

Cross-Cultural Research Development and Cultural Learning

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The purpose of this chapter is to investigate, from a historical and descriptive viewpoint, the cross-cultural method in education as a part of the behavioral sciences. The first part of the chapter describes the early developments in cross-cultural research designs and the specification of some of the elements in cross-cultural methodology. The second part presents some issues related to cross-cultural education and a basic framework to develop a cultural learning theory in addition to the social learning approach.

The present comparative approach in education includes the cross-cultural method. The real value of the cross-cultural method in education lies, not in discovering of facts for a single culture, but in obtaining empirical data to redesign educational objectives, implementation and evaluation of educational programs and in finding means to reduce ethnocentrism in the society at large. Noah and Eckstein express that "the field of comparative education is best defined as an inter-section of the social sciences, education, and cross national study."¹

Education as a discipline needs to very seriously examine the implications arising from educational objectives which have been designed for a wide range of cultures or sub-cultures. A lack of clear and precise scientific research is one of the most serious problems in the study of cultures. Under these circumstances, cross-cultural research is mandated in comparative education when more than two types of validation are involved.

Early Developments in Cross-Cultural Research

In recent decades, a new branch of psychology and education, cross-cultural psychology/cross-cultural education, has become an important element in the understanding of human development. Unlike more traditional fields of psychology, cross-cultural psychology looks for diversity as well as similarities across nations. Furthermore, cross-cultural replications are performed to verify generalizations developed in a specific culture.

The **cross-cultural** method in psychology and education derived primarily from theories of cultural evolution in the field of anthropology. One of the first effective attempts to quantify, measure, and correlate ethnographic data to scientifically tested theoretical postulates is generally ascribed to Edward B. Tylor. In 1889, he presented a paper entitled "On a Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions: Applied to Laws of Marriage and Descent."² It was at the meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, under the presidency of Sir Francis Galton, who pointed out by scholarly investigation for the first time, that the cultural units were classified under degrees of independence and concurrence. Although Tylor's study was, by the present research methodology inadequate, historically, it is a very important contribution to the evolution of a scientific methodology in cross-cultural research.

From 1889 to 1937 only two significant studies were presented in a cross-cultural perspective. The

first one was done by H. J. Nieboer in 1910³ in order to relate slavery as a part of industrial systems. The second one was research on the correlation between material culture and social institutions as reported in 1915 by Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg.⁴

However, in the area of the Comparative Method in Anthropology, the period noted above, was very crucial in cross-cultural research. For example, Franz Boas in "The Limitations of the Comparative Method"⁵ reported in 1896, a program which involved:

1. Detailed studies of individual tribes in their cultural and regional context.
2. The comparisons of these tribal histories as a means of formulating general laws.

Boas compared the historical method with the comparative method. Sapir in 1916, Wisler in 1926, Lowie in 1919, Benedict in 1934, Kroeber in 1935 and many others provided a series of cultural studies utilizing distributional analysis of cultural traits for the study of culture process.

Another important development in anthropology particularly valuable to cross-cultural psychology and education, in the same period, refers to culture and personality field research which is generally attributed to Margaret Mead's study on "Coming of Age in Samoa"⁶ and the work of Malinowski on "Sex and Repression in Savage Society."⁷ These studies of child development and family patterns created quite a sensation throughout the world because of their implications for psychoanalytic theory. In the ensuing years, numerous anthropologists undertook similar psychodynamic case studies of personality development in other cultures. Kardiner (1939), for example, admitted the possibility of applying psychoanalytic techniques in socio-anthropological investigations, and established the concept of the basic personality type.⁸ That is, that personality configurations are shared by the majority of the members of any given society, because of their having had many early experiences in common.

Although these anthropological studies contributed in some ways to the development of cross-cultural research methodology, they never equaled the Tylor approach. The cross-cultural method was renewed by George Murdock in 1937 in a test of correlations between the evolutionary priority of matrilineal and patrilineal institutions.⁹ Cross-cultural research methodology has since reached a high level of scientific development not only in anthropology, but also in psychology, sociology and education.

Murdock's method was essentially the same as Tylor's. Both used the statistical-inductive method in the treatment of the data. Later, however, Murdock started to explain the hypothetical method which implies that one starts from a hypothesis, so that "all

logical or rational operations are performed prior to the final empirical and statistical test."¹⁰ Under this approach, Murdock has been for many years, a leader in applying cross-cultural method. The wide use by others of his Cross-Cultural Survey and his World Ethnographic Sample are obvious examples of his influence.

