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Cross-cultural negotiations

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Globalization has affected the business environment worldwide, and today companies find themselves dealing with business partners from all over the world. A new aspect related to this phenomenon is the intercultural interaction that seems to be required in addition to the professional field expertise to be able to navigate this new environment. In this context, this master's thesis focuses on cross-cultural negotiations in the construction field in Romania.

Taking a holistic view, the focus is centered on the main factors affecting the cross-cultural negotiation process. Aspects related to negotiation strategy, cultural dimensions, and inter-dynamic communication are all considered to provide a complete understanding of cross-cross negotiations. Thus, interviews with experienced negotiators from the local market were conducted and analyzed through qualitative analyses.

The research attempts to illustrate the challenges, the unseen obstacles, and all the essential parts that conduct to a solid outcome in cross-cultural negotiation and to provide some brief recommendations on how to improve the relevant skills needed for effective results.

Keywords: cross-cultural negotiation, cultural dimensions, intercultural communication, negotiation strategy.

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Kulttuurien väliset neuvottelut

Globalisaatio on vaikuttanut liiketoimintaympäristöön kaikkialla maailmassa, ja nykyään yritykset ovat tekemisissä eri puolilta maailmaa olevien liikekumppaneiden kanssa. Tähän ilmiöön liittyvä uusi näkökohta on kulttuurienvälinen vuorovaikutus, jota näyttää tarvittavan ammattialan asiantuntemuksen lisäksi, jotta tässä uudessa ympäristössä voidaan navigoida. Tässä maisterintutkielmassa keskitytään kulttuurienvälisiin neuvotteluihin rakennusalalla Romaniassa.

Kokonaisvaltainen näkökulma keskittyy tärkeimpiin tekijöihin, jotka vaikuttavat kulttuurienväliseen neuvotteluprosessiin. Neuvottelustrategiaan, kulttuurisiin ulottuvuuksiin ja dynaamiseen viestintään liittyviä näkökohtia tarkastellaan, jotta saadaan kokonaisvaltainen käsitys ristikkäisistä neuvotteluista. Paikallisilla markkinoilla toimivien kokeneiden neuvottelijoiden haastattelut suoritettiin ja analysoitiin laadullisen analyysin avulla.

Tutkimuksessa pyritään havainnollistamaan haasteita, näkymättömiä esteitä ja kaikkia olennaisia osia, jotka johtavat hyvään lopputulokseen kulttuurienvälisissä neuvotteluissa, sekä antamaan joitakin lyhyitä suosituksia siitä, miten parantaa tarvittavia taitoja tehokkaiden tulosten saavuttamiseksi.

Asiasanat:

kulttuurien väliset neuvottelut, kulttuuriset ulottuvuudet, kulttuurien välinen kommunikaatio, neuvottelustrategia

Content

Appendices

Figures

List of abbreviations (or) symbols

Abbreviation:	Explanation of abbreviation:
B2B	Business-to-business
BATNA	Best alternative to a negotiated agreement
CQ	Cultural Intelligence
GLOBE	Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness
I1, …, I6	Interviewee 1, …, Interviewee 6
IDV	Individualism versus collectivism
IND	Indulgence versus restraint
LTO	Long-term orientation
MAS	Masculinity versus femininity
PDI	Power distance
UAI	Uncertainty avoidance

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In the present business environment, globalization plays an important role, and its influence has been noticed in all sectors of the economy. To stay competitive in such a dynamic market, companies are reluctantly searching for new international business partners to help them improve their value proposition.

The construction market is not immune to this phenomenon. Although the final product is assembled in situ, a lot of the components, materials, consultancy services or studies, and lately skilled labour force are being sourced from other external business partners. Across the construction industry, the outsourcing practice is expected to grow due to the benefits it provides in terms of industry specialization and cost-effectiveness (CDO Group, Inc, 2021).

This high level of outsourcing requires considerable negotiations, often cross-cultural negotiations, between companies to agree on various contract agreements that will define the rights and obligations of the parties involved. It is well known that in reputable companies the negotiation process is well-defined, and some managers spend a significant part of their work overseeing this process.

1.2 Problem discussion

Although a company may decide to operate only in the local market, it is still required to take into consideration other overseas business partners from the global market. The demand for new overseas business partners, in addition to the common difficulties related to the technical expertise in the professional field, entails additional challenges related to knowledge about international trade rules and multicultural understanding that represents a more delicate part of the process. It is generally acknowledged that cultural differences pose additional challenges to this kind of transaction. In this respect, competence in navigating

global cultural diversity is a mandatory element in order to conduct cross-cultural negotiations that allow achieving the best outcome for a new arrangement between two foreign companies.

This master's thesis draws on elements presented by various existing cultural theories and negotiation practices for exploring the cross-cultural negotiation techniques employed by Romanian negotiators in the local construction market following the general outsourcing trends.

1.3 Purpose

The main objective is to examine how managers operating in the construction market in Romania, have adapted their negotiation styles and techniques to the latest global challenges and what practices do they consider successful in a cross-cultural negotiation.

In order to achieve this purpose, this study aims to provide an answer to the following two main questions.

The first research question considered here is:

How do Romanian managers operating in the construction market in Romania, consolidate their best practices for solid outcomes in cross-cultural negotiations?

The second research question of this study is:

What main extrinsic factors shape the outcome of a cross-cultural negotiation on the local market in their opinion?

1.4 Delimitations

This master's thesis is delimitated to negotiators that work for well-established companies that have a significant background and are operating in the construction market in Romania. The main consideration is on the cross-cultural

negotiations performed by the personnel of these companies when they are dealing with external business partners. The study analyses the manner in which cross-cultural negotiations are performed, considering the overall approach and the strategy of the managers involved rather than the technicality of the process.

The selected interviewees possess extensive experience in negotiations, are already well-accomplished in their professional field, and have experience working within the most reputable companies in the construction industry.

At the company level any strategic expansion campaign or its associated effects, to increase the company's presence in foreign areas or territories have not been taken into consideration in this study. Thus, the study treats only the general customs of the company concerning cross-cultural negotiations.

All the negotiations studied here between the aforementioned companies and their external business partners are considered as B2B (business-to-business) commercial transactions. Thus, they are regulated by the B2B widely acknowledged protocol and business customs.

1.5 Contribution

This study will add to the existing professional material concerning matters of cross-cultural negotiations by providing a clear view of the approaches and strategies used by the Romanian negotiators considering the evolving character of their local market.

The insights revealed by this study will refine the data collected from real-world practices and correlate it with academic research for creating the possibility of further improvements of the existing cross-cultural negotiation techniques for Romanian negotiators.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Brief overview

The following chapter presents a review of the theory related to the topic treated in this thesis and it is structured in three parts. The first part covers aspects related to the **negotiation** seen in its entirety as a multi-stage process. The second part portrays a general view of aspects pertaining to **culture and cultural differences**, by presenting different relevant theories. The third part presents the theoretical part of **cross-cultural facets** and their implications in cross-cultural negotiations.

2.2 Negotiations

2.2.1 Overview and definitions

In the modern world, individuals are part of a complex society, and they face different challenges at different levels. Negotiation is "a way to resolve conflicts or disagreements or divide resources among two or more parties, carried out willingly by free choice" (Zohar, 2015, p 540). Thus, negotiation is a type of activity that is present to some degree in our daily lives, sometimes without even noticing it. A better understanding of negotiations may help us find better solutions in our modern society.

A study on definitions of negotiation considering common factors such as people, process, and substance, highlighted the complexity of this activity, revealing thirty critical definitions based on the literature available in the last four decades (de Oliviera Dias, 2019). That complexity is the result of different aspects and contexts studied within the negotiations at different levels from domestic to regional and international ones. Salacuse (2015) described seven main challenges identified as barriers in international negotiations: 1) the negotiating

environment, 2) culture, 3) ideology, 4) foreign organization and bureaucracy, 5) foreign laws and governments 6) multiple money 7) volatility.

In the business environment, companies in order to achieve the best financial results, compete and collaborate with other participants in the market. The interaction and collaboration, in general, follow a strict business etiquette, that involves among others practices official correspondence, formal offers, negotiations, and contract agreements. In that environment, negotiation can be considered as a process of communication through which the parties try to promote their individual interest or that of a group of people they represent towards reaching an agreement with a desired goal (Salacuse, 2015). A formal agreement between two companies takes the format of a contract agreement.

2.2.2 Dimensions of negotiation

To understand the general overview of a negotiation context, Dorochoff (2016) advises on considering six dimensions that affect the overall format, as follows:

1. Number of parties (two or more)
2. Communication method (formal or informal)
3. Form of communication (spoken or written)
4. The urgency of an agreement (high or low)
5. Type of agreement (formal or informal)
6. Outcome orientation (distributive or integrative)

2.2.3 The negotiation process and its stages

In negotiations, the stake can be very high for the parties involved, and for the best outcome, it is recommended to treat the negotiation as a process with multiple stages. This procedure will allow negotiators to have a systematic approach, with a clear direction on the required outcome at each stage. There are a few opinions regarding how many stages should be considered and what should be covered in each of them. However, a commonly accepted sequence

includes five stages defined as: preparation, establishing the relationship, exchange of information, envisioning and exploring options, and reaching a consensus (Lewicki et al., 2019).

Preparation is the first stage, that involves a series of actions to define an outstanding agreement and the actions required to achieve it (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). The exact actions under this stage vary according to the particularities of each negotiation. Nevertheless, these actions should cover some main objectives. One such objective is a clear understanding of the interests of all the parties involved, in terms of wants, urgency, or concerns (Fisher et al., 2011).

Another important objective under this stage is the establishment of the best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA) (Fisher et al., 2011). This objective provides a clear view of other independent possibilities with other parties if an agreement is not reached in the negotiation.

Also critical under this first stage is establishing their interests and priorities. Once that is clearly established the negotiators can later engage in reaching a comprehensive consensus based on preferred interests and priorities, which is defined in the specialized literature as logrolling (Pruitt, 2013).

Establishing a relationship is the second stage of this process. As its name suggests it deals with establishing a certain level of trust in the relationship, to allow parties to share information about their interests, priorities, and preferences (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015).

Exchanging information is the stage where the flow of information between parties occurs. To complete this stage successfully the negotiators are advised to establish first the rules for the exchange of information and to find out their common interest, compatibility, and differences on the items that are negotiated (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015).

Envisioning and exploring options, is a stage where negotiators with a clear understanding of all the interests and priorities are focused on packaging all these

in a manner aiming for possible solutions that maximize the general outcome (Tomlinson & Lewicki, 2015). Particularly in this stage, new options can be generated, by considering contingent contracts that are dependent on the outcome of future scenarios (Lewicki et al., 2019).

Reaching consensus is the last stage of the process and relies heavily on the outcome of the previous four stages and starts once the fourth stage is closed. In this stage, the negotiators evaluate the options developed through the previous stages. The entire evaluation criterion is required to be anchored in the current reality. Furthermore, a relevant evaluation criterion is based on clear indicators such as standard practice, industry practice, and market rates (Fisher et al., 2011).

