Time Perception across Cultures and Its Impact on Intercultural Business Communication

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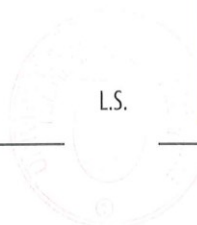
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ABSTRAKT

Táto bakalárska práca sa zaoberá tematikou rozdielneho vnímania času v jednotlivých kultúrach a jeho vplyvom na medzinárodnú komunikáciu v obchodnom prostredí. Cieľom práce je zistiť, ako takéto rozdielne vnímanie času môže ovplyvniť konkrétnu spoločnosť a následne navrhnúť odporúčania, ako tieto rozdiely eliminovať. Práca je preto rozdelená na teoretickú a praktickú časť. V teoretickej časti sú popísané jednotlivé spôsoby vnímania času, ktoré sa naprieč kultúrami môžu líšiť. Praktická časť ďalej skúma skúsenosti spoločnosti Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. s danou problematikou, ktoré boli získané prostredníctvom kvalitatívneho výskumu a na základe zistených údajov uvádza odporúčania, ktoré by mohli zefektívniť komunikáciu a spoluprácu v obchodnom prostredí.

Klíčová slova: interkultúrna komunikácia, vnímanie času, kultúra, časová orientácia, biznis, rozdiely, odporúčania

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with the topic of different perceptions of time in different cultures and their impact on intercultural communication in the business environment. The aim of the work is to find out how such a different perception of time can affect a particular company and then propose recommendations on how to eliminate these differences. The thesis is therefore divided into a theoretical and practical part. The theoretical part describes the various ways of perceiving time, which may differ across cultures. The practical part further examines the experience of Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. with the given issue, which were obtained through qualitative research and on the basis of the obtained data, makes recommendations that could make communication and cooperation in the business environment more effective.

Keywords: intercultural communication, perception of time, culture, time orientation, business, differences, recommendations

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication has become an important and inseparable part of today's world. As people travel around the world, whether for work, study, holiday, or to become part of international trade, it is essential to orient themselves in how to properly establish contacts, communicate and behave in contact with members of other cultures. The fact that a person can communicate abroad does not only mean that he knows verbal communication, which means the language of another country, but above all that he can recognize and use non-verbal signs and signals. One of the important aspects of non-verbal communication is also time, its perception, and dealing with it.

The international environment is very popular in trade, and therefore people often meet members of other cultures and are forced to communicate with them. To be their meetings and negotiations successful, it is crucial for them to master intercultural communication. Such situations can be challenging for someone, but with practice and the acquisition of new knowledge and experience, they improve, and when they can recognize fundamental differences in verbal and nonverbal communication, they can communicate effectively and cooperate with members of other cultures without problems.

The main reason why I have chosen this topic is that at first glance it may seem that there are no differences in the perception of time between individuals because everyone has the same amount of time, and therefore individuals and cultures cannot be different. However, the opposite is true, and the perception of time is a much more complex problem than it seems, so I was interested in how a different perception of time can affect us, and what it can cause.

The theoretical part, therefore, explains not only the basic concepts such as communication, culture, and intercultural communication, but also the various ways of perceiving time and their impact on communication between different cultures. The practical part presents a practical analysis of the operation of the company and its experience with different perceptions of time. The data in the practical part were obtained by semi-structured interviews with individual research participants. The main goal of the research was to find out how different perceptions of time can affect business in the international environment and then to propose recommendations to eliminate these differences and make communication more effective.

I. THEORY

1 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural communication is a complex and important process that needs to be understood for individual cultures to communicate and cooperate. Terms such as intercultural communication, culture, and communication that are important elements of this thesis, will be explained below.

Intercultural communication is a process whereby members of different cultures exchange information (Mohammed 2005, 19). It is a process of interaction that takes place between people who have a different language, culture, religion, or nation (Průcha 2010,16). The subject of the study of intercultural communication is to focus on cultural differences that are visible, and which make a difference between cultures. A person involved in intercultural communication must acquire the basic rules, tools, and skills to recognize such differences and work with them effectively (Mohammed 2005, 19). Learning intercultural communication means not only get to know other cultures but also realize our own cultural identity, understand the background we come from and find out what is our position in society (Martin 2013, 4).

The process of intercultural communication is becoming an increasingly important element in our lives. The importance of intercultural communication is growing mainly due to globalization, which is more and more present in various fields of human activity, such as in business, international trade, science, but also in art, sport, and tourism. People from different countries are still meeting together, so the concept of intercultural communication has become a part of everyday life, and it is the subject of science not only in theoretical but also in a practical way (Průcha 2010, 17).

The concept of intercultural communication can have three meanings that are interrelated, but each of them is different:

1. Intercultural communication as a process of verbal and nonverbal communication in various situations.
2. Intercultural communication as a scientific theory and research exploring real processes within intercultural communication.
3. Intercultural communication as educational and supportive activities focusing on practice, using knowledge from relevant scientific theory and research (Průcha 2010, 13).

1.1 Culture as an Element of Intercultural Communication

Culture is an important element of intercultural communication, and its definition has various meanings from which no one is wrong. First of all, culture is not the same as a country, so there are no political boundaries. This term is associated with the term civilization (Jandt 2010, 15). This is because the culture is always connected with a group of people that have a common way of life. After all, they live in the same social environment where they have acquired their culture and share it with future generations (Hofstede and Hofstede 2007, 14). Every culture has the unwritten rules that follow. Also, each culture has the basic elements that characterize it, such as a common language, religion, ethics, family structures, symbols, traditions, values, beliefs, and more (Čeněk, Smolík, and Vykoukalová 2016, 31).

1.2 Communication as an Element of Intercultural Communication

Communication is not only an everyday part of our lives but also an important element within this thesis. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, this definition is used *'the act of communicating with people and the process of sharing information'* (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Communication is closely related to culture because to communicate with someone else we need to know the symbols that we learn throughout a culture. Communication is also one of the basic human needs, as an individual interacts with other people and creates an interpersonal relationship (Jandt 2010, 59).

1.3 Cross–cultural Psychology

Cross-cultural psychology is a scientific discipline, which is one of the main sources of knowledge and information about intercultural communication. It deals with the scientific study of human behavior and focuses on how various factors of culture influence human thinking, communication, and behavior (Průcha 2010, 24). This science also studies the same and different traits in different ethnic groups and the combination of psychological, socio-cultural, ecological, and biological traits (Berry 2002, 26).

1.4 Cross-cultural Competence

Cross-cultural competence represents the ability of an individual to learn and understand the rules of different cultures. This means that a person can communicate and work effectively with members of different cultures and that he is able to use the acquired

knowledge and skills in any situation (Průcha 2010, 46) (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 355).

1.5 Barriers to Intercultural Communication

There are several barriers to intercultural communication that make communication between members of different cultures more difficult. Each barrier to intercultural communication has a different effect, depending mainly on two factors. The first factor is how big the differences in the cultures are, that is, the more diverse the cultures, the more complicated the communication may be. The second factor is the language in which the participants communicate. It depends on whether the mother tongue of at least one participant of the communication is used in the communication, or whether it is used another language which is not the mother tongue of either participant in the communication (Průcha 2010, 63).

