Socio-cultural psychology research paper example

Sociology, Social Issues

Socio-cultural psychology

A new thinking about the culture and society started to develop among a number of psychologists in the 1980s. Most of these psychologists, who were analyzing cognition and development in non-Western societies, discovered that what they saw could not be explained by the assumptions of traditional psychology. Therefore, they came up with a new approach, socio-cultural approach, to address this discrepancy. Hence, socio-cultural approach is a new segment of psychology. It is an amalgamation of psychology and sociology, in the study of the consequence of social conditions from the perspective of the society as a whole as well as its impact on human behavior formation, Lalwani (2011). Of importance in this case is the cognitive aspect of the nature of human in relation to the society, as well as how social situations influence human behavior.

The central point of socio-cultural psychology is how our interactions with other members of the society influence how we make decisions and our perceptions besides its influence on our thinking. From the perspective of psychologists, childhood acts as the foundation of our socio-cultural thought process, which gains impetus as we grow. They also argue that, cultural facet of society as well as the social norms determines the way we perceive situations, individuals and our personality at large, Cherry (2010). One the crucial concepts in socio-cultural psychology, is selective perception. This can be defined as likely results of interactions of human with the society entirely, and the effects of these interactions on the behavior of the child. Perhaps, an illustration on this concept can indicate how study on socio-cultural psychology can be undertaken and understood. For a long time now

there has been some kind unfairness among the Caucasians and African Americans. A child born in a family which believes in this unfairness and observes racism is likely to acquire the same attitudes towards the opposite race, Cherry (2010). From the socio-cultural psychology point of view, this is basically because the thoughts and beliefs of the child have been developed and based in an unfairness manner right from the start. Unless exposed to a different environment, the child will continue perceiving the other race as does the family.

According to Lev Vygotsky, one of the famous socio-cultural psychologists, there are three major ways in which an individual can be affected from a socio-cultural point of view, starting from childhood. A child may learn through imitation; where a child imitates those who he/she admires most or exposed most to. The child may also learn by following instructions, or what he/she has been told is wrong or right; and this is what molds the behavior of the child. Lastly, a child may learn by joining a group which tries to understand each other and live in agreement, or try to discover what defines their group, (Martin, 2008).

Finally, it is of importance to distinguish socio-cultural psychology from sociology because many people tend to confuse between the two. While socio-cultural psychology focuses on the influences of culture and societal norms on the behavior of individuals, sociology focuses on culture and its impacts on the society entirely at the universal level. Socio-cultural psychology emerged when psychologists started observing human behavior from a different perspective, with regard to compliance in society.

Consequently, socio-cultural psychology is a new field which is evolving but yet to be fully explored, (Rosa and Valsner, 2007).

References

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