

# *Expression of Communication Skills and Benefits for Creating an Effective Mentoring Environment. Comparative Analysis of the Case of Lithuania and Latvia*

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**Abstract** - This paper presents a comparative analysis of the survey results on communication competencies in mentoring in Lithuania and Latvia. In mentoring, it is imperative to examine barriers to communication competencies between business consultants (from now on referred to as "mentors") and start-up entrepreneurs or those intending to start a business (from now on referred to as "mentees") and propose solutions on how to enhance and maintain the business mentor network by utilizing communication technologies.

**Keywords** - communication skills, mentoring.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fostering sustainability ideas in business development is undoubtedly one of the more prominent recent trends. However, to develop a stronger and more sustainable business with certainty, it is not enough to have a good original business idea. It is the mentorship that helps

evaluate your idea and a business plan critically and take the first steps more firmly. Many authors emphasize the importance of mentoring at the beginning of starting a business. In today's practice, a mentor becomes a relevant source of specific knowledge and professionalism and a precious source of experience and assistance. Communication skills are important not only for individuals in the communication industry but also for educators, young people, and entrepreneurs who need to present themselves and their ideas. According to D.Perkumienė and A.Perkumas (2010), quality consulting must be distinguished not only in terms of content but also critical are the factors of communication between clients and consultants. The consultant must be able to understand the client, delve into his/her feelings and character. The client and the consultant's good communication skills and pleasant communication between them have a positive impact on the deepening of clients' knowledge and decision-making (Ester van Laar, et al., 2020). In general, communication, according to J.Fiske (1990), V.Misevičius, R. Urbonienė (2006), and others, is not only

Online ISSN 2256-070X

<https://doi.org/10.17770/etr2021vol1.6651>

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an exchange of experience, verbal and non-verbal signals, information, and mutual understanding. One of the most common problems encountered in day-to-day communication and business consulting arises when the communicating parties do not understand each other. Therefore, in both general communication and business communication, the skills of communicators are crucial.

This paper presents the comparative analysis of the survey results on communication competencies in mentoring in Lithuania and Latvia. **The object of the research.** The approach of mentors and mentees to their communication skills, barriers and problems encountered in communication. **The article** aims to determine whether business consultants and mentees' opinions about their communication skills and the most common barriers and problems in communication differ significantly between the two countries.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**The method of the research.** The quantitative method of raw data collection – a question-based survey - was chosen for the research. A standard questionnaire was compiled to perform the survey. The research data was collected using two questionnaires in Lithuania (one questionnaire was meant for mentors, the other - for mentees), and a combined survey questionnaire was used for the survey in Latvia. Both questionnaires were standardized, closed-ended, with pre-designed questions. The questions were the same for all the respondents replying to the same questionnaire.

All questions in the questionnaires cover 5 thematic blocks, and nominal, interval, rank and Likert scale formats were used to answer the questions of the questionnaires:

1. the demographics of the respondents (age, position, sector in which the company/institution operates, education) - the nominal scale format was provided for the position, sector in which the company/institution operates, education and the interval scale format was used for the questions about respondents' age and work experience;

2. the importance of the communication elements of mentors and mentees (oral, non-verbal communication, written communication and information content development)- the ranked 5-point scale was used, where 1 meant not important at all, 2 - not important, 3 - neither important nor not important, 4 - important, 5 - very important.

3. the effectiveness of communication in business networks - the ranked 5-point scale was used (the same as in block 2);

4. mentors' and mentees' communication skills and factors influencing their communication – a 5-point Likert scale was used, where 1 means not important at all/no influence, 2 - not important/little influence, 3 - neither important nor not important/influence neither important nor insignificant, 4 - important/important influence, 5 - very important/strong influence;

5. the impact of communication barriers on communication - a 5-point Likert scale was used (the same as in block 4).

