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# A Sociological Analytical Reading Of The Importance Of Educational Institutions In Preserving Cultural Identity

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## **Abstract:**

The aim of this article is to provide a sociological analytical reading of the role of educational institutions in preserving cultural heritage from the changes that our current reality is experiencing. The cultural identity of Algerian society is inherited from the teachings of Islam, passed down through generations via the process of socialization conducted by educational institutions. These institutions play a crucial role in imparting and safeguarding this heritage from extinction. Therefore, through this article, we seek to remind and emphasize the importance of educational institutions and their role in preserving cultural heritage in all its forms.

**Keywords:** Educational institutions, cultural identity.

## **Introduction**

The most significant influence on the socialization of individuals is the family, particularly the parents. During early childhood, before entering school, a child spends most of their time with their parents and more time at home than with peers. Therefore, the attitudes and general home environment shaped by the parents, including what is considered acceptable and unacceptable, have a profound impact on the child's development and adjustment during these formative years. Even in later childhood and adolescence, general parental demands and methods of upbringing provide a greater degree of control over the developing behavior of the individual. Socialization involves the essential processes required for the continuity of civilization, the accumulation of social knowledge, and the transmission of culture and heritage from one generation to the next. Cultural heritage is characterized by diversity across various fields, as it is the product of educational, cultural, and social outcomes at the societal level. For the individual, socialization equips them with the skills and qualities necessary to live within a human community, adapt to its demands, and align with its values. Overall, socialization focuses on the socio-educational aspect of the comprehensive development of individuals.

The elements of the socialization process that shape cultural heritage consist of social motivations and other psychological needs, initiating the socialization process that

culminates in social integration, with vital potentials that allow for socialization and underpin social learning (Al-Shanawi, 2001, p. 20). As for society, the various social pressures exerted by the group on its members to modify behaviors in line with the group's standards, and the social roles that the group requires each individual to perform, are facilitated by social institutions such as the family, school, and peer groups. These institutions contribute to this process by relying on social, cultural, and economic sectors. Through laws, society regulates marriage, divorce, child care, inheritance, rights, and duties, thereby expressing a commitment to the survival and continuity of the family as protected social units. Society evaluates the family as a fundamental unit through education, upbringing, customs, traditions, folk wisdom, and religious teachings, all of which emphasize the role of family life and the importance of adhering to its traditions. Additionally, society provides social solidarity to families through legal and customary support, as social norms advocate for the virtues of family life and dismiss the notion of living in isolation from others (Al-Mouti, 2008, p. 21).

### **1- Objectives of Educational Institutions and Their Role in Preserving Cultural and Social Identity**

Among the most prominent functions and objectives that educational institutions aim to achieve through socialization are as follows:

1. Acquiring the norms, values, and ideals prevalent in one's society, which stem from the goals and cultural system of that society.
2. Regulating behavior and methods of satisfying needs according to societal expectations, such as acquiring language from the family, traditions, and fulfilling natural, social, and psychological desires.
3. Learning the social roles expected based on one's gender, profession, social status, and social class.
4. Acquiring knowledge, values, attitudes, and all behavioral patterns, encompassing ways of interacting and thinking specific to a particular group or society in which an individual lives.
5. Gaining the cultural elements of the group, which become part of one's personal composition, thus highlighting the differences in personality types and individual and social distinctions (Al-Shanawi, 2001, pp. 16-17).
6. Transforming a child from a biological being into a social being, meaning the transition from a dependent child to a self-reliant, mature individual who understands the meaning of responsibility. It is clear from this that socialization works to build an individual's personality that aligns with the values, attitudes, customs, and traditions of their society, meaning that the individual inherits the culture of their society through the socialization process.

Thus, we are discussing the significance of the dual role of the family and educational institutions in socialization, as they are the primary entities with which a child has direct and continuous contact during their early years. These entities shape the child's social and cultural sentiments, and socialize them from birth or, at the latest, from the beginning of the second year. They instill values, customs, traditions, and social behaviors that make other socialization agents secondary and unalterable in shaping the individual's personality. The importance of socialization institutions, represented by the family and the school, lies in their being the fundamental pillars in the upbringing of children. The family, with its members, is the first place where social interaction, practiced by the child from the earliest years, occurs, which subsequently reflects on the child's social development. Following this, the values, traditions, attitudes, and customs that undergo development through the parents find their way to the children in a clear and more personalized manner. Socialization is influenced by various factors within the same society, such as the family's cultural, social, and economic level, the parents' personalities, and other factors that affect the socialization process from one family to another (Al-Nashif, 2007, pp. 58-59).

