



Mini Review

School as a social space construction of self: A sociological study

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Abstract

Schools are not just places where children acquire knowledge and develop skills; they also function as social spaces. Children grow up in a social space that is deeply interconnected with their lives and society. It serves as a hub for the transmission of knowledge and the formation of the self. Schools also play a crucial role as a central gathering point for local communities. Interaction with others within the school contributes to the formulation of "self" and the holistic development of students. It enables the student to go beyond the particularistic values of family/kinship ties and adopt universalistic values without which modern complex society cannot function. Education in these settings is closely linked to the community and its traditions. Sociologists have adopted the cumbersome term "socialisation" to designate the broad process of acquiring knowledge, values and skills through a variety of avenues. Classroom teaching of subject matter is only one of these avenues. This paper analyses how schools are necessary for bringing about social transformation through interaction. This paper investigates how schools function as a social space and the construction of self and social identity. The paper first maps out the kinds of socialisation that occur in schools through cultural integration and practises. It explores the child's construction of knowledge from a socio-cultural context. The present paper uses secondary data for analysis as a mini review on the topic. The researcher suggested that there are two general sources of influence: interaction with socialising agents (teachers, administrators, guidance counsellors, local community members, etc.) and local culture, which improves a sense of identity for students.

Introduction

Human beings live in society. The school is one of the most important institutions within society. It is an institution of society that educates children and serves as a social space where children learn and grow. Within the school environment, children acquire knowledge, develop skills and build values through academic and social interactions. The formal environment of school instils norms and values

in children not only through interaction with others but also through discipline and rituals enacted by teachers. Through school and classroom culture, regular interaction and discussion with peers and teachers, students learn cooperation, communication, participation in social skills, sensitivity and respect towards others. This is essential for an individual to adjust and survive in a society. It is the institution that provides spaces for both formal knowledge and societal rules. The research paper investigates the role

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of school as a social space for child's construction of knowledge and cultural transmission in society. The coordination of the community and parental participation with the surrounding society is also important for their children's learning and development. It helps in the strengthening of not only schools but other institutions as well.

The construction of self is influenced by the involvement of various formal and informal agents that contribute both directly and indirectly to the process of socialisation. Family, peer group, school, media, culture and local community members are the major agencies that shape an individual's socio-cognitive development of this journey. Through regular interactions with teachers and parents gain a better understanding of children's learning progress and the overall functioning of the school. The school's curriculum and pedagogical processes prepare students to become effective, responsible and active members of society. In this context, it is noted that schools play a vital role in fostering children's cognitive, social and emotional development.

Review of Literature

At the core of the social science perspective is the idea that individuals do not live in isolation but within a certain kind of social structure that deeply influences their lives in every possible way. It is through education that human beings take up their character, knowledge and activities. Education takes place not only in schools but also in many places in society. When we talk about the self, we are also commenting on the nature of education at the school level. Where the purpose of education is studied, and social science becomes a medium for the same (Basu, 1952).

The development of the self is a cognitive social process. It involves the socialisation of children and interactions between people. Erikson highlighted that individuals develop psychologically to become active and contributing members of society. He believed that all human beings have the same basic needs and that each society must accommodate those needs. Erikson emphasised that people go through eight life stages between infancy and old age. In the first two stages, an infant must develop a sense of trust rather than a sense of mistrust and a sense of autonomy over shame and doubt. In the child's elementary years, the fourth stage involves achieving a sense of industry rather than feelings of inferiority. In the fifth stage, identity versus role confusion, adolescents consciously attempt to solidify their identity. (Woolfolk, 2006)

From a symbolic interactionist view, the self is born and sustained in everyday exchanges. Meanings do not float in thin air; we negotiate them through gestures, words, and rituals. In schools, Classroom talk, feedback tone, norms for participation, and peer micro-cultures thus become engines of self-making.

