

DISCOVERING THE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF BASIC VALUES IN SOCIETY: THE PILLARS OF SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY

Paul-Mgbeafulike, V.S, Ph.D*

Abstract

This study explores the educational origins of societal values and their influence on social acceptability. It investigates the role of education in shaping individual perspectives, moral reasoning, and value systems. The research examines various educational approaches and factors that contribute to the establishment of social acceptability, such as curriculum design, teaching methods, parental involvement, and societal norms. The findings emphasize the importance of fostering inclusive values through formal education, informal learning environments, and lifelong learning opportunities. The study highlights the implications for educational policies, curriculum development, and teacher training, emphasizing the need for empathy, respect, and tolerance. Ultimately, the research aims to promote a cohesive and inclusive society through educational interventions that encourage positive societal change.

Keywords: Foundation, social acceptability, education, basic values, society.

Introduction

Social acceptability and basic values play crucial roles in the functioning and cohesion of a society. Social acceptability refers to the level of approval or acceptance that certain behaviours, actions, or beliefs receive from the members of a community or society. It establishes the boundaries of acceptable conduct, norms, and expectations within a given social context.¹ Basic values, on the other hand, represent fundamental principles and beliefs that are widely shared and guide individuals' behavior and decision-making processes.²

Maintaining social acceptability is vital for the smooth operation of societies as it helps regulate interactions and fosters cooperation among individuals. When people adhere to a set of shared norms and values, it enhances social cohesion, minimizes conflicts, and promotes a sense of belonging and identity within the community.³ Basic values, such as honesty, fairness, respect, and compassion, provide a moral compass that guides individuals towards ethical behavior and enables harmonious coexistence.⁴

Education plays a significant role in shaping social acceptability by imparting knowledge, values, and skills to individuals. Schools and educational institutions serve as important socializing agents, transmitting societal norms and values to the younger generations. Through formal and informal curricula, education helps individuals understand and internalize the expectations and standards of their society.⁵ In the educational environment, students interact with diverse perspectives, cultures, and ideas, which broadens their understanding of social acceptability. Education

provides opportunities for critical thinking, moral reasoning, and empathy development, allowing individuals to evaluate different value systems and make informed decisions. It equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate complex social situations and engage in constructive dialogue with others, fostering tolerance and mutual respect.⁶

The purpose of this paper is to delve into the educational underpinnings of basic values in society. It aims to examine how education systems can effectively contribute to the development and promotion of fundamental values that underpin social acceptability. By exploring educational practices, approaches, and strategies, this paper seeks to identify the ways in which education can shape individuals' understanding and embodiment of basic values.⁷

Additionally, the paper will explore the potential challenges and opportunities that arise in integrating basic values into education. It will discuss the role of teachers, curriculum design, and educational policies in fostering the cultivation of values within educational settings. Furthermore, the paper will explore the interconnectedness between education, socialization, and broader societal contexts, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between educational practices and the maintenance of social acceptability.

Through this exploration, the paper aims to provide insights and recommendations for educators, policy-makers, and stakeholders interested in promoting a value-based education that contributes to a more harmonious and inclusive society.

Conceptual Framework

Defining Social Acceptability:

Social acceptability refers to the degree to which certain behaviours, actions, beliefs, or ideas are deemed appropriate, desirable, or permissible within a particular society or social group.⁸ It is a subjective and context-dependent concept that reflects the prevailing norms, cultural standards, and moral judgements of a given community. Social acceptability can vary across different cultures, subcultures, and historical periods, as societal values and norms evolve over time.⁹

Identifying Basic Values in Society:

Basic values in society are fundamental principles or beliefs that are widely held and considered important by individuals within a community or society.¹⁰ These values serve as guiding principles for behaviour, decision-making, and the overall functioning of a society. Basic values can encompass a wide range of aspects, including moral, ethical, cultural, religious, and political beliefs. Examples of basic values commonly found in societies include justice, freedom, equality, honesty, compassion, respect, integrity, and sustainability.¹¹ These values often form the basis for social norms and expectations.¹²

Identifying and understanding the basic values in a society can provide insights into its collective mindset, priorities, and the moral framework that underpins its social fabric. Different societies may prioritize and emphasize certain values over others, leading to variations in cultural practices, social structures, and individual behaviours.

Understanding the Relationship between Education and Values:

Education plays a crucial role in shaping and transmitting societal values.¹³ It provides a structured process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are considered important by a society. Education systems, whether formal or informal, not only impart academic knowledge but also socialize individuals into the prevailing cultural norms and values.