Professor LaRay M. Barna has created a list of six barriers to intercultural communication, which she named Intercultural Communication Stumbling Blocks (Spack 2007, 66).

1) Anxiety

The first barrier deals with anxiety, which is the feeling a person has in a new situation where they do not know what to do or what to expect (Jandt 2010, 82). This feeling may not only have an individual who comes to a new country, but also a native when talking to a foreigner because it is much more difficult to maintain a normal flow of verbal and non-verbal communication, as they do not know each other's knowledge and experience. (Spack 2007, 72). Feeling of anxiety in communication between members of different cultures can be a problem because one begins to concentrate on this insecurity and may not focus on what the other person is saying, even he can make grammatical or other mistakes in speech (Jandt 2010, 82).

2) Assuming Similarity Instead of Difference

The second barrier is about assuming similarity instead of difference. This barrier deals with a case when an individual does not have enough information about another new culture, so he assumes that there are no differences and behaves in the same way as in his home culture. Thus, it can easily happen that an individual does not respect the rules of a given culture, which might lead to various misunderstandings and problems. The opposite may also be a barrier when an individual in a new culture expects and focuses on differ-

ences and thus fails to recognize important features that cultures have in common (Jandt 2010, 83). This barrier is also connected with the evaluation of everything different from our culture. Instead of trying to understand certain differences, the individual tends to approve or reject them. The problem, however, is that the individual is always biased in evaluating a different culture, which prevents him from looking at different behaviors and opinions from a different perspective (Spack 2007, 70).

3) Ethnocentrism

The third barrier is called ethnocentrism. This barrier points to a negative assessment of another culture. When an individual is ethnocentric, it means that he believes in the superiority of his own culture. The individual believes that the way his culture works is the only possible way (Jandt 2010, 84). Ethnocentrism is also one of the phases in meeting people from the host culture and foreign visitors. At this stage, the hosts will begin to judge the visitor according to the standards of their culture, which will never bring a good result. The hosts see the visitor as a rude, naive, or even stupid (Hofstede and Hofstede 2007, 243-244). Ethnocentrism is associated with two other concepts: cultural relativism and cultural nearsightedness. Cultural relativism means that not every culture is the same, but before we judge other people´s behavior, we must understand their culture. The second concept of cultural nearsightedness means that an individual takes his culture for granted and does not admit that another culture works differently (Jandt 2010, 85).

4) Stereotypes and Prejudice

The fourth barrier concerns stereotypes and prejudices. The concept of stereotype is a negative but also a positive assessment of an individual or a group of people based on what we think, know or believe about the culture or ethnic group to which the person belongs (Jandt 2010, 86). Ethnic stereotypes relate to the attitudes of members of one ethnic group towards other groups, and these attitudes mainly include negative evaluations or even discriminatory elements. These attitudes are lasting, they are already found in children´s behavior and they are passed on from generation to generation (Průcha 2010, 64). On the other hand, there are prejudices, which usually mean negative suspicions, condemnations, even hatred of certain groups, races, religions, cultures, sexual orientations, or ethnic groups. In such a case, an individual is judged according to the group he belongs to, not according to his personality (Jandt 2010, 91).

5) Nonverbal Misinterpretations

Another barrier deals with nonverbal misinterpretations. Since a different language is one of the signs that does not allow communication between different cultures, people often use nonverbal signals to communicate. The problem, however, is that they do not realize that these nonverbal expressions vary from culture to culture, and therefore the meaning of used nonverbal signals may have a different meaning for both sides of the communication. It is important to associate nonverbal signals with the context of communication, which can help people understand their meaning (Jandt 2010, 112). Although nonverbal signals and signs represent a communication barrier, it is possible to learn their meaning, just as it is possible to learn another language. However, it is much more difficult to recognize them in a conversation, as it is not just about facial expressions and gestures, but also about the perception of time and space or the expression of respect and formality (Spack 2007, 69).

6) Language

The last barrier is associated with language. Language affects intercultural communication in several ways. One of the problems can be all areas that are associated with the language, such as vocabulary, syntax, idioms, slang, dialect, accent, and so on. However, when an individual struggle with one of these problems, he is at least aware of what specifically makes him difficulties. Another area that is problematic with language is the meaning of words. Especially in English, it happens that expressions have several meanings with which the individual is unfamiliar, so an individual may acquire one meaning of a given word and uses it regardless of the context (Spack 2007, 69). Another problem is related to the cultural competence needed for an effective and fluent communication. Cultural competence is the ability to know what, when, how, where, and why to say something (Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede 2002, 18). Different problem is connected with the translation of languages. It does not matter whether it is a translation between two different languages or between a language that is the same, but because it is used in different cultures, the vocabulary has a different meaning. In any case, the translation of the language may not be correct, which may cause communication problems (Jandt 2010, 135). Another area where language affects intercultural communication is called linguistic imperialism. It occurs when a culture or a group that is more powerful enforces the use of its language on another group or culture (Jandt 2010, 140).

1.6 Dimensions of Culture

Many cultures in the world are completely different from each other but still have something in common. A common feature of different societies is that they all share the same basic problems. However, the difference is that each culture solves these problems differently (Hofstede and Hofstede 2007, 28). The author of the cultural dimensions is Geert Hofstede, who studied differences among cultures and created cross-cultural comparisons. The research consisted of a questionnaire that examined the values of members of different cultures. Hofstede conducted this survey among more than 116 thousand IBM employees, receiving answers from 74 countries around the world. Based on these answers, Hofstede created five dimensions of culture (Průcha 2010, 34).

The dimensions are:

- Power distance
- Individualism versus collectivism
- Masculinity versus femininity
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Long-term orientation versus short-term orientation (Jandt 2010, 163).

1.6.1 Power Distance

The power distance dimension expresses how individual cultures handle inequalities among people. This dimension deals with the division of power in the state and expresses the relationship between people of a certain culture and authority (Průcha 2010, 34). Power distance is divided into two types: low and high and is present in different areas. According to Hofstede, power distance has foundations in the family. Differences between children and adults are visible in high power distance cultures. Children must obey and respect parents, while in low power distance cultures, children are treated equally, and it is important to raise them as independent people. In high power distance cultures, respect for people of higher status is not displayed only in the family, but also in society. So, this is the reason why these cultures are more authoritarian (Jandt 2010, 177). The same applies to education. In high power distance cultures, inequality between teachers and students is noticeable, whereas in low power distance cultures, these inequalities are significantly smaller, and teachers cooperate with students. Last but not least area where the differences are visible is the workplace. For cultures with high power distance is typical that the power is centralized only in few hands. There is a strong hierarchy among people and also wide salary gap between the top and the bottom members of the organization. Countries with high

power distance are, for example, France, Latin America, or Third World countries. On the other hand, low power distance countries are Austria, Israel, and Germany (Bočánková 2006, 8-9).

