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**Cultural Relationship with Time**

**Introduction**

Living in a country as fast as the United States, it can be hard at times to catch up with things. Time is money in America, and the country follows the linear time concept. People who live in America know that if they do not keep up with the speed of time they can skip important meetings, appointments and events. In my experience, when it comes to the professional world where a person has to meet a dentist, lawyer or a doctor, the schedules are quite rigid and cannot be moved around in accordance with one's convenience. If individual skips an appointment or meeting there are also chances that they will get next date after a week or so. There is a pattern that everyone in America including myself follows, it is quite sequential (How Different Cultures Understand Time). In accordance with the linear time pattern; the past is done and over with, stay in the present and try to plan and focus on today’s tasks, to avoid missing out anything, plan for the whole month and reflect on the next month as well. In this paper, I will talk about my personal experience in regards to time and how the American culture has had an impact on it, further, I will compare it to the Chinese perception of time and cultural.

**Discussion**

When I was in middle school, things were very relaxed. Everything went in a manner that there was no need to plan for a lot of things. Then came high school and things changed drastically. The fact that I had to do something exceptional apart from maintaining good grades in order to get into a good college changed my perception of how time works. Time is indeed money and it does not wait for anyone. The pressure of scoring well, studying, doing a part-time job and taking out time for productive extracurricular activity is not an easy task. There were times when I gave up and stopped, but I saw my peers and family doing the same thing and they were succeeding. As my father best explains it, when one is in high school that is the time of transition where people have to catch up with the pace of the world. When I was applying for colleges I lost the chance of applying in one of my dream institutes due to poor time management, while my peers had sent their college application prior to the delaine (How Different Cultures Understand Time). This gave me a realization of the fact that time will not stop for me and nor will deadlines get rearranged to my likings. I got a reality check and started pushing on every single string to apply and get in my top 3 colleges. Further, to project that I am serious about the degree plan I opted for an internship program other than my part time job so I could amp up my admissions essay further. It is difficult, but seeing how other people do the same things, gave me the needed boost to pursue further.

One thing that I have noticed in American culture, which I believe has a great impact on time is the fact that people are more self-centered. They manage things based on their personal interests and convenience. This fact makes the living pattern in America even more mechanical and set. There is a power struggle and to reach the desired objective a person just has to take all the steps at the right time. This culture to reach the top has made people in America me-focused over the course of time. I came to this realization when I made a Chinese friend in college, the way we functioned and managed our lives was quite different. However, there is one thing similar between Americans and Chinese, that both realize the importance and value of time.

However, the difference in the culture makes the concept and impact of time on both the ethnicities diverse. First, the Chinese like to keep a balance, they do acknowledge the value of time yet this fact does not make them self-centered. In fact, the statement that time has great importance makes the Chinese community more considerate. My Chinese friend would constantly apologize for taking my time and at times he would reach 30 minutes earlier to make up for the time I might lose. This fact made me realize that they value time not just for themselves but more importantly, others. American's, on the other hand, would come right on time, get down to business and leave (How Different Cultures Understand Time). There is a set target that American’s have of earning a certain amount of money by the time they retire. In order to do that a certain amount of money needs to be earned every hour so that the target that has been set can be achieved. I saw my father and mother do that, the same goes for my elder siblings and cousins as well. Now I see my peers and people I work with follow the same pattern. In my case, I have to give my student loan and for that, I need to work and balance my studies at the same time. So, there is a target that I need to reach and in order to do that, I cannot slack or waste any time.

Another difference that I saw between me and my Chinese friend was the fact that when we meet professionally to discuss a certain college project he complains that most Americans are not patient and they leave amid a discussion. This is also true, if the time that I have assigned for the discussion has ended I would leave mid-discussion. I always thought that was an understood thing, but the culture of prioritizing the schedule and plan has a lot do with it as well (How Different Cultures Understand Time). On the other hand, as I observed my friend, the Chinese people are willing to make exceptions in order to continue a discussion in depth. Yes, there is no doubt in the fact that certain aspects of culture have hindered the way people manage their time. However, it is something that a person morphs into by observing family, peers and people in the professional world.

**Conclusion**

The way that people deal or look at time is different throughout the world. Being raised in America, I was told by my family, peers and people from the professional world that it is necessary to keep track of time because it will not wait for you. The culture that I lived and functioned in has transformed me into someone who is more me-focused. If I look at it from a broader perspective, the things that I do and the plans that I make are based on my personal benefit. It might be a harsh reality, but looking at the Chinese culture and their perspective of time it can be learned that one can manage to be considerate while valuing time. Yes, time will not stop for anyone but there are moments when a person should set back and relax so that other important things of life can be acknowledged as well.

Work Cited

"How Different Cultures Understand Time." *Business Insider*. N. p., 2019. Web. 16 May 2019.