

# The agent of socialization theology religion essay



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## **Introduction**

Socialization can be defined in many meaning. According to a study by the department of sociology in University of California, socialization is referred to the learning process by which children and adults learn acceptable behavior from others. Observing or listening to others is also a kind of learning.

Learning is very important in our life because it can shape one's life into desired one or ruin one's life if the learning is unhealthy or not acceptable. A general example for socialization would be language. For instance, we learned Mandarin, English and Bahasa Malaysia from our parents and teachers. Moreover, socialization can be classified into two categories which are natural and planned socialization. First, natural socialization can be referred as the unplanned instruction in group values - spontaneous. In more specific, natural socialization occur when the social world that exist around infants and youngsters are being explore and discover. Natural socialization also known as modeling which means a person choose to imitate and learn the behavior from the person they admire. The natural socialization can be good or bad. One of the bad natural socialization examples is people start to smoking because the people they admire do so. Good natural socialization, for example, people learned to be kindness if the people they admire are

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interested in charity activities. Thus, natural socialization plays a very important role in child development. Next, planned socialization is the planned instruction in group values, which individuals take actions that were designed to train or teach others. These actions typically refer to the old history in which one generation pass to another generation. In addition, these implemented action normally designed to be positive influences a person which involves removing negative influences from the socialization process of a person. For example, parents teach their children to speak in a proper way rather than in a rude way. Furthermore, socialization can be either positive or negative. Positive socialization is encouraging one to change behaviors into socially acceptable one by using rewards. For example, congratulate or reward a student that score first in his grade. For this purpose, this would show the student that he or she can win further reward by studying hard and thus a better behavior. In contrast, negative socialization is the use of punishment on those behaviors that are not acceptable. For example, teachers whip the students when they broke the class window. In addition, a negative social learning experience can make a person negative and unhappy, but positive can make a person happier especially when they learn something that can help them to deal with the challenge of life. Besides, according to a study by Behavioral Sciences Department of Palomar College in California, socialization also can be referred as the process of acquiring culture. Everyone are born without any knowledge of culture and started to learn in the early life. People learn languages and also the role they play in life. For instance, boys learn how to be good brothers, friends and fathers. Therefore, socialization is very important as they can form one's personality. However, there are also some

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difference between common personality due to different group values and growing background. For instance, Dennis (2011) found that " Semai tribesmen in the central Malay Peninsula dislike aggressive and violent people while, the Yanomamo Indians in the border area of Brazil used to train their child to be tough and aggressive since they are young." (D. O'Neil, 2011) Again, as stated on the Sociology 13th Edition by John Macionis, socialization is the complex, all-time enduring social experience by which people develop their human potential and learn patterns of their culture. Human potential refer to the ability every individuals born with. Smelling, looking, tasting, touching, feeling and listening are the examples of human potential. Moreover, different group of individuals learn different patterns of their culture. For example, some people would learn the culture patterns like relieve their worries and difficulties by praying and burning incense if they are Buddhism, whereas some people would learn the culture pattern like pray first before having their meal to gratitude god if they are Christian. In addition, nature and nurture of individuals is strongly connected with their human potential and pattern of culture to be learned. Nature is referred to the roles, skills and genetics characteristics that pass from one generation to next. In short, nature is the heredity and genetics. For example, if the children's parents have high intelligent (human potential), their children also probably have high intelligent. Thus, nature is strongly related and it determines our human potentials. On the other hand, nurture is the surrounding factors that influence individuals through interaction to the world and societies. It also referred to the behavior or patterns of culture that individual to be learned. It is not the behavior that born with. For example, Christian's culture learns to pray before having their meals.