George Herbert Mead focused on the self as something that has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of individual social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process. The organized community or social group that gives to the individual his unity of self may be called "the generalized other." The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community. They split the self into the spontaneous "I" and the socially attuned "Me." Schools are training grounds for the "Me": bells, rubrics, and rules induct me into the "generalised other."

The key quality of the self that Mead is concerned with is its ability to be reflexive or self-aware of their positions in society, their histories/origins. The "I" is his action over against that social situation within his own conduct, and it gets into his experience only after he has carried out the act. Both aspects of the "I" and "me" are essential to the self in its full expression. One must take the attitude of the others in a group to belong to a community... On the other hand, the individual is constantly reacting to the social attitudes, and changing in this co-operative process, the very community to which he belongs.

Durkheim emphasised that the school is a place where children of different social backgrounds come to learn about a wider world. It is here that a culture of organic solidarity could be created.

Human beings interact with each other, and individuals act in the social world. Each social field has its own unique set of rules, knowledge and practices (Pathak, 2002). Bourdieu's structuralist approach to the study of culture, continual cultural cycle-produced culture, internalisation through socialisation. Bourdieu has used the concept of habitus to explain how people develop strategies, the social world embedded in people's actions and behaviour that occur through reactions. The habitus, as conditioned bodily reactions in more ways than one, also indicates one's social actions.

Framing of Self and Identity

Children learn the values, norms, and traditions of society through the content of the textbook, curriculum, interaction, communication, and transformation. For example, safety, care and cooperation are central to learning in schools; positive relationships between teachers and students, peer interaction within and outside class and respect for others will enhance students' potential and socio-emotional development. The socio-cultural environment and individual experiences directly and indirectly shape individuals; these practises in school play a major role in shaping the students' awareness towards the roles and responsibilities of society (Aurora, 1970).

Although personality development is a process that continues throughout life, the foundations are laid before the child goes to school. When a child enters school, the educational institution not only separates them from their family members but also provides them with a new social space and new relationships. After the child goes to school, teachers, seniors and other stakeholders may become the model and potent influence upon the development of the child's personality. In this respect, the school plays a significant role in the construction of self-progressive social forces. The bridge between schools and the self is based on these teachers' interaction, scientific knowledge and moral values, which strengthen the ideology of students. The development of values in school has begun with the classroom culture. Furthermore, Interaction with peers at school of the same age group encourages socio-emotional development in children.

The self has been derived from the mind and developed through interaction with others. At school, children interact with peers and others. The experience of a child develops in relation to the individuals who are already within that social process. Self has arisen in the process of playing with peers and engaging in activities within the classroom. The social process performed in school helps students acquire new knowledge that may be used in every situation and action. They are grouped and encouraged to collaborate closely with one another by their peers inside the school.

The child enters primary school with many attitudes and behaviours shaped by interactions with various groups. These groups may be a peer group, a neighbour group, and those with whom they interact inside and outside the classroom. The child, as he/she enters school, is much like a mirror, reflecting and acting out the behaviours that are important in the groups in which he/she functions as a member. Within the school, to meet individual needs, children were grouped according to their interests, abilities, and achievements. With both formal and informal attitudes, the child learns both within and outside the family and school circle.

The self is different from that of a physiological organism proper. Mead has stated that the individual, largely through interaction, becomes aware of himself. It means the individual comes to know about himself by role-playing. (Mead, 2015)

A child grows self-awareness with the development and through social activity and social relationships. The self is related to the mind. An individual's body becomes a self only when the mind has developed. The mind involves with the process of the development of the self. For Mead, the self is far more than an internalization of a component of social process and culture. The process of self-interaction is a social act in which the human actor indicates to himself matters and organises his action through the interpretation

of such matters. Norms and symbols that convey a meaning that a human being can understand and act on. The educational institution seems to be assisting in the creation and development of the self.

At the same time, socialisation also constitutes an important influence on children's emotional development. Socialisation may be defined as a form of learning that occurs in relation to social and cultural elements. It is also the unconscious and deliberate efforts on the part of parents or other members of society to impart to children the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and values nurtured in their respective society or culture.

