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Bachelor's Dissertation:

Intercultural Communication Competence: exploring the cross-cultural
challenges for foreign entrepreneurs in Albania

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Abstract

In today's international environment, people and cultures can no longer operate in a vacuum, making effective intercultural communication a prerequisite. This research paper includes case studies that investigate potential challenges in cross-cultural endeavors by bringing to light personalized experiences collected among foreign businesspeople residing in Albania.

As a framework to guide the whole project, interviews are displayed in comparison to the theoretical model of intercultural scholar Michael Byram, who identified and systematized the necessary knowledge, attitudes, skills and cultural awareness that representatives of different cultures need to be empowered with, in order to function as efficient mediators in an intercultural context.

The objective of this study is to mainly probe on how participants handled cultural differentiations and communication barriers and established mutual interpersonal relationships with their Albanian interlocutors, proving that the acquisition of intercultural communication competence is a multidimensional process that demands a continuous effort.

Keywords: *intercultural communication, Byram's model, skills, Albania, business, interviews*

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1. Introduction

Intercultural communication is as old as humankind itself. Being a natural process and necessity, it traces back to the beginning of history, in the form of wars, alliances or commercial activities. Nowadays, as the rapidly accelerating globalization has made our world a global village, we are constantly being made aware of the multitude of diversity surrounding us.

Migration, foreign travel, international employment, education and diplomatic relations are bringing people of different cultural backgrounds in daily contact with an unprecedented regularity and urgency. Communicating with other cultures characterizes today's business, classroom, community, and, although that can make our world a more exciting and rewarding place, it also compels us to embrace unique cultural manifestations by deploying a set of skills needed to carefully navigate the ins and outs of intercultural communication and address cross-cultural challenges.

2. Clarifying the concepts: Culture and Intercultural Communication

2.1. Culture – Definitions and Models

Culture has always been an ambiguous concept. Edward Tylor, the founder of cultural anthropology, provided one of the earliest and widely accepted definitions of culture, describing it as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”¹.

Since then, culture has been a subject to a plethora of interpretation and classification. Although the word was initially used to describe arts and other human achievements, revised perspectives now highlight the intangible and indiscernible aspects of culture, like the iceberg analogy by Edward Hall that illustrate the distinction between superficial cultural behaviors and underlying values and beliefs (Figure 1)². Social scientists have also agreed on a common systematic approach that “culture is a pattern of assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of adaptation and

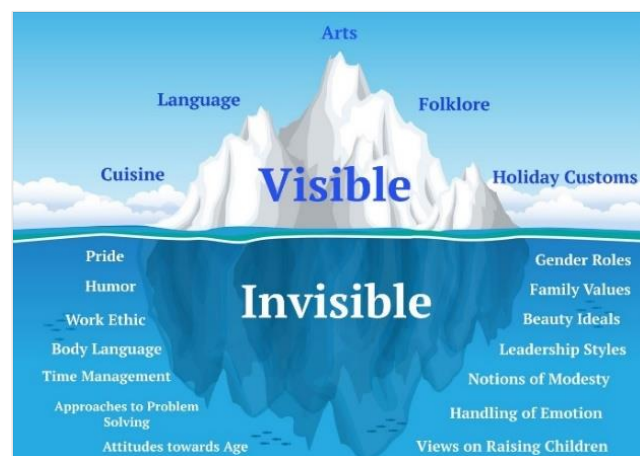


Fig. 1 - Cultural Iceberg Model

¹ (Street, 2024)

² (1976/1989)

integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems”³.



Fig. 2 - Model of Human Mental Programming

Consequently, people grow and intellectually develop by undergoing the process of socialization during which they subtly adopt accentuated cultural traits that distinguish the members of each group. According to Geert Hofstede’s theory, culture therefore constitute, along with the universal human nature and the personality of people, the uniqueness in the mental programming of each individual (Figure 2)⁴.