1.6.2   Individualism versus Collectivism

This dimension expresses the dependency of an individual to collective in any form and the degree of freedom for his or her initiative (Průcha 2010, 35). Individualism versus collectivism dimension focuses on individuals and groups and defines their position in the society and relationship with each other. For an individualist culture is typical that the individual and his interests are more important than the group. On the other hand, in a collectivist culture, the group and its interests are more important. For the individualist cultures is important to know about other people, what they have done, what property they own, or where they live. Collectivist cultures classify people into society according to their family background (Jandt 2010, 164-165). Countries such as the USA, Germany, or Great Britain are representatives of an individualist culture, and collectivism is typical for East Asian and Arab cultures (Bočánková 2006, 10).

1.6.3   Masculinity versus Femininity

This dimension of culture deals with the distribution of roles between men and women. Masculinity represents a male element in society and is characterized by the differences between gender roles. In contrast, femininity refers to cultures where gender roles overlap (Průcha 2010,35). Examples of men´s characteristics are assertiveness, and competitiveness and women´s characteristic is that they are caring. And these characteristics are also shown in individual cultures. However, it is important to understand that these properties apply to both genders. For example, in masculine cultures, not only men but also women are competitive and ambitious. Feminine countries are Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands. In Latin American countries are visible differences between masculinity and femininity because small Central American countries are rather feminine but bigger countries such as Mexico, Venezuela and, Colombia are masculine (Jandt 2010, 176) (Bočánková 2006, 14).

1.6.4   Uncertainty Avoidance

The uncertainty avoidance dimension expresses how individual cultures feel threatened by situations that are unknown or uncertain to them. It shows how people are concerned about various changes, whether at work, in society, or in private life, or whether they try to avoid

or face such situations (Průcha 2010, 35). Cultures that are afraid of something new, need to have certain rules that they follow, and that try to prevent unexpected situations. In strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, the fear of the unknown is visible, for example, in the educational process, where teachers should be able to answer every question and avoid the words I do not know. Also, in the workplace, such cultures emerge rules that regulate the rights and obligations of employees and employers and control the whole work process. People work hard and have no time to relax because time is money (Jandt 2010, 179) (Bočánková 2006, 16). Countries with strong uncertainty avoidance are Greece, Portugal, and Japan, and countries with weak uncertainty avoidance are Singapore, Denmark, Great Britain, and Hong Kong (Průcha 2010, 35). These cultures have no problem with something new and unknown, so they respect and tolerate not only other people but also new ideas and attitudes. Members of such cultures are used to adapt quickly to the uncertainty that arises in their lives because they are flexible, willing to take some risk and do not always follow the rules (Samovar 2012, 188).

1.6.5 Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation

This dimension of culture deals with the perception of time in society. Long-term orientated cultures focus mainly on the future and long-term goals. They are characterized by perseverance and a determination to submit to the achievement of long-term goals. Short-term orientated cultures are focused on short-term goals and need to see the results of any activity immediately. Countries that are long-term orientated are Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore (Průcha 2010, 36) (Jandt 2010, 180).

1.7 Cultural Differences

One of the features that distinguish one culture from the other is the way it solves certain issues that relate to three areas:

- o Those issues that arise from our relationships with other people
- o Those issues that come from the passage of time
- o Those issues that relate to the environment (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 11)

Trompenaars has created seven basic dimensions of culture based on what solution individual cultures have chosen for these problems. Five of them deal with interpersonal relationships, the other two deal with time and environment. Some of these dimensions are the same as the Hofstede´s, that are described above, others contain new information about

the differences between cultures (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 11) (Bočánková 2006, 19).

1.7.1 Relationships with People

1. Universalism versus Particularism

Universalists follow the rules. They know that "What is good and right can be easily defined and always applied." This helps them avoid making exceptions that weaken the rules. They are afraid that if one makes an exception, it will weaken the whole system. Universalists believe that their rules, ideas, and practices can be applied everywhere without exception. Countries such as the USA, Australia, or Germany are high universalists, so they focus more on the rules than on relationships (Bočánková 2006, 19-20). On the other hand, particularists believe that the rules or practices should be adapted to the circumstances that arise. Friendship, family, and relationships are much more important to them than strict rules, so they often prefer relationship obligations (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 11).

2. Individualism versus Communitarianism

Individualism is characteristic of a modern society, where the individual is important. This model deals with the importance of perceiving each person individually in order to be able to contribute to society, so this is the reason why different tasks or decisions are left to the individuals. Communitarianism is typical for a traditional society, where a group is more important, and even individuals are seen more as part of that group. That is why we often encounter that groups are working on tasks or some decision makings (Bočánková 2006, 20).

3. Neutral versus Affective

Emotions are not shown in a neutral culture. When doing business, cultures in North America or Northwest Europe try to achieve their goals without showing emotions because they believe that emotions disrupt the whole process. On the contrary, some cultures show their emotions on every occasion, and doing business is no exception. They have no problem laughing out loud, greet each other cheerfully, or show their anger (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 11-12).

4. Specific versus Diffuse

A specific culture is characterized by the fact that individuals are willing to share their public space with other people but keep their personal space only for close family and friends. A diffuse culture is a culture where these two zones, public and private, overlap. Members of such culture need to guard even their public space since it is easy, for a person who gets here, to be part of the private zone also. When a member of diffuse culture meets with another culture, misunderstandings can very easily occur because access to the public zone can be explained as a close friendship, but it is not always the case (Bočánková 2006, 21).

5. Achievement versus Ascription

In an achievement culture, people are judged on what they have done and how they perform their work or function. On the other hand, in an ascription culture, it is important to know about a person who is he, where he was born, and what family he belongs to, and according to these aspects he is given social status (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 12).

1.7.2 Attitudes with Regard to Time

Time perception is another feature that varies from one culture to another. Some cultures are more focused on the past, and therefore past achievements are much more important to them than what they have now. On the contrary, there are cultures for which the past is almost unimportant, and more significant to them is how they are prepared for the future (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012,13).

Visible differences are, for example, between American and French culture. The American Dream is the belief that anyone, no matter where they come from, can achieve their success through hard work, determination, and risk-taking (Cambridge Dictionary 2020). That is why this idea is important for American culture. It does not matter whether a person starts from zero or has a background from the family what is important is what an individual does to prepare for the future and achieve something. But in French culture, the idea of an American dream does not mean much because they prefer the opposite. The past is important for them, and they do not focus so much on the present and the future (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012,13).

Another way of perceiving time, which is different between cultures, is how time goes by. Cultures like American or Danish perceive that time flows in one line, which consists of

different events. Other cultures think that time flows in a circle where past, present, and future overlap (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012,13).

Furthermore, in terms of time, cultures can be divided into sequential and synchronous. Sequential cultures focus on only one activity at a time, so they perform their tasks one at a time and keep what is planned to do. In the synchronous cultures, it is normal to do several things at once, and there is little emphasis on schedules and plans (Bočánková 2006, 22).