Identity Formation

Identity is unique and complex. It is the combination of values, traits, actions and experiences of an individual. It defines an individual's sense of self. Children's identity is constructed through peer interaction and any group interactions, which are important for students to frame their identity.

Erikson (1968) has explained how a growing individual's mind fuses all the developments and experiences together in a sense of sameness and continuity. Erikson has stated that at every stage, the ego is strong enough to achieve harmony between the inner processes and the surrounding social situations. A child's life constitutes many experiences. Social institutions like family, school and neighbourhoods are sources of social learning. The manners and attitudes are developed through membership and interaction in various groups.

The educational institution, through the process of schooling, which builds on the idea of the good citizen within an institutional framework. At present, the central function and main concern of the school is the moral upliftment of the students through educational culture and practices. The idea of harmonious and good citizenship is presented and produced. The school timetable and classroom practices seek to inculcate those values among the students. The school provides a social space where different cultures interact and prepares them to foster teamwork, social awareness, civic behaviour and collective responsibility. Through this, students develop their competencies and open new ethical and moral capacities towards a better future.

Participation in classroom activities provides opportunities to expand their social learning. Daily interactions with teachers and peers have a significant impact on students' personalities. The school also offers a special opportunity to participate in the larger community. In addition, conducting classroom activities with a peer group fosters a sense of support, commitment, and responsibility among them. It is most important to identify a peer group that continues to be a vital part of social life.

It is not only limited to different kinds of educational activities but also a space where new relationships of various kinds are constructed, maintained, and interacted with. The new social space exists with the teacher, peers, and other stakeholders from different social backgrounds. Within the school, goals, organisations, curriculum, and textbooks all influence intergroup relations. The cultural viewpoint considers socialisation as a major influence on several aspects of human behaviour. Children are socialised in a manner that they grow up as effective members of their society. It is a universal phenomenon and is also considered a major process of cultural transmission (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981).

Impact of Peers and Teachers' Interaction

A teacher plays a vital role in students' lives. During the Vedic era in ancient Indian civilization. Guru-shishya Parampara (teacher-student tradition) played a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and cultural foundation of Indian society. Students were used to living at Gurukul. Knowledge was acquired orally, and the relationship between the teacher and student was based on trust, respect, mutual care and spiritual direction. Gurukul prepared pupils to be valuable members of society by instilling a strong sense of ethics and values. A student's growth was greatly influenced by the guru-shishya relationship, which was held in the highest regard and ideal of learning. It was beneficial for emotional, social and ethical well-being in addition to academic growth.

As India has developed a strong emphasis on practical knowledge, teacher-student interaction promotes their character development and instils values. In addition to academic knowledge, cultivating a good and supportive relationship is necessary for improving self-confidence among students. Positive teacher-student relationships offer a sense of emotional support, confidence and a positive outlook, shaping the overall development of the child.

A teacher-student relationship in school may provide children with security and enhance their adjustment. This relationship forms a healthy academic environment, interpersonal trust and social adjustment. Students can easily learn new knowledge in a systematic and structured way with the guidance of their teachers. At the same time, it is also important to point out that school is a symbolic place where socialization takes place, and identities are constructed, such as that of an educated person on the path of learning, as well as exploring knowledge that takes place in school. Peer cultures also have consequences for individual relations with the world outside school.

Teacher interaction with students has a positive impact on children's social adjustment, which benefits their emotional development. Classrooms are made up of numerous peers. Social and emotional skills are influenced by the reaction of peers and the nature of interactions and relationships. Social

structure of the classroom, peer support, friendship, and peer relationships occur regularly. Sometimes, families and the classroom do not seek membership, but values are shared, which brings members together a sense of belonging.

Erickson explained pre-adolescence are dominated by work, mastering cognitive and social skills, learning much from peers and may develop close affiliation with them. Erickson further commented close relationship with others is not possible until identity development is complete, because intimacy requires knowing and sharing one's self.