**The survey sample.** Fifty-six mentors having business consulting experience and 50 mentees participated in this survey in Lithuania. In Latvia, a total of 102 questionnaires valid for analysis were filled in and received (54 mentors, 32 mentees, 16 others, indicating that they lacked experience in mentoring or were interested in it etc.). This article provides only a comparative analysis of the opinions of those who have clearly identified themselves as mentors and mentees. The study was conducted according to the Project Development and Introduction of a Communication Competencies Model for Enhancing and Maintaining a Business Mentor Network (DICCMEM, 2019-1-LV01-KA203-060414).

**Analysis of the research data.** The descriptive statistical analysis method was applied to analyze the obtained questionnaire survey data, calculating the Average, Mode, Median, Standard Deviation indicators. Data analysis was performed using SPSS 22.0 statistical package. To determine statistically significant relationships between Latvian and Lithuanian respondents' replies, a correlation analysis of the data was performed, and the Pearson's chi-squared test criterion  $p_t$  with a  $p < 0.05$  credibility level was calculated. **Hypotheses of the equality of the averages between two independent samples were tested using the  $t$  criterion.** Differences in indicators were considered statistically significant when  $p < 0.05$ .

## III. THE COMPARISON OF MENTOR-MENTEE RESEARCH RESULTS IN LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

**Demographics of the Respondents.** Figure 1 shows the demographic data of the participants by age. In Lithuania (LT), the most active in the survey were mentees under 30 (38% of 50 mentees, which is 19 mentees) and mentors aged 30-40 (30.4% of the 56 mentors in the survey, which is 17 mentors). In Latvia (LV), the most active were mentees and mentors aged 30-40 (50% of 32 mentees, 16 mentees, and 39,7% of 54 mentors, 21 mentors). In LT, the least involved in the survey were older respondents, i.e. participants over 61: only 2% (1 mentee) of all mentees in the survey and 10.7% of mentors – 6 mentors out of 56. However, in LV, the least involved in the survey were younger respondents, i.e. under 30: 8,9% (3 mentees) of all mentees in the survey and 5,2% of mentors – 3 mentors out of 54.

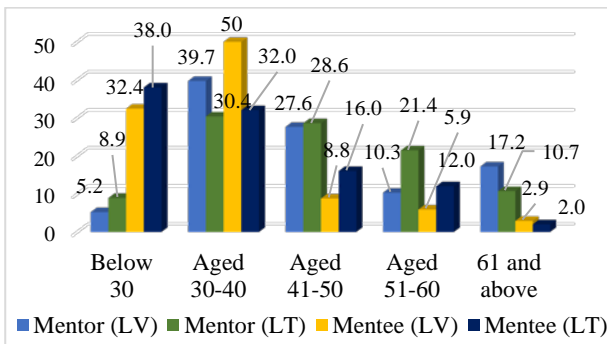


Fig. 1. Distribution of the respondents by age, % (own study)

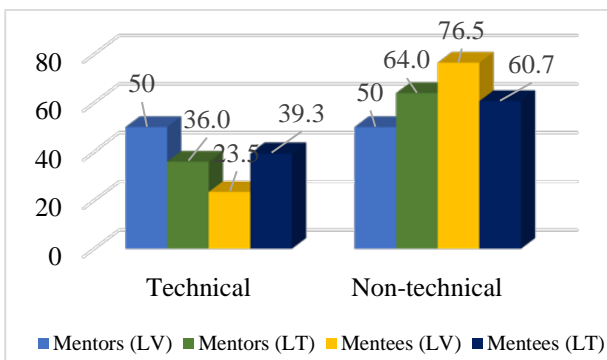


Fig. 2. Distribution of the respondents by education, % (own study)