2.2.4 Outcome orientation (integrative vs distributive)

The parties involved in a negotiation may have a different outcome orientation, and that orientation will drive their conduct during the interchange with their counter party and will shape the entire dynamic of their interaction. In the negotiation academic environment, there is a general recognition of two distinct types of outcome orientation, one called distributive negotiation, and the other integrative negotiation (Zartman, 2005).

In the case of a distributive negotiation, the efforts and attempts are focused strictly on dividing a "fixed pie" (Dorochoff, 2016). This type of negotiation can be seen as a zero-sum game, described in game theory as a situation that involves two parties and where the gain for a party represents a corresponding loss for the other counterparty (Cambridge Business English Dictionary., 2011).

The other type, integrative negotiation, is characterized by viewing the composition and the size of the "pie" open for further improvements (Dorochoff, 2016). In this case, the common efforts of both parties are oriented toward creating better gains for both parties, something that is easily achieved when the participants adopt a collaborative negation style.

2.2.5 Negotiation conflict styles

The above paragraphs focused exclusively on the outcome orientation in a negotiation. Fisher et al. (2011) remind us that in a negotiation, negotiators have two interests, one related to the outcome and the other related to the relationship between the parties. The interest in preserving a good relationship implies concern for both past and future relationships with the counterparty. When analyzed together considering the interaction between outcome and relationship, five negotiation styles emerge: 1-avoiding, 2-accommodating, 3-competitive, 4-collaborative 5-compromise (Lewicki et al., 2010).

Figure 1 represents the negotiation styles in a graphic interpretation considering the degree of attention allocated simultaneously to outcome and relationship aspects.
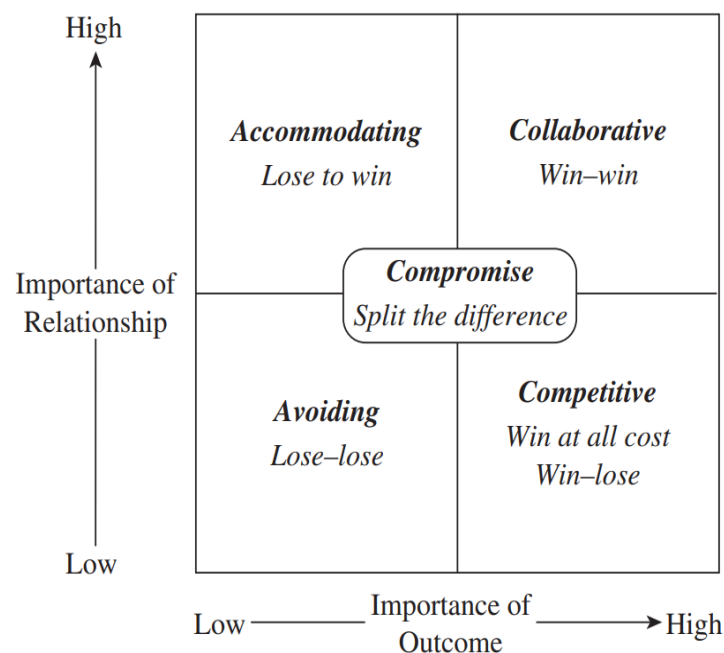
Figure 1. Negotiation styles concerning the outcome and relationship orientation (Lewicki et al., 2010).

Avoiding style (lose-lose) signifies that both the outcome and the relationship have a low degree of importance and is characterized by a withdraw from the active negotiation. It is recommended if the potential benefit derived from the

negotiation does not present interest, but also in moments when a break might be helpful due to high anxiety.

Accommodating style (lose - win) here the outcome is sacrificed in order to maintain the relationship at a high level (Lewicki et al., 2010). It is recommended when a negotiator has already a weak position and expects other negotiations with his counterparty.

Competitive style (win-lose) pays attention to the outcome at the expense of the relationship (Shell,2006), and it is recommended when the negotiator has an advantage and is negotiating in one-off situations.

Collaborative style (win-win) focuses on a high level of both outcome and relationship and requires a high level of collaboration (Lewicki et al., 2010). It is recommended when stake is important, and risk is high for all parties.

Compromise style (also known as split the difference) focuses on an average level in terms of outcome and relationship (Lewicki et al., 2010). It is recommended especially when the parties are under significant time constraints, and they have built some trust.

Each strategy has advantages and disadvantages and before adopting one, an experienced negotiator will analyze the entire context of a specific negotiation together with possible future prospects related to that particular negotiation.

2.3 Culture and cultural differences

2.3.1 Overview and definition

The progress of the modern world allows individual talents and businesses to make their presence, physically or virtually, on a global level without limitations. This phenomenon has conducted to a new environment where there is a significant interaction between people from different cultures. The key to

understanding those interactions is to have a good understanding of culture and cultural differences.

Culture is what allows us to interpret and decipher our operating environment and people with common cultural backgrounds present similarities in the modus operandi employed in this respect (Wildman et al., 2016). Culture is a complex matter and entails a variety of aspects that are studied by different disciplines like anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, psychology, and communication.

This thesis considers some of the most widely recognized cultural models like Hofstede cultural dimensions updated version proposed by Hofstede et al., (2010), the Globe project developed by House et al (2004), Hall's cultural dimensions initially proposed by Hall (1976) and Brett's cultural prototype suggested by Brett (2000, 2014). The selection of these theoretical models has been realized considering their applicability in this particular research topic, cross-cultural negotiation. Thus, the analyses and observations of this study are utilizing different aspects presented by these models to provide a comprehensive understanding of the results.

2.3.2 Hofstede Theory

A cultural model widely used to examine the differences in how people with different cultural and geographic backgrounds interact has been developed by Dr. Geert Hofstede. The model in its final format comprises six dimensions of culture which are briefly presented here.

Power distance index (PDI)

The first dimension, analyses, and measures how a society deals with inequalities among its members. It is focused on the acceptance of the hierarchical order in a society, that is endorsed by all the parties from followers and leaders, and a low score on this index suggests that people question authority and have a low acceptance of unequally distributed power (Hofstede,2011). The main purpose

of this dimension is to measure the level of inequality that is present in all societies in different degrees.

Individualism versus collectivism (IDV)

Is a dimension that takes into consideration the degree to which members of a society tend to integrate into groups (Hofstede et al., 2010). In an individualist society, a member is expected to focus on his own person and immediate family, whereas, in a collectivist society, a member is expected to be focused on the cohesiveness of an extended family (Hofstede,2011). The particularities of this dimension are easily recognizable and measurable.

Masculinity versus femininity (MAS)

This dimension suggests that a feminine society is characterized by a reduced differentiation between genders in terms of emotional and social roles, whereas a masculine society in contrast is characterized by a high differentiation (Hofstede,2011). The terms "masculine" and "feminine" are used here to describe a series of attributes and not for gender demarcation. In feminine societies, there is a strong focus on modest views and sympathy for the weak, compared with masculine societies where the focus is on competition, achievement, and admiration for the strong (Hofstede,2011).

Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)

The uncertainty avoidance dimension measures the degree to which the culture equips its people to feel comfortable or uncomfortable in unregulated situations (Hofstede,2011). It shows if people shun or look forward to unknown, unexpected events or in unstructured formats. A lower score on this index represents a higher acceptance of unfamiliarity. Societies with a high level of uncertainty avoidance are guided by strict rules and codes of conduct, with the aim of providing more simplicity and clarity. In societies with a low uncertainty score, turmoil, and uncertainty are embraced.

Short-term orientation versus long-term orientation (LTO)

This dimension focuses on the perceived importance of the members of a society concerning past, present, and future events. A low score on this index illustrates that a society is oriented towards respecting traditions and social obligations. On the other hand, a society with a high score on this index is embracing a more circumstantial approach oriented towards change and adaptation. These contrasts are easily perceived in the business and investment fields. The economic growth for a poor country correlated with the index score on this dimension shows reduced economic growth for poor countries with short-term orientation in contrast with fast economic progress for poor countries with long-term orientation (Hofstede,2010).

Indulgence versus restraint (IND)

This dimension deals with the perception of control or helplessness of the members of a society, based on societal norms, in their aim to fulfill different personal desires. An indulgent society is permissive in terms of natural human desires that are related to life gratification or having fun whereas a restrained society believes that such desires are to be controlled and regulated by strict rules (Hofstede et al., 2011).

Overall review of Hofstede's dimensions

To illustrate the differences in the above-presented dimensions, Figure 2. Hofstede's cultural dimension comparison, generated with Country Comparison Tool (n.d.), presents a comparison using Hofstede's cultural dimension model for 3 European countries Austria, Romania, United Kingdom (Country Comparison Tool, n.d.). One important caveat of this model is that the score on the dimensions of the model refers to the overall preference.
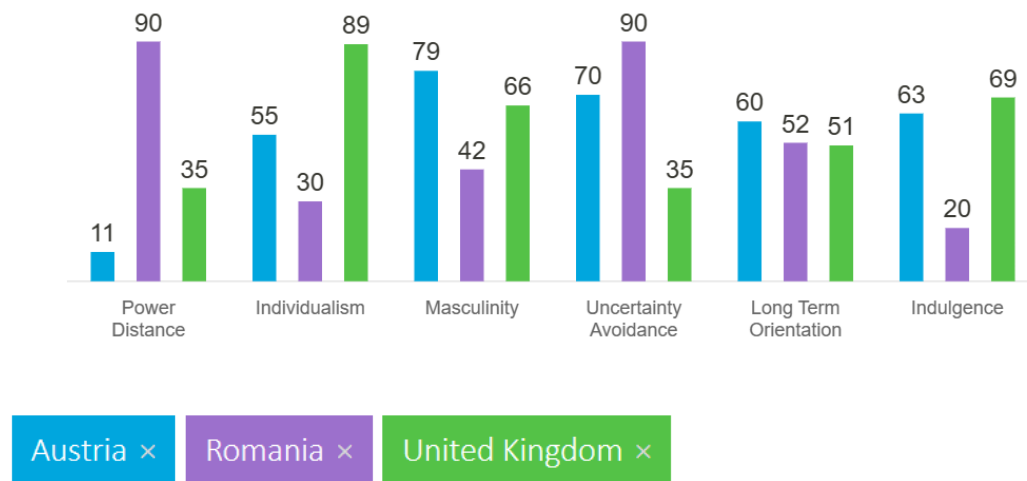
Figure 2.Hofstede's cultural dimensions comparison (Country Comparison Tool, n.d.).

2.3.3 Globe Project

This part presents a brief overview of the Globe research study, and its main relevant aspects related to the research topic formulated by this thesis.

The Globe project (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness) is a comprehensive international research project. The research study in the Globe project focused on national cultures considering the interrelationships between societal culture, organizational culture, organizational leadership, societal effectiveness, and economic competitiveness among its members (Javidan & Hauser, 2004). It is the result of tremendous research work that involved quantitative and qualitative methods and has been carried out by a team over an extended period. The study has a model that comprises nine cultural dimensions for explaining the societal culture and for simple convenience conducted to group around ten culture clusters (Javidan& Dastmalchian, 2009).

