

CHAPTER

5

DEWEY'S PERSPECTIVE: INTERNATIONALIZATION AND INTERCULTURAL LEARNING DIVERSITY

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

John Dewey is one of the most influential thinkers of the modern philosophy of education. According to him, education is a process that not only enables individuals to acquire knowledge but also to establish a meaningful bond with society. Dewey explains human nature on a social and experiential basis. Individuals are inherently social beings, and their interactions and experiences with their environment shape their development (Berding, 1997). Education is a tool that supports both the individual's personal and social development. At the same time, education is a fundamental mechanism for the sustainability of a democratic society and for individuals to develop a sense of social responsibility (Dewey, 1999). Higher education, on the other hand, is an area where individuals gain sensitivity to social problems and establish a meaningful interaction with cultural diversity, beyond the acquisition of academic knowledge (Altbach, 2006). The relationship between

Dewey's views and higher education gains special importance in this context.

The concept of experience is central to Dewey's philosophy of education. Experiences play a fundamental role in an individual's understanding of the world. They enrich the individual's cognitive and social development, and this process can be deepened by cultural and social interactions (Dewey, 1938). Intercultural learning in higher education is important in terms of individuals broadening their intellectual horizons and gaining a sense of social responsibility by interacting with different cultural perspectives. Especially in the age of globalization and digitalization, internationalization in higher education has become a subject that supports individuals' development not only in academic terms but also in social and cultural terms (Knight, 2003). In this respect, internationalization in higher education gains a structure that is consistent with and supported by Dewey's ideas.

In Dewey's pragmatism, education is a process that enables individuals to actively participate in society. This brings up the concept of democracy in his philosophy. In the democratic lifestyle that Dewey advocates, individuals should act together in line with common interests (Biesta, 2006). The overarching concept that enables individuals at higher education levels to establish a meaningful connection with the world at an intellectual and social level is internationalization. Accordingly, intercultural learning enables individuals to overcome their own cultural boundaries and develop a meaningful sense of responsibility in a broader social context. It can be said that Internationalization and intercultural learning are a current reflection of Dewey's understanding of education in terms of their characteristics such as individuals understanding differences, developing solutions to global problems, and gaining global citizenship awareness (Deardorff, 2009).

5.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT, PURPOSE, AND METHOD

Dewey's views on education include views that are closely related to today's globalization and Internationalization processes in higher

education. Moreover, he is notable for presenting these views at a very early date. In this respect, he still maintains his potential to be the most important educational philosopher of the twentieth century. In connection with developments such as globalization, concepts such as intercultural learning and internationalization in higher education have become richer and more popular in terms of content today. We believe that considering Dewey's views from about a century ago together with the current understanding of concepts such as intercultural learning and Internationalization in higher education will provide a more meaningful basis for these concepts.

In this study, the social and experiential aspects of human nature will be examined within the framework of John Dewey's philosophy of education. This examination aims to facilitate understanding and strengthen the role of intercultural learning and internationalization in higher education. Because Dewey's approach supports the view that learning together by individuals from different cultures will contribute to both individual and social development. However, it is necessary to take a closer look at this justification and relationship. In this context, the study will examine in detail how cultural diversity deepens the quality of education in higher education, how it expands the intellectual capacities of individuals, and the role of internationalization in individuals gaining a global perspective. In addition, it will be discussed how internationalization and intercultural learning promote democratic values in higher education and how they contribute to the development of individuals as global citizens with a sense of social responsibility.

5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 Human Nature and Social Interaction

Dewey examined human nature on a naturalistic basis. According to Dewey (1999, p. 266), human nature is a combination of social environments and biological processes. Human nature is directly related to biological instincts; however, these instincts are shaped through social

conditions and habits. In other words, social existence and human nature are intertwined. Nature provides a ground that shapes human purposes. In this respect, human nature is both a part of nature and a social construct. Dewey does not position humans in a separate place from the processes in the physical world. He supports his views with Darwin's theory of evolution. A human is a being that interacts with nature, experiencing biological development processes. Human nature is explained not by a metaphysical power but entirely by natural processes.