1.7.3   Attitudes with Regard to the Environment

The approach of different cultures to the environment also varies. Some cultures believe that values, vices, or virtues are hidden in person and believe that they can control and influence what is happening around us. Other cultures believe that the world and the environment in which they live is more powerful than themselves. They perceive nature as something big and dangerous, which should be feared and respected because people cannot influence it (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012,13).

2 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Non-verbal communication is an important part of intercultural communication, so this chapter will not only explain non-verbal communication as such but also time and its perception, which represents an essential part of non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication also varies from culture to culture. In non-verbal communication, words are omitted, and signs or symbols are used to communicate a specific message. However, this does not mean that any non-verbal behavior immediately constitutes non-verbal communication. Communication occurs when elements such as words in verbal communication or symbols in non-verbal are used intentionally (Jandt 2010, 105-107).

Just as words and expressions in verbal communication have different meanings across cultures, also the meaning of non-verbal symbols varies. However, in verbal communication, these meanings are easy to identify and understood based on grammar and language rules. In non-verbal communication, recognizing the symbols used is a bit more challenging, as their meaning varies from one culture to another. Therefore, when communicating with members of different culture, people should be careful what non-verbal signals they use to avoid misunderstandings (Bočánková 2006, 25).

Nonverbal communication includes several aspects that are considered nonverbal symbols. It is not just the gestures and facial expressions that come to mind when we say nonverbal communication, but there are many more, and one of the aspects is the perception of time.

2.1 Chronemics

This discipline studies how individual cultures use and perceive the time. While time might appear to be uniform for everyone and it flows the same, it is not quite the truth. One example of a different perception of time is to divide time into cyclical and linear (Jandt 2010, 117).

Cyclical perception of time is one in which people believe that time flows in a certain cycle that is repeated. It can be, for example, a cycle of day and night, or a cycle of alternation of seasons. The main idea in this understanding of time is that there is enough time because, after one cycle, a new one follows. Cyclical perception of time is associated with religion, history, and personal life (Toynbee and Markowitz 2020).

Linear, or so-called one-way perception of time, deals with the idea that time has a certain beginning and also an end. In this understanding of time, time is divided into past,

present, and future. The past is something like a library or archive, where people often get lost to get inspiration, remember certain events, or learn a lesson. The future just comes, giving individuals space for imagination and plans. Because linear oriented cultures believe that time has certain limits, it is a rare commodity for them, so they are dealing with wasting, spending, or saving time (BBC 2019).

Chronemics also deals with the ways the cultures record time. One way is to use calendars that date back to a time before Christ. At that time, the calendar was based on the sun and the moon and have different duration across cultures. The Julian, and later the Gregorian calendars create the basics for what is used today (Jandt 2010, 117).

Every member of a culture is familiar with the rules of how that culture perceives time without having to learn the rules. They learn it during their lives, just in the environment where they live, based on the customs and traditions that adhere to in the culture. Therefore, it may happen that an individual is not even aware of the rules and assumes that the whole world is functioning as he and his culture work. Thus, an individual knows the difference only when he spends a longer time in another culture and understands that each culture has its rules not only in its perception of time but also in its overall functioning (Hall 1981, 4).

2.2   The Concepts of Time

Because, unlike animals, people can perceive and control time, the concept of time is complex. One of the basic divisions of time perception is to divide time into linear, where a sequence of events, hours, days, or months takes place and a cyclical one, where individual elements repeat and alternate. Scientists that deal with a concept of time claim, that how a culture perceives and manages the time, express what meaning has a life, and human existence to its members. According to it, they divide culture into three types: the past-oriented one, the present-oriented one, and the future-oriented one. While every type of culture perceives time from the perspective of the past, present, and future, not all perceptions are equally important to them. Every perception of time is strongly influenced by the culture in which an individual lives and is also associated with how he plans, divides, and adapts his activities to others. This is important also in business. The way an individual manages his time also affects how he plans the start of the meeting, the deadline for tasks, or the start of production (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 148-149).

For the perception of time, there are three concepts of time that we distinguish:

2.2.1 Appointment Time

This concept of time relates to punctuality in terms of meetings and appointments. Punctuality is an aspect that differs from culture to culture because what punctuality represents for one culture can mean disrespect, bad manners, or unnecessary precision for another. German or Scandinavian cultures are rigorous in terms of punctuality, while cultures in Latin America are not so strict (Bočánková 2006, 26).

2.2.2 Schedule Time

This concept deals with planning and scheduling. When doing business with other cultures, it is good to know how much time it takes to plan various activities, whether meetings, tasks, or vacations. For countries like the United States and Germany, schedules are extremely important (Hall and Hall 1990, 19). Some cultures, such as Arabs, do not adhere to schedules and plans, so in business, it happens that employees work under constant pressure to complete the job as quickly as possible. Other countries do not like the schedules and the pressure, because it causes that it takes a little longer to complete their assignments (Bočánková 2006, 26).

2.2.3 Discussion Time

The concept of discussion time shows how cultures perform meetings and negotiations. Not only how much time they set for it, but also the way they handle the whole discussion. Some cultures in Central Europe prefer to focus only on what is important and resolve it in the shortest time possible. This, of course, depends on the issue itself, the people attending the meeting, and how they prepare for it. In Latin America, cultures often talk about other topics that are not business-related, but that develop relationships with each other. This concept also focuses on pauses or interruptions during a conversation (Bočánková 2006, 26).

2.3 Time Orientation

Each culture perceives time from the perspective of the past, present, and future, but not for each culture these three periods are equally important. The past is something that has already happened, so we can no longer work with it, but we can draw on it through memories. The future is ahead of us, so it is still unknown and uncertain. Just the present is here and now, and it allows us to connect with the past and the future. We relate to the past by the experience that has shaped us and affects where we are, what we do, and how we

make decisions today. Also, the activities and decisions that we make now will affect our future.

Past-oriented cultures are those that have a long history, such as Chinese, British, and some cultures in Latin America or Europe. Values and traditions are important for these cultures, and they believe that the plans should respect the customs and traditions of society. These cultures still draw from the past because it represents motivation, inspiration, even guidance for them to deal with and decide on various issues. Past-oriented cultures need to preserve history and continue the traditions (Weinshall 1993, 41). For these cultures, the history and the origin of the family, nation, or even business is important. Past-oriented cultures prefer everything older and usual, whether it concerns age, habits, or even technology. They need to honour and respect the ancestors and the elderly. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 170).

Present-oriented cultures are interested in what is here and now. The past is gone, and the future may never come, so it is important to focus on the moment. These cultures prefer short-term plans and immediate results. The relationships they have at the moment are very important to them because everything is temporary (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 170).

Future-oriented cultures seek to shape their future through current activities. They plan a lot and then control whether the plans are working. They focus on everything new and young and everything that has potential in their eyes. Cultures like American or Brazil are imaginative and full of enthusiasm and optimism. In business, it is important for them to have some freedom and opportunities and put great emphasis on deadlines and compliance (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 170). Future-oriented cultures take away traditions from the past, which for them represent experience or so-called know-how, which is extremely important in business. In the United States, for example, know-how is considered a rare asset that generations pass on to each other. Therefore, when these cultures go back to the past, it is not to remember with pleasure, but to find the information and especially the experience they will use for their future success (Hall 1981, 8).

