

## An Analysis of American Values (Literature Study)

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### Abstract

Speaking confidence is essential for academic performance and personal growth. However, many students experience significant fear and lack confidence while speaking English. This exploratory study seeks to discover and analyze numerous factors that influence or detract from secondary school students' speaking confidence. A qualitative research approach was employed, involving observations and the distribution of questionnaires to 61 students—29 from the regular class and 32 from the accelerated class. Additionally, interviews were conducted with twelve students, equally divided between the two groups. The findings indicate the factors including internal and external factors. Internal factors examined include personality traits, self-esteem, language proficiency, and past experiences with speaking tasks. External factors encompass the role of English materials, the influence of English teachers, teaching methods, learning media, peer interactions, family support, learning atmosphere, and classroom facilities. The study highlighted the importance of creating a positive learning environment to enhance speaking confidence among students.

**Keywords:** Analysis, America, Culture, Value.

### INTRODUCTION

Culture is the whole aspect of society in which it is passed down from generation to generation. On that case, the definition of culture is a system of interaction that occurs in society and continues to be preserved (Nurchaerani, 2020). Culture is the whole complex way of life in social life including knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, and common law (Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022). Culture can be informal, abstract, and part of the interactions, expressions, and viewpoints of people who belong to the same culture. In human life, culture is a very important part. Awareness of cultural varieties can help humans to understand and adapt to diversity while in the territory of society with different cultures. Culture is something that cannot be avoided in everyday life, because culture is a whole and comprehensive unity, applies in a society, the environment as a place of daily interaction and students are always located and influenced by the culture in the environment. Culture is a collection of values, priority beliefs and norms of behaviour that form the basis for the individual in dealing with all situations that occur. Every culture from various countries must have their own influence. In cultural studies, it is known as cultural values.

Cultural values are the guidelines of life in society (Verulitasari & Cahyono, 2016). Each community group has customs, customs and beliefs that are agreed upon and embedded in it. Cultural value is an abstract concept in society related to big things and is general, as well as valuable for life. The role of cultural values as a guide in behaving in society concerned; is in the realm of their mind and is difficult to explain rationally. It is timeless, not easily changed or replaced with the values of other cultures (Arifin, 2013). Cultural values are very meaningful in society, as they relate to norms, beliefs, customs, practices and symbols. Therefore, these values need to be cared for, nurtured and passed on to the younger generation, whether through family, education or community organizations. We can conclude from the theory above, cultural values are the guidelines for the life of people who have customs, norms, practices, symbols, and beliefs that are mutually agreed upon in a place or region.

All countries in the world have different cultures, this affects their cultural values as well. America is one of the country with an interesting diversity of cultural identities. The acceptance of new

things and ideas in diversity in America occurs easily because of the open and free social system (Wu, Afzaal, Ghaffar, & Naqvi, 2020). America is one of the countries that has cultural diversity that accepts new things or ideas from existing cultural diversity, and also America has some part in its cultural values.

According to (Weil, 2023) American value is divided into several parts, namely individualism, freedom, competitiveness, privacy, equality, informality, the future change and progress, the goodness of humanity, time, achievement, action, work and materialism, directness and assertiveness. American values encompass several distinct yet interrelated components, reflecting the diverse ethos of the nation. Individualism and freedom are central, emphasizing personal autonomy and the right to self-determination. Competitiveness drives the pursuit of excellence, while privacy ensures the protection of personal space and information. Equality advocates for fair treatment and opportunities for all, and informality breaks down social hierarchies, promoting approachable and direct interactions. The values of future change and progress encourage innovation and forward-thinking, while the belief in the goodness of humanity underscores a fundamentally optimistic view of people. Time is treated as a valuable resource, pushing for efficiency and productivity. Achievement, action, and work highlight the importance of accomplishments and industriousness, often linked with materialism and the pursuit of tangible success. Finally, directness and assertiveness reflect the cultural preference for clear and straightforward communication, ensuring that intentions and desires are openly expressed.

Individualism is a cultural value in which individuals begin to detach from society and focus only on themselves and their immediate family (Aditomo & Nugroho, 2015). It promotes the idea that each person is unique and possesses the right to pursue their own path and goals, free from undue interference by society, the state, or any collective entity. This concept is deeply rooted in Western thought and has influenced many aspects of modern life, including politics, economics, and culture. Individualism is a powerful and influential philosophy that celebrates personal freedom, responsibility, and the intrinsic value of each individual.

