Chinese and American Cultures

Name

Institution

**Time Orientation**

Time is a valuable concept, but it is viewed differently in the cross-cultural settings which define the kind of behaviours people will develop while dealing with the issue. People, therefore, end up having different views and ways of managing time or even reacting to events depending on their background of origin. Americans have specific values surrounding time orientation which are mainly focused on the past, present and the future. They believe that the future is controlled by the way they manage time in the present which can either be built or destroyed depending on the kind of strategies taken (Lewis, 2014). Time in the American culture is money and perishable to the extent that it is such a big loss to waste it. People are controlled by the amount of time they have on a certain activity which ensures that they can be productive (Li, 2008). Planning for the future is an important aspect to these people as they can have ways of dealing with problems that might occur ahead of their time. People who waste time and have no plans for the future are referred to as lazy.

In the Chinese culture, the same thing occurs whereby time is a valuable aspect of every person who thinks about advancing their lives. Confucianism which is the main philosophy amongst the Chinese people takes the time aspect to be an occasional aspect which is only based on the kind of activity going on (Li, 2008). Instead of planning for things that are non-existence, the culture advocates for every individual to know the right moments for certain things and how they can make sense of the moments. Whether is a major national or cultural event which matters to everyone or the small household activities like laundry, one should commit to doing the right thing in its occasion (Li, 2008). There is no fixed manner of dealing with time in the Chinese culture putting in mind that everything has its season and might change depending on the situations that surround the event. Time orientation unlike in the American culture where it is specific, among the Chinese it is multidimensional. People understand that as long as they do things in their right time and occasion, nothing will go wrong. Both America and Chinese, however, place much value in time management and believe in living at the moment while still putting a consideration that the future matters (Lewis, 2014). It is, therefore, an indication that most cultures take much pride in how they use time and the kind of benefits that emerge from these acts.

**Communication**

The interaction between individuals also varies from culture to culture and might have different meanings depending on the people involved. Both Americans and Chinese are people who believe in social communication through the right channels to build stronger interactions. People tend to identify with those they can relate with regarding the language spoken, level of education, place of origin and many other factors (Hallenbeck, 20 04).

Americans communicate differently compared to Chinese people as they live under different believes and have to interact in ways they can all relate. The culture involves first-time introductory overfriendliness behaviour which brings in the mixed reactions to whether the interactions are real or not. Americans are too much involved with both the spoken and unspoken language which makes it hard for them to differentiate whether something is real or not (Hallenbeck, 20 04). They are also too open on private matters, and this usually happens at an early stage of a relationship. Unlike the Chinese people who are usually afraid to talk about their lives in public, Americans seem to be comfortable with the act and more willing to interact on a personal level. Due to the increased use of technological advancements, Americans use more of emails and text messages which are usually short and lack the formal greetings and acknowledgements making them look rude (Rhee, Chang & Rhee, 2003).

In the Chinese culture, communications are not in such a direct way as the Americans do it which leaves the doubt for the meanings of some words. While making a business deal, it is important to listen closely as Chinese do not like to say the word any directly and will use words like ‘probably’, ‘maybe’ and many others. They also use less non-verbal communication forms like nodding which makes them less interactive as expected. When trying to convince a Chinese into a certain deal, it might not be very helpful to judge their position using facing expressions as these are not widely used in this culture (Rhee, Chang & Rhee, 2003). Unlike the westernised cultures, Chinese is an individualised society whereby most people prefer to keep their private issues to themselves instead of discussing them with others. People, therefore, tend to discuss commonly shared issues like culture, politics, religion and other things affecting the society as a whole. A small portion of the population can speak fluent English, and people in the Chinese culture don’t view the knowledge of the prior language to be the measure of intelligence.

**Physical and Mental Health**

The health of individuals in both the physical and mental aspects is viewed to be of negative impact towards their lives. People in these situations are unable to engage in some basic activities which are beneficial to them personally as well as to the society around them. Mental and physical health is taken as a factor that discourages human communication and time orientation as the situations restrict people from being normal like the rest of the community. Both the American and Chinese cultures agree such health issues should be solved medically and psychologically involving professionals in these fields (Herrman, Saxena & Moodie, 2005). Every complication differs depending on the individual, stage of suffering and methods are taken to solve. It is, therefore, crucial to ensure that the health centres are staffed with qualified staff who establish methods of helping different people based on how they feel instead of following the theoretical evidence.

The Chinese culture has a way of looking at physical and mental health in that an individual is considered far from normal due as they do not conduct the regular requirements of an entirely normal individual. The perspective of mental health in this culture is influenced by the Confucianism philosophy which helps researchers understand the meaning of health (Herrman, Saxena & Moodie, 2005). People in the right conditions are expected to be in a position to conduct their duties more effectively such that they are termed as either physically or mentally ill. An individual’s biggest roles in the Chinese society is to actively engage in social goals and personal duties which show that one is okay. Although China is a well-established economy, the syndrome of working too much to the extent that one lacks time for rest or social events is not considered unhealthy. These people unlike in the US culture where their behaviour is considered negative, are praised for being hardworking and with the urge to succeed. That explains why most individual’s end of being sleep deprived and developed disorders connected to stress (Herrman, Saxena & Moodie, 2005). Most individuals with mental disorders are considered to be less valuable in the highly productive economy which might lead to negligence of their condition even from family members and friends.

