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**CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF TIME
CONCEPT IN THE BUSINESS CONTEXT**

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Declaration of Academic Integrity

I hereby declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged material from any source.

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Signed:

Anotācija

Šis darbs analizē izmaiņas citā kultūrvidē strādājošo latviešu laika uztverē. Lai veiktu šo pētījumu, pirmkārt, tika apskatītas teorijas, kas saistītas ar laika jēdzienu. Otrkārt, darba autore izveidoja aptauju darba praktiskās daļas veikšanai. Treškārt, tika analizētas 25 ārpus valsts strādājošo respondentu laika uztveres izmaiņas. Darba galvenie secinājumi parādīja, ka ārpus valsts dzīvojošo un strādājošo latviešu laika uztvere mainās balstoties uz mītnes zemes kultūras laika uztveri un ka tas, kā un cik daudz laika uztvere tiek ietekmēta, ir atkarīgs no katras kultūras. Darba saturs varētu būt noderīgs Latvijas uzņēmumiem, kas vēlētos iepazīties ar laika uztveres dažādību citās kultūrās un uzlabot savu darbinieku laika uztveri.

Atslēgas vārdi: monohronā laika uztvere, polihronā laika uztvere, izmaiņas laika uztverē, starpkultūru komunikācija

Abstract

The present paper analyzes the changes in the perception of time of the Latvians working abroad influenced by the perception of time of the culture they work in. To carry out the research, first, the theories of the concept of time were examined. Second, a questionnaire for analysis was designed. Third, an analysis of changes in the perception of time of the Latvian people working abroad in five different countries was carried out. The author arrived at the following conclusions: the perception of time of the Latvian people living and working abroad changes under the influence of the culture of the host country. The study could be useful for Latvian companies which would like to improve their awareness of different time perceptions and time management.

Key words: monochronic perception of time, polychronic perceptions of time, changes in the perception of time, cross-cultural communication

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Introduction

Our life and work often depend on other people and are influenced by them irrespective of the fact whether it is in Latvia or in a foreign country. There are two types of communication, one is verbal communication and the other one is nonverbal. This paper aims at researching the second type which includes different nonverbal messages that people send to each other all the time they communicate. One of the components of nonverbal communication is chronemics. Human perception of time has a considerable impact on our daily activities. The way people perceive time directly influences their relationship with other people in everyday life as well as in the business sphere. The perception of time is different in different cultures and it is the reason why time is such a relevant aspect when cross-cultural business relationships are considered. When doing business with people from other cultures or working in an international company, it is important to be aware of their understanding of time and to find out the way how to deal with it.

This research **aims** at analyzing the changes in the perception of time of the Latvians who are working in another country and in a different culture.

The following **hypothesis** has been proposed in this paper: the perception of time of the Latvian people who have been working abroad for more than one year changes under the influence of the concept of time prevailing in the culture they work in.

The **enabling objectives** of the research are:

1. to read and analyze the theories pertaining to the concept of time, its different perceptions, and its place in nonverbal communication;
2. to design a questionnaire to discover changes in the time perception of the Latvians who work in five different countries;
3. to analyze and compare the data of the questionnaires;
4. to draw relevant conclusions.

To carry out this small-scale study a number of **research questions** have to be answered. They are: 1. Does the perception of time of the Latvian people working abroad change according to the perception of time of the culture they work in? 2. What are the main differences in the perception of time between Latvia and the 25 respondents' host country? 3. Which are the aspects of the perception of time of the host countries that they value as positive and negative?

To achieve the aim of this work a questionnaire consisting of ten questions will be designed to determine each person's attitude towards the changes in the culture he or she works in together with changes in the perception of time. This is the data gathering instrument in the BA thesis.

The **research method** used in this study is a case study which is defined by Yin as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.” (1984:23). The research is carried out theoretically and empirically. The target population of this study is 25 Latvian business people from the age group 25 – 45 who have been living in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and the United Arab Emirates for at least one year. Their answers to the questionnaire comprising ten items will be analyzed according to the theories examined in this paper.

The paper is divided into four chapters. The first chapter examines the history of nonverbal communication and the place of chronemics in it. The second chapter gives an insight into the theory of monochronic time and polychronic time perception created by E.T. Hall (1983) and other scholars (Trompenaars and Turner (2003), Lewis (2006); Reynolds and Valentine (2004)). The third chapter investigates different perceptions of time examined by different scholars, as well as, it looks at how time can be used in organizations. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the analysis of the questionnaire filled in by 25 Latvian business people who have been living and working abroad in five different countries for more than one year.

Chapter 1

Nonverbal Communication and the History of Research of Chronemics

Chronemics and different concepts of time across cultures are the main themes of this paper. Chronemics is a part of nonverbal communication which is an interaction between people beyond words. The present chapter looks at the history of nonverbal communication as well as examines the essence of the concept 'chronemics' in it.

According to Knapp in Manusov (2006) the first attempts of researching nonverbal communication can be seen already about 2,500 years ago, represented by the Chinese philosopher Confucius. Confucius believed that the meaning of the use of words is overvalued and that there are a lot of things that can be expressed without words. At the same time the first handbooks on oral rhetoric were published. Knapp (2006) believes that: 'the study of oral rhetoric or persuasive speaking is an important tributary of nonverbal knowledge because understanding of a speaker's gestures, posture, and voice are central to an understanding of their effectiveness'(2006:4). Kennedy (1963) presented a theory that the Greeks have advanced five canons of rhetoric: 'invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery' (quoted in Knapp 2006:4). Regarding these canons, an idea that how a speech is delivered can be more important than the content of the speech was presented by Aristotle. The philosopher believed that the way of delivering a speech was very influential.

Kennedy (1972) claimed that the ones, who 'refined, clarified, categorized and expanded on the behaviours involved in speech delivery' were Roman teachers and orators (quoted in Knapp 2006:4). Cicero was the first to connect nonverbal behaviour with emotions, as well as defined different channels of nonverbal communication, for example, eyes, face and voice. A bit later another Roman, Quintilian, continued to popularize an idea that was considered also before, that the signals which are nonverbal have to correspond to the verbal ones. Moreover, Quintilian was the first who described how an orator must dress. The famous rhetoric also made a classification of two groups of gestures: 1. the gestures that come naturally together with the delivery of speech and 2. the ones that are specially performed with mimic and are meant to show something special(2006:4).

Knapp (2006) claims that: 'attention to nonverbal behaviour associated typically with the delivery canon virtually disappeared during the Middle-Ages and the Renaissance when a concern for style predominated' (2006:5). Bizzell and Herzberg in Knapp (2006) comment that in the 1600s a lot of attention was paid towards delivery of speech of preachers and lawyers, which included: 'acting, facial expressions, posture, movement, gesture, projection, tone, pace, and modulation' (ibid.).

Knapp (2006) has investigated that the next step of connecting the rhetorical cannon of delivery and the nonverbal behaviour was the elocution movement which began in 1750 and continued till the beginning of the 20th century. Elocutionists were: ‘keenly interested in body movements and vocalizations, and they developed detailed lists of the many ways a body and voice can be used to deliver written speeches and literary works’ (ibid.). They created different examples and lists of many possible arm, head and body movements, as well as facial expressions that can be used for animation of a speech. The ideas of elocutionists mostly were formal instructions which were later, in the 20-th century manner of public-speaking, formed into less formal recommendations.

In the 19th century the two works that had a major influence on gestures and facial expressions were published. They were: ‘Jorio’s (1832) *Gestural Expressions of the Ancients in the Light of Neapolitan Gesturing* and Darwin’s (1872/1998) *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*’ (2006:6). Jorio’s work included ideas that the use of the same gesture in different contexts can hold completely different meanings and that gestures can serve as both: replacement of words and supplement for them. Charles Darwin who concentrated on researching animal behaviour improved the findings about ‘facial expressions of emotion’. Darwin’s work stimulated other scholars to research: ‘what aspects of an expression are common to our species, the morphology of facial expressions, and how certain aspects of facial expressions of emotion can be modified by cultural teachings’(2006:7).

The key developments of nonverbal communication in the early 20th century influenced the flourishing of the area in the middle of the same century. One of the basic developments was the growing interest in human interaction and communication by famous scholars from different fields. Knapp (2006) mentions the main of these fields: ‘Symbolic interactionists (e.g., G. H. Mead), researchers interested in group dynamics (e.g., K. Lewin, E. Mayo), propaganda (e.g., H. Lasswell), cybernetics (e.g., N. Wiener), and information theory (e.g., C. Shannon and W. Weaver)’. All of these scholars researched communication in different ways, however together they investigated social interaction that helped in understanding all the levels of social life. It initiated the understanding that human interaction plays an important role in such areas as sociology, anthropology, linguistics, sociology, psychiatry and others.

Knapp (2006) claims that after this the interest in human interaction grew rapidly. Scholars from different spheres started to explore this area and used different tools to succeed. As stated by DePaulo and Friedman (1998), in Knapp (2006): ‘by the 1920’s a very active group of researchers was studying spontaneous versus posed facial expressions of emotion, vocal expression, and gestures’ (2006:8). In their research scholars started to use photos,

videos and, even pictures painted by professional painters which helped to observe the use of nonverbal messages in natural settings during human interaction.

Another significant development highlighted by Knapp (2006) was Efron's (1941) study which illustrated how the nonverbal behaviour of people is influenced by the environment they live in, as well as by their cultural background.

Moreover, also: 'the belief that one might learn a lot about a person's internal states by observing his or her behaviour was another early 20th-century conception that fits the study of nonverbal behaviour well' (2006:8).

Knapp (2006) believes that the 1950s was a very significant decade for the development of research of nonverbal communication. The most popular names in this field of this time were Trager (1958), Birdwhistell (1952, 1970) and E.T. Hall (1959) whose works made a great impact on those who were later interested in paralanguage, space, body movement and posture.

As regards the period after the 50's, Knapp (2006) asserts that: 'for many years after World War II, human behaviour was commonly believed to be almost totally malleable by culture, and any data that suggested otherwise were considered "politically loaded" and fodder for racist actions' (ibid.:10).

The late 1960s and early 1970s was a time when nonverbal communication gained unprecedented popularity. Knapp (2006) believes that it could be explained by the willingness of people to interact with each other and to build close personal relationships. More and more books were written on the subjects of different areas of nonverbal behaviour. Knapp (2006) informs that in 1976 the *Journal of Environmental Psychology and Nonverbal Behaviour* was first published and later, in 1980, it was renamed the *Journal of Nonverbal Behaviour*.

In the last decades of the 20th century there were two general approaches to nonverbal research. 'The *structural and ethological* researchers tended to emphasize descriptions of how interactions are organized, whereas others emphasized the manipulation of *psychological* variables and/or nonverbal behaviour to observe the effects' (2006:12). Almost every scholar had a different approach for researching nonverbal communication within these two fields.

When looking at the main works published about different areas of nonverbal research, Kendon (1977) made a great impact on analyzing gestures that included use of facial expressions, eyes and spatial formation and their use in interaction. Later, many authors (e.g. Ekman (1972)) started to research how nonverbal communication can be performed by different parts of face and body separately. That helped to concentrate on a specific subject matter and examine it in greater detail.

In the history of nonverbal communication different methods and subject matters have been investigated throughout times. For example, in the last decades many researchers have paid a lot of attention to gestures. It can be proved with the fact that in 2001 an academic journal *Gesture* was first published. (Knapp 2006:13) Moreover, the current nonverbal research also focuses on how people communicate in different settings, for example, public speaking, interviews, court proceedings, etc.

Despite the fact that: ‘we seem to be circumspect in attributing any given behaviour exclusively to either culture or biology. Unlike the past, there appears to be a greater acceptance that both may play a role in the manifestation of nonverbal behaviour’. (2006:14)

To review, there are scholars who gather information about nonverbal communication as a separate area of research and there are others who investigate it together with verbal communication. According to Knapp (2006): ‘In one sense, therefore, the term ‘nonverbal’ suggests a separate piece of the interaction puzzle, but in another sense it is a term that identifies a starting point for describing the total interactive situation.’. (ibid.)

1.1. Chronemics as a part of nonverbal communication

The present subchapter looks at the history of the term which is used to define the concept of time or *chronemics*. A number of authors have discussed the concept of time long before the term *chronemics* was introduced in 1972. One of them was the linguist and semiotician from Canada, F. Poyatos (1972), who regarded: ‘*chronemics* that concerned conceptions and the handling of time as a biopsychological and cultural element of social interactions’ (Poyatos in Littlejohn; Foss 2009: 100).

Based on the ideas of Rodriques (2000), the term *chronemics* refers to the use of time. Rodriques states that it is possible to look at time as a commodity, its main characteristics being ‘the ability to save, spend, waste or earn it’ (Rodriques 2000:95). Everyone has his or her own comprehension of time, however, there are cases when human attention towards time is the same. An example that shows it is the way how people perceive time in the business world. Business people have to be time-conscious because their organization of time directly influences the amount of money they earn and the productivity of their work (Rodriques2000:96).

Rodriques (2000) claims that the way how time is perceived by an individual influences other individuals around him or her, in this way, sending non-verbal messages to them. Being late or arriving in time to a business meeting, making phone calls in early mornings or on holidays are only some examples that prove it. Each person with his or her attitude towards time shows how he or she treats the relationship with other people.