In 1949, an inter university organization supported financially by the Carnegie Corporation was formed under the title of "Human Relations Area Files." One of its main objectives was to duplicate the existing files of Murdock's Cross Cultural Survey for the members and to distribute additional data obtained by the Survey among them. However, the sample was not always representative of the whole population.

An important contribution to cultural methodology was given in 1953 by Whiting and Child using descriptive data on many cultures recorded in the Human Relations Area Files. Later, Whiting and Whiting¹¹ outlined three aspects of the concept of culture:

1. They regarded culture as the body of knowledge transmitted from one generation to the next about how to do things or how to get things done, the techniques of the society.
2. It was the belief system of the culture, the ethnoscience and religious dogma.
3. It was the ethical system or set of values which provides guidance as to what is good or bad, what is important or trivial, and the relative merits of various goals and behaviors in a hierarchical sense.

With them the modern approach to cross-cultural methodology rests in testing hypotheses which have been derived from theories of cultural evolution, theories of the integration of culture, and theories of individual and social psychology.

Comparative Method in Cross-Cultural Perspective

From these aforementioned concepts, we seem to have three different types of comparative studies: (a) Cross-cultural, (b) Cross-national, and (c) Intercultural. However, Frijda and Jahoda¹² did not consider there to be differences between cross-cultural research and cross-national research. They argued that the term "cross-national" is artificial "since the two types involve no fundamental contrasts in methodology, cross-national studies will here be included under the heading of cross-cultural."¹³ However, there is a fundamental distinction between them. The methodology does not have anything to do with content of a discipline. As a matter of fact all sciences

use the same methodology; it is the scientific method but there may be different techniques.

The fundamental distinction becomes pertinent if we understand that while the "Latin culture" involves many nations with different cultures (Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Albanian and Rumanian) and the circumstance of different nationalities, it is possible to generalize commonalities which are derived in order to differentiate each from other cultures, such as the "Anglo-Saxon culture." Margaret Mead has used the term "cross-national" deliberately to indicate that she is dealing not with relationships between nations, self-maximizing competitive national units, but between the peoples of different nations.¹⁴

Cross-cultural is a wider term than cross-national because **cross-cultural research** looks for diversity across regions, nations, languages and throughout the entire worlds of contemporary man. According to Whiting, the cross-cultural method in anthropology can be defined as the method which "utilizes data collected by anthropologists concerning the customs and characteristics of various peoples throughout the world to test hypotheses concerning human behavior."¹⁵

So, we can say that cross-cultural research refers to studies which employ two or more cultures or societies. According to Murdock, "The data of culture and social life are susceptible to exact scientific treatment as are the facts of the physical and biological sciences. It seems clear that the elements of social organization, in their permutations and combinations, conform to natural laws of their own with an exactitude scarcely less striking than that which characterizes the permutations and combinations of atoms in chemistry and of genes in biology."¹⁶

However, a deeper review of the literature suggests a number of approaches of what the comparative method in a cross-cultural perspective is. For Oscar Lewis, anthropology is cross-cultural in nature while comparison is "a generic aspect of human thought rather than a special method of anthropology or any other discipline."¹⁷ Eggan gets away from the name of comparative method (only one method) and speaks instead of methods of comparisons.¹⁸ Whiting defines the cross-cultural method almost exclusively in terms of the testing of hypotheses in a universal sample with a high reliance upon statistical techniques.¹⁹ Andre Koben, in a review of the history of statistical method in social anthropology, notes that statistical studies have serious invalidities because, in most of them, the units compared are not always truly independent and the areas compared are frequently atomized traits rather than functioning wholes.²⁰ These arguments can be refuted by the use of more adequate procedures for defining operational variables.

