

Basic social learning concepts sociology essay

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This chapter will discuss the basic theories and concepts used to analyze this study elaborately and that would be used frequently in the analysis afterwards. This study consists of some basic theories and concepts. This chapter is consist of two portions. In the first portion that is theoretical framework, theory of masculinities, social learning theory, socialization theory etc. are discussed and later in the conceptual framework portion motherhood concept is discussed.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura (1977) has proposed the social learning theory which has become possibly the most significant theory of learning and development. In social learning theory Albert Bandura (1977) states behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. In society children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, characters on children's TV, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models provide examples of masculine and feminine behavior to observe and imitate.

Theory of Socialization

Socialization is one of the most important social processes in every human society. Without socialization the human beings would not be able to participate on group life and develop the human characteristics. The process through which an infant internalizes the values and norms into his self or the made of learning to live in society, is called the process of socialization. The important outcome of the socialization is the individual personality, personality refers to the fairly stable patterns of thought, feeling and action <https://assignbuster.com/basic-social-learning-concepts-sociology-essay/>

and action characteristic of human beings. The core of personality is the 'self' which is a person's personal identity which he experiences consciously as distinct from other people and things. How does the 'self' is formed in the childhood and how it gets molded throughout life is, has intrigued the sociologists, psychologists and social psychologists. The prominent theories of socialization are formulated by Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead and Sigmund Freud. Mead and Cooley emphasized the social side of socialization, whereas Freud stressed the relationship between biological side of humans and their social environment. Through diagnosis of disturbed female patients, Freud concluded that much human behavior is due to unconscious motivation. We are often unaware of the real reason for our actions. The influence of early childhood experiences are fundamental for personality development. It is experiences within the family in the first few years of life, Freud contends, which largely shape our future psychological and social functioning. According to Freud, society prohibits us from expressing certain instincts and desires, especially impulses related to sex and aggression, social order would be impossible without the regulation of these drives. Hence society imposes its will on the individual, suppressing and channeling the drives for socially acceptable outlets but often doing so in ways that lead to later neuroses and personality disturbances. Freud lays heavy emphasis on the social control of the sex drive. This drive present even in infants leads to constant conflict between individual and society.

Theory of Masculinities

Raewyn Connell's theory of masculinity is the most influential theory in the field of men and masculinities. In its simplest sense masculinity is

understood as 'attributes of man'. It's easily understandable that 'attributes' that are associated with 'man' can never be the same in all cultures and during all times (Imtiaz, 2009). It is difficult to give a comprehensive definition of masculinity as it is not a single but admits of unlimited variation. There is no fixed type of masculinity. It changes due to the change in gender relation. Masculinity is a kind of domination and oppression based on gender, class, race, religion, ethnicity etc. Such domination and exploitation can occur between men and women, women and women and also among men. The overarching structural productions of the dominant form of masculinity not only invoke them to be engage in violent behavior but also diminish the positive social values (like modesty, sympathy, patience etc.) which they consider as feminine (Imtiaz, 2009). R. W. Connell (1995) states that-' Masculinity' is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience. Essentialist definitions pick a feature that defines masculinity (risk-taking, aggression, responsibility, irresponsibility, and more) and describe men's lives according to it.

Hegemonic masculinity

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was first proposed in reports from a field study of social inequality in Australian high schools (Kessler et al., 1982); in a related conceptual discussion of the making of masculinities and the experience of men's bodies (Connell, 1983); and in a debate over the role of men in Australian labor politics (Connell, 1982). Hegemony is a process by which one group claims leading position in social life and

maintains and sustains that power (Islam, 2008)." Hegemony always refers to a historical situation, a set of circumstances in which power is won and held. The construction of hegemony is not a matter of pushing and pulling between ready-formed groupings, but is partly a matter of the formation of those grouping. To understand the different kind of masculinity demands, above all, an examination of the practices in which hegemony is constructed and contested –in short, the political techniques of the patriarchal social order. (Connell, 1987: 181)" Masculinity has many faces. Hegemonic masculinity is something that boys and men perceive and attain through a series of practices and applications. Hegemonic masculinity helps to attain certain dynamics in gender relation. It recognizes male power as structural which is closely connected with patriarchy. This practice is performed by the society through its institutions. " As power practices are inherent in the gender disparities which are very much based on class race, ethnicity, religion etc, there are always the possibilities of exploitations not only between men and women but also among men." (Imtiaz, 2009)According to R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt (2005), hegemonic masculinities refer to the thinking about men, gender, and social hierarchy. It has provided a link between the growing research fields of men's studies (also known as masculinity studies and critical studies of men), popular anxieties about men and boys, feminist accounts of patriarchy, and sociological models of gender. Hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practice (i. e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The most important feature of this hegemonic masculinity, alongside its connection with dominance, is that it is heterosexual (Connell 1987).