Therefore, learn pattern of culture are related to the nurture. In summary, both nature and nurture are very important and strongly related to socialization. However, based on sociological perspective, nurture matters more because it has more influence on individual's personality and behaviors. In the socialization process, agent of socialization plays a very important role. Agent of socialization is referred to the individuals or institutions that influence emotion, attitudes, behaviors and self-concepts of individuals. They are the sources for people to learn about society, culture, and themselves. They also responsible in educate individuals about the societies, norms and values which will also enable the societies function smoothly. Examples of people who serve as agent of socializing are family members, teachers, friends, neighbors, idols, politicians, business leaders, and many more. Agent of socialization is classified into four main categories, which are the family, schools, peer group, and mass media. Most of the people begin their socialization with the family. Family teaches individuals language, rules, roles, morals, interactions, behaviors and many more. Therefore, family is the most important agent in socialization and people believed that loving happy families can turn out a happy and positive child. On the other hand, everyone spend a lot of times at school and it is the first gate for child expose the social world. School teaches people rules, social settings, and values. It also provides skills and a lot of information for them to understand themselves and others. Peer groups are a group of individuals that have common interests, social position and age. At here, children know how to build relationships without the supervision of adults. They also willing to change their personalities in order to be accept by other peers. It has great influences on individuals especially in a rapidly changing society

nowadays. Because of generation gap, the attitudes and behaviors of youngster and senior are different. Lastly, mass media represent the impersonal communication and have the strongest influences against people. It can influence one's behaviors through imitating and modeling. Examples for mass media are newspaper, magazines, radio, internet, and television program. Among these four agents of socialization, the family and peer groups are most important in one's life.

## **Family**

Family group is no doubt the most important agent of socialization for most individuals. Socialization process starts when a family is raising and provides education to the child, such as father playing the role of raising his child, and mother teaching her child about manners and morality. Thus family group has become the first social institution for an individual, it shapes an individual's mind and personality. In addition, family helps new born individuals to learn their culture and develop their social identity. Different cultural education seems to be directly related to the standards of discipline taught to a child. For example in western society, research has shown that the first-born child tend to receive stricter discipline and higher expectation on achievers, while child born last seems to be raised with more relaxed standards of discipline (Christine M. , 2011). According to the order of children born, they will receive different educations and standards of discipline, thus a child born first or later will be influenced diversely by their family group. The family socialization could be explained more understandingly by quoting the Erikson's stages of development. In each stage of growing, there are influences of agents of socialization who have an

impact on the child (A. Driscoll & N. G. Nagel, 2008). As the child who is growing and adapting to the psychosocial development, family's capacity for influences could become stronger or weaker. Thus, the family group is the most important agent early in the child's development where a child start to develop the trust, independence, the sense of competence and ambition, relationships with others, decisions about future generations and also the reflections on one's life (A. Driscoll & N. G. Nagel, 2008). Basically, a family group is made up of parents, brothers or sisters. In the socialization process, a child who born as the eldest tend to be more responsible and mature, while who born last will be more pampered. Parents are playing a very important role as an agent of socialization in a family. They are occurred in the first sight of their children when the children were been born as a baby and open the eyes. Thus, parents' attitude and personality will directly influence their child as they are set to become their child's role model in anytime. According to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, children inherit their habits such as manners, vocabulary, speech patterns, accents, and body behavior from their family (Christine M. , 2011). However, a child's life-chances are affected by their family's position in the social structure and never be equal since born. Different forms of capital are transmitted to a child from their parents such as the economic capital (money), cultural capital (parent's education level) and social capital which are the social network connections that parents have access (Christine M. , 2011). In the growing process of children in a family, they tend to think that what their parents and siblings do must be correct and their own selves are allowed to do so. Thus, parents and siblings in a family are having significant influences to an individual's attitudes, beliefs and also values. For example, a child will

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mirror his father's violence behavior because he thinks that is the correct way to handle everything with violence. As chip off the old block, the child will be doing the same thing to his own children in the future too. Besides that, when parents could not have their words to the children oftentimes, the latter will not keep the promise when they grow up as they think it is not necessary to do so. In addition, the family bond will not be strong without the word trust on one another. Furthermore, a rich family and a poor family are also playing a different role as the agent of socialization to their children. Not to discuss about love here as every families love their members each others for sure, but the educations, attitudes, beliefs and values of a rich family and poor family delivers to their children are totally different. In a rich family, parents buy or give what their children want to them without any condition. This cause their children become less independent as they will not pay effort to get anything they want while they just need to call ' daddy' or ' mummy' for everything. In contrast, poor family children tend to be more independent as they pay effort to work for getting what they desire. Furthermore, children who born in a rich family have high desires on things they like, they do not feel enough as their parents keep giving them what they want, they just desire to demand more. Inversely, children who born in a poor family, their desires are easily fulfilled as they pay effort to get the thing they like, and they get the achievability and appreciate what they have. There is a real-life example of my friend, who named Shawn. He born in a rich family and he did really get what he wanted from his parents always. While his father work as a businessman who always went outstation and his mother are working too, his parents do not have enough time to interact with him. He then always thinks that it is merited for his parents to give him what he wants, thus he