Therefore, it can be said that the family and educational institutions are the primary transmitters or inheritors of a society's culture to the child. The family provides the seeds and emotions, followed by educational institutions that specialize in forming the attitudes necessary for life in society. The interaction between the family and the child is more intensive and longer in duration than other interactions the child has, making the influence of the family and school on the child during early childhood in the realm of socialization always the strongest compared to other agents, such as peers, teachers, and the media.

From another perspective, we can discuss socialization in the context of the duality of social learning and the process of social education, which transforms an individual from a being into a socially, culturally, and educationally well-adjusted person. In this section, we focused on two essential processes:

#### - **The Social Learning Process**

Some scholars argue that the definition of socialization is limited to social learning. However, despite the significant role that learning plays in socialization, it is broader than being confined to learning processes alone. This is because socialization encompasses many other processes. As evident from its definition, the role of social learning varies from merely imparting to the child the customs and traditions they will need as they grow older, such that their perception of the external world is largely shaped by their understanding of their society. Moreover, socialization processes also involve dealing with other general issues. Therefore, adults must be taught in the same way as children to resolve this conflict. Highlighting the importance of social learning, the scholar Rotter developed a theory emphasizing the study of six needs that can arise from the use of social learning:

1. Positioning the individual in their social place
2. Protecting the individual
3. Enhancing the individual's ability to control more than their potential
4. Independence
5. Emotional attachment, such as love and patriotism
6. Physical comfort (Kamal, 2010, pp. 74, 93)

#### - **The Social Education Process**

As previously mentioned, the socialization process transforms an individual from a mere being into a social person. This process aids in transmitting the culture of the previous generation to the current one, whether through the family, school, or other social institutions. Given the importance of culture in differentiating one society from another, socialization plays a crucial role in preserving the characteristics of each society. Naturally, socialization fails when it is unable to transmit the culture of previous generations to contemporary ones. Elkin and Handel emphasize that achieving appropriate and correct socialization is essential, as biological inheritance is necessary for the learning process. Here, we focus on biological intelligence because its deficiency may hinder or affect the process of interaction and socialization (Al-Khouli, 1993, p. 232).

#### **2- Secondly: The Relationship between Culture and Socialization**

Educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping individuals within a society, but societies differ due to the unique culture of each. Education, in its relationship with cultural reality, serves as an expression and response to it. Culture, in its broadest sense, refers to the complex and interwoven completely that a society has developed to solve its problems while satisfying its needs. Some aspects of culture are material, such as clothing, food, shelter, and the methods of their use, while others are non-material, such as ideas, values, customs, traditions, language, and systems. This concept of culture is what distinguishes human society, as it provides the ability to acquire knowledge, transfer experiences, and develop aspects of life and society in this manner. A society may abandon certain cultural elements deemed unsuitable for continued living, adding new elements better suited to its needs. Indeed, there is no culture without society.

A.K. Ottaway points out that a society's culture during a specific period is determined by the interaction of two types of factors:

- The stage of technological invention and scientific discovery that the society has reached.
- The prevailing goals and values within the society (Dhafar, 2003, pp. 18-19).

W.F. Ogburn considers that cultural lag occurs when values do not respond or interact at the same rate as material changes. He assumes that material change comes first and more rapidly, a perspective aligning with the Marxist view that economic factors determine

social change. Accordingly, the cultural structure includes the generalities, specificities, and cultural variables prevalent in society, such as religion, customs, traditions, language, arts, ways of thinking, means of communication and transportation, and available professions and crafts. These cultural components have a direct and fundamental impact on educational systems. For instance, religious factors play a significant role in determining the content of curricula, removing certain subjects, and shaping educational ethics, including the morals of teachers, students, and educational institutions alike. The influence of religion also manifests in the names of schools and educational institutions and in the domains of various types of schools.

At this point, I must briefly discuss language, which is a crucial factor in shaping cultural identity and in the success and development of the educational system. Language serves as the medium through which information is conveyed to learners and through which various concepts and ideas in the curriculum are expressed. It is the central focus of educational planning and policies. On the other hand, customs and traditions play a prominent role in influencing educational systems. For example, some social norms, such as the prohibition of females leaving the house without a male escort—especially when attending educational institutions—have historically contributed to higher illiteracy rates among women. This is corroborated by Dr. Muhammad Al-Titi. Thus, education performs an essential function in transmitting cultural heritage to subsequent generations, refining, defining, and developing it. A person is born into a natural environment they quickly become familiar with, surrounded by a specific group of individuals—their family and kin. Later, they encounter various customs and are expected to follow carefully selected behaviors to meet their needs and perform certain actions during different occasions. The newborn is not left alone until it is ensured that they have matured, a process known as socialization, through which an individual is transformed from a biological being into a social being. During this process, they learn to interact with their social environment, adopting their family's customs, lifestyle, immediate environment, and society at large (Al-Titi, 2002, p. 186).