2.2. Communication across different cultural boundaries

Jens Allwood has explained that “people with different cultural backgrounds share information on different levels of awareness between them”⁵. Hence, intercultural communication can be significantly challenging, since mediators, as bearers of culturally determined patterns of perceptions, experiences and attributes, are being asked to exchange verbal or non-verbal meanings in a less familiar and approving environment (Figure 3)⁶.

Finding common grounds in a cross-cultural framework can be only achieved by understanding in depth how cultures generate different schemes of reality, recognizing potential barriers and adapting to new behavioral perspectives through daily practice. A comprehensive literature review, accompanied by three case studies, will be further provided in order to interpret this process, known as intercultural communication competence.

Certainly, it is worth mentioning that the notion of intercultural communication may not always be associated with the concept of nationality. Although groups have typically been related to national states, authorities often refer to a wider range of communication issues that arise between individuals of different religious, social, educational etc. backgrounds, and differences between those groups should not be underestimated.

³ (1985/2010: 18)

⁴ (2011)

⁵ (1985: 3)

⁶ (Satuna, 2019)

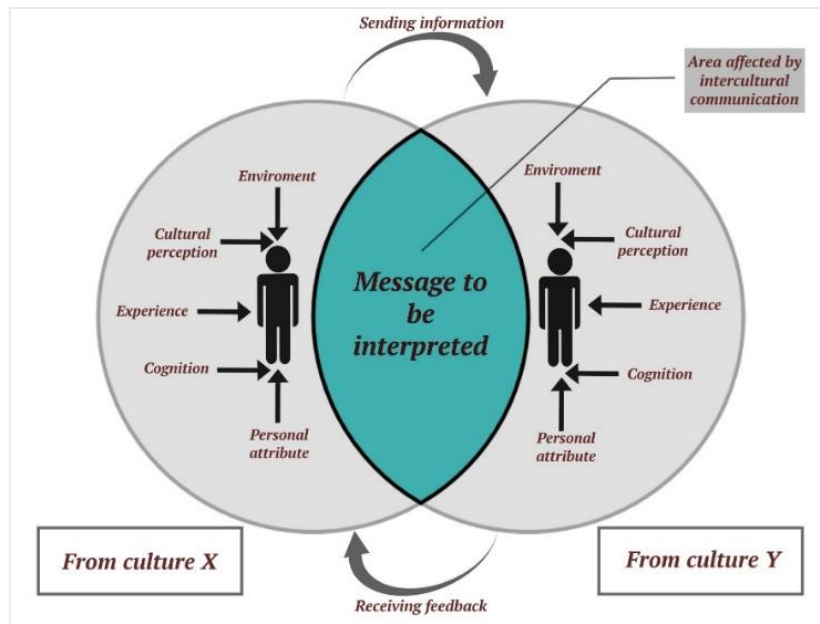


Fig. 3 – Intercultural communication activity flow

3. An overview of the research method

The acquisition of intercultural communication is highly contextual, since it is determined by a variety of factors, namely who is engaged in the communication process, in what context, for what purpose, and in which time frame. For that reason, Darla Deardorff has encouraged the use of qualitative research methods⁷.

Data for this essay were therefore collected in a predetermined research framework. In-person interviews were conducted among Arif (Turkish, 55 years old, dental specialist), Jessica (German, 34 years old, tech and marketing strategist) and Luisa (Italian, 38 years old, foreign language instructor), three foreigners of different qualities who all reside and own businesses in Albania. These people offered to share different experiences and views on their personal and professional life abroad and their answers will be later thoroughly analyzed to record what can be recognized as a challenge during intercultural interactions with the Albanian culture and, at a macro scale, to identify the components of intercultural communication competence.

4. Albania as a host country

Twists and turns in migration flows in and out of Albania have made the country an ideal base for the research purposes of this essay. With the fall of totalitarianism in the early 1990s, the image of the Western world served as a magnet for Albanians, driven by push factors such as entrenched

⁷ (2006: 258)

poverty, lack of education and corrupted political system. This explosive, often not authorized, migration flow led to one of Europe's largest contemporary diasporas, as it is estimated that around 1.2 million Albanians (1/3 of the resident population) live abroad⁸.

