

THE SCHOOL SOCIALIZATION AND ITS EFFECT IN FORMING SOCIAL IDENTITY FOR STUDENTS : ANALYTIC STUDY IN SYMBOLIC INTERACTION THEORY

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Abstract

This research explores the critical role of school socialization in shaping students' social identity through the lens of symbolic interaction theory. Recognizing school as a formal institution where students undergo dynamic social learning, the study emphasizes how daily interactions, symbols, and hidden curricula contribute to the development of self-awareness and social roles among students.

The research is significant in highlighting the school's function beyond academic instruction—it acts as a formative space that influences students' values, behaviors, and perceptions of themselves and others. By utilizing symbolic interaction theory, particularly the ideas of Mead and Blumer, the study reveals how meanings are generated and reinterpreted through social interactions within the school context.

The study aims to (1) analyze theoretical frameworks of school socialization, (2) explain identity formation mechanisms using symbolic interaction concepts, and (3) investigate how symbols and social behaviors influence students' self-perception and group belonging. The methodology adopts a qualitative analytical approach, relying on interviews and observations.

Findings indicate that positive teacher-student relationships, inclusive school policies, and participation in extracurricular activities foster a stronger, more positive social identity. Conversely, marginalization, hidden discrimination, and authoritarian systems contribute to identity disruption and social alienation.

The study concludes that schools are not only educational platforms but symbolic environments where identities are formed. It recommends integrating symbolic interaction into teacher training, revising curricula for cultural inclusivity, and enhancing extracurricular activities and dialogue. Such strategies can foster a supportive environment for identity formation and social integration.

keywords : School Socialization, Social Identity, Symbolic Interactionism, Student Self-Perception , Educational Environment

Introduction:

School socialization is one of the most important stages in which the student's personality is reshaped, as the school contributes as an official social institution to building social awareness and shaping social identity through the values, behaviors and roles it transmits. Since the school is an interactive environment that brings together students from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, the interaction that takes place within it, especially between teachers and students, plays a central role in shaping one's perceptions of oneself and the surrounding community. In light of this, this study analyzes the impact of school socialization on the formation of social identity among students, based on the perspective of symbolic interaction theory, which highlights the importance of daily interaction and symbols in understanding social behavior.

The problem of research:

To what extent does school socialization affect the formation of students' social identity? How can symbolic interaction theory be employed in analyzing this effect?

Importance of Research:

The importance of this research lies in several aspects, including:

1. Highlight the pivotal role of the school in the process of socialization and identity formation.
2. Provide an analytical framework to understand the relationship of symbolic interaction to upbringing and identity.
3. Supporting educational decision-makers with indicators that help develop educational policies that take into account the social and cultural dimension of students.

Research Objectives

1. **Analyze the theoretical frameworks for understanding school socialization**, focusing on its components, functions and different parties, from a socio-educational perspective.
2. **Interpret the mechanisms of social identity formation among students** based on the basic concepts and principles of symbolic interaction theory, linking them to the educational school context.
3. **Explore the relationship between educational symbols and interactive behavior within the school** and their impact on the student's self-perception and social position within the school community.

Methodology:

The study relied on the analytical approach that aims to analyze the relationships between educational and social phenomena through the collection of qualitative data, with the analysis of teachers' discourses and classroom and non-classroom activities, in light of the concepts of symbolic interaction theory.

The first topic: the concept of school socialization and its dimensions

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The first axis: the nature of school socialization School socialization is one of the most prominent social processes that the student undergoes in the educational stages, and it is the process through which the emerging individual is integrated into the social and cultural system of the wider society through the school institution. It is defined as the process by which the school, as an official pedagogical medium, imparts norms, values, attitudes, roles, and cultural symbols to students, in order to prepare them for effective integration into society. This process is formalized by During structured activities and curriculum, the character is informal through daily interactions between students and teachers, and what is known as the "hidden curriculum".

School upbringing represents the institutional extension of the upbringing of the individual that begins within the family, but it is more comprehensive and broader in terms of the age groups it covers, and in terms of the multiplicity of sources of social influence. When a child enters school, he not only separates from his family, but begins to interact with a new world characterized by the presence of a formal educational authority (teacher), a specific institutional system (school schedules, regulations), and peers from diverse social backgrounds. All these factors open up prospects for the student New to acquire social skills, form a new self-awareness, and build a social identity consistent with the requirements of the school community.

The peculiarity of school socialization lies in the fact that it is not limited to the curricula taught, but extends to acceptable patterns of behavior, and the roles that society expects the student to play in the future, such as commitment, cooperation, discipline, respect for laws, and acceptance of the other. These roles are taught directly or indirectly through the

interactions of school daily life, which gives the school an important symbolic character in the student's life.