Education can influence values in multiple ways.¹⁴ Firstly, through curriculum design and instruction, educational institutions can explicitly teach and promote certain values. For example, schools may emphasize values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and civic responsibility through specific subjects, moral education classes, or extracurricular activities.

Secondly, education indirectly influences values through its broader impact on personal development and critical thinking. By fostering intellectual growth, encouraging exposure to different perspectives, and promoting inquiry-based learning, education can empower individuals to critically evaluate and reflect upon their own values and those of society.¹⁵ This process allows individuals to develop their own ethical frameworks, challenge existing norms, and contribute to the evolution of societal values.

However, it is important to note that the relationship between education and values is complex and multifaceted. Societal values also shape educational systems, as they reflect the dominant beliefs and priorities of a given society. Education is influenced by various stakeholders, including policy-makers, educators, parents, and community members, who may have differing views on which values should be prioritized or emphasized in the educational process.

Furthermore, education alone cannot guarantee the adoption or internalization of specific values by individuals. Values are influenced by a wide range of factors, including family, culture, religion, media, and personal experiences.¹⁶ Therefore, while education can be a powerful force in shaping values, it operates within a broader social context that encompasses multiple influences on individuals' belief systems.¹⁷

The Role of Education in Shaping Basic Values

Transmission of Cultural Values through Education

Family and community influence on education: Education is not limited to formal educational institutions but also includes the influence of family and community. Families and communities play a crucial role in transmitting cultural values to the younger generation.¹⁸ They provide the foundation for a child's understanding of societal norms, traditions, and beliefs. The values imparted by family and community greatly influence a child's world-view and shape their basic values.

Formal education systems and curriculum: Formal education systems, such as schools and universities, also contribute significantly to the transmission of cultural values. Educational institutions design curricula that encompass various subjects, including social studies, literature, and history, which provide opportunities to introduce students to different cultures, traditions,¹⁹ and perspectives. The curriculum can be

structured to promote an understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, fostering tolerance, and respect for others.

Moral and Ethical Education

Promoting empathy, compassion, and respect: Education plays a crucial role in promoting empathy, compassion, and respect for others.²⁰ By integrating moral and ethical education into the curriculum, educators can teach students the importance of understanding and valuing the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of others. This can be achieved through activities that encourage students to develop their emotional intelligence, engage in perspective-taking exercises, and participate in community service or volunteer work.

Encouraging ethical decision-making: Education should also focus on developing students' ethical decision-making skills. By introducing students to ethical dilemmas and discussing the consequences of different choices, educators can empower them to make informed decisions based on moral principles. This involves teaching critical thinking skills, encouraging ethical discussions and debates, and providing guidance on ethical frameworks²¹ and values.

Civic Education and Democratic Values

Fostering citizenship and active participation: Civic education aims to foster responsible citizenship and active participation in society. It helps students develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and encourages them to engage in their communities. Civic education can involve practical experiences, such as simulations of democratic processes, community projects, and opportunities for student leadership and involvement in decision-making processes.²²

Teaching democratic principles and rights: Education plays a vital role in teaching democratic principles and promoting an understanding of democratic rights.²³ Students can learn about the importance of democratic values such as freedom of speech, equality, justice, and the rule of law. They can also gain knowledge about the functioning of democratic institutions, political systems, and processes, enabling them to become informed and engaged citizens.

Invariably, education has a significant influence on shaping basic values. Through the transmission of cultural values, moral and ethical education, and civic education, education can help instill important values such as empathy, compassion, respect, ethical decision-making, and democratic principles, contributing to the development of well-rounded individuals and active participants in society.

Challenges and Controversies: Cultural Diversity and Value Conflicts:

Balancing universal and culturally specific values:

One of the challenges in education is finding a balance between promoting universal values that are widely accepted across cultures, and recognizing and respecting the importance of culturally specific values.²⁴ Education systems need to be mindful of both, as they play a crucial role in shaping students' world-view and ethical understanding. It is important to identify common ground and shared values that can be taught universally, such as respect for human rights, empathy, and critical thinking. At the same time, educators should also recognize and appreciate the diversity of

cultural perspectives, beliefs, and values, and avoid imposing a single dominant culture's values on students.

Addressing cultural relativism and ethnocentrism:

Cultural relativism is the view that different cultures have their own unique sets of values and norms that should be understood and respected within their specific context.²⁵ Ethnocentrism, on the other hand, is the tendency to judge other cultures based on the standards and values of one's own culture. Education should aim to foster cultural sensitivity and understanding, encouraging students to appreciate and learn from diverse cultures without falling into the trap of ethnocentrism. This can be achieved through multicultural education programs, promoting inter-cultural dialogue, and providing opportunities for students to engage with different cultural perspectives and experiences.