On the other hand, it is common to see cross-cultural research identified with historical research. For

instance, Radcliffe-Brown identifies it with library technique and as the construction of history.²¹ Nadel reduces the scope of cross-cultural method and defines it as the systematic study of similarities and differences through the use of correlation and covariation.²²

For Campbell²³ the purpose of research using cross-cultural dimensions or multinational comparisons can be divided into three types:

1. Confirming and exploring the universality of some relationship or attribute of social man.
2. Natural experiments, in which regions differ in some environmental factor which can be studied using an experimental treatment.
3. Maximum variability studies. This approach, using the cultural variable as the experimental treatment is one of the latest developments in the cross-cultural method. The classic study of this type given by W.H. Rivers on visual illusions²⁴ during 1901 to 1906 was revised and fully documented by Segall, Campbell and Herskovits.²⁵ They collected data from fifteen societies showing cultural differences in susceptibility to geometric illusions. Many other researchers have made replications of this study.

In conclusion, our brief review of the literature has revealed many approaches in cross-cultural methodology. However, no discipline has a method which is only unique to itself. All disciplines are in fact using the same method, the scientific method. The logic of the formal scientific approach to knowledge of setting up a hypothesis, developing a technique, gathering the data and drawing conclusions and the informal scientific or qualitative approach involve only three different methods—historical, descriptive and experimental—but they all apply to the study of cultures in the comparative dimension. The methods differ from each other only to the extent that they serve different functions and thereby are guided by different techniques or interpretations.

When the cross-cultural research deviates from its scientific approach, it is dependent not upon its methodology, but upon its practitioners. In other words, while cross-cultural research can be considered to use a scientific methodology, not all practitioners of cross-cultural research are in fact, systematic scientists. Under this consideration we can operationally define **cross-cultural research** as the activity of solving problems cross-culturally; this process leads to new knowledge using the scientific method and the comparative technique which are currently accepted as adequate by scholars in the field.

Today, the area of qualitative and quantitative cross-cultural research has been expanded to many different social and behavioral fields. There are a very

important number of professional associations dealing with comparative studies and cross-cultural dimensions and journals in such disciplines which covers a substantial amount of cross-cultural studies.²⁶ Among them is a specialized quarterly journal entitled, *Cross-Cultural Research* whose mission is to publish peer-reviewed articles describing cross-cultural studies in all of the social/behavioral sciences and other sciences related with humans. However, this Journal only accepts studies which do more than just compare two or more cultures. Dependent variables must be linked statistically to one or more independent variables that are also measured. This is a very important issue, as we pointed out earlier, because an observed difference could be the result of any other difference or complex casual interactions between or among the cultures compared. To the linear models of the past and with the more sophisticated techniques and research tools of today, cross-cultural research is moving towards more complex designs. These non-linear designs focus on holistic concepts rather than on fragmented perspectives; they are more concerned with interactive effects between variables than with isolated variables themselves.

Objectives in Cross-Cultural Research

The main purpose of cross-cultural research in education and psychology is the elaboration of general and specific objectives to the cultures involved without distorting an articulate common goal. Generalizations, very common in education, must be supported empirically to satisfy the external validity of the conclusion.

The advantage of the cross-cultural approach as compared with the single cultural research approach is that the possibilities for misinterpretation are less with the former. An intensive study of a single nation or culture provides rich insight into the society or culture as a functioning organism, but hardly permits any generalization to other societies or cultures of the same nation.²⁷ Whiting states that the advantage of the cross-cultural method are two fold:²⁸

1. It insures that one's findings relate to human behavior in general rather than being bound to a single culture.
2. It increases the range of variation of many variables.

One of the necessary requirements to establish universal scientific laws is that the observed phenomena be applicable to all pertinent environments. In education and psychology behavioral laws need to be tested against the universal man. If this is not done, proposed behavioral laws or general goals can only be accepted in the particular society or culture in which they are found. For this reason, using abstract gener-

alizations about some cultural groups without looking at their relationships with society is methodologically wrong. To achieve this objective in education, the cross-cultural method as a part of the comparative approach is the only meaningful tool for obtaining empirical data from the existing educational system and the complexity of human nature.

