

# What model underlies patterns and practices of parenting?

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## Abstract

The study was an ethnographic research carried out in the *Aymara* community of Tupe, mountains near Lima, Peru. The search aimed to find what models underlie patterns and practices of parenting children from Tupe and what model underlies education. The question that served as starting point was: Is the model underlying patterns and practices of parenting and education model compatible? The research began from the importance of cultural compatibility, which suggests that if education is compatible with the upbringing patterns, you can expect improvements in learning. After the ethnographic study, models of upbringing and education were developed. It was found that both models had major differences and that in order to improve children's education, it was important to incorporate features from the model underlying patterns and practices of parenting.

**Keywords:** Patterns – practice - rearing - education - model.

## 1. Introduction

This study started from an interest in contributing to the understanding of the low performance of children in rural areas, based on a case study. The study was carried out in the Highlands of Lima, in Tupe, an *Aymara* community, 3,200 meters above sea level.

Academic performance studies conducted in rural areas by the Area of Quality Measurement of the Ministry of Education from 1986 until 2008 show that it is still very low. Quantitative studies were conducted to find factors related to the problem, and since the year 2005 the need for qualitative studies has arisen in order to understand this. So far, there are no solutions in this regard, but the need for studies on upbringing patterns has been confirmed. The study aimed to fill this gap in understanding the relationship between patterns and parenting practices and patterns and teaching practices. The main question was: Is the model underlying patterns and practices of parenting and education model compatible?

The starting point is the importance of cultural compatibility, which suggests that if education is compatible with parenting patterns you can expect similarities between the everyday practices that parents apply and those applied by the school teachers.

The cultural compatibility hypothesis was developed by Deyhle, 1987; Jordan, 1985; Tharp, 1989; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987. Most of the evidence relating

to cultural issues in education comes from halls of Native Americans from the western part of the United States and Canada, Alaska and Hawaii. They are all ethnographic studies that are based on the relationship between education and culture.

## **2. Frame of reference**

### ***2.1. Patterns and practices of upbringing***

It was not easy to develop the framework which was our reference in the process of research on patterns and rearing practices; we are based on studies<sup>27</sup> related to the processes of socialization and parenting. We have the contributions of Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict. They believe that all subjects and stages involved in the process of socialization of the subjects of a group shape them into a way of being, a structure which can be his personality, thus relating culture and personality. This suggests the relative importance of the guidelines of a group, their regularities, i.e. their "patterns".

Search finally led us to the comparative study of six cultures by Whiting (1963) on patterns of parenting, "Six Cultures. Studies of Child Rearing" by three universities Cornell, Harvard and Yale. The selected places were: Nyansongo, a community in Gusii, Kenya; the Khalapur Rajputs in India; a villa in Okinawa; the Juxtlahuaca Mixtecs in Mexico; Iloco, a neighborhood in the Philippines; and the new English of the city of Orchard in the United States.

This study was a synthesis of anthropological and psychological constructs in an effort to clarify behavior patterns. And for us, it was the starting point for the development of our frame of reference.

The authors argue for observation and interpretation of children in their natural settings, where they carry out actions that are significant from the point of view of the actors. That is why they suggest the importance of linking "scenarios" (as they call it) where socialization takes place and "actors" that are present in it. They claim that what shows greater variations between culturally diverse societies are these combinations of scenarios and actors.

The "scenario" as they call it, would refer to ecology, economy, the social organization and politics of these various places. These scenarios would provide the background parameters for the behavior of the rearing agents; in other words, they influence the patterns and practices carried out by adults in the upbringing of children.

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<sup>27</sup> Referring to anthropological studies of Mead, Benedict, Deng, Erchak, Freed & Freed, Grindal, Honigmann & Honigmann, Howard, Jocano, Kawharu, Kaye, Landy, Leis, Peshkin, Read, Williams.

We were interested in the description of these scenarios, the issues considered in these descriptions of each context and the actors, especially children. With regard to descriptions of the context, this topic was dealt with in these studies concerning the development of the lifecycle, and the priority activities of each cultural group where the ethnographic research took place. Regarding guidelines and practices, the authors noted patterns (regularities) of behavior of children and adults in the activities, in ceremonial life rituals, in beliefs about the supernatural, the theories of disease, among others.

We could summarize that when we mention patterns and rearing practices we are referring to:

- Adult activity (especially women) on the child
- The cultural orientations of the group as regards training, care and development of children
- Description of the lifecycle, from pregnancy to puberty. An emphasis on the role of women.
- Customs being transmitted to new generations in the socialization process.
- Knowledge, behaviors and skills are expected to be acquired by the new generations.

Taking these basic aspects into account, it was very broad to work on these issues and we established categories that could serve as a reference for addressing them. And we obtained these base categories to review that which concerned education.