House et al. (2004) present those nine cultural dimensions with a scale to measure the index score from 1 to 7, as follow: assertiveness, future orientation, gender egalitarianism, humane orientation, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, performance orientation, power distance, and uncertainty

avoidance, and mentions that performance orientation derives from McClelland's (1961) work on achievement, humane orientation uses concepts from Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Putnam (1993) and McClelland (1985), future orientation is supported on work by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) and the other six dimensions draw on dimensions conceptualized by Hofstede (1980) that are further elaborated.

Detailed interpretations of each of the nine cultural dimensions presented by the Globe project are presented here as follows:

Assertiveness.

Represents the level to which individuals in a society or an organization within that society manifest in an assertive, combative, and aggressive manner in their social relationships (Chhokar et al., 2007). At its root, this cultural dimension analyses the manner in which direct confrontation is perceived. In this respect, a culture with a high score on assertiveness will have the facts presented in a more direct, or even blunt manner in contrast with a low-score culture where the aim will be centered around harmony and saving face and a less aggressive manner.

Future orientation.

Characterizes the level of interest in scheduling, investing in future, and postponing personal or group gratification by individuals in a society or an organization within that society (House et al., 2004). This cultural dimension examines two contrasting manners of how people live, and those manners can take a short-term hedonistic form or one with postponed gratification. Although the actions take place in the present time, the fact that the outcome orientation can be directed towards an immediate outcome, or in contrast directed to a future later outcome, creates two diametrical approaches guided by opposite behaviors.

Gender egalitarianism.

Is the degree to which a society or an organization within that society tries to reduce gender role differences and at the same time is trying to advocate for gender equity and equality (House et al., 2004). Through this cultural dimension,

the balance of equal status between men and women is analyzed. This aspect has received a lot of attention in the last period and numerous studies have been focused on this matter.

Humane orientation.

Represents the level to which individuals in a society or an organization within that society support and promote other members for being reasonable, unselfish friendly, and sensible in rapport with others (Chhokar et al., 2007). This dimension explores the quality of selflessness, putting the interest of others ahead of one's own interest. The core elements involved are related to altruism, fairness, true unselfish concerns, and mutual respect.

Institutional collectivism.

Represents the level to which organizational and societal institutional codes support and compensate for collective process and collective distribution of resources (House et al., 2004). In its essence, this cultural dimension focuses on the interdependence or cohesiveness of an individual as a part of an organization. In a high institutional collectivist culture, this is translated through strong group unions and resolutions reached through group decisions.

In-group collectivism.

This cultural dimension considers the level of pride, allegiance, and adherence shown by individuals toward certain groups, circles of friends, family, or organizations (Chhokar et al., 2007). In this case, the focus is on how individuals identify themselves as part of certain groups or organizations. Part of this affiliation includes adopting the same group practices, which on the positive side can create high cohesiveness but, on the downside, it doesn't allow too much room for new ideas.

Performance orientation.

Considers the level to which a society or an organization favors and compensates individuals for their effort oriented toward performance progress and improvement (House et al., 2004). This dimension is used to analyze the performance orientation considering the manner of approach and not the outcome which depends on a series of other factors that are to be considered case by case.

Power distance.

This cultural dimension scales the level of encouragement and compensation in relation to unequal distribution of power with more power at the higher levels, by the individuals of a society or an organization (Chhokar et al., 2007). High power distance cultures are characterized by unequal distribution of power among the members, and obedience towards leaders without any inquiry. On the other hand, low power distance cultures are characterized by the presence of flat hierarchies and distribution of power, that is conducive to a high degree of scrutiny.

Uncertainty avoidance.

The last cultural dimension mentioned here is concerned with the level of uncertainty avoidance that individuals of an organization or a society manifest by employing pre-established rules, standardized guidance, and bureaucracy in their attempt to reduce unknown effects from unforeseen events (House et al., 2007). This cultural dimension investigates the attitude toward uncertainty and risk. Cultures with high uncertainty avoidance value more predictability, and reliability than opportunity and its inherent risk and therefore adopt strict rules to control the outcome. Cultures with low uncertainty avoidance are more inclined toward opportunity and therefore adopt a more flexible guidance protocol.

The Globe cultural dimensions captured the manifestations of culture in two distinct ways, first "as is" and the second "as should be" and on two different levels the first one as a society and the second level as organizations within that society (Chhokar et al., 2007). That specific approach is considerably convenient

when the leadership dimension is being analyzed in terms of cultural differences. Furthermore, its specific structure highlights the contrasts in different aspects between cultures.

2.3.4 Hall's theory

Edward T. Hall used his extensive knowledge in the anthropology field and focused on the differences in culture and intercultural communication. His contribution to intercultural communication is widely acknowledged in the academic field (Rogers et al., 2002).

The proposed model considers three dimensions: 1) context, analyzed as low-context versus high-context culture, 2) time, as monochronic action versus polychronic action, and 3) space, as high territoriality versus low territoriality (Hall, 1959). His approach is based on high-context and low-context cultures.

The first-dimension context focuses on the manner of communicating a message, that gives a certain meaning. In a society with a high-context culture, the context itself is crucial, the communication is accompanied by implicit messages and nonverbal communication, whereas in a low-context culture, the communication is based on explicit verbal messages (Hall, 1976).

Time is another dimension and is based on the fact that time is perceived differently according to culture. Hall, (1976) indicates that monochronic cultures tend to do one thing at a time and work on a carefully scheduled plan in contrast with polychronic cultures that prefer multitasking and adopt a flexible attitude regarding schedule. People from monochronic cultures are task-oriented, in comparison with people from polychronic cultures who are relationship oriented.

Space dimension refers to personal space, thus it analyses the relation between people and space as they interact in different circumstances. In cultures with high territoriality, people prefer higher physical distances between themselves and prefer clear boundaries, whereas in cultures with low territoriality, people prefer

shorter physical distances between themselves, and boundaries and not critical (Hall, 1976).

In cross-cultural interactions, Hall's cultural model helps understand how the parties act and to recognize their natural behavior that is shaped by their cultural background. The focal point of the model is communication, and in a world where cross-cultural communication is crucial, this might be a plausible explanation for why this model is still relevant after so many years.

2.3.5 Brett's prototype of culture

Jeanne Brett is a professor and academic researcher that conducted numerous studies in the field of cross-cultural negotiations. The model proposed and updated by Brett (2014) was specially conceived to analyze how culture affects a negotiation and its outcome, by focusing on three cultural prototypes: dignity, face, and honor. This prototype model of culture was designed taking into consideration a view oriented more towards a world-wide perspective of various cultures. Each of those types of culture from the overall proposed prototype is more representative of people from a certain geographic location.

Dignity culture is representative of North America and Western Europe. The main aspect of this culture is the overall orientation towards the individual, and the personal perspective of one's value (Brett,2014).

Face culture is predominantly representative of East Asia (Leung and Cohen 2011). The overall orientation is toward a collective interest, well-structured hierarchical societies where the value of an individual is granted by the society (Brett,2014).

Honor culture is representative of the Middle East, North Africa, and Latin America. This type of culture combines elements pertaining to both, dignity and face cultures, thus the individual value is self-perceived and endorsed by the society (Brett,2014).

All these three cultures mentioned here can be analyzed in further detail considering the general tendencies in terms of various factors. For intercultural negotiations, the crucial factors that are to be considered are the level of trust, mindset, negative emotions, and dominant strategy (Alsani et al., 2013). In cross-cultural negotiation, the differences between these factors conduct a distinct set of interests and strategies for each negotiator and they shape the negotiation environment for that encounter (Brett, 2007). The effect of distinct cultures in a cross-cultural negotiation is best illustrated in figure 3. Cross-cultural negotiation dynamics.
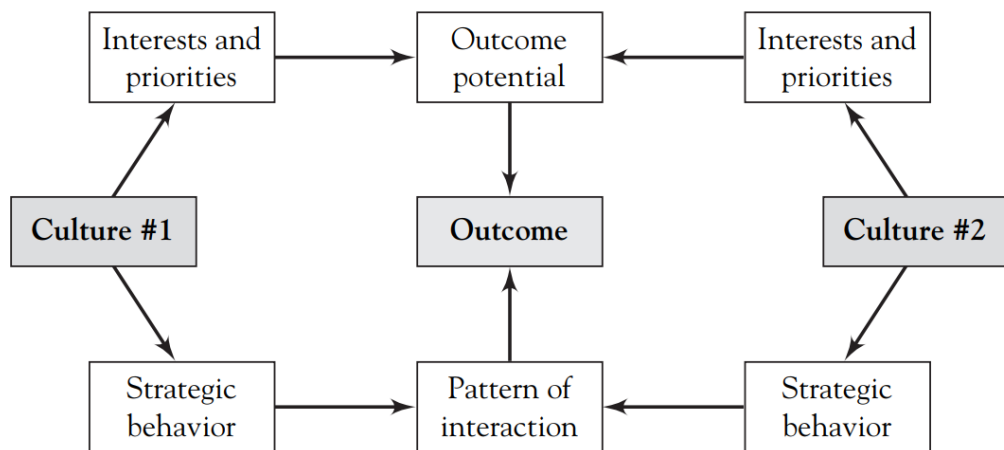
Figure 3. Cross-cultural negotiation dynamics (Brett, 2007).

By considering specific circumstances and aligning them with the interests and strategic behavior dictated by a particular identified culture, an experienced negotiator can validate the best appropriate path in any intercultural negotiation. The main purpose of Figure 3 is to provide an overall guidance in establishing that path. Brett's prototype of culture combined with the intercultural negotiation interaction model provides a powerful tool for understanding the implications brought to the negotiation table by the intercultural diversity of the negotiators.

2.4 Cross-Cultural facets

2.4.1 Cultural intelligence

In the previous sub-chapter 2.3 Culture, a series of models and theoretical frameworks have been presented to emphasize possible approaches that highlight the multifaceted aspects of culture. Our present world is evermore connected, and this interconnectivity translates into more interactions between people from different cultures. The successes of such interactions often depend on the cultural intelligence of the parties involved. Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to the capability to operate in environments with diverse cultures and that capability is examined by considering three key factors: cognitive, motivational, and behavioral (Earley and Ang, 2003). Later, those key factors have been reviewed and revamped, thus a four-factor model has been proposed considering factors like:1) motivational CQ, 2) cognitive CQ 3) metacognitive CQ, and 4) behavioral CQ (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). Cultural intelligence can be considered at an individual level or at group level. At the individual level, those four factors are also called capabilities and can be visualized in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Capabilities of Cultural intelligence (Livermore & Soon, 2015).

