



**Title: Exploring the role of cross-cultural differences in Negotiation:
A study of the challenges facing immigrants when entering the labour market in
Ireland**

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of communication barriers due to cultural differences in the negotiation processes. The research focuses on the challenges faced by immigrants in the professional Irish labour market. The aim is to investigate effective techniques to reduce and overcome cross-cultural conflicts that may occur due to cultural differences, as well as providing recommendations to immigrants seeking to join in the Irish labour market.

The methodology used for this dissertation was qualitative, addressing the epistemology philosophy with a focus on interpretivism and an inductive approach. Primary data was gathered through 12 semi-structured interviews with European and Non-European immigrants who work with different types of negotiation in the Irish labour market.

The analysis relied on primary data collection to address the established areas of study after performing a literature review that analysed existing data contained in books, journal articles, case studies, and other reliable sources. The research has shown that language barriers and different approaches to interaction among cultures are the main communication barriers and challenges faced by immigrants when negotiating. This often generates misunderstandings in the work environment, consequently slowing, and affecting the negotiation process. By using clear and effective communication techniques, such as confirming and clarifying, in addition to prior preparation before interacting or negotiating with people from different background is effective in order to reduce and overcome communication barriers. Moreover, it has been identified that the awareness of cultural differences is crucial to reduce and avoid misunderstandings and conflicts generated due to communication barriers. This are important recommendation for immigrants who seek to join in the multicultural Irish labour market.

Introduction

Background and Context

Globalization has transformed the world into a massive village. Borders are now merely geographical constructs that have little bearing on the flow of people and ideas, resulting in cultural, political, and economic interconnectivity between individuals, companies, and nations (Singh, 2014).

We now live in the 'Age of Migration,' a time in which foreign migration has increased, globalised, feminised, and politicised. Cultures have become more diverse and dynamic as a result of technological advancements and increasing globalisation of the world (Castles et al., 2005; Favell, 2008). In a globalized world, multicultural diversities in businesses are commonplace. People of different nationalities are part of an organisation's workforce, which may be called "multicultural teams" (Kwadzo, 2014). These are very important resources for global companies, as with them, there is a deeper understanding of customer culture in an expansive range of international markets (Brett, Behfar, & Kern, 2006). According to (Barkai, 2007), multiculturalism is described as social, geographic, political, and economic diversity around the world. Because of its unique and general abilities, the multicultural workforce is a valuable resource for businesses, making cultural norms and values increasingly relevant. Furthermore, (Kumar, 2015) says that due to the globalisation of economies, production, consumption practices, and markets, it is more important than ever for managers at all levels to improve cross-cultural contact, intercultural negotiation, and decision-making sensitivity. The method of making decisions, reaching agreements, and reaching consensus has evolved, necessitating knowledge of cross-cultural communication skills.

When it comes to the interaction and negotiation among individuals from different cultures, the negotiation process may be viewed differently by them. *Different people negotiate in different ways* (Kumar, 2015). Individuals' negotiating styles, as well as their perceptions and interpretations of the negotiation process, are influenced by their culture.

Back to the past, throughout human history, different approaches to negotiating have developed. Each form, or approach, represents distinct human behaviours and strategies for dealing with the types of conflicts they had to deal with. First, with endless wars in early human history, the primal negotiating strategy was largely based on survival. During the Renaissance in the 16th century, the second type emerged. Internecine wars between city-states and the globalization of trade necessitated more conscious and strategic approaches to negotiation. The Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries cultivated a rationalist approach to negotiation that lasted until the early twentieth century. The rationalist approach to negotiation and mediation has been institutionalized

and perfected in the current fourth generation. This began after World War II in the mid-twentieth century, in an increasingly complex technological world. How people perceived the process, their ability to compromise, and the prevailing tactics and techniques created and employed during each negotiation phase were all modifications to the cultural, social, and political environment of the time. Each approach has adopted earlier forms' methods and techniques, and today's negotiations, regardless of conflict background, embody tensions and obvious traces of many, if not all, prior forms of negotiation practiced in previous centuries. Only some techniques or tactics have gone extinct, many of them labelled archaic or outmoded tactics, have been refined and adapted for modern use (Benjamin, 2012).

Bringing the negotiation into the updated context and for the purpose of this study regarding the Irish labour market. The complexities of negotiating inside organizations has become more complicated, as Irish businesses have become more culturally diverse (Jeong, 2016). Communication barriers, such as language barriers, poor communication, gaps in values and traditions, and other factors make the negotiating process challenging in a multi-cultural environment (Nowicki, et al., 2019). As a result, it affects the overall atmosphere of the business as well as the parties' relations. In an organizational environment, recognizing and comprehending the cultural values of workers helps recruiters navigate their workforce in different parts of the world (Hofstede, 2011). Thus, management must work to bridge communication gaps and resolve roadblocks. In order to ensure successful negotiations among people from different backgrounds, it is considered critical to reducing communication barriers during the negotiation process.

Problem Statement

When employees or organizations negotiate with clients from different backgrounds, it is likely that there are misunderstandings due to cultural differences. These differences can include education, values, and beliefs. This often creates communication barriers due to misinterpretations of a cultural component, leading to high levels of anxiety that ends in a communication breakdown between parties, consequently affecting the result of the work (Sudhiir and Sudhiir, 2016). In the last few decades, Ireland has experienced a great increase in cultural diversity due to the number of immigrants, which has also led to an increase in the diversified workforce in companies operating in the country (Kingston, 2016). However, as previously mentioned, misunderstandings can occur due to barriers of communication in a negotiation process.

Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to investigate the role of communication barriers due to cultural differences in the negotiation processes. The research focuses on the challenges that immigrants face when entering the professional labour market in Ireland.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify how cultural differences can affect the negotiation process in a work environment
- To identify the challenges faced by immigrants related to communication issues
- To investigate how negotiation techniques can be effective in cross-cultural conflicts
- To provide recommendations to immigrants entering the Irish labour market, with a focus on cultural differences and conflicts

The first chapter will review the applicable literature in terms of cultural differences and negotiation processes, as well as cross-cultural negotiations and cultural diversity patterns. Here, the study will also define and investigate the communication barriers that influence the overall negotiating process, which will aid in determining the key causes of negotiation failure. It will also define and investigate cross-cultural negotiation techniques and strategies, as well as providing understanding of the Irish labour market and its immigration policies. Following chapter one, the research methodology (Chapter 2) will outline the general structure of the study. In chapter 3, the primary data collected will be presented. The following chapter (Chapter 4) will analyse the data using the data analysis methods described in the introduction to the chapter. This will be accompanied by a discussion in chapter 5, followed by the conclusion.

Value of the Research

The research explores communication barriers and related issues faced by immigrants in Ireland. Analysing the best/most successful negotiating techniques can support immigrants seeking to join the Irish professional labour market, allowing them to better cope with potential cultural differences and conflicts. As well as Irish organizations, which are now culturally diverse due the great number of immigrants in the country.

A sample size through qualitative analysis is needed to investigate why such barriers can affect negotiation processes. This would have required face-to-face meetings, which has not been possible due to the current guidelines adopted by the Irish Government to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Chapter 1: Review of the Literature

1.1 Introduction

In an increasingly diverse society, the cultural composition of populations gradually becomes more cosmopolitan and the workforce in organizations becomes progressively multicultural (Kwadzo, 2014).

In this regard, the awareness of the characteristics and nuances of cross-cultural communication helps in the impacts on the perception of conflicts and resolution strategies to be used in different groups when dealing with conflict situations in the workplace, especially when it comes to negotiation with different backgrounds.

For the purpose of this study, the review of the literature seeks to better understand the role of cross-cultural differences in negotiation in a culturally diverse society. There is a need to evaluate existing literature and research that focus on negotiation, communication barriers, cross-cultural differences as well as the labour market in Ireland and its integration for immigrants. This review will be conducted through academics and professional papers, which will support the overall data collection and analysis efforts, providing contextual background through existing literature.

1.2 Cultural Differences in the Negotiation Process

1.2.1 Definition of Negotiation

There are many ways to research and define negotiation. It is a common process that is used by individuals to achieve what they want. We can also approach negotiation as a method of dispute resolution or just the process of buying and selling. Cambridge English Dictionary (2020) defines Negotiation as: *“the process of discussing something with someone in order to reach an agreement with them, or the discussions themselves”*. In the book, *The Handbook of Dispute Resolution*, (Patton B. 2012, p.279) offers this description: *“Negotiation can be defined as back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement between two or more parties with some interests that are shared and others that may conflict or simply be different”*.

In the renowned book on negotiation *Getting to Yes*, (Fisher, Ury, Patton and Fisher, 2008) simplified negotiation as the simple fact of getting what you want from others, they add by saying that it is a communication exchange designed to reach an agreement when you and the other party have common interests, however, one or the other is opposed.

With these definitions, we can understand negotiation as the act of reaching for something we want. Although it seems, due to the definitions discussed above, negotiation is not so simple. It is a complex process, that involves tactics, values, personalities, habits, and beliefs. Consequently, when dealing with cross-cultural negotiations the complexity of the process can be even greater, which will be addressed below.

1.2.2 Cultural Differences and Cross-Cultural Communication

Cultural differences, cross-cultural or intercultural communication depends on some variables. Among them, the operational definition of culture, however, this is an embracing definition. Some researchers simplify this definition only as communication between individuals of different nationalities (Kwadzo, 2014). Others have a broader view and define them as interethnic, interreligious, and even interregional communication (Gudykunst, 2003; Martin & Nakayama, 2007). (Sudhiir and Sudhiir, 2016) quotes Sir E.B. Tylor saying that *“Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society”*. According to (Keesing 1974), culture allows people to have an implicit theory about certain behaviour and in the interpretation of the other's behaviour. Through social interaction, different cultures teach and support different implicit theories.

Interactions between individuals can also vary among interpersonal and intercultural values. When personality traits and experiences are present in an individual's interaction, it is characterized as a more interpersonal than intercultural relation, especially if these individuals become more intimate, even though intercultural elements may still be present. In business or casual communication, sensitivity to intercultural factors is crucial to success (CommGAP, 2013, p. 1).

According to (Kinkhabwala, 2019), cross-cultural communication *“is the form of global communication pertaining to the different ways of interactions and communication being held between persons belonging to different culture”*. (Wiseman, 2003) claims that the ability to transmit a sense of adequacy and effectiveness of communication in different cultural contexts is what makes the person efficient among different cultures. Not only knowledge of the language, but also an understanding of the pragmatics of language, as the use of education when making a request (Gass & Neu, 1996). Furthermore, (Anderson, Hecht, Hoobler, & Smallwood, 2003) states that an effective communicator must be sensitive to nonverbal communication patterns in other cultures, being cautious with gestures that may have different meanings in a host culture. Also, the use of touch and proximity in a physical space.

A determining factor in the efficiency of intercultural communication is the act of avoiding ethnocentrism (CommGAP, 2013). This is characterized as the manner to see your own culture as correct and natural, stating that all other cultures are wrong and strange. Thus, an individual characterised as ethnocentric has extreme difficulty in communicating and adapting in a multicultural environment, especially when engaging in a negotiation process.

According to the research mentioned above, it is evident that culture is a broad term that encompasses many aspects of human mindset and behaviour, also influencing the way how individuals communicate cross-culturally. However, it cannot be limited to different nationalities only, but also what is learned and acquired from an individual's life experiences. This idea is supported by (Hoebel, 1972) who defines culture as a system of learned behaviour patterns that are unique to members of a community and are not passed down through the generations. (Northouse, 2007) adds saying that culture is a community of people's learned beliefs, principles, laws, norms, symbols, and rituals. According to (Hofstede, 1991), a social psychologist and anthropologist, regarded as a forerunner in the study of cross-cultural communities and organizations, culture "*is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others*". Hofstede also says that culture can be thought of as an onion that can be peeled layer by layer to expose its substance. Which the outer layer is mostly associated with culture, such as language, foods, clothing, etc. The middle layer implies a community's standards and beliefs, and the onion's core is the secret to effectively collaborating with other cultures (Gray, 2012).

(Hofstede G, 2011) suggested six cultural dimensions to determine the principles that define particular trends in order to analyse cultural diversity. This research was based on factor analysis to analyse the results of an IBM global survey on employee values conducted between 1967 and 1973. It has since been improved. The six dimensions examined by Hofstede are Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Collectivism vs. Individualism, Masculinity and Femininity, Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence vs. Restraint.

Power Distance: The degree to which less powerful members of organizations and institutions (such as the family) agree and expect unequal power distribution has been described as power distance. Reflecting on inequality. It implies that the degree of injustice in society is endorsed by both the followers and the representatives. It is clear that power and inequality are basic realities of every society. Uneven societies are a reality, however, some more than others.

Uncertainty Avoidance: Uncertainty Avoidance differs from risk avoidance, as it concerns a society's capacity for uncertainty. It shows how much society has conditioned its participants to be

uncomfortable or at ease in unstructured circumstances. Unstructured scenarios are unfamiliar, unexpected, and out of the ordinary. Uncertainty-avoidant societies use rigid moral norms, regulations, and guidelines, as well as rejection of deviant opinions and a belief in absolute Truth, to try to reduce the likelihood of such circumstances.

Collectivism vs. Individualism: The preference given to the collective versus individual rights and freedoms is referred to as collectivism vs. individualism. Individuals in non-collectivist cultures are linked by close personal and protective bonds, which are focused on group loyalty and family ties. Individualistic societies expect people to look out for themselves, and they expect everyone to contribute to a shared purpose while putting no pressure on one another.

Masculinity and Femininity: Masculinity and femininity relate to and describe men's and women's positions in culture and behaviour. According to (Hofstede, 1996), men's goals vary greatly from women's goals, and these goals can therefore be articulated from a masculine and feminine viewpoint. To put it another way, they also see a divide between male and female ideals. In highly masculine cultures, this component is often regarded as taboo.

Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation: This factor makes connects past actions/challenges to present and future actions/challenges. A lower degree (short-term) of this indicator suggests that customs are respected and upheld, and that steadfastness is appreciated. Adaptation and circumstantial, pragmatic problem-solving are seen as a must in societies with a high degree in this index (long-term). Short-term oriented poor countries typically experience little or no economic growth, while long-term oriented countries continue to grow to a degree of success.

Indulgence vs. Restraint: The newest dimension, added in 2010, is related to the happiness factor. This dimension relates to the degree of independence people have in satisfying their individual desires as a result of social norms. A culture that allows reasonably free satisfaction of simple and normal human desires related to enjoying life and having fun is considered indulgent. On the other hand, a society that regulates and controls the satisfaction of needs through the use of strict social norms is restrained.

Hofstede's study is very applicable to cross-culturalism and provides insights into various cultures, making it an important source of knowledge for negotiators who communicate with people from various backgrounds. However, the study has become somewhat outdated because of the continuous updating and interaction between countries, necessitating an upgrade. Besides, the sample used is very limited regarding to the large number of nationalities and cultures presented in the world.

One of the flaws in most cross-cultural research is that it fails to recognize the distinction between social and individual analysis, which equates to mixing anthropology and psychology. More than half of 180 studies failed to differentiate between variations in social culture and individual culture, resulting in multiple perceptions and implementation errors (Hofstede G, 2011).