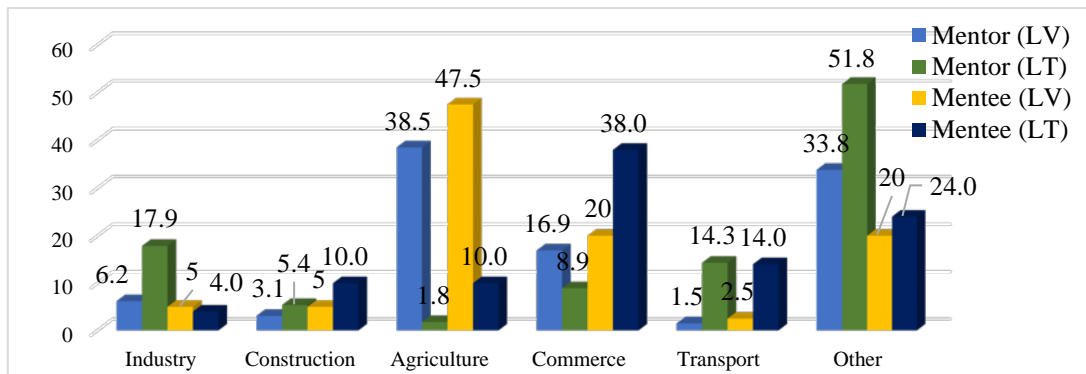


Fig. 3. Distribution of the respondents by field of activity, % (own study)

In terms of positions held (Figure 4) and work experience (Figure 5), the mentors' survey in both countries was dominated by company managers with more than six years of managerial experience.

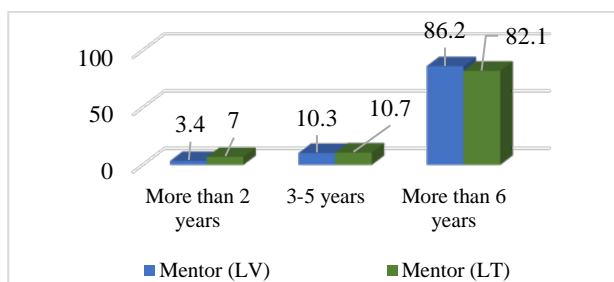


Fig. 4. Distribution of the mentors by work experience, % (own study)

Depending on which sectors of economic activity in which the respondents are involved or in which the prospective respondents (mentees) intend to start their own business (Figure 3), we observe that the survey involved commerce, transport, agriculture, construction, industry representatives or individuals intending to start their own business in the respective sectors. More than half of the mentors surveyed in LT (51.8%) represented other sectors of economic activity, such as recruitment, selection and management of staff, services, training, non-formal education, public sector, IT, start-up consulting, event organization, rental of premises, finance and business consulting etc. Of the mentees surveyed in LT, the majority, i.e. as many as 38%, would intend to start their own business in the commerce sector. In LV, most of all respondents (more than 38% of the mentors and more than 47% of mentees) represented the agriculture sector, but in LT, the number of respondents represented this sector was the lowest: just 1,8% of mentors and 10% of mentees. The smallest part of mentors and mentees surveyed in Latvia represented the transport sector.

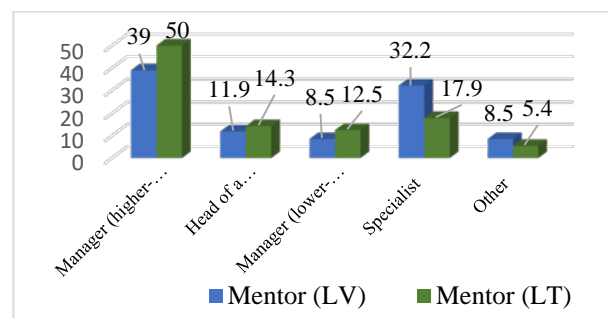


Fig. 5. Distribution of the mentors by occupation, % (own study)