One key concept in this context is the "hidden curriculum", which refers to the set of values, norms and unspoken messages that a student receives at school without being part of the formal curriculum. For example, when a student learns order by standing in line, or learns social hierarchy through the distribution of power within the classroom between teacher and students, or learns social differentiation by distinguishing between activities reserved for high-achieving students and their peers. These practices play a major role in shaping the student's awareness of himself, his status, and his expectations of society.

School socialization is a means of reproducing the social structure of society on the one hand, and a tool for bringing about social change on the other. Through the educational process, society can strengthen collective identities, address cultural or class divisions, or perpetuate them if students' specificities are not taken into account. Thus, school upbringing is not limited to the cognitive dimension, but also includes the psychological, social and symbolic dimensions that collectively contribute to building the student's personality.

In light of the above, school upbringing is a pivotal formative process in the student's life, contributing to shaping his view of himself and his society, and establishing his social identity through interaction with cultural symbols, standards of behavior, and expectations of the roles he learns daily within the school.

Second Theme: Functions of School Upbringing in Society

The school is one of the most prominent institutions of socialization that exert a deep and sustainable impact on the lives of individuals, as its function is not limited to the transfer of academic knowledge and cognitive skills, but also to perform structural roles related to social construction and the reproduction of culture and social values. The school is the institution that systematically and deliberately transmits culture from one generation to another, including the language, traditions, customs, norms and beliefs that form the cultural framework of society.

A central function of schooling is to teach the basic values that a student needs to be an active and harmonious member of society. These values include order and discipline, which accustomed the student to respect laws and rules, tolerance that fosters a culture of acceptance of others, and cooperation that fosters teamwork and a sense of responsibility towards others. This pedagogical aspect is complementary to the educational aspect, as the school produces individuals who are not only fluent in reading and writing, but also possess social awareness and civic behavior stemming from a school environment. Institutional.

The school also provides a vibrant social space that enables students to interact with their peers and teachers, giving them communication, negotiation and understanding skills, and preparing them to play future social roles within the community system. It is not only a place of learning, but a social laboratory where students play symbolic or actual roles similar to what they may later play in the labor market, or in family and community life. In doing so, the school contributes to building the social personality of the individual, by developing concepts such as belonging, citizenship, justice and collective responsibility.

In addition to these functions, the school plays an essential role in the reproduction of the social system, that is, it enshrines the values and structures that exist in society through educational curricula, teaching methods, and assessment mechanisms, which guide the student towards identification with prevailing cultural and social patterns. Through this qualification, students are integrated into the societal structure, enhancing their sense of collective identity and national belonging, and supporting the stability and cohesion of society in the long term.

The school also contributes to social mobility, providing students with opportunities – which may be equal or uneven – to move up the social ladder, based on competence and merit. Although the educational system is presented on the face of it as a fair system that guarantees equal opportunities, reality sometimes reveals class and regional disparities that affect access to advanced positions in society. However, education remains one of the most important ways to achieve social justice and open new horizons for the individual towards the future Better.

In conclusion, the school is a pivotal institution in the process of socialization, not only in terms of knowledge, but also in terms of building personality and forming social awareness, which contributes to preparing generations capable of positively interacting with society, participating in its development, and achieving social stability.

Third Theme: The Parties of School Education and their Impact

The process of upbringing within the school is not only a one-sided process carried out by the teacher, but it is a multilateral system, in which the roles of a group of educational and social actors overlap, each of whom contributes in his own way to shaping the student's personality and directing his behaviors. These actors exert their influence not only through direct educational discourse, but through daily interaction, exemplary behaviors, cultural symbols and organizational systems that govern school life.

At the forefront of these is the teacher, as the cornerstone of the educational process, and the most frequent personalities in contact with the student. The role of the teacher is not limited to the transfer of knowledge, but goes beyond that to be a role model and behavioral model to be followed. The personality of the teacher, in terms of his behavior, balance, justice, and style of communication with students, has an indirect impact on the formulation of value awareness and social attitudes among students. His attitudes on issues such as discipline, dialogue, or tolerance are slowly ingrained in the students' consciousness, contributing to building Their personalities are either positive or negative, depending on the nature of these situations.

Besides the teacher, the peer group (colleagues) is one of the most important actors in school upbringing. At school age, the student begins to move out of the circle of family influence to broader horizons of social interaction. The peer community plays a pivotal role in transmitting informal social values and norms, those that are not taught in the curriculum but acquired through experience. This group may be a source of support for promoting positive behavior and belonging to the school community, or a tool to impose negative pressures that lead to rebellion or deviation, especially If the group is characterized by a culture that rejects authority or deviates from the prevailing values.