Socialization is an integral part of education, involving the family, extended relatives, social environment, and authorities, supported by educational institutions that aim to nurture individuals socially, culturally, morally, and intellectually. Through this socialization process, culture is transmitted to individuals' behaviors, modes of expression, and thinking patterns. Socialization serves as the light that individuals shed on objects and subjects, where culture becomes the insight that enables them to delve deep, analyze facts into their basic components, then reassemble them theoretically, ultimately forming judgments about them (Saeed, 2001, p. 90).

Social culture is inherited from one generation to the next. Therefore, the process of transmitting and developing culture must be a social function carried out by those responsible within educational institutions. It is widely agreed that education, in both its theoretical and practical sense, is the effective tool of culture. Moreover, education has become a well-organized process, evolving into a profession and an ethical human art.

This evolution is due to the fact that the family alone can no longer perform all the educational duties required to bring a person to a level that aligns with the scientific needs and demands of the current era (Saafan, 2001, p. 6).

As is well-known, the school is the official social institution responsible for a set of national strategic duties. Ibrahim Nasser defines the school as an institution founded on human civilization and the idea of comprehensive development, regardless of its specific type or focus (Khassaouna, 2002, pp. 165-167).

The family precedes the school, as the social roles of both the school and the family manifest in the socialization of individuals through education, formation, and instruction. Their relationship should ideally stem from this foundational perspective—the relationship between the family and the school should not remain superficial as it often does today, where the family merely supplies the school with raw material, i.e., the student. Consequently, the entire educational process is placed on the school's shoulders. Instead, this relationship should be comprehensive, based on the idea that both the family and the school are partners in preserving cultural identity. Indeed, they are partners in both success and failure when it occurs. Often, blame and criticism are directed solely at educational institutions, as if society in all its components is free from responsibility for the educational outcomes. Despite the changes that have occurred and continue to occur in families and modern societies, the family remains one of the institutions with profound impact on society. At home, the child learns language and acquires many behaviors, customs, traditions, and values through imitation at first, followed by instruction. The child also learns the distinction between right and wrong.

In our view, the family constitutes the foundational nucleus of an individual's life, with its influence persisting not only until the individual enters school but throughout their entire life. Consequently, school education is an extension of the child's upbringing at home. Several studies have demonstrated the impact of the home environment on the development of a child's behavior, whether cultural or social. Much of an individual's behavior is a reflection of their home life; for instance, the cleanliness of the home is often mirrored in the child's appearance and clothing. Similarly, the way parents communicate, their manner of speech, and the spirit of belonging to a community, as well as the level of sacrifice within the family, all deeply influence the child. Any behavioral dysfunction within the family is often inherited by the child and can become a persistent behavior, especially if the conditions outside the home, such as peer influence, reinforce it. The realities of daily life reveal numerous examples of maladaptive behaviors in children, such as lying, deceit, and the use of foul language, which are often the result of internalizing the behaviors observed within their families, particularly between parents.

Given the significant influence of the home on the individual's socialization, it is incumbent upon schools to understand the home environment of the child to better comprehend the various factors influencing their personality. Schools cannot fully invest in their educational work without the cooperation of parents, who should provide vital information about their child's characteristics and needs. However, this connection is

often absent, with the relationship between educational institutions and families being virtually nonexistent. Families tend not to view educational institutions as public services established for the community's benefit, tasked with forming and educating children, and providing what the family can no longer offer. Thus, it can be said that the school and the family, as socialization institutions, are complementary and play a crucial role in preserving cultural identity. This perspective is supported by numerous researchers previously mentioned, who emphasize that both school and family should be seen as essential tools for transmitting and preserving an individual's cultural identity. Through them, cultural values can be instilled, and society can be developed, thanks to the principles and values inherited by individuals from both the family and the school. Educational reform, therefore, must begin with these two social institutions and proceed in parallel with the societal developments and changes that occur. These institutions are the guarantors of sustainable human development.