A Harvard scientist Tom Cottle created a so-called Circle Test to determine the time orientation of individual cultures. During the test, members of different cultures have to express their perception of the past, present, and future in circles. They should draw these three circles on paper to show as they perceive the relationship between the present, the past, and the future. These circles may vary in size, depending on what is important to the individual. They can also overlap or be completely separate, depending on how they

interact. In the end, each circle should be marked, to make clear which represents the past, which the present, and which the future (Reychler 2015, 33). Based on the test results, Cottle created four possible configurations in terms of time perception. The first lacks the relationship and connection between the past, present, and future. This model is visible in Chinese, Russian and Venezuelan culture. While Russia focuses mainly on the future, China attaches equal importance to all three time periods. The second model shows the temporal integration that is most visible in Malaysia and Japan, where the past, present, and future overlap. In the third option, there is a partial connection of circles, which is visible in several cultures. In the Belgian, German, and British cultures, this overlap is smaller, with Britain more past-oriented, Germany present-oriented, and Belgium perceiving past, present, and future as equally important. The last fourth option shows that the individual circles are touching each other, but do not overlap so that the past, present, and future follow each other but do not influence. This model is visible, for example, in India and Nigeria (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 2012, 155-156).
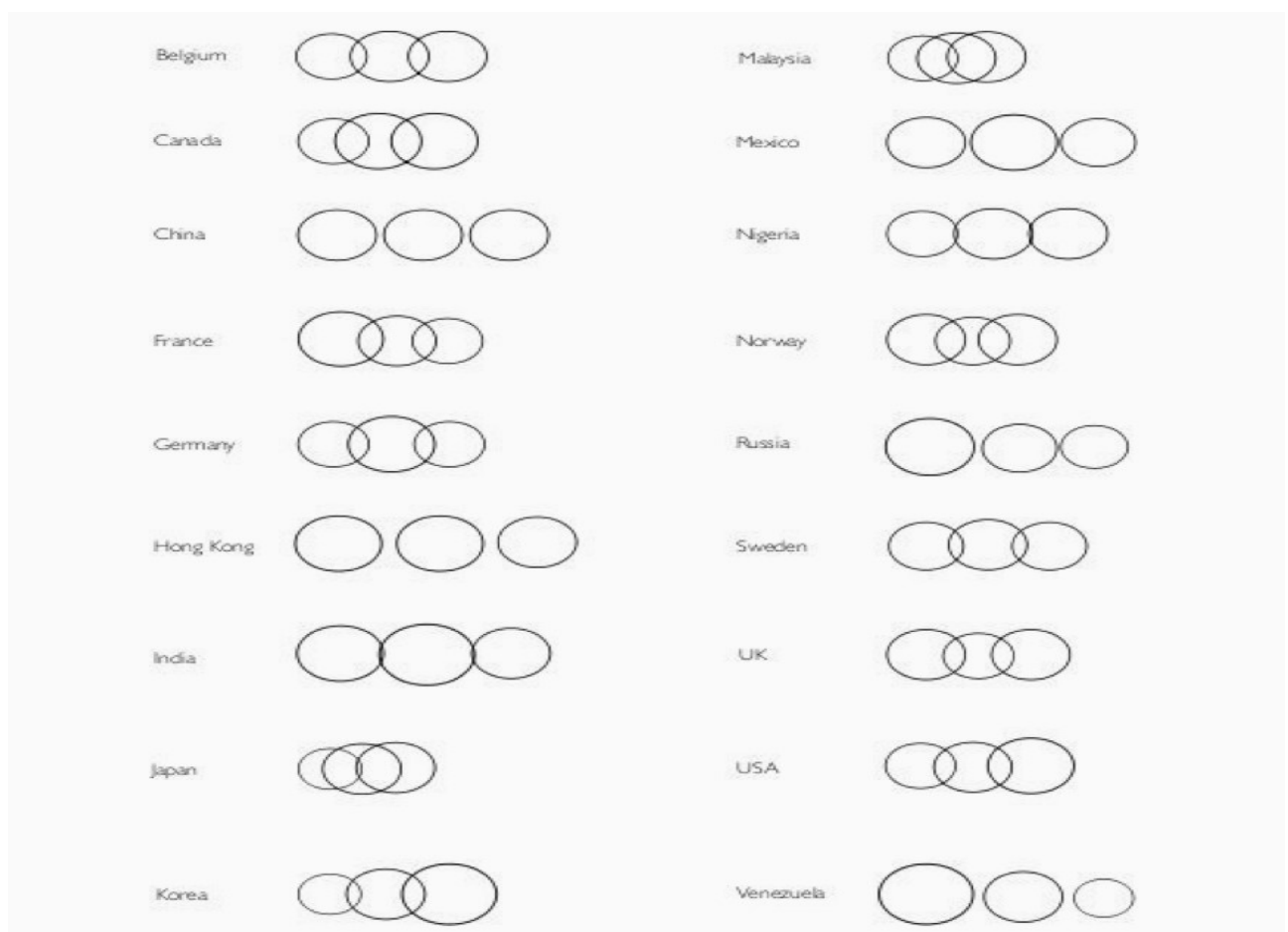

Figure 1: The Circles Test

Source: Futurist Barbara 2020

2.4   Monochronic and Polychronic Cultures

Monochronic and polychronic time are other time systems that vary from one culture to another, but these two are important in international business. Monochronic cultures perceive time as sequential and linear (Bočánková 2006, 27). Monochronic perception of time, or M-time, dates to the 18th and 19th century and is associated with the Industrial Revolution. Such a perception of time is typical for North America, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, or South Korea. Cultures with the monochronic perception of time concentrate and do only one thing at a time. They perceive time as a specific thing they can get, lose, spend, or save and divide it into several segments. M-time cultures adhere to accuracy, complete tasks on time, and follow schedules and plans that are important to them. Also, individuals with a monochronic orientation are committed to their work, which they devote a lot of time to. They need their privacy but also respect the privacy of other people, so they adhere to the rules to avoid disturbing others at work (Nonis, Teng, and Ford 2005, 411-412). Space is also associated with the question of time perception. M-time cultures ensure that employees have privacy, so private offices may even be soundproof. According to Edward Hall, monochronic perception does not represent natural time because it disrupts the natural rhythm of an individual (Hall and Hall 1990, 14-15). Also, management that is essential to monochronic cultures sometimes makes no sense. However, all the plans and schedules that these cultures use cannot always be applied. It is not always possible to say with certainty how long a meeting with a client or an activity takes. What one day can take ten minutes, on another day it takes twenty minutes. Sometimes people can work continuously, so they can do the job in a short time, another time they might be disturbed, so it takes longer to finish the job (Hall 1983, 43-44).