Competitive can be positioned as a competitive condition or state of competition that occurs or is experienced by a person or group of people in winning a competition (Arif, 2021). Competitiveness today is as prominent as globalization and it encompasses all the elements that can explain the success of a nation. Firms engage in a variety of tactics to gain a competitive edge, such as pricing strategies, marketing campaigns, and technological advancements. These maneuvers are often driven by the desire to capture market share, increase profitability, or establish dominance. However, competition isn't just about individual firms vying for supremacy; it's also about how they interact within the broader ecosystem, responding to changes in customer preferences, regulatory landscapes, and technological advancements.

Freedom is power or the ability to act without coercion; absence of constraints (obstacles) (Mulia, 2014). The definitions of freedom identified by Foner do not assume that individuals will be able to do whatever they please. Each of the five definitions of freedom discussed above include limits. Freedom encompasses the ability of individuals to act and make choices without undue constraint or coercion, allowing for self-determination and autonomy. It is a multifaceted concept that extends beyond mere absence of physical confinement to encompass various dimensions. Moreover, freedom is intertwined with notions of justice, equality, and human rights, serving as a cornerstone of civilized societies where individuals can flourish and contribute to the common good.

The purpose of the right to privacy is to protect the confidentiality of personal matters from the dissemination and misuse of individual data (Hamid & Intan, 2022). . Privacy has been considered from different disciplines like sociology, psychology, law and philosophy. It is a multidisciplinary domain, having an easy concept but difficult to define. It is the physical as well as impalpable limits of an individual who likes to be free from others intrusion. At the same time, the boundaries of privacy may differ from one place to another affecting by the culture, religion, etc.

Equality is a term born as a resistance to the issue of social discrimination in the life of a society built to weaken oppression (Barir, 2014). Equality is a term that emerged as a response to the pervasive issue of social discrimination, serving as a foundation for resisting and weakening oppression within

society. It signifies the aspiration for fair treatment and equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background, race, gender, or socioeconomic status. The concept of equality challenges entrenched power structures and discriminatory practices, advocating for a more just and inclusive social order where everyone has the chance to thrive.

An informal environment can be defined as an environment where there are no formal rules controlling it (Djazari et al., 2013). In such settings, individuals often experience greater freedom to express themselves and engage with others in a more personal and authentic manner. This lack of rigid structure can foster creativity, collaboration, and a sense of community, as people feel less constrained by hierarchical norms and more open to sharing ideas and perspectives. Whether in social gatherings, workplaces, or educational settings, informal environments can lead to dynamic and enriching experiences that contrast with the often restrictive nature of formal contexts.

According to (Weil, 2023), the future change and progress It is a manifestation of the struggle of the American state after the existence of European colonialism in the country to develop all aspects in America with a focus on future changes. This drive for development has propelled the United States to focus intensely on future-oriented changes, aiming to advance various aspects of society, including technology, economy, and social structures. By prioritizing innovation and forward-thinking, America has sought to redefine its identity and build a nation that continuously evolves and improves. As a result, America became superpower country in the world.

Humanity is a manifestation and there is a reaction between people who view each other as worthy and honourable neighbours. "Humanity" is a matter of defending and promoting forms of human glorification as they are (Aristin, 2016). Humans are social creatures which in the process of life must interact with other humans. The value for interacting with others such as tolerance, love, and so on is called humanity (Rorong, 2019).

The term 'time is money' is not just a term but has become a culture in several countries such as America, European countries, Australia, Japan, Korea, and other countries. They are used to being taught to value time so that when there is no work, they will tend to strive to do something of productive value such as by writing or reading. That is why in some developed countries such as Japan, America, and countries in Europe many people are found reading when they are waiting in line or on a train or bus. According to (Weil, 2023) Time is a means of precious resources.

Action plays an important role in getting an achievement. Achievement can be said to be a result that has been achieved by someone as evidence of the effort that has been made (Retnowati et al., 2016). And an achievement cannot be separated from the name materialism. The belief that material possessions and wealth are a priority over all other values of life for personal satisfaction and happiness in order to improve social status is materialism (Husna, 2015). Americans regard materialism as overconsumption. Materialism is an understanding that considers that reality is actually matter or matter, and this reality is referred to answer a number of life problems related to the nature and existence of all things (Murdani, 2019).

Directness and Assertiveness have a relationship in American values. Directness is a statement of points that you want to convey clearly, concisely, without being complicated. While Assertiveness is the ability to express feelings and thoughts firmly and honestly without interfering with the rights of others either verbally or non-verbally (Barida, 2016).