## ***2.2. On patterns and practices of education***

Another important issue considered was patterns and practices of education, where we found that there is a vast American literature on ethnographic analysis of education<sup>28</sup> and referrals to ethnographic books in classrooms<sup>29</sup>. In these studies topics are:

- Interactions
- The ritual followed in the classroom
- Teaching styles / learning styles

The question that helped us to focus on leading this part of the study was: Which elements are those taken into account by a teacher<sup>30</sup> in order to organize a class in the classroom with pre-school children and how teaching is understood by the Ministry of Education in Peru.

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<sup>28</sup> We have the studies of Gallimore, Boggs & Jordan, Wolcott.

<sup>29</sup> We have the studies of Cox, Shultz & Florio, Splinder.

<sup>30</sup> It led us to review what are considered by the teacher to plan and implement that organization in classroom. So we take as a reference guide of the Ministry of Education in 1998.

Teaching<sup>31</sup> is understood in the basic curricular structure of initial education (5 years) and primary education of minors<sup>32</sup> as "generator of an eminently interactive process, where children build their learning in an active relationship with their context, with their peers, their work materials and the teacher." There is always an intentional interaction created by the teacher in the educational process. Educational interaction will be effective to the extent that the teacher interventions are appropriate and responsive to the interests, needs and level of development of students. "In this context education can be conceived as a set of aids offered by the teacher to the children in the personal knowledge construction process" (1998: 19-20).

This notion of teaching is designed with these characteristics: focusing on the student and his personal process; interested in the type of interaction established by professor according to the interests of students; for that interaction to be timely, the professor intentionally supports through a set of aids that he or she organizes previously. And, in these ages (5 years) interaction and communication with the child is most relevant.

If we talk about patterns and practices of education, we are referring to regularities, orientations, actions expressed in the Guide of the Ministry which is followed by most of the teaching staff of the public sector. These elements and others that we incorporated after revising literature on education became categories from which we gathered information on patterns and practices of parenting.

These elements (categories) were:

- a. The Organization, understood as the arrangement of time, space, the content, activities and resources offered by the teacher in the classroom (Uria, 1988; Meyer & Rowan, 1983; Hargreaves, 1992)
- b. The contents to be provided or developed, which can be conceptual, procedural or attitudinal. (Uria, 1988; Rosales, 1988; Ciscar & Uria, 1993)
- c. Interactions (roles) carried out between the teacher and the parents; between colleagues; with children. These roles depend on the characteristics assigned to children as well as adults. (Uria, 1988; Hargreaves, 1992; Medina, 1991)
- d. Communication, content and the way of giving it to parents and children. (Uria, 1988; Medina, 1990)
- e. Activities, which refer to programmed actions or not by the teacher to teach. (Uria, 1988; Medina, 1990)

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<sup>31</sup> This notion of teaching is also maintained in the curricular year 2000 proposal.

<sup>32</sup> The Structure Curricular Basic, is the Official document of the Ministry of Education and the governs all relating to the level which in this case is that of initial education and primary.

f. Regulations, such as rules established by teachers or in agreement with the children. (Gotzenz, 1997; Watkins & Wagner, 1991)

g. Values developed or promoted by the teacher in the classroom. (Nereci, 1973).

In short, we will use the following notions:

Rearing-teaching patterns: regularities in the education of boys and girls conceived by adults in a community or by the teachers.

Rearing-teaching practices: regularities in everyday practice applied by parents and teachers to educate boys and girls.

These regularities were observed in all the above respects (life cycle, customs, etc.) and from the above-mentioned categories.

Model: for us it will be an abstraction of what we found based on the seven categories mentioned above.

### **3. Methodology**

We proceeded with a study at a descriptive level, an ethnographic study type, since the interest focused on identifying patterns and practices both in parenting and education, and from then on determine the similarities or differences.

Field work was conducted in five stages. The first stage consisted in getting to know the area, talking to the authorities there and finding lodging. During the second stage, a census of the area was carried out; the third was devoted solely to field work; the fourth consisted in contrasting the findings in the community of Tupe with those in schools and in the last stage, the underlying models were elaborated..

After fourteen months, the research came to an end. The last four months of this work were devoted to analyzing and elaborating the underlying models.

The only limitation was having to reduce our visits to certain times of the year because of other tasks that were pending.

Likewise, to save the time constraints and results we found, we decided to choose random couples who had several children or were couples who would potentially have them so as to observe this process of girls and boys. It was not difficult since it is normal for families to have at least four children.

#### **3.1. Categories of analysis**

We have taken into account those categories that are very important in relation to those considered in the teaching-learning sessions in the classroom such as:

- a. The organization, understood as the available time, space, the content, activities and resources offered by the teacher in the classroom or by the adult in the community.
- b. The contents to be provided or developed, which can be conceptual, procedural or attitudinal.
- c. The interactions (roles) carried out between the teacher or parents; with the children. The roles will depend on the characteristics assigned to children and adults by the teacher or by the adult community.
- d. Communication, content and how to offer it.
- e. Activities, which refer to programmed actions or not by the teacher to carry out teaching, activities of the community of the children.
- f. Regulations, as rules established by teachers or in agreement with the children. Or valued or rejected community rules
- g. Values developed or promoted by the teacher in the classroom, or by adults in the community.