Polychronic cultures, such as Japanese, Latin American, Indian, or even Czech are characterized by engaging in multiple activities at once. Planning and keeping deadlines for P-time culture is not so important. They are more committed to maintaining long-term interpersonal relationships, not just within family and friends, but also with business partners (Nonis, Teng, and Ford 2005, 411-412). As for the perception of space between members of a polychronic oriented culture, they do not respect privacy as much as members of the M-time culture. P-time cultures ensure that people are in contact with each other at work because strict adherence to private space where individual employees should be separated from each other would distract them from working together. As mentioned above, polychronic cultures do not emphasize schedules, so it often happens that scheduled

events or meetings are often cancelled or postponed because they adapt to people who are much more important to them (Hall and Hall 1990, 15-16).

However, the fact that culture is oriented more monochronic or polychronic does not mean that all members of that culture perceive time only in this way. It happens that in M-time culture there are individuals who perceive time in a manner typical for P-time culture and vice versa. For example, in the United States, which perceives time in a monochronic way, this perception is particularly evident in business, government, and various professions, but in private individuals use a more polychronic perception of time (Hall 1983, 49). This depends mainly on individuals, as it is reflected in their behaviour and nature. How an individual perceives time is determined not only by the culture´s perception of time but also by the background that he comes from. So ultimately, individual perception of time is influenced by his family, school, or other social groups. Thus the monochronic and polychronic perception of time is a problem in international communication because individuals who do business with each other may come from cultures where time is perceived differently and may not even know about it (Nonis, Teng, and Ford 2005, 412).

2.5 Long-term versus Short-term Orientation

As the name implies, cultures that are long-term oriented (LTO) focus on future success. Perseverance, determination, and thrift are important qualities for these cultures. Short-term oriented cultures (STO), on the other hand, focus more on the past and the present. Society and the preservation of traditions are especially important to them (Hofstede and Hofstede 2007, 162).

The individual orientation not only of the culture but also of the individual is visible in various areas of life. The individual acquires the basics of long-term or short-term orientation in the family and at school. Families that are part of a country with a high long-term orientation focus on teaching their children practical life. Children learn how to be frugal, how to work for a long time to achieve goals, and be persistent, and they also learn not to be satisfied with the immediate satisfaction of their needs. At school, these children learn that they will succeed in their efforts, and vice versa, when something fails, it is due to their lack. Children from long-term oriented cultures are good at mathematics and specific sciences. On the contrary, families that belong to a short-term oriented culture teach their children how to preserve traditions, be part of a given society, be tolerant and respect others. They also teach them how to meet their needs immediately and enjoy their

free time. Children attribute success or failure, whether at school or in life, to coincidence and are good at the abstract sciences (Hofstede and Hofstede 2007, 165-167).

Another area where the differences between LTO and STO are manifested is work and business. Cultures with a long-term orientation in the business focus on building a strong market position during their operation. They know that results will not come immediately, but they will achieve them gradually, through hard work (Venaik, Zhu, and Brewer 2013, 364). Family businesses often predominate in LTO cultures. Individuals who start a business know that they must set certain goals, which they must be persistent in achieving. There must be a hierarchy in the company so that individuals complement each other in their business roles. The economy to which members of a long-term oriented culture have been guided since childhood is used in the work environment, where they can manage their savings and capital in such a way as to bring them further investments and profits. Unlike LTO cultures, where the company focuses on longer-term goals without immediate results, companies in STO cultures focus more on the results already achieved, for example, last month or quarter (Hofstede and Hofstede 2007, 168-169).

2.6 Consequences of Different Perception of Time

How whether individuals, groups of people, or entire cultures and nations perceive time is reflected in various areas of their lives. It not only affects the psychological, physical, or health aspects of life, but also affects how people behave, think, or even how they can organize their lives and the functioning of society as a whole. How individuals value the past, present, or future is reflected in their way of life by either enjoying each moment to the full or choosing deliberate steps that will bring them a better future. It also manifests in accepting the changes and challenges that will arise in their lives. From a psychological point of view, different perceptions of time also affect the communication of individuals themselves. Islamic culture, which is highly past-oriented, has a completely different way of communicating and establishing interpersonal relationships than other cultures in the world. Therefore, when it comes to the future, they refer to God's will and prefer to focus on their history and traditions. The fact that countries with a low future orientation have difficulties in building relations is also reflected in trade negotiations because it is difficult to build trust.

From a health point of view, the pace of life of a given culture and its members is very important. It has been proven that countries in the modern world, where people are constantly striving for goals, better work results, money and a better position in society,

have far more health problems than countries where the whole philosophy of life is set differently (Shipp 2014,).

3   CONCLUSION OF THE THEORETICAL PART

The individual points in the theoretical part of this bachelor thesis prove that the perception of time is a complex matter. At first sight, it may seem that everyone has the same amount of time, so there can be no difference in how individuals perceive it, and yet there are differences. Sometimes it is difficult to recognize these differences at first glance, and one notices them only after a longer and more intense observation, but one thing is certain. How individuals and entire societies of people perceive time distinguishes us from each other and gives us characteristic features. Every culture maintains what is typical of it and handed it down from generation to generation. Therefore, each individual is influenced by the environment in which he grows up and lives, and every element that sticks to him carries his life, whether private or professional. And it is precisely the working environment that is the place where the clashes of different countries are visible because it happens that the differences between cultures prevent them from smooth business and trading. The theoretical part of this work describes and explains the different perceptions of time in different cultures. The second, practical part of this work describes how theoretical knowledge can interfere with practical life and also what steps individuals can take in the event of significant complications when meeting members of another culture.

II. ANALYSIS

4 INTRODUCTION OF THE COMPANY THERMOTECHNIKA BOHEMIA S.R.O.

To get the necessary information on the topic I am dealing with in this thesis, I approached a company that provided me with enough information about how the perception of time can affect the business and communication.

The company Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. is operating in the Czech market since 1992, when it has started supplying beer dispensing equipment in the Czech Republic (TC Bohemia 2020). The form of business of this company is a limited liability company, which means that the members of such a company are not personally liable for the debts or liabilities of the company (Business Dictionary 2020). The executive director is JUDr. Dezider Imre, who started to perform this function in 1992. Later in 2016, Mgr. Silvia Štarhová was also registered as executive director of this company, so now they are performing this function together. Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. is located in Újezd u Brna and consists of two parts- Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o., and TTH Bohemia s.r.o. Both parts are located in one place, both have the same management, but the TTH BOHEMIA s.r.o is responsible for legal issues of the company. Its departments are Economic Department, Human Resources Department, Legal Department, and Accounting Department. THERMOTECHNIKA BOHEMIA s.r.o is responsible for all other aspects of business and is concerned with Purchasing Department, Business Department, Service Department together with Service Dispatching and also the Production and the Stock Department. This company has also some other branches abroad in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, or Croatia. (TC Bohemia 2020).

Except for supplying beer dispensing equipment, it has also been supplying gastronomic equipment since 1995, and in 2004 it became a supplier of Italian coffee called Pascucci with accessories. In addition to the supply of the mentioned products, this company is engaged in the production, sale, and service of dispensing and cooling equipment. Thermotechnika Bohemia offers either its own manufactured products or the products of foreign companies that cooperate with it. (TC Bohemia 2020).