Submission of a business project in time shows not only that the person who has done it is responsible for and serious about his or her work but also implies a non-verbal message to the people with whom he or she works together.

Rodrigues gives some examples how the perception of time and its associations vary in different cultures. 'An Indian host may politely invite the American or British guest to come at any time to his home. But the European guests would interpret this "any time". They might believe that the Indian host does not expect them to visit. They may not pay a visit to the house of the Indian unless he states a specific time for the visit.' (2000:96). Here the problem is that the Indian person's invitation was considered from the point of view of the American or British as a non-invitation although the Indian host did not mean it. This example shows that non-verbal communication through *chronemics* mostly depends on each culture in every particular situation.

Raphael, Raphael and Valdovinos (1984) assume that the way how people respect each other by arriving late or early for an appointment or a meeting reveals a lot about what they think of the particular event, as well as of the participants. It is believed that *chronemics* includes not only time but also timing and the number of times an activity has been repeated. The term embodies: 'the number of times a behaviour or a statement occurs or recurs' (1984:216). There is a certain meaning for things that are repeated over and over again and for those which are said only once and have some definite aim. Timing, conversely, characterizes the effect of something that is said. In many cases it is very important to know when to speak and when to keep silent. It influences the way how other people perceive the things that are said and how significant they seem. Raphael, Raphael and Valdovinos describe that timing: 'which is to be distinguished from the record of occurrence (or time), as well as the frequency of occurrence (or the number of times), is also an aspect of *chronemics*'. (ibid.)

Bruneau in Key (1980) defines *chronemics* as: 'the study of human tempo as it relates to human communication' (1980:114). Furthermore, *chronemics* deals with studying both: 'subjective and objective human tempos as they influence and are interdependent with human behaviour' (ibid.). The term includes also: 'the study of human communication as it relates to integrated and interdependent levels of time experiencing' (ibid.).

Wood (2010) explains *chronemics* as the way: 'how we perceive and use time to define identities and interaction' (2010:133). Regarding this aspect there is a norm that in Western cultures people who are important and hold a high status are allowed to keep others waiting and people with a lower status are supposed to be on time. This means that the time of people with a high status is more valuable than of those with a low status. For example, professors are permitted to be late for a lecture but students may be reproved when arriving

after the lecture has started. Moreover, as in Western society the value of time is significant, everything happens at high speed. Wood (2010) gives some phrases presented by Lackoff and Johnson (1980) which show how important time is for American culture. These phrases are: “Don’t waste time,” “Save time,” “Spend time,” “Can’t spare time,” “Invest time,” “Run out of time,” “Budget time,” “Borrowed time,” “Lose time,” “Use time profitably”(2010:133). All of these phrases represent the attitude that Americans have towards time.

Wood (2010) also holds an opinion that people reflect their personal priorities by spending a certain amount of time with certain people. Whenever it is possible people try to spend more time with people they feel comfortable with and have a positive attitude than to those who make them feel uncomfortable. The same process can be observed in the business sphere where more time is spent with people who are more important. For example, banks are paying more attention and trying to please the clients who have deposited a higher amount of money (2010:133).

1.2. The research of the concept of time

There is a group of famous researchers that have offered their ideas of how the time can be seen and applied to cultures, groups of people or to every person separately. The first significant researcher of time concept was E. T. Hall. His research is present in his books: “The Hidden Dimension” (1969), “Beyond Culture” (1976), and “The Silent language” (1981). Although these books have been written a long time ago, they are still the greatest contribution to the research of the concept of time.

Taking into account E. T. Hall’s findings, further research of time concept has been undertaken by F. Kluckhohn and F. Strodtbeck (1961) who have included the time sense in their five orientations of human life. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck have asserted that: ‘The possible cultural interpretations of temporal focus of human life break easily into the three-point range of past, present and future’ (1961:13).

Later, at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s, G. Hofstede has carried out a considerable research of measuring the influence of national cultures on multinational culture. His investigation allowed him to develop four dimensions: 1.individualism/collectivism, 2.uncertainty avoidance, 3.power distance, and 4.masculinity/femininity. Then, in the late 1980s the research of G. Hofstede was carried on and as an outcome of it, the fifth dimension was added to the four existing ones. The author formulated two orientations of time: long-term orientation and short-term orientation (Hofstede 1997:166).

In the continuation of the research made by G. Hofstede, F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden-Turner in 1997 looked at three main cultural dimensions which included also the attitude towards time. Further classification of Hall's findings was made by R.D. Lewis (2006) who classified the cultures into linear-active, multi-active and reactive ones (2006: 37).

There are many views how different authors explain their understanding and peculiarities of the term *chronemics*. All these theories maintain that time is a concept that leaves an impact on our everyday lives and influences our relationship with others. In having any relationship with other people it is important to understand which is our own way of perceiving time and, how it differs from others. To classify how people perceive and comprehend time in different places in the world and to compare them, E.T. Hall has advanced the idea of two types of time which will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Monochronic and Polychronic Time Perception

E. T. Hall is the most well-known scientist in researching and analyzing the concept of time. In his book "The Dance of Life. The Other Dimension of Time" (1983) he introduces a concept of monochronic time and polychronic time. The present chapter will look at his findings and ideas presented regarding this topic.

Hall states that time organization in complex societies is managed in two or even more different ways. First, there is an organization system where each 'event is scheduled as a separate item' (1983:45). It means that people do things one by one and do not mix them. Second, there are other people who do 'several things at once' (ibid.), all at the same time. A quotation by Hall shows how these perceptions of time influence peoples' lives: 'I noted how deeply it affected the channelling and flow of information, the shape and form of the networks connecting people, and a host of other important social and cultural features of the society'(ibid.).

Hall compares these two different perceptions of time with 'water and oil' (ibid.) and comments that each of them has its strong and weak sides. The way of doing many things together Hall has termed 'polychronic time' (P-time), but the system where each thing is done separately – 'monochronic time' (M-time). According to Hall, 'polychronic time is oriented on involvement of people and accomplishment of business operations much more than on meeting deadlines or following schedules. In this perception of time people are not too serious about being in time for a meeting and feel free to cancel them. Hall considers that: 'P-time is treated as less tangible than M-time' (1983:46).

M-time people are almost 'obsessed with management'. They try to schedule everything that can be scheduled. This weakens the role of their perception of time because there are many unpredictable moments or situations on a daily basis.

People of the monochronic system cannot get the way how appointments and meetings are handled by the P-time people. They cannot understand how everything, even things that are very important, can be changed so quickly. With P-time people nothing is consistent or secure because of how fast and frequently they change their plans.

People always need the way to stay informed about everything that is happening and it is complemented with the flow of information. The research of Hall shows that: 'Polychronic people are so deeply immersed in each other's business that they feel a compulsion to keep in touch' (1983:50). They want to find out every smallest detail about others, this serving as a basis of their existence.

Hall presents also some acts of administration in these two time settings. Control and administration for P-time people is a matter of analyzing a job. By doing this the administrator is able to verify that each function is completed. This way the administrator feels that he or she has control over the employee. However, Hall explains that: ‘scheduling how and when each activity is actually performed is left up to the employee’ (ibid.). P-time people believe that scheduling other’s work and interfere in his or her plans violate the individuality of the person.

Opposite to this, M-time people make a schedule of activities but leave the analysis of the tasks fulfilled in individual’s hands. The way how P-time people manage their administrative matters at work helps to remind the employee about the fact that his job is a ‘part of a larger system’ (1983:51). On the other hand, M-time people are not able to see that their activities are a part of a system. They know that the organization they work for has a certain system but it does not work as a whole.

Hall states that: ‘My point is not that one system is superior to another, it’s just that the two don’t mix’ (1983:51). Both monochronic and polychronic time systems have their strong and weak sides. The author of the paper has made efforts to sum them up. A polychronic administrator is able to manage a large number of employees. Moreover, organizations that work with the polychronically have certain limits for the number of employees. Their goal is to have people who are gifted in the main positions of the organization and they have problems when something new or different is being introduced. The bureaucracy of organizations with polychronic system can be a disaster without gifted people. The monochronic type organizations are opposite they can allow having more employees than polychronic ones.

Another idea proposed by Hall is that polychronic time is female time and monochronic is male time. It is common knowledge that women tend to concentrate more on their relationships with people, but men, as declared by Hall: ‘are more task-oriented’ (1983:52). P-time people value other people highly. Their lives are influenced by their relationship with others. They almost never choose to follow their schedule if they have to help a human being who is having any trouble. As described by Hall, M-time people are: ‘oriented to tasks, schedules, and procedures’ (1983:53). Sometimes these people forget about the human needs of other people only to follow their straight plans.

It is not easy to understand whether a person is monochronic or polychronic time oriented and, as Hall has said, each of us has some characteristics from both of these time divisions. The question is: which of them is the dominant one in our perception of time?

Trompenaars and Turner (2003) supply other terms for explaining the same ideas. The term that corresponds to the monochronic perception of time is 'sequential' but the one which is used instead of the polychronic system is 'synchronic'. 'Sequential' thinkers are certain about everything having its time and place. Any changes in the sequence they are used to causes their uncertainty. Such beliefs make 'sequential' people always do things right, although this might disturb them in doing the right thing. Trompenaars and Turner voice an opinion that: 'a "straight line" may not always be the best way of doing something; it is blind to the effectiveness of shared activities and cross-connections'. (2003:123) However, often 'sequential' people do not see it and continue to follow their straight rules.

'Sequential' people make very tight schedules and value each minute of their time. They consider employees being rude if they are some minutes late because it may disrupt their schedule for the whole day. The main principle in their lives and, especially, in their business relations is that 'time is money'.

To explain the second perception, which is 'synchronic', Trompenaars and Turner explain that: 'There is a final established goal but numerous and possibly interchangeable stepping stones to reach it.' (2003:124) These people are less serious about punctuality that is such an important topic for the 'sequential' people. 'Synchronic' people do not think of time as unimportant, they just treat some other cultural values as more crucial. They are certain about placing people before any schedules. The appointment time for 'synchronic' people is more approximate because they are able to observe their other parallel activities while waiting.

Another categorization introduced by R. Lewis (2006) in the book 'When Cultures Collide' and examined by Reynolds and Valentine (2004) is the differentiation between 'linear', 'multi-active' or 'flexible' and 'cyclical' time. Lewis claims that: 'time, particularly, is seen in a different light by Eastern and Western cultures, and even within these groupings assumes quite dissimilar aspects from country to country.' (2006:53) Linear time corresponds to the monochronic time that was already discussed in this chapter. It means that people who follow linear time perception; 'prefer to do only one thing at a time, to concentrate on it and to do it within a fixed schedule'. (2006:54) For people who follow this concept, time is expensive and they try to use it carefully and avoid wasting it. Lewis, as an example of the main representatives of the linear time, mentions Americans for whom time is the most valuable commodity. These people: 'prefer to concentrate on one thing at a time and work sequentially within a clock-regulated timeframe; they see this as an efficient, impartial, and precise way of organizing life – especially business'. (2004:30) People from cultures who follow the 'linear' time frame observe schedules, are future-orientated and measure their time

precisely. Lewis refers to the societies which follow the linear time perception as to 'profit-oriented societies for whom time is precious, even scarce, commodity.' (2006:53) These cultures are mostly oriented on their immediate future and try to do everything fast and follow the flow of time to succeed.

Reynolds and Valentine point out that schedules are really important for 'linear' cultures, they are: 'critical because they permit planning and prevent uncertainty'.(2004:30) In these cultures schedules are designed into small units and each of the designed appointments have to be accomplished precisely. People do not like if someone is late because it leaves a negative impact on their schedule for the whole day. Reynolds and Valentine claim that: 'they prize punctuality and consider promptness a basic courtesy as well as a proof of commitment'. (2004:30) These cultures believe that doing two things at one time is unacceptable towards others.

The focusing on the future is one of the main characteristics of 'linear' cultures. People from these cultures often take special time management courses to manage to get done more and more every day. It is believed that: 'in 'linear' cultures, belief in the future is unshakeable – after all, the future promises greater expertise in controlling time and packing more into each time unit'. (2004:31) The measurement of time units is very precise, the period for each unit is relatively short. Usually they plan their time into: 'minutes, hours, days' when planning short term activities and into: 'quarters and years' when reporting about their earnings of the exact period (2004:31).

Lewis (2006) believes that there is nothing against linear time perception as far as its use is not imposed on other cultures. The big value of each minute is particularly present in the business world but people from such professions as artists, writers or philosophers see and treat time completely differently. Lewis characterizes linear cultures as such which think that: 'time is passing (being wasted) without decisions being made or actions being performed' (2006:54).

Furthermore, the 'flexible' way of perceiving time carries the same idea as the polychronic one. Cultures which follow it are used to accomplishing several tasks at once. People from these cultures avoid strict schedules and are satisfied with multitasking. They do not mind if someone interrupts them or their plans are changed. Such people are people-oriented and never treat their job higher than their friends or family members. Reynolds and Valentine reflect it in an example: 'I can always get another job, but I only have one brother'. (2004:32) Cultures with the 'flexible' interpretation of time are present-oriented. They live for experiencing each moment of their lives.