Based on the above theory, this article describes the cultural values reflected in America which include individualism, freedom, competitiveness, privacy, equality, informality, change and progress in the future, human goodness, time, achievement, action, work and materialism, directness and assertiveness.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research in this article is qualitative research by using descriptive method by literature study as a method to obtain data. Qualitative research is a study that emphasizes holistic description to explain in detail about certain phenomena. The literature study method or literature study is a research data

collection method is a theory and data collection technique based on analysis of books, articles, and research journals related to the research made (Adlini et al., 2022).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Cultural values will not be separated from the culture of the community itself. The value of cultural values in society is a reflection of the behaviour that appears in people's daily lives. Cultural values are very meaningful in society, as they relate to norms, beliefs, customs, practices and symbols. Therefore, these values need to be cared for, nurtured and passed on to the younger generation, whether through family, education or community organizations. America is a large country in which various human elements are mixed with different cultural identities. So to show that that is the value of Native American culture cannot be separated from the flow of cultural variation itself. The values of America are based on the summary of the literature study as follows:

### **Individualism**

Individualism is a cultural value in which individuals begin to detach from society and focus only on themselves and their immediate family. Since the beginning of the American nation, the values of freedom and individualism have been an inseparable part that has been integrated into the characteristics of its citizens and society. Individualism means more importance to personal freedom, meaning more selfishness than to others. These individualistic values are very dominant in the U.S. Americans strongly believe in the concept of individualism, they consider themselves to be independent individuals, and are in their own control.

In research (Yusuf, 2022) which is based on the film *A Grandson* from America, reflected that the cultural values of Western people, especially Individualism, which in this case is played by a boy after six years Brooks, wants to always act according to his will, does not want to be restrained, Brooks feels he has the human right to do everything he wants without the need to be reprimanded and scolded even though his actions are wrong. The attitude of individual children in the educational space is usually caused by differences in economic, social, and cultural status. Children like to demean the status of others, sometimes the child's attitude does not take care of the feelings of his friends. This is like the many cases of bullying in schools. The perpetrator always degrades the status of his friend for various reasons, so in that way many children laugh at their victims. The concept of education in the liberal tradition is rooted in Western ideals of individualism. This liberal influence is seen in education that prioritizes performance through a process of competition between students. Ranking to determine the best students, is an implication of this educational understanding. Individualism is a trait or habit that does not care about other people and the surrounding environment so that it only prioritizes the interests of its immediate family, even worse only thinking about oneself.

### **Freedom**

One of the absolute rights of an individual is freedom. Freedom is an abstract thing whose implementation feels real. Deprived of freedom will make man do a lot of repression in his life (Fachamy & Kusmara, 2013). Freedom in the United States is very important and is enshrined in the United States Constitution. Freedom is an activity or an action based on a rule that is not binding or complicates the activity or an action.

In the article "The Role of Civic Education as a Pillar of Human Rights Education" (Surajiyo, 2023) President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1948, declared the Four Freedoms (four freedoms) before the United States Congress. The contents read as follows:

a. Freedom of speech.

Speech is important in bringing about the desired change especially our role as a society to create a democratic environment, Overcoming the fear of speaking out is an important step to strengthen democracy and ensure justice and freedom for all citizens (Lestari et al., 2023). Freedom of speech does not include the freedom to insult and demean others.

## b. Freedom of religion.

Freedom of religion, choice, embrace, belief and worship of a religion and belief is a right for every individual, everyone has the freedom to practice their religion and beliefs and it was guaranteed by human rights instruments. No one should be forced to choose a religion, no one has the right to reduce, limit or deprive a person of his or her right to profess his religion, it is because the right to religion and belief is a non-derogable right, a right that cannot be diminished under any circumstances and by anyone (Rahmat, 2014).

## c. Freedom from fear.

Freedom from fear is a condition where all people feel comfortable in carrying out their life activities because the situation of the country is safe, orderly, and prosperous, and the government is not repressive towards its citizens. In other words, freedom from fear is integrated completely and comprehensively with the fulfillment of the other three freedoms. freedom from fear means more security, that is, there is no threat to the freedom obtained by all citizens in a country (Gromico et al., 2013).

## d. Freedom from want.

Naturally there is no human being who wants himself poor, because the poor conditions often make someone marginalized in his social life. "freedom from want" is a fundamental human right, and it is acknowledged that there is enough sustenance in the world to feed everyone (Berry, 2020).