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had become least independent. Time after time, he had become as what the Chinese said " a fly on the wheel", he always shows off what he had among his friend. As a result, his friend group becomes lesser and lesser. In summary, this shown that how important is the interaction between parents with their children. Single parented children tend to be more independent. Although they do not have the advantages from both parents such as education and resources capital, but they are trained to be more respect and filial towards their single parent and work hard to get what they desire. There is one of my friends who named David. He does not have a father since he is born to this world with his twin sister. They were grown up independently by his mother. When he was a child, his mother educate him with patient and love, thus he sincerely respect and love his mother. In the years he is growing, he found that he is different from his peers as he doesn't have a father like his friends do. Due to some reasons that his mother do not tell him what happened to his dad or where has he been. However, his mother's love to him and his sister is felt equally like two parents. Thus, he do not ask his mother about his father, do not blame his mother, and love his mother with twice a child do. Although he is single parented, he do not feel inferiority, he ever feel that he is the luckiest son in this world to have such a good mother and sister. Unfortunately, his sister had passed away in the age of thirteen due to dengue. That year is his saddest moment as he lost his beloved sister. In the moment, his mother hides her sadness to console him and give him her shoulder. After that period, David has become very independent and hardworking to earn money. These are all to provide his mother a most comfortable and happiness life and not to let her mother to face any sadness again. Thus,

most single parented children would be more independent than two parented children. Fortunately, I am born in a blessed family with both my parents and two brothers. My father work as a businessman and my mother is a housewife, while one of my brothers is working and another one is studying. I am the second son of my parents. When I was a child, I used to be pampered by my parents and do not have the heart to study well. As a small businessman, my father income was not stable, but he was still willing to buy me what I wanted. At that age, I was thinking that it is merited for my father to do so. Moreover, I do not pay effort on my school work as I only keep playing games. I remember there was one day, my father talked with me about his past experiences. When he was a kid, his father (my grandfather) worked for few jobs to carry the whole family. In that period, they did not ever have three meals for one day. My grandfather had worked beyond the measure during that time, but my father resolved the hard life by studying. This past experience of my father influences my orientation of life. Therefore, I started to pay attention to my school work and study hard so that I help provide my father a better life in the future. My mother is a kind and lovely person as she did not mad on us even though we did something really wrong. She taught us patiently about manners and morality, to train us to become good-mannered and honest people. Besides, I was taught by my parents about the ways to communicate and socialize with others. As a housewife, my mother manages all the housework without complaining a single word. When I was still a spoilt child, I always think that managing the housework is my mother's vocation. I did not clean my house even if my room is very messy. One time, I asked my mother not to clean and arrange my room because it's more convenience for me as I know where is my things

at. Until one day, I could not find my wallet which buried by the "garbage" in my room and I am forced to clean and arrange the room myself. When I was arranging my room, I stepped on a pen and felt down and broke my arm. That day I was sent to hospital and felt regret. I reflected that my mother always wanted to clean and arrange my room is for my own good, and it is not an easy job. Began from that day, I started to appreciate what my mother did for me every day and become a more discipline person as I clean and arrange my room oftentimes. Moreover, my elder brother was the one who always protected me when I was bullied by others, I am very proud to have a good brother like him in my family. Also, he always work hard and pay extra living costs to parents to helps reduces our family burdens. He knows how hard our parents worked to raise us to become what we are now. He is a very responsible person and always be a role model for me to become an elder brother. What my elder brother did had influenced me to become responsible brother to my little brother as I learned the elder one should taking care the young one or parents. Besides, there is a fine influence from my younger brother too. Although he is the youngest member in our family, he does think in a mature way too. That is, he did not complain and blame parents about what he did not get upon requested. He understands parents stress and burdens of the family are not light at all. My younger brother taught me to be content with one's lot. As people always say, enough is as good as a feast, so we must appreciate what we having now. Time after time, I am growing up with my parents' effort. I really appreciate and felt gratitude to my parents and my brothers as they are the important people who had give me a true and clear direction in my life. I