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Conceptual Framework

Concept of Motherhood

Motherhood is the state of being a mother. According to Bhasin and Khan (1986), " Motherhood does not mean physically giving birth to a child. It means looking after, nurturing and caring for another human being. It means helping another person develop physically, emotionally and mentally".

Mothers have historically fulfilled the primary role for raising of children. The title " mother" is often given to a woman other than biological parent, if it is she who fulfills this role. Nancy Chodorow (1978) in her writing "

reproduction of mothering", argues that the mother is the central element of differential identity formation. She has presented the term " reproduction of

mothering" to describe the process of sexual division of labor. She believes that, this division encourages mainly woman to be a mother and has

psychological effects on the development of boys and girls. Female

parenting develops relational capacities in girls by internalizing the role of caring and reproducing their mothers. While, boys learn to reject the female

aspects of nurturing and empathy. Women's mothering produces

asymmetries in relational experiences of girls and boys. Chodorow perceive

this as the course of social consequence of male domination. Adrienne Rich

(1976) in her writing " Of Women Born" claimed that motherhood as is a

social institution. She believes that this institution creates a dangerous split between private and public life. According to Rich, the power of motherhood

has two aspects. First, the biological potential to care or nourish human life

and second, the magical power invested by men in women in the form of

Goddess-worship or the fear of being controlled by women.

Basic Social Learning Concepts

There are three core concepts at the heart of social learning theory. First is the idea that people can learn through observation. Next is the idea that internal mental states are an essential part of this process. Finally, this theory recognizes that just because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in a change in behavior. In his famous "Bobo doll" studies, Bandura (1977) demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. The children in Bandura's studies observed an adult acting violently toward a Bobo doll. When the children were later allowed to play in a room with the Bobo doll, they began to imitate the aggressive actions they had previously observed. Bandura identified three basic models of observational learning: A live model, which involves an actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behavior. A verbal instructional model, which involves descriptions and explanations of a behavior. A symbolic model, which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books, films, television programs, or online media.

Linkage of socialization and masculinity

The socialization process of a boy teaches him to attain the traditional masculine attributes and exercise those in real life to become a "man". With their traditional perception and behavior they become dominant, violent, patriarch and masculine. The social construction of masculinity is an embodiment of social pressure and cultural norm that determine the gender roles, gender relations, responsibility and also rights. The social institutions like family, education, religion, culture, media etc. are helping in the socialization process of a boy to act like a hegemonic masculine man. The

masculine values and practices derived from socialization shape power relation not only between men and women but also among men and among women.

Social learning and masculinity

People learn appropriate appearance; behavior that shapes their gender identity emerging from modeling same-sex parents, peers etc. Like many other social behaviors expected from men the hegemonic masculine attributes are also imposed upon men by society. Society sets some particular attributes and qualities for men to achieve in order to become a real man. The ideologies and code of conduct for men are both learned and imitated by men from their role models. Here, social learning process plays the most significant role in constructing masculinities among young men in a society.

Motherhood and Masculinity

In the first phase of a man's socialization, mother plays a very important role. Male infants always attached more with their mother rather than their father. According to Freud, both male and female infants are attached to the mother whom they perceive as all powerful. Mostly fathers work outside of the home as an earning person. In the circumstances of the father's absence, it falls to the mother to bring up the children and to make the son into a man like his father. In order to develop the son into a man like the father, mother coerced the son to give up the mother as an emotional object and to become something other than feminine by rejecting femininity (Islam, 2008). A mother gives greater emphasis on the masculinity of the son in

opposition to herself. It is the mother who primarily give shape the masculinity of the son.