Other psychoanalytic theorists, such as Freud, gave little attention to peer relationships as a significant feature of personality development.

The students must learn the values, beliefs, and behaviour patterns of society. In brief, socialisation is the whole process of transformation that makes the biological organism a social organism. This transmission takes place essentially through formal and informal learning. Learning is a socio-emotional process held in interaction and transmission from one generation to another (Bauer, 1956).

In the modern world, a changing society, the school is not merely a building where socio-cultural skills are inculcated but also where information and technical skills are learnt, and examinations are conducted, students are assessed and evaluated. It focuses on the role of the school and how the content of the curriculum, modes of interaction and communication of the school constitute the individual self.

Cultural Construction

Culture is an abstract concept that is transmitted from generation to generation. The family and school act as agents for transmitting cultural and moral values to children. Culture constitutes a storehouse of thinking, feeling, believing, practising, and engaging with cultural elements at school. A child develops knowledge of culture that, during early childhood, is largely acquired within the family. Parents' behaviour, attitudes, and family norms have a significant influence on young minds. Both family and school share a common purpose: the cultural construction and socialisation of the new generation. Cultural construction is a core concept that shapes human development.

Children continuously learn their culture and culturally relevant values through social institutions. They observe local festival celebrations at school. The school acts as an agent for transmitting cultural and moral values to students. Through the celebration of local festivals at school, children learn cultural and social values that help them adjust effectively within society. These experiences also help them become responsible members of the community and encourage them to respect and preserve their local culture.

Most parents are actively involved in the school's cultural activities.

Culture is an integral part of the collective identity, which serves as the foundation of individual attitude, behaviour, mindset, and social system. Therefore, introducing local cultural heritage to students from an early age, particularly through contextual learning in schools, is considered an effective strategy to foster a sense of pride, appreciation, and active involvement in the preservation of regional culture. On the other hand, arts and cultural festivals like Diwali, Holi, Ganesh Chaturthi, Christmas celebrations and other traditional festivals have proven to be effective spaces to revive the spirit of local cultural identity. This festival is a collaboration between the school, students, parents and local community members, which shows a strong collaborative identity model. Through the festival, children are not only spectators but also active cultural actors, as dancers, musicians, and craftsmen. This kind of approach shows that strengthening identity through performing arts can be a fun and meaningful educational tool. Local culture is an integral part of the community's collective identity, which serves as the foundation for the community's behaviour, mindset, and social system. These cultural practices not only reflect cultural richness but also show how people interact with their surrounding environment, both natural and social. Local culture plays a central role in building community identity, where these values strengthen social bonds and mutual respect among community members. Local community members are actively involved in and provide moral support for the smooth functioning of the school.

In this context, education not only teaches theory but also integrates local values that are relevant to students' lives. Teaching based on local wisdom can introduce students to sustainability and natural resource management concepts that have existed for a long time in the community's cultural practices. This festival is not only a place for cultural preservation but can also be an educational space that involves schools and communities. Therefore, local cultural festivals have great potential to be integrated into the educational curriculum to teach the younger generation about their local values, history, and diversity, which also fosters a sense of pride and active involvement in the preservation of local culture.

Conclusion

Social institutions play a crucial role in the formation of self and identity. Schools provide children with opportunities to explore their roles and responsibilities as responsible members of society. As children become mature, they develop meaningful relationships with their peers and other members of the community, supported by the school environment. In addition, the school atmosphere and curriculum significantly contribute to the Children's overall

growth and the development of their self-identity. Schools can serve as a social space by providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for children. Social institutions, particularly schools where children learn and practice appropriate behaviors, values, attitudes and moral actions, all of which contribute to the construction of their identities. These aspects are developed through group formation, participation and interaction within the school environment. As a social space, the school supports children in developing self-awareness, self-recognition and a sense of identity that prepares them for their future social lives.

Conflict of Interest

Author declares no conflict of interest with the present publication.

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