Motivational CQ / CQ Drive

The term motivational CQ or CQ drive, covers the ability to sustain attention and effort in learning and operating in circumstances influenced by cultural differences (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). Thus, it is recognized the fact that operating in cross-cultural settings requires extra effort. This CQ drive measures the willingness to allocate sufficient consideration and interest to support that effort. Its importance in the cultural intelligence model is revealed by the fact that it controls the aforementioned effort, where the end result of those actions is directed towards gaining a real cultural understanding. Motivational CQ can be further studied and measured through its three subdimensions intrinsic interest, extrinsic interest, and self-efficacy (Livermore and Soon, 2015).

In terms of international negotiations, (Karsaklian, 2014) reports that this factor will clarify answers regarding why the deal is important and what is the expected outcome.

Cognitive CQ/ CQ knowledge

The term cognitive CQ, also referred to as cognitive knowledge reflects the level of knowledge in general about different cultures and their differences on various dimensions. The knowledge here is viewed in its holistic sense, meaning expertise related to cultural beliefs, norms, and values. The importance of this cognitive factor relies on the fact that it provides a good overall understanding of the systems that outline the code of social interaction within that culture (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). It practically facilitates social interaction by allowing one to follow patterns familiar to the new culture. The main subdimensions of CQ knowledge are cultural general understanding and context-specific understanding (Livermore and Soon, 2015).

Related to international negotiations, the cognitive CQ will provide some insights regarding what the appropriate thing would be in a particular case or what is

considered as the most important part considering all the cultures involved in the negotiation (Karsaklian, 2014).

Metacognitive CQ/ CQ strategy

The metacognitive CQ factor, also referred to as CQ strategy points out and measures an inner-oriented approach concerning cultural assumptions, during the entire interaction process. It evaluates the level of conscious cultural awareness during an intercultural interaction (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). This cultural awareness translates into the ability to recognize and mirror the new rules and behaviors considering the new cultural venue. The critical importance of this metacognitive factor is prescribed by the fact that it requires dynamic thinking about others and circumstances in various cultural surroundings, it poses challenges to cultural assumptions, and it forces people to review and adapt their strategies based on the cultural insights derived from the critical thinking (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). The CQ strategy comprises three subdimensions: planning, awareness, and checking (Livermore and Soon, 2015). Based on the realization of the new cultural aspects, the strategy can be adjusted to match the distinct particularities of the new culture and achieve the desired results.

In the international negotiation field, Karsaklian (2014) advises that metacognitive CQ answers concerns regarding how big the negotiation team should be, how to handle disagreement, and the appropriate approach related to relationship or assertiveness level.

Behavioural CQ/ CQ Action

The behavioral CQ or CQ action, reflects the actual proficiency to operate in a manner appropriate to the cross-cultural context (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). It entails a balanced approach where elements of the new culture are blended with the elements of the initial culture. The CQ action includes three dimensions that can be further analyzed and measured: speech art, verbal actions, and nonverbal actions (Livermore and Soon, 2015).

With regards to international negotiations, this factor entails finding the perfect harmony on concerns that often trouble people involved in international negotiation. Those concerns are associated with the appropriate place for holding the discussions, aspects related to gifts, or the expected level of personal relationship involvement (Karsaklian, 2014).

The above-mentioned components of cultural intelligence provide a detailed view of all the aspects that play a significant role. It is important to acknowledge that the essence of cultural intelligence portrays the required capability as being flexible towards interacting with diverse cultures regardless of their particularities. Cultural intelligence encompasses the skills and "the ability and competence to use all the human senses to converse, empathize, function, and transact effectively with those of another cultural background". (Asser & Langbein-Park, 2015, p. 165). The most notable part is that this capability can be developed, and the model proposed by Ang and Van Dyne, (2008) facilitates individual improvement for anyone interested in this matter. Furthermore, the cultural intelligence concept applies also to organizations, following the same basic principles. In a new article, Livermore et al. (2022) highlight cultural intelligence at the organizational level as a prerequisite characteristic for functioning effectively in a sophisticated and unpredictable multicultural world that is marked by rapid technological changes.

2.4.2 Intercultural communication

In the business environment, communication between companies occurs on daily bases, and its effectiveness is usually seen as the first crucial step in achieving the established strategy of an organization. In strict terms, **intercultural communication** covers aspects related to the communication between people with distinct cultures, while **cross-cultural communication** emphasizes the differences in communication dictated by their distinct cultures (Browaeys and Price, 2015). Therefore, these terms are to some degree used interchangeably.

Communication entails a message that is conveyed in a complex contextual arrangement. Different communication theories interpret the relationship between factors involved like sender, receiver, relation, context, information, and their interaction. Browaeys and Price, (2015) offer a graphic representation of the communication in a cross-cultural context, as presented in the next figure.
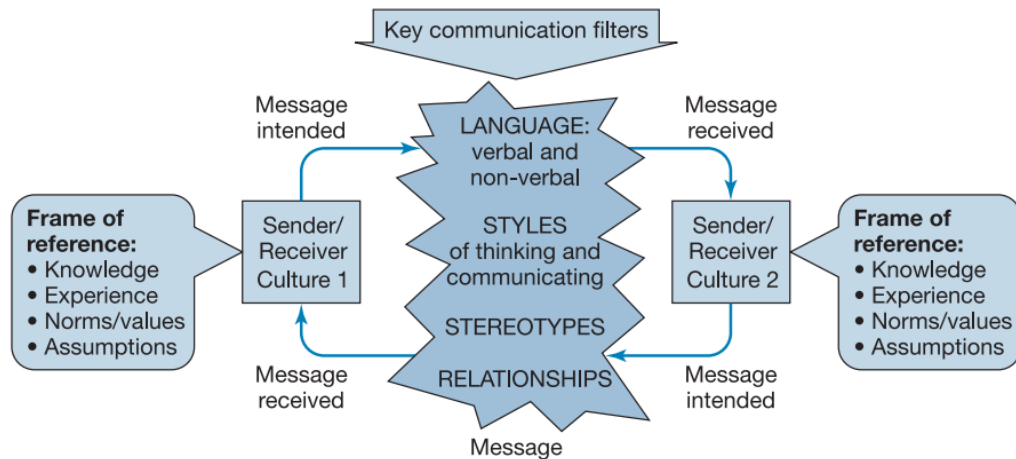
Figure 5. Model of cross-cultural communication (Browaeys & Price, 2015).

This model considers the two parties involved, a frame of reference that is different for each party, and the key communication filters that help both parties to distill information individually. The frame of reference includes personal knowledge and experience about the matter in discussion, coupled with norms and values pertaining to their own culture and their own views and predisposition to the culture of their counterparty (Browaeys and Price, 2015). What is noticeable here is the significant input of the culture in this entire process. The particularities of culture, as highlighted by various theories presented earlier in this thesis, bring a real contribution here in understanding and conducting detailed analyses by employing this intercultural communication frame model. For example, the proxemics dimensions, originally proposed by Hall, (1966) together with non-verbal acts are very insightful in the actual interaction that takes place during face-to-face discussions, in cross-cultural negotiations.

Modern communication tools provide a variety of channels for communication, that allow parties to move beyond the traditional face-to-face encounter to online

meetings, video conferences, instant messaging, press releases, and all these new methods change the way people communicate (Browaeys and Price, 2015).

In the B2B environment, international communication in addition to the already mentioned aspects related to communication between people from different cultures adds its own layer of complexity by considering also differences related to legislative, governmental, and political factors that have to be taken into consideration (Tuleja, 2017). This aspect is also relevant for the cross-cultural negotiations in the construction field, in the context examined by this master's thesis.

2.4.3 Main barriers to intercultural communication

During intercultural communication when various messages are being sent and received, some communication barriers may appear on the way and part of these barriers may be attributed to cultural misunderstanding that appears from the diversity of the cultures involved. Barna (1994) has identified six stumbling blocks in intercultural communication as follows: 1) assumption of similarities 2) language differences 3) non-verbal misinterpretation 4) preconceptions and stereotypes 5) tendency to assess 6) anxiety level.

Moran et al. (2014) point out some particular aspects of intercultural communication like its dynamic structure, the fact that it occurs in context, its irreversibility, and the fact that communication does not automatically imply understanding. These remarks together with their implications have a significant influence on cross-cultural negotiations.

2.4.4 Brief summary of the cross-cultural facets in negotiations

Therefore, considering the above-presented facts it is noted that a cross-cultural negotiation is permeated by facets related to cultural intelligence, and intercultural communication together with the barriers and aspects associated with this type of communication. In intercultural negotiations, it is paramount to

remember that "all negotiators bring their tacit cognitive knowledge structures and cultural and social history, as well as their native languages, to the negotiating table" (Dowd, 2015, p.15).

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The main focus of this thesis is to highlight the critical parts of cross-cultural negotiations for Romanian managers operating in the Romanian construction market and what essential elements they find important for successful results in cross-cultural negotiations.

3.2 Research design

The next paragraphs present the strategy employed for delivering the overall research objectives and the approach adopted.

3.2.1 Research philosophy

Research philosophy covers the ideology concerning by what methods the data about a phenomenon is collected, investigated, and applied. To better understand a research paradigm, Jaspersen et al. (2018) present three main components of the scientific research paradigm: epistemology, ontology, and methodology. In business and management research, Saunders et al. (2019) present five main philosophies positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism. The positivism and interpretivism philosophies seem to be the most used philosophies in scientific research.

Positivism is characterized by the belief that a single reality exists, and that reality exists independent of a researcher, and furthermore, a researcher is able to observe the reality objectively. Positivism is recommended for quantitative methods.

Interpretivism assumes that reality is related to the observer and thus it is observed subjectively. It is considered more appropriate for studies that employ qualitative methods.

This study applies the interpretivism research philosophy since that pertains to elements of social interpretation, social interactions, ethnography, and human experiences which are highly relevant to the topic in discussion. Multiple interpretations are present in multicultural interactions. Those interpretations are the result of a variety of aspects involved like different cultural backgrounds and specific social behaviour. Analyzing this diversity through an interpretive manner has the advantage of capturing all that socially constructed complexity.

3.2.2 Research approach type

In general, two contrasting approaches to theoretical development are possible and those can generate in one case a deductive approach, in the second case an inductive approach, and in a third case an approach named abductive approach that is recognized as a blend of the previous two approaches (Saunders et al., 2019).

The deductive approach will start with the existing theory, and the main purpose of a study employing it will be to test the hypothesis based on the existing theory. In contrast, the inductive approach will start by collecting information and drawing meanings, themes, points, or hypotheses from the research.

This research was conducted employing an inductive approach due to the subjective interpretations that are involved, the context of the study, and the social aspects that are inextricably connected to a cross-cultural negotiation, the topic of this thesis.

The entire focus of the study is on why some elements and actions are perceived as conducting to a successful outcome in a cross-cultural negotiation in the context discussed here. Thus, the direction of the study was guided by the observations made on the collected data where the aim was to get a comprehensive feeling and understanding of the interpretations furnished by the participants in the study. Once this aspect was concluded the main points have been scrutinized and compared with the relevant applicable theories.

This study has been conducted following somehow a descripto-explanatory style aiming to draw conclusions related to the aspects identified in a desirable cross-cultural negotiation outcome.