### **3.2. Population and sample**

The population of the town of Tupe: 72 couples with young children from 0 to 6 years of age; 54 boys and 40 girls from 0 to 6 years of age and 6 teachers who work in Tupe. There is only one teacher responsible for infants from 0 to 6 years of age.

Deliberate sample

Ten couples:

According to age, place of origin and instruction: 2 young couples between 20 and 29 years of age (one couple from Tupe and one from another zone); 2 young couples between 30 and 39 years (one couple from Tupe and one from another zone); 2 couples between 20 and 37 (a couple from Tupe and one from another zone); 2 couples between 30 and 50 years (a couple from Tupe and one another zone); and 2 single mothers

There was only one teacher responsible for the kindergarten level (which in Peru is called "inicial")

### **3.3. Techniques employed**

- a. Census for the diagnosis.
- b. Participant observation and interviewing children, parents and teacher.
- c. Implementation of a checklist

Collecting information from the categories above entailed:

Observation:

- a. Activities carried out by the adult parents and teacher.
- b. Activities carried out by children by indication of the adult or by their own initiative.
- c. Distribution of time in adults, boys and girls.
- d. Distribution of space in the house and in the classroom.
- e. Games involving boys and girls.
- f. Class sessions.

Interview

- a. On the activities performed by adults, boys and girls.
- b. Games in which they participated.
- c. On the activities carried out by the teacher.
- d. On the ways of controlling boys and girls.
- e. On the distribution of time of adults, boys and girls.

Initial survey (District census)

On each family data

A checklist of skills applied to girls and boys.

## **4. Results**

### ***4.1. We highlight some of the results***

We can say that there is no compatibility between patterns and parenting practices and patterns and practices of education. To be more specific:

- There is no relationship between the content, activities and roles developed in the classroom and that acquired by the children on what they learned in the community. The contents dealing with activities in the area (classification of livestock, diseases, cure, preparation of cheese, marketing, etc.) are very specific to their context and incorporate a range of classifications hardly referred to in the activities carried out in the classroom or considered by the teacher. Roles are also differentiated between girls and boys.
- Many of these contents are expressed through the daily games, games played alone or with peers, in different age groups. A large amount of information is obtained from observation and the interchange when boys and girls play.
- The contents are product of the daily activity. Especially girls who assume obligations of taking care of the younger ones at home unlike boys who assume specific obligations from seven years of age.

- The description of the activities of livestock, trade and agriculture (in this order of hierarchy) allowed a delimitation of the cycle followed both by adults and by children of the community each month of the year. This cycle does not coincide with the school year, and that is why there is absence at certain times of the year when the girl is five years old and there are other younger family members.
- One of highly appreciated values among the Tupe community is the autonomy achieved by girls from the age of five. This autonomy is reinforced by other older girls. You could say that it is women who have leadership in this community. Besides, competitiveness among all children is encouraged. They are always competing and adults are always comparing.
- A highly valued attitude among the Tupe community is the resistance to physical pain. He who does not overcome a disease is openly questioned; he is considered useless.
- There are a number of skills achieved by children which are not profited in the classroom activities. Beginning with balance, motor skills, achieved through activities carried out according to roles assigned in the community.
- Adult relationship with children is direct during the first months, then the older sisters take care, and adults only guide when needed. Between the ages of 9 months to five years bonds with their older sisters are reinforced. The brotherhood relationship is very strong and the community reinforces this as a value.
- The adult only rewards and stimulates when something has been well done. One way to control children is through stories, especially those of missing people and those of souls in pain.
- Support among peers of the same sex is very strong and consolidated from age 5 in the girls. And boys from age 6.
- In the classroom, the teacher emphasizes obedience and questions the autonomy of the girl to decide; they are rewarded or stimulated only if they have been obedient (if they have been subject to his authority). Furthermore, the teacher encourages participation and leadership of the boy and not of the girls.
- Not all children and the community girls attend initial school. The average attendance rate is 20 children per classroom.

#### **4.2. Conclusions**

- All interaction in the classroom is the reproduction of the interaction learned by children and girls (pattern and practice). When they just start school, in the best of cases they will try to reproduce their patterns and practices and understand those of the teacher to be able to start a relationship.



- In most situations the teacher tries to adjust a certain psychological theory of how a boy or girl has to be in the classroom and does not ask himself why this child behaves this way or that way.
- The relationship patterns and practices of education versus patterns and practices of rearing really express a communicational relationship: knowledge, behaviors recognized in the social group which the children come from and the social group which the teacher comes from.
- To understand how this pattern and practice is would improve the relationship between both sides.
- It is those levels of coherence between the contents received at home and those learned elsewhere, which would improve learning. Contents that are expressed mostly through playing.
- Ethnographic studies in the classroom would allow a better understanding of the learning situations and finding critical points in the interaction and raising questions about the knowledge we have on boys and girls.
- Ethnography allows furthering the patterns and practices of various actors, that well used would allow improving the situation of the school.

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