



Symptoms of Education Deficiency in Social Reality: Evaluation and Pedagogical Proposals for Addressing Them

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Abstract

The main issue of this article is *education* as a meaning “process” and as the requested point (desideratum) in accordance with its role in educational and social reality. More specifically, by illustrating the aspects of this relation, we seek to give prominence to the role of education at an ethical and practical level, concerning not only citizens’ social behavior but educational institutions and wider society, as well. It is our primary intention to highlight education’s relationship with social learning and its effect on students’ social behavior, within the family and school environment. At his point, the practices that the child becomes familiar with within the family, school, and social environment in general and which eventually, play a decisive role in the development of personality and more specific in a person’s behavior, will be discussed. In addition, specific samples of young individuals’ and adults’ social behavior, which reveal the deficiency of *education* and at the same time concerning prevailing culture and its causes, will be determined. The article is concluded with the final observations, findings, and pedagogical suggestions.

Keywords: education, social learning, social behavior, social reality.

1. Introduction: Article’s main inquiries for discussion

Education is the highest spiritual and cultural good both for man himself and for society and humanity in general. For this reason, the educational systems, worldwide, include it as a basic purpose and orientation in their curricula and the processes of education and socialization of the students. However, the question that arises is, whether the school, which offers systematic education, as well as other basic institutions of society, such as e.g., the family, in practice, manage to provide the necessary and appropriate education, which will contribute to the smooth, rational, democratic and cultural functioning of both human behavior as well as the institutions of society. In this sense, and for methodological purposes mainly, they are aimed at a better understanding of the content of the article. Therefore, we raise the following questions, which refer to the main aspects of the subject:

- How is the concept of “education” defined and acquired?
- Which is the relation of “education” with the concepts of “schooling”, “edification/discipline” and “learning”?
- Which is the role of education in school, society, and specifically in people’s social behavior?
- Which is the role of school and family in gaining education?
- Concerning education, what are the relevant signs in the behavior of children, young individuals, and citizens in today's social reality?
- What are the main causes referring to lack of qualitative characteristics of social behavior or in other words where are the causes of education’s degradation and marginalization detected?
- Which pedagogical suggestions contribute to addressing the issue of education deficiency?

2. The concept of “education”

The concept of “education” is referred to the cognitive and mental development of a person that is mainly obtained through schooling, discipline, and socialization in different levels of the educational system (Babinotis, 2001; Konstantinou, 2015). According to the sociological approach, the term “education” is defined as the transfer of cultural elements for continuity and conservation of the cultural system, which is obtained from previous generations, to be ensured. Thus, education is not only knowledge, is not only memorization, is not only a simple specialization. Education is the general product of ideals, perceptions, and values that rule the life of a society and nation. In other words, that means that education is the cognitive, mental, sentimental, and aesthetic development of human beings (Babinotis, 2001, 2002; Filias, 2000; Konstantinou, 2015).

In conclusion, the meaning of “education” is defined as the result of cultivation and enhancement of the cognitive, mental, sentimental, and social abilities and general people’s abilities, as a whole, which is shaped through schooling, discipline, learning, and socialization. We perceive the term “education” as the broadest of relevant terms (schooling, edification-discipline, learning) and as a synonym of the term “learning” in the sense of learning constitutes a result of education procedure (Konstantinou, 2015: 30; Krivas, 2007). While “schooling” is about the organized and systematic, teaching, learning, and discipline by institutionalized providers that improve individual’s cognitive and mental skills, “education” is addressed to people’s emotion and human nature which differentiates them from other creatures of the animal kingdom and at the same time familiarizes them with human values of freedom, democracy, justice, equality, truth, mental equilibrium, honesty, aesthetic quality, respect of fellow man and cultural and natural environment, etc. In the same vein, “education” gives people moral and mental fulfillment, improves them culturally, and holds them responsible for their future by emphasizing the common end of mortal inhabitants of the planet Earth. At this point, the essential difference between the two controversial meanings of “schooling-education” is detected (Babinotis, 2001; Konstantinou, 2015: 30).

3. Social learning and education

Among fundamental principles of interaction, the inevitable of communication is included, when two or more individuals are placed in the immediate environment of each other. Related to this principle is, also, the inevitable of learning and consequently of education for the child in school, as well as in his/her environment. Almost everything within his/her environment and school is meaningful, that is; everything is determined by its very own conceptual meaning. Especially in school, the child learns his/her own practices while at the same time perceiving educator's practices which characterize the school environment and they don't belong to the curriculum. These practices are identified as "social learning" (Chaniotakis, 2011; Konstantinou, 2015; Mavrogiorgos, 1985).