3.2.3 Research strategy

The research strategy covers aspects related to the method through which observations are intended to be collected. The actual research strategy employed is a matter of individual choice taking into consideration the particularities of each study, its main questions, and the consistency with the other layers of the research methodology. Thus, Saunders et al., (2019) observing those interdependencies acknowledge the following strategies as the most relevant for business and management research: experiment, survey, archival and documentary research, case study, ethnography, action research, grounded theory, and narrative inquiry.

Throughout this study, a narrative inquiry strategy is utilized. The decision for this particular choice was driven by the fact that this strategy is recommended for qualitative studies, and it is bound to deliver insightful findings in contexts where the focus of research is oriented on specific meanings. Furthermore, this strategy is recognized for allowing a deep analysis of socially constructed explanations, which matches perfectly with the aim of this study that entails elements of social dimensions and relationships within the cross-cultural negotiation process.

3.2.4 Time horizon

The time horizon is another important aspect that shapes the structure of any research. Thus, a thesis can be carried out as longitudinal research that studies changes and development over a certain period or as cross-sectional research focusing only on a particular time (Saunders et al., 2019). This research takes a cross-sectional approach mainly due to the time constraints dictated by the

academic program and the associated resources required to perform this kind of research.

3.2.5 Sampling strategy

Following the study's main aim and its research questions, the target population for this study had been defined as experienced Romanian negotiators operating in Romania on the construction market and with some involvement in cross-cultural negotiations. Due to budget, time constraints, and realistic objectives, only a representative sample was considered. To achieve a probability sample, the possible candidates have been further narrowed down to people with experience and direct involvement in negotiations in the construction market of a minimum of ten years, and to those who are working in well-established companies active in the Romanian construction market. The availability of participants was investigated through direct conversations, phone calls, and emails to possible candidates and took a significant amount of time. Thus, a total number of six participants had been confirmed. This number was deemed to be appropriate considering the objective of the study and its methodology. Furthermore, the data that was gathered through these semi-structured interviews provided ample and relevant intelligence for the main purpose of this research.

3.2.6 Data collection methods

Following the interpretivism philosophy adopted, the data collection has been guided by a qualitative research design through a mono-method qualitative study. This study is based on the interpretation of different meanings as expressed by the participants; thus, qualitative methods resonated best with the study's aim. For conducting this study, a series of interviews were conducted. Those interviews had a semi-structured format, including some questions that followed a more structured format. Taking into consideration the evaluative and exploratory nuances of the cross-cultural negotiation study, the semi-structure

format was considered the best alternative. All the interviews were conducted under the one-to-one format, and they have been carried out utilizing modern IT technology, more precisely the were conducted using the ZOOM software platform which is well known for its services in video communication and virtual meetings. The decision to conduct internet-mediated interviews was dictated by factors related to the location of participants, and their availability for such an interview. Prior to the interviews, all the participants have been provided with information related to the intent of the study, its confidentiality, and anonymity aspects. The acceptance as voluntary participation had been confirmed through a participation consent form (see appendix 2. Interview consent form) that had been signed by each participant. All the interviews have been recorded.

3.2.7 Data analysis methods and techniques

The decision to adopt qualitative research conducted to further consideration on which data analysis technique might serve better in this study considering all the methodology and its aspects as presented above in each representative paragraph. Taking a global view of the methodology and especially the interpretivist stance adopted in this research, the thematic analysis has been chosen as a data analysis technique to gain a multifaceted understanding of the cross-cultural negotiation process as studied in this thesis. The recorded interviews have been transcribed verbatim and anonymized for further study. For transcription in the absence of a specialized program, the dictate and transcribe functions from Microsoft Word have been used, and that required extensive extra work in terms of checking, re-checking, and capturing nuances of tone in order to conclude the data cleaning. The transcribed interviews have been analyzed using thematic analysis as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). The entire analysis followed a six-step process as follows: 1) familiarization with data, 2) coding, 3) constructing themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining themes, and 6) preparing the report. The entire process has been conducted in a reiterative manner.

3.3 Limitations

As already mentioned in the paragraph regarding the time horizon, the main limitations have been related to the limited duration of the study to match the academic schedule. Other relevant limitations refer to access only to basic resources used in academic research projects.

3.4 Methodology Summary

The entire research design structure as detailed in the above paragraphs has been constructed with the purpose of providing the desirable level of information to conduct this research in the area of cross-cultural negotiations.

4 Data Analysis

The thematic analysis carried out in this study provided overall five main themes: 1) individual negotiation style, 2) views on multicultural aspects, 3) organizational influence 4) elements of trust, and 5) market conditions. It is important to mention that each theme has a few sub-themes that have been assembled considering the numerous codes utilized in the narrative analysis. Figure 6 on the next page (Figure 6. Data Analysis Map) takes the role of a thematic map in an attempt to provide a facile visualization of the main themes and their subsequent sub-themes. For a more detailed presentation regarding the main themes, sub-themes, and their codes please see Appendix 3. Expanded map of thematic analysis.

It is noted the fact that each theme covers an important distinct aspect, and combined they deliver a clear picture of the cross-cultural negotiation process in the context studied here. Additionally, the first three themes can be seen as a cluster used especially for consolidating the best cross-cultural negotiation practices, while the other two themes emphasize the local factors that shape the negotiation process.

4.1 Theme 1. Individual negotiation style

Individual negotiation style is the first theme identified and it refers to the behavior of one individual in the negotiation process, considering private perceptions and habits. Personal approaches considered here cover aspects related to general orientation, preference for IT tools employed, and inclination to certain structures or frameworks all concerning the negotiation process.

Figure 6. Data Analysis Map.

Subtheme **Individual view** has been classified as a sub-theme of the above-mentioned theme, where factors related to personal opinions, personal attitudes, and outcome orientation blend in a highly personal manner. In any negotiation, obtaining some benefits is the final goal; however, the entire process can be driven by a focus on outcome, or by a focus on the relationship with the other party the other possible options being a mix between these two in different

proportions. The interviewees clearly understood this matter and provided clear views on the general market preference for this orientation in the current circumstances. The mixture in orientation is generated by the personal factor that is highly present in this case:

I5: "I think 50% from each [relationship and outcome]. So depends a lot on the activity and the type and the field you act but. But most probably half-half [relationship-outcome]".

I4: "Initially, is always about the outcome, but is always good to build good relationships… you know, and definitely, you will get better results later. Everybody is orientated toward outcome initially."

I3: "…our policy is to build up a relationship with the supplier…. Building a relationship for the future"

I1: "The outcome [first], relationships afterward."

Subtheme **IT tools** have been identified as another sub-theme with a high impact on the main theme considered here. Its impact has been recognized as having benefits related to time, perception of risk, the strength of arguments, and some challenges related to building rapport, cooperation, and trust issues (Gordon, 2022).

The advantages of the modern IT tools recognized by the interviewees are related to the ability to overcome challenges dictated by long distances and reduce the time allocated to such negotiations:

I3: "New techniques and software are very useful. … They are beneficial because you can save a lot of time and resources, compared to, let's say, paying them a visit to their office."

I4: "I think these meetings are very beneficial for everybody. […] it's easier when you discuss these things, I don't know, overseas and distance, so it is beneficial definitely."

At the same time, the limitation of new technology is acknowledged, especially regarding human connection and emotions. In negotiation interactions, emotions are powerful cues for the experienced negotiator, and they facilitate a glimpse of the view of the other individual's general attitude. This overall experience is perfectly illustrated by the following remarks:

I6: "What I personally like, especially in the first meeting, when you should introduce yourself and your counterpart to introduce himself, I will prefer always to have a person-to-person meeting. Because always having the person in front of you…will help me better understand that person without any hidings that can be in an online meeting."

I5: "It's very good to have a face-to-face meeting when it's possible to shake hands. This is the best way because you can feel the emotion, you can feel the tension of one meeting and of course, you have [feel] the vibe in the room."

Negotiation consistency is the third subtheme of the first theme, and it covers the individual part from the perspective of a process. The coherence of the approach has been stressed rather than the actual steps involved. Elements of planning and strategy at a personal level have been revealed here, as noted from the following affirmations:

I1: "I use the same steps for every negotiation. […] I just do it personally, that's it."

I3: "We prepare a negotiation plan, simple."

Furthermore, certain parts are considered more important than other parts of the plan, and additional preparation is involved in those parts as mentioned by one interviewee:

I5: "…the preparation is the most challenging [part of the plan] because you should identify in the correct way all the information needed for the negotiation process"

At the same time there is a general recognition of personal adaptability in style to different degrees as suggested by one negotiator:

I1: "I only do it how I am used to, and I go from there to see their feedback [other party's feedback], and according to their feedback, I… I adjust my negotiation if that's the case."

In a sense, the inter-dynamic process of negotiations requires negotiators to acknowledge the uniqueness of each negotiation and to include those specific particularities in their predefined structure and style. The reliable manner in which they perform this is related to their own personal negotiation consistency.

4.2 Theme 2. Views on multicultural aspects

Views on multicultural aspects are the second main theme identified in the thematic analysis and it refers to how the multicultural perspective is acknowledged in the negotiation process. The subject of this theme does not directly pertain to negotiation in the construction field; however, it is inextricably present in any cross-cultural negotiation. What it important for the construction field, is the advice from Lewicki (2019) to use standard elements characteristic to the profession, technical, and engineering matters as a common denominator to overcome the differences derived from cultural differences.

Three main sub-themes: 1) recognition of extra-challenges, 2) recognition of cultural diversity, and 3) cultural intelligence have been identified as having a substantial effect on this theme and are further presented here:

Recognition of extra-challenges. In this sub-theme, the results highlighted that the interviewees were conscious of the extra actions required from their side in order to overcome the extra-challenges derived from cross-cultural negotiations. Furthermore, they were well prepared in that sense, with concrete actions to overcome the identified challenges as appropriately as possible. This fact was demonstrated by various statements like:

I1: "You… you spend more time on the negotiation [cross-cultural negotiation]. You try always to get the feedback, send reminders. Give phone calls, follow up and the emails, follow up on the offer. And that's it. If you spend more time. You will reach a deal if it's the case… So yes, it is more demanding from time perspective."

I4: "That is why we make plans, yeah, we need to know the people we are negotiation, negotiating with and if we know that the other party doesn't speak English or our language ... we need to bring somebody who speaks that language… Or we ask them to bring a person who can speak our language."

The extra difficulties added by negotiating with an external partner are recognized holistically, considering what the present and future interaction shall entail for their entire operating business. Those challenges vary from possible language barriers and non-verbal communication to conflicting values and geographical distances, arising out from different perspectives, as one interviewee pointed out:

I2: "Well geographical distance means first of all to be at the same period in the office, if we're talking of big geographical distance so yes you have to make your schedule in a manner that it's appropriate for both parts…I believe the most important [difficulty in cross-cultural negotiation] is related to the geographical distance, because that… that means an impact on money, distances means increased costs with transportation and that influences a lot the price. I think this is the most important."