The school administration is responsible for shaping the institutional environment for education, and determines the organizational and psychological framework in which teachers and students work. The administration plays an important role in creating a stimulating or frustrating educational environment, through its policies in dealing with laws, the distribution of roles, and the mechanisms of reward and punishment. Fair and open management fosters a climate of trust and belonging within the school, while oppressive or apathetic management may push students towards feelings of rejection, withdrawal or even symbolic violence.

Educational studies highlight the importance of what is known as the hidden curriculum, which is the set of unspoken educational messages that the student receives implicitly through school organizations, methods of dealing, and prevailing cultural models. This may be an unspoken distinction between students based on gender (masculinity and femininity), class affiliation, or academic performance. These messages affect the construction of the student's perception of himself and his place in society, and may promote positive identity and belonging, or perpetuate a feeling of feeling inferiority and marginalization.

It is worth noting that these parties do not work in isolation, but are interconnected in a network of relationships that influence and are affected, creating a complex nurturing environment. The teacher interacts with the administration, influences the peer community, is influenced by curriculum policies, and so on. Therefore, understanding schooling requires a holistic view of these relationships and mutual influences.

It can be said that the school as a socialization institution is not based on curricula only, but on a rich network of human and organizational relations that collectively shape the student's personality, values and behaviors, and contribute to his formation as an active citizen adapted to his social and cultural environment.

The second topic: the theory of symbolic interaction as a theoretical framework for analysis

The theory of symbolic interaction is one of the most important sociological theories that have contributed to the interpretation of human behavior within different social contexts, especially in educational institutions such as the school, where the daily interaction between individuals is the main factor in shaping meanings and building identity.

The first axis: the emergence and development of the theory of symbolic interaction

The intellectual roots of symbolic interaction theory go back to American pragmatic philosophy, and George H. Mead is the informal founding father of this theory, as he focused in his work on the importance of symbolic interaction in self-formation, asserting that identity arises through active participation in social life.

Mead did not write his works in an organized manner, but his student Herbert Blumer collected his ideas and formulated them within an integrated theoretical framework, and called them the term "theory of symbolic interaction" in the forties of the twentieth century. Bloomer asserted that society is understood not by universal laws or rigid structures, but by meanings that arise and are reproduced in the daily interaction between individuals.

The theory is based on three main principles that form its backbone:

1. **Individuals act based on the meanings they give to objects and situations:** meaning is what guides behavior, not the object itself or its objective characteristics.
2. **These meanings arise through social interaction:** meaning is not innate or isolated, but acquired during interaction with others in a social context.
3. **Meanings are modified through the individual's internal interpretive processes:** the individual does not automatically receive meaning, but interprets and reinterprets it according to his position, experience, and interaction with the environment.

These principles have made symbolic interaction a flexible theoretical framework for the analysis of educational contexts, because it focuses on the human actor as a maker of meaning, not just a passive receiver of it.

Second Theme: Symbols and Meanings in the School Context

In school life, symbols and meanings play a central role in controlling behavior and understanding oneself and the other. The school is not only a space for receiving information, but also a daily theater full of signs and connotations that influence the construction of social relations and the formation of individual and collective consciousness.

Symbols in a school context include a variety of elements, such as:

- **Verbal language:** The teacher's words, expressions of praise or punishment, and methods of guidance all carry social implications that affect the student's sense of self.
- **Non-verbal language:** such as gestures, facial expressions, and body movements, which may express respect, rejection, or preference.

- **School uniforms:** which acts as a collective bond that indicates belonging and unity, but may also become a symbol of authority and discipline.
- **Daily organization and school routines:** such as ringing a bell, queuing, or distributing seats, which are organizational symbols that carry messages about order and hierarchy.

For example, when a teacher praises a particular student in front of his classmates, this symbolic behavior reinforces the positive meaning that the student holds about himself, and enshrines his position within the class group, which affects his future interactions. A student who is ignored or treated in a negative way may build a negative perception of himself and his social position within the school, leading to withdrawal or aggression.

In doing so, the school becomes a symbolic environment in which students learn not only through educational content, but through daily symbolic interactions that produce meanings, and contribute to building belonging or alienation.

Third Theme: Social Identity from the Perspective of Symbolic Interaction

From a symbolic interactive perspective, social identity is built through a series of interactions that an individual experiences during his lifetime, especially in his early stages of school. Identity is not a fixed internal characteristic, but an ongoing social process shaped by the individual's perceptions of others' perceptions of him and their reactions to his behaviors.