‘Flexible’ or ‘multi-active’ cultures treat their relationship with people as a very important part of their lives: ‘When people and relationships demand attention or require nurturing, time becomes a subjective commodity that can be manipulated or stretched.’ (2004:32). Communication between people who view time as ‘flexible’ is not dependent on a clock. They do not finish their meetings without having agreed upon certain questions only because their schedules say so.

Reynolds and Valentine introduce another way of perceiving time – ‘cyclical time’. People who follow ‘cyclical’ time frame see time completely differently. They believe that: ‘time manages life and humans must adjust to time.’(2004:34). In ‘cyclical’ time cultures time is considered to be repetitive. It repeats itself after a certain period and later does it all over again.

Cultures that live following ‘cyclical’ time frame try to find certain connections and links which reflect common characterizations of each period of time. ‘cyclical cultures believe that logic is neither linear (cause/effect) nor people-driven, but captures the unity of human experience with the whole of life, nature, and existence’ (2004:34).

Also dealing with business and business decisions in the cultures which follow the ‘cyclical’ time frame is different. Reynolds and Valentine describe that: ‘decisions are not made quickly nor in isolation, purely on their present merits with scant reference to the past; decisions have a contextual background and are made long term’.(2004:35) ‘Cyclical’ cultures believe that time comes around as in a circle and it lets them do the same things after a certain period of time when they are ready for it. They think that it is impossible to miss an opportunity that has come to them because they are sure that sooner or later it will return.

The way how these cultures treat time influences also their relationship with people. For them, it is important to build close long-term relationship with their business partners because they believe that they will cooperate with them also after a certain period of time.

People from ‘cyclical’ time oriented cultures pay a lot of attention to the past. They try to find links and connections that affirm their belief of the repetition of time. When these people are making plans for the future they are doing it for a long period ahead.

All in all the differences between monochronic and polychronic people, discussed in this chapter, are essential enough to interfere with their understanding of each other. It is hard to accept each other’s opinions and habits. However, in the business world where each person is an individual with his or her own beliefs for doing things the right way it is even harder to change themselves in order to work with others.

To find out more about different divisions of time the next chapter will include the ways how time can be differently perceived in terms of location, duration and intervals.

Chapter 3

Different Perceptions of Time and Their Use in Organizations

Knapp and Hall (2010) in their book 'Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction' look at different human perceptions of time. They affirm that time belongs to a definite communicative environment. They also share the idea that was introduced by Lackoff and Johnson in 1980 that for people in the US time is tangible. They think about time as of 'something that can be made, saved, spent or divided up' (2010:104). Knapp and Hall also give some examples of how to express characteristics of some objects from our environment using time, for example: 'a chair that looks like it has been there "forever" or an elevator that "never seems to be on time"' (2010:104).

Time has an important role in human lives. It indicates the moment when we are going to sleep, eating our lunch and doing other everyday activities. Time also determines the social interaction between people. To prove that, Knapp and Hall use the ideas of Leonard (1978) and Werner & Baxter (1994) who believe that time influences the way we perceive people. Some examples which show it are that people who seem boring to us talk "too long", people who are responsible are "on time" and people who respect others give them some "time to themselves". Moreover, Knapp and Hall emphasize the importance of time even more by giving examples of people marking some specific date and time of a serious meeting on their wrist or in their cell phones. Time, very often, is responsible also for the stress felt in everyday lives.

The main findings of Knapp and Hall (2010) are the division of time into different perceptions. The first of them, 'time as the location' is related to a specific event happening at a specific time. For example, it can be described by such quotations: 'You hugged me at the exact moment I needed it most.', and 'I don't like eating dinner at 10 p.m.' (2010:105). The first of these examples shows that the timing of the action taken was well-planned, but the second one reflects the opposite. Time can be a location also for some everyday events such as the time meant for having a lunch. For some people it is common to eat lunch the same hour each day but others are used to doing it any time in some specific set of hours.

When we look at the second perception of time which is 'time as duration', it includes human perception of the length of different events. When going to an event people usually develop their perceptions of how long the event is going to last by referring to their previous experience. Sometimes these perceptions are right but sometimes they are not, in such a way disturbing a person's plans for the rest of the day. Moreover, often the actual length of an event differs from our perception of how long it is. To explain it better, Knapp and Hall have

said that if the environment of an event is boring we feel as if it will take ‘forever’ the event will end, but if it is interesting and we like to be there ‘time flies’.

Another perception of time introduced by Knapp and Hall (2010) is ‘time as intervals’ which corresponds to the periods of time between particular events. People can build their perception of time by evaluating how much time has passed from one time an event has happened till the next. For example, when a person has not seen his or her close friend for a long period of time, it seems strange because seeing the friend after certain small period of time was already a person’s habit.

Besides Hall’s distribution between monochronic and polychronic time and the one of different perceptions of time, there is another categorization which divides people in the past, present and future-oriented groups. The next sub chapter will look at the meaning of this distribution, as well as, at the characteristics of people belonging to one group or to another.

3.1. Past-oriented, present-oriented and future-oriented time

Trompenaars and Turner (2003) introduce two different notions how people see time as such, they are: ‘time as a line of discrete events, minutes, hours, days, months, years, each passing in a never-ending succession, and time as a circle, revolving so that the minutes of the hour repeat, as do the hours of the day, the days of the week and so on’ (2003:120). The authors claim that for a long period of time anthropologists have insisted that the way how a particular culture thinks of time and operates with it, determines how its members understand their lives and the nature of their existence.

Trompenaars and Turner talk about three types of cultures on the basis of the extensive research performed by Geert Hofstede and his time concept, which are present-oriented, past-oriented and future-oriented cultures. According to them, present-oriented cultures are the ones which do not attach a big importance to time and tradition, as well as ignores their future. Past-oriented cultures are oriented to restoring and maintaining the traditions coming from past in the present. Future-oriented cultures are the ones that have big expectations for the future and that are doing everything possible to realize them. Moreover, people who are future-oriented are often those who experience development in both, economic and social contexts.

According to Trompenaars and Turner, time is: ‘an idea rather than an object. How we think of time is interwoven with how we plan, strategise and co-ordinate our activities with others. It is an important dimension of how we organise experience and activities’ (2003:121). Each person’s experience of time lets him or her consider an event that has happened in the

past at the present moment or to envisage an event that is going to happen in the future. The ability to do so is called ‘an imperative use of time’.

Trompenaars and Turner claim that time has a meaning not only for an individual as such, but also to groups of people or cultures to which he or she belongs. This plays a significant role when people are dealing with business with other people from groups or cultures which have different perception of time. The system of time for one group may be completely incomprehensible for another and may cause misunderstandings which do not concern the business deal itself. Here the factor that determines the possibility to work together is the ability to communicate, dealing with such factors as time.

Different perceptions of time influence also the way how people do business. Their understanding of time and attention to it regulate the way they work. To find out how exactly the perception of time influences work in organizations, the next chapter will show the main problems and questions that are connected to it.

3.2. Use of time in organizations

The same as time influences everyday human lives it influences also their work in organizations. Moreover, it influences the work of each organization and its success. This chapter is going to look at what are the main problems that time and timing cause in organizations and how they could be solved.

Ballard and Webster (2010) believe that: ‘organizations are run through time: they are constituted in a through discourse, symbols, and messages about the time and timing of human activity’ (2010:1). Time determines a lot for an organization’s ability to manage its work and to coordinate its activities. Ballard and Webster give examples how the attention towards time is used in speech: 1.there are a lot of examples when organizations use vocabulary of time management (e.g.: ‘time saving, time wasting, time-and-motion, etc.’), 2.there are also examples when time is used when speaking about marketing (e.g.: ‘lead time, development time, speed of delivery, etc.’), and 3.there are also expressions used to talk about appropriate use of human time (e.g.: ‘vacation time, flex time, time sharing, etc.’) (2010:1).

Ballard and Webster claim that these orientations towards time have become so useful in everyday speech because of the history of industrialized organizations. Marx (1849/1977) in Ballard and Webster has said that time started to become traded for wages during the industrial revolution. This event influenced people to look at time in the context that “time is money”.

Ballard and Webster have made a distinction of time in organizations between *commodification*, *construction* and *compression* of time that have been proposed by Hassard

(2002). This distinction has been made to research the use of time in organizations and comprehend its use. Authors believe that all of these three factors have to be researched together and only then the use of time in organizations can be understood. According to the authors: ‘when “work-life” discussions focus on issues of temporal *commodification* to the exclusion of other tropes, popular discourse typically centres on themes of “balance” to address the amount of time spent working (Perrons, Fagan, McDowell, Ray, & Ward, 2005; Caprioni, 2004; White, Hill, McGovern, Mills, & Smeaton, 2003; Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2002). The *commodification* of time is explained with balance in planning human relationship with his or her work and the life he or she is living outside from work. This distinction of ‘work and life balance’ nowadays is very popular in books or TV shows that try to give advice for the society. In modern society it is very hard to find a way to manage the work life and out of work life so that both of them are wholesome. In most cases, people who work at high positions in organizations usually prioritize their work and have problems in finding time for their families, friends and leisure time.

More and more people who work in organizations are trying to recover their time planning and find a way to schedule their lives to achieve balance between ‘work’ and ‘life’. Ballard and Webster claim that: ‘Time recovery is an important—even critical—goal to humanize the workplace and provide space for meaningfulness in work (i.e., through adequate time “off” in order to find a satisfying balance between the professional and personal)’ (2010:3). However, there are a lot of people who do use their holidays or vacation time for working due to different observations. This means that the only problem is not only the lack of time but also the way how the members of organizations think. Therefore, the other of the three factors of researching the use of time and timing in organizations has to be applied. According to Ballard and Webster,: ‘The futility of redressing work-life problems based solely on the *commodification* of time is that it ignores non-rational aspects of temporal *construction* by organizational members’ (4:2010).

As to the *construction* of time in organizations it can not be constructed only by an organization itself as there are a lot of cultural norms and values that influence it. There is a problem that some organizations, as well as, people working in them do not respect their working hours and stay available for their clients or executives 24 hours a day. Ballard and Webster think that one of the causes of it may be the grooving progress of modern technologies. Of course, the possibility to use different technologies might help to improve the work of an organization, but another thing is that it gives people an opportunity to be available all the time and take more and more work with them when they are supposed to have their free time. For example, the ability to read and write e-mails from personal

computers and mobile phones make people to think about their work all day long. Kirby (2003) in Ballard and Webster proposes an idea that: ‘new technologies are the apparatus through which employers intrude across boundaries into their employees’ personal lives to extract ever increasing amounts of time and energy’ (2010:5).

The *compression* of time is defined by Ballard and Webster as: ‘a measure of the combined effect of the time (i.e., scarcity, or lack of time) and timing (i.e., scheduling, or when work occurs) of work, leading to an increased pace of life’ (2010:5). To achieve this ‘pace of life’ there is an activity called downshifting which is applied as reduction of working hours and salary in order to become more happy and use the time of their lives appropriately. Ballard and Webster point out that: ‘The strategy of downshifting as “the only sensible option” in managing compression overlooks both the economic system that led to the *commodification* of time and the cultural values that shape and are shaped by our *constructions* of time’ (2010:6).

When applying *commodification*, *construction* and *compression* at the same time, the main idea is for organizations to achieve fullness and meaning in their use of time and the workers of them to achieve the same things in their lives. Ballard and Webster (2010) considers that to achieve it, organizations should work as an unit and develop a collective that can rely on each other and are interested to spend their time so that it is spent worthy.

Other problem regarding time in organizations is the different perceptions of time between their workers. This is an issue that has to be dealt with mainly in international organizations because the perception of time is usually affected by geographical placement. The next sub-chapter is going to look at polychronicity in organizations and show, how does it influence organization’s work.

3.3. Polychronicity in organizations

As every person is different also his or her perception of time differs. The perception of time plays a significant role in the relationship between members of any organization. To manage their work and find the best way to work together they have to accept each other’s perception of time. This subchapter is going to examine polychronicity in organizations researched by Bluedorn and Jaussi (2007).

The characteristics that are used in order to talk about perception of time in organizations, according to Bluedorn and Jaussi, are: ‘polychronicity, speed, punctuality and temporal depth’ (2007:188). These four factors are the main issues of differences among individuals or collectives in an organization. Although, the difference of time perception is present in an organization, it is essential in what circumstances it appears. There might be

different situations as to the fulfilment of tasks. The ability to solve problems associated with different time perceptions is directly influenced by factors, such as, whether the tasks have to be accomplished doing a teamwork or working alone, as well as the area in which every organization works in, etc..

