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## SOCIALIZATION AND EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** Socialization and education are fundamental processes that contribute significantly to an individuals development. With these processes, an individual can easily be included in various social circles and be facilitated in an cultural integration. While an individual may accept certain societal rules, this does not necessarily mean full compliance with them. Socialization is indeed key – without it, society could not thrive and progress. And the critical masure of the success in a society has been education. Education, therefore, can be defined as a specific social process in which young people acquire essential knowledge and skills that serve as a cornerstone in their future role in society. It broadens our mental horizon, it instills maturity and lays down the way to success in life. Education fosters self-respect and earns us respect from others. Last but not least, it teaches us how to navigate the world and understand the expectations of society. As Nelson Mandela said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world!"

**Key words:** socialization, education, individual, society, success.

### Introduction

Human beings are social creatures, born and living among other people. Therefore, it is crucial how one learns to cooperate with others and understands societal rules of behavior. Many educators believe that education is key in shaping a child's personality, but the primary task of education is socialization—preparing individuals for life and action in society by instilling accepted norms and values and understanding public values. Through education, individuals aim to become part of society, actively participate in their development, and enjoy the rights granted by society. Education involves the transfer of knowledge and values, particularly in schools and universities, using methods such as teaching, learning, and discussions. Education plays an essential role in shaping who we want to be today and in the future. It teaches us to communicate with others in ways that are acceptable in our society and helps us develop our personal identity by understanding who we are and where we come from. It provides the tools needed to navigate the complex world of social relations. During education, children interact with peers, visit each other's homes, attend parties, share ideas, learn new concepts, and compete with students from different regions, all of which broaden their horizons. Thus, the role of education is to help us become productive and responsible members of society. In short, education is the essence of humanity. Emile Durkheim points out that education teaches individuals specific skills necessary for their future profession or occupation. This implies that each person should commit to a particular, specialized role, thus socializing in a certain way. On the other hand, individuals are born with innate abilities that develop over time. Intellectual and cognitive development also involves the evolution of one's relationship with the surrounding world, which includes the presence of other people, interactions with them, and accepting specific social roles. As individuals reach adulthood, they must not only develop their thoughts and psychological functions but also establish relationships with their environment. These relationships exist in various settings such as family, school, and peer groups, where children

absorb and process norms and values, adapting them to their individual needs and views. This complex process of social learning forms the basis of socialization, allowing the acquisition of knowledge, values, and social skills necessary for group membership. The term socialization encompasses two aspects: first, the socialization of production means, and second, the preparation of individuals for participation in social and cultural life. Society endures through the transmission of culture to new members. If new generations do not learn the way of life of a society, that society ceases to exist. Everything characteristic of a culture must be conveyed to newcomers to ensure the society's survival. Thus, socialization is the process through which society and culture persist. The main goal of socialization is to adopt behavior characteristic of the culture in which an individual grows and develops. Socialization can be considered a lifelong experience, as individuals go through various experiences and social roles that impact them. The ultimate positive effect of socialization is the formation of a socially mature individual capable of engaging in socially desirable and acceptable behavior, forming healthy relationships and habits with oneself and others. "Everything you learn becomes your wealth, a wealth that cannot be taken from you, whether you learn in a building called school or from the teacher of life. Learning new things is a timeless pleasure and invaluable treasure." – Joybell

### **Socialization – concept and definition**

We have already mentioned that socialization is the process through which we learn to become members of society by internalizing societal norms and values, as well as learning how to perform roles such as worker, citizen, and friend. Today, socialization is understood not to be exclusively tied to childhood, even though its primary agents are the family and school. It continues throughout life. The most general and comprehensive term to denote all processes through which a young human being is introduced to society is socialization. Socialization lasts a lifetime, but the process is most intense during youth. Socialization encompasses all societal influences and those from its units (groups, institutions) on the individual, preparing them to take on social roles and shaping their personality. In these processes, the individual does not merely passively accept and react to these influences but actively and creatively responds and integrates them. For sociology, socialization is significant primarily because it introduces individuals to society, which for functionalists means that they adapt and prepare for roles associated with maturity, though the development, autonomy, and independence are often overlooked. It is well known that human offspring naturally develop within human society. The essence of the human individual is their personality, and their development necessarily involves processes of organic, psychological, and social maturation and change. Society aims to align the integration of new generations into community life with the current organization of social life and its development directions, as well as the laws of individual development. When the significance, strength, and wholeness of the social environment's influence on personality development are emphasized, the focus shifts from development to the socialization of the personality. Socialization of the personality refers to the formation of the personality as a bearer of distinctive traits important for a particular community and its members, as well as the formation of the personality as a universal and comprehensive system of psychological phenomena. Thus, for a culture to endure, it must provide mechanisms through which cultural elements are transmitted from older to younger generations. This process of systematically passing on knowledge and beliefs to the young, while also allowing for their creative and critical assimilation, is called socialization of the personality.

