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Chapter 2: Culture and people

Multiple choice questions

1. In addition to their shared values, beliefs and patterns of behaviours, members of a particular culture share _____.

a. a common history

b. the same dialect

c. a common racial background

d. a common food preference

2. Culture has been defined differently by scholars from different disciplines, such as philosophy, anthropology, cultural studies and communication. However, scholars tend to agree on some common characteristics of culture. They are _____.

a. Culture is pervasive

b. culture is changing

c. culture is learned

d. all of these

3. Which of the following is NOT true of cultural identity?

a. Identity bounds people from the same cultural group together.

b. Identity bridges boundaries between ingroups and outgroups.

c. Identity presents the link between individuals and the society in which they live.

d. Identity is formed through cultural processes.

4. Some beliefs are seen as very likely to be true; others are seen as less probable. Beyond what is merely truth, cultures have concepts of ultimate significance and long-term importance, known as _____.

a. values

b. worldview

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c. cultural beliefs

d. assumptions

5. In Japan, people of junior position bow to people of senior position when greeting. What point does this example best illustrate?

a. how culture generates a dynamic of role

b. how cultural rules are similar in different contexts

c. how culture defines norms of behaviour for people

d. how culture generates a dynamic of role and how culture defines norms of behaviour for people

6. During the 1800s tango was understood as a primitive dance, too sexual and it was banned in Argentina. Nowadays, it is accepted as part of our social life. This example best illustrates culture is _____.

a. ethnocentric

b. changing

c. shared

d. pervasive

7. We could build a city in Africa similar in appearance to New York, but it would still not be New York. What does this example tell us about culture?

a. Culture is ethnocentric.

b. Elements of culture may not change at the same speed.

c. Culture is dynamic.

d. Our beliefs and values are more subject to change.

8. Kenneth Pike (1967) identified two approaches that may be employed when investigating culture. Which of the following best describes the etic approach?

a. Each culture can only be examined through immersion.

b. Culture may be examined by applying predetermined categories.

c. Culture is learned through socialization.

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d. Each culture is unique.

9. Which of the following statements is a function of a subculture membership?

a. It creates a sense of identification.

b. It sets boundaries between ingroups and outgroups.

c. It provides its members with a set of values and norms for behaviour.

d. all of these

10. Which of the following is NOT true of organizational culture?

a. Employees hold beliefs and values governing their behaviour.

b. Employees develop shared interpretation of organizational reality.

c. Subsidiaries of the same organization operating in different countries have exactly same values.

d. Organizational culture gives employees a sense of identity.

11. Erving Goffman (1969) argued that identity is a theatrical performance. His model offers insights into how _____.

a. cultures and identities are discursive constructions

b. cultures and identities are essentialist

c. cultures and identities are regional first

d. we learn our cultural rules and norms only from our parents

12. The power of heritage demonstrates the continuity of a culture from generation to generation. Pre-colonial Maori society (New Zealand today) was _____.

a. individualistic

b. fragmented

c. communal

d. divided

Short answer questions

1. What does ‘digital culture’ involve and what is its characteristics?

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2. Which layer of culture, according to Dodd's model, do economy systems belong to? Give an example to illustrate how the economic system of a society can reflect its culture.
3. How could organizational culture influence its employees?
4. Why is identity considered a product of social construction?
5. What is ethnography as a research method employed to study culture?

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Short answer questions

1. What does ‘digital culture’ involve and what is its characteristics?

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Ans: Digital culture stands for the changes brought about by contemporary digital, networked and personalized media in our society and it signifies the transformation from print and broadcast centred media to networked media which rely on digital communication technologies. The emergence of digital culture is associated with more user participation, and a more personalized and visually rich media environment. Young people born in and after 1990 are commonly regarded as the digital generation; and the term digital culture has come to refer to the multiple ways in which young people engage with digital media and technologies in their daily lives.

2. Which layer of culture, according to Dodd's model, do economy systems belong to? Give an example to illustrate how the economic system of a society can reflect its culture.
Ans: The economic system of a society falls into the outer layer of culture. An example to show how it reflects culture is in economic transactions. In some remote villages, people still use barter trade for business transactions, whereas in more developed regions, people are more likely to use cash or credit cards to make a purchase. With the advent of communication technologies, digital currency or electronic money is replacing credit/debit cards and cash in physical form such as banknotes and coins. Like traditional money, digital currency may be used to purchase goods and services, such as Google wallet.

3. How could organizational culture influence its employees?
Ans: Organizational culture can be a strong determinant of attitudes to organizational and cultural change. For example, employees in a large hospital in Australia undergoing job change and physical relocation were classified by organizational level, from the CEO to the cleaning and grounds staff. Their attitudes to the change were strongly influenced by their level, with those at higher levels being more positive about the change, which modernized the hospital organization, and less concerned about the physical move. It emerged that for lower-level workers, the location of the hospital and the actual buildings were central to their identity, as their families had been employed in this place for several generations.

4. Why is identity considered a product of social construction?

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Ans: Identity is a product of social construction. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1969), Erving Goffman proposes that identity is a theatrical performance that conveys the self to others in the best possible light, in conformity to cultural and societal norms. Despite the criticisms, Goffman's influential model of self-presentation offers insights into the discursive construction of identity (identity construction through talk and discourse) and the social presentation of self. One important way of self-presentation is through identification with a cultural group. Cultural identity implies a person's sharing of worldview, value system, attitudes, and beliefs with their cultural group. In this sense, cultural identity both locates a person in a cultural group and distinguishes the person from others who are in other groups.

5. What is ethnography as a research method employed to study culture?
Ans: Ethnography refers to a specific research methodology that has been employed to study different cultures and subcultures. According to Gribich (2007: 40), this approach has 'strong links with the anthropological tradition of observation of culture *in situ'*. Ethnographic research aims to describe the whole culture. This will usually involve participation for several years in the setting, learning the language and collecting data. Many ethnographers today spend a shorter time in the field but use a number of data collection techniques to speed up the process of data collection, including focus groups, face-to-face interviewing, participant observation and document analysis. Data gathered from ethnographic studies often cast light on our understanding of the life and culture of particular communities.

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