In a business context, when culture is understood as a socially shared meaning system that coordinates social activities, and not only as nationality, the importance of culture in international negotiations becomes apparent (Jacob and Wilken, 2010).

1.2.3 Cross-Cultural Negotiation

Despite the several definitions of negotiation, the process is something in common that is present in all negotiations (Brett et al. 2007). Intercultural transparencies are severely affected by cultural differences in behaviour, communication patterns, perceptions, objectives, values, and norms of negotiators. Concepts of time, the distance of power or universalism, particularism are also differencing for intercultural negotiators, as well as decision-making styles. When negotiations reveal differences in norms and values based on culture, a conflict can be triggered, while negative emotions often build. However, when expectations in these areas coincide, positive feelings can occur that benefit the negotiation process (Guirdham, 2020).

“International business negotiations do not only cross borders, they also cross cultures. Culture significantly influences the way people think, communicate and behave.” (Salacuse, 2005)

According to (Kumar, 2014) a negotiation is characterized as cross-cultural when the parties involved in the process have different backgrounds and different ways of feeling, thinking, and acting. This type of negotiation is considered to be one of the most important skills in terms of global business, where they have the complexity of domestic negotiations, but with the added cultural diversity. In the book, *The Palgrave Handbook of Cross-cultural Business Negotiation*, (Ayub Khan and Ebner, 2019, p.117) explains that *“Cross-cultural studies of negotiation discuss similarities and differences between global cultural systems and their impact on business outcomes. They explain the behaviour of people, working in organizations around the world.”* Adding that cross-cultural research expands the range of particularities of negotiation, intensifying negotiation’s research questions, theories, and concepts. (Leung et al, 2005) says that culture is the main factor that influences the processes and outcomes of negotiations. Moreover, the cultural values of the parties involved can significantly impact international business negotiations, from the first to last phases of the negotiation.

Members of different cultures involved in a negotiation process may focus on different aspects of the agreement, whether it is a legal/financial, or personal/relationship. The implementation of a negotiation agreement can be emphasized in a particular culture, while the range and prevention of practical problems are enhanced in another's. For some cultures, the attention is focused on the details of the negotiated agreement, such as documents referring to the agreement. In other cultures, the focus is on promises to be kept, such as process and implementation. As an example, there is American and Japanese culture, where Americans negotiate contracts, on the other hand, Japanese negotiate personal relationships (Herbig, 1997).

Although these two nationalities have distinct cultures and represent the world's greatest business forces, further research into other countries and cultures is needed. Since Ireland is a multicultural country with a culturally diverse workforce, it is important for this paper, as well as other studies in the same field, to understand how each culture negotiates. Hofstede's study already discussed previously in this paper, shows a detailed study between several countries, demonstrating the influence of a society's culture on the values of its members, however, the study is not based on cross-cultural negotiations, but rather on a broader cross-cultural context, such as cross-cultural communication, international management, business, and cross-cultural psychology.

The task of managing cultural diversity in international relations is twofold: An inter-organisational basis, and companies that deal with negotiating partners from various cultures (Simintiras & Thomas, 1998). When an organization has a large diversity of nationalities in its employees, the issue of how to blend culturally in its negotiation teams arises. As a result, culture has also an effect on intra-organizational basis negotiations. However, current research does not fully address the two aspects of intercultural negotiations, the majority of studies compare only intra-national negotiators, but not on an inter-organizational basis.

Despite the awareness of cultural differences, it is important not to judge the negotiator only by their culture. Factors such as the negotiator's personality, age, previous experience, presence of interpreters, and organizational culture can influence the approach to negotiation. Communication, which allows the harmonisation of mental models, is crucial in intercultural negotiation (Guirdham, 2020). (Brett et al. 2007) believes that cultures reluctant to change are stagnant and predestined for extinction. Being a commercial transaction or a social relationship, cross-cultural negotiation is a process of communication and cooperation. It is about building a long-term relationship and understanding each party's needs and demands, as well as respecting their cultures and values (Ayub Khan and Ebner, 2019).

When it comes to the country analysed, Ireland has the intercultural approach which supports the integration of all national groups in society, where offers them an opportunity to express themselves in the negotiation process (Ayerbe & Bojikian, 2011). Negotiation is established among multiculturalism and assimilation, which increases the members' capacity for quick understanding and active participation.

1.3 Cross-Cultural Communication Barriers in the Workplace

Based on the studies discussed above, it is possible to see how cultural factors perform an important role as invisible barriers in the generation of conflicts in negotiation processes and in the workplace. Therefore, there is a need to detect these barriers and their impacts in the workplace in order to conduct data analysis and help identify challenges faced by immigrants related to communication barriers in the Irish workforce.

The dynamics of communication among cultures is the basis for multicultural communication. This is established in the identification of events present in the gathering of people from different cultures, especially when there is a greater amount of cultural variation in a relatively small space (Sael, 2019). In an organizational business context, when analysing cross-cultural communication, it is important to pay attention to the management aspect, as it deals with organizational culture, behaviour, leadership techniques and motivational policies. Considering these themes, issues related to management style, communication methods, and employee behaviour are significant, since they have an intermittent influence on cross-cultural communication (Munter, 1995).

Problems in the workplace due to barriers imposed by cultural diversity are quite common. With the continuous globalization and an increasingly multicultural workforce, businesses around the world must be willing to understand and eliminate those invisible barriers to cross-cultural communication which somehow can affect the quality and the flowing of work. Exposure to other cultures and provide adequate education on intercultural communication are essential ways to facilitate the elimination of these barriers. Besides, apart from a more favourable and lighter environment, there is also the opportunity for expansion and geographic outlook (Delecta and P, 2015).

1.3.1 Examples of Cross-Cultural Communication Barriers in the Workplace

With the purpose of making cross-cultural communication understandable and clear, barriers involving the communication process will be discussed in more detail below.

1.3.1.1 Misunderstanding and Divergent Languages

An organization where that has significant cultural diversity has many advantages. These include varied solutions for an issue according to the backgrounds of those involved, as well as a broader view of international markets. However, despite the advantages, some disadvantages may arise. In a team made up of people from different cultures, language barriers can likely lead to major communication problems, resulting in uncertainties and anxiety that leads to misunderstandings, the main barrier of a multicultural environment. This may become even worse among workers of different levels of experience, age, and ethnic background. In short, language barriers hinder the communication process making it slower and more ineffective (Chrenková, 2021).

1.3.1.2 Norms and Roles

Norms are rules established according to each culture where the correct and acceptable behaviour is determined. Roles are a set of norms destined for particular groups (Delecta and P, 2015).

All cultures have their own rules, norms and behaviours that are considered acceptable or not. When dealing with a multicultural environment, people often fail to understand and accept the norms of another culture, especially when there is a social hierarchy. That is the case of some countries in which different roles are assigned to men and women, where women are subordinate to men. When interacting with men in the workplace, women from certain countries may feel intimidated and that it is not right to speak or even look into the eyes of their co-workers. In this case, men who are involved in this situation may feel uncomfortable in some way. On the other hand, men with this cultural background have difficulties in working with women, particularly when being supervised by them (Chrenková, 2021).

1.3.1.3 Religion, Values and Beliefs

In addition to norms and roles, each person has their own values and beliefs, which are according to their culture. These prevalent cross-cultural values and beliefs must be properly identified by an individual in order to communicate effectively (Delecta and P, 2015).

For many countries, religion has an extremely dominant role, for example, the Muslim culture. Individuals who are part of this culture, according to their values and beliefs, need to go out to pray many times a day, or even request days off as they are prohibited from working on certain days. However, this may not be acceptable to a manager or co-workers who do not know the religion and consequently ends up making a hasty judgment (Chrenková, 2021).

1.3.1.4 Stereotyping

According to Cambridge English Dictionary (2020) stereotyping is “*to have a set idea about what a particular type of person is like, especially an idea that is wrong*”. (Intezari et al, 2017) defines stereotype as an assumption that certain values, norms, and attributes of a given culture must define the individuals belonging to that culture.

Thereby, value judgments and inadequate information about people lead to erroneous choices in cross-cultural communication. Cultural stereotyping increases and generalizes the view about people, leading to an increase in fear and anxiety (Delecta and P, 2015). Such stereotypes are the main cause of mistaken opinions about other cultures, consequently, creating communication barriers.

1.3.1.5 Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is founded on the idea that people consider their culture and customs to be the only right one and superior to other cultures (Yongkun, 2018). (Ayerbi et al. 2011) also defends this idea and believes that ethnocentrism is a thought where our own culture and behaviours are norms and parameters for all other groups.

Due to our own cultural experience, we unconsciously think that our culture is distinct from the other. Ethnocentrism plays a dangerous role in the workplace, which may raise the level of anxiety, as it creates the idea that the actions of others are wrong and ours are not. (Tinsley, 2001) says that members of multicultural teams face several problems as regards ethnocentrism.

1.3.2 Dealing with Cross-cultural Communication Barriers

In times of multiculturalism, a communicator must be efficient in their competence in intercultural communication. Such competence in cross-cultural communication allows an organization to achieve goals, respecting the values, norms and beliefs of the people affected by its systems. The development of intercultural competence within a business organization is essential to overcome the barriers to cross-cultural communication (Welch & Welch, 2008). Intercultural competence is defined as the ability to interact in a set of activities where the core belongs to a common communication code. This ability is based on knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The success of cross-cultural competence is based on three pillars. The elements that favour the orderly cross-communication process are cross-cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural awareness, and cross-cultural ability (Zahoor, 2021).

The main cross-cultural communication aspect is characterized as intercultural sensitivity. Such an aspect should be developed to promote to individual's competence of understanding cultural differences. With the development of cultural sensitivity, the individual will be able to understand self-concept, neutrality, and self-possession. The cross-cultural cognitive aspect focus on cross-

cultural awareness, which promotes increased cultural awareness as well as self-awareness in the process (Zahoor, 2021).

When it comes to the behavioural aspect, cross-cultural communication is characterized by intercultural ability. The development of this competence is characterized by the improvement of skills necessary for the accomplishment of successful intercultural transactions, which would bring financial and tangible returns for the multicultural organization. The development of social skills such as etiquette, interactive management, and increasing the quality of self-expression are some of the main areas of results in which the process is expected (Dues & Brown, 2003).

Developing the ability to appreciate characteristics and nuances of people from different backgrounds requires time and concentrated effort. These qualities are identified as knowledge, management of anxiety, understanding and intercultural competences and attitudes. These traits are characterized by respect, curiosity, discovery, and openness. Intercultural development coaches highlight the importance of attitudes as cross-cultural responses shape up (Linghui & Koveos, 2008).

(Delecta and P, 2015) mentions some methods that can improve cross-cultural competences, specified below:

Cross-cultural Knowledge Training: Basic cross-cultural culture training will enable employees to identify and understand different cultures in the workplace and qualify them to recognize and tolerate cultural differences, such as beliefs, values, perceptions, and also interpretations.

Mutual Benefit Policy: Mutual benefit policy application for all cultures must be present in organizations, so employees from different cultures may be able to benefit from a win-win situation.

Language Training: As the language barrier is the biggest problem faced by a multicultural team, adequate language training for employees who are more likely to interact with foreigners is very important.

(Kinkhabwala D, 2019) advise previous research on the culture of the different countries, so that cross-cultural differences are previously identified and worked on correctly. Especially when dealing with large businesses, and major legal and financial decisions.

Cultural diversity, from the correct perspective, provides the collaboration of efforts and the shared vision possibility. Eliminating threats, identifying, and exploiting opportunities are essential factors for efficient cross-cultural communication in the workplace.

1.4 Strategies and Techniques for Successful Cross-cultural Negotiations

In order to better conduct the objectives of this study, there is a need to investigate assertive negotiation techniques and strategies that helps in cross-cultural situations.

The communication approaches adopted by the parties are defined as tactics used to achieve the objective, the set of these tactics are called strategy. (Mintu-Wimsatt; Garci; Calantone, 2005) states that the parties involved in negotiations face two basic strategies, which are problem-solving (integrative) and aggressive bargaining (distributive). Problem-solving strategies lead to positive results and win-win outcomes. While the aggressive bargaining strategy may generate a win-lose outcome. For a more generalized concept, the integrative or problem-solving strategy is more used in business negotiations. This is since this strategy promotes cooperation and the establishment of long-term relationships. When it comes to cross-cultural negotiations, negotiators from different backgrounds are more likely to adopt this strategy (Eliashberg, J., G. Lilien and N. Kim, 1995). For a successful integrative negotiation, the interlocutor's skill to comprehend the points of the agreement and mutual beneficial gains, as well as the formation of resources is essential. By having a clear awareness of their personal and target interests, it is possible to achieve an integrative result, that is ultimately a win-win outcome (Jeong, 2016).

(Weiss, 1994) says that a negotiator who is more open and comfortable with the other's party style is more likely to encounter and succeed cross-culturally. However, even if a negotiator has good cultural competence and an ability to adapt easily, it may be challenging to adhere to behaviours that are not normal or common in their culture. Thereby, it is necessary to identify styles and interpret each other's goals, gradually starting the negotiation in sync, generating reciprocity to the process.

(Tadmor et al. 2010) believes that in successful cross-cultural negotiations, individuals are conscious that all people are equal, and they belong to a specific culture that gives them specific characteristics. However, according to the studies mentioned in the previous topics, in a business environment, the organizational culture and the cultural background of the employees greatly influence how negotiations will be conducted.

In fact, negotiation in cross-cultural environments may seem difficult and generates anxiety and fear. Negotiation beyond its cultural vision adds some factors that may be challenging to any negotiation, such as language barriers, body language and dress. There are also different ways of expressing satisfaction or not regarding the outcome. Some negotiation techniques can be used to overcome these barriers, redefining the process to an international context and thereby facilitating the process of

cross-cultural negotiations (Green, 2020). Bearing in mind that negotiation is a method in which one seeks what one wants, a set of variables and elements are also important for this process.

1.4.1 Elements for Successful Negotiations

Positive and collaborative negotiators do not support the ideas of bargaining and competing. Here, the negotiation is performed founded on fundamental principles that encourage friendship, harmony, and long-term accomplishments for the parties involved (Ayub Khan, M. and Ebner, N., 2019).

(Patton B. 2012) believes that some elements of negotiation may assist in identifying real interests, opportunities, and minimizing surprises, regardless of cultures or even gender. Divided into 7 elements, this structure was developed by the Harvard Negotiation Project where it seeks to define negotiation in a comprehensive way, as well as practices and strategies to be adopted. The seven elements are:

Interests: Interests are extremely relevant and necessary for the parties in a negotiation process. (Patton B. 2012, p.280) says that "*Interests are the fundamental drivers of negotiation*". This includes a party's needs, motivations, and desires. Identifying the interests of the other party is a determining factor for success in a negotiation.

Legitimacy: Adding value to the negotiation, making the other party feel that the process is being fair, honest, and legitimate.

Relationship: It is important creating a connection among individuals involved in the process. Negotiation becomes more effective when there is a good rapport between the parties. Separating people from the issues and being honest and respectful.