The first of the factors mentioned, polychronicity, is a way of perceiving time first introduced by E.T. Hall that has been already discussed in this paper (see chapter 2). Bluedorn (2002) has defined it as: ‘the extent to which people (1) prefer to be engaged in two or more tasks or events simultaneously and are actually so engaged (the preference strongly implying the behaviour, and vice versa), and (2) believe their preference is the best way to do things’ (Bluedorn and Jaussi 2007:189). There are a number of characteristics that distinguish polychronicity from Hall’s monochronicity. First, Bluedorn and Jaussi claim that: ‘polychronicity is a continuum of behaviours ranging from the extremely high-end, where people prefer to engage in a multitude of tasks at the same time, to the low-end (sometimes called the monochronic end), where people prefer to engage in only a single task or event at a time and will resist moving on to a second task until the second task is completed’ (2007:189). Second, polychronicity is about doing several tasks at once in a given period of time. People who perceive time polychronically often accomplish their tasks simultaneously, sometimes, even doing it in a back-and-forth manner. For example they can start to work on one task, then continue on doing another task, but later getting back to the first task that has been started. This, the accomplishment of a number of tasks at the same time does not mean that polychronicity helps people to do more in a shorter period of time. It is just a manner of doing things and their own preference of carrying through their tasks.

According to the ideas proposed by Hackman and Oldham in 1976, Bluedorn and Jaussi point out that: ‘In a work context, the job will limit and often determine the extent to which people conduct themselves in a polychronic manner. A key characteristic of jobs is their skill variety, which concerns the variety of activities and skills that an individual must perform and use when undertaking a task’ (2007:190). However the person’s perception of time is a cultural issue that, in most cases, is his or her own characteristic, it could be influenced by a job position taken so that the person had to change the way he or she sees time. Regarding the above mentioned, Bluedorn and Jaussi offer nine propositions for successful use of polychronicity:

1. ‘The more polychronic the person, the better the person’s performance will be on tasks characterized by high skill variety.’ (2007:190).

This proposition shows that polychronic time perception not only allows to do many tasks simultaneously, but also enables a person to use different skills that he or she has when completing a specific task.

2. 'An individual's level of polychronicity will be positively correlated with job satisfaction when tasks are characterized by high levels of skill variety.' (ibid.).

This shows that polychronic people are able to use different skills at once and this way to reach better results.

3. 'The greater the extent to which individuals have the opportunity to perform work in a manner consistent with their preferences for how polychronically they prefer to work, the greater their job satisfaction will be.' (2007:191).
4. 'The greater an individual's polychronicity, the more job satisfaction the person will experience when performing unstructured tasks.' (ibid.).

For polychronic people it is important to be able to do tasks in a manner that is in accordance with their beliefs because it helps them to work with higher self-efficiency. It is very helpful if a polychronic person is able to manage his or her work and does not have any particular restriction in planning the tasks that have to be completed.

5. 'The level of autonomy on the job will moderate the relationship between polychronicity and creativity such that when autonomy is high, polychronicity will be positively correlated with creativity, but when autonomy is low, polychronicity will either be less strongly correlated with creativity or not correlated with it at all.' (2007:192).

This means that it is very important to understand the way how polychronic people think and work in order to get the best result they are able to provide. The proposition above once more affirms the importance of the perception of time of a person in connection with the person's way of accomplishing different tasks and managing his or her work.

6. 'Cross-functional workgroups will display more group-level polychronicity (i.e., the group will engage in more projects and tasks simultaneously) than single-function groups'. (ibid.).
7. 'Cross-functional workgroups will be more likely than single-function groups to develop norms and values indicating that the group should take on multiple projects and tasks simultaneously'. (2007:193).

People who are able to observe various functions in an organization form a group which can usually deal with all the tasks that are entrusted to it because of its ability to adjust.

8. 'The larger the organization, the less polychronic its culture will be.' (ibid.).

9. 'The more organic an organization's structure, the more polychronic its culture will be.' (ibid.).

Both of the propositions mentioned above (items 8th and 9th) explain that polychronicity usually is a characteristic of small organizations or small work groups. This is because when a number of people in a team is small, each member has to observe different tasks.

All of the theories examined above have been observed in real life circumstances and many of them explain the activities of real people or organizations. The next chapter includes practical analysis of 25 Latvian people who have to adapt their perception of time to a perception of time of another culture because of living and working in it.

Chapter 4

Changes in the Perception of Time of the Latvians Working Abroad

After researching the differences and the overall perception of time of Latvian and Russian business people who work in Latvia in the author's term paper written at the end of 2012 she has decided to analyze the perception of time of the Latvians in other circumstances. The results of the previous research showed that the way how Latvian and Russian business people in this country perceive time is more or less the same and that their perception is more polychronic than monochronic.

The author of this paper decided to continue the research by finding out what happens to the perception of time of the Latvian people when they relocate and start to work in another country. To prove the hypothesis of this paper that: 'perception of time of the Latvian people who have been working abroad for more than one year changes according to the perception of time of the culture they work in' (see p. 4), a questionnaire comprising ten items has been designed.

The questionnaire includes ten questions about the changes in a person's perception of time after moving to another country. At the beginning of 2013 the questionnaire was distributed by e-mail to 25 Latvians who are currently living and working overseas. People whose age bracket is from 25 to 45 and who have been working in another country, for a period longer than one year, answered the questions. The number of respondents from each country: Italy, The United Arab Emirates, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, was five persons per each. The areas in which the respondents work vary. However, it does not leave a negative impact on discovering the overall effect that work in another culture may leave on the perception of time of the Latvian people.

The questionnaire that was filled in by the respondents is presented in Appendix 1 (see p. 48). In order to be sure that the respondents are able to distinguish between monochronic and polychronic time perception, the author of this paper sent a table which reveals the main characteristics of these two perceptions of time to all the respondents. The table is designed by E. T. Hall and M. R. Hall in 1990 and is included in Appendix 2 (see p.50).

To understand the influence that working in another culture leaves on the Latvians better, the answers to the questionnaire will be analyzed one by one. Five examples of the filled in questionnaires are included in Appendix 3 (see p. 51)

4.1. Analysis of the data of the questionnaire filled in by the Latvians who work in the United States of America

The group of five Latvian respondents working in the US consists of two people who are now living in the state of California, one person who lives in New York, one person who works and studies in Colorado and another one who works in Arizona. This group is represented by three male and two female respondents in the age bracket from 25 to 45. Their positions differ: two of them work in hospitality business, one of them is a tour guide, one of them is a trainer in a sports center and the fifth one is an athlete.

1. Three of the respondents who work in the United States claim that they are more polychronic than monochronic. They consider that they like to do things simultaneously and change between tasks. One respondent believes that doing many things at once helps to complete them faster. He is sure that while working on a certain task sometimes an answer to another one just comes by itself. Another person believes that concentrating on many things at once makes him feel more important and gives him more energy. The third person answers that as she is an artist in her heart she is not able to focus on one thing at a time. Her head is full of different ideas and she believes that letting these ideas cross her mind helps her to be creative. She is sure that when doing many things at a time it is more likely that at least one of them is successful.

The other two respondents think that they have the monochronic perception of time. One of them believes that it is not possible to finish a task successfully if a person is working on several other tasks at the same time. He thinks that the best results can be achieved only by focusing on one task. The other monochronic person thinks that she is very punctual and that she likes to finish everything on time. Scheduling helps her to organize her life and she feels good living this way.

The answers to the first question from the five people who work in the USA show that even if they are all from one culture and now are living and working in another culture their way of perceiving time differs. To discover how their time perception influences their life in the US and how they feel there, the answers to the second question will be presented.

2. As to the second question four out of five respondents affirmed that they feel changes in their perception of time caused by the work in the US. One of the respondents answers that in the States it is not possible to stop and rest for a while. He said that everyone around him is doing something all the time. Because of being together with these people he has become very similar to them. He admits that he does not feel well when he has a free time. Another respondent believes that living and working in another culture influences

everything about her. In the USA she feels like a part of something big. Although she knows that everyone around her are individualists, she likes the feeling of the never-ending movement and activity around her. One of the respondents claims that he and his perception of time have changed but he is not happy about it. He does not like that in the US everyone is on his or her own and people are not really friendly or familiar with each other. He explains that with the friendliness and familiarity he thinks a real one, not the superficial one favoured by Americans. Another respondent says that he feels good about the changes in his perception of time. He believes that now, when working in the US, time has a bigger value and that he spends his time more worthwhile.

The respondent who answers negatively and claims that her perception of time has not changed explains it by saying that she has always treated time as very valuable. As she is an athlete, time has a great meaning in her life. She is fighting with milliseconds in her championships as well as her age to be able to reach the best results in her career.

The answers to this question show that, as regards America, the culture there is different and so is the perception of time. However, the answers show that the Latvians who work there are able to adjust to it and, mostly feel good about how the life there has changed their perception of time matters.

3. Regarding the third question all five respondents give an affirmative answer. They have become more punctual because of working in the USA. Even though this question does not ask for any comments some of the respondents still give them. They say that in the USA time is one of the main issues that determines people's lives, it is of paramount importance to be punctual and respect the schedules of other people. Another idea expressed is that it is not possible to build a career in the US without being punctual.

4. As to the fourth question, all of the respondents answer that the organizations they work in are monochronic.

5. The answers to the fifth question differ. Three of the answers are in the affirmative, which means that the respondents like the way the Americans treat time. The other two answers are negative.

6. When analyzing the answers to the sixth question they are quite different. Three of the respondents claim that they feel better working in American culture. One of the respondents says that in the USA he feels awake. He feels energy from people all the time as they are finishing one task and running to start the next one right after it. Another respondent answers that she feels just a bit better in the USA. She believes that because of the way how people treat time the arrangement of many things is better. This arrangement results in an easier life. One of the respondents thinks that as to the business sphere and work in

organizations the perception of time really helps to reach the goals and move forward step by step. However, he has different thoughts when speaking about the private lives of people. He believes that human relationships in the USA are very superficial and that they are not ready to invest their time into building a friendship that would be real in the eyes of a Latvian person.

The two other respondents think that regarding the perception of time, it has been easier for them to work in Latvia. One of them believes that in Latvia people are able to separate their work life and their leisure time. He believes that this is the main reason that helps to be a personality whose only characteristic is not the name of a company he or she works for. The second respondent says that for her it is easier to work in Latvia, because she understands Latvians better. She likes that there she understands time issues the same way as other people.

From the answers to this question, it is possible to see how different people feel about working abroad. They reveal the points which are common and different when comparing the two cultures. Although there is something common in the answers of the five people, they are still very different.

7. As to item number seven all the respondents give an affirmative answer. This means that in their opinion the way how the time is scheduled and tasks are managed in the USA leads towards success.

8. All the answers to the eighth item are positive. There is at least one thing for each of the respondents that they do not accept in the American perception of time. This shows that, even if they think that the way how Americans organize their time and deal with time issues is successful, there still are issues they do not understand. One of the respondents claims that he cannot accept that a lot of Americans are so tense when thinking about time. They are not able to relax even on holidays and this interferes with their relationship with people. Another person points out that sometimes Americans are so obsessed with following their schedules that they do not listen to their own feelings. They eat only when the schedules say so and not when they feel hungry and the same refers to sleep and other everyday activities. One respondent thinks that all of this rush on a daily basis does not allow Americans to enjoy life. He believes that they might be very rich and successful in business but without being able to establish a real relationship; they do not allow themselves to be truly happy. Another respondent in her answer expresses an idea that this might be the last possibility for Americans for finding a balance between their work and personal lives. She believes that with the fast development of technologies and human need for more and more money people might become similar to robots, which do only mechanical activities and have no feelings. The fifth

respondent shares her negative experience of American punctuality. She does not like the fact that a person who comes to a meeting five minutes later is treated as irresponsible for the rest of his or her time in an organization. All of these answers show that in many cases the Latvians are not able to understand the way the Americans think and treat time. Further, the author of this paper is going to find out if there are any issues that the respondents find valuable about the perception of time in America.

9. All of the answers are positive. This shows that despite the fact that all of the respondents have negative feelings in terms of the American concept of time, there are also matters that they see as beneficial. All of the respondents mention that they appreciate the perfect organization of time. All the activities during a day are scheduled and have to be done in the period of time meant for them. One of the respondents admires the way how people treat each others' time. Their punctuality towards other people helps to cooperate and leads to successful cooperation in the workplace.

10. As to the overall views of the respondents about living and working in the United States regarding time matters, most of them are satisfied with it. Most of all they like the perfect organization of everything around that helps to arrange the life itself. They think that as to the business sphere, American perception of time is really faultless. However, their opinion is different when talking about the personal lives of American people and their way of building relationships, when comparing the perception of time in the USA and Latvia, respondents believe that each of them has its strengths and weaknesses. One respondent thinks that the perception of time in Latvian business culture differs a lot from the American companies researched. In the US there are rules that are applied to all organizations, no matter in which sphere they specialize in. Three of the respondents have a strong opinion that when analyzing the perception of time in the organizational level, Americans have taken a big step forward. The respondents themselves understand that the reason of it is the history of organizational and business sphere, as well as the huge number of population, and the amount of money invested and other variables that distinguish both of the countries under discussion.

All in all, the perception of time of Latvians and Americans differ. However, despite these differences, the answers to the questionnaire items show that the Latvians there are able to accept most of the characteristics of the perception of time of Americans and adjust to their way of living. The answers to the questionnaire prove that the perception of time of the Latvians who are currently working in the USA has changed.

