
A Look at the Impact of Culture Change on Family

The effects of culture change on the family are so diverse and evident in our contemporary society. This paper examines the effects of culture change to the family which includes both positive and negative. The main discussions are hosted in the body which comes after the introductory part of this paper. The next part features the verdict and finally the references appear in the last page.

There are blurry boundaries between the family as an institution and the society's culture change since change is inevitable. Murdock (1949) cited by Haralambos and Holborn (2008), defines the family as "a socio-cultural group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a culturally approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adapted, of the sexually cohabiting adults." Giddens on the other side defines culture change as the alteration of culture order which may involve progress. He outlines culture change as either cultural, physical environmental or political (Giddens, 2006). The family as an institution is part of the society, therefore a change in one part of the society may affect the family either directly or indirectly with negative or positive impacts.

Types of families

The family is a social unit created by blood, marriage or adoption and can vary in types for instance nuclear and extended families. These types of families are based on either organization, form of marriage, authority or residence. Some are as follows: Nuclear family which constitutes of the father, mother and children only. The extended family is also a type on its own which encompasses the nuclear family members plus the relatives such as uncle, aunt, cousin and other closely related kins. Single parent families are part of this categorization where these families consist of one parent raising one or more children. Step families are evident in the current society which entails the merging of two families into one in cases of prior divorces or death of spouses. There are grandparent families which entails grandparents raising their grandchildren (Nam, 2004). Patriarchal and matrilineal families are based on authority while avunculocal and neolocal fall under residence categorization. The types of families are many and so fluid today due to culture changes.

Culture construction of the family

Culture change has affected the family in that the industrial revolution has had a great impact to

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the family as an institution. For example in Kenya, the patriarchal nature of the family. In the pre-modern families, men went out to work as the wives did household chores. The husband was regarded as the breadwinner. However this concept of the family has changed where women have been educated and are now into professions just as men. The number of single-parent families and cases of divorce has increased which is a negative impact to the family. On the other hand, it's beneficial to the family where both the husband and the wife are working because it gives them the ability to support the family needs (Zeitlin et al., 1995).

Change in culture roles

Cultural roles in the pre-modern families are quite different from the modern families due to the culture change. For example among the Dinka, boys used to herd cattle while girls and young women went to gather. Currently this is not the situation in the families today. The culture roles taken by the girls and the boys are so fluid. For example nowadays girls go out to dig in the farms and also get employed in different jobs such as M-pesa shops where they work and earn an income. Similarly boys in the current families also go to work and do household chores such as cooking, cleaning utensils and washing their clothes. The positive side of it is that family members are now versatile and one can do any job or task. However this independence (economic) has resulted to many ladies refusing to get married since they feel they can sustain themselves to the extent of investing into test-tube-babies (Van Den Berghe, 1979 cited by Graemem, 2013).

Change in family sizes

Bane (1976) cited by Nam (2004) posits that the family sizes are getting smaller and mobility has separated up some families. Culture change has contributed to the reduction in the percentage of the "classical" nuclear and extended families. Currently one-parent families and quasi-family units based on non-marital cohabitations have dominated the society. This has affected the family as an institution negatively because cultureization of children is not effective. That is, a child raised by one parent will automatically lack the culture values and aspects that the missing figure would have delivered.

Change in recreational values

Recreational activities in which families in the past engaged in have changed in the modern society. This is as a result of innovations and human creativity. This culture change has had a great impact to the family's recreational values. The family members in the current society have adapted new recreational values and activities. For example in the past society's families, children would gather around fireplaces with their respective grandparents who would narrate to them stories and legendary tales. This was highly valued since it was a way for the children to

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learn life lessons and also get cultureised into the society's culture traits (Zeitlin et al., 1995).

This is not the case in the current families. Nowadays parent buy for their children gadgets such as PlayStations and brickgames among others which they play with their children at home. Children in the contemporary families also have smartphones where they are much more interested in the internet than the fairy tales of the past. Post-modern families value the internet to the extent of installing home-faiba and Wi-Fi connections at home. The time which would have been spent listening to stories is now being spent on the internet through devices such as smartphones and other digital activities such as watching movies and soap-operas. Thus, this culture change has affected cultureization of the children at the family level in a way (Graemem, 2013). The negative side of this effect is therefore ineffective cultureization of the young generation where they engage in deviant activities like pre-marital sex and drug abuse due to the exposure. Contrary, the positive impact of this effect is that the family members are more literate due to the exposure.

Change in economic activities

There has been a great shift from the agrarian society to the current industrialized society. The economic activities at the family levels have changed due to this culture change. The means and modes of earning an income to sustain the families have changed which has had a great impact to the family as a culture institution. For example in the agrarian era, production was based on the family and children and women were the source of labour. Hence the families were large so that they could cultivate the family land for mass production. Polygamous families with many children dominated the society which is not the case in the current society. Currently most areas have been urbanized and people have been moving from rural areas to urban areas to get employment in the industries and companies. This change has affected the families in that nuclear families with few children have been the order of the day. Families are trying to keep their numbers small for mobility purposes. It's common to find families where the husband is working in a different area from the wife where the wife stays with the children and they only meet on weekends. Nowadays it's also common that most families have two homes; one in the towns or urban areas and the other in the rural areas where they go on weekends or holidays (Nam, 2004).

Solution

As its evident that culture change is a two sided sword to the family. Solutions to these negative impacts can be deployed to try and save the family from culture erosion. The advancement in technology can be viewed as a catalyst to enhance morals and culture traits rather than viewing it as a stumbling block. For example, educational programs can be hosted on television channels to educate the children to try to bring them up as fully cultureized members of the

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family. Also marital programs can be hosted on the TV channels and the internet too through platforms such as blogs and YouTube channels to educate couples on the importance of the family and how to solve disputes so as to reduce the number of divorces and thus single-parenthood among others.

Conclusion

Since change is inevitable, it should be viewed from a positive dimension. Culture change affects the families and we cannot avoid the impacts of culture change to the families. Therefore it's good if we accept the influence of culture change on the family.

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