Alternatives or BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiation Agreement): In a negotiation, it is essential to prepare and keep in mind all possible alternatives, especially in a possible non-agreement, also including the possible alternatives to the other party.

Options: Being creative and generating options which can lead to the common interest of the parties, thus, the satisfaction in the negotiation.

Commitments: Determination in advance of all terms of the agreement, such as a signed contract or a formal proposal.

Communication: Regardless of the type of negotiation, communication is present in the process. An appropriate choice is needed regarding the type of communication that will be used, including the ability to listen.

Being aware of the basic elements of the negotiation, it is possible to prepare in advance and add value to the process, in this manner, achieving the outcome desired.

1.4.2 Getting Ready to Negotiate

As well as any other process, preparation is the key to a successful outcome. In a negotiation process, one of the exercises to be done previously is to explore all possible scenarios and alternatives, thereby, developing a more focused and accurate communication to be used in the process. Self-reflection is also an important step to be taken when negotiating, where the parties may be able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, thus developing effective strategies in order to improve their performance during the negotiation (Ury, 2016).

According to (Molinsky, 2016) in a work environment, the parties involved in a negotiation, whether they are employers or employees, tend to spend significant time preparing for dialogue with the other party. Negotiators must be competent in the matter to be discussed.

In a cross-cultural context, it is extremely important to learn the most common basic cultural components of the other party. Besides showing respect, it is a way of building credibility and trust, as well as helping in choosing the appropriate strategies to be used in the process (Zieba, 2021).

1.4.3 Separating people from the Issues

(Fisher and Ury, 1981) defend the idea of the separating issues and people during the negotiation, be it a transaction, or a partnership. They suggest that as a negotiator, the focus is the issue's solution, rather than paying attention to the personality, behaviour, or personality of the individual. (Green, 2020) also support this idea and adds that in cross-cultural negotiations it is important to negotiate issues separately, in order to create a space where negotiators can concentrate on the most relevant elements of an agreement without distraction, thereby, issues and positions become imperceptible among them in cross-cultural negotiation, making the process simpler and more effective in reaching the best outcome.

Negotiations should be based on exploring each issue, analysing its causes, and then proposing alternative solutions for resolving the matters that were brought to the table. Actively listening, understanding their needs and demands, as well as focusing on the issue, is respectful and thoughtful towards the other party, which may result in win-win outcomes for all (Ayub Khan, M. and Ebner, N., 2019).

1.4.4 Focusing on Interests

Based on the principles of (Fisher and Ury, 1981), (Ayub Khan, M. and Ebner, N., 2019) says that the interests represent the parties' long-term benefits and collaborative attitudes. The focus on interests rather than positions is an important role in the negotiation process. It is not about valuing certain concerns specified by a party, it is about identifying each other's purposes that are not exposed or said, and then working collaboratively to achieve them.

As already mentioned previously, interests are the essential drivers of negotiation (Patton B. 2012). (Brannen & Salk, 2000)

points out that although it requires a certain amount of time and effort to identify the party's interests in the negotiation, once that knowledge is acquired, it can be very useful to achieve mutual objectives. (Ayerbe & Bojikian, 2011) adds that the negotiation becomes more convincing when the target negotiator's standpoint is also influenced for personal gain.

1.4.5 Time to Negotiate

Based on the negotiation strategies mentioned above, it is possible to realize how preparation plays a decisive role in any negotiation process. When dealing with cross-cultural negotiation, the process is even greater as the knowledge about the other party's culture becomes essential.

This idea is supported by (McLean, 2010) where suggests that achieving a deep understanding of different cultures allows us to understand multicultural similarities and differences, which makes it possible to face and correct cultural differences that may generate offense and disagreements when engaging in cross-cultural situations. Understanding why people act and talk in certain ways helps proactively, avoiding conflicts related to cultural differences, thus generating mutually satisfactory results. Furthermore, (Huang et al, 2004) stress how comprehension of the cultural influence in negotiations decreases misunderstanding and uncertainty in the process. (McGinnis, 2005) adds that the awareness of such cultural differences is necessary to negotiate successfully.

When information is impossible or difficult to access, it is recommended to hire consultants capable of providing such information and detailed particulars of a certain culture in order to avoid any cultural misinterpretation that somehow can hinder the negotiation process. Such consultants usually have legal awareness in cases of legal disputes (Bult, et al., 2016).

(Zieba, 2009) suggests finding ways to bridge the cultural gap. This can be accomplished by adjusting to the other party's culture or by persuading the other side to add elements of our own culture. In some situations, adopting a combination of both cultures, or even finding a third culture if necessary.

Undoubtedly, negotiating in cross-cultural situations is not an easy task, it requires continuous learning, respect, and curiosity. Another important aspect is to deal with a negotiation in which the agreement is not reached. The feeling of frustration can be dominant, nevertheless, it is necessary to realize that a respectful no, may just be that right now is not an appropriate moment to set an agreement, however, it may be in the future (Green, 2020).

(Salacuse, 2005) argues that the world's cultural complexity makes it difficult for any negotiator, no matter how qualified or experienced they are. In contrast, (Peng, 2008) says that knowing how to achieve results in an international business negotiation and understanding aspects relevant to a negotiation process makes negotiators more successful.

1.5 Understanding the Irish Labour Market and its Integration Policy for Immigrants

Narrowing the study and contributing to the final objective of this research, which is based on promoting recommendations for immigrants who desire to enter the labour market in Ireland. There is a growing need to understand the immigrant labour market and how it integrates.

1.5.1 Migration Flows in Ireland

Due to the economic boom that occurred in the 1990s and early 2000s, Ireland experienced a significant increase in the number of immigrants, thus bringing considerable ethnic and national diversity to Ireland (McGinnity, Grotti, Groarke and Coughlan, 2018). In the last decade, the country experienced a period of mass transformation, regarding the economy and also the immigrant population, where it became a multinational society with a permanent and established immigrant population (Kingston, 2016).

In an updated and statistical context, the number of immigrants who entered Ireland in 2019 was 88,600, 1.9% less than the previous year (90,300). Among this number, 34.5% (30,600) are Non-Irish nationals from outside the EU, continuing to present a strong migration flow. However, it is estimated that this number has decreased considerably due to COVID-19 in the current year. Other important data to be discussed among the total number of immigrants (88,600) is that 66.9% of them aged 15+ (53,000) had a third level qualification. Accounting 12.7% of the total population, 622,700 non-Irish citizens were residing in Ireland in April 2019 (CSO, 2019).

Even in times of crisis, migration will remain to be present and important in the future, not only in Ireland but in other countries as well, as it moves the economy in certain areas of work and people's desire to migrate to a better life situation (King, 2012).

(McGinnity et al., 2011) says that in a basic context, when changing countries, an immigrant must adapt and find a place in the host society. This means finding a job, income, home, health, and education services, as well as developing a sense of culture politics and social norms.

1.5.2 Immigrants Integration in the Irish Labour Market

In an economic context, the term integration is applied in relation to the success of immigrants in the Irish labour market, not addressing aspects of social or political interaction. In this sense, the economic integration of immigrants has a direct correlation with their participation and accomplishment in the labour market of the host country. This integration of immigrants is a determining factor in promoting social cohesion and great economic expansion in the country, allowing immigrants to be independent citizens, thus facilitating the results among the community, the receiving economy, and the immigrants (McGinnity et al., 2014a; OECD, 2015a).

To talk about the integration of immigrants in the Irish labour market, it is necessary to understand the Labour Migration Policy in Ireland. Citizens belonging to the European Economic Area (EEA) have the right to reside and work in Ireland without any restrictions. Non-EU nationals are characterized as citizens who are not part of the EEA. Unlike EU citizens, their access to the labour market is regulated by the labour migration policy. Such citizens are not entitled to immediate entry in the Irish labour market and need legal authorization to access a job. In order to satisfy the needs of the labour market in the EU, in 2003 the Irish government adopted the Work Authorizations Act 2003. The government included regulations that limited NON-EU immigrants to highly qualified occupations (McGinnity, Grotti, Groarke and Coughlan, 2018).

(Ruhs, 2005) states that such changes, where a more restrictive licensing system has been introduced are based on the implementation of policies that preferences EU citizens in recruiting, thereby, performing a significant change in migration to Ireland. From 2007 to 2013 the number of work permits for non-EU citizens decreased dramatically, consequently creating shortages in some sectors of the labour market. In 2014, a series of reforms to the permit system was introduced by the Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014, considered to be the light of the economic recovery at that time. As a result, work permits for NON-EU citizens has increased again since 2014 (Gusciute et al., 2015).

In an updated context, in 2020 Ireland issued 16,419 work permits, data shows India in the top spot with 5,565 work permits, Brazil in second with 1,799 and Pakistan occupies third place with 976 work permits (Employment Permit Statistics 2020 - DETE, 2021).

NON-EU citizens with stamp 4, residing outside the EU, or those who have remained as a spouse, civil partner or dependent of an Irish citizen, as well as an international protection beneficiary, are entitled to access employment without the need of a work permit. Students from outside the EU who have residency with stamp 2 permission can also access the labour market for up to 20 hours during school time and full-time through holiday periods. Some graduates from outside the EU can access employment full-time with permission of the Stamp 1G for periods of up to two years after graduation (Arnold et al., 2017).

1.5.3 Disadvantages Faced by Immigrants in the Labour Market in Ireland

Between 2004 and 2007 the role of immigrants in the Irish economy was quite evident. During this time many Irish employers preferred to hire immigrants for meeting the needs of certain sectors in the labour market and also to bring new skills, in addition to their work ethic, potential and low cost (Moriarty et al. 2012). Towards the end of 2007, there was an economic recession that led to a high level of unemployment, not only for immigrants but also for natives. However, immigrants felt the impact of the economic crisis severely, accounting for 17.7% of the unemployed in Ireland (Barrett and Kelly, 2012; McGinnity et al., 2013). According to (CSO, 2016) the number of immigrant non-Irish nationals was 47,651, where only 25,866 of them were employed.

Based on the evidence presented, it is clear that migration in Ireland was and remains important for the labour market and economic growth of the country. However, some research shows that immigrants face some disadvantages in the Irish labour market. (Kingston, 2016) mentions some researchers, saying that immigrants face higher unemployment and lower wages. Even though they are highly qualified, immigrants tend to occupy lower positions for their professional skills. Interestingly, some immigrants have had some advantages in their results when compared to natives. Those are highly qualified in their field and are mainly fluent in English, from countries with English as a native language or countries from Western Europe.

In studies carried out on discrimination in Ireland, it was found that immigrants suffer discrimination in the labour market, particularly when applying for jobs (McGinnity et al., 2006; O'Connell and McGinnity, 2008).

Although migration in Ireland has grown considerably in recent years and has directly influenced the economy and the labour market, there are gaps in its literature, necessitating further research. This study shows disadvantages for immigrants in the labour market in Ireland. However, due to limitations with Irish employment data, there was a lack of information on the reasons that influence such disadvantages.

1.6 Summary of the Literature

According to the literature discussed above, it is possible to understand that negotiation is the act of seeking what is desired. However, this process is not very simple, especially when dealing with different cultures where misunderstandings can occur due to communication barriers related to different backgrounds.

Culture can greatly influence the way people relate to each other. Understanding the concept of culture as a set of elements that characterize a particular individual or group, such as norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, and ideas may help people to comprehend certain behaviours not only of themselves but also of the other. Social interaction leads cultures to interact with each other, teaching and defending different implicit theories about a given culture (Keesing 1974).

The concept of cross-culturalism is based on the idea of interaction between individuals from different backgrounds. In a multicultural society or environment such as Ireland, the ability and efficiency in cross-cultural communication makes the interlocutor effective among distinct cultures (Wiseman, 2003).

In an international business context, with increasing globalization and teams even more multicultural, problems in the workplace or in international transactions may arise due the barriers imposed by cultural diversity. Thus, the development of an intercultural competence is necessary in order to overcome these barriers. This allows organizations to reach objectives, while respecting norms, values and beliefs of people (Welch & Welch, 2008). Such competencies are based on abilities such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which essentially preach the understanding of cultural differences, cross-cultural awareness, and neutrality, self-concept, and self-possession (Zahoor, 2021).

Cross-cultural negotiations can be marked by difficulties. This is due to different nationalities, each having their own set of backgrounds, concepts, and personality traits, which often clash due to ideologies and beliefs. Careful work conducted through proper preparation and mutual obligations, as well as the basic techniques of any traditional negotiation, are expected to be effective in international business negotiations (Zarway, 2021). When dealing with cross-cultural negotiation, the awareness that all people are equal regardless of their culture, values, and beliefs, makes the negotiation process more open and effective.

Ireland, the study country, is home to many multinational corporations and has a large number of immigrants, and an increasing multicultural workforce. As a result, international interactions and negotiations are fairly common in Irish workplaces. However, due to varying backgrounds, such

interactions can become heated. A study will be undertaken to better understand these challenges and to develop potential guidelines for immigrants seeking to join the Irish labour market, which will be discussed in the findings of this study.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The concepts and methods of analytical thought processes used in a scientific investigation are referred to as research methodology (Sutrisna, 2009). Defining the methodology is important since it allows one to choose the best technique to develop research, making this study more practical, scientific, and accurate. The purpose of the study is to discover a new way of deriving significance from the phenomena under examination, rather than to have the complete truth about it (Snyder, 2019).

According to (Denzin and Lincoln, 2015), the research methodology or research technique is decided by the essence of the research question and the topic under consideration. The aim of this study is to investigate and comprehend the significance of constructed theories, which in this case is the communication barriers due to different backgrounds in the negotiation process. The research will concentrate on one aspect: how communication barriers impact negotiation rather than why they affect the process. As the research is of an academic nature and there are limited time and resources to work, the focus on a single element is necessary.

The methodology for this study was chosen as a qualitative research approach, as it is concentrated on collecting data through transparent and conversational communication. Qualitative approaches are thought to be capable of analysing complex situations and producing rich results while recognizing the researchers' impact on the research findings (Sutrisna, 2009). Comparatively, the quantitative method, (Kothari, 2004) explains their differences, saying that quantitative analysis is focused on assessing the quantity or volume of something. It can be used to define phenomena that has a numerical value. Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, is concerned with qualitative phenomena, such as those involving or relating to consistency or kind. For example, when looking into the reasons for human behaviour (i.e., why people think or do such things), it is often referred to as 'Motivation Study', which is a form of qualitative research. This method of study seeks to reveal the underlying motivations and expectations by performing in-depth interviews.

Qualitative research may seem appealing due to its rich outcomes, however, it may be difficult to conduct, resulting in poor research if not performed properly.

The methodology of this study is conducted through The Research Onion Method developed by (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2007), which illustrate the phases of a research process in greater detail. The following paragraphs describe a detailed justification of the methodology and methods addressed.

2.2 Philosophy

Aiming to aid researchers in conducting more well-informed and well-designed empirical (primary) studies, in addressing research methods, two of the most prevalent philosophical branches, namely ontology and epistemology, are discussed.

Ontology deals with existence and reality, actual knowledge (A. Crowther, 2020). This philosophy is concerned with 'claims' and observations made regarding the essence of fact, such as what happens, how it appears, what units make it up, and how these units communicate with one another (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Realism and relativism are the two dominant schools of thought when dealing with reality. Realism defends the idea where just one reality exists. Relativism, on the other hand, is the polar opposite of realism, implying that there are many truths (A. Crowther, 2020).