**The Importance of Communication Channels of Mentors and Mentees.** Effective communication is essential to build a trusting and strong mentoring relationship. Therefore, it is essential to identify appropriate channels of communication. The conducted

survey allowed us to determine which communication channels are important for Lithuanian and Latvian mentors and mentees. The results showed (Table 1) that in nonverbal communication, the essential aspect for Lithuanian mentors is the look and eye contact ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.52$ ), while mentees highlight voice intonation ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.48$ ). In LV both, mentors ( $\mu^{LV} = 4.41$ ) and mentees ( $\mu^{LV} = 4.00$ ) highlighted voice intonation. According to mentors in LT and LV, physical distance is the least important ( $\mu^{LT} = 3.96$  and  $\mu^{LV} = 3.81$ ), while mentees find gestures to be the least important ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.02$  and  $\mu^{LV} = 3.56$ ). In verbal communication, both mentors and mentees in both countries highlighted face-to-face communication. The least important to mentors and mentees in LT is a face-to-face group meeting: the average value of mentors is 3.71, and mentees are 3.92. In LV, the least important both for mentors and mentees is video or audio conference: the average value of mentors is 3.59 and mentees – 3.63. In written communication, the least important for LT mentors are written letters sent by ordinary mail ( $\mu^{LT} = 3.16$ ), for mentees - notices and announcements ( $\mu^{LT} = 3.62$ ). Websites and blogs are the least important communication channel in written communication both for mentors and for mentees in LV. Mentors in LT ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.36$ ) and mentors ( $\mu^{LV} = 3.69$ ) and mentees ( $\mu^{LV} = 4.00$ ) in LV acknowledged e-mails as the most critical element in written communication. At the same time, Lithuanian mentees distinguish websites and blogs as the most important in written communication ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.14$ ).

Examining the hypothesis that mentors and mentees in both Lithuania and Latvia evaluate communication

channel equally on average, we see that out of 20 evaluated communication channels, mentors evaluate the importance of 7 channels and mentees of 9 channels significantly different (mentors: written letters, presentations, e-mail, internal communication platforms, document sharing systems, social media, websites and blogs; mentees: facial expressions, look and eye contact, gestures, posture and body orientation, voice intonation, manuals, social media, websites and blogs, face to face conversation). Mentors in Lithuania assess communication channels' importance on average 5% more favourably than in Latvia, mentees -8% (Table 1).

Table 1 also presents data on the significance of the difference in the average ratings of mentors and mentees in each country separately. As shown in Table 1, the most significant difference between a mentor and a mentee in Lithuania was represented by *written letters* ( $p_t^{LT} = 0.038 < 0.05$ ), i.e. it was important enough to the mentees, but not for mentors. In Latvia, the assessments of most non-verbal communication channels (except for physical distance) differ significantly: mentors evaluate the importance of communication channels more favourably than mentees. For mentors in both countries, non-verbal communication channels are more important than verbal or written communication channels (average rating in LT is 4.24 and in LV is 4.18). However, the mentees' assessments are different; in Lithuania, mentees distinguish non-verbal communication channels as more important (average rating is 4.26 in LT, in LV – 3.83), and in Latvia, verbal communication channels (average rating is 4.16 in LT, in LV – 3.98).

TABLE 1 THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION MODEL ELEMENTS BETWEEN MENTORS AND MENTEEES IN LATVIA AND LITHUANIA (OWN STUDY)