Stages in Cross-Cultural Research

A cross-cultural research involves, at least four stages.²⁹

- Establishing the purpose of the research and delineating the transcultural variables with respect to their cross-societal cross-national, cross-communicational and subcultural characteristics.
 1. More than two societies or nations and languages would be desirable to produce sufficient diversity in order to eliminate competing, plausible hypothesis or take advantage of subcultural characteristics.
 2. Arranging for preliminary meetings and availability of additional personnel as well as research assistants, procedures for training them, techniques for the collection of data, methods and techniques of analysis, and strategies for financing and implementing the study.
- A pilot study to test out ideas in a preliminary fashion.
 1. When the subcultural frame is not available, a demographic survey is necessary.
 2. Instruments should be designed, selected and adapted to the cultures under study. Translation, back-translation, measurement of meaning and comparison are essential to validate verbal instruments.
 3. Preliminary studies on small samples of subjects in each culture, society or nation.
 4. Scoring and coding of data, and chronogramming (time schedule planning).
- Carrying out the main study.
 1. Replication of the pilot study.
 2. Elimination of major sources of internal invalidity.
- Refining the analysis, interpreting the results and publishing them.
 1. Researchers from different cultures need full involvement in the analysis and interpretation of the findings to reduce ethnocentrism and cultural bias.
 2. Stimulate additional questions and problems deserving of further intensive research.

Methodological Issues

A basic work on research methodology has been done by Brislin, Lonner and Thorndike.³⁰ Besides their approach some methodological issues which need to be taken into account in cross-cultural research are:

- The use of scientific methodology.
Using scientific tools and approaches found in studying human behavior or educational constructs.
- The lack of comparability among psychological or educational examiners working in different cultures.
The syntax of the examiner's role relation to the subject may be so inextricably embedded in the culture that it becomes confounded with some of the major cultural variables under study.
- Sampling: minimize the effects of common origin and diffusion.³¹
 1. Problems: Heterogeneous culture, size of the country or culture, varied composition of the population in each region, regional geographical and climatic differences, diversity of natural resources and economy, educational opportunities within regions, chronological age versus vague terms (such as adolescence, adult, young, first grade, etc.)
 2. Solutions: Restricts the universe in order to draw a representative sample but with equivalent criteria in all cultures to be compared—identifying culture type by linguistic criteria; or to limit the sampling bias and measurement of the biases involved in order to control them; measuring of systematic and random errors. Finally, it is recommended to use stratified samples or designs in order to reduce the effects of diffusion.
- Cultural variables discrimination.
According to Donald T. Campbell, comparison between two cultures are usually uninterpretable because many cultural differences are operating which might provide alternative explanations of the findings. He proposed eliminating plausible rival hypotheses by supplementary variation of a subcultural nature deliberately introduced as part of the design. "The more cultural diversity present in the design, the greater the prospect of achieving a generalized and valid conclusion."³²
- Semantic and conceptual equivalence³³ of the instrument in different cultures and the problems of measurement.
The problems of translating instruments across different cultures are:

Test Construction Theory

It is not sufficient simply to translate a questionnaire or a test to guarantee its efficient interpretation in a culture different from the one where it is originally produced. It is necessary to make an adaptation or even substantial change in an instrument. The confounding of language differences and personality is the classic study by S.M. Ervin in 1964 of 64 bilingual Frenchmen who were given the Thematic Apperception Test (T.A.T.) on two different occasions, once in English and once in French. The response content and associated personality variable shifted significantly from one language to the other in ways that could be predicted as knowledge of English or French culture.³⁴

Also the investigations of Charles Osgood and his colleagues using the Semantic Differential Technique for the comparative study of cultures is providing evidence that exists a universal framework underlying the affective or cognitive dimensions of language.³⁵ Their proposal of creating a World Atlas of Affective Meaning may provide a rich source of information for adaptation of concepts across different languages.

Validity Face

It is a process of validity in adaptation and standardization of instruments to other cultures.

- 2.1. General Criteria
 - 2.1.1. Utilizing the same techniques of the original instrument.
 - a. Same application technique.
 - b. Same statistical criteria.
 - c. Keeping the internal consistency between constructs.
 - 2.1.2. Modification can be made according to:
 - a. Items or reactivities which show difficulty level.
 - b. Sociocultural differences and attitudes toward the test situation.
 - c. Socioeconomic differences and language development.
- 2.2. Specific Criteria
 - 2.2.1. Small sample and application of the translated original test to the sample.
 - 2.2.2. Representative Sample.
 - 2.2.3. Translation, back-translation and adaptation of items.
 - 2.2.4. Administration of the tentative instrument to the sample.
 - 2.2.5. Election of final items or reactivities.
 - 2.2.6. General rules in psychometric theory.
 - 2.2.7. Replication in subcultures utilizing the procedure pointed above.
- 2.3. Administration of the instrument
 - 2.3.1. Test familiarity versus non-familiarity.
 - 2.3.2. Syntax of the research's role.
 - 2.3.3. Changing administrative procedures according to pertinent cultural differences.