Despite these ongoing internal difficulties, Albania is now surprisingly witnessing not only return migration but also a significant settlement of foreign expats into the country. Motivated by serious brain drain concerns and determined to strengthen economic activities through foreign private investments, the Albanian state has adopted migration and business policies advantageous to foreign citizens. According to official statistics, 18,151 foreign inhabitants held a residence permit in Albania in 2022, a number increased by 21.6% compared to 2021⁹.

Among them, each one of the participants of this study saw the potential in moving and starting their business activity in Albania under different circumstances:

Arif: *In 2001 I had a friend here who told me to come and work for him, but he soon bankrupted and left the country, so I took over the business. I live here since then and we are now three partners. At first, we only had the laboratory, but now we also have three clinics and a total of 35 employees.*

Jessica: *I'm German and I was living in England when I met my Albanian boyfriend online; we were working together. At some point I wanted to leave moody England, so I decided to come down here in 2018. I work online, I have my own company doing tech and marketing support and I got my residence permit through the business.*

Luisa: *I've been teaching Italian to foreigners since 2014. I decided to immigrate to Albania 1,5 years ago because I wanted to live with my fiancé and it was much easier for me to transfer here. I also knew that I could easily get my VAT identification number and taxes are not as high as in Italy, so I was quickly able to open my small business here with the same clients I had in Italy.*

5. Intercultural Communication Competence in theory and practice

The aptitude to adopt a complex of abilities needed in order to effectively interact in cross-cultural contexts can be shortly described as Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), and a wide research activity has been yielded in an attempt to study this term. Following Michael Byram's ICC model (Figure 4), widely cited in pedagogical literature, these abilities can be theorized as five distinctive interrelated components or "savoirs" in French [to understand/know how to], as he called them¹⁰, which will be now thoroughly discussed in comparison to interviewees' thoughts and experiences.

⁸ (Barjaba, 2019: 173)

⁹ (Institute of Statistics, 2023)

¹⁰ (Mahmud & Wong, 2016: 5562-5563)



Fig. 4 - Byram's ICC Model

5.1. Knowledge

Knowledge can be either culture-specific or culture-general and is crucially important in any intercultural encounter.

In respect of culture-specific knowledge, an interculturally competent person should be aware of the other culture, including its linguistic and communicative conventions, social norms, values, history, and generally speaking the perspectives, practices and products of the particular cultural group¹¹.

The familiarity with different cultural norms can significantly affect intercultural experience. Arif, who described himself “semi-informed” when he first went to Albania, and Jessica, who “hadn't even seen a single photo of the city” have admittedly encountered more culture shocks compared to Luisa, who explained that: “I had read a lot about Albanian history and traditions. Two books that I really loved were *Tregime të moçme shqiptare* [Ancient Albanian Tales] and the *Kanun* (set of traditional Albanian laws from the 15th century). So, I think I was culturally more prepared than other people, and of course I had been talking to my fiancé for two years already”.

The knowledge of the target language has at this point a special purpose to be highlighted. Language is obviously determining to cross-cultural information transfer, as it represents the main medium for expressing culture. In the research field there have been strong debates asserting that the structure of a language affects speakers' worldview and cognition¹². Thus, acquiring the native

¹¹ (Hoff, 2020: 56)

¹² (Ilie, 2019: 265)

language is strongly connected to intercultural communication, and Jessica's input on the topic is truly revealing:

Jessica: *I decided to put more effort into learning the language because I've had too many annoying experiences to not be able to communicate about it. For example, the taxi driver would not give me any change back and then pretend he didn't understand me. And when you don't understand a single person around you, you obviously live a parallel life. I couldn't do everyday things because I always had to hope that somebody would speak English or that I could Google translate, which often doesn't work into Albanian. I felt like I was always having a substandard life experience.*

Factual knowledge, however, seems not sufficient, if not complemented by procedural knowledge and deep comprehension of how culture may affect communication, as well as of the socialization process itself and the appropriate and sensible ways to act at both an individual and a collective level. The key point is that culture-general knowledge allows people to deal more successfully with the diversity of cultures and the acceptance of the otherness¹³.