Means	Mentors		Mentees		Pearson's chi-squared criterion			
	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$p_t^{LT}$	$p_t^{LV}$	$p_t^{Mentors}$	$p_t^{Mentees}$
<b>Non-verbal communication</b>								
Facial expressions	4.29	4.24	4.30	3.91	0.917	<b>0.043</b>	0.747	<b>0.015</b>
Look and eye contact	4.52	4.30	4.46	3.91	0.626	<b>0.035</b>	0.082	<b>0.002</b>
Gestures	4.13	4.11	4.02	3.56	0.483	<b>0.002</b>	0.923	<b>0.012</b>
Posture and body orientation	4.18	4.20	4.20	3.75	0.877	<b>0.011</b>	0.854	<b>0.012</b>
Voice intonation	4.34	4.41	4.48	4.00	0.228	<b>0.011</b>	0.566	<b>0.002</b>
Physical distance	3.96	3.81	4.10	3.84	0.346	0.872	0.313	0.142
<i>Average</i>	<i>4.24</i>	<i>4.18</i>	<i>4.26</i>	<i>3.83</i>				
<b>Written communication</b>								
Written letter	3.16	3.59	3.66	3.56	<b>0.038</b>	0.895	<b>0.035</b>	0.711
Reports	3.61	3.37	3.66	3.38	0.781	0.980	0.157	0.202
Presentations	3.98	3.50	3.98	3.69	0.989	0.324	<b>0.003</b>	0.119
Manuals	3.73	3.43	3.94	3.44	0.258	0.955	0.078	<b>0.024</b>
Notices and announcements	3.48	3.39	3.62	3.56	0.480	0.378	0.610	0.786
E-mail	4.36	3.69	4.02	4.00	<b>0.045</b>	0.070	<b>0.001</b>	0.917
Internal communication platforms	3.86	3.46	3.94	3.81	0.593	0.117	<b>0.023</b>	0.523
Document sharing systems	3.86	3.50	4.02	3.75	0.302	0.264	<b>0.045</b>	0.187
Social media	3.96	3.19	4.04	3.41	0.641	0.324	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.003</b>
Websites, blogs	4.13	2.96	4.14	3.09	0.923	0.546	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.001</b>
<i>Average</i>	<i>3.81</i>	<i>3.41</i>	<i>3.90</i>	<i>3.57</i>				
<b>Oral communication</b>								

Means	Mentors		Mentees		Pearson's chi-squared criterion			
	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$p_t^{LT}$	$p_t^{LV}$	$p_t^{Mentors}$	$p_t^{Mentees}$
Face to face conversation	4.82	4.63	4.70	4.38	0.332	0.063	0.070	<b>0.035</b>
Face to face group meeting	3.71	3.93	3.92	3.94	0.266	0.953	0.225	0.933
Phone call	3.89	3.96	4.04	3.97	0.406	0.966	0.637	0.694
Video or audio conference	3.68	3.59	3.98	3.63	0.085	0.867	0.625	0.085
Average	4.03	4.03	4.16	3.98				

Pearson's chi-squared criteria:  $p_t^{LT}$  - for mentors' and mentees' sets in LT;  $p_t^{LV}$  - for mentors' and mentees' sets in LV;  $p_t^{Mentors}$  - for mentors' sets in LT and LV;  $p_t^{Mentees}$  - for mentees' sets in LT and LV.

**The Importance of Content Creation of Mentors and Mentees.** In mentor and mentee communication, it is important to single out the ability to create communication content. Communication must focus on completeness, relevance, clarity, accuracy, quality, value, timeliness, etc., of the information to increase the productivity of the communication, reduce the number of errors and increase efficiency and reliability in general. Table 2 contains the evaluation of the importance of content creation for the respondents. From the mentors' point of view in both countries, the most crucial thing in content creation in communication is to present content clearly (average value  $\mu^{LT} = 4.89$ ,  $\mu^{LV} = 4.57$ ), in Latvia, reliability of information is also most important for mentors ( $\mu^{LV} = 4.57$ ). The second important issue in LT is the correctness of the content ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.80$ ), but in LV information completeness ( $\mu^{LV} = 4.46$ ). The third important issue in both countries is the speed of response ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.50$ ,  $\mu^{LV} = 4.37$ ). According to mentees, information reliability in both countries is the most important ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.74$ ,  $\mu^{LV} = 4.56$ ), then – information clarity ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.72$ ) in LT and information completeness in LV ( $\mu^{LV} = 4.50$ ). The third most important issue for mentees in LT is information completeness ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.58$ )