Social learning is the realistic, the true school character, which is revealed through the existent reality and not what is declared in the rhetorical specifications. Social learning is the "knowledge" and "education" that are related more to values, rules, acceptances, attitudes, and practices that are applied in intrapersonal relations at the framework of school reality. Social learning is all the practices that student is familiarized with or become addicted to in school daily routine. It constitutes the framework, according to which, schools and educators interpret and confront practical problems of school life and specifically the approach they follow in addressing the student, as a personality (Konstantinou, 2015; Xochelis, 2015; Zinnecker, 1975).

4. Personal and social identity development

Every individual, in a complex structured society, according to the roles he/she accomplished, has acquired several identities, some of them permanent, other temporary and imaginary, such as gender identity, cultural identity, political identity, etc. Overall, the personal and social identity constitutes an important aspect in a person's discipline and socialization procedure, in the sense that it is this procedure's result which arises from the interaction process between the individual and the environment (Konstantinou, 2015; Konstantinou, 2020; Wellendorf, 1974).

"Personal identity" is a cohesive structure that consists of the individual's personal life experiences, allowing him/her to perceive and interpret them with his/her personal way as a unity, as a unique and unprecedented biography, as a single, undivided chain which belongs to a unique person (Konstantinou, 2015: 255; Wellendorf, 1974:27).

Whereas, "social identity" means the social category and its features, through which a person defines him/herself and is defined by others. That is, the social identity, sets the person within a category of somehow similar individuals, while the personal identity differentiates and distinguishes him/her from every other person of a specific category (Goffman, 1967; Wellendorf, 1974: 27). Besides, this identity, except for some minimum cases, such as national identity and gender identity could not be acquired by individuals abruptly, but it has to be gained or claimed.

5. Completeness in communication and practice

The individual through the process of interaction with the environment and specifically through discipline, schooling, and socialization acquires and shapes not only his/her personal and social identity but also, completeness of communication and practice. Thus, the concept of "completeness in practice" (Handlungskompetenz) is perceived as the ability of a person to address with adequacy issues related to his/her participation in the social interaction so that his/her participation -in this interaction- does not lead, unilaterally on the cancellation of his/her expectations that has raised for the specific social circumstances (Kron, 1989: 32; Schäfer, 1981: 49-51).

The successful response in the demands of each situation depends, at a great deal, on the means a person applies. Considering verbal communication, the “completeness in practice” refers on the one hand to the person’s verbal ability (Sprachkompetenz) to use grammar and syntax correctly and on the other hand to the ability to communicate with others and to organize his/her participation to the communication so that he/she could be functionally related to practice. In other words, to have the opted result in his/her communication with others (Kron, 1989: 32; Schäfer, 1981: 49-51).

6. Signs of discipline and socialization in practice

According to Greek findings of social interaction, it is a very frequent phenomenon, even in an unimportant disagreement, one of the participants – in the interaction – who believes that he/she is the offended or the victim, to use, as a first movement in the communication context, his/her “outstretched palm” towards to other or others; an act that in the Greek language is called “mountzoma”, or blooming with “curses” or insulting words in a propulsive situation to make direct use of violence, that is to assault and commit batter. The reaction or the counteraction of the “others” who receive this kind of communication depends mainly on their discipline, socialization, and generally their education. In other words, they depend on their identity and their completeness in communication and practice. Thus, they make use of the same means as the first communicator, that is; exchange of “strikes” or organize their strategies, depending on the communication and practice completeness they have achieved. Within this concept, completeness in communication and practice acquires everyone that finds him/herself in a discourse position or contradiction, uses as a prime priority the rational argument process, or in other words the rational management of contradictions (Bernfeld, 1967; Konstantinou, 2015).

7. The role of the family in a child’s social behavior

At this point, we want to underline the determinant role of discipline, learning, and socialization within the family environment. Specifically, the way the family is organized and functions in terms of its learning and cultural level, the relationships among its members, with specific reference to incentives, emotions, practices, habits, motives, and experiences with which a child deals with daily, play a crucial role in his/her behavior.

Thus, every individual, in the context of his/her social-cultural communication with the natural and social environment addresses people, objects, values, rules, circumstances, emotions, and expectations. All of these elements are organized and structured in a way that they emphasize human interferences in his/her effort to survive, to coexist, to create, and generally to function as a social entity. Inside the boundaries of his/her social activities, human beings and especially an adult, as a parent or educator and by holding educational responsibilities, develops various strategic activities, constantly. To be more specific, it is about procedures, methods, relations, rules, and attitudes which primarily aim to transfuse to the adults these elements which are about to formulate him/her into a social entity and facilitate him/her to constitute his/her personality that is his/her personal and social identity. These strategies contributed and continue to contribute, mainly, to two basic institutions of the social system, the family and school. These two institutions have two common elements; the adult’s person edification (discipline) and socialization, focusing on the ulterior purpose of shaping his/her personality, as well as his/her integration into the social system (Konstantinou, 2015; Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2018; Nikolaou, 2021).