### **Components of socialization**

According to M. Ivković, structurally, socialization can be discussed in terms of four components. First, socialization as cultural assimilation is the process of adopting the entire culture of a social community. This primarily involves adopting the way of life characteristic of a particular community. Through gradual involvement in various aspects of social life, new members of a community come to understand and adopt the beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors that are presented to them or deemed important for effectively addressing personal, group, and societal issues. Second, socialization as education and upbringing refers to the segment of socialization that society organizes and systematizes. Education and upbringing largely occur in specialized institutions known collectively as schools. Through the educational and upbringing process, traits of the personality that are both widely applicable and of significant

instrumental value in social life are developed and nurtured. Schools both educate and nurture. Third, socialization as the development of social identity is the process of integrating personal and social identity and fostering a sense of social belonging. This involves the development of self-awareness and understanding of one's place within the community and represents a crucial component of the socialization process. Fourth, socialization as individuation means that socialization is a process of building self-awareness, personal competencies, and autonomy. Socialization leads to the development and fulfillment of individual differences among community members. In a narrower sense, socialization introduces individuals to social processes and relationships. While this primarily concerns young individuals, the process continues throughout life, although it is most intense during youth. For instance, when a child interacts with peers, establishes various relationships, and engages in play, they learn to adhere to community customs and understand that life in society follows certain rules. Socialization does not occur only in childhood; it is a lifelong process. Whenever an individual joins a new group or adopts a new role in life, we say they need time to adjust, which is also a form of socialization. For example, a freshman needs time to adapt to new conditions and learn the behavioral rules of the university. The same applies to a worker in a new job, a young person in marriage, and so forth.

### **Stages or phases of socialization**

Every individual is born with certain tendencies. However, what they become as they grow, and what qualities they develop, largely depends on their upbringing. Upbringing, in turn, is significantly influenced by the circumstances of their life, the people they encounter, and their relationships with others. According to Sergey Flere, four stages in the process of socialization can be distinguished: primary socialization, secondary socialization, socialization in adolescence, and socialization in adulthood. Primary socialization is the most crucial for individuals and greatly impacts the development of their personality. It occurs during early childhood and within the family. During this period, the individual is entirely dependent on their parents. A child is born as a blank slate and is minimally prepared for life in the external environment. In the family, the child acquires initial knowledge, develops and forms skills, and reacts to parental approval or disapproval. They attempt to follow their parents' examples and learn social life.

As Koceva (2017) notes, "The significance of family socialization lies in the fact that children form their personalities not only through the conscious actions of their parents but also through everyday family life and the context of the environment, adopting what is necessary for them."

Reward and punishment play a significant role as well. Both create new forms of behavior. Secondary socialization occurs primarily under the influence of schools and other institutions within the system. It is a product of society, based on the social division of labor. Attending school promotes the child's intellectual development, particularly learning the language. The school acts as a social community with clearly defined behavior rules. Socialization happens through education and group activities that share fundamental characteristics. In school, a child must be quiet and attentive for longer periods and is not the center of attention, as they are in the family. Socialization in adolescence marks the entry of individuals into the adult world. This stage coincides with puberty and its aftermath. During this age, individuals often look for role models and behavioral patterns, primarily from those connected to their parents. Adolescence is a critical stage for developing emotional balance. During this phase, previously acquired complexes are affirmed, and new ones are formed. Young people start paying attention to social needs, often identifying with social movements and engaging in them. Socialization in adulthood is associated with human maturity. Social maturity is best defined as a state where egotism and egocentrism prevail, but significant dependence on the immediate surroundings is overcome, leading to the development of consistency and moral responsibility. Socialization continues through all social processes and relationships in which the individual participates, such as work, family, leisure, and various other activities in the community. Despite this, socialization is perpetuated through education, which is considered permanent and lifelong.