and information clarity in LV ( $\mu^{LV} = 4.47$ ). The least important issue for both mentors and mentees in both countries is the provision of solicited information only (mentors –  $\mu^{LT} = 4.23$ ,  $\mu^{LV} = 3.91$ , mentees –  $\mu^{LT} = 4.30$ ,  $\mu^{LV} = 3.78$ ). Examining the hypothesis that the means of evaluation of various aspects of information content creation in mentors' and mentees' sets differ significantly, we see that in LT, the importance of content clarity in information content creation is evaluated significantly differently by mentors and mentees ( $p_t = 0.032 < 0.05$ ), i.e. mentees rated this aspect significantly lower than mentors. In LV, assessment of information content creation aspects does not differ significantly in mentors' and mentees' sets. However, statistically significant differences were found between the respondents' assessments in LT and LV. We can record that the importance of information reliability ( $p_t^{Mentors} = 0.017 < 0.05$ ) and clarity ( $p_t^{Mentors} = 0.001 < 0.05$ ), and provision of solicited information only ( $p_t^{Mentors} = 0.037 < 0.05$ ) differ statistically significantly in mentors' sets in Lithuania and Latvia. The importance of the provision of solicited information only ( $p_t^{Mentees} = 0.006 < 0.05$ ) differs statistically significantly in mentees' sets in Lithuania and Latvia as well.

TABLE 2 THE EVALUATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTENT CREATION (OWN STUDY)

Means	Mentors		Mentees		Pearson's chi-squared criterion			
	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$p_t^{LT}$	$p_t^{LV}$	$p_t^{Mentors}$	$p_t^{Mentees}$
Information reliability	4.80	4.57	4.74	4.56	0.440	0.930	<b>0.017</b>	0.165
Information clarity	4.89	4.57	4.72	4.47	<b>0.032</b>	0.455	<b>0.001</b>	0.089
Provision of solicited information only	4.23	3.91	4.30	3.78	0.611	0.548	<b>0.037</b>	<b>0.006</b>
Information completeness	4.46	4.46	4.58	4.50	0.287	0.780	0.991	0.522
Information regular updating	4.38	4.26	4.50	4.44	0.382	0.274	0.457	0.644
Speed of response	4.50	4.37	4.44	4.31	0.665	0.691	0.323	0.411
Average	4.54	4.36	4.55	4.34				

**Communication skills of mentors and mentees and factors influencing communication.** Influence is the basis of communication skills. Therefore, the study was interesting to analyze how mentors and mentees evaluate

communication skills that affect communication. When assessing the importance of communication skills (Table 3), we see that, according to mentors' and mentees' point of view, the least important in LT is the ability to put oneself in another's shoes, understand each other's

emotions and experiences (mentors  $\mu^{LT} = 3.93$ , mentees –  $\mu^{LT} = 4.06$ ) and in LV - ability to interpret a person by appearance and behaviour (mentors  $\mu^{LV} = 3.98$ , mentees  $\mu^{LV} = 3.69$ ).

According to mentors in LV and mentees in both countries, the most critical skill is the skill to create a wish to communicate and cooperate (mentors  $\mu^{LV} = 4.50$ , mentees –  $\mu^{LT} = 4.58$ ,  $\mu^{LV} = 4.44$ ). For LT mentors, the most critical skill is the skill to actively listen (reflect, ask questions, conclude, discuss) -  $\mu^{LT} = 4.66$ .

Examining the hypothesis that the means of evaluating communication skills and communication influencing factors in mentor and mentee sets differ significantly (Table 3), we see that the ability to listen actively ( $p_t = 0.039 < 0.05$ ) among mentors and mentees in LT is treated significantly differently, i.e. mentees value the importance of active listening significantly lower than mentors. The assessment of other skills in Lithuanian mentor and mentee sets does not differ significantly. The importance of all communication skill in the Latvian mentor and mentee sets does not differ significantly as well. However,

statistically significant differences were found between assessments comparing the respondents' in LT and LV. Only the importance of interpreting a person by appearance and behaviour ( $p_t^{\text{Mentors}} = 0.001 < 0.05$ ) differs statistically significantly in mentees' sets in Lithuania and Latvia. Lithuanian mentees the importance of this skill to evaluate more positively than Latvian. Significant differences in evaluation between mentors in both countries in assessing communication skills are more common. The importance of such skills like the ability to correctly choose the strategy and tactics of dialogue, skill to actively listen (reflect, ask questions, conclude, discuss), ability to put oneself in another's shoes, understand each other's emotions and experiences, and ability to argue differ statistically significantly in mentors' sets in LT and LV. Lithuanian mentors more positively see the importance of these skills than Latvian, except for the ability to put oneself in another's shoes, understand each other's emotions and experiences ( $\mu^{LT} = 3.93$ ,  $\mu^{LV} = 4.06$ ,  $p_t^{\text{Mentors}} = 0.018 < 0.05$ ).