8. The role of school and society in student's behavior

At the school level, the organization and function of school life and the provided quality of culture determine to a large extent the student's social behavior considering the school as an important social institution that is responsible for providing students with organized and systematic learning, discipline, and socialization. On a broader level, it should be pointed out that the way which society is organized and operates, from an institutional, cultural, scientific, technological, political, and economic point of view, defines the content, the orientations, the attitudes, the perceptions, and the mentalities of their members' behavior. Life in society such as in school, which is a social construct, is full of contradictions. The school, under the context of discipline and socialization, should develop in students those strategies such as empathy and the ability of cognitive control, of critical and rational confrontation, etc., in order to address confrontational situations, plan carefully his/her movements and control effectively these movements of the "others" (Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2021; Liakopoulou, 2020; Nova-Kaltsouni, 1995).

By this approach, we, certainly, do not mean that school should teach students to conflict by making use of arbitrariness and authoritarianism such as stigmatization, irony, sarcasm, offense, assault, and battery, etc. However, in addition, the student should learn without avoiding the controversy, instead of applying the "well-known" strikes to "other", to make usage of essential and rational argument exchange and dialog or otherwise rational management of contradiction which are dominant in the school and social daily routine (Konstantinou, 2015; Konstantinou, 2020).

The organization of pedagogical communication in the school provides the student with many chances to realize and understand the issues of kindness and modesty, such as "apologizing" when it comes to a mistake and someone else's burden. The student should, also, understand that individualism does not facilitate the collective and shared responsibility in the development of social relationships. It is imposed that the student should understand that he cannot always be right and neither that any responsibilities should be always held in the others. The school has the organizing and pedagogical potential in cooperating with students to establish where it is possible, clear rules concerning communication, relations, and generally the participant's behavior in the interaction so that to ensure the frame of smooth social communication.

The usage and imposing of arbitrary sanctions, which is the outcome of arbitrary perceptions, that, mainly, do not function with specific and clearly defined rules, are related to negative effects in the content of the discipline, "burdening" not only the pedagogical relationship between educator and student but also the configuration of the personal identity and completeness in student's communication and practice. In addition, some "traditional" perceptions of educators that the so-called student's problematic forms of behavior, constitute an inherent element of his/her personality or that they are credited exclusively to in his/her family environment, are not consistent with current pedagogical views which are based in conclusions of earlier scientific researches and studies.

The educator as the main responsible person of the organization of pedagogical communication in the school holds the determinant responsibility for the form that discipline and socialization context perceive, for the kind of the pedagogical relationship-communication and certainly for the concomitant connected with student's personality configuration. Thus, more specifically and practically, every individual develops his/her social behavior through information, knowledge, experiences, and generally through the influences from parents, siblings, educators, classmates, media, and overall, through the interaction with the social environment. Finally, that means that every family, every school, and generally every society in the time passage have shaped

their own culture through the interaction occurring among them, which is ultimately reflected in the behavior of its members.

9. Indications of education reflected in everyday life

Based on the previous approach it is certain that completeness in communication and practice, as it is expressed by the behavior of the member of Greek society in his everyday life and all sectors, reveals characteristics of the education he has acquired through his participation and activation in family, school and social life. Therefore, this is the kind of thoroughness in communication and practice or, in other words, education, which we seek to highlight, partially, through typical examples of the behavior of the child, the young person, and, in general, the member of the Greek community.

To address this issue some typical examples, easily apprehended in Greek everyday life since they appear at a high frequency are illustrated below (Konstantinou, 2015: 263-264):