Subtheme **Recognition of cultural diversity**. While the first sub-theme was centered around the extra challenges added by aspects related to cultural diversity, this one is arising from the realization of the impact of an individual's own cultural views. The cultural difference is also recognized from one national culture to another through the recognition of multiple dimensions that characterize a culture. The awareness of own cultural view in the negotiation is mentioned by one of the interviewees:

I3: "… we have our own style of negotiation, but it's not very different to what they do overseas… let's say in other countries it's not very different, it is different up

to a certain extent… but is not very different… A foreign negotiator has, will have, would have his background, his own experience...”

The recognition of interviewees' own cultural background is further considered in coordination with that of their negotiation partner, in terms of possible affinities that will easy the entire interaction. This aspect is mentioned by one interviewee:

I5: “if they [the other negotiators] are Latin like us, for sure they will be more than pleasant to have a [Romanian] negotiation partner, but if they will be, for example, from the Asiatic part, … they will not enjoy it the same way.”

One the other hand, there is a clear understanding of the various dimensions involved when talking about culture. The most important aspect here is the fact that these dimensions impact differently the interaction during a negotiation. One interviewee relates:

I4: “Honestly no, I don't think the culture is the main issue in negotiation, but of course, we had different issues when negotiating things with different cultures… Normally we treat everybody equally but of course, there are different cultures when you need to be more careful when you… I don't know… when you touch the religion part… or I don't know different things, depending on that culture. Yeah, you need to be more careful because people are sensitive and we don't want to start the negotiation with the left foot”.

The difference between the cultural dimensions varies across cultures and their effects at the negotiation table vary according to different circumstances. Aspects that are trivial for one party can be of utter importance for their counterparty. All these differences are simply the result of the cultural differences involved. The interviewees have experienced this phenomenon and treat these possible contentious subjects very carefully, as mentioned in the above statement.

Subtheme **Cultural intelligence** is related to the ability to interpret unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures of individuals outside of your own culture (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). In cross-cultural negotiations, cultural intelligence is portrayed as a critical skill that can significantly affect the outcome of a

negotiation, regardless of the previous preparation involved. Ang et al., (2007) mention four factors for evaluating the level of cultural intelligence: metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behavior.

The analysis found that the interviewees are conscious of the cultural intelligence effect in cross-cultural negotiations and furthermore, are preoccupied with all four factors in various degrees. One interviewee related to this intricate matter:

I1: "Spend more time or try to see their point of view, try to see what you don't want to understand. What's their opinion? Why is their opinion different? And eventually you, I think if you want, you'll figure out that point."

The entire approach of the negotiation interaction is guided by the factors pertaining to cultural intelligence, to improve communication by taking into consideration the particularities of the specific circumstance and its participants:

I2: "Well, when it comes to have this situation [cross-cultural interaction] I think the approach is a little different. I try to be more accurate, to be more…, to be a good observer of the other person because is different than working with the same environment, usually an environment that you know, and you feel comfortable with."

I6: "All the time the discussion should be adapted… at the specific moment with the specific person because with some person you can have a more friendly discussion because you've found some points that are touching both of you, and you can have a five-minute discussion about things that you both like. Sometimes your partner can be more… not necessarily professional… but more formal, and in this case, you should be in the same line like him".

4.3 Theme 3. Organizational influence

Throughout the interviews, there was highlighted another theme named organizational influence, which has a significant influence on cross-cultural negotiation and that covers elements prescribed by the organizations where the negotiators carry out their duties. The actions of a negotiator are in tune with the

guidance set up by the company that she or he represents. That guidance covers aspects from the established modus operandi, and cultural views, to top management involvement and contractual matters.

Subtheme **organizational modus operandi**. The results, in this case, indicated that, in general, the organizations follow the internal protocol as required by their accreditations and agreed protocol, regardless of the type of negotiation. One interviewee pointed out:

I5: "We have some internal procedure process. We have some internal forms imposed by the ISO certification, and our company is certified so we should follow the procedure in negotiation… in the signing of the contract, in preparing the material for the signing of the contract and we have… we have all these implemented in our company and they are actually imposed by the certification we have. So yes, we have this, and we use it."

At the same time, there are no extra procedures for cross-cultural negotiations, and interviewees highlighted the fact that they adapt the existing procedures as required by circumstances based on personal experience and the history of the company as well. It is confirmed that this approach allows to have these internal procedures integrated into the negotiation process as pointed out by one of the interviewees:

I4: "I am not aware of these templates [special templates for cross-cultural negotiation], but of course, we always make a plan for anything, and we have experience in negotiations…We have the bullet points, not myself… but my company."

Cultural orientation is a sub-theme that provides a clear view at the company level of their preference for a traditional approach consisting in working with other companies with similar cultural backgrounds or a more pragmatic one with an orientation targeted strictly towards business results. The level of preference here varies between companies to different degrees. However, the most important feature observed here is that all organizations are primarily focused on compliance with their internal protocol as pointed out by one interviewee:

I4: "we don't have an orientation to some type of companies we work. We have a prelisting system. So, all the companies which we work with should be first listed. Is not important if they are clients or if they are partners. The importance is that to have them listed, which means that is to have all the paper forms filled and to have all the agreements from the parties involved, accountancy department, sales department, technical department. Once we have this form done, of course, we do not have any other problem to work with those companies…"

This approach guides any negotiation process including a cross-cultural negotiation and it represents the mandatory pre-qualification stage, that somehow balances the preference orientation characteristic of this sub-theme.

Top management involvement subtheme. Even though the interviewees were directly involved in the negotiation interaction, a degree of involvement from top management was also present in the cross-cultural negotiation if high values or key partners were involved. One interviewee mentioned:

I2: "…the management is involved but the rule is that you have, … you need some value so if you're talking about contracts above some established value then they are involved for sure, below that value you have the power to decide whatever you need to do in order to have your business done."

Mainly the actions of top management in this respect are performed as a courtesy towards developing business relationships rather than involvement in the negotiation interaction. These actions also follow the pre-established internal protocol.

I5: "If it is really an important negotiation and we speak about here about the top management from our client or from our partner, of course, always the top management is there, presenting the company and to do the introduction, but they… after they'll do this, they'll step back and they will let the next management level the middle management to do their job in negotiation or in, let's say contracting process."

The values that trigger the actions of the management team are different in each company. However, these actions exhibit the general interest of the company in the outcome of that particular cross-cultural negotiation.

Contractual aspects subtheme. Under this sub-theme called contractual aspects, a series of critical issues have been identified as related to money, technical requirements, and leading time. These aspects can completely end a negotiation as one of the interviewees mentioned:

I3: "We need to procure certain products and that's it. I want to get my product, under the budget and in time, and that's it. If they [the negotiation's counterparty] don't comply with my requirements and specifications, OK, I will find the one which is eager to work with us "

It is a characteristic of the construction industry to adhere to specifications and standards. However, these aspects are rather prerequisite than sufficient to have a successful negotiation outcome. The entire contract details are woven around these and cover a multitude of various other issues from payment terms to warranties and final settlement.

4.4 Theme 4. Elements of trust.

Elements of trust, or in simple terms trust, is a theme that is related to the elements of trust between the parties, or more precisely how those elements are perceived during the negotiations.

Subtheme **Confidence level** refers here to the overall confidence projected at the negotiation table. It is satisfied through pre-qualification forms that have also been mentioned in organizational procedures but also through new attributes concerning the willingness to adhere to certain requirements and comply with various requirements. This compliance part is noticeable in the following statement:

I2: " For instance, if someone supplier is asking for advance payment nowadays is a matter of lack of trust on both sides so you need to have some warranties for

any money that you are paying in advance… because even if you are having a very good…. let's say….. product or some materials, or with a very good price if you are coming to discuss about these payment conditions and you have some restriction regarding this matter so you will stop the negotiation."

Relationships status is an important sub-theme that relates to the existing business relationship between the party involved in the negotiation. In contrast with the subtheme of cultural orientation from the main theme 3 (Theme 3: organizational influence, which focuses on initial preference), the present sub-theme considers an existing relationship between the two parties at the negotiation table or even goes to previous relationships with common parties. Its essence is captured by the following affirmation:

I2: "Yes, I would say that if you have some history regarding previous negotiations or executed contracts it gives you the ability to move things a little faster in a later stage. But if you're dealing with a new company usually takes time to gain trust so it takes time to negotiate and to… receive the best conditions you need, in order to have a good contract situation. It is rather related to the previous interaction, rather than different cultures."

Other party negotiation style subtheme reflects the approach and style of the other party. Thus, is another sub-theme belonging to the elements of trust theme and highlights the fact that various negotiation strategies are often associated with a certain level of trust. This level is assessed not on the strategy itself but more on different associated actions like involvement and responsiveness, shared goals, and desires for building future possible commercial relations. Although the opinions regarding the expected form of strategy from the other party were mixed from collaboration (to achieve high focus on outcome and relationship) to compromise or even accommodation stressing the importance of relationships, how the strategy was delivered decided the trust level. One interviewee clearly presented this trust issue:

I3: "We try to build in a good relationship with the suppliers, not only based on the price but also based on future collaboration, let's say future relationship, long

term relationship, and beneficial relationship for both, both parties. Otherwise, I mean, if we have our case right now with the subcontractor which we are having on board for some work and we tried … this is what we told him: *It looks like you don't want to be a partner with us. You just want to be a subcontractor and that's it.* And we will most probably not sending any more inquiries in the future. Because he doesn't want to, I mean… he's very difficult in negotiating in all sorts of things. Although professionally they are good. "

4.5 Theme 5. Market conditions.

Market conditions represent another theme identified as having a major impact on the dynamics of a cross-cultural negotiation in the context described by this study. The particularities of the market conditions force the participants to adapt their negotiation styles to one that resonates with the business environment.

5.1 **Evolving market.** Under this sub-theme was observed the continuum aspect of cross-cultural negotiation in the business environment, where the negotiation strategies and techniques have been constantly adapted to the new challenges, developments, and expectations of external partners.

I5: "It developed a lot [the local market, in terms of cross-cultural negotiation practices] in the last… I would say 10 years. Romania became an international market so, we do exchange with all the countries, and I think this helped a lot to understand how to do business and how to approach each type of situation. So, in the last years, it developed a lot… the market. "

Highly competitive market subtheme. It was noted here that the negotiations, particularly those involving a cross-cultural element, tend to be directly affected by the highly competitive local environment. In a negotiation, those high expectations do not refer to a single characteristic or item, rather they are treated in a holistic manner, resulting in expectations regarding the best business partner, product, price, time, and relationship among others. This approach can deter cross-cultural negotiation as one interviewee pointed out:

I1: "[how foreign negotiators see the Romanian negotiation environment?] Competing, I don't know. Competing… I don't think they are used with the Romanian negotiation [style] because we are demanding from the start."