TABLE 3 THE IMPORTANCE OF RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS AND THE SPECIFICITY OF COMMUNICATION WITH A MENTOR AND THE MENTOR'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS (OWN STUDY)

Means	Mentors		Mentees		Pearson's chi-squared criterion			
	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$p_t^{LT}$	$p_t^{LV}$	$p_t^{\text{Mentors}}$	$p_t^{\text{Mentees}}$
Ability to create a wish to communicate and cooperate	4.57	4.50	4.58	4.44	0.932	0.637	0.473	0.330
Ability to correctly choose the strategy and tactics of dialogue	4.45	4.20	4.38	4.38	0.524	0.282	<b>0.045</b>	0.971
Ability to arouse the partner's interest in a topic of conversation	4.34	4.31	4.32	4.28	0.865	0.814	0.834	0.778
Ability to ensure correct dialogue	4.39	4.37	4.28	4.19	0.319	0.155	0.843	0.467
Skill to actively listen (reflect, ask questions, conclude, discuss)	4.66	4.33	4.42	4.31	<b>0.039</b>	0.894	<b>0.003</b>	0.509
Ability to put oneself in another's shoes, understand each other's emotions and experiences	3.93	4.26	4.06	4.28	0.400	0.893	<b>0.018</b>	0.243
Ability to interpret a person by appearance and behaviour	4.05	3.98	4.28	3.69	0.119	0.078	0.624	<b>0.001</b>
Ability to argue	4.13	4.48	4.08	4.38	0.761	0.516	<b>0.010</b>	0.100
Ability to use modern communication technologies	4.30	4.06	4.36	4.16	0.686	0.592	0.121	0.194
Average	4.31	4.28	4.31	4.23				

**Evaluation of the Impact of Communication Barriers between Mentors and Mentees.** For communication to be effective, it is necessary to identify the barriers that should be eliminated; therefore, the respondents were asked to rate the barriers that hindered successful mentoring (see Table 4). From Lithuanian and Latvian mentors' point of view, of all possible barriers, the reliability of the information source and its significance have the greatest impact on communication between a mentor and a mentee, i.e. whether the recipient is confident that s/he can rely on the communicator and the information s/he provides ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.41$ ,  $\mu^{LV} = 4.30$ ). In

terms of Lithuanian mentees, in addition to this barrier, a lack of time is also indicated ( $\mu^{LT} = 4.20$  for both barriers). In terms of Latvian mentees, technical barriers and obstacles have the greatest impact on communication between a mentor and a mentee ( $\mu^{LV} = 4.25$  for both barriers). According to Lithuanian mentors' and mentees' sets, communication is least affected, in terms of mentors and mentees, by cultural and national barriers, i.e. they represent the influence of various national social norms, values and traditions during communication (mentors'  $\mu^{LT} = 3.29$ , mentees'  $\mu^{LT} = 3.22$ ). In Latvia, communication is least affected, in

terms of mentors, by technical barriers and obstacles ( $\mu^{LV}=3.57$ ), in terms of mentees, by differences among

personalities, experiences, knowledge, skills, and status ( $\mu^{LV}=3.25$ ).

