

Functionalist perspective on education



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Functionalists, use education as part of their observations, as a whole of society. Functionalist perspective, looks at structural theories. Functionalists use society as part of organic analogy. This means that society operates effectively due to all the parts of society working together. If a part of society, does not function properly then it can affect the rest of society. Functionalists see Education, as the main organ in society. It is very important in society. If the school system works properly, then society will function properly as well.

Emile Durkheim(1858-1917) suggests that education is very important in teaching children the society's norms, values and roles. They learn to accept authority and how to socialise with other people, known as secondary socialisation. Children learning the appropriate norms, values and roles in society, which helps keep society stable and helps to maintain the value consensus. Value Consensus is an agreement between society members, to conform to certain values. This creates " social solidarity"(Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). People in society will feel more involved in society, having more of a sense of belonging. Emile Durkheim also suggests that education provides the teaching of society's history. This is important, that children will learn to feel more apart of something larger than themselves. They will learn to develop a sense of belonging and commitment, to a certain social group that they belong to. This could prevent Anomie, which is feeling normlessness. (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Functionalists such as Talcott Parsons(1961) suggests that after the primary socialisation of children, secondary socialisation takes over as the most important role in society. Education, prepares children with their adult roles

in society when they are much older. (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). When a person reaches the ages of 16-18, they are officially classed as an adult in society. Primary socialisation, is where the family is most responsible for. They teach children how to talk, walk and learn skills, necessary to live.

Parents tend to treat their children, most importantly as their child and do not tend to focus on their individual skills or standards. This is known as “Particularistic standards” (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

When children reach primary or secondary schools, they are treated equally. They are based on their skills or standards, which is based on every children regardless of their family connections. This is mainly called “ universalistic standards”.(Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Within societies of families, the child’s social status is ascribed. This means that the status of the child is set when they are born. For example, a child born into a rich family, may be seen as a child who is rich when they are born. Talcott Parsons suggests that due to industrialization in societies, people’s status can change and be achievable.(Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). For example, a person who qualifies as a doctor may have their occupational status changed as getting a good job.

Talcott parsons suggests that school education prepares young people for adult life. Using school exams, children’s achievements are based. (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Children learn to conform to authority in schools. They learn to conduct themselves in school, using school of conduct. These may vary from school to school. For example, different uniforms to be worn by students.

Talcott Parsons suggest that school principles are mainly focused on a meritocratic society. Student's status are mainly achieved, through their worth as individuals. (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). This still occurs in today's school system. People with the highest grades, are more likely to be in top classes then people who get lower grades. Schools tend to work on this system. Another example is getting into University, people need to require a certain level of qualifications, to get into University.

Talcott Parsons, also suggests that schools provide an important function in the future potentials of the workforce. Schools can select students, according to their level of skills, to best suit future employment according to their skills. (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Marxist Perspective on Education

The Marxist perspective, is a conflict approach. Unlike, the functionalist theory it focuses on the conflict of education.

According to Marxists, the system of the education provides the needs of the Capitalists (the ruling class). Schools, learn children norms and values, suitable for working in a Capitalist society. It prepares children, for their future role in the employment industry.

Marxists, suggest that there are inequalities in societies even though the education system aims to provide equality of education. Inequalities can form, in different areas such as employment. Many people may become powerful in society, well others may become workers of the powerful.

Marxists suggests that the economic base of society is important. Economic factors, are important in every society.

Marxists such as Herbert Bowles and Samuel Gintis, in *Schooling in Capitalist America*(1976). They suggest that education forms the main role in producing employees, for the workforce. They also suggest that there is a close relationship between the social relations between the workplace and the education system. This shows how the education system, works in teaching children.

According to Bowles and Gintis(1976), they suggest that schools provide the skills, values needed by a capitalist society by providing a “ Hidden Curriculum” (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Students learn from attending school, they learn from the principles of the “ Hidden Curriculum” (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Bowles and Gintis(1976) suggests that the “ Hidden Principle”(Haralambos & Holborn, 2008) learns children authority. In schools there is a system of a hierarchy which controls the authority of the school.

The head teacher, is usually at the top and then school teachers. Students are considered at the bottom, because they need to accept authority. This helps them to prepare for employment, accepting authority from employers in the future.

Bowles and Gintis(1676) suggests that students learn to be motivated by external factors.(Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). External factors such as pocket money, allow them to focus on their studies. High school students,

get their qualifications if they work hard making them more able to get good employment.(Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).