According to Dr. Bashir Khalaf, the current state of the Algerian school system is one of chaos, plagued by hasty decisions and annually changing programs without a clear educational philosophy rooted in the collective consensus of the Algerian nation. He argues that education should emerge from the agreed-upon goals and objectives of the nation, with educational leaders serving as implementers of these principles. Contrary to this, the current situation suggests that the Ministry of Education operates as the sole authority determining the educational philosophy for the Algerian nation, a stark contrast to practices in other nations worldwide (Khalaf, 2013, p. 179).

The relationship between educational institutions and the family should be grounded in principles of communication, mutual interaction, and effective partnership, with all resources and means mobilized to support this relationship in practice. It remains the school's responsibility to take the first step towards this openness, striving to involve the family in its work and ensuring their active participation. Moreover, schools must also engage with the broader community by implementing all legislative and legal measures necessary to achieve this openness, a practice that was once in place and proved fruitful.

Accordingly, these institutions, regardless of their types, engage in the process of integrating the individual into the community by instilling its values, customs, behaviors, and perceptions. This process, known as socialization, is of paramount importance to society, as it ensures the continuity of its culture. It is also crucial for the individual, as it enables the fulfillment of both contemporary and social needs. This highlights the significant role these institutions, whether formal or informal, play in the social formation of individuals. Moreover, these institutions enforce social control through various methods, considering that education instills in people the norms of society, thereby imposing adherence to social cultural standards (Sha'irah, 2009, p. 97).

### **3- The Role of Educational Institutions in Transmitting Cultural Heritage to Future Generations**

Socialization is as old as human societies themselves. Every society, since the formation of the family unit, has engaged in the socialization of children, with the primary objective being the upbringing of offspring to ensure their survival in accordance with the norms established by society. These norms were designed to maintain the continuity of their customs, traditions, and ways of life. However, socialization as a subject of academic study with its own principles, methodologies, and systems gained real attention only in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This shift occurred when Park (1939) published his research on socialization, framing it as a reference point for studying society. The sciences contributing to the study of socialization include anthropology, the discipline that examines humans as both natural and social beings. Within anthropology, both cultural and social anthropology focus on the human being as a civilized entity living in a society with a defined culture.

Anthropology places significant emphasis on the study of socialization. Analyses and studies of human culture conducted by anthropologists have demonstrated the impact of cultural factors within a society on individual behavior. As a result, the focus shifted towards educating individuals and socializing them into appropriate behaviors necessary for societal cohesion. Socialization studies have thus relied on the cultural frameworks of the communities to which individuals belong, ensuring they become accepted members of their society. This involves raising individuals according to specific norms and predefined roles, enabling them to interact socially and perform appropriate roles in various social situations.

From the above, it is evident that anthropologists concentrate on aspects of behavior determined by a society's particular culture. They also emphasize the process of social interaction within a specific cultural context to understand human personality and its socialization within that framework (Sharai'ah, 2006, pp. 68-69).

Anthropological interests related to socialization are generally divided into two main areas:

- **Section One:**

The first section focuses on the study of socialization as a means of transmitting and preserving culture, emphasizing the role of socialization in maintaining cultural continuity. This necessitates a focus on the socialization of specific aspects of culture within any given society, or an analysis of the facets of cultural assimilation that underline the process of socialization. Scholars view society and culture as powerful forces that significantly influence individual behavior. One of the key contributors to the study of socialization in the twentieth century was the anthropologist Linton (1943), who made substantial contributions through his studies of various primitive cultures.

- **Section Two:**

The second section emphasizes socialization's impact on human personality, with key contributions from the school of psychology led by Freud. Freud viewed personality



development as a psycho-biological growth process, arguing that the behavioral patterns established in a child during the first five years of life have a profound effect on the individual's personality development in later stages. During childhood, the child remains dependent on others, especially the parents, and this dependency shapes the initial personality structure, which plays a critical role in strengthening the ego and fulfilling its integrative functions (Al-Sharai'ah, 2006, pp. 79-80).

### **Conclusion:**

If the family and educational institutions serve as the individual's reference group, granting them social status, shaping their standards, determining their attitudes, and forming their personality, while also providing numerous economic, educational, psychological, social, physical, and recreational functions, then studying today's children simultaneously entails examining the economic, social, and cultural aspects of their families. These aspects reflect the societal conditions in which they live. Today, society is compelled to explore various methods and approaches to preserve its identity and personality, particularly through educational institutions. The preservation of cultural identity includes the historical and cultural heritage passed down through various means, such as family education, school curricula, literary and artistic heritage in its diverse forms, and the proverbial wisdom expressed in sayings like popular proverbs and maxims, all of which strive to transmit and inherit this heritage from one generation to the next.

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