4.2. Analysis of the data of the questionnaire filled in by the Latvians who work in Italy

Four of the respondents from Italy live and work its northern part but one of them in the southern part. Two respondents, one man and one woman work in hospitality business near Venice. The other two women work in the fashion industry in Milan and the fifth respondent works in a shipping company in Capri. To get to know how these people feel about working in Italy, and what is their opinion about the perception of time of Italians the author of this paper will continue with analyzing their answers to the questions.

1. As to the answers to the first item four of the respondents think that they are more polychronic and only one of them that thinks she is monochronic. The main characteristics mentioned by the polychronic people are their interest in people and their relationship. One of the respondents claims that family and friends are the most expensive things in her life. Another one believes that the most important thing in life and business is having good relationships with people. He thinks that success of a person is directly influenced by people he or she knows and by relationship they have. He says that knowing the right people can be a lot more valuable than having the right degree. However, the person who sees herself as monochronic, thinks that scheduling and getting through her life task by task helps her to feel needful all the time and never give up.

2. Regarding the second item, the five respondents affirm that they feel changes in their perception of time that are influenced by working abroad. One of the respondents, who has worked also in other European countries says that the work and life in Italy has made her more relaxed about her daily tasks. She says that Italians have taught her to keep calm and rely on a positive outcome of things she is not able to influence. Another respondent who works in the same area as the first one says that although Italians are not too serious about their schedules, she has learned that the things that are important have to be done on time and have to be carried out the best way possible. The respondent, who lives in the Southern Italy, has learned how strong can be a family and how much it means to Italians. At first he has felt uncomfortable about working in a family owned company because of his irrelevant role in it, but now he understands that there are a lot of benefits of a business that is run by one family. Another respondent admits that now he puts more energy on relationship with people he works together. He says that he has had to change his character because of Italian tendency to build long-term relationship. Different changes of the perception of time are felt by another respondent. She has started to identify with her past. By seeing the significance of family members and history for Italians, she feels the need to find out more about her own past.

The answers to this question show how many things have changed in the perception of time of five Latvian people, despite the fact that all of these changes have appeared in the same culture.

3. All the answers to the third item are negative. The time perception of Italians is not more punctual than the one of Latvians.

4. All of the respondents answer that the time perception of the companies they work in is polychronic and that they have to work on a number of tasks at the same time.

5. The answers to the fifth item differ. Two of the respondents do not like the comprehension of time of Italian culture. Two other respondents like it, but the remaining one admits that he does not mind the way how Italians perceive time but he still likes the perception of time in Latvia more.

6. Regarding the sixth item, four of the respondents prefer the way how Latvians perceive time regarding business matters. One of them thinks that Italians are a bit too family-oriented and it disturbs their work. They tend to leave a lot of unfinished tasks that hinder their business. Each of them has a family, which usually consists of a large number of people and they are ready to quit their work for any problem a member of their family has. The respondent thinks that this is the main issue that does not allow them to reach the best results in business. Another respondent answers that when working in Latvia she feels closer to people. She believes that this makes her feel more confident and work with better results. Then there is a respondent who thinks that in Latvia people feel the border between work and family better. They do not mix them together and it helps to plan the life inside and outside of the job. Another respondent, who thinks that the way how people refer to time is better in Latvia, believes that Latvians are a bit more motivated and more future-oriented. He likes the way how Latvians plan their work and the tasks they have to accomplish in order to get better results and improve their lives. However, in Italy people are more past and present-oriented they live so that each day is filled by impressions and emotions. They are interested in how they and their families feel in the exact moment of time. The one respondent whose answer is that she prefers the perception of time of Italian culture feels the opposite way. She likes how people live day by day and try to make every day worth living. She feels that in Latvia people plan for the future too much, but in most cases, when the future they have thought about comes, they continue to think further.

The ways of perceiving time of Latvians and Italians are really different. However, none of them is better than the other. The major condition is that the perception of time is in accordance with a person who has to deal with it on a daily basis. If it is so, the person is able to operate and organize his or her life successfully.

7. The answers to the seventh item are all negative. Respondents do not think that the Italian perception of time helps to manage the tasks of organizations successfully. Some of the respondents comment that there are many other characteristics that help Italians to work successfully, but, unfortunately, the perception of time is not one of them.

8. As to the eighth question, all of the respondents say that there is at least one thing that is not appropriate for them in the perception of time of Italians. Two of the respondents claim that it is their way of treating their relationship with their families. They believe that the tendency of having long phone conversations with all family members during office hours is inappropriate. Another respondent wish that Italians were a bit more punctual on daily basis. He thinks that it would solve a lot of problems with business issues. One of the respondents does not like that Italians often are too much influenced by the things that have happened in the past. As an example, he says that sometimes they are not ready to try some new approaches of accomplishing tasks that might ensure better results because they want to maintain their traditions and act the same way as they did in the past. One more respondent can not understand the extent of time which is spent for conversations. During their business conversations Italians manage to talk about everything from their pets at home to their aunt's birthday celebration. They do not feel like spending time when talking about such issues because what matters to them are their relationship and the ability to rely on each other.

The difference between Latvian and Italian cultures can be seen in the answers of the respondents. There are so many issues regarding time that are not comprehensible for Latvian people, but despite this they can still live and work there and do it without any major problems.

9. The answers to the ninth question are also affirmative. All the respondents admit that there is something they can learn from Italians regarding their perception of time. One of the respondents mentions their ability to always choose family instead of anything else. They express their feelings towards their families with their ability to leave even the most serious task unfinished if their help is needed. Another respondent tells that she likes how Italians manage to work on so many tasks simultaneously, and even though they are spending a lot of time for other activities that do not apply to work, they still manage to finish the tasks they are working on. One of the respondents likes that Italians are ready to spend time for talking to people they work together about any issue. He feels more important when having a face to face conversation with his boss instead of receiving a formal and impersonal e-mail letter. There is also a respondent who likes that the scheduling of time in Italian culture is not too strict. This enables her to organize her own work without having to think about meeting the schedules of other people all the time. The remaining respondent likes that Italians have time

for everything. He thinks that they have found the best way to manage their work and leisure time, unlike many other cultures, by spending the most of their time for themselves, their families and friends.

10. The opinions about life in Italian culture regarding the time matters differ. There are people who feel like they are in the right place and are happy to work in Italy and be able to look at time differently as before. However, there are also two respondents who do not feel that the way how Italians treat time fit their personalities. All of the respondents are sure that there is a significant difference between the perceptions of time of Latvian and Italian people. The three respondents who like the way how Italians perceive time like to live and work in Latvia, but the chance to work in Italy gives them an opportunity to learn something new and feel new emotions. The respondents who do not like the perception of time of Italian culture say that they are used to living in one way and it is hard for them to adapt to another culture, because its attitude towards time is completely different.

To sum up, the perceptions of time of Latvian and Italian cultures differ a lot. Both of these cultures are oriented towards different periods of their lives which is the main reason why their views of time are not the same. The answers of Latvian respondents who live and work in Italy show that their perception of time is influenced by the one of the Italian culture.

4.3. Analysis of the data of the questionnaire filled in by the Latvians who work in the United Kingdom

The group of Latvian respondents working in the UK consists of four men and one woman. Three of the respondents work in London, one works in Manchester and one in Plymouth. One of the respondents who work in London is a construction worker, one is a bartender and one works as a dealer in a casino. The respondent who works in Manchester works in administration of a sports club. The one who lives in Plymouth works as a shop assistant. Most of these respondents have been living in England for more than two years and have an experience of doing other jobs as well. To discover the feelings regarding the perception of time of Brits of these respondents, the author of this paper is going to analyze their answers to the questionnaire.

1. As to the first item two of the respondents answer that their perception of time is monochronic but the three others think that theirs is polychronic. Looking at the reasons of why they think so, one of the respondents who thinks of himself as being more monochronic tells that he plans everything in his life. He admits that he can not live without his diary and that he feels unsettled if something unexpected crosses his daily schedule. The second monochronic respondent claims that with having a schedule she can do everything step by

step. She likes to finish her daily tasks one by one and put a tick in her journal after completing them. She believes that doing this helps her to feel bigger self-esteem at the end of every day. The respondents who think of themselves as being polychronic time perceivers feel differently. One of them believes that there are some tasks that resolve themselves when the right moment comes. He does something when he feels like it is the right time to do it. He does not follow any schedules and feels well about not doing it. Another respondent thinks that he is polychronic because he likes to work simultaneously on different tasks and contact with different people. He believes that by doing more also more is done. The last respondent is not sure whether he is monochronic or polychronic. The only thing he is sure about is that he is people-oriented.

2. Three of the respondents do not feel any significant changes in their perception of time caused by the life and work abroad. The remaining two think that there are some changes they have observed. One of these respondents thinks that he has become more punctual. He is sure that if he wants to succeed in his work he has to adjust his perception of time to the one that Brits have. He feels that punctuality is rated very high by his colleagues. The other respondent who feels changes in his perception of time thinks that he has got used to the slow decision making of his British colleagues. He comments that at first it was very hard for him to accept this way of deciding things. Now he admits that he sees the benefits of doing so. He is sure that it makes the decisions well-considered while this leads to much better results. The fact that only two of five respondents have noticed changes in their time perceptions may indicate that the perception of Latvians and Brits are rather similar.

3. Regarding the third item, all of the respondents answer that they have become more punctual. There might be two reasons for becoming more punctual: the punctuality of the British culture or the job position they take.

4. According to the answers to the fourth item four of the respondents see Brits as monochronic time perceivers and one as polychronic ones.

5. All of the respondents have no opposition according the way how the British culture views time.

6. Answers to the sixth item show that all of the respondents do not have any preferences between the perceptions of time of Latvians and Brits. Three of the respondents have chosen both answers and commented that they feel good working in both, Latvia and the UK, regarding the issues that are related to time. One of the respondents prefers the perception of time of Brits because he thinks that the way they perceive time helps them to arrange their business issues. However, he says that also the perception of time of Latvians is appropriate for business. Another respondent likes the Latvian perception of time more

because there she feels more pertaining to others. She believes that she understands the way how Latvians perceive time better and she feels safe in such conditions.

7. All of the answers to the seventh item are affirmative. The managing of tasks in the organizations in which the respondents work is successful.

8. The answers to the eight question show that three of the respondents do not have any issues regarding time that they are not able to accept. The two other respondents do not like the fact that Brits tend to be slow in doing their business. They believe that this characteristic often interferes with the work that has to be managed to get done.

9. Most of the respondents praise Brits for their punctuality. One of them thinks that the punctuality is the main reason why British business is so successful. Another respondent believes that punctuality serves the role of arranging the tasks that have to be done and gives Brits a possibility to conclude them at the right time. Another valuable characteristic of the British perception of time, according to the respondents, is that they manage to separate their time at work and their free time. The respondents appreciate the fact that Brits do not talk about work outside of it which is rarely done in Latvia.

10. When commenting on the life in the UK in comparison of the life in Latvia regarding the perception of time, most respondents admit that they do not feel a big difference. However, the respondents who work in London feel that people there are in nonstop movement. The fact that the city is so full of people makes the respondents to feel the rush around them all the time. They admit that in Latvia the everyday life is a bit calmer. However, when talking about work, the respondents do not feel the rush that is felt on the streets. One of the respondents answers that the business in the UK is usually done very thoroughly and he believes that it is the result of the slow decision-making and the ability to work fast after a decision is made.

Differently than in the two countries that were analyzed previously, the answers to the questions of the Latvians working in the UK show that the perception of time there is more similar to the perception of time of Latvians. A fact that demonstrates it the best is the answers to the eighth question, where most of the respondents do not name anything that they are not able to accept in the perception of time of Brits.

4.4. Analysis of the data of the questionnaire filled in by the Latvians who work in the United Arab Emirates

This sub-chapter will summarize the answers to the questions of five respondents who are living and working the United Arab Emirates – Dubai. This group of respondents consists of three women and two men. One of the respondents works in the fashion industry. She has

been living in Dubai already for more than three years. Another respondent moved there two years ago with his family and works as an architect. The second female respondent works as a hostess in a restaurant/nightclub. One of the respondents is a waitress in the same restaurant. The fifth respondent works as a part-time ski instructor in 'Ski Dubai' which is an indoor mountain complex. To find out what are the differences in the perception of time in Dubai, the answers to the questionnaire will be analyzed next.

1. Three of the respondents who work in Dubai think that their perception of time is more polychronic. One of them admits that he has become more polychronic because of his life in Dubai. However, also back in Latvia he was used to doing many things at once and schedule his tasks concurrently. Another of the polychronic respondents says that she is not able to follow any schedules. She thinks that for accomplishing a task the right moment has to come. The third respondent remarks that she manages her tasks according to her feelings, sometimes she is able to do a lot of tasks at once in order to take some time free from job at some other moment. The two other respondents see themselves as more monochronic. One of them thinks that scheduling things and doing them one by one helps to put everything in order. The second one thinks that working on one task at a time from the beginning till the end improves the result of it.