According to Dewey (1999, p. 326), humans are naturally oriented. Human interaction with their environment is not passive but an active process. He supports this activity with the concept of drive, which he says is "an organic element that prepares desire and thought, initiative and behavior". In this sense, humans do not passively wait for the effects coming from their environment but rather actively intervene in their environment. The formation called experience is shaped in this intervention. This orientation and movement are considered important in terms of enabling human change (Dewey, 1920, pp. 86–87).

According to Dewey (1999, p. 326), drive is not simply an instinctive reaction or impulse. Drive is a basic component that shapes the interaction of the organism with its environment. It is an organic element that prepares desire and thought, initiative and behavior. Emphasizing the biological basis of human behavior while bringing the concept of drive to the fore, Dewey argues that drive is a product of the organism's innate organic structure. With this approach, he remains loyal to Darwin's theory of biological evolution and evaluates human behavior as a result of the evolutionary process between nature and the organism. Therefore, Dewey has the idea that biological processes have a direct effect on behavior. According to him, humans, as evolutionary beings, have developed these drives and instincts while interacting with their environment. This development overlaps with Dewey's understanding of experience. Drive is not only an innate biological structure; it is also a product of the constant interaction between humans and their environment. While drives shape the actions and

behaviors of the individual, these actions and the results of these actions become the elements that constitute the individual's experience.

According to Dewey (1920, pp. 86–87), experience includes two basic elements: doing something and suffering the consequences. If these two elements are closely connected, a real experience occurs. If there is no meaningful connection between the action and the consequences, it cannot be described as an experience. Experience is always interactive. While the individual reacts to his environment, he also shapes his environment as an active subject. As the individual transforms his environment, he also changes and learns. Thus, experience gains depth through the continuous relationship between environmental conditions and the individual's actions.

According to Dewey (1922), human nature begins to take shape with impulse and drive. However, explaining human nature with these two concepts is insufficient. He argues that these characteristics can only gain meaning through social influences. Behaviors are shaped as a result of social learning and the interactions of the individual with his/her social environment. At this stage, he uses the concept of habit. While explaining habits, Dewey starts with what a habit is not. In this direction, he uses the expressions "repetition is by no means the essence of habit. The tendency to repeat is the case of many habits, but not all" (Dewey, 1922, p. 37). He suggests that habit does not consist of involuntary repetitions. In these aspects, he explains habit as "habit means a special sensitivity or accessibility to certain classes of stimuli, constant preferences and aversions, rather than the bare repetition of certain actions" (Dewey, 1922, p. 42). He explains these views with the example of an angry person using violence against the person who provokes him. According to Dewey, this action is not a repetition but a habit. Although the aggression directed at that man occurred only once in the attacker's life, the attacker has a strong tendency towards aggression and expresses it willfully (Soysal, 2024, p. 252). Therefore, habits are not the simple repetition of certain behaviors but tendencies that individuals acquire as a result of their interactions with their social environment. In addition, as a requirement of a person's existence in society, habits also make it

possible to adapt to social conditions. Character is acquired in this way. Character is open to transformation to the extent that individuals maintain continuous interactions with their environment. (Dewey, 1922, pp. 37–42).

In Dewey's (1922) view, humans can change with social and environmental conditions. Therefore, he opposes those who defend the view that human nature is unchangeable. Instincts are primary in human behavior, but they are shaped by the social environment. Innate instincts gain meaning through social interactions. Since social interaction affects instinct, human nature is also open to change. As can be understood, there are complex relationships between social environment, instincts, and habits, and they are specific to the individual. Therefore, the reasons that determine human behavior cannot be reduced to a single factor. As a product of natural and social processes, humans are an organism in constant change and transformation.

