The mainstream research in educational settings usually gives precedence to cognitive factors at the expense of extrinsic variables such as the individuals' salient cultural values and social belief systems. The present article, however, tries to unfold some reasons as to the importance of cultural factors in attaining educational objectives. That is to say, a multiperspective research frame with cultural issues as the core or accomplishment with cognitive ones can provide a better explanatory capacity for interpretation and analysis of learners' behaviors in educational settings. To this end, the present article provides four main topics of parallel contingencies, a case of value-based education, the significance of infusing culture and education, and distributed cognition as the main hinges of its discussion. Accordingly, the first topic concerns the fact that different choices individuals make are cross-culturally under the influence of external parallel factors that help them in value assignment and meaning making processes. In the second, the discussion, with a particular case study of Iran, purports that the value-based education in eastern countries, sometimes, has been the main source of upward mobility and improvement. The third topic explains that through integrating culture and education we can access some better research niches in the areas such as educational management and assessment, educational injustices, and emergence of new concepts. The last topic also refers to the fact that our cognition should no longer be regarded as solely an internal faculty since, as an example, many socio-technical inventions have expanded our understanding and the trend will continue.

KEYWORDS: socio-cultural, contingency, distributed cognition, value-based.

1. INTRODUCTION:
Academic learning should be considered as a complex process for which instructors and educators are not singularly responsible. How much a learner prospers is time and again as dependent on his willingness to be committed as on the factors that influence learning. Tooby (2014, para.5) explains the interrelationship of learning and culture in the following manner:

"Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another".

A group of researchers, in the field of language studies, have accordingly indicated that national cultures influence individuals' perceptions, behaviors, beliefs, problem-solving strategies, and negotiation methods. Harrison and Huntington, 2000; Hofstede, 2001; Kirkman et al., 2006; Sincero, 2012). Thus, many researchers are trying their hands in socio-cultural investigations and the trend will continue.

Back in 1990s, the question of inseparability of culture from the classroom teaching was again brought into limelight. For example, Tavares and Cavalcanti (1996) maintained that culture is not only what we perceive in the classroom, but also whatever is instructed through language. This led to new investigation pathways in which researchers tried to connect learnability and cognitive development to culture (e.g., Pinker, 1989, 2010). The importance of cultural variables did not cease here. In fact, some researchers pointed at human cultures as the main source of our evolutionary advanced cognitions (Whiten & Erdal, 2012). They want to associate cognitive evolution with cultural knowledge and thus consider it as a multifaceted phenomenon. Therefore, the question is why we should not indeed radically new because from the late 17th to the start of 18th century rationalists and empiricists who were mostly nativists (Gross & Rey, 2012) devotedly advocated the idea that cognition alongside other human faculties were innate, and thus unlearned (Sanet, 2014).

In a very recent endeavor, Thompson, Kirby, and Smith (2015), have proposed that the exclusive views of nativists about the innateness of cognition should be discarded because culture has even changed the course of natural evolution and selection and has led to better adaption with environment and a noticeable cognitive growth in humans. In other words, we are not limited by our innate predispositions to act in a certain way. Altugan (2015) also presents an interesting argument on how culture can facilitate or impede learning. He believes that learning and social environments are interrelated and that we bring our social perspectives and cultural identity into learning. In other words, one's socio-cultural background backs up or discourages his motivation to learn. Interestingly, one's learning of different values is channelized through culture.

2. A BRIEF REVIEW ON THE RELATION OF COGNITION AND CULTURE:
According to Zimmermann (2015), the term culture is a derivation from the Latin word “colere”, which means nurture, and thus includes all different types of knowledge people share such as language, religion, art, and etcetera. These bits of knowledge build people's cognitive capacities. In other words, culture organizes people's collective minds (Hofstede, 1984, p.51):

"Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another".

In the field of learning, no single guideline can ensure the highest level of cognitive performance on the part of learners. For sure, becoming a high achiever requires many kinds of government investments on learning. However, learning is a multifaceted phenomenon. Therefore, the question is why we should not think of cultural investment, first.

So far, our researches in the educational fields have tried to perpetuate a priority with cognitive variables. However, an individual's grasp of important matters of life is so-shaped by the cultural influences of a setting in which he lives. In other words, while cognitive factors are important variables that influence learning, cultural beliefs affect both learning and cognitive capacities. According to Herrmann, Call, Hernandez-Lloreda, Hare, and Tomasello (2007, p.1) "humans are not just social, but ultra-social". This quality accounts for a different set of cognitive skills that are developed culturally and equip the members of a particular society with all means of conformity, interactivity, and sustenance. Therefore, gravitating towards socio-cultural concerns is academically valuable since it seems that learning problems are sometimes approached on a far too restricted basis. In this regard, Tooby (2014, para.5) explains the interrelationship of learning and culture as follows:

"...learning and culture seem so compelling because they map closely to automatic, built-in features of how our minds evolved to interpret..."
In educational researches, motivation as a cognitive asset is another extensively researched topic (Han & Yin, 2016). According to Dornyei (2009, 2011), even in motivation studies, the behavior of learners in performing a task is a function of a wide range of non-linear, dynamic variables as opposed to the traditional views. Such variables could include learner-specific factors, classroom situations, task-related issues, and other external socio-cultural factors. Dornyei, therefore, challenges the traditional view that regards motivation only in terms of generalized motives plus situation-specific motives. In this dichotomy, the generalized motives refer to enduring psychological dispositions of individuals that are mainly task-independent while situation-specific motives cover their temporary responses to a task. He, thus, maintains that an individual’s on-task behavior is a function of multiple factors or parallel contingencies.