In total, the savoir of knowledge offers a frame of reference during the communication process, which contributes to sensitivity towards potential intercultural differences and misunderstandings¹⁴.

5.2. Attitudes

Attitudes comprise the emotional level of ICC, according to which, interacting individuals should be curious and respectful of other cultures, motivated to communicate in unfamiliar contexts and comfortable with ambiguity and cultural diversity. These positive attitudes would help to turn any potential misperception or misunderstanding into opportunities to engage in a creative way and to constructively resolve cultural conflicts¹⁵.

However, attitudes may often be influenced by stereotypes or prejudices that are important barriers to intercultural communication. Standardized ideas or preconceived judgements are often based on attempts to understand national cultures, but there is a great risk of neglecting the differences that exist between groups or individuals on a non-national level¹⁶. These biased generalizations are displayed under an unrepresentative viewing and may result to unsuccessful intercultural communication, as they hinder mutual understanding.

For this part, attitudes of both mediators, meaning the interviewees and the local people, will be examined. Comparing the interviews, it is interesting to observe each answer to the question: "Was there any prejudice or stereotype you initially had about Albania that essentially affected your attitude?"

¹³ (Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva, 2019: 18)

¹⁴ (Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva, 2019: 18)

¹⁵ (Liu, 2019: 43-44)

¹⁶ (Allwood, 1985: 2)

Arif: *I was being told to come to Albania since 1992, but from what I was watching on the TV about the country's chaotic political situation I was very negative. When I got another invitation in 2001, I insecurely decided to give it a try, and in reality, things were much difficult from what I had thought, Albania was still left behind back then. At first, I wanted to go back home, but, once I got to know how things work here, I really liked it. So, I took my family with me and we settled here.*

Jessica: *Albanians do get stereotyped a lot, and the problem I think is that the criminals of this country are all abroad. But of course, you can't judge an entire population based on a small group of people. I didn't have any negative idea like that. I was working in daycare and my amazing deputy was Albanian. Also, the carwash I've been going to for years I've realized now that it's run by Albanians, I'm certain because of the decoration, and the hospitality has always been incredible. I hadn't met any people that would have gotten me a negative idea. So, I was quite neutral.*

Luisa: *My father used to work in construction and some of his colleagues were Albanians. People thought that they were not civilized or educated enough, but this was just a prejudice because Albanians immigrants were just eager to do any kind of job to provide for their families. My parents also had some concerns of me dating an Albanian guy, but they all vanished as soon as they met him. [...] Personally, the first Albanian that I really got to know was my boyfriend, and since then I think I'm biased by his behavior; he is such a nice person, his family and acquaintances too, so I always tend to judge things by him.*

Based on their previous knowledge, each person had a different disposition while immigrating to the country, which definitely proves the interrelation between Byram's savoirs. Moreover, it is visible from both Arif's and Luisa's telling how attitudes can be modified during an interaction, as people may often realize their implicit preconceptions that mainly derive from limited understanding¹⁷.

Since intercultural communication is a two-way process, interviewees were also asked about the perceived attitudes from Albanian people. All shared some positive impressions, praising people's hospitality and affability. Jessica even added a new perspective to the discussion, talking about what she called a "foreign privilege": "People are very friendly, I have been in many situations, like stuck with a broken car, where they have gone out of their way to help. I'm also noticing that sometimes you get foreign privilege. For example, I got pulled over by the police once for driving too fast. The policeman asked me where am I from and when I answered in English he proceeded to say "Oh, Germany! This is not Autobahn, okay? Go slow!". In any other case he would have given me a major ticket, but I knew he wasn't going to".

Nevertheless, what was reported as a drawback is the occasional financial exploitation of visitors, which can be a common practice in touristic or business-friendly destinations. As Luisa confessed, "there is this mentality in Albania that foreigners are cows to be milked, that can afford everything because they are rich, which is not always the case. This is a complain I hear from a lot from expats, that Albanians are always scamming us for money". Jessica agreed to that, saying that "sometimes you pay for being a foreigner". Both expressed their deep frustration, making it obvious how negative attitudes may demote intercultural experience.