TABLE 4 THE INFLUENCE OF BARRIERS ON COMMUNICATION BETWEEN A MENTOR AND A MENTEE (OWN STUDY)

Means	Mentors		Mentees		Pearson's chi-squared criterion			
	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$\mu^{LT}$	$\mu^{LV}$	$p_t^{LT}$	$p_t^{LV}$	$p_t^{Mentors}$	$p_t^{Mentees}$
<b>1. Technical barriers and obstacles</b>	3.84	3.57	4.00	4.25	0.308	<b>0.001</b>	0.106	0.166
<b>2. Psychological barriers and obstacles:</b> Differences among personalities, experiences, knowledge, skills, and status	3.57	3.80	3.70	3.25	0.442	<b>0.001</b>	0.130	<b>0.016</b>
2.2. Selective listening	4.02	3.81	4.00	3.38	0.901	<b>0.010</b>	0.117	<b>0.001</b>
2.3. Attitude to the communicator	3.82	3.96	3.42	3.84	<b>0.029</b>	0.499	0.385	<b>0.040</b>
2.4. Source reliability	4.41	4.30	4.20	3.81	0.074	<b>0.010</b>	0.354	<b>0.031</b>
2.5. Filtration - the manipulation of information by the communicator	4.13	3.80	4.12	4.38	0.973	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.019</b>	0.153
2.6. Lack of time	4.02	4.11	4.20	3.75	0.184	0.074	0.484	<b>0.018</b>
2.7. Dislike to the form (dislike to arguments, the communication style)	3.73	3.76	4.00	3.94	0.080	0.312	0.853	0.733
<b>3. Psychophysiological barriers</b>	4.05	3.91	4.04	3.63	0.914	0.070	0.218	<b>0.013</b>
<b>4. Social barriers and obstacles</b>	3.45	3.70	3.58	3.81	0.498	0.552	0.136	0.292
<b>5. Cultural and national barriers and obstacles</b>	3.29	3.72	3.22	3.41	0.750	0.066	<b>0.010</b>	0.420
<b>6. Logical barriers and obstacles</b>	3.86	3.94	3.94	3.41	0.581	<b>0.003</b>	0.483	<b>0.007</b>
<b>7. Stylistic barriers and obstacles</b>	3.68	3.80	3.84	3.66	0.361	0.399	0.421	0.381
<b>8. Semantic barriers and obstacles</b>	3.70	3.81	3.78	3.47	0.586	<b>0.039</b>	0.391	0.100
<b>9. Phonematic barriers and obstacles</b>	3.59	3.61	3.64	3.53	0.776	0.664	0.895	0.591
<i>Average</i>	<i>3,81</i>	<i>3,84</i>	<i>3,85</i>	<i>3,70</i>				

Examining the hypothesis that the means of the assessment of the influence of communication barriers in Lithuanian mentor and mentee sets differ significantly (Table 4), we see that only the mean assessment of the influence of a single communication barrier, the attitude towards the speaker, differ significantly ( $p_t=0.029 < 0.05$ ) among mentors and mentees, the assessment of the impact of all other barriers does not differ significantly among mentors and mentees. However, the statistically significant difference is more common in Latvian mentor and mentee sets, for example, technical barriers and obstacles, differences among personalities, experiences, knowledge, skills, and status, selective listening, source reliability, filtration, logical barriers and obstacles, semantic barriers and obstacles. The significant difference between Lithuanian and Latvian mentees' mean evaluation of the influence of various communication barriers is more common than mentors'.

### CONCLUSIONS

The conducted study showed that the assessment of communication elements (communication channels, content creation through communication, various communication skills and communication barriers) usually differed significantly between Lithuanian and Latvian mentors and mentees. In most cases, mentors and mentees in Lithuania consider various communication elements more important than in Latvia. It can be concluded that this may have been influenced by the different number of respondents by age - in Lithuania,

more respondents than younger than 30 years and less old than 60 years participated in the survey. The Latvian respondents to the survey were more concentrated in one field of activity - agriculture, while the Lithuanian respondents represented more different fields. In general, the average assessments of communication skills differ very little in various aspects.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The scientific paper has been developed with the financial support of the ERASMUS+ project Development and Introduction of a Communication Competencies Model for Enhancing and Maintaining a Business Mentor Network (DICC MEM.2019-1-LV01-KA203-060414).

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