The idea of parallel contingencies, therefore, advocates the consideration of simultaneous factors, namely socio-cultural variables affecting one's future performance. Of course, Dornyei is not alone. Some other educational theorists also maintain that socio-cultural ideologies influence one’s interpretation of specific situations, behaviors, and goals (e.g., Balakrishnan & Low, 2016). Pay attention to the idea of parallel contingencies as shown in the diagram below:

On the interconnectivity of culture and cognition, Rosenberg, Westling, and McLeskey (2010) also maintain that cultural teachings affect learners’ willingness to perform in noticeable ways. To prove the point, they referred to different behaviors of children in collectivist versus the individualist countries. While the individualists usually encourage showing of ability, the collectivists encourage group harmony. Knowledge about such contingent variables can certainly help educators and researchers interpret learners’ behaviors apart from personal biases and inaccuracies. A note-worthy point is that some factors like immigration and new research niches. Indeed, Individuals’ personal characteristics in association with various environments produce wide variety of investigation niches. (Dillon, Bayliss, Stolpe & Bayliss, 2008)

3.1. A value-based education, a case from Iranian schooling:

Eastern countries mostly regard ethical values as the core of education of the minds and the characters (Joshi, 2007). In Iranian context of education as well, students and teachers are equally instructed about some ideological values and principles that are supposed to guide them morally through different stages of life. Moreover, the concept of religious culture promulgated widely after the 1979 revolution, operates as a spiritual gauge of someone's personality both at an institutionalized and interpersonal level. In this sense, people are required to act committedly and sincerely, not only within their family circles, but also in social settings. The ethos of duty is thus encouraged as an indivisible element of socio-cultural value system that can result in sustainable success, if observed faithfully. This key ethos, as taught and highly upheld after the revolution, warns against compromising humane values at the cost of overly ambitious goals. Perhaps, most Iranians have heard or read about the two famous quotes of the late Iranian leader, Imam Khomeini, as saying:

- “You are obligated to study, if not, it is forbidden for you to be in schools [idly].”
- “The teacher is a trustee other than ordinary; he is a trustee of men.”

These quotes being ideological in essence indicate the reconceptualization of learning as people’s sincere duty in the early years after the revolution and after the initiation of Iran’s Cultural Revolution (Mojab, 2004). Therefore, the authorities required the educational practitioners and the activists to integrate the sense of duty into educational policies and introduce it as the most ideal goal to students. This tactic, perhaps, could remind students-instructors on the both sides of the education continuum of their commitment to the future architecture of Islamic republic of Iran. Moreover, in 1960s, in tune with the urgent need for learning and progress, the Literacy Corps, this time called Literacy Movement, was reorganized with the aim of eradicating illiteracy and revitalizing the most egalitarian educational system of all time. The results were satisfactory. According to the United Nation’s report in 2006, Iran succeeded to stand as the 9th highest literate nation among the world countries (Zand, 2012). All political propagandas aside, such status promotion is just an example that shows people's socio-cultural idealization of educational objectives influences their achievements. Thus, the colossal impact of culture on people's life choices cannot be ignored. In this regard, the Iran's late leader in one of his speeches considers the effect of culture, sometimes, just like that of a weapon (as cited in Tamer, 2010):

“The cultural weapon, according to the textbooks, has great potency than economic and political tools because it affects the soul of a community. Through humiliation, brainwashing, and the spread of consumerism, it is asserted, the imperial powers manipulate the identity of the oppressed nations” (p.74).

These are, of course, just a few examples of how cultural values have affected people's transformative performances. People, generally speaking, tend to confer value on things through the lens of the traditions with which they have been brought up. Oftentimes, they disapprove of some goals because they find them contrary to the socio-cultural conventions of their time (Castro, L. Castro-Nogueira, M. Castro-Nogueira & Toro, 2010). That is, the motives for acting in conformity and non-conformity are culturally bound (Fish, 2012).

Back to the topic of education, we will not be in the right place to think that an individual factor can single-handedly answer all the educational problems. As we know, students, who are standing in the forefront of learning, diverge in the degree of their socialization to mainstream cultural values, their personal approaches to learning and their idealizations of life goals.

For sure, even in academic settings, not all pursue the same objectives; therefore, ascribing satisfactory outcomes and performances merely to learners' cognitive factors apart from their ideologies and cultural values can be an oversimplistic sloppy conclusion. In other words, our inside controlling faculties are intertwined with outside domineering factors of equal importance.