Although Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. is a company operating mainly in the Czech market, it also cooperates with foreign companies. Also, some companies with which it cooperates in the Czech Republic are those owned by foreign companies, so you can get to know the foreign culture in them. Thus, this company has experience with Japan, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary, and Romania.

5 PRIMARY RESEARCH

The research in this thesis serves to obtain information from the practical operation of the company and to compare them with theoretical knowledge of the issues I deal with in this work.

5.1 Main Goals

The main goal of this thesis is to present how the perception of time can affect the business in a particular company and to make recommendations on how to eliminate the differences and make the business more efficient.

5.2 Research Question

To meet the goal of the thesis, two research questions are stated:

RQ 1: Is the time perception of Czech culture presented in the given company?

RQ 2: Does the different perception of time have an impact on intercultural business communication?

5.3 Research Method

As a research method for this bachelor's thesis I have chosen the method of qualitative research, and that is a semi-structured interview.

The research used primary sources that represent new, current, and specific information. However, the collection of primary information is slower than the processing of secondary data and requires some preparation. Primary sources are those subjects that are the original bearer of the information, and that can provide the necessary information value for the research (Kozel, Mynářová, and Svobodová 2011, 56-57). Qualitative research uses a small number of participants for analysis but provides a large amount of sufficient information (Kozel, Mynářová, and Svobodová 2011, 166).

A semi-structured interview is a type of qualitative research that requires preparation. Before the research, the researcher must prepare in advance a list of questions that are necessary for the research to be successful. These questions are available to the researcher during the interview, he can determine the order in which he will ask the respondents, and he can also complete them as needed (Kozel, Mynářová, and Svobodová 2011, 191).

5.4 Characteristics of the Research and Its Preparation

Before starting the research itself, I first identified the areas and topics that I considered relevant in this bachelor's thesis. After that, I compiled a list of nine questions through

which I wanted to learn as much information as possible from the respondents. Then I sent this list by e-mail to the executive of Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o, and then she selected other employees who would be best suited to my research and also sent this list to them. I sent it to them in advance so that they would have the opportunity and time to go through the questions and think about them, and then I held telephone conversations with each of the participants. Because quarantine was ordered throughout the country, I could not hold the interviews with the participants in person, but on the other hand, I did not want the research to take place only via e-mail. That is why I took the opportunity to make phone calls. Each participant could prepare for the questions in advance, or at least to think about the answers, but the fact that I could talk to each of them at least by phone ensured that I got much more information.

Participants of the research are four employees of Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. Each of the participants holds a different post in the company, and also each of them has a different time worked there. The first of the participants (P1) is the man who has been working for the company for more than three years as an assistant to the company's executives, so he deals with the administration and operation of the company and sales and communication with not only foreign customers and partners. The second participant (P2) in the research is the woman who has been with the company for almost six years and is in charge of the company's economic department. One of the participants (P3) is again the man who has been working for the company as an assistant for only a few months but still has experience in dealing with foreign customers. The last respondent (P4) in this research is the company executive herself, who has been working in this position for four years but has been working in the company for a total of six years.

5.5 Research Evaluation

I wanted to find out through the questions I asked the participants not only their experiences with the perception of time, but also experiences with cultures that would perceive time differently. Also, these questions were used to find out how they can work with time, how they can organize it, whether they use any tools for work, and its organization.

So now follows an analysis of the questions and answers along with an explanation of what I was trying to find out with the given questions.

One of the ways cultures can differ in their perception of time is how important it is for them to set and meet deadlines. Some cultures always set a deadline for a given work

which they strictly follow, other cultures also set a date, but it is not relevant for them, and some cultures do not set any deadlines. In the case of this research, I wanted to find out the respondent's experience with deadlines, either within their company or in cooperation with other companies. I found different opinions in the answers because two respondents, P1 and P2, agreed that both within the company and in cooperation with other people, the deadlines are largely met. Participant number three was also inclined to the fact that there is no problem with meeting the deadlines within their company, it may just happen that a priority contract or project arises, and then other works may be postponed. However, this respondent surprisingly stated that he has a problem in cooperating with Hungarian companies because he has to wait a long time for everything and remind them of things several times. By having a great overview of what is happening in the company, the company's executive, who is the fourth participant, provided information that if employees have given deadline, they try to meet it, but there are exceptions among employees in the company that have a problem with the deadlines, it is not always possible to rely on them, and therefore they need more control. As for customers or partners, she said that the biggest problem with meeting certain deadlines is when the invoice is due when it happens that the payment takes too long, even after the deadline they agreed on.

My next question about their experience with meeting delivery deadlines also concerns this matter. By supplying their products and services to other companies and also by taking parts or finished products from other companies, deliveries must run smoothly and in the shortest possible time. In their answers, the respondents agreed that when it comes to the delivery of goods or services on their part, they meet everything within the agreed deadlines, which is also supported by the fact that their deliveries have very good evaluations. However, the problem arises when other companies supply something to them. Respondents stated that they have been cooperating with most of their suppliers for a long time, so they already know who is reliable in supply and who, on the contrary, not so they can arrange themselves accordingly. It happens that they also have one-off suppliers, for whom they cannot know in advance whether they meet the agreed delivery deadlines or not, and this is where the problem often occurs. In such cases, their business is also affected as long as their delivery is delayed since they are waiting for delivery from someone else.

The other two questions focused on the duration of business meetings or conferences, whether within the company or in business negotiations with partners or customers. When asked whether working meetings start on time, all respondents answered in the affirmative.

When asked if they end in time, everyone agreed that this is also observed in the company in most cases, but it may happen that the meeting must be extended, but they always agree on it during the meeting. When it comes to a working meeting with partners or customers, large companies have a predetermined date and time of this meeting, and it is also always observed.

Another question concerned the organization of time and tasks using different planners, timelines, or schedules. All respondents agreed that they know such tools, but because they are a small company, they do not use them personally. On the contrary, they have experienced that in the case of large or multinational companies, these tools are used in various situations, for example, in setting meetings.

Another question is related to the monochronic and polychronic perception of time, specifically whether the respondents prefer to deal with tasks one by one or do something from each task at the same time. In this case, the answers were different, which proves that here prevails more individual perception of time than that given by culture. Two respondents, P2 and P3 stated that they always prioritize between tasks and fulfil them accordingly, so they prefer to do things one by one. Participant number 1 supports this statement only from a theoretical point of view, so he always plans tasks, but their fulfilment is chaotic, does not follow the plan, and it often happens that he solves all things at once. The answer of the company's executive depends on her position, stating that by working in the company's management, during the day, in addition to her work, she has to deal with a lot of issues with colleagues, customers or partners, and therefore even if she does not like it, she has to solve everything at once. Therefore, she often uses time after work to complete her work in peace.

One of the questions also concerned what time frame is appropriate for answering either a phone call or an e-mail. The first participant stated that if he missed a phone call, he would solve it as soon as possible. He tries to respond to emails within a maximum of two days. The other participant also confirmed that she solves the issues within 48 hours, in case this time prolong, she will always inform the person about it. Next, the third respondent handles telephone calls immediately and prioritizes them over e-mail communication. However, the fourth participant thinks that we are living in fast-moving times, so if she does not respond either to the phone call or the e-mail within 24 hours, it is often a problem in the business environment. It is, therefore, necessary to use automatic answers if one of the employees is out of his office during working hours, even for a few hours.