When it comes to Epistemology, this philosophy is about the knowledge observed by people. Epistemology is concerned with arguments that what is presumed to exist may be understood by the "knower or to-be-knower". Exploring the theory of knowledge, especially its processes, 'validation,' and alternative methods of obtaining knowledge in the assumed reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). According to (González, 2020) epistemological philosophy, assesses the application and essence of cognition to concepts such as interpretation, reasoning, and reality.

On how new knowledge can be gathered, there are two fundamental beliefs, realist, and interpretivism. Realist research should be done in an objective manner, whereas interpretivist research is subjective (A. Crowther, 2020). In a more detailed context, the realist research known as ETIC consist of the idea where from a far perspective, the researcher investigates the research area critically. This does not indicate that they are physically distant, but it does emphasize that the researcher prioritizes theoretical constructs and principles, allowing them to direct rather than being guided by the subjective meanings of the study participants. In contrast, interpretivist research or EMIC is described as a viewpoint from which the researcher derives an insider's perspective, where to determine the facts, interaction with people is needed. The researcher joins the field while conducting research on a specific subject. Once in the research area, the researcher tries to comprehend the social phenomena from the perspective of the research subjects (Difference Between Emic and Etic | Compare the Difference Between Similar Terms, 2015).

This research address philosophy epistemology with a focus on interpretivism, an Emic approach to research, based on analytical methods. The reason for selecting this philosophy was to achieve an understanding of the research question from the individual's perspective and thereby produce

common themes, reflecting on the specifics of situations, the sense in which those specifics are contained, subjective interpretations, and inspiring action.

2.3 Approach

Following the methodology, the debate goes on to the next stage of research methodology, namely the research rationale that is informed by the researcher's philosophical stance. The rationale of the research, the role of the current body of information gathered in the literature review, and how researchers use data collection and subsequent data analysis are all examples of research reasoning (Sutrisna, 2009).

Methodology or approach, focuses on systematic information about discovery and study, establishing standards on how information should be gathered. The approaches available for research are deductive and inductive.

The deductive approach involves formulating a hypothesis based on existent theory and devising a research method to test it. Deduction starts with an expected pattern that is compared to the data. Generally, when dealing with quantitative analysis, a deductive method would be used. In contrast to the deductive approach, the inductive approach is based on observations, which lead to conclusions, researchers obtain as much information as possible from participants and then look for trends. Inductive research results are context-specific and cannot be generalized to a wider population (A. Crowther, 2020).

(Sutrisna, 2009) says that inductive analysis aims to achieve a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question by using a "less-structured" approach. Rather than formulating a hypothesis, the inductive approach tries to be open to all potential outcomes while suggesting a series of additional data collection steps in order to address the phenomenon in question. According to (Carr, 1994), qualitative analysis tends to be inductive, which means that a hypothesis is formed, or a pattern of meaning is examined based on the data collected by the researchers.

For the purpose of this research, an inductive approach was more appropriate, where a specific observation was made, and from there, leading to the development of a theory. In this case, data was gathered through primary research, then conclusions were reached. The inductive approach is also a more suitable approach for small samples that produce qualitative data, the methodology used in this research.

2.4 Strategies

The research strategy details the researcher's strategies for completing the project. Experimental research, action research, case study research, surveys, and a systematic literature review are all examples of strategies that can be used (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2007).

In order to better understand the strategy chosen for this research, there is a need to comprehend the other strategies available and their nuances.

According to (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2007) the strategy of developing a research process that compares the outcomes of an experiment to the predicted results is known as experimental research. It can be expanded to any field of study and typically requires the consideration of a small number of variables. It is usually deductive in nature.

Action research mainly begins with a problem that the researcher would like to solve, where the fact that the researcher participates in the study is the most important aspect, not only as a researcher but as a participant as well, may influencing the outcomes. It is a step-by-step process that typically necessitates many iterations to draw a conclusion (A. Crowther, 2020).

The systematic literature review or grounded research is established in the existing literature that is considered important is referred to as necessary literature, and the study moves back and forth between the literature and empirical research before a hypothesis is established. In general, researchers do not begin with a set of goals in mind, but rather follow where the study leads them, and theory emerges as data is gathered. It is inherently exploratory, making it difficult to know when to stop (A. Crowther, 2020).

When it comes to case study strategy, this strategy is aimed at a single individual or group of people. It can provide insight into the unique characteristics of any example, as well as determine the importance of culture and context in determining case differences (Silverman, 2013). (Bryman, 2012) defines case study analysis as the evaluation of a single unit in order to evaluate its main characteristics and draw generalizations. In most cases, a researcher investigates a single unit in great depth.

Lastly, the survey strategy is primarily used to identify contributing variables among various data sets. It allows for the gathering of large amounts of data that will be used to address the research query. A survey is a sample of people drawn from a population, where there is a range of techniques, such as personal interviews, which requires a lot of time and effort, however, the results can be rewarding. Conducting telephone interviews may save time, but they are difficult to set up and nonverbal communication can be a challenge. Questionnaires are often used for quantitative research (A. Crowther, 2020).

The main evidence comes from the participants themselves, such as interviews or questionnaires (De Costa, et al., 2019). Specific views and direct thoughts are assessed in primary data collection.

The strategy carried out in this research was a Survey, where there is a representative selection of a population. The case study was also an option thought of as a strategy, however, it is a more used method to study organizations or entities. In this case, a selection of interviewees represents the broad population.

2.5 Choices

The choices are the fourth layer of the research onion, this layer assists in deciding if it is necessary to use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies or to use only one. (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2007) says that the study onion has three delineated choices: mono, mixed, and multi-method research.

The mono-method necessitates collecting only one sort of data, which can be quantitative or qualitative. The mixed-method enables researchers to combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies to produce a specific collection of data in a study. And multi-method, as well as the mixed method, quantitative and qualitative research can be used, however, executed separately and triangular (A. Crowther, 2020). (Flick, 2011) explains that the mixed method incorporates approaches to produce a single dataset, while the multi-method divides the analysis into parts, each of which produces a distinct data set.

In order to have a deeper understanding of the subject discussed, the mono method was the only method chosen, where qualitative research through interviews was carried out.

2.6 Time Horizon

The time horizon refers to the amount of time taken to complete the entire research. Within the study onion, there are two types of time horizons: cross-sectional and longitudinal (Bryman, 2012).

According to (Goddard & Melville, 2004) when analysing change over time is a significant consideration for the study, a longitudinal time horizon for data collection is used. In contrast, a cross-sectional time horizon is applied when studying a specific phenomenon at a specific time.

As a Longitudinal study can take a significant amount of time to concretize, which could render the research project's timeframe unfeasible, the time horizon for this research was Cross-Sectional, analysing the conflicts that occur due to cultural differences at the time of negotiation.

2.7 Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection and Analysis consist in the innermost and final layer of Saunders' research onion. The approach used at this point of the research has a substantial effect on the study's overall reliability and validity (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2007). According to (Bryman, 2012), the analytical methodology chosen affects data collection and analysis. This layer describes how the study data is obtained and analysed. The information gathered may be primary or secondary. Primary data is information gathered directly from the source. This can be achieved by using a range of methods, such as questionnaires, oral or written interviews, and so on. While secondary data is obtained from other researchers' work or views (Newman, 1998).

For this study, the primary data collection method was chosen. Since the data is collected and checked by the researcher, primary data collection lends credibility to the study. This also aids in drawing conclusions based on the most recent data, resulting in more reliable and current outcomes. As it is qualitative research, this paper directly addresses the opinion of 12 immigrants who already work in the professional labour market in Ireland through interviews, thus obtain first-hand knowledge information about the aim of the project and its objectives.

When dealing with a diverse group of immigrants from different countries around the world, it is not possible to identify all the elements of the population, therefore, non-probability sampling was used. This sampling was chosen as it entails selecting elements based on assumptions about the population of interest, which serves as the selection criterion. Probability sampling, on the other hand, is a sampling process in which every member of the population has an equal probability of being included in the survey (Surbhi, 2017).

In order to conduct the data collection process, a sampling technique must be selected. The technique chosen is determined by the sampling method chosen, either probability sampling or non-probability sampling. In this case, the sampling technique is based on non-probability sampling, where the most commons are convenience sampling, judgment sampling, snowball sampling, and quota sampling. However, the sampling technique appropriate for this study was self-selection, a convenience sample that is made up of research participants or subjects who have agreed to take part in the study (Oxford, 2014).

Through the self-selection process sampling technique, the research reaches professionals who deal directly with negotiation as the main work tool, in which freely chosen to participate in the study. This sampling technique was selected because it is useful, non-randomly, and offers ease of data collection.

Following the process, an in-depth interview with 12 immigrants working in the Irish labour market was performed. According to (Showkat and Parveen, 2017), one of the most effective ways to gather primary data is through in-depth interviews. In comparison to a simple questionnaire or rating scale, an in-depth interview is conducted with the goal of learning more about the interviewee's experience and perspective on a subject. A significant advantage of in-depth interviews is that they help uncover more informative and in-depth information than other data collection approaches such as questionnaires because they are more effective and less formal.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, where participants could follow the transcript while still being able to express their thoughts on the research question, as it gives the interview structure, but also enabling for some flexibility. Such an approach allowed the study participants to comprehend the problem from their own perceptions, making comments and reflections if they feel necessary. The focus is not just on "what", but also on "why" people think that way.

Due to the COVID-19 and the isolation measures adopted by the Irish Government, the interviews were conducted via Zoom. The data collected from 12 interviewees was analysed through thematic analysis of the transcripts. The objective of the thematic analysis is to identify similarities and repetitions in the findings since the interviews carried out had open responses.

2.8 Research Limitation

When dealing with non-probability sampling, there is no guarantee that the selected sample was represented accurately, therefore, it is unlikely to analyse the findings regarding the entire population, as desired. Also, by using the inductive approach, which produces a broader range of theories and conclusions based on a few observations (in this case 12 interviewees), the reliability of the research findings can be challenged. This is mainly because, all research participants may share the same situation, in this case, they are all immigrants dealing with cross-cultural negotiations in the Irish labour market, the context and perceptions of each interviewee are different. Only in situations where the original research's context is the same can interpretivist/relativist research be used. Lastly, the use of in-depth interviews as a data collection tool consumed a significant amount of time, causing some delays in the research project's timeline.

2.9 Ethical Guidelines

The application of ethical concepts or values to different topics and fields of study is referred to as research ethics. This requires ethical considerations in research design and execution. The attitude and habit of researchers to perform their studies in accordance with relevant ethical, legal, and professional structures, responsibilities and standards are known as research integrity. Researchers must not rely on plausible or false information to reach a conclusion. In order to ensure the precision of the report, researchers must keep track of every detail in the sample. If an individual is asked to act as a peer reviewer, they should be extremely vigilant and thorough, rather than being biased and superficial. The guidelines for protecting sensitive information such as personal details, personal information, and other personal data were safeguarded by providing informed consent.

Chapter 3: Data Presentation

A total of twelve interviews were conducted to gather information on the research subject. The interview transcripts are concisely presented in this chapter. The extensive transcripts can be found in the appendix, at the end of this paper.

Transcripts:

All interviews were conducted via Zoom and subjects gave permission to be recorded. The recordings and notes made during the interview process were used to develop this transcript.

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

“...I believe that the biggest difficulty is in the sense of the voice tone...”

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

“... I believe most of the time is a language barrier...”

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

“... it is just the accent that sometimes causes an issue, because it is a little difficult for them to understand me at the beginning.

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

“... there is a lack of communication because of the language barrier.

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

“... I could not understand why they were having that behaviour with me, I thought maybe they were laughing at me, it was a really awkward situation... that was a big challenge because it was difficult to cope.

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

There is always that language barrier, which is a challenge...”

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

I do not have challenges. It is mostly timekeeping and work ethics...”

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

The different approaches, I guess. Because different cultures can sometimes lead to small misunderstandings...”

Interviewee 9 (South African):

I think the biggest challenge has been the communication side of it. Communication is the biggest thing, and cultural differences...”

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

I particularly do not feel much different because I have been working in sales my entire life, and I believe that sales are most of the time, more relationship than any other thing...”

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

“... I think this is the big challenge we face when we are selling our product, people's doubt if we are real or not.

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

Well, I think the main challenge is of course the language because it is not my native language...”

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

“... it affected me a lot in the sense that I was even angry with the client, I thought he was very rude ...”

- Have you already failed to reach an agreement in a negotiation because of this?

No, but in some circumstances, the difficulty of dealing with some clients has already caused some disagreements in the business...”

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

When there are challenges in communication, everything takes a little bit longer, even small tasks...”

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

“... I feel because of my accent the conversation gets a bit difficult for them to understand. And because of that, I believe you tend to lose a lot of potential clients.

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

I think miscommunication...”

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

That affected a lot my productivity, my calls were not the way that I expected. I could not go through all the topics that I had in mind. It was really frustrating.

- Have you already failed to reach an agreement in a negotiation because of this?

That happened before. Nowadays that is not happening anymore, because I already build a long and good rapport with them...”

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

It did not affect to be honest, because there is always a way...”

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

Authority in some cultures, but it is not necessarily a cultural thing I suppose...”

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

“... I can say it is a barrier of the language for some other immigrants when they come over here...”

Interviewee 9 (South African):

It does not really affect if you know how to approach and manage it...”

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

“...If you are talking to someone who does not have English as the first language, and English is not your first language as well, sometimes the communication does not flow properly and can generate small misunderstandings.

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

“... doing the negotiations by internet, WhatsApp, Instagram, it can take a little longer, so maybe would be the time.

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

It can affect because sometimes it can create some awkward situations, which can lead to hard relationships at work...”

- Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

Language for sure...”

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

“... their perception or values are a little different from mine...”

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

“... it was a little hard for me to get used to this language. I meant their accent, the knowledge of the slang and the knowledge of the place.

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

“... I had to read a lot of emails from other former colleagues or colleagues, just because I needed to get on track with which vocabulary they use...”

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

“... I was struggling a lot to work with Indian people because they are really straightforward. The meetings were always a little bit tense, ... To be honest this is not the way that I like to work. I like to work in a friendly way. For me was super challenging.

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

Well, I would say that some people have difficulties following the rules, especially in times of COVID and everything.

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

The issue that I had was timekeeping ... I am originally from Germany where we are obsessed with timekeeping.

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

“... I think native English speakers, do not understand your struggle because most of them never really experienced it, it seems they do not have much patience...”

Interviewee 9 (South African):

Definitely language...”

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

I do not face many barriers apart from that, just the language and usually more with non-native English speaker.

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

“... When you deal with different cultures, it can lead to misunderstanding...”

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

“... make a certain difference between the approach of the language, ... Maybe a little lack of confidence, especially in the informal language.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

I currently deal with all this very well, ... I had to develop myself, obviously, but I had a lot of support from my co-workers.”

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

You need to be very patient ...”

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

To adjust, to blend in with the culture, and I would say the more you work, the more you learn...”