5.3.2 Experience-based Education and Higher Education

According to Dewey (2014a, p91), the development of a human being, who is a social being from birth, is shaped as a result of his interaction with the social environment. Through this interaction, the individual can construct himself in a meaningful way. Instead of a fixed and unchanging human nature, we can talk about a human nature that constantly develops through experiences and cannot be explained separately from the social context. Therefore, social interaction is one of the most important factors that form identity (Dewey, 1922, pp. 172–174). At this point, experience, which is understood as a reflection of every moment that individuals interact with their environment, is a fundamental element of education. Educational interaction constitutes the learning process. Such learning deeply affects the cognitive, affective, and social development of individuals.

In Dewey (1938), experience is considered in two basic dimensions. One of them is experience; the other is deep thinking. Experience includes the moments that individuals perceive with their senses and actively participate in and experience. Experience is a concept that can explain the experiences that an individual gains from life and how these experiences gain meaning. Dewey sees experience as a dynamic process that is multidimensional and can change and take shape in a social and cultural context. In this respect, he emphasizes the continuity and changeability in the concept of experience. On the other hand, experience is affected by past experiences and current situations from an individual perspective. It prepares the ground for possible future experiences. Experience undertakes the task of determining the individual's learning and world recognition style. Thanks to the depth and diversity of this task, individuals develop their abilities to not remain indifferent to the world they live in, to think creatively, and to look critically. Therefore, in Dewey's perspective, experience does not only serve individual desires. It is a tool for the individual to transform society. However, Dewey warns that experience alone is not sufficient. In order for the individual to make sense of experiences, they need to be thought deeply about. At this stage, Dewey advances and explains the thinking process. According to Dewey (1957), thinking should be used as a method that saves from impulse and custom. When a person does not think, they evolve towards an animal nature. When they think, they can organize their goals, overcome the unknown, and step into the future. Therefore, people can make sense of their experiences through thinking. Dewey argues that the most efficient learning can be achieved through the combination of thinking and living.

According to Dewey, in the traditional model, knowledge is transferred to students by the teacher. Students accept this knowledge without questioning it. In this model, the efficiency of learning is low. Students can actively participate in the learning process by deriving meaning from their own experiences. In this direction, learning is connected to experience. The concept of experience provides important clues about how educational systems should be organized. In addition

to the cognitive and emotional development of the individual, one of these clues is that education should be structured to provide the individual with the opportunity to establish meaningful relationships with society and to support social responsibility awareness (Dewey, 1999). In this way, the information learned is reflected in the student's life and gains meaning. Experience-based education aims to teach students how to apply knowledge in life. And in particular, it supports students' intellectual and emotional development by encouraging them to think critically. Education should strengthen the social nature of humans. According to his work *Democracy and Education* (1999), education should respond to the needs and expectations of the social environment in which the individual is located. Because the individual's self-development cannot be considered independently of his/her relationship with society. In this context, experiential education provides students with a sense of social responsibility, but more importantly, education is a tool for social reform. The fact that individuals take an active role in society and are responsible indicates the quality of education. In other words, Dewey supports the necessity of considering the development of the individual within the social context and supports the fact that the concept of experience is not limited to individual experiences but also has a social dimension (Dewey, 1938).

Dewey's understanding of social interaction has deeply penetrated into modern educational systems. Today, the influence of Dewey is undeniable in the widespread use of methods such as collaborative learning and group work in education. These methods are based on the idea that humans are in a natural state of behavior and that individuals experience deeper and more permanent learning experiences through social interaction. In this context, Dewey supports students to learn from each other. Thus, education becomes a social process that is a tool for both individual development and social progress (Dewey, 1999). Today, global cooperation in science is increasing (Melkers & Kiopa, 2010). Global collaborations have become a means of progress for a society (Gui et al., 2019). Multidimensional collaboration networks are being woven in the internationalization of higher education institutions and

intercultural learning studies within them. These networks, for example, aim to develop online or face-to-face learning environments between students from different nations (Mattheos et al., 2001; Vinagre, 2017).