As differences between cultures are not only visible in the perception of time, but also in different matters, I wondered if the respondents have attended any training in working and cooperating with members of another country. All participants of the research stated that they had not attended any such training and added that they did not even consider it important. However, everyone confirmed that in such cases, knowledge of a foreign language is important, which they have the opportunity to acquire in a company where they have language courses available. They added that they considered important, for example, courses in business skills and sales practices, knowledge of how to conduct negotiations, and the development of soft skills.

The last question was only additional because I was interested in whether any of the participants had either a positive or a negative experience in terms of meeting deadlines. However, none of the participants stated anything specific that would be worth mentioning, mostly just repeating what they have already said in the previous answers.

5.6   Answering Research Questions

In this part, the research questions, which are listed in section 5.2 of this bachelor thesis, are answered.

The first question is: Is the time perception of Czech culture presented in the given company?
According to the Hofstede Insights website, in terms of long-term or short-term orientation, the score of the Czech Republic is 70, which means that it is rather pragmatic, and focused on longer-term goals and the future. Czech culture believes that truth is linked to a given situation, context, and a specific time. This culture does not stick strictly to old traditions, on the contrary, it easily adapts to the newer ones, which are gradually changing. Members of Czech culture are thrifty and able to invest well not only their money but also time. They are persistent and consistent in achieving the set goals (Hofstede Insights, 2020).

It can be said that this characteristic is certainly visible in the company. That they are associating with a business environment that is constantly changing and adapting to trends, they have to behave accordingly. This means that they must constantly invent something new or innovate the old, and even if they have traditions within the company, they must adapt them to the given conditions. The fact that the Czech nation is characterized as thrifty and able to invest well is also reflected in business by the fact that they have been

operating successfully on the market for several years, so they know how to manage finances but also time and use it to their advantage.

In terms of perceiving time in a monochronic or polychronic way, Czech culture is polychronic. It is characterized as not very good at meeting deadlines and punctuality, and also members of Czech culture tend to engage in several activities at once, which they even consider their advantage, as they believe that by engaging in several activities at once, their work is more efficient (Bočánková 2006, 37).

However, the perception of time, which is characteristic for the Czech Republic, is not completely visible in the given company as the research shows that the monochronic perception of time prevails in the business environment. Research participants confirm that they prefer sequential perception of time to multitasking, which means that they divide the individual tasks, try to perform them one by one, and before starting a new task, they want to complete the previous one. Of course, this is not always applicable, as it happens in the business environment that it is necessary to deal with several issues at the same time, so even if they do not like to, but still sometimes reach for multitasking, especially in the period when they are pressed for time.

The second research question is as follows: Does the different perception of time have an impact on intercultural business communication?
Although none of the participants mentioned specific cases where different perceptions of time would affect business communication or cooperation with participants in different cultures, it is clear that such cases may occur. This is probably, when cultures that have more different characteristics than the common ones come together, and when these characteristics are largely reflected in the actions and behaviour of people in everyday life.

The only case that could be considered a sign that a different perception of time affects the operation of the company is the response of a third participant in the research, who stated several times that he comes into contact with Hungarian culture very often and always encounters the problem of non-compliance of agreed deadlines and everything takes a very long time. In this case, it is clear that if Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. orders some goods or services from a Hungarian company, and relies on the fact that they will have these products at the agreed time and will be able to handle and use them further, or move them further to the customer and it does not happen, a problem will arise. The worst part may be that the surveyed company considers it polite to adhere to what is agreed with someone in advance, and therefore the behaviour of Hungarian companies seems inadequate for them and, conversely, for Hungarian culture, such behaviour may seem

perfectly fine and may feel under pressure when the Czech company is constantly pushing for them.

5.7 Recommendations

This section presents recommendations on how to make communication and work in an intercultural environment more efficient.

One of the recommendations could be about the use of technologies and tools to organize work and time. While they are a small company, the use of available technologies is not necessary, although they could increase work efficiency. They have to be careful if they want to expand their activities because, in the case of larger companies, such tools are necessary, and the company's employees would not be prepared for such a change. So they could try at least some technologies within the company to get acquainted with it and also to improve and maybe simplify a job and its organization.

Another recommendation concerns the negative experience of Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. with compliance with deadlines, delivery times, and payment of invoices after the deadline. In case that another company with which they cooperate constantly does not comply with what they agree on, it would be good to terminate cooperation with such a company and find someone else on the market. If such a resolute solution is not possible or they do not want to apply it, it is good for unreliable companies or customers to adjust the dates, delivery times, or due dates of invoices to suit them.

Because the participants did not mention a specific problem in cooperating with other cultures, it is difficult to recommend something specific to them. But if it happens in the future that they have an essential problem with operating in an international environment, it would be appropriate, before the cooperation with another culture, that they get acquainted with fundamental differences not only in the perception of time, but also in behaviour and habits, so that they do not be surprised by something, or that it won´t happen that these differences cause them problems or even unsuccessful cooperation.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis dealt with the different perceptions of time between cultures and their impact on communication in an intercultural environment. The work consists of two parts. The theoretical part presented the basic concepts related to intercultural communication as well as different ways of perceiving time across cultures and their impact on business communication.

In the practical part was presented qualitative research, specifically a semi-structured interview. This research was performed between the employees of Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. In this part were also analysed the individual questions of the research participants and also were clarified the reasons why I focused on individual areas of their functioning.

In this work, two main goals were set, namely, to approach how the individual perception of time can affect the selected company and then propose recommendations to eliminate the differences and improve communication between cultures in the business environment. The research showed that the biggest problem of the surveyed company is the different perception of time in terms of meeting deadlines, delivery times, and paying invoices on time. These discrepancies cause problems for a company when they are dependent on the delivery of products and services from suppliers, or when they are waiting for the money they need to work with.

Based on this, at the end of the practical part, were proposed some recommendations, as to how a given company can solve similar situations in order to avoid the problems that arise from such actions. One of the recommendations was to adjust the dates and delivery times so that Thermotechnika Bohemia s.r.o. even in the event of a delay, would be still able to operate without the products and services delivered, or without a paid invoice. Another of the recommendations concerned the use of new technologies and tools for organizing time and work, with which the company does not yet have much experience.

To summarize the whole bachelor thesis, it is important to note that a person associating in an intercultural environment should be aware that differences in the perception of time between cultures exist and may even be a major problem in business cooperation. However, if one can recognize these differences, communication can be effective and successful without unnecessary complications and failures.

The research questions that were set in this work were answered, and also the main goals of the work were met.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

USA	United States of America
M-time	Monochronic perception of time
P-time	Polychronic perception of time
LTO	Long-term orientation
STO	Short-term orientation
P1	Participant 1
P2	Participant 2
P3	Participant 3
P4	Participant 4

LIST OF FIGURES