### Competitiveness

The competitive nature of Americans is based on a very strong individualism, this competitiveness covers all aspects of life. Competitive is the feeling that everything has to be won, they tend to hate losing (Syamsuri et al., 2020). The competitive nature that exists in humans is evidence of human resources that have competitiveness. This is an explanation of the existence of rank, position, and so on. It's all obtained because those who are competitive clearly have high innovation and creativity. The ability to complete tasks in a new way is called innovative. The displayed work performance will continue to exist and grow. America is home to most of the best middle and post-secondary institutions in the World. The emergence of excellent schools in America cannot be separated from the competitive nature between schools to get the title of excellence. One of the innovative traits of HR is those who want to continue to develop their performance and not just be satisfied with what they have produced (Rezky et al., 2019). Intellectual intelligence is a must-have for those with a high competitive spirit to determine strategies and find the right alternatives. Competitive is a condition in the condition of competition carried out by individuals or a certain group or organization to achieve a victory in any aspect.

### Privacy

The right to privacy is one of the inherent rights of everyone and is the dignity of everyone that must be protected which includes sensitive content or personal data (Kusnadi & Wijaya, 2021). Personal data is a person's right to privacy that must be protected from various aspects of life. Privacy is any form of information that is specific and inseparable to a person that may not be disseminated without the consent of the person who has (Paul & Aithal, 2018). The procedure for safeguarding such information is called a privacy system. (Alibeigi et al., 2019)The present review, is a doctrinal legal study on background, concept, limits and legal development of privacy through comparative and descriptive approach in order to offer a general and understandable idea of the right to privacy.

In the book created by (Weil, 2023), Americans value privacy very much with each other but are sometimes misinterpreted by strangers for the Privacy Limitations. One example of the application of privacy respect in America is from home, children in America tend to be given a private bedroom as a form of respect for the privacy of the child. Privacy is a right that belongs to everyone regardless of who the person is, old, young, rich, or poor that is private or confidential. Privacy also serves a purpose.

### **Equality**

Social equality is a socio-political system in which all people who are in a particular group of people have equal status and rights in determining attitudes and opinions in any aspect (Panjaitan & Olivia, 2023). In the **Preamble of Declaration of Independence United States July 4, 1776 stated that** *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”* That means that since the declaration of independence, the American people have also claimed to recognize equality for all Americans and they have equal rights Nor is one born superior than the other without any exceptions. However, in practice in America, there is still discrimination against those who are considered "different". It can be interpreted that equality is a right to get an equal life without discrimination from someone or a certain group. Equality is a term born as a resistance to the issue of social discrimination in public life that is built to weaken oppression.

### **Informality**

An informal environment can be defined as an environment where there are no formal rules controlling it (Djazari et al., 2013). In the book created by (Weil, 2023), Informality is a prominent feature of American behaviour that is reflected in the habit of saying names without first names (such as Mr. or Mrs.) or surnames after introductions. It is considered a casual interaction. Almost all aspects of their lives run using informality, but in some cases such as public and ceremonial events they use formal language. Not only in language, the use of informality is also in the selection of their clothes, Americans prefer to wear casual clothes that are more casual than formal. Although in the business world formal wear is the rule, in America it can still tolerate the use of casual suits in business meetings held. Sometimes this is considered a lack of respect for people who are not from America so that the assumption arises that Americans are disrespectful. Informal is an activity carried out by a group repeatedly so that a habit is created, informal can also be interpreted as an activity or a habit that is not formalized by a place or even a country.

### **The Future, Change and Progress**

In the book created by (Weil, 2023), American countries tend not to drag on in the dark past since European colonialism, they are more focused on the future of their nation. So, now America is one of the world's recognized superpowers. American trends are more interested in science, technology and innovation than history and tradition. It can be said that America holds that change is an indicator of progress and believes that all problems must have a solution. Future lives have two choices, namely setbacks or progress, if a life regresses it will inevitably be left behind or even neglected, and vice versa if a life experiences an progress it must undergo a change.

### **The Goodness of Humanity**

Humanity is a manifestation and there is a reaction between people who view each other as worthy and honourable neighbours. "Humanity" is a matter of defending and promoting forms of human glorification as they are (Aristin, 2016). Humans are social creatures which in the process of life must interact with other humans. The value for interacting with others such as tolerance, love, and so on is called humanity (Rorong, 2019). Steadfastness to the principle of American society that everyone has their own advantages so that they can bring change to good things or in short they have the ability to improve themselves. They consider that every human being deserves and deserves to be treated like a human being himself. Humanity is a sense of care, tolerance or love that one has for others.