firmly believe that my family members are the people who will accompany me until the last day of this world.

## **Peer**

What is peer? It refers to people who group together in similar age and social status as well as sharing the common interests within the groups. According to Open Stax College, in the earliest years of one's life, peer group are act as their agent of socialization. For instance, there would be a person from the peer group who acts as a leader to teach other children the rules of the games. Day after day, once we growth up as a teenager, peer groups would become very important to us as in accompany us on the growing road, giving us a fresh mind when we are in troubles, direct us to a better way for our future and etc. Besides that, like what the people always mentioned that at home we might able to depend on our parents, however when we are out of the house, somehow we might need to depend on our peer groups.

Therefore, peer groups are somehow become very important when we are in trouble outside of our home, in fact the peer would give us some support on the issues that we are facing. By right, peer helps us to learn the value from them and we learn various types of culture, habits, language, way of living, and way of thinking. Nowadays, it is more and more dominant on the behaviour that influence by the peer. When a peer group was formed quite a time, children among the group would start to exchange their feelings or attitudes within their group. By right, sometimes there would be someone would have a different ideas among the other people, it is where they could easily exchange the ideas and would have make the other have a different perspective. Somehow, the ideas that share by others might not perfectly

works on each others, yet it would hold most of the same attitudes and beliefs. One of the main influenced by the peer group would be the development of socialization skills. For example, when we group with the people who always use English as the communication language, sooner or later we would able learnt up the slang or the styles of how they use English to communicate with people. By right, we would also able to gain some confidence within the group and it helps us to have a better confident to socialize with people, in the other words it help us to improve our socializing skills. Besides of communication technique, peer group would also affect our outward appearance such as how we dressed up ourselves, what we would choose to eat, and etc. Peer group also plays an important role for every individual to learn and to have a different view of themselves from the other peers. With the comments or feedback giving back from the peers, it allowed individual to make changes of them where they think they have to change. With the changes they made, it help them to build more confidence and acceptable by the social. Peer group is the major agent of socializations which able to influence our attitudes, beliefs, values, and also orientations of life. When ones belief in what they can achieve and put in a hard effort, probably they can make a change for themselves in their daily life. One of my friends, she was married with Dato in her very young age. Both of them love each other a lot. Let's imagine if you married with a well-known person, how is your life going to be? It must be glorious and unexpected life. They live happily ever after in a fancy and huge house. Both of them enjoy their life like no one experience it before. They went to Europe for their honeymoon. And they almost visited more than half countries around the world. He treated her as his princess, while she possessed whatever she

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wanted to. Marry delivered a baby prince as all of her family members treated her in an even better way. As she thought everything was in her control, actually it is the beginning of her nightmare. Marry realised and found out that her husband having affair with another girl. This turned her life into a miserable situation. She tried as hard as she could to overcome her marriage problem. But she failed to maintain their relationship. Marry ended up with divorce finally. With the addressed of " Datin" for her entire life time, and suddenly she lost all her pride, her self-esteem that she owned in just one night. As what we said, smart people do make mistakes at times. Marry being expelled by her husband. From a grand house, she being forced to move into a small room which only able for her to make a slight turn. She lost her beloved son who being brain washed by her mother in law. For now, the only one that she can believe is herself. She is nobody at the moment. But what she did is she trusts herself that she can do it. Marry beliefs that whatever she paid out for now are worth for her to gain anything in return. And finally, she became an owner of two kindergartens even though she is young. She worked hard to achieve her fortune and never give up. The first step is always the hardest. But as you believe that you can do it, you definitely can obtain with no doubt. As we said, " If you want something, you'll do absolutely anything to obtain it. But if you don't want something, you'll give a thousand excuses to refrain from it." Marry's story influence how the way I think. She let me know that as long as we trust ourselves and we didn't give up by keep on trying, we will able to make the impossible to become possible. On the other hand, peer group make lot of influences in my personal orientation of life. In high school I have one friend, she was my good friend. We were in the same class for 3 years in high school. We