2. As to the second item, all of the respondents have confirmed that their life and work in Dubai have a great impact on their perception of time. All of them admit that at first it was very hard to understand and accept the way how the Arabs deal with time issues. One of the respondents tells that he has become more relaxed towards scheduling and deadlines. He says that there is almost no need to schedule something because most likely it will not happen the way it should have. Another respondent thinks that she has got used to everything happening at once. She has learned how to deal with all the tasks given to her simultaneously. Then, there is a respondent who has become more tolerant towards the perception of time of others. He has got used to the tendency of interrupting almost every meeting by phone calls, other conversations or some irrelevant discussions. One of the respondents explains that she has accepted the way how people in Dubai make their decisions. She is used to waiting for decisions to be made. The fifth respondent also has become more relaxed and is happy about being able not to rush anything. All of these answers demonstrate that the perception of time in Dubai is very different from the one in Latvia.

3. All the answers to the third questions are negative. None of the respondents has become more punctual because of working in Dubai.

4. The answers to the fourth item are the same. All of the respondents say that their companies manage business in a polychronic manner.

5. Three of the answers to the fifth item are affirmative and people say that they like the way how time is perceived in Dubai. The other two answers are negative.

6. Regarding the sixth item, two of the respondents prefer the perception of time in Arab culture. They believe that as it is more relaxed, people are happier and manage their time so that the most of it is spent with their families and friends. The other three respondents prefer the perception of time in Latvia. Two of them say that it is much easier for them to work with the perception of time here. They think that in Latvia the arrangement of accomplishing tasks is organized better and in this way it is possible to reach better results. The last respondent is convinced that she feels better when working in Latvia because she knows what to expect here. Despite the fact that she has lived in Dubai for more than three years, there still are situations when the way people perceive time surprises her.

7. Two answers to the seventh item are affirmative, which means that the organizations in which the respondents work know how to manage their time. However, the other three are denying.

8. All the answers to the eighth item show that there is at least one thing in the perception of time of Arab culture that cannot be accepted by the respondents. One of the respondents tells that he cannot accept the length of business meetings. He says that a lot of inexpedient issues are discussed during these meetings and this makes them irrelevant. Another respondent comments that she hates the way how people there cancel meetings at the last minute. She considers it as being rude and inexcusable. One of the respondents thinks that the business life should not be so much influenced by religion. She provides an example: if a company is doing business internationally, the long Islamic holidays leave a negative impact on it. The second male respondent thinks that people there are too much relaxed about time and it causes a lot of problems in the business sphere. Another respondent does not like that all interruptions during working hours are considered as being important there. The fifth respondent thinks that sometimes people there are trying to cope with too many things at once even if it is not possible to accomplish them. Here, it can be seen that there are a lot of different characteristics of the perception of time of Arab culture that cannot be understood by the Latvians. To find out whether there are any things that the Latvian respondents evaluate as being useful in the perception of time there, the analysis will continue with considering the answers to the next item.

9. Four of the answers to the ninth item are affirmative and one is negative. It means that four of the respondents can name some matters that they value highly in the way how Arabs regard time. One of the respondents once more comments on the relaxed attitude towards time. Another respondent likes that people in Dubai manage their time so that their

personal relationships with people are always put in the first place. Then there is an opinion that it is very clever to spend time on getting to know people who are involved in one's business. The respondent who thinks so believes that relationships between people who work together and trust their partners is a principle of doing business successfully.

10. As to the feelings about the style of working in Dubai and in Latvia, opinions of the respondents differ. One of them confesses that she feels much better in Dubai because of the relaxed attitude towards time. She thinks that life is calmer there and people live better because of their interest in each other. She thinks that in Latvia people are more individualistic, envious and hypocritical. Another respondent likes that business tasks in Dubai can be done flexibly and interchangeably, however, she does not like that so much time is allocated to decision-making. As to the situation in Latvia, she believes that decisions are made much faster, however, the fulfillment of tasks depends on a company. One respondent thinks that the perception of time in Arab culture is good for relationships and also for happiness in life. However, he does not think that it is appropriate for business. One respondent is of the opinion that the attitude towards time in Dubai should be more serious. She does not like that the late arrivals and interruptions in meetings negatively influence the lives of other people. She thinks that in Latvia people respect each other's schedules and are not used to such things. The fifth respondent thinks that there are both, positive and negative aspects of the attitude towards time in both countries. He thinks that the best way to deal with it is the ability to adapt to different circumstances.

All in all, the answers to the questions of the people whose host country is Dubai reflect the big difference between the perception of time there and in Latvia. They show various positive and negative aspects which characterize the perception of time in Arab culture. Moreover, they show that in this case the hypothesis of this paper is completely true, because the perception of time of the Latvians working in Dubai has been influenced a lot.

4.5. Analysis of the data of the questionnaire filled in by the Latvians who work in Germany

The group of the Latvian respondents who are living and working in Germany consists of three men and two women. All of them have been in Germany for more than a year. One of the members of this group is a physics professor who works in Hamburg. Another one is a manager of cultural events in Berlin. One more respondent who lives in Berlin works as a nurse. A respondent living in Munster works in a kindergarten. The two other respondents who are brothers live in Dresden, both of them work as shop assistants in a sports outlet.

Their answers to the questionnaire are going to be analyzed to understand whether or not there are any changes in their perception of time caused by the lifestyle in Germany.

1. As to the first item, three of the respondents who work in Germany are monochronic. They comment that they like to schedule their tasks and do them one by one. They do not prefer to work on many tasks at the same time. One of them thinks that monochronicity leads to a successful career and helps to advance a person's position in business sphere. The other two respondents are polychronic. As one of them works in culture management, she is used to doing a lot of things at once and cooperating with people who do the same.

2. As to the changes in time perception caused by working in German culture, only two of the respondents have noticed them. One of them thinks that he has become more punctual and that his daily routine has become better scheduled. The other one has got used to doing tasks one by one and concentrating on each task till it is completed.

3. The answers to the third item consist of four positive and one negative answer. This shows that most of the Latvian respondents have become more punctual because of working in German culture.

4. Four of the answers to the fourth question show that the organizations in which the Latvian respondents work operate in a monochronic manner. The one exception is the answer of a woman who works in the culture sphere. She believes that, although, a lot of companies she cooperates with are monochronic, mostly her work is done in a more polychronic way.

5. All the respondents admit that they like how German culture treats time.

6. As regards the sixth item, three of the respondents answer that they prefer the time perception at work in Germany. One of them thinks that everything there is scheduled and proceeds smoothly. Another respondent believes that German perception of time plays a significant role in the country's success in business. The two respondents who prefer the perception of time of business matters in Latvia are more flexible and know how to cope with complicated situations without worrying about them.

7. Four of the respondents confirm that they think that the time management of their organizations is successful. One respondent does not think that the attitude towards time in the company she works in helps it to become more successful.

8. Contrary to the respondents from other countries, only two respondents who are working in Germany name some things that they cannot accept in the perception of time in German culture. One of them points out that to his mind, the decision-making is too slow. He thinks that Germans are too conservative and are not able to accept changes. The other respondent mentions that sometimes she feels that Germans are too serious about things they

should not be so serious about. She does not like that the punctuality is often valued over new ideas and proposals. The three other respondents do not have any objections to the way how Germans perceive time.

9. All of the respondents share an opinion that there is something valuable in the perception of time of German culture. Most of them mention the punctuality which helps to arrange the tasks and daily schedules so that there is time left also for families, friends, leisure activities and free time. One of the respondents likes that Germans think in the long-term manner and are interested in becoming more successful in the near future. Another respondent thinks that the way how Germans are able to schedule their lives so that they do not have to mix business with their private lives is positive. The fact that all of the respondents agree upon the advantages of German perception of time, shows that their culture can be a good example for doing business here in Latvia.

10. As to the opinions about time matters regarding the life and work in Germany, one of the respondents claims that he likes the way how German culture treats time and organizes their lives at work and outside it. He believes that Latvian business people can learn a lot from Germans in order to manage their businesses and reach better results. Another respondent thinks that there are no big differences in the perception of time between Latvia and Germany. He believes that sometimes the business processes in Germany are managed better because of the country's long experience in business sphere. One of the respondents does not like how seriously Germans view time and hopes that business in Latvia will not become so focused on punctuality and deadlines. Another opinion is that Germany being a big country with very well developed business has to apply such fixed time schedules because of having a lot to do. This respondent believes that currently the time perception in Latvia does not have to be changed and that it is appropriate for the things happening in the area of business.

The answers to the questionnaire by the Latvian respondents who are living and working in Germany show that the differences in time perceptions of the two countries are not significant. Although, there are some specific characteristics of German perception of time, Latvian people do not have any problems to comply with them.

The analysis of the answers to the questionnaire by the 25 Latvian respondents who are currently working in five different countries all over the world have shown that in most cases their perception of time changes according to the perception of time of the culture they are working in. However, the results of the questionnaire show that there are some cultures which influence the Latvian perception of time more than others. This is because of the difference in perception of time in Latvia and in other countries. Some of them are more similar, but some are completely different. The main differences between the perceptions of

time of Latvian culture and other cultures can be seen in the answers which comment on the aspects that the respondents cannot accept and on those which they value as being useful.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to analyze the changes in the perception of time of Latvian people, caused by living and working abroad, as well as to present the findings of a small scale research concerning the main characteristics which influence the perception of time of Latvians working in five different countries. The hypothesis of the work was: the perception of time of the Latvian people who work abroad for more than one year changes according to the perception of time of the culture they work in (see p.4).

In order to understand different ways how people perceive time, the author has studied theories on this topic. The main authors examined were E.T. Hall (1983), M. L. Knapp (2006), M. L. Knapp and J. A. Hall (2010), F. Trompenaars and C.H. Turner (2003) and others. In the empirical part, the graduate has designed a questionnaire to discover the differences in the perception of time as a result of relocating to a foreign country. Moreover, she has analyzed the answers to the questionnaire of 25 Latvians living and working in five different countries to find out if and how their perception of time has changed. On the basis of the case study carried out several conclusions can be drawn:

One of the most significant conclusions of this study is that in most cases the perception of time of the Latvian people who work outside Latvia changes because of the influence of the perception of time of the host culture.

Another major conclusion is that different cultures influence the perception of time of Latvian people differently. These changes in the perception of time reflected in the answers to the questionnaire items vary. For example, the changes described in the answers from the respondents who are working in the United Arab Emirates or Italy are more pronounced than those in the answers of the respondents from the United Kingdom or Germany.

The third major conclusion is that the perception of time of the foreign countries analyzed is evaluated by the respondents differently. Some of them are seen as positive examples for managing time issues in the business sphere but the others are not.

The results of this study indicate that the way how the perception of time of Latvians working abroad changes depends on their own personal perception of time, on their duties and position in the company and, of course, on the concept of time prevailing in the culture of the host country.

The data obtained as a result of the present study enables the graduate to conclude that time can be perceived differently in different cultures and these differences exert a significant influence on the way how these cultures operate in the business sphere.

However, with the small sample size, certain limitations of the study have to be pointed out, as the above findings might not be generalized to the changes in the time perception of all Latvian people living and working in the cultures analyzed.

The data obtained by means of a questionnaire enables the author of this BA thesis to state that the hypothesis has been validated and the aim of the paper has been achieved.

Further research might investigate whether and how Latvian people with a longer record of working overseas have changed their perception of time and what is the effect of these changes on their professional career. It might help to discover which are the most relevant characteristics of the perception of time of other cultures that could be applied to the perception of time in Latvian business culture in order to succeed in the area of business.

Theses

1. Nonverbal communication is a part of communication between people beyond words. It is the use of gestures, postures, personal space, eye contact, and also the perception of time.
2. The main distinctions between different perceptions of time are the monochronic and the polychronic concept introduced by E.T. Hall, the orientation towards past, present or future researched by G. Hofstede, and F. Trompenaars and C.H. Turner and the linear, multi-active and flexible time perceptions suggested by R. Lewis.
3. The perception of time serves a significant role in the functioning of any organization, it influences the way a company occupies and determines the success it achieves.
4. Both, monochronic and polychronic time perceptions have positive and negative features. None of them is seen as a paradigm of perceiving time.
5. People have some of the characteristics of both, monochronic and polychronic time concepts. The characteristics which are more dominant determine each person's perception of time.
6. The perception of time of the Latvian people living and working abroad changes according to the perception of time of the culture they live and work in.
7. The way how and how much the perception of time of a host culture influences the perception of time of Latvian culture depends on the foreign culture analyzed.
8. Latvians have expressed both, positive and negative attitude to the time perception of the foreign cultures analyzed.
9. The main factors that influence the way how the Latvians working abroad perceive the differences in the time concept of a foreign country are their personal views, cultural background and the field of business they represent.
10. The differences in the perception of time of different cultures directly influence the way they act in terms of doing business.
11. For people who are polychronic it is easier to adapt to cultures that also have a polychronic perception of time. For people who are monochronic it is easier to adapt to cultures that also have a monochronic perception of time.

12. The same characteristics of the perception of time of a foreign culture by some Latvians might be seen as positive and by some others as negative examples.
13. The perception of time of a culture influences its business and makes a distinction of time allocated for business and personal life.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

The influence of the foreign culture on your perception of time

Dear respondent,

I am an undergraduate of the University of Latvia. As my BA thesis is devoted to the changes in the perception of time of Latvians who are living and working abroad I would be grateful if you filled in this questionnaire. To understand whether you belong to the monochronic or to the polychronic perception of time, I have added a separate file which includes a table that gives the main characteristics of these concepts.