2.4. Measurement Interpretation and techniques for imputing missing data: Users of imputation techniques should bear in mind that the reliability of the technique is based on the reliability of the original scale. In cross-cultural studies it is possible to have larger amounts of missing data in the same data set. Burton (1996) describes five techniques to estimating data in cross-cultural codes.³⁶ They are: the variable mean technique, the case mean technique, the contingency table technique, the Z-score technique and the regression analysis technique.

Ethical Issues

The scientific and technological development of some countries or cultures, as well as their researchers creates conflict with developing nations or other cultures when the foreign researcher exploits the natural resources of this developing country without giving to them any social and scientific satisfaction. Many host culture scholars feel they are ignored or that their research area is being invaded. Herbert C. Kelman pointed out that in some nations or cultures there is a growing resentment of academic colonialism where the external investigator is seen as exploiting a natural resource, namely, the social-cultural heritage of the people.³⁷ An example of this resentment is well expressed through the famous Camelot and Sympathetic projects conducted in Latin America during the sixties. The magazine *Science* reported that "the Camelot affair has seriously damaged prospects for independent academic research in the hemisphere."³⁸

In order to reduce ethical problems in cross-cultural research the following points must be taken into consideration:

1. Organization of a research team, including members of all cultures involved in the investigation.
2. Sensitivity to the meaning of research in different countries or cultures.
3. Autonomy of action for investigators in each culture.
4. Patient development of mutual interaction and collaboration.
5. Decentralization of funds.
6. Mutual budget cooperation.

Types of Cross-Cultural Studies

1. Historical studies: Comparative analysis, using the historical method of characteristics, similarities and differences in already existing materials as primary sources.³⁹ Also, as qualitative research which is not necessarily based on precise measurement and quantitative claims.
2. Descriptive studies: Comparative analysis made through qualitative research, statistical tech-

niques or mathematical theory in order to describe educational phenomena or behavioral facts.

3. Experimental studies: Comparative analysis made through experimental or quasi experimental designs or through observation, field or laboratory experiments. The control of cultural variables and randomization are essential in these studies. Campbell and Stanley's experimental and quasi-experimental designs can be adapted to cross-cultural research.

Types of Cross-Cultural Administrative Designs

1. The investigator analyzes behavioral characteristics or educational components of his culture in other cultures, societies or nations.
2. The investigator analyzes behavioral characteristics or educational components of other cultures to his culture.
3. The investigator from one culture designs a cross-cultural research and invites scholars from the culture under study to join a team, acting as the chairman himself.
4. Cross-cultural designs developed by groups of investigators from different cultures.
5. Cross-cultural designs developed by a group of international or national institutions.

Cultural Learning Theory: A Cross-Cultural Approach

Besides the interest in generating universal general laws of behavior, the scientific orientation of contemporary psychological research has given some recent emphasis to the development and application of the cross-cultural method, traditionally left to Anthropology and related fields as it was presented at the beginning of this chapter.

On the other hand, in order to generate principles and laws of human behavior, it is necessary to make use of a comparative method. Basic research demonstrates that the study of cultures without previously defining the cultural variation, generates results that differ from the ones that include such variation.⁴⁰ This fact leads us to present the research hypothesis "the more the intracultural variation in a sample, the more the probability to draw generalized conclusions with a high level of external validity."

Social and Cultural Learning

Nevertheless, the majority of cross-cultural research divides the cultural variation (example Latin Culture vs. Anglo-Saxon Culture), but not the intra or subculture, which is the one that defines the first variation.

For example, to talk about American culture, without defining the subcultural variations (as the molding of the behavior performed by the migratory European groups, native Indians, Africans, Hispanics, Asians or other relevant cultural groups) leads us to a distortion of the results about American culture. Studies made by Diaz-Guerrero and Peck (1968) and Escotet (1973, 1976, 1992) related to the measurements of values and affective domains, determine that the last ones acquire different meanings for the subjects of the research according to the degree of cultural interaction that is introduced in the research's design.

Also, the group of elements described before and the different components of individual learning and social learning analyzed by other researchers, have caused us to develop a new conception of learning capable of measurement, which is called cultural learning. In general terms, learning is an epistemological process in which the individual (individual learning), society (social learning) and culture (cultural learning) take part. Learning is a fundamental process in life. Every human being learns and by means of learning develops behavioral and cultural patterns which enable him to function in society.

By means of the cross-cultural method, we have been able to infer techniques different from the traditional ones. We have also been capable of expanding the research hypothesis that man not only learns from imitation, observation, etc. but there are other forms of learning which are not simply learning from models. In our research, we have been able to identify the assimilation, segregation, extinction and cultural interaction. These have been determined among other principles that differ from any other approach to the present moment and that conforms to a new dimension of cognitive and affective learning which we call **cultural learning**.

Moreover, while the studies of Bandura, Walters, Dollard, Miller, Staats, Honigman, Berkowitz and many more have emphasized the processes that take place in the individual in relation to the group, our studies have concentrated on defining the changes in behavior of one subculture as a function of the other. This approach is immersed in a concept of unity and cultural gestalt that allows us to measure the cultural components in an isolated manner, and the set of cultural practices which in contact with other sets produce different contingencies for cultural survival.

This theory was generated in the search of methodological cross-cultural patterns, rather than in the deliberated development of postulates and principles. As was discussed earlier, the cultural method has changed from a basic historic-descriptive study to qualitative research and experimental. Because of this, the cross-cultural method constitutes a determinant instrument to get empirical data about human behavior.

Nevertheless, the majority of cross-cultural research in psychology and education has been misplaced in cross-cultural terms or it has been reductionism. For example, we could point out that:

1. A research design of a culture without a subcultural variation, can not be considered cross-cultural. It is even worse when someone does research of a culture different than his and the results are considered cross-cultural.
2. The majority of cross-cultural research has studied the differences of behavior, but not the similarities. Differences and similarities are required to establish valid cross-cultural conclusions.
3. When the subcultural samples are incorporated as cross-cultural design samples, they generate an artificial experiment or descriptive research. This can give results that characterize cultural practices of a subculture but that do not characterize those practices of interaction between the other subculture which is, in short, the observable behavior.

It is precisely because of this last point that our hypothesis about cultural learning research developed. The evolution of our cultural learning hypothesis can be traced through one of the research projects we did that generated later studies, from 1969 to 1992.⁴¹

At first, the objective of our study was to simply measure the hierarchy of values of three subcultural samples of the United States: the Chicanos or Mexican-Americans, the Navajo Indians and the Anglo-Americans from the State of Colorado. At the beginning we applied a scale developed by Peck and Diaz-Guerrero in order to measure 15 factors. We formed four selected groups of students, three of which adapted to all of the three subcultures. The other group consisted of a mixture of Chicano and Anglo-American students. We were surprised to see that the hierarchy of values of the Chicanos we measured separately, and the same hierarchy of values, which we measured in an integrated way to the Anglos had suffered some important variations in the position of some factors. We thought that these results were due to error in the design and external variables. But we also established the hypothesis that the methodology used to artificially separate the samples, generated different results from the ones we expected.

But after repeating the study several times and finding similar results each time, we conducted a Solomon experimental design, in which, with the same subcultures we derived the following groups. One group made up of Anglo-American students; another group made up of Chicano students and one group made up of Navajo students. Three other groups like these were formed. But to these last ones we explained different concepts of respect and presented audiovisual

material about them that was later discussed. All this was done as an experimental treatment. A seventh group was formed in which the three subcultures were integrated and to which the previous treatment was applied. And finally there was another group made up of the three integrated subcultures but to which no treatment was applied. At the end, the hierarchy of values and the meaning of the concepts of respect were measured, according to behavioral scales previously validated in these subcultures. The findings determined that the concept of respect was substantially modified in the integrated group that received the treatment, but it was the same in the subcultural separated groups that received the same treatment.

This not only means that the methodological strategy modified the results, but that a new hypothesis emerged; a new type of learning exists that only shows itself through an interaction or cultural break-up different from social and individual learning and highly related to ethnic identity. Later studies, including those that replicated research by Segall, Campbell and Herkovits, regarding cultural differences of the perception of geometric illusions, reaffirm the hypothesis of cultural learning and show us some principles that identify it.

In studies made in Colombia about early learning, rules of upbringing and the development of behavior, Ardila insists also in a modeling learning for a determined culture, different from the learning models of Bandura and Walters.⁴²

There are studies being done with different Venezuelan subcultures and migratory European groups. These studies support our research hypothesis: There are a series of basic principles for cultural learning. In order to understand these we have to find, experimentally, laws of human behavior with universal validity.

To achieve this we have to discriminate between the proportion of variation, due to universal parameters and the proportion determined by specific cultural contingencies. Cross-cultural psychology will have in cultural learning the essence of its scientific discipline or at least a significant part of it, while other areas of Psychology can help shape this discipline. Will cultural learning become the core of cross-cultural education and psychology? Additional and extensive research regarding the relationship between the process of learning and culture will determine the answer to this question.

Ethnocentric and Cultural Learning

At this moment in time, it is possible to establish a dichotomy between cultural learning and ethnocentric learning. The latter involves assimilation, cultural isolation, ignorance, fragmented thinking, prejudice

and internalization of negative cultural practices, while cultural learning determines acculturation, intellectual growth, holistic thinking, creativity, attitude toward participation, solidarity, and democracy. Three learning principles can be identified in relationship to this dichotomy:

Assimilation: Takes place when one ethnic or cultural group acquires the behavior, values, perspectives, ethos and characteristics of another cultural or ethnic group and sheds its own cultural characteristics. Practice of assimilation by any group determines complete loss of its original culture. This learning mechanism is used to reinforce different forms of ethnocentrism and develops cultural involution. Conflict resolution is based on competition and aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

Acculturation: Takes place when cultures come into contact, influence each other, and an interactive exchange of cultural elements occurs. When acculturation is used by an ethnic group, the culture is modified but maintains its essence. This is the most important learning principle for developing cultural learning. Conflict resolution is based on cooperation, tolerance and peaceful attitudes.

Accommodation: Takes place when groups of different cultures, values and ethos maintain their separate identities, no interaction occurs but they live in a peaceful relation. The practice of this mechanism involves the complete maintenance of cultural differences and differentiating group identification. Accommodation only permits natural growth, but neither cultural learning nor ethnocentric learning is developed. Tends to avoid conflict.

The first two principles of learning are separated by at least six stages of cultural development (see Figure 6.1) which have elements in common to Banks typology.⁴³ Individual members of ethnic groups are at different stages of cultural or ethnocentric learning which can be identified and described.

The stages are multidimensional, linear and non-linear: they are not necessarily sequential; people can experience the stages moving in all directions, stages can be reached vertically or horizontally, and it is possible that a person may never experience a particular stage. These six development stages are:

Cultural Ethnocentrism: Internalization of the ethnic and negative cultural practices. The individual or group practices ethnic and cultural separatism. Development of assimilation, cultural isolation, cultural ignorance, fragmented thinking, prejudice and nationalism. Cultural involution.

Knowledge of Cultural Behavior: Knowledge of undesirable cultural practices of his/her own culture. May develop social encapsulation and enculturation.