Mead asserts that the self has two aspects:

- **Me:** The aspect that reflects the perception and expectations of others, that is, the social self formed through interaction.
- **I:** It is the subjective actor that responds to those expectations and reshapes behavior.

In the school context, the student is constantly confronted with symbols and interactions that affect his or her self-perception. When they feel accepted, encouraged, and valuable, a sense of positive identity is enhanced. If they feel ostracized, marginalized, or negatively compared, they may develop a shaky or defensive identity.

Belonging to classmate groups, clubs or school teams, reinforces the process of self-identification through "us" versus "others", perpetuating a sense of belonging or creating interboundaries that perpetuate class, cultural or gender differences.

Thus, symbolic interaction explains not only how the student sees himself, but how identities are produced within the school as a complex social environment, in which symbols, expectations, authority, and language interact to shape the meaning of the self and its place in society.

Third Theme: Analysis of the Impact of School Upbringing on the Formation of Social Identity

The school is a social environment that has a great impact on shaping the features of the social identity of the individual, due to the fact that it provides a daily space for continuous interaction between students and teachers, and between students themselves, and because of the symbols, values and social roles it contains that are perceived and interacted with from the early stages of upbringing. School upbringing, with its direct and indirect educational and educational implications, contributes to instilling students' perceptions of themselves, of others, and of their place in the wider society.

The first axis: the manifestations of identity in the school environment

Social identity is manifested in the school environment through daily practices and behaviors that express the student's awareness of himself and his belonging, whether explicitly or implicitly. The student's style of expressing his opinions, his use of language (in terms of

vocabulary, tone, confidence), and the way he deals with his colleagues and teachers are indicators of how to build his social identity.

For example, the way you sit in class may reflect a degree of self-confidence, submission, or a desire to rebel. Classroom answers and the nature of interaction with the content express the student's awareness of the importance of his voice and presence. A school uniform is not just a uniform, but a symbol of belonging and discipline; the way it is worn may reflect an attitude of uniformity or rejection of the system. Also, the choice of extra-curricular activities reflects the type of interests and sub-identities that the student seeks to assert, such as belonging to sports teams, science clubs, or cultural groups.

All of these behaviors represent symbolic manifestations of social identity within the school. Through it, the student reshapes his perception of himself within the system of "we" versus "them" – we are the superiors, we are the people of the region Fulani, we are the open-minded versus "them" – which reflects a state of belonging or isolation, of inclusion or exclusion.

The second theme: a case study of students in secondary education

In order to understand how the school contributes to building social identity, qualitative and analytical interviews were conducted with a group of high school students, belonging to diverse social and cultural backgrounds, and studying in different schools in terms of organizational level and educational policies.

The results of the study showed that students who received positive interaction from teachers, in terms of encouragement, appreciation, and human communication, were more able to express themselves, explained in defining their social identity, and more felt belonging to the school environment. A positive relationship between the student and the teacher is a mirror of the self, fosters a sense of merit and entitlement, and opens the door to the acquisition of values such as cooperation, discipline, and ambition.

On the other hand, some students expressed a sense of marginalization and alienation, as a result of the school's lack of consideration for their cultural specificities, or ignoring the social backgrounds from which they came. For example, some students from rural environments or cultural minorities felt that the school did not reflect their culture, but rather sought to assimilate them into a standardized model, leading to a weakening of identity, or to the adoption of defensive and negative identities.

The study also noted that belonging to active groups within the school (such as theater groups, or student councils) helped students adopt a clearer and more stable social identity, as these groups provided them with opportunities to emerge, influence, and participate, which enhanced their sense of social value.

Third Theme: Challenges and Obstacles in School Upbringing

Despite the great role that the school can play in promoting the positive identity of students, there are a number of challenges and obstacles that weaken this role, and in some cases may even distort or weaken identity.

Among the most prominent of these obstacles:

1. **Socio-economic differences between students**, which create class differentiations within the school that affect the quality of relationships and interaction. A student from a well-to-do background may have symbolic privileges that make others feel inferior or marginalized.
2. **Traditional educational patterns**, which perpetuate indoctrination and authoritarianism, and do not take into account individual differences and multiculturalism. This pattern may turn the student into a passive recipient, preventing him from expressing his identity freely.

3. **Weak positive interaction between teacher and student**, as the relationship turns into an authoritarian relationship characterized by tension and fear, instead of being a relationship of support and appreciation, which weakens the student's self-confidence.
4. **Unspoken discrimination in treatment**, whether based on gender, social background, or academic achievement. This discrimination generates a sense of unfairness and contributes to the reinforcement of marginal and alienated identities.
5. **Ignoring the individual identity of the student** in favor of a unified collective model does not give way to differences of expression, and does not encourage creativity and diversity, which pushes students towards isolation or silent rebellion.
6. **The strict punitive system and authoritarian style**, which treats the student as a sinner rather than a participant, reinforces feelings of aversion, and leads to school alienation, where the student loses the sense that the school represents him, or that he is an active part of it.