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

“... to have an agenda for every meeting, so you tell them the timeframe, you ask them if they want to include anything in the agenda. So basically, make sure that the meeting had a real value.

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

“... we have a script, and there is everything we need to do, you just need to follow it, step by step, ... we avoid slang, we try to speak as much clear as possible. Sometimes I try to repeat the question again in a different way...”

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

“... I use my hands, google translate, I try to be as clear as possible.

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

“... would be asking them again to make sure that they understood the question properly.

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

I would try not to argue back because I can understand that they do not have a clue of my culture or other people's culture...”

Interviewee 9 (South African):

“... I usually ask them again to make sure they understood, or maybe go into a Google Translate, or even go as far as getting somebody that speaks the same language to help me...”

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

I am always checking if I have got it right, I am rephrasing and confirming... I am also trying to be always friendly and nice to people, even though if it is a hard problem, I think they will be more open if you are like this.

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

Well, I think we need to develop patience, a lot of patience. Become more tolerant of those things and ask things again if you do not understand..."

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

I always try to explain again and make sure I am giving the right information. I try to speak as clear as possible, not using slang, or making any jokes, especially in a work environment.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

"... basically, before any negotiation, a whole preparation is made according to the client's focus.

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

"... I like to learn a little piece in their language, so that makes our communication more relaxed..."

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

"... maybe it would be some preparation with the data we have, I mean I make my research.

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

Ice breaker is very important, ... Definitely preparation as well. Also, a follow-up email, just making sure you leave a timeframe..."

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

I usually do a pre-call, ... I make sure that everything is clear for both, if I understood them if they understand me..."

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

"... the strategy would be more in a way of thinking. You just need to have the approach of how to talk with them. Also, you need to have good open ears, listening well is very important.

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

I particularly do not have any technique. I am a very straightforward person. Maybe just ask them again to see if they understood properly.

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

I would try to find a common ground to talk about and break the ice...

Interviewee 9 (South African):

Everything has to be prepared beforehand. So, would be preparation.

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

“... I am usually very polite, and I try to break the ice at the beginning, ... I also usually prepare all my meetings in advance, and I like to double-check after the meeting to make sure they understood everything correctly.

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

I research a little bit about the new markets that are coming to us, ... I have to always update myself...”

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

Be prepared for sure. As I am not a native speaker, I try always to improve my language, and to use the appropriate language, depending on the situation, ... I try to separate things and make the right choice in terms of approach.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

Most of them, yes, but we already had some flawed negotiations.

- **Why do you think these negotiations were flawed?**

“... I believe that the negotiations were flawed because of our competitors, ... others were flaws due to my communication. Unfortunately, I think I am still a little limited in terms of language...”

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

Yes, I had good reviews...”

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

Yes, definitely. I used these techniques and, obviously, I have done well with them...”

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

Yes, it is crucial to have a process in negotiation, ... I think a process is essential for any business.”

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

Yes, I do believe because I have been involved with that for two years already, and I can see that the component of the revenue for example has been doubled...”

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

I do, the main thing is, you will be happy if you can help someone and then that someone is happy because someone tried to help him or her. And everyone is satisfied in the end.

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

I think it is good, just to make sure that everyone is on the same page. It helps the work environment as well.

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

I think it is helpful, effective, or not, I do not have a better method to approach people with different cultural backgrounds...”

Interviewee 9 (South African):

Yes, I think so. It is obviously up to the people that are using it. But most of the time, you need to have an understanding of what you are doing.

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

Yes, absolutely, ... I have been getting a lot of good scores. I think I am going on a good path.

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

Yes, I think they are effective, but we are always looking for different new strategies...”

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

I do believe because until now I did not have any issue. I have got good results when I was doing my negotiations. I mean, I could reach my goals.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

“... I must develop the language more, understanding the market better, ... I believe personal contact breaks the formality of the process a little...”

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

“... you need to really understand that sometimes it is very hard for some people to get there, ... step back sometimes, and observe why people think and act that way.”

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

“... be a little bit more confident, also learning and training.

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

“... I think it is important to diversify, have more employees from different backgrounds, ... More female and also more inclusion in the company...”

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

I think companies should be even more multicultural and people should be a little bit more open to understanding different people, ... Also, try to read a little bit about the culture when you deal with them...”

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

“... First lesson, good listening... I think it is the patience that everyone is lacking. Okay, I would say patience and understanding.

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

I think having some sort of networking events and more certain work events where people can be passionate in a way to just be more relaxed...”

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

“... that I tried to be more understanding of different cultural backgrounds, but I found that it is very hard for certain Irish people, local people to understand different backgrounds...”

Interviewee 9 (South African):

I think learning the pieces of other people's cultures ... understanding that person and how they see life to me is very important.

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

“... I believe if you are afraid of talking to people, that could be a problem. Because negotiation is not about price is about relationship.

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

I think the most important thing, say what the customer wants, what they need, and then come up with a good proposal...”

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

I think keeping the work environment as mixed as possible, ... Also training or events in the companies about the cultures, it is always worth to people understanding a bit more about different countries and cultures...”

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

“... not to worry so much about the judgments, do not push yourself so much, ... respect cultural differences above all...”

- In general, do you think people respect these cultural differences?

Most do, but some are not so open to it, which is a pity.

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

First of all, do not be afraid to show your culture. Also, do not be shy, putting it in a simple way, if you want to learn something, you need to be open...”

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

“... I would say is to get used to the culture, ... Try to socialize, which will help your view and grow your confidence as well...”

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

“... to avoid being involved with foreigners. Your job is to make sure you are open, ... I think that is important, try to mix, try to diversify your friendship circle.

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

I think the first step is to make sure that you are involved with different people because then you are going to get more confident to speak in front of them...”

- Do you think there are disadvantages of non-European immigrants to European immigrants?

Yes, the first one is the level of English, ... Second, the visa...”

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

I would tell them to be themselves, but also you need to blend into the culture because you are coming to someone else country. So, you need to listen to them, you need to obey their rules, you need to follow their laws... And I think you need to learn. It is a learning experience, a big learning experience...”

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

Put yourself out, socialize and trying to hang out with people from different nationalities, and you will be able to realize different cultural differences and you will educate yourself and be open to different perspectives.

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

I would say, try to not get offended too much. Be more confident in yourself...”

Interviewee 9 (South African):

I think the advice would be not to overthink it. Also, if you feel that you can do something, then you must be able to go for it.

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

My advice would be just go for it, there is nothing to worry about, ... also try to understand, and try to improve as much as you can your English and your cultural knowledge.

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

I think it is important we respect and understand each other. Communicate is a healthy way to understand other cultures and see other perspectives. So, open your mind, be more tolerant...”

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

Always improve the language, for me is the main thing, ... try to understand that we are all different and have different cultures, be more respectful, understand that sometimes a joke in your country can be offensive to other people. Have a balance. Another thing that I think really important is listening...”

Chapter 4: Data Analysis/ Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, thematic analysis was used to analyse data obtained from 12 interviewees who are immigrants working with negotiation in the professional Irish labour market. Since the interviewees provided open-ended answers, thematic analysis was used to identify parallels and repetitions in the results. According to (Braun and Clarke, 2006), such a technique is applied in qualitative research in order to recognizing, analysing, and documenting data trends (themes). It organizes and explains the data set in detail. However, it often goes beyond this, interpreting different aspects of the research subject.

Furthermore, the approach used in this thematic analysis is theoretical (top-down). Such an approach of thematic analysis focuses on a specific aspect of the data, rather than providing a comprehensive overview of the data as a whole. The researcher theoretical or analytic interest in the field drives theoretical thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

After coding the data, which is the process of highlighting parts of a text, normally phrases or sentences, and creating shorthand labels or "codes" to denote their content (Caulfield, 2019), the primary data gathered yielded three themes and two sub-themes. Misunderstandings due to Language Barriers and Different Approaches, Clear and Effective Communication, and Understanding Cultural Differences are the established themes, with Preparation and Interaction Among Cultures as sub-themes, discussed in detail in the following topics.

4.2 Misunderstandings due to Languages Barriers and Different Approaches

From the challenges faced by immigrants in the Irish labour market, language was mentioned by 11 of the 12 interviewees, while different approaches were cited by 8. Such cultural differences lead to misunderstandings, also mentioned by the interviewees. Therefore, the first theme that emerged from the interviews was misunderstandings due to languages barriers and different approaches.

Interviewee 12: *"I think the main challenge is of course the language because it is not my native language..."*

Language is a necessary tool for communicating and stating facts in a structured manner. It aids in the opening of our minds to knowledge, allowing us to comprehend, perceive, and analyse data and information. Words, symbols, gestures, signals, and even sounds are used to convey ideas and feelings from one person to another. The difficulties that a person or a group encounters while communicating

refers to the 'language barrier'. It is also known as a cultural barrier because it occurs when people speak different languages or dialects. In the absence of a shared language, the term language barrier refers to the inability of two or more people to understand each other (Bhasin, 2020).

Interviewee 1: *"... I was very afraid to write an email, answer the phone, but that was certainly due to the lack of confidence that I had regarding the language."*

Interviewee 3: *"... there is a lot of back and forth between the client and myself because his English is really poor... So, there is a lack of communication because of the language barrier."*

Interviewee 5: *"... I could not understand what they were writing, literally, I could not understand their English, or they could not understand my English. I think it was a very shock, a cultural shock... that affected a lot my productivity, my calls were not the way that I expected. I could not go through all the topics that I had in mind. It was really frustrating."*

Based on the quotes of the interviewees presented above, the feeling of anxiety, tension, and frustration is prevalent.

Some studies on the impact of using a foreign language on non-native communicators focused on the discomfort that comes with using a different language. Situations involving spontaneous, unprepared expression, such as those that arise during a negotiation, are among the sources of such anxiety. Other sources could include differences in the speakers' sound and linguistic structure. Anxiety alters the communicator's emotional condition and has a detrimental impact on the effects of using a foreign language in all situations (Constantinescu, 2015). Furthermore, a negotiator might be concerned about their ability to manage the agreement, about negotiating with a foreign culture, or about the likelihood that the other negotiator may not recognize their cultural values and beliefs, leading to a negative outcome. While some degree of communication anxiety is natural, it may obstruct the negotiator's ability to interact effectively, potentially slowing down the negotiating process (Dunoskovic, 2016).

It is not unusual to experience culture shock when communicating with people from other cultures. Culture shock is a form of psychological reaction that may occur when operating in or with people from different cultures. While culture shock is common, it can cause frustration and stress when communicating across cultures. Part of the anger and tension stems from a sense of being out of touch with the other culture, alienation, or the recognition of cultural differences. Intercultural negotiations can be complicated by a lack of familiarity with a new culture and the discomfort that comes with it (Dunoskovic, 2016).

Interviewee 9: “... *Communication is the biggest thing, and cultural differences, ... you need to be so careful as to what you say or how you say it because it could be determined in an incorrect way.*”

Interviewee 10: “... *sometimes the communication does not flow properly and can generate small misunderstandings.*”

Interviewee 8: “... *The different approaches I guess, because different cultures can sometimes lead to small misunderstandings...*”

Interviewee 5: “...*I could not understand why they were having that behaviour with me...*”

Interviewee 1: “... *Perhaps the style of communication used was very different from the style of communication that I think is appropriate in a negotiation.*”

The interviewees’ answers above show a certain level of uncertainty regarding to failures in communications due to different approaches. Also, pointing to misunderstandings as a consequence of communication barriers.

Communication problems arise as a result of language differences caused by workers from various ethnic groups. Words spoken in one culture can have a different meaning in a different culture (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). However, communication problems include not only language barriers, but also differences in gestures, writing ways, and speaking styles among cultures. Thus, multinational companies often encounter difficulties and obstacles regarding international negotiation, team building, labour relations management, and interpersonal relations management (Spangle & Isenhardt, 2002). Conflicts and disagreements are unavoidable in a multicultural workplace due to differences in cultural backgrounds, norms, and beliefs (Lande, 2017; Cojocaru, 2010).

Different approaches can be understood as a factor resulting from different norms of each culture. Norms describe how people think (shared reality) and behave. They regulate people’s behaviour and are conceptually linked to cultural traditions. Certain habits are prescribed by norms, and once socially routinized, they become routines (Frese, 2015). Once become routine, when communicating with others, it is normal to exhibit those habits and behaviours. However, using a certain approach that is usual for the interlocutor may appear in a different way to the individual receiving the message, resulting in misunderstandings.

In terms of cultural differences, it is difficult to prevent misunderstandings when two cultures collide. Misunderstandings refer to the practice of interpreting another culture using one's own cultural norms,

modes of thought, and everything else that one is familiar with. Normally, people can only see the world through the lens of their own thinking (Yue, 2016).

If communication barriers are not handled properly, they can lead to unpleasant outcomes. They may also generate other communication barriers. Due to a lack of cultural understanding and intercultural communication skills, cross-cultural communication differences trigger confusion, prejudice, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism. People from different cultures must communicate effectively to achieve common goals and success. Negotiation and cross-cultural communication processes have challenges that must be addressed for communication to be successful (Menkel-Meadow & Schneider, 2014).

4.3 Clear and Effective Communication

In order to deal with communication barriers and avoid cross-cultural conflicts, 10 of the 12 interviewees emphasized clear and effective communication as an important technique. To obtain proper knowledge and to be effective in their interactions, interviewees highlighted preparation. Hence, the second theme identified in the thematic analysis was clear and effective communication, followed by preparation as a sub-theme.

Not only can the same words have different meanings in different ways, but they can also have different meanings when heard by different people with different perceptions, which may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, already discussed in the prior topic.

We have a natural propensity to believe that our understanding of an issue is similar to others. Parties' communication is influenced by their thought processes. And the way they negotiate is influenced by their communication (Jednaszewski, 2018).

Interviewee 5: *"... I make sure that everything is clear for both, if I understood them if they understand me..."*

Interviewee 12: *"I always try to explain again and make sure I am giving the right information. I try to speak as clear as possible..."*

The acting of making sure that the communication was delivered properly in order to be effective when communication was addressed by the interviewees.

According to (Kirkwood, 2012), words generate images, and images lead to a destination. As a result, the manner we interact has an effect on the results of our goals.

While clear meanings of communication vary depending on the context or circumstance, certain aspects of successful communication often foster a mutually common meaning (Butler, 2011). Communication is effective when a wide range of knowledge, including facts, views, emotions, desires, and experiences, is fully and accurately communicated, obtained, and decoded, resulting in mutual understanding (Barry, Lewicki, & Saunders, 2005).

One of the most important aspects of achieving win-win outcomes in negotiations is clear communication (Jednaszewski, 2018). The aim is to make yourself and your position clear, which is dependent on your ability to communicate. Additionally, the ability to influence others to behave and act in a certain way is a specific skill that is required for target achievement. Employers have a propensity to give priority to applicants with advanced communicative abilities. To be a good negotiator, one must be conscious of potential challenges, the importance of listening and nonverbal signals, as well as how both of these variables affect the interaction process (StudyCorgi, 2020).