¹⁷ (Liu, 2019: 44)

In any case, bilateral openness and respect to cultural differences is absolutely invaluable for the mediation between cultures and a main precondition for the obtainment of new knowledge and skills needed to enhance intercultural communication competence¹⁸.

5.3. *Skills of Interpreting and Relating*

Interpreting and relating skills refer to the capacity of intercultural mediators to interpret and assign meaning to unfamiliar cultural data, and find associated relationships (through comparing and contrasting) between those interpretations and the existing knowledge of the involved cultures¹⁹.

Emphasis for this part of our comparative analysis will be given to deeply embedded standards, such as values, beliefs and perceptions, which are mainly a subject of interpretation. Interviewees were elaborately asked about different values of the Albanian society and each one of them expressed their opinions based on their personal ethics, experiences and cultural norms.

Starting with Arif, he views Albanians as his “brothers”, which indeed derives from the strong cultural similarities between cultures. He heartily pointed out people’s solidarity and “besa” (meaning “word of honor”), which is probably the most important precept in the Albanian culture: “Proving yourself not trustworthy is the ultimate form of humiliation, and sometimes it’s a matter of life or death. Care and respect are very important and I think this is why people don’t fight that much. In Turkey things are similar, but maybe here this sense of unity is way more intense because it is a small country. My city, Izmir, has a bigger population than the whole Albania!”.

Jessica confirmed that these outspoken perceptions are highly valued, “unless selfish interests are at stake”, she commented. Comparing Albania to her previous countries of residence, she chose to draw attention to its safeness, which could be probably seen as an outcome of the values mentioned above:

Jessica: *I have never felt so comfortable anywhere else and a lot of foreign people agree with me. I had never had anyone behaving in any inappropriate way to me. Would I leave my purse on the table and go to the toilet in England? No. Would I leave my scooter outside for a prolonged period of time in Germany? Probably no. I never see drunk or intoxicated people, which is the default in Germany on Sunday mornings. Also, all the bars just leave the chairs and tables outside during the night. In Germany you have to stack them and use massive chains or else next morning you won’t have any chairs. I really appreciate that.*

As a subtle example of interpreting, Jessica deciphered these behavioral patterns by understanding that “people are way more concerned by how they’re being seen by others than whether their actions are legal or ethical”. She came to the realization that Albanians often persist with the past-oriented concept of building an ideal social image, by undergoing an internal self-control in order to meet society’s expectations and avoid criticism. Although this might seem irrelevant to modern cultures, traditionally closed communities are up to this day governed by this habit. “This is the way society is designed”, she claimed.

¹⁸ (Liu, 2019: 44)

¹⁹ (Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva, 2019: 18)

This mindset has a predominant role in most aspects of life, including family relations, as Luisa implied: “In my family we always talk about family problems or money, whereas Albanians care a lot more about their privacy. I think this has to do with the idea of preserving their image, which happens to the Sicilian society as well”. With family being the fundamental social structure, all interviewees laid further emphasis on family values. Albania, Turkey and Italy, all laying in the Mediterranean region, share a common cultural orientation, where family is conservatively a priority. “Protecting the people you love”, “showing deep respect to your parents”, “providing for your family even when you are miles away” are some parallels marked by Arif and Luisa.

On the other hand, Jessica described the Albanian family as a “complex construct”, compared to the German one. As an external observer, she made herself aware of the negative dimension of familism: “Everyone likes to say how important family is, but I always see siblings hating each other for family assets. At first, I thought it was hilarious, but then I realized that if we ask auntie to borrow her car in order to move something big, auntie will come to claim that favor back, otherwise her husband will start jokes about that time when we couldn't afford a big enough car”. In this case, we see Jessica focusing on a different interpretation of the topic, to an extent that the other participants might not be able to do so.