3.2. The significance of infusing culture and education:

According to Vygotsky, the renowned Russian constructivist psychologist, “The social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and in fact. The individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary” (as cited in Wertsch, 1985, p.30).

Our behavioral changes in given situations are thus best understood when we find the social dimensions that guide our choices. One of the aims of educational researches should be to infuse different opportunities that lead to new realities and new research niches. Indeed, Individuals’ personal characteristics in association with various environments produce wide variety of investigation niches. (Dillon, Bayliss, Stolpe & Bayliss, 2008)

“Niche construction may be thought of simply as the mutually transformative interactions between individuals and groups and the environments in which the interactions take place” (p.26).

According to Humbert (2003), our deepest values are interwoven with life cir-
cumstances and the goals we set to pursue. In fact, we are urged to follow what we want and steer clear of what we dislike through the guidance of our deep val-
ues. Then, what we want has one end in society, group interactions, and environ-
ment and another in our preference strategies at a time. Therefore, our cognitive
 capacities together with externally imposed factors provide us with synergic
 insights and profound contextualized interpretations of what success is. Scott
 and Palincsar (2013) mention three major benefits of integrating socio-cultural
 variables to education:

• The employment of socio-cultural theories can promote educational
 management and ameliorate injustices.

• Many recent concepts are created by brining socio-technological phe-
 nomena within educational contexts.

• Applying new socio-cultural products in education leads to the develop-
 ment of new assessment and evaluation techniques.

3.3. Distributed cognition rather than cognition alone:

As mentioned, researches in the field of education have a great fascination
towards cognition. By cognition, perhaps, we can refer to the “mental lives” and
capabilities of individuals (Rahimi, 2014, p.1). The interesting quality of this
component of human life is that it can be extended and expanded. Maddox
(2010) equals the term extension to stretching out and expansion to spreading
out. That is exactly what happens to our mental ability. In other words, our mental
faculty can increase its efficacy both quantitatively and qualitatively.

In view of the old definition of the term, cognition was once supposed to be inter-
nally residing in an individual, but the idea has already been devaluated after
Edwin Hutchins developed the concept of distributed cognition in 1990s (Lee,
Ng, Rabinovich & Wu, n.d. para.1). Hollan, Hutchins, and Kirsh (2000) maintain that the distributed cognition or
Dong “extends the reach of our cognitive world beyond the individual alone to
encompass the interactions of people with each other, with resources and materi-
als in the environment” (p.175). Pay attention to the diagram below:

![Figure 2. The interaction of people, society, and environments in distributed cognitions](image)

Perhaps, the Dornyei's concept of parallel contingency is now best interpreted
with the help of the concept of distributed cognition. We know that the progres-
sive world of information technology allows for a variety of products that
involve learners in discovery learning. New types of learning are thus insepara-
able from the tools that provide potential niches for learning. The diversity of
updatable Worldwide Web sources and professional online software are all typi-
cal examples of new learning niches. As an example, researchers can now make
use of online programs such as Endnote to upgrade their knowledge and to cite
their article references as required. These are among a faction of numerous digi-
tal plans that enable us to extend and expand our cognitive abilities.

In social dimension, many neologisms are added every day to our mental reper-
toire and web of ideas by the introduction of novel patterns of interactions and
brand-new inventions marketed, propagated, and made available both nationally
and internationally. As an example, the term such as “webinar”, or a virtual con-
ference, was somewhat meaningless 25 years ago. Similarly, the idea of e-
learning course work and education as a new face of learning seemed to be far-
fetching in 1970s (Makherji, 2013). By the same token, the thought to have a non-
stop replay of a lesson in an e-learning coursework, learning through gamification in
mathematics or new languages, lesson-by-lesson online auto-
matic assessment of knowledge have now turned into the dominant vocabulary
of an average individual in urban areas. Again, the topics such as digital humani-
ties, digital modes of information generation, ludology, interfaces for learning,
and categorization of metadata, hashtags, social network, and microblogging are
no longer the exclusive semantics of one field of study. Therefore, our future
research trends should always make it a point to regard the emergent social phe-
nomena whatever they will be as part of our distributed cognition.

4. CONCLUSION:

Educational researches are commonly about the enclosed settings such as
schools, colleges, and universities. While at the first glance, the interpretation
seems to be all right, it seriously falls short of capturing what education is about
in essence. Indeed, educational settings are built and defined by human agents
who primarily bring about socialization practices, beliefs, and customs into
play. While At a certain point of time people may tend to prioritize a set of learn-
ing goals, they may want to replace them, at other times, depending on the social
changes during their life. Therefore, socio-cultural issues are the constitutive fac-
tors that can motivate people to achieve and move forward. To sum up, under-
standing why it works for education requires us to study the contingent parallel
variables that affect learners in one way or another. The cultural and socio-
technical products that are used by learners affect their cognitive abilities; as
a result, the interdisciplinary researches that map these factors are more effica-
cious in contextualizing educational problems. Within the scope of the present
article, we, hence, tried to discuss the significance of socio-cultural aspects by
particularly introducing two major constructionist ideas of parallel contingency
and distributed cognition.

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