Therefore, experience-based education is of great importance in terms of internationalization and intercultural learning in higher education. One of the focal points of experiential education in particular is intercultural interaction. According to Dewey (1999), intercultural interactions enrich the experiences of individuals and contribute to intellectual development. In higher education, students are expected to develop more complex thought processes, evaluate social problems from a critical perspective, and gain different experiences in this process. Considering Dewey's approach to education, it can be said that he would see higher education as a functional process that enables individuals to participate in society in a meaningful and democratic way rather than an opportunity to acquire academic knowledge. Because experiential learning in higher education has content that enables students to face real-world problems and develop analysis and solution skills, which Dewey emphasized. Today, universities offer multicultural learning environments where students from different cultural backgrounds come together. It is clear that the individual and social dimensions of experience-based education support intercultural learning. This richness and contribution can be adapted to the teaching of almost every discipline. Moreover, a learning environment where different cultural perspectives coexist allows individuals to question their own perspectives, respect different ways of thinking, and develop critical thinking skills. Dewey (1999) states that this type of educational model helps individuals develop a sense of global citizenship.

5.3.3 The Place of Internationalization and Intercultural Learning in Dewey

According to Hickman and Alexander (1998), education in the global world is not only local but also international. This education should be evaluated especially within the framework of intercultural interactions.

According to Dewey (1938), students gain experiences in accordance with the society they join and the environmental conditions they communicate with. Students who are shaped by their experiences pave the way for future social change. Dewey's ideas are closely related to the concepts of Internationalization and intercultural learning. For Dewey (1998), education enables individual development as well as transcending local, cultural, or national boundaries. Education should enable collaborative problem-solving and develop a common culture towards the universal area.

When Dewey wrote his texts, ignoring different cultures was an important agenda. Although it is still an important agenda today, it is possible to say that this situation has been overcome in many countries. According to Garrison et al. (2016), Dewey argues that the learning processes of students from different cultural and social backgrounds should be supported. In this way, students can gain a broader world view than their own cultural perspectives. Dewey (1999) argues that students establish meaningful interaction by understanding different cultures through education. Intellectual and social development is enriched through interaction with different cultures. Different cultural backgrounds should be accepted rather than ignored (Dewey, 1999). Dewey's statement that "the power of choice between various values and a sensitive imagination of things of intellectual value are the basic marks of a cultured mind" (Dewey, 2014b, p. 117) supports intercultural learning environments that especially provide value diversity. Intercultural learning increases the power of choice and the power to think about things that have intellectual value.

According to Dewey, education involves a social and cultural context. This context is a life context that forms the student's environment. If there are different lifestyles, values, and perspectives in this social and cultural context, the student will have the opportunity to understand them. By combining this experience of the student with deep thinking, critical thinking skills increase, and the possibility of social reform is strengthened (Dewey, 1999). In this direction, for Dewey,

it is individually and socially valuable for students not to remain within their own cultural boundaries during their educational processes.

Establishing a meaningful relationship with different cultural perspectives is necessary for the society as well as for the students themselves. Cultural diversity can be addressed in two ways in educational systems. First, cultural diversity protects individuals' own cultural identities. Second, it allows them to develop respect and understanding for other cultures. Dewey (1946; 2019) thinks that these two aspects turn students into global citizens. Global citizenship means developing sensitivity not only to local problems but also to social, political, and economic problems worldwide. The route of both aspects is cultural. Students adapt to both local and global society. Students develop sensitivity to world problems while understanding themselves within the local community and becoming part of the global society. An educational system that wants to create this process strongly must adapt to constantly changing social and cultural conditions. In other words, according to Dewey, it is challenging for an educational system that only includes local elements to adapt to constantly changing social and cultural conditions. Internationalization is the key concept for such an educational system (Dewey, 1938).

