

CULTURE and its characteristics

Definition, functions, components

Ideational definitions

- *Culture could be defined as the shared experience of a group of people, which is learned through socialization and is transmitted from generation to generation in order to survive and prosper.*

Non-ideational definitions

- *culture is "the total pattern of human behavior and its products embodied in thought, speech, action, and artifacts, and dependent upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations through the use of tools, language, and systems of abstract thought."*

Culture as norms and values

- Norms can be defined as the unwritten expected patterns of behavior. They shape everyone's personality and they ensure stability and harmony in a society.
- values indicate what should or must be done in order to conform to the pattern of life in a given culture

Culture as adaptation

- In order to live man, like all other species, must come to terms with the external world.... Man employs his sense organs, nerves, glands, and muscles in adjusting himself to the external world. But in addition to this he has another means of adjustment and control.... This mechanism is *culture*

Elements of culture

- Government
- Economy and technologies
- Social institutions
- Religion
- Education
- Arts
- Science

Culture

- is a human being's medium; there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture. This means the way we think, the way we express ourselves, we move, we solve our problems, we plan our cities, the way the economic and government systems function -all this is culture.

Two levels in culture

overt and covert, implicit and explicit,
things you talk about and things you do
not talk about.

Beneath the clearly perceived, highly
explicit surface culture, there lies a whole
other world.

Mainstream culture

- A commonly shared system of behavior patterns, symbols, values in a society

Subculture

- subculture encompasses a relatively large number of people and represents experience accumulated by a certain economic or social class, ethnic group, race, age group

Characteristics of culture

- Culture is learned (taught or acquired).
- Cultures and cultural patterns change.
- Culture is a universal fact of human life.
Cultural patterns and themes are related to universal human needs and conditions.

Characteristics of culture

- Cultures provide sets of unique and interrelated selected blueprints for living and accompanying sets of values and beliefs to support these blueprints. These networks provide life support systems for those who interact within them.

Characteristics of culture

- Language and culture are closely related and interactive. Culture is transmitted in great part through language, cultural patterns are, in turn, reflected in language.
- Culture functions as a filtering device between its bearers and the great range of stimuli presented by the environment. This filtering device is both protective and limiting.

Characteristics of culture

- Culture is shared and in effect defines the boundaries of different groups

FUNCTIONS OF CULTURE

- Help human beings adapt to the environment;
- help to produce and distribute goods and services;
- maintain internal order;
- harmonize society;
- provide a set of values and beliefs