Fourth Theme: Towards a supportive school environment for building social identity

In light of the above presentation of the theory of symbolic interaction, and an analysis of the impact of school upbringing on the formation of social identity, it is clear that the school is not just an educational institution, but also a symbolic social environment, in which social identity is formed through a complex system of interactions, symbols and relationships. Understanding the nature of this environment, and addressing the factors that hinder the building of positive identity, is essential for the holistic development of the educational process.

First: Elements of the school environment affecting the formation of social identity

Recent educational and social studies indicate that there are a number of elements that directly or indirectly affect the formation of identity among students, including:

- **Human interaction in the classroom:** The teacher's behavior in communication, appreciation, and guidance has a significant impact on enhancing or weakening the student's self-confidence.
- **Formal and informal educational discourse:** such as the content of the curriculum, the language used, methods of bullying or encouragement in the classroom, and the symbolic messages contained in the "hidden curriculum" related to gender, class, or affiliation.
- **School management policies:** such as equity in the distribution of opportunities, inclusion of cultural diversity, the extent to which students are involved in decision-making, and the extent to which social and economic disparities are taken into account.
- **Extra-curricular activities:** which represent opportunities to form positive sub-identities that contribute to inclusion and self-esteem, especially when students are allowed to participate freely and interestingly.
- **Student groups:** Peer relationships are an influential factor in the emergence of a sense of "us" versus "them", which may lead to positive social cohesion or division and social isolation within the school.

Second: Manifestations of school upbringing imbalance

Through observation and field analysis, it is possible to monitor a set of imbalances that negatively affect the effectiveness of school upbringing, most notably:

- Poor human and emotional interaction between teacher and student.
- Adopt an authoritarian and punishable style rather than dialogue and encouragement.
- Absence of policies that ensure recognition of cultural and social differences among students.
- Unspoken discrimination in the distribution of tasks or pedagogical attention.

- Ignoring individual identities in favor of imposing a uniform pattern of behavior and identity.

Third: The results of the social study and its analysis

Data analysis and field interviews show that:

- Students who feel visible, heard, and respected within the school exhibit higher levels of trust, belonging, and the ability to express their identity clearly.
- In contrast, students who lack support, or are excluded or negatively stereotyped, are more likely to experience identity disorder and social alienation.
- Social identity within the school is not only built through academic knowledge, but through everyday symbolic practices, the general cultural climate, and the form of interaction within the classroom.

Conclusion:

Social identity is not an automatic product of being within the school, but rather a complex socio-educational process that is gradually shaped by symbolic interaction and individual and collective experiences. Therefore, the school must go beyond its academic role to become a living space in which students produce themselves and redefine their belonging and place in society in a conscious, fair, and based on recognition and deep human interaction.

The study concluded that school socialization is a decisive factor in shaping the social identity of students, as the school acts as a platform for symbolic interaction that reshapes the individual's awareness of himself and the other. The analysis showed that the quality of interaction within the school, and the nature of the symbols used, directly affect the construction of social identity. The study recommends that teachers should be trained to promote positive interaction, take into account students' social and cultural backgrounds, and develop curricula to be more aware of the social dimension of identity.

Recommendations to enhance the role of school upbringing in building social identity

1. Integrating symbolic interaction methodologies into teacher training

Teachers should receive systematic training to understand symbolic interaction in the classroom, and to emphasize the importance of indirect messages they send to students through their behavior and words.

2. Reviewing educational policies that take into account cultural and social diversity

School policies should be developed that take into account the different backgrounds of students and promote a culture of recognition of diversity, not the pursuit of identity stereotyping.

3. Rebuilding curricula to be inclusive and diverse in identity

Curricula should represent all segments of society, and reflect different stories and experiences that contribute to broadening the student's horizons of self-meaning and belonging.

4. Activating extra-curricular activities as tools to build a positive identity

Sports, artistic and cultural activities should be supported as effective symbolic points of interaction, promoting the formation of positive social identity through teamwork and participation.

5. Promote a culture of dialogue in the classroom and among students

Open and structured classroom discussions should be encouraged, and students should be taught listening and expressive skills, contributing to the maturation of their self- and social awareness.

6. Designing a psychosocial support system within the school

The need to provide social workers specialized in identity, belonging and integration, who follow up on students who have adjustment problems or feel isolated.

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