### **Agents of socialization**

We know that the process of consciously transmitting knowledge and beliefs to the young, while also involving their acceptance, is called socialization. Socialization is said to last a lifetime and involves an intergenerational process. Whenever an individual becomes a member of a new group or takes on a new role, it is said that they need time to adjust (e.g., a freshman student, a worker at a new job, young people in marriage). So who conducts socialization? What are its agents? The agents of socialization are diverse, but the main ones are: the family, the school, various social groups, and mass media. Through the process of socialization, the hidden hand of societal forces beyond our control guides our lives. The main agents of socialization – family, school, peers, media, public opinion, and religion – exert pressure on each of us. However, let's start like this: socialization begins within the family, with the birth of the child. The baby is molded into a member of the family group and is directed towards discovering the secrets of its society. Parents are the first source of love and the first model of behavior. The mother and father teach the child to speak, recognize its needs, and through rewards and punishments, the child is trained to adjust to the expectations of others. American sociologist Kreber noted that "the amount of everything an individual receives from their culture is so great that the individual represents a unique example of their culture." The family determines the kind of person the child will become. Proper development will only occur if the family environment is characterized by harmonious relationships, love, and respect between partners.

"The family environment is the place where a child, especially in the early years of life, acquires primary skills—walking, speaking, thinking. From this perspective, parental involvement in the child's upbringing and creating a pleasant family environment is a fundamental condition for successful social development" (Koceva, 2017).

The individual as a person influences culture, creatively using personal abilities and moral and artistic experiences to find new spaces for personal breakthroughs. The school provides the child with an organized way to acquire knowledge, be educated, socialize, and develop their personality.

"Attending school stimulates the child's intellectual development, particularly through learning and language development. When a child begins school, it has more significant consequences for them because their lifestyle changes. Attending school has significant effects on the child" (Koceva, 2017).

The child notices that things in school are not always said or done the same way as at home. The child's universe expands. Socialization occurs subtly, when there are no noticeable differences between the values and customs present at home and those observed at school. Most children need time to adjust to the change from home to school. For example, a child raised in a highly disciplined and patriarchal family may experience confusion and a sense of inadequacy in a school environment where creativity and freedom of thought are encouraged, and vice versa. Most of the time, children spend outside the home with a peer group consisting of children of similar age and status, who tend to identify with each other. A German proverb says, "If you want to know who you are, ask who your friends are!" Thus, peers become important role models, shaping their behavior and way of thinking. For instance, if Stefan's friends are interested in swimming while he practices basketball, Stefan might lose interest in basketball and start swimming instead. The peer group exerts a strong influence on the child, especially during adolescence. It is not uncommon for a student to achieve poorer results just to avoid being perceived as a teacher's pet or a "nerd" by their peers. Such peer influence can have lasting effects on the child's life, particularly in their professional development. Mass media also have a significant impact on children, especially during the formation of their personality. They are a powerful tool that simultaneously connects people and creates large differences between them. For example, mass media allow widespread advertising of specific products to reach everyone, aiming to standardize tastes and perceptions of what is good and desirable. Mass media sell not only products but also lifestyles. A good example is the Coca-Cola advertisement that ends with the phrase "Life is beautiful."

### **Socialization and individual freedom**

According to contemporary views, the process of socialization also involves individualization, meaning the individual's ability to overcome existing social conditions and change according to their own needs. Humans and their culture are multifacetedly interconnected. An individual can behave passively, as a blind follower of their culture, or as an active creator contributing to its intellectual development. When an individual behaves exclusively passively, they are described as conformist. Conformism is behavior in which an individual adapts in a socially acceptable manner without a critical stance or selection. Specifically, it is behavior where the individual cannot display their individuality or freedom of thought. Such a person does not create problems or unexpected situations for others. They are withdrawn and agreeable to everything and everyone, accepting the prevailing norms of behavior in the community. However, when an individual acts as an active bearer of culture, they are highly creatively engaged. Like the conformist, the active bearer of culture accepts the norms of behavior and existing societal and cultural standards, but they enrich and expand the list of values, creating new and previously unknown aspects for society, even at the risk of conflict with it. Such an individual is called a nonconformist. A culture-bearer is a creator, with their creative abilities evident in all areas of social life (art, sports, science, music, philosophy). These creations may achieve perfection, and they then usually become an integral part of a new culture, with the individual assuming the role of a bearer of that culture. "Only active people, with their struggle and ruthlessness, push life forward, while only passive people, with their patience and kindness, make it possible and bearable." – Ivo Andrić

### **Education – concept and definition**

There are numerous definitions of what education actually represents.

Petrova-Gorgieva (2010) emphasizes that education is an extensive, general pedagogical concept, encompassing all deliberate influences on the individual and representing the acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits, worldviews, and the psychophysical development of the person.

Petrovski (2006) notes that education can also be defined as an activity aimed at developing knowledge, moral values, and understandings required in all areas of life, rather than knowledge and skills related to specific, limited fields of activity.

Zoglev (2002) highlights that the product of education is erudition. Erudition is the collection of what an individual learns from books and other knowledgeable people. In this context, knowledgeable people are those with a higher level of formal education than the individual they influence, by transferring knowledge. Education as a process, in the more advanced sense, is an activity in which educated or specially trained individuals, acting as professionals, convey a certain quantity and quality of knowledge to the individual undergoing this educational process through teaching.

On the other hand, education is also a process through which an individual achieves something with the help of learning. According to the renowned French sociologist Émile Durkheim, education represents the connection between the individual and society. He argues that the primary function of education is to transmit societal norms and values from one generation to the next. For him, society can only survive if there is a sufficient degree of homogeneity among people, achieved through education. Education strengthens the essential characteristics needed for communal life in the child. It represents a collection of what is learned from books and knowledgeable people. Conversely, as previously mentioned, education is also a process in which an individual achieves something with the help of learning. In my opinion, no human being can lead a dignified life without education. Through the knowledge gained from education, we morally improve ourselves. Education and upbringing are the keys to the future perfection of individuals and humanity. We ask, what is the significance of education? What are the foundations of knowledge and education? To be educated, to be knowledgeable in a particular field, helps people think, feel, and act in ways that contribute to their success,

improving not only their personal satisfaction but also their community. Moreover, education develops human personality, thinking, and prepares individuals for life experiences. The foundation of education is acquiring knowledge and information leading to a successful future. Thus, we can identify the goals of education that impact us: firstly, to know how to speak, read, write, be passionate, creative, solve problems, think critically, have moral courage, be good, and behave well. Education is an advantage that helps our people and builds a better society. Therefore, education is an important factor in shaping an individual's personality. Our education begins at a very young age. We first encounter learning through play in kindergarten, then continue in compulsory primary and secondary school, and most people complete higher education. We all know how important education is because our parents constantly tell us that we need to study and achieve excellent grades. Problems arise when young people begin to lose faith in the educational system, as despite their success, they cannot find employment, their efforts are not valued, and they constantly witness various injustices in society. Despite this, the power of education is undeniable, and you can get the most out of it if you truly desire it. Just as for the individual, education is vital for the success of any society. Without order, there will be chaos and anarchy. Therefore, to maintain a rational, peaceful, potentially sustainable society, every member must undergo some form of education.

### **Formal and Informal education**

There are two types of education: formal or institutional, which is conducted through primary and secondary schools and universities in higher education, and informal education, which occurs spontaneously and ranges from self-education by the individual to indirect educational influences from non-educational institutions outside the formal education system. Formal education is implemented according to an education system regulated by legal provisions and sub-legal acts. It consists of a defined curriculum and program. Educational levels are strictly defined, and obtaining a diploma as verification of knowledge confers a corresponding status in the community. Changes occur slowly and sometimes do not meet students' needs. We spend about 16 years of our lives in formal education. Deep down, every good teacher understands the impact and importance of education. It is not just about learning, reading, writing, and solving math problems at school. Formal education is necessary for acquiring knowledge and skills required to become a better person and create a better society. In formal education, the individual enrolls in an institution that nurtures and teaches according to a set of rules and curriculum. Education is standardized and structured. Knowledge gained in formal education builds on previous knowledge obtained from the same source. Informal education focuses on addressing deficiencies. It serves to complement formal education and initiate a process that involves content not covered by the formal level of education (such as courses, skills, practical knowledge, personal development, etc.).

Informal education was defined by UNESCO in 1972 as: "Organized educational activity outside the formal system aimed at meeting the needs of learners and the objectives of learning."

Informal education includes all unofficial learning experiences gained from interactions between parents and their children, between siblings, friends, and neighbors. Essentially, it is learning from society. The socialization of individuals, understood in the broadest sense, provides both types of education—formal and informal. Formal education is completed with the end of a study cycle, but informal education continues throughout life. This continuous learning produces a concept of ongoing learning that integrates practicality and experience, creating a compilation of great and decisive importance. In addition to formal and informal education, there is also informal education. It is defined as unplanned, spontaneous education without any formal characteristics, non-intrusive, without aspects of directed communication, often referred to in everyday jargon as "the school of life." Although it arises spontaneously in the learning system, it fully complements formal and informal education. Without it, navigating the working environment would be challenging.

### **Education theories**

There are several theories about education, but the most significant include: Basil Bernstein's theory, Bowles and Gintis' theory, Ivan Illich's theory, and Michael Young's theory.