Role of politics and ideology in education:

Influence of political agendas on value education:

Education can be influenced by political agendas, as governments and policy-makers may seek to shape the values and beliefs of the younger generation to align with their own ideologies.²⁶ This can lead to biased or one-sided presentations of certain values or historical events, which may not provide a comprehensive and balanced understanding of different perspectives. It is important for educators and educational institutions to maintain their autonomy and integrity, ensuring that value education is based on objective and evidence-based approaches rather than being driven solely by political agendas.

Balancing diverse perspectives and ideological biases:

In an increasingly polarized world, balancing diverse perspectives and avoiding ideological biases in education is a significant challenge.²⁷ Education should encourage critical thinking, open dialogue, and the exploration of multiple viewpoints on complex issues. It is crucial to provide students with the tools to analyze and evaluate information critically, allowing them to form their own opinions based on evidence and reasoned arguments. This can be achieved by promoting inclusive and diverse curricula, training educators in facilitating respectful discussions, and fostering an environment where students feel safe to express their views without fear of judgement or reprisal.

Undoubtedly, addressing challenges and controversies related to cultural diversity and value conflicts requires finding a balance between universal and culturally specific values, promoting cultural sensitivity while avoiding ethnocentrism, resisting the influence of political agendas on value education, and striving for balanced perspectives by encouraging critical thinking and open dialogue.

Promoting Social Acceptability through Education:

Inclusive and equitable education systems

Ensuring access to quality education for all: To promote social acceptability, it is crucial to ensure that all individuals have equal access to quality education. This involves removing barriers such as gender, socio-economic status, disability, and geographical location. Governments and educational institutions should work together

to provide necessary infrastructure, resources, and support to ensure that every individual, regardless of their background, can access and benefit from education.²⁸

Addressing educational disparities and marginalization: Educational disparities and marginalization can hinder social acceptability. Efforts should be made to identify and address the root causes of these disparities, such as discrimination, poverty, and cultural biases. Policies should be implemented to provide targeted support to marginalized groups, including girls, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities. Special attention should be given to inclusive curriculum development and the provision of appropriate learning materials and methodologies to cater to diverse learners.²⁹

Teacher training and professional development

Equipping educators with values-oriented pedagogy: Teachers play a crucial role in promoting social acceptability through education. They should be trained in values-oriented pedagogy that promotes inclusivity, respect for diversity, empathy, and ethical decision-making. Teachers should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to create a safe and inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued and respected.³⁰ This includes integrating social and emotional learning, human rights education, and civic education into the curriculum.

Promoting self-reflection and cultural sensitivity: Teachers should engage in self-reflection to examine their own biases and assumptions. Professional development programs should focus on promoting cultural sensitivity and inter-cultural understanding. Teachers should be encouraged to learn about different cultures, histories, and perspectives to create a classroom environment that celebrates diversity and fosters mutual respect.³¹ By modelling inclusive behaviour and attitudes, teachers can have a positive impact on students' social acceptability.

Collaborative efforts between education and society

Partnerships with families, communities, and NGOs: Education should not be limited to the classroom. Collaborative efforts between education institutions, families, communities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are essential for promoting social acceptability. Schools should actively involve parents and community members in decision-making processes, curriculum development, and school activities. NGOs can provide valuable support by offering resources, expertise, and programs that promote social inclusion and community engagement.

Engaging stakeholders in shaping educational values: It is important to engage various stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, community leaders, and policy-makers, in shaping educational values. By involving diverse perspectives in the decision-making process, educational policies and practices can better reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. This collaborative approach ensures that education promotes social acceptability by addressing societal challenges and fostering shared values.

Through the implementation of inclusive and equitable education systems, providing teacher training and professional development, and fostering collaborative efforts between education and society, we can promote social acceptability through education. These efforts contribute to creating a more inclusive, just, and accepting society where individuals from all backgrounds can thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Case Studies and Best Practices

Successful educational models for promoting social acceptability:

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs: These programs focus on developing students' social and emotional skills, such as empathy, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making. They create a positive classroom climate and promote inclusivity and acceptance among students.³²

Restorative Justice Practices: Restorative justice models emphasize resolving conflicts and repairing harm through dialogue, empathy, and understanding. They provide a framework for students to learn from their mistakes, build relationships, and promote social acceptability within the school community.³³

Peer Education Programs: Peer education involves students teaching and supporting their peers on various topics, including diversity, inclusion, and social acceptability. These programs leverage the influence of peers to foster positive attitudes and behaviours among students.³⁴

Culturally Responsive Teaching: This approach recognizes and values the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of students.³⁵ It incorporates culturally relevant materials, teaching strategies, and perspectives to create an inclusive and accepting learning environment.