Last but not least, work ethic is another significant matter to be discussed. Albanians were overall praised for their hard-working attitude. Luisa found some common traits in comparison to her Italian province, which can be summarized in the motto “If you work, you will succeed. If you succeed, you will be rich. If you are rich, you will be happy”. She attributed this lifestyle to the “big footprint” that communism has left into the Albanian society, which, according to her, is still very visible. Similarly, Jessica mentioned that one of the first things she noticed in Albania is that people don't ever wish “have a nice weekend”, which is totally common in Germany or England. “Why? Well, people used to do six days of paid work and one day of community work around the city, so nobody was really resting”, she explained.

Summing up, all these juxtapositions come to efficiently underline the importance of multiperspectivity. Being able to recognize similar or differing points of view and how these actuate other people's behavior and perception of the world determines how effectively can we communicate with them and contributes in anticipating potential cross-cultural misunderstandings.

5.4. Skills of Discovery and Interaction

Skills of discovery and interaction are the mental abilities of “acquiring new knowledge of a culture and its practices” and “operating knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication”²⁰.

Discovering the insights of a new cultural environment is the most active part of intercultural communication, and therefore each experience may greatly vary, as can be comparatively seen below:

²⁰ (Liu, 2019: 45)

Arif: *Coming from beautiful Izmir, it was really difficult to adapt. There were still no streets, no electricity, no water. This nice neighborhood here used to be an empty square, full of potholes. The country has changed a lot since then, the lights rarely go out for example. Back then, we had to use a generator all day long in order to be able to do our work and we even had some battery-operated lights at home, I remember.*

Jessica: *When everything is new, it can be super exciting. At the beginning, I would go to a new restaurant or bar every night, I would drive every single place in the country, just because I've seen it on the map. I was doing all these fun things, the sun is shining, people are nice, food is good.*

The differentiating factor here is obviously the timeframe and country's capabilities under which each participant immigrated to Albania. Despite that, both communicators managed to successfully interact and adapt, by evaluating the new system of customs and norms and making a personal decision to embrace it. Therefore, interacting individuals cannot behave appropriately in a foreign environment without adopting local habits, as an effort not to be counterproductive in the given communication situation²¹.

Setting an example, both Jessica and Luisa shared some unique to them experiences regarding the untidiness in Albania in daily practices such as environmental pollution and driving, which comes as no surprise taking into account that in their countries of origin stricter regulations and awareness on such topics are applied. What shapes the process of intercultural communication here is the skill of establishing relationships with the host culture and negotiating cultural differences, as Jessica has successfully done:

Jessica: *I like a certain amount of chaos; it's refreshing and not boring. I don't like having to stick to many rules when it comes to driving. It's perfectly legit to flash the person that drives too slowly in the middle lane. I don't mind fireworks every midnight. I don't mind stray dogs. I don't mind the trash that foreign people always complain about. In my neighborhood we only have one trash can and as soon as you throw anything in there eight dogs and six chickens will start throwing everything out. But what's the point of complaining? There are so many other problems to fix before arriving to trash collection as an issue.*

Deeper attention should be also paid to intercultural business activity and communication in Albania, which is the main connection point between all interviewees. Although it sometimes may seem that business practices are universal, this is a rather ethnocentric perception. Interculturally competent businesspeople need to be able to explore unfamiliar business environments and compromise on various aspects, including bureaucracy, technical and legal standards and communicative strategies. In order to better comprehend what cross-cultural challenges may be involved in Albania's constantly evolving business market, it would be helpful to first consider Arif's input, who has managed to maintain a long-lasting business in Albania:

Arif: *Back then everyone could open their businesses in Albania; no taxes, no paperwork. The country was still recovering from a dictatorship and an awful civil war. We should never forget the historical background here. When I first came, the state had just started to get on track and it was not before 2006 when they did some major changes that continue till today; laws for businesses*

²¹ (Erickson, 2021: 11)

were passed, VAT and cash registers were introduced. Those who survived through these years have now strong businesses. Today things are more complicated.

