing each cultural system.

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