- A concerning number of students of all grades use to throw away the empty packaging or even the content of consumables/snacks, such as potato chips, cookies, chewing gums, etc., inside the communal areas of the school or any other communal area outside the school (sidewalk, street, etc.).
- The minority, even though a stable number, of students, write slogans, repeatedly and systematically, usually extreme, vulgar, and mainly with political content, not on banners but the walls of university buildings, infringing every rule and aesthetics, obviously, violating public and private property.
- The surface of monuments and statues are often and overtly overlapped and desecrated with, at least, inelegant slogans and graffiti, insulting the memory of important personalities of history, culture, and society, in general.
- The quality of political speech and the behavior of some politicians, not only in their pre-election and social presence but also when addressing the Parliament, is one of the most typical examples of culture, behavior, and, eventually, education.
- The use of vulgar and offensive expressions or “showing somebody the finger” is observed frequently, on a daily basis, even for insignificant issues and events.
- The use of extreme, obscene, and offensive expressions, slogans, as well as violence, especially on football fields, is considered highly common manners observed at weekends.
- Not respecting order priority in daily transaction procedures in public or private areas of public services is considered, by some people, at least “cool” and “cunning”.
- An indefinite number of drivers behave individualistically, selfishly, and, as a general rule, transgressively, while not following basic road-traffic rules. As a result, they cause -in many cases- serious or insurmountable problems either on the roads or even on the sidewalks and parking lots. Furthermore, the violation of red traffic lights, one-way streets, and priority, as well as the occupation of parking spaces for disabled people with special needs and abilities, is considered, by many drivers, not only normal but also a “cool” social attitude.
- A sufficient number of our fellow citizens, in the name of tradition and custom, use extremely dangerous or even life-threatening tools (e.g., rockets, firearms), to “have fun” at festive events, such as Easter, weddings, etc., incidents often resulting in accidents or, even, fatal injuries.

- The side of small and big roads as well as the beaches, almost all over Greece, “moan” from garbage; mainly empty plastic water bottles, coffee cups, cigarette butts, leftovers, etc.
- Throwing cigarette butts or, even, empty packs of cigarettes out of the car window and emptying car ashtrays at the traffic lights are usual daily actions.

Furthermore, usual phenomena are:

- the frequent vandalism and destructions of shelters of urban and long-distance transport operators and telephone booths,
- the innumerable slogans on the walls of houses and sabotages of parked cars, etc.

10. Main causes of the absence of quality behavioral features

The examples mentioned above as well as many other similar cases, lead to the conclusion that an unspecified “by research” but certainly, concerning several members of Greek society, of almost all ages, show daily and frequent signs of education deficiency, which are reflected in their behavior. This becomes apparent while noticing features such as rudeness, lack of respect and aesthetics, inconsistency, irresponsibility, delinquency, etc.

These behavioral samples, which might be considered “by some people” as of minor cultural and social scope and importance, reveal consolidated perceptions, mentalities, and practices, difficult to be eliminated because they are enhanced by the way the political and social system operates featured by, for example, tolerance and impunity. Nevertheless, they reflect, in practice, the qualitative characteristics of one’s personality in addressing personal and social issues. All these, in addition to the features of the prevailing culture, lead to the pessimistic determination that the functioning and the future of Greek society, in terms of education and social behavior, are not very auspicious.

Building upon this observation is important, given the fact that the functioning of institutions and, the social system, in general, depends on the values, rules, and practices applied by the stable members of society at all aspects of everyday interaction and practice. If responsibility was to be shared between the causes and factors that shaped this level of culture, we would argue that the greatest part lies with those who exert any institutional, political, cultural, and social power. To be more specific, based on the structure and functioning of the institutions, the greatest responsibility lies with those who elaborate and establish the way the political and social system operates (culture, practices, obsessions, tolerance, impunity, etc.), which ultimately, “orientates” the attitude of the member of Greek society at every aspect of social action and communication.

Moreover, much of the responsibility lies with the family environment, in which the initial, besides all, attitude and social behavior of the child is established. Ultimately, the educational system and, in particular, the school is responsible for the way it educates, teaches, and socializes students and young individuals. Also, as a determining factor in shaping individuals’ behavior of any society is considered the extent to which attached importance is given to education provided. Last but not least, we state that influence of other public or private institutions, such as the media, does play its role, and, indeed, sometimes decisively, in shaping and affecting the social behavior of the member of the Greek society.

11. Impacts of technological development

Due to swift technological progress, science, education, art, communication, production, environment, as well as our everyday life are redefined by the terms and new

implementations that arise from technological development, although often society finds it difficult to keep up with and adapt to its pace. Nothing is left unaffected anymore by the rapid progress that is taking place in the field of technology (Filiás, 2000).

Modern society, like any other society, anticipates technological progress and we must approach this reality without “skepticism” but without excessive expectations too. We should not, after all, forget that man defines the means (tool) and determines its use. Both human power and perspective lie precisely to his attempt to go beyond nature not in order to abolish it but to make the world a better place. Therefore, without education, science leads the market economy to a predatory system of exploitation, competition to overt violence, and knowledge to a dangerous force of destruction (Filiás, 2000; Postic, 1995).