Deploying his knowledge, attitudes, and skills into action, Arif sought the opportunities to successfully establish his business as a foreigner. Jessica and Luisa, as younger freelance entrepreneurs, went through a similar process while experiencing unprecedented business-related practices, such as:

- Complicated administrative procedures and lack of technical support

Jessica: *Getting my residence permit was a nightmare. They tell you to bring these five papers and also apply online, but then you realize that the system has been down for months, and they have no solution for you. [...] This month I have some paperwork to do due to some grant, and I'm regretting it already. No one replies to me, and eAlbania [government portal] doesn't work half the time.*

- Ongoing digital transformation of public services

Luisa: *It's nice that they have digitalized a lot of things. Everyone has an online invoicing software now, so the government instantly knows when are you earning money, whether that's good or bad. But everything is still at an initial stage, I think they were never prepared to accommodate all the foreigners that came here, especially after the pandemic. Who would have ever thought that all these Americans would leave the U.S. to work remotely and low cost in Albania?*

- Lack of information and translation services

Luisa: *I would go in official websites and find contradicting or missing information. I had some information here, some information there, and at some point, I just gave up. This is something that I have heard from other people as well, and even employees on public services, police stations or immigration offices are not fully aware of all procedures. Also, almost nothing is available in English, reading the laws or communicating with the authorities has been extremely difficult.*

- Different payment and exchange rate policies

Jessica: *Albania is a terrible location to run an online business. People can't pay you with credit cards and banks keep declining transactions with foreign companies. [...] Most policies apply to Albanian companies selling to Albanian companies or customers. Thus, when I get money in US dollars and convert it into the local currency (lekë) I cannot use the original invoice, I have to generate a second one for the exact amount of lekë that I received into my bank account and depending the day the exchange rate fluctuates, so none of my numbers make sense. Recently, the exchange rate has been really beneficial to lekë, but not to those who get paid in other currencies.*

- Procrastination on professional interactions

Jessica: *I call it an "Albanese" day when I have to go to the bank queue for 2 hours, and then to the business registration office and then to the accountant and I've done zero work all day. My accountant always needs to have coffee for any minor issue, and when we finally meet, he just gets his laptop to show me something for 30 seconds. Thank God I had my coffee!*

- Distrust from local clients

Jessica: *I would love to have some more Albanian clients, it sounds very romantic, however I just feel that people are very resistant to advice because they think they know everything better and won't listen to you, particularly if you're a woman.*

In any circumstance, each interviewee had to actively interact with their Albanian interlocutors while adapting to their cultural patterns, a skill that can be also perceived as the fundamental trait of a global citizen.

5.5. Critical Cultural Awareness

In Byram's model, all *savoirs* are in a relationship of mutual causality, and critical cultural awareness features in the center as the most crucial element.²² Inspired by the German philosophy of *politische Bildung* [political education], Byram used this term to underline individuals' ability to "evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures"²³.

In any engagement to foreign cultures, people are involved with their own identity that provides them with a sense of belonging. Being, though, explicit and conscious of personal cultural traits in relation to other individuals or cultural groups is not only tightly associated with self-reflection, critical outlook, multiperspectivity and mental maturity, but also enhances the acquisition of skills and attitudes and functions as "a basis for studying other cultures and coping with intercultural communication in any environment"²⁴.

6. Conclusion

Mastering intercultural communication is an on-going process with no complete and perfect model to imitate, as culture itself is a dynamic concept²⁵. Different theoretical approaches, such as the one cited on this paper, proposed a structured set of elements likely to enhance the efficiency of communication between bearers of different cultural parameters, however intercultural communication competence leans on tremendous fluidity and subjectivity.

Interviewees for this study confront daily and on different levels of effectiveness with the confrontation of "us" versus "them", and their personal experiences highlight the uniqueness of the construction and perception of cultural identity and intercultural communication. Each one of them is another explorer of this borderless world where different feelings, actions and thoughts come constantly to interaction and every cross-cultural barrier is a new, enriching experience for both mediators.

²² (Erickson, 2021: 16)

²³ (Liu, 2019: 46)

²⁴ (Liu, 2019: 46)

²⁵ (Petrus, 2014: 140)

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