Interviewee 1: “... *I believe that personal contact breaks the formality of the process a little. Because knowing the person personally, you can also see a non-verbal communication, and better understand the other side, better observe the style of that person.*”

Interviewee 2: “... *you need to explain and show people what you want them to achieve, rather than just telling them...*”

The act of negotiating is a communication exercise. In a negotiation, every action sends a signal. Anything we do (or do not do) has an effect on the other party. Conversations and silence are included in this category. Although negotiators can stop communicating, they do not stop acting in a certain way. Your actions give messages to the other party, influencing them.

Nonverbal cues are used to signify feelings and add context to verbal communication. To assess the complete contact package, skilled negotiators establish techniques in observation and listening. Understanding the other party's hidden feelings requires observing and reading nonverbals communication. Pay attention to what is being said and how it is being said, as well as what is not being said. Both of them may be revealing the other party's motivation (Hudson, 2021).

Interviewee 10: “*I am always checking if I have got it right, I am rephrasing and confirming...*”

Interviewee 4: “*In a meeting would recovering what the client said every time that is needed to change from one topic to another... basically, make sure that the meeting had a real value.*”

Interviewee 7: *“... asking them again to make sure that they understood the question properly.”*

In order to make sure that what had been understood was correct, avoiding back and forth, and misinterpretations, interviewees mentioned that the techniques of confirming and clarifying were very important.

Such strategies are verbal tools that help developing communication skills and gain a clearer understanding of what is being said. Negotiators who can use this approach are more effective in their daily communication as well as in their careers (Atkinson, 2011). However, it is important to avoid ambiguity, therefore, it is essential to ask questions to ensure that everybody is on the same page. Such questions can be thought of as a tool, and this tool is characterized by the language they employ. “If I understand you correctly, we decided on the following...” is an example of a good way to clarify what has been stated. This demonstrates that the individual is a considerate listener, that they respect the other side's viewpoint, and pays direct personal attention to detail to ensure that all is exactly what the other side expects (Jednaszewski, 2018).

Interviewee 7: *“I think it is good, just to make sure that everyone is on the same page. It helps the work environment as well.”*

Interviewee 6: *“...the strategy would be more in a way of thinking. You just need to have the approach of how to talk with them...”*

Interviewee 2: *“...you need to find a way to communicate because, after all, communication is the most important thing.”*

Communicating clearly and effectively is an important manner of avoiding misunderstandings and preventing conflicts that occurs due to cultural differences. However, the form of contact to be used must be selected carefully, as well as what will be presented when interacting and negotiating with people from different backgrounds (Patton B, 2012). In order to acquire appropriate knowledge for that, good preparation is needed.

4.3.1 Preparation

We think of preparation as the act of getting ready for a good outcome, and it is not different in any interaction or negotiation. One of the activities to be completed before the negotiation is to consider all potential scenarios and alternatives. This form of review can result in a more concentrated and accurate process, thus, a favourable outcome for all parties (Patton B, 2012).

Interviewee 10: *“... I also usually prepare all my meetings in advance...”*

Interviewee 1: “... basically, before any negotiation, a whole preparation is made according to the client's focus.”

A deep understanding of the culture that will be interacted with, facilitates the assimilation of differences and similarities. When it comes to negotiations, about 80% of the negotiation outcome is usually reached in the pre-negotiation process, and structured preparation helps to get the result desired. A structured negotiating preparation process necessitates devoting time to thinking about the result needed, the other party's values and how to approach them, and the alternatives available in the negotiation process (Hudson, 2021).

(Fisher, Ury, Patton and Fisher, 2008) points that is necessary to prepare a strategy for establishing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the opposing party.

Interviewee 3: “... it would be some preparation with the data we have, I mean I make my research.”

Interviewee 5: “You need to know what you are going to speak about on the call because you are literally going to have 30 minutes, and you cannot lose that momentum. That momentum is going to be crucial for you to close the deal...”

Before starting a negotiation, a good negotiator conducts research (Robbins, 2016). The research ahead of time is a smart way to be well prepared for presentations and discussions. Whether it is a negotiation, a presentation at work, or an important business meeting, having done some basic research allows an individual to present facts without worrying about their accuracy (The Importance of Research, 2021). Likewise, presenting confidence and respect, important elements when engaging in cross-cultural negotiations, as well as preventing potential conflicts that occur due to cultural differences. Preparation is a continuous process. Once a mutually beneficial agreement is reached, the preparation for the next debate begins.

Regardless of any technique, while engaging in a negotiation or a business meeting, people must be able to listen and talk respectfully to one another.

4.4 Understanding Cultural Differences

By analysing the answers of the 12 interviewees, words such as respect, learning, listening, patience, openness, and socialization were cited by all of them. Putting these words in the objective context, which is to provide recommendations to immigrants entering the Irish labour market with a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts, the last theme that emerged from the interviews was

understanding cultural differences. Such a theme gave rise to a sub-theme, which was interaction among cultures.

Interviewee 1: “... *respect cultural differences above all...*”

Interviewee 12: “... *understand that we are all different and have different cultures, be more respectful...*”

Respect for the Irish culture and the other cultures presented in the work environment was mentioned by interviewees.

According to (Lins, 2019), culture can be used to categorize “other” people, but it can also be used to respect differences and prevent assimilation and coercion. In order to build positive relationships with cultural ‘others’, whether they be clients, co-workers, government leaders, competitors, or strategic allies. A healthy respect for the other peoples’ culture and ideals expressed within is needed (Potter and Balthazard, 2000).

Interviewee 2: “... *it is very important when you are working with different cultures, you step back sometimes, and observe why people think and act that way.*”

(Umran, 2014) quoted Somavar and Porter (1991) saying that “*intercultural interaction to understands one must first understand human communication*”. And adds saying that in order to reach truly effective intercultural communication, it is crucial to respect members of other cultures as human beings, respect other cultures as they are and not as desired, respect the right of members of other cultures to behave differently from how we act. Listening carefully to the other is also a considerable form of respect.

Bringing it to a business context, according to (Singh, 2014) when people enter a group, they carry the principles and ideals that they have been taught with them. These principles and ideals, however, are rarely enough to help an individual excel in the workplace. Increasing our knowledge and understanding of the cross-cultural negotiation process can improve our chances of achieving international business success (Prestwich, 2007).

Knowledge as a result of learning is an important tool mentioned by the interviewees, not only in negotiations but also in general interactions, as it can help to reduce and avoid misunderstandings arising from communication barriers mentioned previously.

Interviewee 10: “... *try to understand, and try to improve as much as you can your English and your cultural knowledge.*”

Interviewee 9: *“Learning the pieces of other people's cultures...”*

(Lins, 2019) states that to live together, interact, and collaborate, people must have a basic understanding of one another, which necessitates learning about different cultures and identities. This condition necessitates people's awareness of various viewpoints within the world in which they reside, as well as the reduction of stereotypes, assumptions, and prejudice regarding various cultures and people.

Learning about different cultures is a perfect way to gain a cultural diversity awareness, which is crucial in the development of societies that succeed at problem-solving and improving a variety of situations. Either doing your own research or politely asking about the subject. Understanding the motivations behind one's behaviour helps to minimize "false labelling" and improve teamwork and communication (Suciu, 2020). Since every voice matters in a society, people must learn to be citizens who are able to demonstrate empathy and mutual respect to others (Hess, 2011).

Learning about other's people cultures is essential, but the improvement of the language becomes crucial to better cope with challenges faced regarding to language barrier, a huge issue for immigrants according to the interviewees. Therefore, constant learning is needed.

Interviewee 2: *“... if you want to learn something, you need to be open...”*

Interviewee 7: *“...educate yourself and be open to different perspectives.”*

Education is important to avoid hasty judgements and to be accepting and open to new ideas and behaviours (Suciu, 2020). Acceptance is the willingness to recognize that everyone has the right to be themselves. This entails having the freedom to express their own emotions, ideas, and views (Schmitz, 2016).

In order to be more open and accepting, thereby achieving cultural awareness, we should avoid judgement on other peoples' views and actions, because our judgment is always subjective, in the sense that it is based on our own perceptions and experiences, which are conditioned by our culture (Umran, 2014).

According to (Lins, 2019), people can transcend their own ways of being by interacting with others to learn and experience various ways of being. It enhances the attractiveness of countries, workplaces, and educational institutions.

4.4.1 Interaction Among Cultures

A significant way of understanding cultural differences is to immerse in them. Such interactions can also be understood as socialization, an important element mentioned by most of the interviewees.

Interviewee 3: “... *Try to socialize, which will help your view and grow your confidence as well...*”

Interviewee 5: “*I think the first step is to make sure that you are involved with different people because then you are going to get more confident to speak in front of them...*”

Interviewee 4: “... *try to mix, try to diversify your friendship circle.*”

Any cultural and social interaction among immigrants and locals, according to (Smith, 2011) generates cross-cultural understanding that enables all members of the community to achieve a degree of familiarity with one another and broadens their respect for all cultures.

As well as familiarity, confidence is evidenced by interviewees, not only related to the language but also the way of seeing other people's cultures and different perspectives, therefore understanding cultural differences.

In negotiation processes, interaction and constructive communication are regarded as critical components in avoiding conflicts and ensuring the effectiveness of negotiation processes. (Baker, et al., 1996).

Interviewee 12: “*I think keeping the work environment as mixed as possible...*”

Interviewee 2: “*I think it is very important when you are working with different cultures...*”

Interviewee 5: “*I think companies should be even more multicultural and people should be a little bit more open to understanding different people...*”

Interviewees also highlighted that companies should be even more multicultural because working in a multicultural community helps immigrants gain more confidence and avoid the feeling of being alone. Training and events in the workplace or via Zoom that encourage interactions will help employees learn and understand more about different countries and cultures while also adding a lighter atmosphere to the workplace.

(P. Singh, 1995) believes that differences between cultures do not have to be seen as divisive or negative to one culture or the other. A sense of 'multiplicity of identity' can and should be created by cultural diversity. The best way to minimize ignorance and bias while ensuring that employees cater properly to the cultural needs is to adopt a view of culture that unites rather than divides.

4.5 Summary of the Data Analysis/ Findings

The primary data revealed three themes and two sub-themes that are interconnected. Misunderstandings due to language barrier and different approaches as the effect of challenges faced by the interviewees in relation to communication barriers in cross-cultural negotiations. When communicating with the other party the technique highlighted for the interviewees was clear and effective communication to deal, reduce, and overcome such communication barriers that may generate conflicts due to misunderstandings. Preparation as the main tool to acquire prior knowledge of the interactions, thus, showing confidence and respect to the other party. Finally, understanding cultural differences as recommendation of the interviewees to immigrants seeking to join the Irish labour market, with an emphasis on cultural difference and conflicts. Highlighting interaction among cultures as an important way of improving cultural awareness.

Since language is such an important tool for expressing feelings, ideas, and engaging with others. The language barrier can be a significant challenge, especially in the workplace and during negotiations, often causing discomfort, anxiety, and frustration. Consequently, the negotiating process may be disrupted, and overall work productivity may be affected. Even when two people are speaking in the same language, in this case, English, accents may influence the process and lead to communication failures. Different approaches also play an important role to generate misunderstandings, as people can misinterpret what has been said.

The majority of the interviewees do not speak English as their first language, use clearer communication that is free of slang and language vices in order to improve the effectiveness of their communication. Confirmation and clarification of what has been said is one useful technique used by interviewees to avoid back and forth and misunderstandings. Preparation is the negotiation technique mentioned by interviewees before entering into a cross-cultural interaction because it allows them to consider all possibilities and options ahead of time. This not only provides the other party with more reliable and relevant information, but it also demonstrates confidence and respect to the other, important elements against conflicts.

Recommendations are the last objective of this study. Interviewees emphasised that it is necessary to respect, learn, listen, be open, tolerant, and patient, when joining the Irish labour market. Such factors promote cultural awareness and potentially reduce misunderstandings and conflicts in negotiations and the workplace among people from different backgrounds. Interaction among cultures, or socialization was highlighted by the interviewees as an opportunity to blend into the hosted culture and become aware of the language, costumes, and beliefs. Which can even facilitate entry into the

labour market. Interviewees also mentioned that companies should be even more multicultural and encourage interaction among employees, thereby, promoting more confidence to foreign employees, as well as a more comfortable environment.

It is clear that misunderstandings can trigger a slew of issues, however, by understanding cultural differences, it is possible to comprehend why people behave the way they do. You tend to sympathize with others as you identify with them. This makes it easier to understand one another and therefore, avoid conflict.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The results from the primary data analysis/findings will be presented in the discussion chapter to show how this review integrated the research objectives and analysis. The aim is to show how the results can be used to clarify the overall research questions by comparing the answers given by the interviewees during primary data collection to existing or new theories. The study generated discussions that assisted in answering the research questions by providing thorough discussion using the analysis presented in the previous chapter and due to the perspectives of the interviewees.

In order to give a clear and accurate explanation of the following topics, examples from the primary data gathered and literature review discussed previously will be presented.

This section is structured based on the objectives elicited in the introduction. Other issues can also be clarified now since there is a deeper comprehension of the subject at this stage of the research.

5.2 Objective 1 – The effect of cultural differences on business negotiations

The primary analysis reveals that anxiety, anger feelings, and frustration can arise due to the lack of understanding when dealing with cross-cultural negotiations. Consequently, decreasing the productivity and effectiveness of the negotiation. Also, slowing the process may cause the loss of potential clients and revenue.

According to the current theory discussed in chapter 1 (Literature Review) of this research, during a negotiation process, members of different cultures may concentrate on different aspects of the agreement, whether it is a legal/financial, or personal/relationship. In one culture, the execution of a negotiating agreement may be emphasized, while in another culture, the focus is on the range and avoidance of practical issues (Herbig, 1997).

Even though negotiators are located in the same country, in this case, Ireland, and speaking the same language while negotiating, the above theory allows us to see that each culture has its own way of negotiating. Such differences can be seen through the responses of some interviewees.

When asked about examples of communication barriers experienced with someone from another culture, interviewee 5 (Brazilian) referenced one situation when negotiating with Indian people. According to the interviewee, Indian people are very straightforward which often created a tense atmosphere for the meetings, by asking for numbers, values and what could be provided. The interviewee added by saying that this was not the preferred way of working, and that was very

challenging in terms of proceeding with the negotiation. On the other hand, interviewee 3 (Indian) while questioned about the techniques used when engaging in cross-cultural negotiation, said that the technique used was to provide market insights and numbers. According to Hofstede's dimensions, Indian culture has a higher level of masculinity dimension (56) than Brazil (49). A higher score on the masculinity dimension suggests that competitiveness, accomplishment, and performance will drive society, with success represented by the winner / best in the field. While a lower score on the femininity dimension indicates that caring for others and quality of life are the primary values of society (Country Comparison - Hofstede Insights, 2021). Thereby it is possible to note the differences in the style of the parties involved in the negotiation. Interviewee 3 (Indian) dominates in masculinity dimension and uses more numbers, values and what can be provided while negotiating. Conversely, interviewee 5 (Brazilian) favours a more friendly and conversational approach due to his lower degree of masculinity. Although the difference is not high between the two countries, it is evident that it has a significant effect on the negotiating, causing some failures in the process.