Gender:

Current Location:

Age:

Field of work:

1. Do you think of yourself as of a more monochronic or a more polychronic person?
 - a. Monochronic
 - b. Polychronic
 - Which are the characteristics of your personality that make you think so?
2. Do you feel any changes in your perception of time that have been caused by working abroad?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them
3. Have you become more punctual at work because of the time perception of the host culture?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Does your organization work in a more monochronic or polychronic manner?
 - a. Monochronic
 - b. Polychronic
5. Do you like the way how the host culture you work in treats time?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- Could you provide your comment on the issue?
6. Regarding the perception of time, is it easier to work in the host culture or was it easier in Latvia?
 - a. In the host culture
 - b. In Latvia
 - Why?
 7. Do you think that the perception of time of the organization you are working in now helps to manage your tasks successfully?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 8. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that are not acceptable for you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them
 9. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that you value very highly?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them
 10. Please, comment on your feelings about living and working abroad in terms of the concept of time and compare the perception of time there with the perception of time in Latvia.

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Appendix 2

The Characteristics of Monochronic and Polychronic People (by E.T. Hall and M.R. Hall in 1990)

<u>MONOCHRONIC PEOPLE</u>	<u>POLYCHRONIC PEOPLE</u>
do one thing at a time	do many things at once are highly
concentrate on the job	distractible and subject to interruptions
are low-context and need information	consider time commitments an objective to be achieved, if possible
are committed to the job	are high-context and already have information
adhere religiously to plans	are committed to people and human relationships
are concerned about not disturbing others; follow rules of privacy and consideration	change plans often and easily
show great respect for private property; seldom borrow or lend	are more concerned with those who are closely related (family, friends, close business associates) than with privacy
emphasize promptness	borrow and lend things often and easily
are accustomed to short-term relationships	have strong tendency to build lifetime relationships

In: E.T. Hall, M.R. Hall (1990) *Understanding Cultural Differences: Germans, French, and Americans*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing Company

Appendix 3

Sample of the Questionnaire No 1

Gender: male

Current Location: California, USA

Age: 26

Field of Work: hospitality

1. Do you think of yourself as of a more monochronic or a more polychronic person?

a. Monochronic

b. **Polychronic**

- Which are the characteristics of your personality that make you think so?

I like to do several things at once, it helps me to complete them faster and use my time more useful. In my experience it is often so that while I am dealing with one question an answer to another one just comes to my mind. This makes me operate between my tasks and pay attention to all of them at the same time. If an idea or an answer to the question comes to my mind I turn to it immediately.

2. Do you feel any changes in your perception of time that have been caused by working abroad?

a. **Yes**

b. No

- If yes, then, please, comment on them

My life has become faster. Everything around is moving very fast and it makes me to be more active too. For people here it is usual not having any free time. All the time something is happening. Now, also I do not feel well when having a free time. Doing nothing feels like spending time worthlessly.

3. Have you become more punctual at work because of the time perception of the host culture?

a. **Yes** (I believe that it is not possible to do any job in the States without being punctual.)

b. No

4. Does your organization works in a more monochronic or polychronic manner?

a. **Monochronic**

b. Polychronic

5. Do you like the way how the culture you work in treats time?

a. **Yes**

- b. No
- 6. Regarding the perception of time, is it easier to work in the host culture or was it easier in Latvia?
 - a. **The current culture**
 - b. Latvia
 - Why?

As everything is happening so fast here, I feel more awake than back home in Latvia. People who are starting to work on the next task right after finishing the previous one give me energy.

- 7. Do you think that the perception of time of the organization you are working in now helps to manage its tasks successfully?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
- 8. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that are not acceptable for you?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them

I do not like that Americans are so obsessed with their schedules. Sometimes meeting their schedules for them is more important than doing such daily activities as sleeping or eating.

- 9. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that you value very highly?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them

Despite the obsession with scheduling, of course, it has also a positive side of it. Everything is very well organized. It helps to reach the best results in business.

- 10. Please, comment on your feelings about living and working abroad in terms of the concept of time and compare the perception of time there with the perception of time in Latvia.

In the USA everything is very well arranged. Life has a rhythm that everyone considers important. People rarely try to do things differently from how they should be done. However, I do not think that the way how people view time in Latvia is bad. As our country is much smaller, it does not need everything to be planned in advance. I believe that in both countries the perception of time is appropriate for each of them.

Questionnaire No 2

Gender: female

Current location: Milan, Italy

Age: 25

Field of work: the fashion industry

1. Do you think of yourself as of a more monochronic or a more polychronic person?
 - a. Monochronic
 - b. **Polychronic**
 - Which are the characteristics of your personality that make you think so?

I think that I am a people oriented person because my family and friends is the most important thing in my life. They are the main reason why I miss home.

2. Do you feel any changes in your perception of time that have been caused by working abroad?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them

I believe that my perception of time has become more relaxed. I have learned from Italians that it is important to have fun in life. As in most cases they are calm as regards schedules and meeting deadlines, I try to be the same and rely on a positive outcome.

3. Have you become more punctual at work because of the time perception of the host culture?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**
4. Does your organization works in a more monochronic or polychronic manner?
 - a. Monochronic
 - b. **Polychronic**
5. Do you like the way how the culture you work in treats time?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
6. Regarding the perception of time, is it easier to work in the host culture or was it easier in Latvia?
 - a. The current culture
 - b. **Latvia**
 - Why?

I prefer working in Latvia because there I understand people better and also they understand me. Here, sometimes I do not know what to expect from people. As in Latvia I feel closer to people, it helps me to reach better results also at work.

7. Do you think that the perception of time of the organization you are working in now helps to manage its tasks successfully?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**
8. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that are not acceptable for you?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them

I hate that Italians talk about unimportant things in serious business meetings. They talk about their aunt's birthday celebration, their dinner plans and their pets which is not appropriate. I understand that they like being friendly, but business meetings, definitely, are not the right time for discussing private lives.

9. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that you value very highly?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them

I like that Italians manage to work on so many tasks simultaneously. At first I could not understand how they do it. As they are concentrating on so many other things that are not related to work during their working hours, it is admirably that they still manage to do something.

10. Please, comment on your feelings about living and working abroad in terms of the concept of time and compare the perception of time there with the perception of time in Latvia.

I like working in Italy. I think that I have become more open minded because of living here. I have learned a lot new here. Although, it is easier for me to understand people and build relationships in Latvia, I believe that at this moment Italy is the right place for me.

Questionnaire No 3

Gender: male

Current location: Manchester, United Kingdom

Age: 35

Field of work: Administration

1. Do you think of yourself as of a more monochronic or a more polychronic person?
 - a. Monochronic
 - b. **Polychronic**
 - Which are the characteristics of your personality that make you think so?

I believe that I am a polychronic time perceiver because of not scheduling anything. I do not like to follow any schedules. I like to accomplish my tasks when I feel is the right time for doing it. Of course, as I am working in administration of a sports club, there are some schedules that I have to follow. But if I have to choose the way I use my time myself, I do everything when the right moment comes.

2. Do you feel any changes in your perception of time that have been caused by working abroad?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them
3. Have you become more punctual at work because of the time perception of the host culture?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
4. Does your organization works in a more monochronic or polychronic manner?
 - a. **Monochronic**
 - b. Polychronic
5. Do you like the way how the culture you work in treats time?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**
6. Regarding the perception of time, is it easier to work in the host culture or was it easier in Latvia?
 - a. **The current culture**
 - b. **Latvia**
 - Why?

I can work in both of these countries. I do not have any problems to adapt to the perception of time in the UK.

7. Do you think that the perception of time of the organization you are working in now helps to manage its tasks successfully?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
8. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that are not acceptable for you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them
9. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that you value very highly?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them

I like the punctuality that Brits have, although, I could not say that I am punctual myself. When I look how people here deal with business issues, I see that their punctuality helps them to do most of the things fast and successfully.

10. Please, comment on your feelings about living and working abroad in terms of the concept of time and compare the perception of time there with the perception of time in Latvia.

I do not feel any noticeable difference between the perception of time here and the one back home in Latvia.

Questionnaire No 4

Gender: female

Current Location: Dubai, the United Arab Emirates

Age: 29

Field of work: hospitality

1. Do you think of yourself as of a more monochronic or a more polychronic person?
 - a. Monochronic
 - b. **Polychronic**
 - Which are the characteristics of your personality that make you think so?

According to my experience, I know that I am not able to follow any schedules. I can finish a task only when I have some strict deadlines.

2. Do you feel any changes in your perception of time that have been caused by working abroad?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them

My experience here has taught me to do many tasks simultaneously. I am already used to everything happening at the same time. At the beginning it was hard for me to accept it.

3. Have you become more punctual at work because of the time perception of the host culture?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**
4. Does your organization work in a more monochronic or polychronic manner?
 - a. Monochronic
 - b. **Polychronic**
5. Do you like the way how the culture you work in treats time?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Regarding the perception of time, is it easier to work in the host culture or was it easier in Latvia?
 - a. **The current culture**
 - b. Latvia
 - Why?

I prefer the perception of time in Dubai because people are more relaxed here. The most I appreciate their ability of planning their time so that they have enough time to spend with their families and friends.

7. Do you think that the perception of time of the organization you are working in now helps to manage its tasks successfully?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that are not acceptable for you?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- If yes, then, please, comment on them

I hate that Arabs are used to cancelling meetings in the last minute. It is not fair to others and I think that it is rude.

9. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that you value very highly?

- a. Yes
- b. No

- If yes, then, please, comment on them

I like the fact that people here feel free to put their personal issues above everything else. I believe that nowadays it is very uncommon.

10. Please, comment on your feelings about living and working abroad in terms of the concept of time and compare the perception of time there with the perception of time in Latvia.

I like the perception of time here. I feel very good because I feel that people are interested in each other. It is not a superficial interest but they are really hospitable and friendly. I like also that the life is calmer here.

Questionnaire No 5

Gender: male

Current Location: Hamburg, Germany

Age: 44

Field of work: science

1. Do you think of yourself as of a more monochronic or a more polychronic person?
 - a. **Monochronic**
 - b. Polychronic
 - Which are the characteristics of your personality that make you think so?

I think that my perception of time is monochronic because I usually do tasks one by one.

2. Do you feel any changes in your perception of time that have been caused by working abroad?
 - a. Yes
 - b. **No**
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them
3. Have you become more punctual at work because of the time perception of the host culture?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
4. Does your organization works in a more monochronic or polychronic manner?
 - a. **Monochronic**
 - b. Polychronic
5. Do you like the way how the culture you work in treats time?
 - a. **Yes**
 - b. No
6. Regarding the perception of time, is it easier to work in the host culture or was it easier in Latvia?
 - a. **The current culture**
 - b. Latvia
 - Why?

Here people are more punctual and everything is planned in advance. It helps to arrange the tasks better and get better results.

7. Do you think that the perception of time of the organization you are working in now helps to manage its tasks successfully?

- a. **Yes**
 - b. No
8. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that are not acceptable for you?
- a. Yes
 - b. **No**
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them
9. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that you value very highly?
- a. **Yes**
 - b. No
 - If yes, then, please, comment on them

