

Elements and Levels Of Culture

UNESCO Definition:

Recently the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization described culture as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group that encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyle, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs (2002).

It appears that the basis of all human behaviors and beliefs is the group's specific values system. Values represent the core of any culture and comprise psychological, spiritual, and moral phenomena.

Elements of Culture:

*Social Heritage/ Traditions /Way of Life
Human Environment/ Behavior /Rules of Social
Life /Values /Norms /Time /Language
Relationships /Sense of Self/ Food Eating
Habits /Beliefs Attitudes /Cognitive Knowledge
Mental Processes /Learning /Material Life
/Dress Appearance /Work and Leisure Habits
Information and Communication /Greetings
Celebrations /Religion /Symbols /Meanings
Dialects.....etc*

Types and Levels of Culture:

The term Culture often refers to National culture. However, nationality alone does not define culture. People's behaviors and preferences are influenced by several other cultures: Global

environment, ethnicity, race, religion, occupation, family, friends,

and even individual value systems. For example, people everywhere are influenced by political and social systems as well as economic development. Business people are influenced by industrial, organizational, and professional culture. Socially, people are, of course, influenced by family and friends. Accordingly, the following types of culture can be identified:

- Universal culture refers to culture of all humans and nationalities.
- Civilization culture refers to culture of particular civilization, which comprises different nationalities with similar political systems, economic development, ethnic roots, and religion values
- National culture refers to culture of a particular national group, sometimes called "Country Culture". National culture can be defined in this way as long as nation and country have clearly defined regional boundaries. However, this is not always the case. Different nationalities can coexist within the geographic boundaries (limits) of a single country and have different cultures. For example four different nationalities; Serbs, Croatians, Kosovars, and Macedonians, each with different culture, used to belong to a one single country, the former Yugoslavia.
- Regional culture refers to the culture of a particular geographical region, such as the southeastern of the United States (casual and relaxed) or the Northeastern (formal and busy), each with

- different values, priorities, and lifestyles.
- Generation culture refers to the culture of a particular generation. Generations may have different values, preferences, and needs.
 - Industry culture refers to the culture of specific industry, industries such as tourism, banking, construction, retailing, or pharmaceuticals have their own specific cultures because they share different worldviews on how to organize and manage a business.
 - Professional culture refers to the culture of a specific profession. Distinct occupational and professional groups (e.g., doctors, lawyers, engineers...) have their unique cultures because they differ in their task requirements, beliefs, and values, have distinct codes of conduct, and even have unique dress codes.
 - Organizational/Corporate culture refers to culture of specific organization. Organizations and corporations have different cultures because they are influenced by the different nature of industry, business, product, and services.
 - Family culture refers to family's structure and cohesion, the nature of relationships between its members, roles and responsibilities of wives and husbands, as well as orientation towards religion, politics, and economy.
 - Individual culture refers to an individual's value system, beliefs, ideas, expectations, actions, attitudes, and intentions, all of

which are often influenced by demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, income, years of formal education...) and personality (e.g., motivations and knowledge...).

The above presented conceptions of culture can be regarded as different levels of culture. As a result, one may distinguish several levels of culture. At the bottom of the pyramid and the lowest level of culture is individual culture, characterized by values and standards of the individual. The second level is represented by organizational and family culture that are shared by the smallest social groups, for example: organizations, families, or clans. The third level comprises industry and professional cultures, which are shared by groups or communities like physicians and car industrials. The fourth level refers to nation, origin or residence culture that is shared by people of the same nationality, country of origin, or country of residence. The fifth level is represented by civilization culture and comprises different nationalities with similar political system, economic stages of development, ethnic roots, and religious values. Finally, the sixth level is represented by universal human culture. This highest level represents culture of all humans and nationalities, their ways of life, behaviors, values, ideas, and morals.

These levels are interdependent and influence each other all the time.