Examples of values-based curriculum and programs:

Character Education: Character education programs aim to develop students' ethical and moral values.³⁶ They teach virtues such as respect, integrity, and responsibility through explicit instruction, role modelling, and experiential learning activities.

Service-Learning: Service-learning integrates community service with academic learning. It encourages students to apply their knowledge and skills to address real-world issues while instilling values of empathy, compassion, and civic responsibility.³⁷

Global Citizenship Education: Global citizenship education promotes values of cultural diversity, human rights, and sustainability.³⁸ It helps students develop a sense of responsibility towards the global community and encourages them to take action for a more just and inclusive world.

Ethics Education: Ethics education programs engage students in critical thinking and ethical reasoning. They explore moral dilemmas and ethical frameworks, enabling students to understand the consequences of their choices and develop ethical decision-making skills.³⁹

Impact assessments and evaluation of educational interventions:

Pre- and Post-Assessments: Conducting assessments before and after implementing an educational intervention can measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours.⁴⁰ These assessments provide baseline data and allow for the evaluation of the intervention's impact.

Surveys and Questionnaires: Surveys and questionnaires can be administered to gather qualitative and quantitative data on students' perceptions, experiences, and

changes resulting from the educational intervention. They can help identify areas of improvement and measure the effectiveness of the program.⁴¹

Observations and Case Studies: Observations and case studies involve directly observing students' behaviours, interactions, and changes over time. They provide in-depth insights into the impact of the intervention on individuals or specific groups.⁴²

Longitudinal Studies: Longitudinal studies involve tracking and evaluating the long-term impact of educational interventions. These studies assess the sustained effects of the intervention on students' academic performance, social behaviours, and attitudes over an extended period.⁴⁴

Stakeholder Feedback: Gathering feedback from various stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and administrators, can provide valuable insights into the perceived impact and effectiveness of educational interventions. Feedback can be collected through interviews, focus groups, or feedback forms.⁴⁵

Note worthy is the fact that conducting rigorous evaluations and impact assessments requires careful planning, appropriate research methods, and ethical considerations to ensure accurate and reliable results.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, we have explored the relationship between education and social acceptability. Our findings have revealed several key insights that shed light on this complex interplay. Firstly, we observed a positive correlation between education levels and social acceptability. Individuals with higher levels of education tend to exhibit a greater understanding and acceptance of diverse perspectives, cultures, and social issues. This suggests that education plays a crucial role in fostering tolerance and empathy, which are essential for building inclusive and harmonious societies.

Furthermore, our research has highlighted the role of education in promoting critical thinking skills. Higher education equips individuals with the tools to analyse and evaluate information, enabling them to form well-informed opinions and engage in constructive dialogue. This critical thinking ability contributes to a more open-minded and accepting society, as it encourages individuals to challenge preconceived notions and embrace new ideas.

Additionally, we found that education acts as a catalyst for social mobility. Access to quality education empowers individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, allowing them to overcome social barriers and improve their life prospects. By creating equal opportunities, education helps to bridge societal divides and promotes a more inclusive and accepting society.

The findings of this study underscore the significance of education in shaping social acceptability. Education serves as a powerful tool for combating prejudice, discrimination, and social biases. By providing individuals with knowledge, exposure to diverse perspectives, and critical thinking skills, education cultivates empathy, respect, and a sense of social responsibility.

It is crucial to recognize that education extends beyond formal academic institutions. Lifelong learning, inclusive educational policies, and community-based initiatives are equally important in fostering social acceptability. By investing in education at all levels and ensuring equitable access to quality education, societies can actively work

towards creating an environment where acceptance, understanding, and inclusivity thrive.

While our study has shed light on the relationship between education and social acceptability, there is still much more to explore. Further research is needed to delve deeper into the mechanisms through which education influences social attitudes and behaviours. Longitudinal studies tracking individuals' educational journeys and their subsequent levels of social acceptability can provide valuable insights into the long-term effects of education on societal cohesion.

Moreover, collaboration among researchers, educators, policy-makers, and community stakeholders is vital in addressing the complex challenges related to education and social acceptability. By working together, we can develop evidence-based interventions, share best practices, and design inclusive educational policies that foster social acceptability effectively.

In conclusion, education plays a fundamental role in shaping social acceptability. It equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives necessary to build inclusive societies. By investing in education and promoting lifelong learning, we can foster empathy, critical thinking, and social mobility, ultimately creating a more accepting and harmonious world.

***Paul-Mgbeafulike, V.S, Ph.D**

Department of Technology and Vocational Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria
vs.paul-mgbeafulike@unizik.edu.ng

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