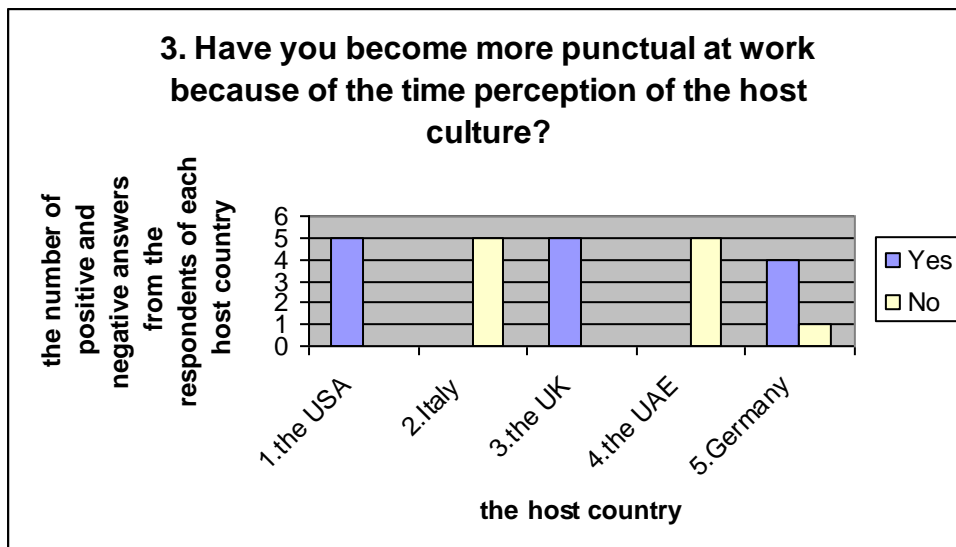
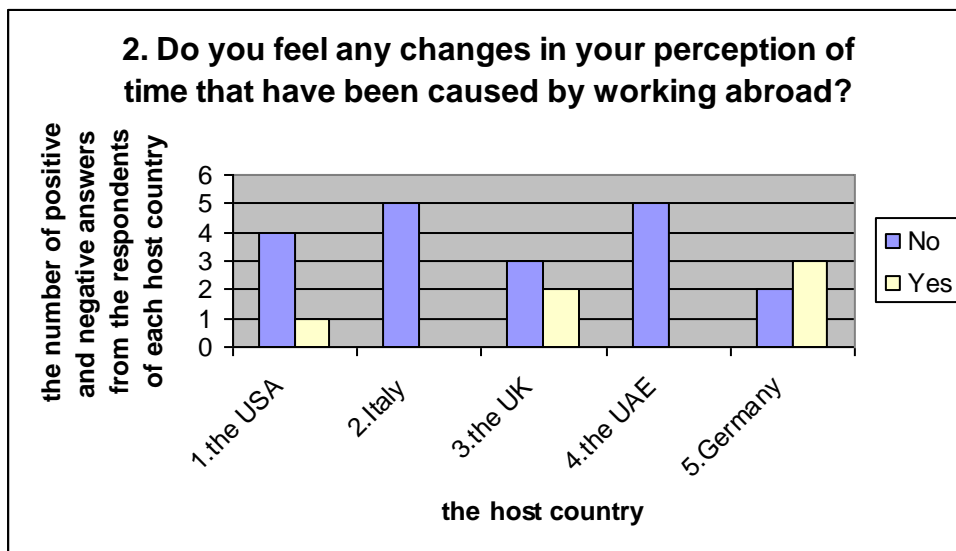
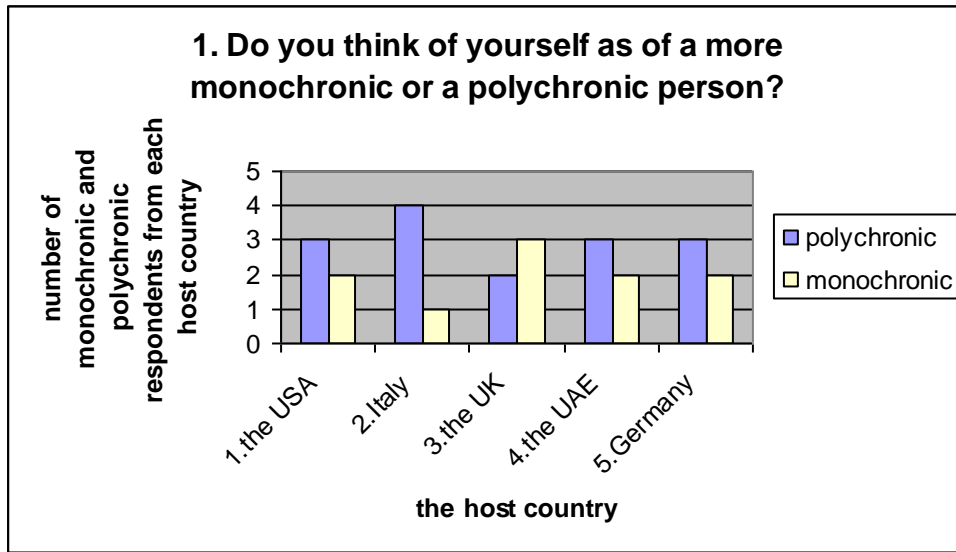
I like the punctuality of German people. I think that in my profession punctuality is important. I like German ability to plan everything so well and follow their plans.

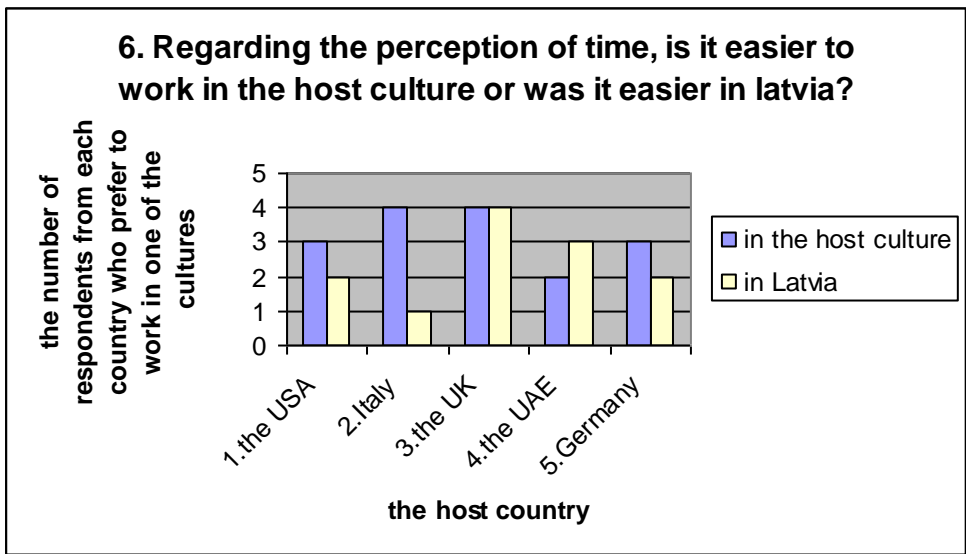
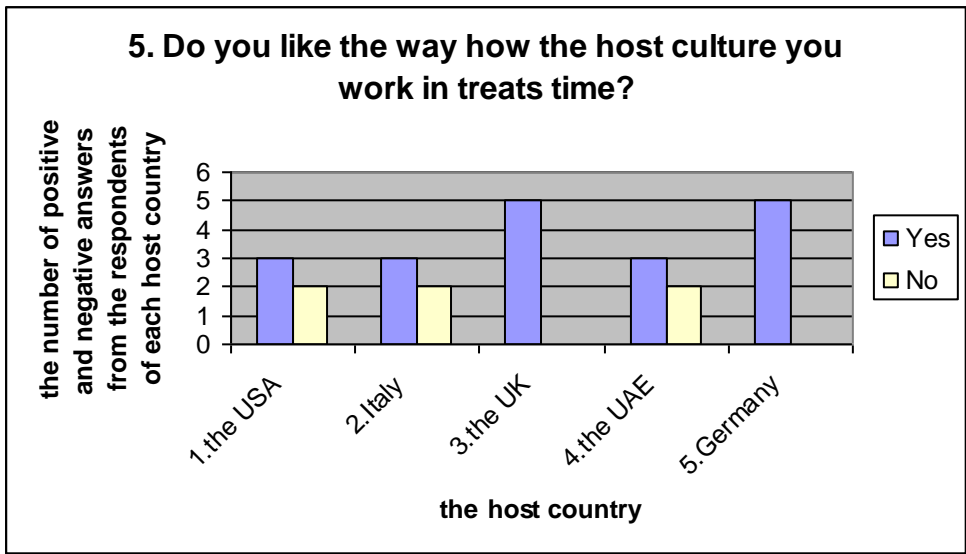
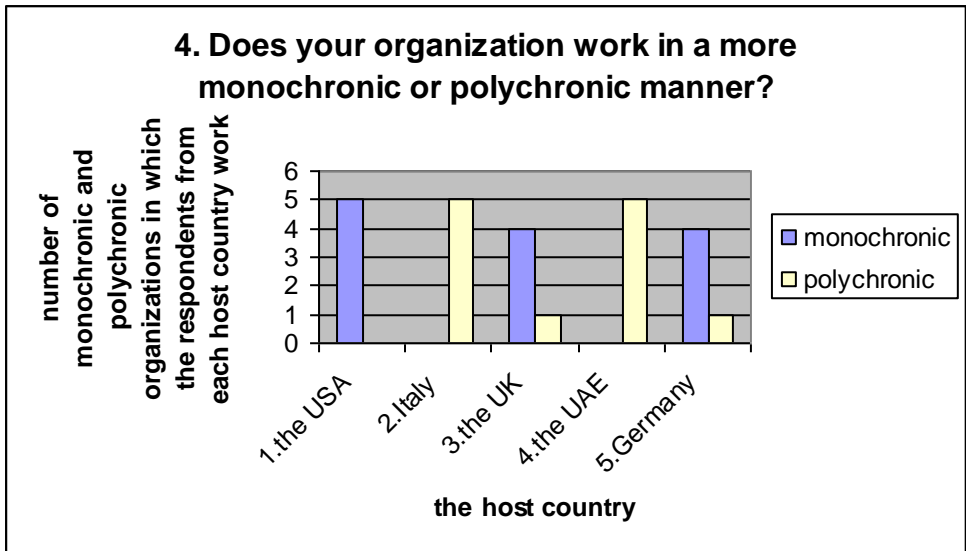
10. Please, comment on your feelings about living and working abroad in terms of the concept of time and compare the perception of time there with the perception of time in Latvia.

I do not see a big difference between the time perception here and in Latvia. I believe that Germans are more experienced in the business field and that is why they know how to do things right and plan successfully.

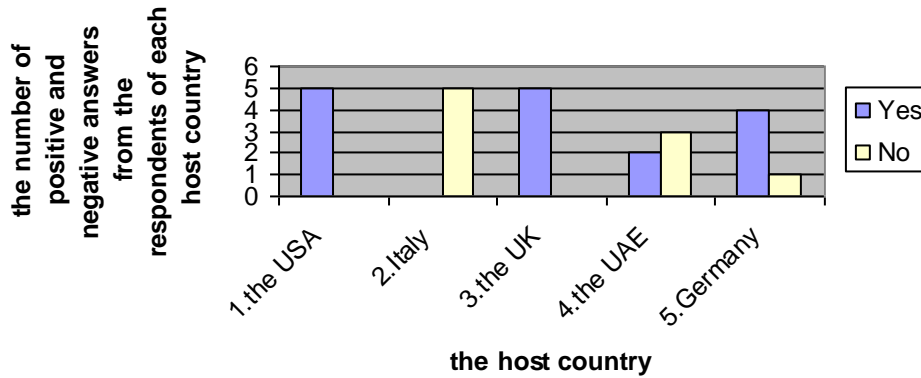
Appendix 4

The Graphical Representation of the Results of the Questionnaire

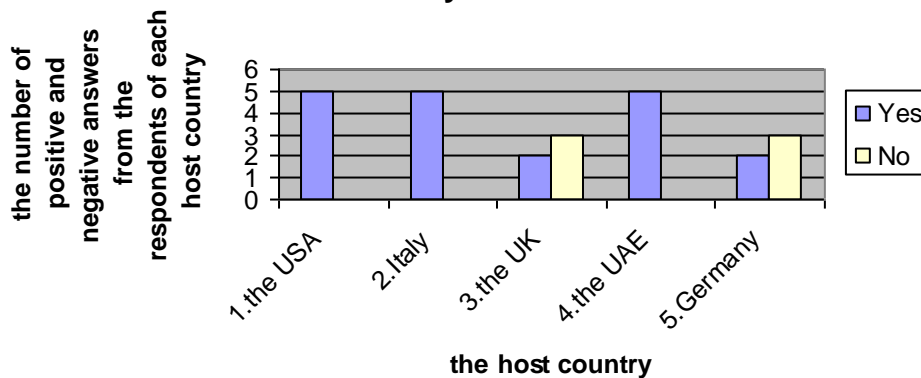




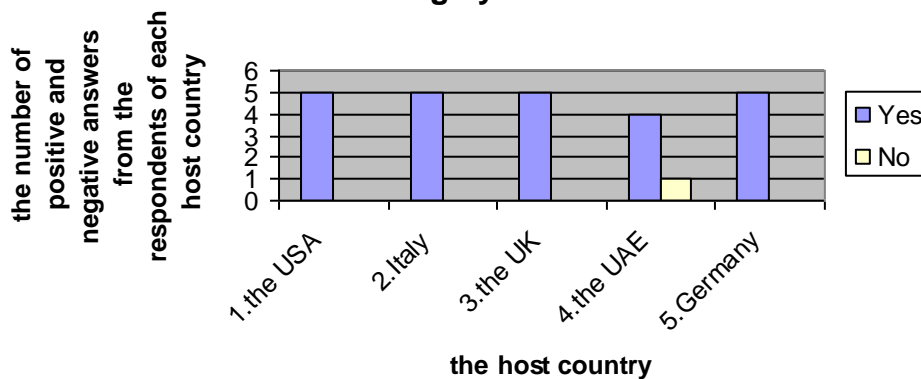
7. Do you think that the perception of time of the organization you are working in now helps to manage your tasks successfully?



8. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that are not acceptable for you?



9. Are there any issues regarding the perception of time of the host culture that you value very highly?



Attestation Page
Dokumentārā lapa

Bakalaura darbs „Cross-Cultural Comparison of Time Concept in the Business Context” (Laika jēdziena salīdzināšana biznesa vidē dažādās kultūrās) izstrādāts LU Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātē.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

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21.05.2013.

Rekomendēju/nerekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai

Vadītāja: Dr.paed.,asoc.prof. Solveiga Ozoliņa

21.05.2013.

Recenzents:

Studiju metodiķe: Valentīna Goldmane

21.05.2013.

Darbs iesniegts Anglistikas nodaļā

21.05.2013.

Darbu pieņēma:

Darbs aizstāvēts bakalaura gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē

..... prot. Nr., vērtējums

Komisijas sekretāre: