

Values and norms



Values and Norms Culture definition The term culture has come to have several meanings, the concept of which first started around eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. The culture of a particular group of people can be defined in terms of values, norms and folkways.

Values

A value can be defined as an assumption on the basis of which an ethical action is taken. The value can be personal or culture. A set of values that are consistent is called a value system. The various types of values are: ethical/moral, ideological, religious, political, social and aesthetics values.

Norms and folkways

Norms can be defined as the set of behaviors and cues that are acceptable within a society and group. Generally a group defines the rules that will be used for deciding appropriate and inappropriate values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (Changing minds, 2011). These rules become the norms for the common people. Folkways are the set of norms, values and virtues that have not been strictly put into law but are followed out of imitation and mild social pressure.

American cultural elements:

The American society is a multitude of diverse cultures from across the world. As a result, American culture is deeply enriched by the values and norms of different culture. Some of the recognized values of America are:

Individual freedom: The value of free individual leads to a person having control over his/her own destiny. This freedom entails the individual to choose his religion, profession, education in specific and in general the way s/he wants to spend her life.

Privacy: Privacy is another important value that is followed in America.

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People in America don't want anybody else to interfere in their affairs or give advices. People generally want others to mind their own businesses.

Other values prevalent in American culture are self-reliance, equality of opportunity, and competition.

Some of the norms that followed in America are:

Direct eye contact while conversing with others

Facing the door when getting in and stepping onto an elevator

Standing at an appropriate distance from other people in an elevator

Mexican elements:

Some of the elements in the Mexican value system are:

Large families outside the large cosmopolitan cities.

Highest importance of the family in the social structure. Family members

help each other to find jobs, finance houses or make large purchases

The father is considered as the head of the family who is also the chief

decision maker. The authority of mother is considered as secondary to that

of their husband

Machismo or masculinity is expressed in various ways by the male members

of the society

Some of the norms that are followed in Mexico are:

Shaking hands is not done generally by women pat on the right forearm or

the shoulder. Men shake hands up-to a level that they comfortably know

each other after which they will hug each other

While going dining, arrive about 30 minutes late than the scheduled time

Consolidation of differences and similarities

American and Mexican cultures are different in more ways than in the ways

they are similar. While Mexicans put family as the most important thing,

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which is above education and success. Americans consider punctuality as an essential trait whereas Mexicans consider it appropriate to be late to dinners. Another contrasting difference is in the position of the women in the society. While women in America have almost equal decision making powers as their husbands, they play a secondary role in Mexico.

References

Changing Minds. (2011). Social Norms. Retrieved from:
http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/social_norms.htm