Through internationalization, students establish meaningful relationships with different cultural norms. Students can question their own cultural perspectives, and it becomes easier for them to understand their differences. Internationalization in higher education also supports the academic and social development of individuals. International student exchange programs, multicultural classes, and intercultural collaborations allow students to understand different cultural contexts. Such interaction increases intellectual development and social responsibility awareness (Dewey, 1999). Dewey's views have become increasingly important in higher education systems as we approach the present day.

In summary, *Internationalization in Higher Education* contributes to students' thinking skills and experience. In Dewey's philosophy of education, intercultural interaction is an important factor that enables

students to develop critical thinking skills. It means that students question their own cultural norms and values, get to know themselves, and learn from different cultural perspectives. This process, which broadens students' perspectives, helps them look at social problems from a broader perspective. (Dewey, 2014b, p. 117). In this way, students can question their own experiences and gain a tendency to be more flexible and open-minded. They learn to make sense of new experiences. They gain the ability to adapt these experiences to future situations. In order for social change and progress to occur, it is necessary to raise individuals who are open to learning from different cultures (Dewey, 1999).

5.3.4 Dewey's Views and Today's Higher Education

Dewey plans education as a dynamic process based on individual experiences. His philosophy has left effective and permanent traces on modern education systems. These traces are evident in student-centered approaches. In addition to individual development, his educational philosophy, which includes social and cultural responsibilities, increases interest in multicultural learning environments and aims to provide students with a rich perspective (Williams, 2017).

Garrison et al. (2016) Dewey emphasizes the importance of the concept of education in terms of sharing cultural experiences and contributing to a democratic society. In this respect, Dewey provides an intellectual basis for educational systems in terms of social integration and cultural adaptation. According to Ryan (1995), the meaning Dewey attributes to concepts such as experience, critical thinking, and cooperation are the main principles that can be applied in multicultural educational environments. In an age where Internationalization is accelerating and intercultural interaction is intensifying; Dewey's views are the starting point for raising global citizens.

Dewey's view of education as a reform tool supports Internationalization and intercultural interaction in education. In the age of globalization, professional needs, skills, and competencies can no longer be met within a single culture or national borders. The

environment that individuals will be involved in and the problems they will face have also diversified internationally. This in itself is a change and means that the student understands the change they are in.

Dewey was already aware in the early 1900s that internationalization would accelerate and that education had a role in this process. Dewey's (1999) idea that education should develop critical thinking and collaboration processes supports this awareness. In this context, he states that individuals can produce more creative and effective solutions by working with people from different cultures. He does not set any cultural boundaries in order to make students open to different perspectives. Collaborative experiences with students from different cultures are especially functional in terms of seeing social problems from a broader perspective.

In the period when Dewey (2019) stated that intercultural learning keeps democratic societies alive, monocultural democracy approaches were considerably widespread in the world. Dewey advocated multicultural learning environments in such a period. The relationship that Dewey established between education and democracy supports the intercultural learning environment and process. Internationalization in education provides opportunities for individual and social experience in a way that increases the sustainability of democracy. It is also a necessity for individuals from different cultures to learn together to protect and strengthen democratic values. In such a period, it is quite difficult for many countries to advocate that students establish meaningful relationships with different perspectives, question their own cultural values, and become sensitive to social problems. Today's higher education institutions mostly aim to equip individuals with democratic values by encouraging Internationalization and intercultural learning processes.

The development of global citizenship awareness by higher education stems from the contribution role of these institutions in the global society. It has been observed that Dewey also advocated that students should be provided with such awareness. The most fundamental component of the idea of global citizenship is that students

from different cultural backgrounds should overcome their own cultural boundaries and become more sensitive to global problems in the process of internationalization. In this context, Dewey's democratic education approach also serves the formation of global citizenship awareness.

Dewey's views are a natural part of the application in today's education systems, especially in international student exchange programs and multicultural learning environments. In this process, individuals develop critical thinking skills to understand different cultural norms and values, while at the same time strengthening their commitment to democratic values. Dewey's pragmatist education philosophy encourages individuals to take an active role in such multicultural learning environments and to produce solutions to global problems through cooperation. According to him, the role of education in this process is for individuals to understand different cultural and social contexts. At the same time, students learn how to maintain democratic values within this context (Dewey, 1999).