Furthermore, it is acknowledged that a high level of competition is affecting the negotiation interactions and might hurt the business altogether. This view was reinforced by one interviewee:

I2: "I think it's a competition, it's a competitive environment and…. I don't have some examples… but so far as I've seen in the market this competition sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad. For instance, if you are trying to get a client with no matter what price in the end no one will be happy… very happy about this."

Results overview

The five themes identified and presented in this chapter can be further grouped around the research questions, with the first three themes directly addressing the first question, and the last two themes treating parts more relevant to the second question. Figure 7. Themes grouped provides a simple visualization of this arrangement for an easy perception of the overall structure obtained from the data analysis carried out in this chapter.
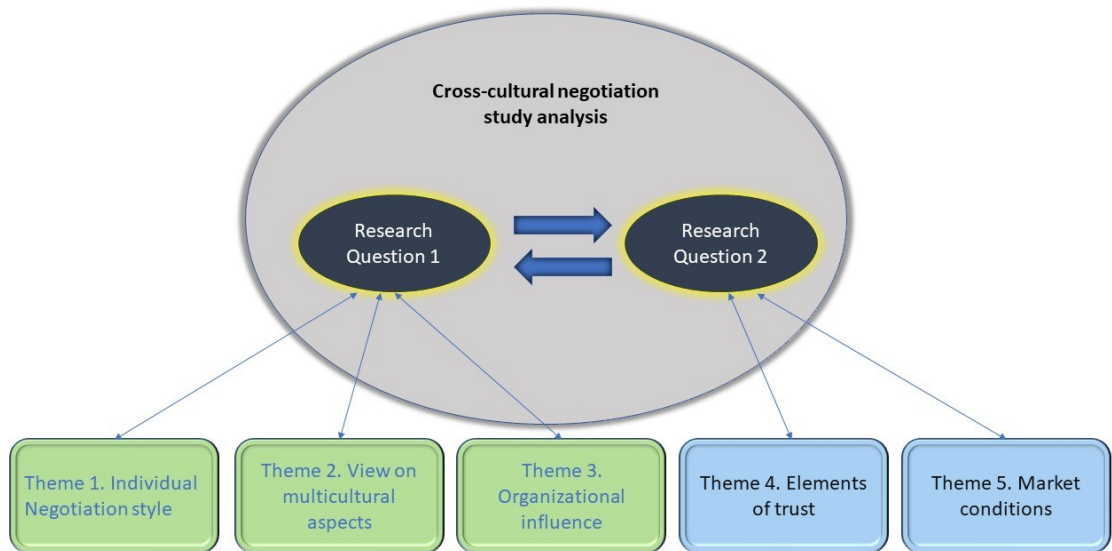
Figure 7. Themes grouped.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, various considerations and implications of the results obtained during the data analysis (for details see the previous chapter 4. Data analysis) have been further distilled along with elements of the relevant theory to answer the main research questions of this master thesis that refer to how Romanian managers consolidate their best practices for solid outcomes in cross-cultural negotiations and what main extrinsic factors shape the outcome of cross-cultural negotiations on the Romanian construction market.

5.2 Key findings summary

The data analysis identified five main themes as follows:

- Theme 1. Individual negotiation style.
- Theme 2. View on multicultural diversity.
- Theme 3. Organizational influence.
- Theme 4. Elements of trust.
- Theme 5. Market conditions.

Each of these themes is discussed in further detail in the next paragraphs with the aim of providing a holistic view of cross-cultural negotiations in the specific context directed by the research questions of this study.

5.3 Interpretations

The answer to the first research question has been provided by the findings of the first three themes identified in the thematic analysis and these themes can be seen as the main pillars used by the local negotiators in consolidating their best

cross-cultural negotiation practices. The answer to the second research question has been furnished by the observations noted from the fourth and fifth themes.

Theme 1. Individual negotiation style has brought into discussion the personal element involved in any negotiation. That personal element generates a unique particularity in the negotiation style that is distinct for each individual. Notwithstanding this uniqueness, the study provided a general categorization regarding major sub-themes that play an important role at the individual level in cross-cultural negotiation. Thus, the personal views regarding the orientation's outcome together with the personal inclination towards certain IT tools and the preferred framework of negotiation always combine in a unique format that delineates the individual negotiation style. The outcome orientation is widely recognized in the professional field, and Lewicki et al., (2010) recommend using the style orientation matrix (see Figure 1, in sub-chapter 2.2.5 Negotiation conflict styles of this thesis) in preparing the strategy of negotiation.

The individual views on IT tools determine the willingness of negotiators to integrate those tools into their negotiation activities. The information technology that facilitates the negotiation process is recognized as having a disruptive effect from the normal rhythm of traditional negotiations (Thompson, 2022). The disruption factor from the familiar negotiation process is being felt regardless of the actual IT tools employed. Although the interviewees have noticed the technological advances in IT tools and their benefits, they also stressed the differences from the traditional negotiation process when using IT tools.

Personal factors also affect how an individual tackle the sequence of a negotiation. The results of this study suggest a strong attention to the preparation phase, which according to the participants allows for more flexibility later in all the subsequent stages of the negotiation process.

The professional literature recognizes the importance of the preparation step, Fells and Sheer (2019) portray the preparation element as the key to any negotiation and highlight the fact that this should always be directed towards the other party.

Theme 2. View on multicultural aspects provides a clear view of the difficulty added to cross-cultural negotiations by cultural differences. All the participants in this study pointed out that they view cross-cultural negotiations as more demanding than intra-cultural negotiations and extra effort is required from their side in that context. The interviewees seem to be aware of the fact that culture implies a multitude of dimensions. Although they do not use a specific cultural model like those suggested by Hofstede, Hall, or Globe cultural dimensions, they relate to various circumstances when the difference encountered during a cross-cultural negotiation can be easily ascribed to a specific cultural dimension suggested by the aforementioned cultural models. Hernadez-Pozas, (2019) has analyzed the advantages and limitations of using certain cultural models in negotiations and advises against the usage of these models in a reductionist manner, and proposes a further cultural exploration considering particular aspects like age, education, or occupation of the people involved, together with a focus on the contextual factors like environment and corporate policy that may affect the negotiation. The insights provided by this research suggest that the approaches employed by the interviewees are well aligned with that view. Following Hofstede's cultural dimensions, a Romanian negotiator has a high score on uncertainty avoidance, a medium to high on long-term orientation, and a low score on the indulgence dimension which is expected to be translated into a predisposition toward relationships rather than the immediate outcome. Utilizing the Globe project, more precisely the performance orientation and the uncertainty avoidance dimension the results will conduct to the same expectations. This study suggests that the orientation of the local managers was channeled primarily to the outcome of the negotiation and not the relationship. This finding could be explained by the role of other factors involved that also have been observed by this study, factors like professional field and corporate policies, which in this case seem to have a prevalent role.

Hartmann (2019) reminds us that the behavior of an individual might diverge from their cultural background due to their personal traits and specific circumstances, and also highlights the inter-dynamic aspect of cross-cultural negotiations that can have a distinct mark on the actions of the person involved. Thus, cultural

intelligence described by Ott & Michailova (2018), as the capacity of an individual in unfamiliar circumstances to cope with diversity and perform competently, might represent the best-suited skill for overcoming the inter-dynamic challenge arising from cross-cultural negotiations. The results of this study indicate that the local negotiators understand that cultural intelligence within all its four aspects (motivational, cognitive, metacognitive, and behavioral), is a vital skill for striking the right tune during cross-cultural negotiations. Furthermore, the negotiators interviewed in this study seemed to be aware of the influence of their own cultural background with its specific cultural dimensions, on their preferred negotiation approach.

For delivering the best results, the first two main themes identified in this study although they treat different characteristics, the first one covering the individuality and the second one the cultural background are to be considered in a complementary manner.

Theme 3 Organizational influence.

Organizations exert a powerful influence through their own organizational culture, that permeates throughout all their entire activities. The participants of this study have indicated the influence of the organizations that they represent in cross-cultural negotiations. Cancialosi (2017) portrays the organizational culture as related to experience, ideologies, and expectations of a company that are expressed by all the members throughout the internal and external interactions and various activities.

The findings of this study on organizational influence suggest two main orientations that make their presence noted in cross-cultural negotiations. This first one and the most notable is guided by the internal protocol, procedures, and contractual clauses and conditions for a specific negotiation. The second orientation is related to cultural and business affinities along with the top management assistance during cross-cultural negotiations. The results of this study imply that the former direction takes prevalence over the latter direction during cross-cultural negotiations. Organizational cultures have two sets of rules,

written and unwritten (Organizational Culture - Business Dictionary, n.d.) and the orientations unveiled here can be ascribed by analogy to those written and unwritten rules that govern the organizational culture. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the effect of both orientations presented here is expected to be found in a cross-cultural negotiation. An experienced negotiator reading the clues provided by those orientations shall have a better understanding of his case at the negotiation table. Salacuse (2015) reminds us that in negotiations between organizations, an experienced negotiator will take into consideration that the outcome of a negotiation is shaped by the external negotiation between the actual negotiators and also by internal negotiations between the negotiator and their own organization that is carried out in the background.

Theme 4 Elements of Trust.

One of the key findings of this study is referring to elements of trust that are seen as critical for a successful cross-cultural negotiation. In a cross-cultural negotiation, the successful outcome such as joint profit is affected by three main factors: 1) cultural difference, 2) bargaining strategy, and 3) trust. It is important to note that the first factor that is referring to cultural differences has also a direct impact on the other two factors not only on the result (Ribbink & Grimm, 2014).

The data analysis indicates that the interviewees perceived a certain level of trust as mandatory for the negotiation in the first place. The results of this study indicate that the level of trust is built from different spheres. The first and the most important is the ability to satisfy the pre-qualification protocol required by the company, the second one is built on the existing relationships and interrelations, and the third one is built on the perception of the style and interest of the counterparties.

The first sphere represents the due diligence step and although it has been pointed out as being a pre-requisite and the most important one, it is also seen as a clear straightforward process.

The second sphere has been recognized as being more complex and can be viewed as a continuation of the first step, however, the attention in this sphere is centered on direct or common possible affiliations of the parties involved. Usually, the validation of the information is done through third parties.

The most challenging part is posed by the third sphere which involves a lot of intangible values, that may be perceived differently by various actors. By applying the frame suggested by Browaeys and Price (2015) (see Figure 5. in sub-subchapter 2.4.2 Intercultural communication) it is noticed that the intended message is converted into the received message through a series of filters, and the most important ones identified in this instance, by this study, are the negotiation style, stereotype, and relationship. Thus, the filter contains individual and cultural matters that have already been identified and discussed in the first two paragraphs of this chapter.

It is well documented in the literature that people from cultures with high scores on the power-distance dimension tend to have a lower level of trust when dealing with outsiders (Kale, 2003). Different degrees of trust towards in-groups and out-groups are more notable in Brett's Model. Brett (2014) implies for so-called *honor culture,* an orientation towards distrust of out-groups, and sometimes the same orientation is present even for in-groups. The results of this study highlighted the fact that the interviewed negotiators put a lot of emphasis on the level of trust required for successful cross-cultural negotiation. Therefore, in this respect, the results of this study are consistent with the existing theory.