### **Time**

The term 'time is money' is not just a term but has become a culture in several countries such as America, European countries, Australia, Japan, Korea, and other countries. They are used to being taught to value time so that when there is no work, they will tend to strive to do something of productive

value such as by writing or reading. That is why in some developed countries such as Japan, America, and countries in Europe many people are found reading when they are waiting in line or on a train or bus. In the book created by (Weil, 2023), Americans consider time a valuable resource. Americans have the principle of getting the best results efficiently by utilizing time to do good and wise things so that the time used is not wasted.

### **Achievement, Action, Work and Materialism**

Action plays an important role in getting an achievement. Achievement can be said to be a result that has been achieved by someone as evidence of the effort that has been made (Retnowati et al., 2016). Appreciation of a person is characterized by a person's contribution to the improvement of his work ability. People who work hard are highly admired in America, with a record of having to excel as well. An achievement cannot be separated from the name materialism. The belief that material possessions and wealth are a priority over all other values of life for personal satisfaction and happiness in order to improve social status is materialism (Husna, 2015). Americans regard materialism as overconsumption. Materialism is an understanding that considers that reality is actually matter or matter, and this reality is referred to answer a number of life problems related to the nature and existence of all things (Murdani, 2019). In the book created by (Weil, 2023), Americans are considered materialistic because they are driven by their consumptive nature, especially towards "branded" goods. American materialism and consumerism are often refuted under the pretext of "reward for hard work".

### **Directness and Assertiveness.**

Directness and Assertiveness have a relationship in American values. Directness is a statement of points that you want to convey clearly, concisely, without being complicated. While assertive is the ability to express feelings and thoughts firmly and honestly without interfering with the rights of others either verbally or non-verbally.

In the book created by (Weil, 2023), directness in communication is one of the characteristics of American, they express opinions in an express opinion and the principle that honest and frank discussions with the intended person is the best step to resolve disputes. They will immediately openly express their dislike for something to someone if they really feel that way, thus minimizing misunderstandings. The expansion of frank aspects also contributes to the delivery of opinions called assertiveness. Americans are educated to be strict about their rights, especially if they feel they are being treated unfairly, exposed to business fraud, and so on. This can also be seen by the "return" method if the goods received are not in accordance with what was ordered or damage occurs. So that sellers also serve their customers and tend to respect customer requests very much. Directness occurs when we only mention the main points in speaking or conveying something, while assertiveness occurs when we convey certain information by expressing a feeling so that it can cause a firm impression.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above discussion, it is concluded that cultural values in America include individualism, freedom, competitiveness, privacy, equality, informality, future change and progress, human goodness, time, achievement, action, work and materialism, directness and assertiveness.

Individualism means more importance to personal freedom, meaning more selfishness than to others. Freedom is power or the ability to act without coercion; absence of constraints (obstacles). Freedom in America includes, freedom of speech and expression (Freedom of speech), freedom of religion (Freedom of religion), freedom from fear (Freedom from fear), and freedom from lack or destitution (Freedom from want). Competitive is the feeling that everything has to be won, they tend to hate losing. Privacy is any form of information that is specific and inseparable to a person that may not be disseminated without the consent of the person who has. The right to privacy is one of the inherent rights of everyone and is the dignity of everyone that must be protected which includes personal data. Equality is a deep belief that in all people have the same value, no one is born superior to others. An

informal environment can be defined as an environment where there are no formal rules controlling it. America holds that change is an indicator of progress and believes that all problems must have a solution. Humanity is a manifestation and there is a reaction between people who view each other as worthy and honourable neighbours. The term 'time is money' is not just a term but has become a culture in some countries such as America, Americans consider time as a valuable resource and have the principle of getting the best results efficiently by utilizing time to do good and wise things so that the time used is not wasted. Action plays an important role in getting an achievement. Achievement can be said to be a result that someone has achieved as evidence of the effort that has been made, and an achievement cannot be separated from the name materialism. Americans are considered materialistic because they are driven by their consumptive nature, especially towards "branded" goods. American materialism and consumerism are often refuted under the pretext of "reward for hard work". Directness and Assertiveness have a relationship in American values. Directness in communication is one of the characteristics of American, they express opinions in an express opinion and the principle that honest and frank discussions with the intended person is the best step to resolve disputes. While assertive is the ability to express feelings and thoughts firmly and honestly without interfering with the rights of others either verbally or non-verbally.

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