became very close because we have same interest about music. After finished our high school, she decide to study psychology in another city. At the same time I decide to study pharmacy in my hometown and it make me and she cannot meet. She really loves her choice as a psychologist. I had a different condition; I feel my decision to choose pharmacy is not right. I decide to withdraw from the university. I feel depressed because at that time I was confused and I don't know what should I choose and I don't want to do nothing at home, I must get any education. I told her about all what I felt, during her holiday she spend time to be with me because she knows that I had a bad condition when I feel don't know what should I do. We shared a lot of thing once we met. She told me how she really dreamed to be a psychologist. But I saw something different from her, she looks thin and weak and I became concern, I asked her and surprisingly she gave me unpredictable answer, she said she got leukaemia since 1 year ago and she hid it from me and her purpose came back to hometown is for her to spending time with all her friends and families and she said she knew that she will never can reach all her dream as a psychologist. 4 month after she confessed that she got leukaemia, she passed away. I was so sad. I will never have a friend as good as her. How she was fighting to reach her dreams while she also needed to fight from her leukemia made me think to "continue" her steps to become a psychologist. After 3 months she left me, I decided to really continue her step and decided to study a psychology. And now is my third year studying psychologist and I know that was my right decision. Also, one of my friends had influenced me to believe that we can overturn our weakness if we work hard on something. Belief is something that individuals believe in and accept as true. It gives a person confidence

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and hope to cope with challenges. During primary school, there is a friend of mine always have poor academic performance and nearly failed his studies for a few times. He wishes to score straight A in the UPSR exam but everyone shows ridicule and laughing at him. He work hard and finally scored the result he wishes for. That time onwards, he strongly influences my belief that work hard on something we will get what we expect to return. Just like a proverb by famous poet Li Bai in ancient China, " if work hard enough, you able to grind an iron rod into needle." In my peer group, a friend of me who named Phillip do not as fortunate as us, he lives in a poor family. Nevertheless, he does not waste any food all the time as he knows every pierces of food has its own value. He always felt content with what he had. However, another friend of me-Chester is living in a better circumstance, but he does not feel arrogant. He always share his foods with Phillip as he know he could not finish his food by himself and do not want to waste. Phillip and Chester had influence my sense of value, they taught me not to waste and appreciate what we are having with us now while Chester taught me all about sharing is caring.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, family is the first agent of socialization in most of the people's socialization process which the family is affecting you first before anything thing else. That is, when we still are children, we interpret ourselves as well as the society through our eyes and understanding from what our family members such as parent, elder brother and sister doing. Thus, family can be say as act as an aid that helps a child to fit into the social culture. In order to help a child to fit into a healthy social culture, family should act as a good



aid. Good aid, for example, may involve good image and attitude. For instance, father must be responsible and mother must be caring. However, as a responsible and caring parent is not enough, some unhealthy behavior must also avoid from the children. For example, when you addicted to smoke but you must not smoke within the sign of the children. Also, if you really enjoy in driving car fast, but you must control yourself when your children are inside the car. By doing all of this, not only allow the children to develop better behaviors but also have a safety and healthy life in the future.

Children are also likely to influence by their peers. The influences can be positive or negative, but in the socialization or developing process children are still unable determine what is the positive or negative influences. In order to help the children towards to positive influences, proactive action on children's friendship must be taken by parents during early childhood in which creating a good foundation to assist the children making good choices. For example, parents can teach their children what is a good friend means by providing the criteria such as honesty, caring, sharing and kindness. In addition, if the parents found that their children having negative friends, the parents must immediately setting limits for their children before the children are being influenced.