Theme 5 Market conditions

The findings of this theme direct our attention to an area that is often neglected in cross-cultural negotiations, and that encompasses the current status of the market where the negotiations take place. Khan & Baldini (2019) point out that contemporary business organizations have adapted to globalization and that global business standards are noticeable and play an important part at the negotiation table. The results of this study suggest that this phenomenon is first-hand experienced by the local negotiators. Thus, they have acknowledged a

continuous transition to new guidelines and rules set up by external global trends, and they see this transition as beneficial for all businesses and proof that the market is evolving in the right direction. Nevertheless, the results indicate some concerns among the negotiators regarding the fierce and dynamic market competition and how this affects the negotiation process, and how it might affect the companies operating in this environment in the long term. Those concerns might be correlated to the uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension suggested by the Globe project, which in this case considering the cultural background of the negotiators tend to indicate a preference for some social norms to reduce the unpredictability of future events derived from this fierce competition.

Lewicki et al. (2019) remind us about the contextual character that plays an important part in any negotiation. In line with that remark, the negotiators involved in this study pay sufficient attention to the market condition, to a degree that sometimes dictates atypical behavior if we report strictly to their cultural background and their expected cultural predilection.

5.4 Limitations of the study and recommendations

All studies are bound to certain limitations, and a clear understanding of those limitations provides critical direction for other related studies. In this case, one limitation is related to the sample of the study represented by six seasoned Romanian negotiators specialized in the construction market. The study has included only qualitative analysis and would be desirable to have the results supported also by studies based on quantitative research. Future quantitative analysis may provide further clarity in terms of the proportion in which, the themes identified in this research are contributing towards constructive outcomes in negotiations.

The construction market has its particularities in terms of project-based orientation due to the complexity of activities involved and their associated high costs. The findings of this research, most probably represent valuable insights for cross-cultural negotiations in Romania. However, their applicability to other fields

should be considered by analyzing the similarities between the other field that might be investigated and the construction field for which this study has been designed.

In terms of practical implications, the study suggests that the individual pillars of cross-cultural negotiations and the extrinsic factor that shape cross-cultural negotiation might in appearance not be so obvious to the managers involved in this process. Thus, it is worth considering those often-unnoticed aspects in designing cross-cultural training for local managers. This approach might help negotiators to enhance their skills in cross-cultural negotiation regardless of their level of experience. This skill definitely will be in high demand since cross-cultural negotiation is an activity that is expected to become more and more part of their daily tasks.

A further possible study may take a longitudinal research form and thus may provide interesting findings on how these themes identified here evolve over time. Another possible further direction could be a comparison of the identified themes with other themes identified in new locations where there is more advanced economic development. This might provide helpful findings on what is required for a local manager to stay ahead of cross-cultural negotiation interactions.

5.5 Conclusion of the discussion

The observations of this study aimed to provide an answer to the first research question by presenting a detailed view of the foundation utilized for solid outcomes in cross-cultural negotiations, in terms of individual style, multicultural aspect, and organizational influence. The answer to the second research question has been furnished by insights related to trust and market conditions. In essence, all the observations presented here are to be considered interrelated in their impact on cross-cultural negotiations and together they illustrate how negotiators operating on the construction local market in Romania can perfect their approach for solid outcomes in cross-cultural negotiations.

6 Implications

This study aimed to provide a clear image of the main elements and forces that permeate the cross-negotiation techniques in the construction market in Romania.

The results indicate that individual, cultural, and background factors in all their complexity interact in a sophisticated manner throughout the entire cross-negotiation process. The crucial part of the cross-cultural negotiation in the context analyzed by this study seems to be the interplay between the above-mentioned factors and not the characteristics of those factors analyzed in an isolated manner.

A valuable finding here is the essential attention required on the whole framework and the surrounding environment, rather than a focus on specific technical or cultural particularities involved in the negotiation. For negotiators, this might require a zoom-out from their initial target, which might provide helpful insight on how to tailor their approach to successfully achieve their goals.

Probably the findings of this study will prove useful to be further developed and integrated into the training provided to the local negotiators involved in cross-cultural negotiation, especially aiming to understand the fluidity of the process and avoid stereotyping based on single factors.

It would be interesting to see more academic research on the dynamics of the crucial factors identified. Future research might be conducted to compare the forces of the interactions between different industries or from other groups with different cultural backgrounds.

As globalization becomes part of the new norm of doing business, skillful cross-cultural negotiation competencies will become mandatory for future managers. Hopefully, the summarised implications of this study briefly presented in this last chapter and the lengthy report provided throughout this entire master's thesis, will provide some guidance for the Romanian managers in respect of the constituents

that generate solid outcomes in cross-cultural negotiations, and furnish some assistance towards the aspects that might help them perfect their skills.

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Questionnaire:

Negotiator Profile:

1. When preparing for a negotiation with a person or team from another culture (than yours/your company's) do you create a negotiation plan? Please detail even if you do or don't.
2. In cross-cultural negotiation do you decide on a negotiation style based on the other party's cultural background prior to the actual meeting?
3. What part/aspect of cross-cultural negotiation do you consider the most demanding/critical? Considering the usual sequence of the negotiation process as: Preparation, Exchange of information, Bargain, Closure, Execution, choose the one you find most challenging and detail.
4. Do you allocate extra time to cross-cultural negotiation during the negotiation process? Why/why not?
5. How would you describe your own negotiation style in a cross-cultural interaction?
6. When sharing information in a cross-cultural negotiation, do you use the same approach with all counterparties (irrespective of their culture) or do you adapt your interaction style to your counterparty? (Do you adapt your verbal speech length or insert additional (graphic) information? Do you provide your counterparty with written minutes of your verbal agreements?)
7. Do you consider the new IT tools that facilitate virtual meetings, conference calls, and exchange of information in real-time as beneficial or detrimental to cross-cultural negotiation, please explain why.

Company Profile

1. In your current company is there a preference oriented toward working with foreign companies?

2. Does the company treat differently the negotiation process in a cross-cultural negotiation compared to the same culture negotiations? If so, please detail.

3. Are there internal procedures, forms, and templates used in cross-cultural negotiations? How do you find them (helpful/not)? Why? If they don't exist, would you like to have any? Why?

4. Does top management get involved in the cross-cultural negotiation process? How does this involvement support you?

5. Based on your experience, what should a company do to support the outcome of cross-cultural negotiations?
   - Would you appreciate having more freedom in the negotiation?
   - Would you appreciate having more resources and time for the negotiation?
   - Would you appreciate being provided regular training in international negotiation? Please detail.

Location Profile

1. Do you consider the general tendency in negotiations in Romania to be oriented towards building relationships between parties or more oriented toward the outcome of the negotiation itself?

2. Do you consider that this orientation changes when the other party is a foreign agent?

3. How would you describe the evolution of the Romanian market in terms of negotiation practices in cross-cultural negotiations?

Seller Profile

1. Think of your own experience so far in this company. What was the most difficult cross-cultural negotiation you were involved in? What made it difficult? What could you have done differently?

2. In your opinion, the most difficult challenges in cross-cultural negotiation are related to:

- Language barriers
- Non-verbal communication
- Business etiquette
- Conflicting values
- Geographical distance
- Cultural differences

3. How do the challenges you chose earlier manifest and how do you overcome them?

4. From the following list of negotiation styles which one do you prefer your counterpart to have?

- Avoiding (withdrawing from active negotiation)
- Accommodating (high focus on relationship, low focus on negotiation outcome)
- Competing (low focus on relationship, high focus on negotiation outcome)
- Compromising (compromising between outcome and relationship)
- Collaborating (high focus on relationship, high focus on outcome)

5. How do you think foreign negotiators describe the Romanian negotiation environment? If no answer is offered, some possible suggestions could be: Lacking transparency, Transparent, Bureaucratic, Balanced, or Other…

Interview consent form:

Consent to participate in a thesis study

I have received the information on the goals and practical implementation of the study conducted as a thesis. I have been given the opportunity to ask further questions on the study.

I have received the information on processing personal data in the study. I have been promised that processing of my personal data will be careful and information security will be adhered to, and that the data will not be disclosed to external parties.

I know that my participation is voluntary. I can interrupt or withdraw my participation in the study at any time. I am aware of that if I interrupt the study or withdraw my consent, the data collected on me until disrupting or withdrawing my consent can be used as a part of the research material.

Place and date [insert place and date and after this, delete Place and date and the instructions]

I will participate in the study

_____
Name of the individual [insert the name of the individual and after this, delete Name of the individual and the instructions]

Recipient of consent

_____
Name of the researcher [insert here the researcher's first name and last name and after this, delete the Name of the researcher and the instructions]

The original signed consent of the research subject and a copy of the research brief will be stored in the researcher's archives. The research brief and copy of the signed consent will be given to the research subject.

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Expanded map of thematic analysis:

Theme 1: Individual negotiation style					
1.1 Individual view	1.1.1Personal opinions	**1.2 IT Tools**	1.2.1 Traditional methods	**1.3 Negotiation consistency**	1.3.1 Style
	1.1.2 Personal attitude		1.2.2 New methods		1.3.2 Structure
	1.1.3 Outcome orientation		1.2.3 Practices		1.3.3 Flexibility

Theme 2: View on multicultural aspects					
2.1 Recognition of extra-challenges	2.1.1 Awareness	**2.2 Recognition of cultural diversity**	2.2.1 Own cultural view	**2.3 Cultural Intelligence**	2.3.1 Openness
	2.1.2 Difficulty		2.2.2 Dimensions of culture		2.3.2 Knowledge
	2.1.3 Additional actions		2.2.3 Diversity		2.3.3 Adaptability

Theme 3: Organizational influence				
3.1 Organizational modus operandi	3.1.1 Procedures		**3.2 Cultural orientation**	3.2.1 Cultural background preference
	3.1.2 Protocol			3.2.2 Business orientation preference
	3.1.3 Imposition			3.2.2 Elasticity
3.3 Top management involvement	3.3.1 Actions		**3.4. Contractual aspects**	3.4.1 Money
	3.3.2 Delegations			3.4.2 Time
	3.3.3 Support			3.4.3 Performance

Theme 4: Elements of Trust							
4.1 Confidence level	4.1.1 Compliance	**4.2 Relationship status**	4.2.1 Previous history	**4.3 Other party neg style**	4.3.1 Responsiveness		
	4.1.2 Pre-qualification		4.2.2 Referrals		4.3.2 Common goals		
	4.1.3 Adherence		4.2.3 Interrelations		4.3.3 Cooperation		

Theme 5: Market Conditions				
5.1 Evolving market	5.1.1Continual changes	**5.2 Highly competitive market**	5.2.1 Dynamic environment	
	5.1.2 Internationalization		5.2.2 Aggressive business orientation	
	5.1.3 Adaptation to new guidelines		5.2.3 High business velocity	