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian) said that when dealing with some clients from different backgrounds, the feeling of anger appeared, as the way addressed from the client was quite rude, according to the interviewee. Adding that unconsciously, the approach used in the response communication was rude too. As the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, where questions that are not in the questionnaire can be made, another question was addressed after this answer, which was if the interviewee has already failed to reach an agreement in the negotiation because of this. The following answer was no, however, this has already caused some disagreements in the business.

The case cited above supports Guirdham's (2020) theory discussed in the literature review, where it is stated that when negotiations expose cultural differences in norms and values, a conflict may occur, and negative emotions are likely to rise. In addition, (Murdock, 2016) compares culture to an iceberg, where people see behaviours formed by values below the surface. Conflicts and clashes occur when peoples' actions contradict the values and beliefs of others. Since there is no right or wrong way of doing things; it is a matter of cultural traditions, the contrasting values lead to disagreements and challenges.

Although conflicts may arise due to cultural differences, the impact of such effects on business negotiations differs from person to person. This can be noticed in some interviewee answers. Negotiations may fail for a variety of reasons, not only cultural differences. The process can be also influenced by the values gained during life and personality, as stated by (Hoebel, 1972) in the literature review, emphasizing that culture is a system of learned behaviour patterns.

5.3 Objective 2 - Immigrant's Communication Challenges

Addressing the second objective of this research, where is to identify the challenges faced by immigrants related to communication issues. It is clear that the language barrier is a huge issue to immigrants when working in the professional Irish labour market. As well as the different approaches used while communicating, timekeeping, and work ethics.

From the data analysis and literature discussed, it was found that language barriers cause significant communication difficulties in a team made up of people from various cultures, resulting in uncertainty and anxiety, which leads to misunderstandings, the major barrier in a multicultural environment (Chrenková, 2021).

The language barrier was mainly highlighted when the respondents are from outside Europe and do not have English as their first language, where there is a certain level of difficulty to communicate effectively while engaging with people from another culture. Not only in a business negotiation, but also in their interactions with co-workers. English is the common language used by business corporations in Ireland. Therefore, poor knowledge of this language leads to communication breakdowns, reducing the effectiveness of the work and slowing down the process.

Another important point to consider when it comes to the language barrier for immigrants is that, even though they are highly qualified, immigrants appear to be assigned to lower-level roles, making it difficult for them to grow within the organization. Successful immigrants are those who are highly educated in their profession and are mainly fluent in English, primarily from English-speaking countries or Western European countries. This assertion is backed up by Kingston (2016), mentioned in Chapter 1 (Literature Review). Reinforcing Interviewee 5 (Brazilian) speech, when in a question that arose outside the interview transcript that was if the interviewee thought non-European immigrants experienced any disadvantages compared to European immigrants. The interviewee responded by saying yes, emphasising the language barrier. According to the interviewee, in European countries the English language is generally stimulated and learned at an early age at school, unlike other non-European countries, citing Brazil. Also, the type of visa is mentioned, which sometimes makes the hiring process prohibitive. Indicating the obtaining of a suitable visa (1G) that is provided with an MBA or master's degree.

In addition to language barriers, the different approaches used due to cultural differences is a challenge as well. What is appropriate and common in one country, may not be appropriate in another. Interviewee 6 (Croatian) while answering the question about challenges faced with people from different background, stated that Irish people are very friendly, saying please and thank you for

everything, however, this was not the way she was raised in her country, not acting the same way, which was seen as rude here. Adding that it was a real challenge in the beginning when entering the Irish labour market. This is established due to different norms and roles in each culture. Similarly, in the research mentioned in the literature review by Delecta (2015), norms are rules that each society establishes decides what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour. People often struggle to understand and embrace the norms of another culture when interacting in a diverse environment.

Interviewee 7 (German) when responding to the same question, stated that do not face challenges, however, timekeeping and work ethics can be an issue. Looking to Hofstede's dimensions discussed in the literature review and the previous topic, Germany's culture is characterized by its individualism (67). Personal preferences, as well as a sense of duty and obligation, are an important basis for this dimension. Following the ideal of being "honest, even if it hurts," communication is among the most straightforward in the world (Country Comparison - Hofstede Insights, 2021). The feature was also cited by the interviewee. When cultures with a high level of individualism deal with a collectivist culture, conflicts may arise.

Furthermore, according to Spangle and Isenhardt (2002), the most common concept of culture is that people's practised norms, values, and beliefs shape their cultural identity, which leads to numerous generalizations, biases, and stereotypes that negatively affect comprehension of one culture to another. However, as discussed in the literature review, when viewed from the proper perspective, cultural diversity allows for cooperation and the creation of a common vision. For effective cross-cultural communication in the workplace, threats must be eliminated, opportunities must be identified, and new scenarios must be exploited.

5.4 Objective 3 - Effective's Negotiation Techniques in Cross-Cultural Conflicts

The findings of the comprehensive literature review and interview analysis shows that clear and effective communication is needed to avoid misunderstandings arising from barriers such as language and different approaches discussed previously.

Such findings are supported by (Mulyana, 2003), who stated that people must be effective communicators in order to avoid misunderstandings in interaction with people from different cultures, since relationships in any sense must be built via communication. However, this concept becomes a little superficial as it does not state what should be done to be an effective communicator.

From the data analysis presented in the previous topic, a technique used by the interviewees is confirming and clarifying, verbal tools that improve the ability to communicate and produce a mutual

understanding, avoiding cross-cultural conflicts. This technique was not mentioned in the literature review, but was presented in the data analysis chapter. Where it says that negotiators who use this technique tend to be more successful in communication and careers, as well as demonstrating respect and thoughtfulness (Atkinson, 2011; Jednaszewski, 2018). Crucial components for a good relationship with others. Moreover, further research about this technique is recommended, as the information acquired was from a small sample size, and literature about this topic was limited.

In order to be clear and effective in negotiations and interactions in general, interviewees highlighted preparation as a negotiation technique used before communicating or negotiating with people from different backgrounds. According to the interviewees, good preparation is important as it brings confidence and assertiveness to the process and a whole understanding of what is being done. In addition, gives time to understand the culture of their counterparty in a negotiation context.

The preparation is accomplished by research, tool mentioned by the interviewees. Similarly, in the literature review, (Kinkhabwala D, 2019) recommends prior research on the cultures of the various countries so cross-cultural gaps can be properly recognized and addressed. Particularly when it comes to important legal and financial decisions within large organisations.

Another similarity presented in the data analysis and literature review regarding to preparation is the act of thinking about the outcome desired, their values, how to approach them, and the alternatives available (Hudson, 2021). Interviewee 6 (Croatian) when was asked about the negotiation technique used, said that the technique would be more in a way of thinking, finding an appropriate approach of how to talk with the other party.

The “icebreaker” was also pointed at as a technique according to the interviewees. This technique makes the other party feel more comfortable and breaks the formality of the process, leading to a lighter and more pleasant atmosphere, consequently preventing conflicts. However, there is no relevant literature in the field, requiring further research.

Furthermore, a negotiator who is more open and comfortable with the other’s party style is more likely to encounter success cross-culturally (Weiss, 1994). As mentioned in Chapter 1 (Literature Review), in a cross-cultural context, it is extremely important to learn the basic cultural components of the other party. Besides showing respect, it is a way of building credibility and trust, as well as helping in choosing the appropriate technique to be used in the process (Zieba, 2021). Such assertions give rise to the next topic, which is understanding cultural differences, detailed below.

5.5 Objective 4 – Recommendations to Immigrants

Finally, the last objective of this research entails making recommendations to immigrants seeking to enter the Irish labour market, focusing on cultural differences and conflicts, being understanding cultural differences the main suggestion presented from the data.

When asked about what advice the interviewees would give to immigrants, all the interviewees mentioned elements such as respect, learning, listening, patience, tolerance, socialization, and understanding others. All of these elements are implied to cultural understanding or intercultural sensitivity and intercultural cognition. According to (Zahoor, 2021) discussed in the literature review, intercultural sensitivity and intercultural cognition are important cross-cultural communication aspects. The development of these aspects creates individuals' ability to understand cultural differences, as well as self-awareness. The literature review also mentions (McLean, 2010), saying that when a deep understanding of cultural differences is achieved, it helps to perceive similarities and differences, better coping with cultural differences that may generate misunderstandings and conflicts. Furthermore, in successful cross-cultural negotiations, individuals are aware that all people are equal and that they belong to a particular culture that gives them characteristics (Tadmor et al. 2010). Similarly, interviewee 2 (Lithuanian) reflected that apart from the language barrier, if a person is open, and tries to think like the other person, it is possible to see that there is not a big difference and that everyone is the same.

The findings also show socialization as an important recommendation to immigrants. Socialization can be considered as interaction among cultures, according to the data generated from the interviews. Interviewees emphasized that talking with people, listening to them, interacting with other nationalities, and learning about other cultures are important before entering the Irish labour market. It will allow improvement of language and provide new views/perspectives of life, making the person open and understandable regarding cultural differences, especially in a multicultural country as Ireland. (Keesing 1974) mentioned in the literature review says that, different cultures teach and defend different ideas through social interaction, reinforcing the finding gathered from the interviewees.

Another important point to consider related to the interaction among cultures according to the interviewees is that companies must have more employees from different backgrounds. Interviewees spoke positively about promoting events that interact with people, making employees more comfortable among cultures and an enjoyable environment. Thus, a workplace full of confident people, with different perspectives, broad knowledge can be free of misunderstandings and conflicts.

As stated in the literature review, intercultural awareness is critical to success in business and casual conversation (CommGAP, 2013, p. 1).

Luckily, according to Hofstede's dimensions, Ireland scores 35 on uncertainty avoidance, which is relatively low. To the Irish labour market, it is important to have ideas, and it is commendable to be creative. Irish companies value innovation and are constantly seeking new approaches to problems (Country Comparison - Hofstede Insights, 2021). This can be encouraging for immigrants seeking to enter the Irish labour market. The literature presented in chapter 1 says that a multicultural organization has advantages in terms of different solutions for an issue because of their employee's backgrounds, as well as a broader view for international markets (Chrenková, 2021), which may lead to expansion and business more profitable. Such information may be relevant when engaging in a selection process.

Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate the role of communication barriers due to cultural differences in the negotiation processes. The research focused on the challenges faced by immigrants when entering the professional labour market in Ireland. Based on qualitative analysis, it has been found that communication barriers such as language barriers and different approaches used due to divergent cultural norms and values of the parties involved, prejudices the effectiveness of cross-cultural negotiations. This causes back and forth and small disagreements, consequently slowing the process. When entering the Irish labour market, immigrants face challenges such as misunderstandings related to cultural differences. This generates negative feelings such as anxiety, frustration, and lack of confidence. Analysis of the interviews showed that most of these issues happen at the start of immigrants' professional career in Ireland.

This research is qualitative in nature, based on epistemology philosophy with a focus on interpretivism, directly addressing the opinion of 12 immigrants who currently work in the Irish labour market by in-depth interviews, collecting data through transparent and conversational communication. Such methodology enabled first-hand knowledge and a possibility of understanding the research question from the interviewees' perspectives, providing new insights, and reflections related to different perspectives and ideas.

From the information presented through existing literature and primary data collected, it is evident that culture has a huge impact on how people think, interact, and act. People act differently according to their culture and the way they were raised. When two cultures meet and negotiate, it is likely that conflicts will arise due to their differences of language, opinion, values, interests, and the approach adopted in the communication. As described in the literature review, culture is the key aspect that influences the processes and outcomes (Leung et al, 2005). The negotiation process can be challenging or even stymied by cultural differences among people, however, it is possible to achieve success in cross-cultural negotiations and interactions by using effective techniques that concentrate on mutual understanding in order to overcome and minimize these differences and challenges.

The research has shown that clear and effective communication is the main technique to reduce and overcome communication barriers generated due to cultural differences in negotiation. The literature says that a person's ability to communicate a sense of adequacy and efficacy in various cultural contexts is what makes them successful across cultures (Wiseman, 2003). Confirming and clarifying was indicated as a useful verbal tool to make communication truly effective. By being sure about what has been stated in the process, parties can avoid misunderstandings and conflicts that may occur.

Primary data highlighted preparation as a technique to have proper knowledge about the other party's culture and the subject that will be discussed in the process. Preparation can demonstrate clarity, confidence, and respect towards the other. Such a technique appears to be effective in closing agreements between the parties as well. Adequate literature about confirming and clarifying was not found, therefore, further research is recommended to obtain a deeper knowledge to better help people in terms of effective cross-cultural communication.

Similarities among literature and primary data about disadvantages faced by immigrants when entering the labour market in Ireland was observed. Immigrants tend to occupy positions that are below their professional abilities, however, some immigrants have had success, occupying higher positions, including management. These individuals are mainly fluent in English or are from Western European countries (Kingston, 2016). This was reinforced through conducting the interviews. Interviewees who held higher positions, were all English native speakers or from European countries. Thus, it can be concluded that the language barrier is a huge issue for immigrants, as well as an appropriate visa. However, a deep understanding of these disadvantages between European and Non-European immigrants has not been achieved due to the lack of Irish data and a relatively small sample size used in the primary research. Additional studies on the subject are needed to provide further information to immigrants who seek to enter and occupy higher positions in the Irish labour market.

According to the literature and primary data presented in this research, understanding cultural differences including respect, learning, listening, patience, and interaction among cultures promotes cultural sensitivity or cultural awareness. This is extremely important when engaging with people from different backgrounds, in order to be effective when communicating, and to avoid misunderstanding and conflicts. Whether in a negotiation, business meeting or a simple personal interaction, it is important to understand that everyone is equal, regardless of their language, norms, values, and beliefs. This is a positive approach that can be used to obtain success in cross-cultural negotiation, or interactions in general. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Irish labour market values ideas, innovation, creativity and constantly looks for new approaches to solve problems (Country Comparison - Hofstede Insights, 2021). These are characteristics that can be found in immigrants due to their different backgrounds and experiences outside of Ireland. This is a way immigrants can identify opportunities and succeed when entering the Irish labour market. Finally, a positive approach to learning English, showing respect, and engaging socially has been observed as essential to achieving successful cross-cultural outcomes.

Reflection

In terms of knowledge enhancement, my experience of conducting research and writing the dissertation was really enriching. From the start, I always wanted to talk about negotiation and cultural barriers. The choice of this topic is due to my background and my love for people and different cultures, as well as my desire to understand more about the issues that cultural differences can cause in a multicultural environment. After conducting some initial research and talking to people working in the field in Ireland, I was sure that I wanted to focus on this topic.

Throughout the project, I learned a variety of techniques to conduct research. I became acquainted with a variety of methodological options in order to choose the most appropriate methodology for this dissertation. However, the most important lesson I learned about methodology was that methodology and technique are important to take proper steps in decision-making and objectively understanding any given case. I am confident that knowing the value of proper methodology in circumstances will guide my future decisions and assist me in proposing suitable and appropriate solutions to future professional challenges.

I assume that the knowledge and understanding I acquired through the process will help me achieve my academic and professional goals in the future. The research and dissertation writing process has also helped me to identify areas where I can develop. The entire procedure was crucial in terms of honing research, writing, and critical thinking skills.

