

CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Introduction

Education is a key pillar for the development of a country. This goal can be realized if the country has an efficient education system. Educators, parents, and the community face a number of issues in education. Think of your thoughts about what is going in schools in your town/village and across the country. This topic introduces some issues in education, such as culture and education, education and social mobility, education and social challenges, and trend issues.

Education and Culture

Meaning and Definition

Already, education was defined in the previous topics regarding different writers or perspectives. We will briefly discuss culture, its meaning, and its definition.

- The term 'culture' was derived from the German word Kultur, which means civilization.
- Culture has been defined by several scholars in different ways. From various definitions, culture can be defined as shared ideals, customs, beliefs, and knowledge that characterize people's way of life in society. It is the total way of life of a human society.
- Culture is defined as the shared customs, religious views, and way of life of a community, citizens, or country. It comprises a set values and standards of a particular group of people.

Although *Somalis* may differ in shades of local lifestyle, they share a uniform language, religion, and culture and trace their heritage to a common ancestor.

Activity 1:

1.1 Write another one definition of culture and compare above definitions.

1.2 Briefly discuss Somalia culture and find dissimilarity of two regions or two parts.

Types of Culture

There are two major categories: Material culture and Non-material culture.

- **Material culture:** This consists of concrete objects. They are physical objects that people create. They include tangible or observable things like buildings, types of shelter, clothing, food, and artwork.
- **Non-material culture:** It consists of abstract human creations. They include language, ideas, beliefs, rules, skills, customs, religion, routines, family patterns, and work practices, political and economic systems.

Activity 2: Write example on material culture and non-material in the below table.

Material culture	Non-material culture

Components of Culture

There are six components of culture: symbol, language, norms, values and beliefs, rituals, and artifacts.

- **Symbol:** A symbol is an object, word, or action that represents a concept. Some symbols are types of nonverbal communication, while others are material objects. Every culture has its own set of symbols associated with different experiences and perceptions, for example, the flag of Somalia, eating right hand, the crescent moon (Islam symbol), and others.
- **Language:** Language is an essential source of continuity and identity in a culture. Language can be spoken or written. One of the most essential developments in the evolution of society was the creation of written language. Somali script was written in 1972, which actively contributes culture. Language influences how we think and perceive the social and physical worlds.
- **Norms:** refers to shared beliefs or values and the human behaviors that support these values within a given society, such as the standards of conduct that are met with social approval or disapproval. Somali's norms include hospitality, kinship, respect for older people, and honor. Norms are often divided into two types; formal norms and informal norms. Formal norms are written laws and informal norms are the unspoken list of behaviors that are considered acceptable.
- **Ritual** is a religious service or other ceremony which involves a series of actions performed in a fixed order. Rituals reflect and transmit a culture's norms and other elements from generation to generation.. Examples of rituals include wedding ceremonies, Eid festival, and other important event.

- Values: are another important element of culture and involve judgments of what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. A culture's values shape its norms. In Somalia, for example, the family's oldest daughter always takes care of her other siblings.
- Artifact: The last element of culture is the artifacts, or material objects, that constitute a society's material culture. In the simplest societies, artifacts are largely limited to a few tools, traditional houses, the huts people live in, and their clothing.

Activity 3: Based on Somali culture, write examples of each culture element in the table below.

Symbol	Norms	Arts

Characteristics of Culture

- Culture is learned – culture is learned by any individual especially if she/he grows up with that particular culture. She/he can learn language and many other cultural attributes.
- Culture is shared by a group of people – we can consider a thought or an action as a culture if it is commonly shared and believed or practiced by a group of people.
- Culture is cumulative – different knowledge embodied in culture can be passed from one generation to another generation.
- Culture changes – not all cultures accumulate. There is knowledge, thoughts or traditions that are lost as new cultural traits that are added.
- Culture is dynamic – there is no culture that remains in a permanent state. Culture changes constantly as new ideas and techniques are added in time modifying or changing the old ways.
- Culture is ideational - culture forms an ideal pattern of behaviors that is expected to be followed by individuals. It serves as guidelines that members must follow to gain social acceptance from the people with the same culture.
- Culture is diverse – culture has many sub-cultures. A system has several mutually interdependent parts. Although the parts are separate, they are interdependent with one another forming but form one culture.
- Culture gives us a range of allowable behavior patterns – culture provides us with the norms of appropriate behavioral patterns. It involves how an activity should be conducted and how an individual should act appropriately e.g. husband, wife, parent, child etc. It tells us how to dress based on sex, occasions, status, etc.

Activity 4: In consideration of the above characteristics of culture, briefly answer the following questions:

1. Did you learn any culture from interacting with your colleagues in the last four years?

2. In your observation, is any change in Somali culture? If yes, list them.

Functions of culture

- Culture helps establish normative order in society. It sets customs and rules essential for the survival of a group e.g. one is not allowed to kill, steal or takes someone's property without permission.
- Culture establishes certain rituals associated with the behavior of its members.
- Culture creates specific rites to portray key events in communal life.
- Culture creates an identity among its members and enables them to communicate and interact in a way they all understand and identify with.

The Role of Culture in Education

Education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its cultural heritage through schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions.

- Society must provide its members with tools for communication.
- Society must provide its members with the tools for feeding themselves and improving their conditions of living.
- Society must teach its members beauty and aesthetic values. Schools teach arts that assist students in appreciating beautiful values and help them appreciate themselves.
- Society must prepare its members to be masters of their own physical environment and natural sciences are therefore needed by society.
- Society must provide religious education to meet the spiritual needs of its members.
- Society must prepare its members to live under acceptable social conditions with other members. Society needs disciplines like history, sociology, and anthropology to achieve this.
- Society must produce people who can improve on the living physical environment.
- Society must regulate itself in order to maintain its continued existence.
- Society must prepare its members to fight against internal and external forces that threaten its continued existence.

- Society values order and the rule of law. The teaching of law is critical as it prepares the learner to learn the rule of law and order which is necessary for the society to survive.

Activity 5: Understanding the role of culture in education, write at least three roles not included in the above points.

Summary

In this topic, it was introduced the meaning and definitions of culture. It was defined as a way of life in a particular community. Culture is divided into material and non-material culture. Culture elements include symbols, values, language, norms, arts, and rituals. Finally, it highlighted the characteristics, functions, and role of culture in education.