12. Consequences from the current social and cultural data

We experience a fluid and insecure environment, economic instability (globalization), broadening of supranational institutions, multiculturalism (some countries have to deal with the presence of hundreds of thousands of immigrants and refugees), huge and rapid knowledge production, high technology (mobile phone technology and telecommunications, internet), rapidly increasing information flow (information overload and informational “pollution”), new and extreme behavioral phenomena (religious fanaticism, terrorism, criminality), pandemic, absence of neighborhood for children, new morals and new habits and practices, etc. All the above need to be integrated by the school as actual – realistic data in its educational function and purposes. Otherwise, the education provided will be unrealistic and far from social reality.

13. Assessment and pedagogical suggestions

Excluding the contribution of family, which has a crucial role in shaping perceptions, attitudes, and, social behavior, in general, it has to be understood that the role of the school is of great importance, as it can cultivate social values and pay more attention to issues of education more systematically. In other words, those who practice educational policy need to be seriously and responsibly concerned with the fundamental social and pedagogical question: “what education and culture are offered to students and young individuals, in what way and for what purpose”.

Therefore, at this point, the purpose of the educational system is clearly stated and must be directly, systematically, and practically connected with the cultural education provided to students, as long as it seeks to citizens with broadened horizons, aware of the messages of the times, concerning universal values and culture, with respect to man and natural and social environment, with respect to public and private property, visionaries but also diverters of ills and faults of society.

In any case, family, school, and society need to familiarize the child and the young individual with the demarcation of their behavior: to learn to respect the rules and laws along with their content and meanings in every area of their presence and action. Thus, by interpreting the role of the rules through the messages they send, it is concluded that rules set limits that the individual cannot exceed, otherwise, he must learn both theoretically and practically that he will suffer the consequences of his misbehavior and rule violation. In other words, the rules set boundaries to action and interaction between members of a social group. This means that boundaries determine a person's scope of action and reaction. Namely, they function as rules of what is allowed and what is forbidden, a fact observed in daily basis, that are not applied to a high and opted degree in family, school, and social reality (Konstantinou, 2015; Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2018; Morgan, 2012).

This present approach explicitly highlighted that education plays a key role in the development of one's biological, linguistic, cognitive, emotional, mental, and social abilities and skills. As demonstrated, the individual, acquires his human and social characteristics, through education and socialization, and, eventually, forms a mature personal and social identity, as well as completeness and integrity in communication and practice.

Yet, the question is how the pedagogical communication is organized and, in particular, what form education takes in both family and school environments. The child's social behavior traits, as well as his personality as a whole, depend, to a large extent, on its form. Subsequently, aiming to this direction, the profound role applies on the orientations, and in general the way in which school carries out its pedagogical and social mission, and consequently, the form of implementation that teacher acquires referring to his pedagogical.

However, it is an indisputable fact that the conditions, under which children grow up today, have changed so radically that even the adjusted school is not able to accomplish, to a significant extent, the requirements imposed on it. That is; to help students accomplish their life and achieve humanism. In that sense, it is now imperative for the schools to give prominence to the education of the students as a primary process, which, till now, has a fragmentary and clearly degraded role. This is a significant disadvantage in the operation of the Greek school, when in fact it has been scientifically proven that the promotion of social values, attitudes and overall, the formation of human personality are directly related to the type of education provided to him.

Therefore, the school must reinstate a neglected function, which will strengthen its pedagogical role. Through school education, today's citizen is important to acquire those skills, abilities and strategies to be able to manage effectively all individual and social issues that arise every day. The prevailing standards and influences that a child and a young person perceive today, have taken a profound but also uncontrollable shape. This is an additional reason for school education to take on the role that rightfully, self-evidently and now imperatively, pertains to. Moreover, through appropriate educational and socializing practices, the school can encourage among other things, sentiments of love, friendship, kindness, forbearance, sympathy, pleasure, confidence and, generally, enhance the emotional (psychic) stability and balance of students.

Society needs citizens, who, through their education, have formed complete personalities with critical and creative thinking, with collective perception and solidarity with their fellow humans, with respect to man and environment, concerning values and culture, and with respect to democracy and peace. And let us not escape our attention the overall and most important thing. That is, society needs citizens with education and culture, but also with a school attached to the real life of the child. In direct connection with social reality. Because, education means politeness, decency, dignity, etc., it means respect for fellow human beings, the different, the laws, the natural, cultural and social environment, etc.

Concluding this article, let us remember the wise words of Plutarch: *"Man's happiness consists in education and training, and not in the goods that luck gives and takes away"*.

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