Basil Bernstein's theory focuses on distinct linguistic codes. Bernstein argues that children from different social backgrounds develop specific linguistic codes from an early age, which later affect their success in schools. The speech of working-class children, for example, is characterized by a restricted code – meaning is often implied rather than explicitly stated. This restricted code is typical of children from lower-class families who socialize and form groups within their class. In contrast, children from middle-class families develop an elaborated code or style of expression, where the meaning of words can be individualized to address specific situations. Children who master the elaborated code are better equipped to meet the demands of formal higher education compared to those who use the restricted code. Bowles and Gintis' theory concerns schools and industrial capitalism. They observe that education is not a significant factor in achieving economic equality. Contemporary education, therefore, should be understood as a response to the economic needs of industrial capitalism. Schools help prepare future workers with the technical and social knowledge and skills required by enterprises, along with respect for authority and discipline. Ivan Illich's theory addresses the hidden curriculum. Illich is known for his critiques of modern economic development and questions the concept of compulsory education itself. According to him, schools have developed around four main goals: custodial supervision, sorting people according to professional roles, awareness of dominant values, and acquisition of socially accepted skills and knowledge. Much more is taught in schools beyond the formal content of lessons. Lessons are not taught to children explicitly but implicitly through school procedures and its organization. Through this hidden curriculum, children are taught that their role in life is to know their place and remain passive in it. Michael Young's theory deals with knowledge, power, and education. Young argues that those in positions of power will attempt to define what constitutes knowledge. He and his collaborators imply that there is no objective way to assess knowledge or determine whether one form of knowledge is superior or more important than another. If a form of knowledge is considered superior, it is because those in power have defined it as such and imposed their definition on others. Consequently, all knowledge is equally credible.

### **Education in the 21st century**

If we view education as a grand historical experiment, we can confidently say that this experiment has only just begun. Out of 7,000 years of human history, schools have only been established in the last 300 years, and comprehensive education on Earth emerged in the 20th century. Today, a person living in the 21st century can freely acknowledge that they would not be who they are without education on this planet. However, the world is changing rapidly in all spheres of life. Hence, there is a continuous call for education to adapt to the needs of the 21st century. The educational system must continually evolve to meet the new needs of young people so they can face the challenges of the 21st century—the age of digital revolution, which accelerated personal and professional reprogramming processes during the global pandemic. Education should enable young people to acquire functional knowledge that is applicable and to foster a desire for learning, which is easily accessible on social media, where informal education offers countless opportunities, information, guidance, methodologies, techniques, and experiences on how to improve skills, acquire values, and become better and happier both for oneself and for the surrounding environment. Thus, education today represents a significant challenge. If we do not change the way we teach our children, we will face difficulties 30 years from now. The methods we use to teach our children today are based on knowledge from the past 200 years. We cannot teach children to compete with machines—machines are smarter—we must teach them something unique that machines will never be able to match. 21st-century education needs to integrate content that helps young people become active citizens of society, fostering creativity, critical thinking, leadership, a system of volunteering, civic activism, and community involvement. We need an education that teaches not just facts, but thinking, analysis, critical approaches, and finding solutions to problems.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, education is a beacon of light in the darkness. It pulls us out of obscurity and shows us the true path, providing opportunities to illuminate our future. Socialization, on the other hand, should be learned from an early age at home and continued in school. School is the primary institution where socialization takes place. Therefore, a person brings positive changes

to themselves and society through the education they receive at school. Socialization is a process through which a young being, from the earliest days, becomes a member of a social group, adopting the culture (ways of thinking, speaking, feelings, values, knowledge, and beliefs) that the group possesses, which is usually part of a broader cultural area. During the process of socialization, actions are taken to develop the individual's personality and prepare them for assuming roles corresponding to adults. In other words, socialization is a process of transforming a biological being into a person with many characteristics common to all humans, but also with specific traits, and adapting them to life in society. Socialization and education are deeply intertwined processes that collectively shape an individual's development and integration into society. Socialization provides the foundational values, norms, and behaviors necessary for navigating social interactions, while education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in a complex, information-rich world. Together, they facilitate personal growth and prepare individuals for active, informed participation in their communities. A well-rounded approach to both socialization and education ensures that individuals not only achieve academic and professional success but also develop the social competencies essential for effective collaboration and engagement in a diverse society. "He who stops learning grows old, whether at twenty or eighty. He who keeps learning stays young" – Henry Ford. Education is the hope for a good life and is a fundamental right of every person on this planet. To deny this right is evil. As Koković (1994:88-89) aptly points out, education creates and promotes the following myths: "the foundation of educational success is merit; the foundation of reward in occupation is merit; learning is the path to success in the world of work." Education creates the myth that those at the top have reached that status through their own merit, while those at the bottom can only blame themselves for their position. Therefore, the educational system reduces dissatisfaction, which is usually caused by the hierarchy of wealth, power, and prestige.

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