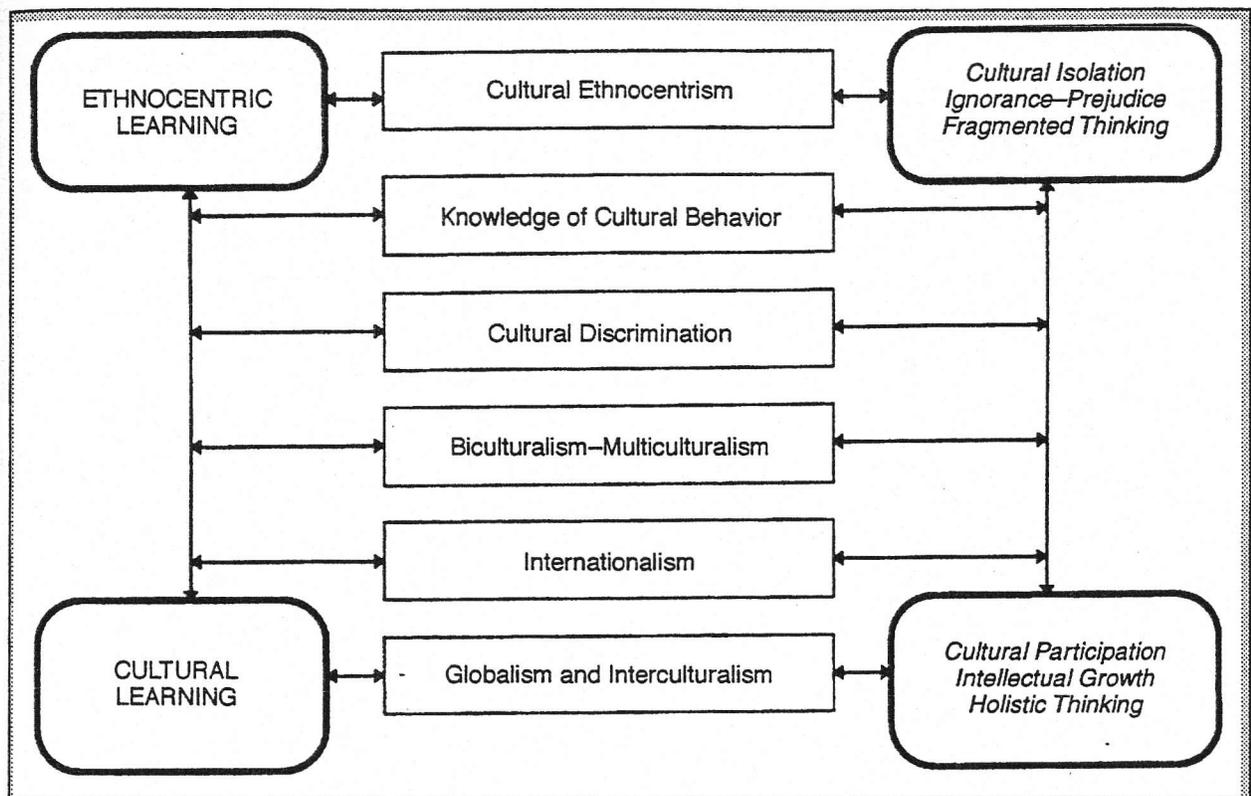


FIGURE 6.1 STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN CULTURAL LEARNING AND ETHNOCENTRIC LEARNING

Cultural Discrimination: Self-evaluation (learning generalization and discrimination) in relation to cultural practices and attitudes towards his/her own culture. Differentiation between desirable and undesirable practices.

Biculturalism or Multiculturalism: Attitudes, skills and commitment needed to participate in another culture (s) without losing his/her own culture. Respect for other cultures and ethnic groups but not necessarily interrelating with them.

Internationalism: Reflective national and ethnic identifications and the skills, attitudes and commitment needed to function within a range of cultural groups and nationalities. Capable of developing social interaction among members of different nations or societies.

Globalism and Interculturalism: The individual has reflective and positive ethnic, national, international and intercultural identifications. The intercultural person has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and commitment needed to function within cultures throughout his/her nation and world: thinks globally and acts locally. Learning by diversity, acculturation, intellectual growth, holistic thinking, creativity, attitude toward participation, solidarity, and democracy. Cultural evolution.

Without a doubt, the reality of the educational experience in the world demands the removal of a nationalistic, discriminatory and racist education. Cross-cultural research and cultural learning can be the tools and moving forces towards an interethnic and intercultural education. The aim is not only to provide access to education regardless of race, religion, social class, age or gender, but to promote and maintain an education respectful of diversity as an ecological cultural system; an education which teaches to appreciate differences as a means towards individual and collective growth. These goals are attainable provided that the school integrates into its curriculum universal cultural variables as well as those pertaining to its particular cultural environment. It is an unfortunate paradox of our time that while technology abridges boundaries, space and time, the more advanced societies increasingly detach themselves, culturally and economically, from the impoverished ones, and harbor lack of solidarity and disguised racism. These ethnocentric practices endanger the survival of mankind and are a symptom of the degradation of cultural relations among ethnic groups and nations. We need to build a culture for peace and to disregard forever the culture of war which has been the consequence of reinforcing ethnocentrism in people's minds.

Notes

- 1 Harold J. Noah and Max A. Eckstein. 1969. *Toward a Science of Comparative Education*. London: The Macmillan Company, p. 121.
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