Americans, on the other hand, remain to be the most conscious about physical and mental health which has reached to the extent that it is a normal thing. Anyone regardless of how they appear or behave can be mentally sick as these are psychological problems (Sue, 2002). An individual can be all successful, engaging in productive actions but maybe internally unstable due to the conditions of their life. Mental health has become an open issue that people can discuss with the public and get less judgment as many others are facing the same. That explains why people take depression pills without worrying about their families, workmates and other close people. Americans like to take things as they are instead of hiding behind hard work and success when defining mental instability. Many people facing disorders are financially okay, performing well in their jobs but unable to give themselves time to develop as expected by society. There are therefore more medical centres in the US ready to handle these cases than they are in China due to the openness of the population about their lives (Sue, 2002). The culture encourages the use of family and other social relationships as a way to solve the issues facing an individual even before thinking about the doctor. Physical and mental health is however not a factor to stop an individual from participating in the normal day to day activities as these issues show how different people are in the face of the changing world.

**Group Relationships**

The way people interact with each other is largely determined by their cultures as everything is learned while growing up. Group relations vary from the individualism kind of preference to the collectivist nature. Both Chinese and American cultures put great value on social relationships as they define the societal development in all sectors. Although they interact differently, both encourage people to be friendly by offering facilities that allow social relationships (Yuki et al., 2005).

The Chinese society is more of an individualism case where people prefer to think personally and make more individual decisions than depending on the rest of the group to act. Most individuals, therefore, may be differently opinionated while in group settings instead of just agreeing with everything said. Research finds their culture to be a kind of introversion because they are usually not ready to make the first impression. When in a group context with a Chinese individual for the first time, it is hard for them to give the first point or start off a conversation (Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2005). They prefer to listen and know a person before commenting as they are afraid of causing the first time judgmental effect. They are also more into expressing actions and not words like the Americans. While people in a group setting might be wordy, the Chinese encourage vivid actions as a display of a certain feeling (Yuki et al., 2005). Instead of telling you they like you now and then, they will instead show the emotion by doing nice things for you like lunch, dinner and gifts. Friendships with Chinese people are more intimate as compared to those of Americans as their culture encourages on more love. It is therefore normal to see a Chinese boss treating her employees like her children after a considerate time of working together.

Americans, on the other hand, are usually more a collective and like to stand out in group meetings even when they are interacting with strangers. They will most probably start off a conversation in a place where nobody knows everyone to keep them comfortable. They are also flirty and will express their feelings with more words as compared to actions (Nibler & Harris, 2003). Americans are not likely to develop long-term relationships with lots of people as their interests end once there is nothing to share with the other individual. They, therefore, end up with a few strong relationships mostly with family and close friends or colleagues. Friendships in the American society developed under many conditions and not so many end up being close to the extent of helping each other (Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2005). Most people in America prefer to be independent and do not share their issues with friends and family as well. Unlike in China where a simple social relationship in more of love and family treatment, Americans like to keep their distance and keep it work or friends. Americans are finally seen to be less involved in knowing details about a particular person although they are the ones who initiate the conversations (Yuki et al., 2005). They usually start with a ‘hello’ and have nothing more to say as they do it as a norm that they have learned from others down the generations. They also get straight to the point like saying a straight yes or no unlike in the Chinese culture where most answers cannot be well understood.

**Perception and Measure of intelligence**

The view of intelligence varies across cultures depending on the kind of activities that people engage in as well as the way these cases affect those around them. One sign of intelligence in a certain philosophy might be a normal thing or a complete disappointment in another civilisation. The Americans and Chinese both share the fact that intelligence comes with the ability to understand a situation a make a decision that positively benefits the individual or those around. Any action taken to better the lives of people is seen as intelligence with its intensity increasing by how it affects others. They advocate for individuals to ensure that all their interactions and activities are regulated by the kind of consequences they might have on the rest of the world (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004). In the 21st Century, both cultures do not use education or wealth as a measure of intelligence due to the kind of actions that people usually conducted regardless of their achievements.

Americans define intelligence as the ability of an individual to be conscious of their environment and engage in rational debates. The way a person conducts themselves in the cases of public talks, discussions or even arguments is what explains if they are intelligent enough to handle themselves. The American society is very diverse and encourages people to be different instead of copying each other’s way of doing things. The levels of education, ability to speak a certain language fluently or even the skin colour does not determine how intellectual one is (Tsethlikai, 2011). Someone can be very fluent in English with college degrees and yet their way of thinking and reasoning is lower as compared to a person who only went to the high school level. The leaders, business persons and other respected individuals are considered to be intelligent because they have a way of engaging people when asked, complemented or criticised about their work (Tsethlikai, 2011). They do not know just utter words without thinking about their impact on their reputation or even the people who admire them.

The Chinese culture, on the other hand, determines intelligence by the people’s abilities to relate and understand each other as well as perform their roles in the society. The Chinese culture encourages people to be responsible for everything they do, and hence an intelligent person will ensure that their roles are well implemented. Intelligence is being able to observe that negligence will lead to more damage and it is better to commit to the responsibilities (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004). People who neglect their families, political duties and others are termed to be dull in the face of the intellectual measurement. The way people relate to others is also another show of how clever or foolish one is. Individuals who are kind, friendly and helpful even to strangers are intelligent. The intellectual level does not come with any special achievements in the society, but it is all about the inner drive to do the right thing.

In conclusion, while addressing the different aspects that define the American or Chinese cultures, there are some biased opinions from the society that makes the information controversial. Stereotyped views show that the American culture is open to anything regardless of how negative it looks which is not true according to the study established about their social relationships, intelligence and communication. Stating that the Americans are afraid of forming long-lasting relationships with people and instead only keep roots with family and friends may be seen as wrong since most people think that it is the opposite. The same biased views also establish that Chinese culture is strict and suspicious which is different from the findings. They are more open to treat people like family after knowing them and also use valid methods to measure intelligence. The cultures have more to offer and with more research one would establish the true meaning and details instead of assuming the stereotyped viewed.

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