Dewey's understanding of education should be considered not only in terms of its strengths but also in the context of the potential challenges brought about by the globalizing world. Globalization can cause economic and political inequalities to deepen. In educational environments where intercultural interactions are intense, the possibility of local cultures being pushed to the background should be carefully evaluated in the light of postcolonial criticism. In the globalization process, the risk of dominant cultures establishing hegemony over other cultures can affect education policies. Globalization has also gained a different dimension with the spread of digital technologies. How education systems respond to these inequalities and new technologies is an important topic of discussion. All of these raise the question of how Dewey's understanding of democratic education can cope with such risks.

Dewey's (2019) emphasis on multicultural learning aims to ensure that individuals can question their own thoughts while also establishing meaningful connections with different cultural norms. Furthermore, it has been seen that Dewey's approach clearly advocates the need for education to provide a model that will enable individuals to embrace

their own cultural values while also establishing connections with other cultures. However, even if multiculturalism and local cultures are supported in the model advocated by Dewey, how cultural diversity can be preserved is open to debate. It is unclear whether the issue of preserving one's own culture will be successfully achieved by all students in higher education. At this point, it can be assumed that those who successfully transform their experiences into skills will stand out, while those who cannot will melt away in the face of other powerful cultures.

The question of how Dewey's critical thinking and collaboration-based approach can be integrated into digital educational environments is also important. Although online platforms allow individuals to connect with people from different cultural backgrounds, the extent to which these tools are effective in developing critical thinking skills is debatable. It is also debatable to what extent the interaction Dewey advocated can be implemented in a digital environment. Nevertheless, Dewey's pragmatist philosophy can provide a roadmap for the integration of digital technologies into education. Digital environment experiences and collaborations should also be discussed within this context.

5.4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

John Dewey's approach that humans are beings shaped by experience reveals how important it is for the development of both the individual and society to learn within rich and diverse cultural contexts. In this context, intercultural interaction is not only a way of getting to know others but also a way for the individual to reinterpret and recognize himself and contribute to the progress of society. Therefore, this study shows that internationalization and intercultural learning in higher education, which are mostly thought of as organizational, political, economic, technical, and administrative processes, have a deep-rooted relationship with human nature and the nature of learning. The fact that improvements to be made in this direction in higher education are

always supported by certain theories provides a richness of perspective. At the same time, such theoretical supports perform a functional task.

Another important finding is about the individual and collective benefits of internationalization and intercultural learning in higher education. The experience-based education model proposed by Dewey, in addition to individual contributions such as critical and creative thinking, empathy, and academic knowledge, offers the opportunity for students from different cultural backgrounds to learn together, approach common problems from different perspectives, and internalize democratic values. For this reason, intercultural learning should be seen as an indispensable tool that paves the way for social solidarity and living in global harmony.

However, when the inequalities brought about by globalization are taken into account, there are risks such as local cultures becoming obscured or being assimilated by dominant cultures. It is another important issue to evaluate these risks in line with Dewey's understanding of education that aims at democratization.

If human nature is a structure that gains meaning, transforms and develops with experience, as Dewey suggests, it is an important discussion to what extent and how today's higher education institutions support this aspect of human nature. Based on this study, the main discussion topics that can be suggested to higher education theorists can be as follows. Are the programs that offer the opportunity for intercultural interaction at a level and duration that will allow individuals to deepen their thoughts and understanding? Can the process be supported by the views of different philosophers, such as Dewey's understanding of education, which places individual and social formations at the center of the education system? Where and how do today's theories position themselves under the liberal globalization discourse that sees education as an economic investment and the student as a customer? Such questions present themselves as ethical, political, and economic problems in front of internationalization and intercultural learning in higher education.

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