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Appendix

Interview Questionnaire

1. What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?
2. How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?
3. Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?
4. How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?
5. What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?
6. Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?
7. What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?
8. With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian A):

Interview conducted 10/04/2021 at 2pm.

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

I think the biggest challenge, mainly because my main contact with clients is online and by phone, I believe that the biggest difficulty is in the sense of the voice tone. For example, things that sound very rude to me, maybe in their nationalities was normal, but to me, the way that was addressed on certain occasions sounded quite rude. Perhaps the style of communication used was very different from the style of communication that I think is appropriate in a negotiation.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

I think mainly at the beginning, when I started to deal with these clients, it affected me a lot in the sense that I was even angry with the client, I thought he was very rude and did not like him very much, so maybe I was even rude too, but of course unconceitedly.

- **Have you already failed to reach an agreement in a negotiation because of this?**

No, but in some circumstances, the difficulty of dealing with some clients has already caused some disagreements in the business, which other people, for example, my manager had to intervene.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

Language for sure. The language disturbed me a lot at the beginning. I was very afraid to write an email, answering the phone, but that was certainly due to the lack of confidence that I had regarding the language.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

I currently deal with all this very well, and what helped me a lot in my point of view was my work environment. My workplace is very multicultural, with a lot of people from different nationalities, so I feel very welcome there, they helped me a lot in the beginning, not only with the language but also in dealing with clients. And they continue to help me until now. Let us say that they helped to shape me as a professional, especially in relation to the conflicts that may arise. So, I had to develop myself, obviously, but I had a lot of support from my co-workers.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

Yes, we have some techniques here. And the type of technique varies according to the client profile, for example, we know that there are clients who focus more on price, so my approach will be much more focused on price, another client will focus more on quality, so I reach for something more focused in quality. We do not have a big cultural difference in relation to clients, most of our clients are Irish, however, we have these differences in relation to the size of the company and its needs. So basically, before any negotiation, a whole preparation is made according to the client's focus.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Most of them, yes, but we already had some flawed negotiations.

- Why do you think these negotiations were flawed?

In some aspects I believe that the negotiations were flawed because of our competitors, I believe that they had a better strategy. And to be honest, I believe that others were flaws due to my communication. Unfortunately, I think I am still a little limited in terms of language, and this ends up affecting my power of argument with the client.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I think that a lot of this is a personal change, in the sense that I must develop the language more, understanding the market better, and at the same time, I think that if I had a personal contact instead of email or phone, it would be a greater facility in negotiations. I believe that personal contact breaks the formality of the process a little. Because knowing the person personally, you can also see a non-verbal communication, and better understand the other side, better observe the style of that person.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

The first advice would be, not to worry so much about the judgments, do not push yourself so much, because it can affect the quality of your work and putting you down. Another thing would be to respect cultural differences above all. On the other hand, I think that other cultures must also accept an external culture and understand the cultural differences that exist in a multicultural country.

- In general, do you think people respect these cultural differences?

Most do, but some are not so open to it, which is a pity.

Interviewee 2 (Lithuanian):

Interview conducted 14/04/2021 at 2:30pm.

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

It is circumstantial, to be honest, but I believe most of the time is a language barrier. That is for sure. That is always the main challenge I guess, and everything else is perception. I have dealt with a lot of different people from different cultures and if you are open-minded, if you try to think like other people, there is not a big difference, we are all the same.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

When there are challenges in communication, everything takes a little bit longer, even small tasks.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

I used to work with people from Asia, and sometimes their perception or values are a little different from mine. I think they see things in a different way because of their background, I really think that communicating with those people, you need to think a little bit more.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

You need to be very patient, I guess you need to explain and show people what you want them to achieve, rather than just telling them. Because then you can come about really being a positive person, especially for someone that maybe does not understand you correctly, the questions or what you are asking them to do. So, I believe you need to find ways. You cannot assume that someone is on the same level as you, I meant in language, so you cannot think that they are thinking the same way as you. Because, most likely, we have different ways of doing something, we will be doing it in different ways.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

In my experience, because I love new things, and in my career in business or whatever, I already met people from a lot of different cultures. So, what I like to do is, I like to learn a little piece in their language, so that makes our communication very more relaxed. I would say, maybe learning a few things from their culture, helps to make the communication closer and easy.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Yes, I had good reviews. I would say that it is not always about the other culture. It is also about you, you need to find a way to communicate because, after all, communication is the most important thing.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I guess if you're in a position where you are a leader of the team, you need to really understand that sometimes it is very hard for some people to get there. There are two directions, left and right, in some cultures would be better to go right, and in another to go left. So, I believe you need to let people find their own way. You need to let them choose whether to go because a lot of people would feel more comfortable doing things in their own way. It would be a faster and more relaxed atmosphere for everyone. Also, I think it is very important when you are working with different cultures, you step back sometimes, and observe why people think and act that way.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

First of all, don't be afraid to show your culture. Also, do not be shy, putting it in a simple way, if you want to learn something, you need to be open. It is not possible to learn something if you do not want it and if you are not open to it.

Interviewee 3 (Indian):

Interview conducted 15/04/2021 at 10am.

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

What happens is that the language is not a big factor for me, it is the accent, because obviously, Indians have a different accent than Irish and many immigrants in Ireland too. So, it is just the accent that sometimes causes an issue, because it is a little difficult for them to understand me at the beginning.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

Sometimes affects because when I am giving the clients the information about what we will be doing, the services that our business will provide, I feel because of my accent the conversation gets a bit difficult for them to understand. And because of that, I believe you tend to lose a lot of potential clients.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

At first, it was a little difficult for me because I had started a job and just arrived in Ireland, so it was a little hard for me to get used to this language. I meant their accent, the knowledge of the slang and the knowledge of the place.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

To adjust, to blend in with the culture, and I would say the more you work, the more you learn. The first month is difficult, the second month is okay and then from the third month, you start getting into the same, culture and you start getting into the same language and the same accent, some slangs that are used. So, get used to everything and then it becomes a bit easier. I would say when you are actually on the job and when you are actually working, you tend to learn by that.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

Not really. I mean I follow my steps with respect to my sales cycle. So, concerning the cultural differences are, I actually think the clients are more interested in how we would be helping their business. So, I would end up giving market insights and give them numbers, talk to them about numbers, and try to help them in that thinking process. Okay, so maybe it would be some preparation with the data we have, I mean I make my research.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Yes, definitely. I used these techniques and, obviously, I have done well with them. So, even in the future, I do not think I will move on to another strategy, I am going to do the same thing.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

With the experience that I have, I would say, if you are working in another country and you are an immigrant, obviously it is going to be a bit difficult for you to understand the language. I mean it may be the same language but again, coming back to the same point of understanding the accent, understanding the local slangs, and understanding the culture. So, be a little bit more confident, also learning and training.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

I would not give advice, the only thing that I would say is to get used to the culture. If you want to get into the negotiation world, you must talk a lot with people, and the best way to do that is in your initial years when you are studying. Try to socialize, which will help your view and grow your confidence as well. And when you actually start working, this is going to be a plus point always.

Interviewee 4 (Spanish):

Interview conducted 17/04/2021 at 4pm

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

I am currently in a situation where there is a client with a pending invoice. And the issue here is, I am explaining to this client the different payment methods that we can offer him. And there is a lot of back and forth between the client and myself because his English is really poor. Even if he is only by writing emails his English is not good. So, there is a lack of communication because of the language barrier.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

I think miscommunication. I have an example, in my company we were offering an incentive for clients that were coming back to the platform. So, let us say you had a client, they stopped spending, and then we wanted them to spend again, basically, we call them term accounts, which means that we give them an incentive to make them spend again. So, basically in 30 days, they had to spend 5k and then we would be being able to give them another 2k for them to spend. So, in that scenario, the client misunderstood the timeframe to spend that 5k, they thought that they could be spending the 5k in their own time.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

When I first started to work in a corporation in Ireland, not only in English, even in Spanish. I had to read a lot of emails from other former colleagues or colleagues, just because I needed to get on track with which vocabulary they use, and how to send an email, how to finish a business email. So even for my native language, it is something I had to kind of relearn from the scratch. Because I did not have the proper knowledge, for a business corporation maybe.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

Basically, in a meeting would recovering what the client said every time that is needed to change from one topic to another. One thing that is really important is to have an agenda for every meeting, so you tell them the timeframe, you ask them if they want to include anything in the agenda. So basically, make sure that the meeting had a real value.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

Ice breaker is very important, if the client likes to have a little of more a personal approach, you can really talk about anything at the beginning, just to make them feel comfortable. We are working but at the end of the day we are all humans, so I think it does make things more enjoyable and trustworthy. If you trust in the person you are talking with, for sure you are going to share more information, and that information might make the client go really dig deep into what they need. Definitely preparation as well. Also, a follow-up email, just making sure you leave a timeframe, to keep the momentum and it should be on the same day that you had the meeting, because the client will pay more attention to that email and the likelihood to close the deal earlier could be higher.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Yes, it is crucial to have a process in negotiation. So, for example in my job or in any job I have worked, with sales, or even with customer service, we have to follow processes, and they are very important because each process has something that you cannot jump from one point to the other. You need to understand the process because later you can check the data and see where the revenues coming from, see where mistakes are happening. So, by following the process you can later go back and through reports just dig deep into errors or ways that could be improved or more. I think a process is essential for any business.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I think companies could be more flexible with targets, that would help employees to feel more relaxed. Less pressure, less overwhelming, less burnout. And related to cultural differences, to be honest, I have never thought about it, we are not different. So, I know that may have a language barrier, but because we are treated equally, I never thought about it. But I think it is important to diversify, have more employees from different backgrounds, more women, increase the women rate if it is the case where the company has a higher percentage of a male. So, diversifying would be a thing that they should look at. More female and also more inclusion in the company. More visibility, maybe organizing activities throughout the year about women in tech and making sure that the company, encourage people to speak up.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

I think the first thing you should do when starting in a new company is trying to avoid being involved with foreigners. Your job is to make sure you are open. Avoid being only with people from the nationality as you, because if you do it from the first week, it will be much harder for you later to feel included in other groups. I think that is important, try to mix, try to diversify your friendship circle.

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian B):

Interview conducted 17/04/2021 at 5pm

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

This is a very good question because if you think about it, I have been working with negotiation for my entire life, but always was with Brazilian people, and nowadays I work with Chinese people, which is a completely different nationality and different way to speak with, I mean to communicate. I am going to give an example, when I started to work with them, in the first call I noticed that they were speaking between them and kind of laughing. I could not understand why they were having that behaviour with me, I thought maybe they were laughing at me, it was a really awkward situation. As time goes by, I noticed that they were like this, and now I think it is something cool, they tend to have this behaviour in all the meetings, and sometimes it seems they are not paying attention. And for me, that was a big challenge because it was difficult to cope.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

That affected a lot my productivity, my calls were not the way that I expected. I could not go through all the topics that I had in mind. It was really frustrating.

- **Have you already failed to reach an agreement in a negotiation because of this?**

That happened before. Nowadays that is not happening anymore, because I already build a long and good rapport with them. But at the beginning, 100% it affected a lot, especially in emails, sometimes I could not understand what they were writing, literally, I could not understand their English, or they could not understand my English. I think it was a very shock, a cultural shock. But nowadays because I have been working with them for over one year, we do not have this issue anymore, we really understand each other. To be honest, I love to work with Chinese people because they are super approachable. They are friendly, and I cannot see any issue anymore, I think the cultural shock was just at the beginning.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

Yes, I also used to work with people from Singapore, and I was struggling a lot to work with Indian people because they are really straightforward. The meetings were always a little bit tense because even though you want to go through all the points in the agenda, they did not want to pay attention to

the agenda, they wanted the numbers, the values, what I could provide to them. To be honest this is not the way that I like to work. I like to work in a friendly way. For me was super challenging.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

Basically, at work, we have a script, and there is everything we need to do, you just need to follow it, step by step. As we work with people around the world, and sometimes they may do not have the same level of English, or they have a different accent, we try to be, to deliver the meeting and to let the meeting and everything kind of the same. So, this is the way that we are doing, and of course, we avoid slang, we try to speak as much clear as possible. Sometimes I try to repeat the question again in a different way. Also, I need to make sure if I am in a quiet place, and there are no noises if I have a good internet connection, which is actually a huge issue nowadays.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

I usually do a pre-call. You need to know what you are going to speak on the call because you are literally going to have 30 minutes, and you cannot lose that moment. That moment is going to be crucial for you to close the deal. After the call, I send an email to them, with everything that we are going to discuss and of course I make sure that everything is clear for both, if I understood them if they understand me. After that, always make sure that I booked a second call, I send a follow-up email, with everything that we discussed and the follow-ups, what is the next step for me and for them.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Yes, I do believe because I have been involved with that for two years already, and I can see that the component of the revenue for example has been doubled. So, if it had not been worked effectively, in terms of communication that would not happen. So, I really believe this is a good sign.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I think companies should be even more multicultural and people should be a little bit more open to understanding different people, knowing that it is not because that person is from that culture that they are going to be exactly the same other people that you met in the past that was not really good.

Also, try to read a little bit about the culture when you deal with them. I did that when I was working with Chinese people and it was helpful somehow.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

I think the first step is to make sure that you are involved with different people because then you are going to get more confident to speak in front of them, you are going to get used to the different accents, and this is going to be much better for you. Also, maybe, enrol in a course that is going to be linked to the position that you are looking for, try to make sure that you are on the right path.

- Do you think there are disadvantages of non-European immigrants to European immigrants?

Yes, the first one is the level of English, speaking about Brazilians, I would say, 85% of the Brazilians people that comes to Ireland have a very poor English, very basic. It is not our fault, we do not have enough education in schools in terms of another language. While in Europe, they start to learn English since they are little, so most of them already speak English very well when they arrive here. Second, the visa. Even though you speak good English, even though you have everything, but if you do not have the correct visa, it is very hard for a company to sponsor you. They do not want to pay for that, this is a big issue. So, the best way possible is to do an MBA or master class and then you will the correct visa to try.

Interviewee 6 (Croatian):

Interview conducted 18/04/2021 at 2pm

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

There is always that language barrier, which is a challenge. Talking about the experience that I had working in the airport, that is the number one. The language barrier is a huge issue for some people. Second, was just the way how to approach someone, and how someone would react to your approach. Working in Ireland, Irish people are very friendly, nice, they say thank you and please all the time, and I do not do that back home, in Croatia. We do not say please or thank you for everything, so that was challenged for me when starting, they thought I was maybe rude, but I was not, that was just the way I was raised. We are kind of the same, but we are different.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

It did not affect to be honest, because there is always a way. It can be very challenging and hard especially if you do not have time. Time was the main issue for us in the airport because I just did not have time to spend, explaining something to someone for hours, the airport is busy. I would not say it was stopping me from helping someone, it does take a little longer maybe, but in the end, you managed to sort it out. The customer understands what the issue is.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

Well, I would say that some people have difficulties following the rules, especially in times of COVID and everything.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

In my case, working in the airport and dealing with different nationalities all the time, I use my hands, google translate, I try to be as clear as possible.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

While working with people face to face daily, it took me actually a good few months to realize how to talk with each passenger, the approach to use, and the main thing is, depends on where they are

from. So, the strategy would be more in a way of thinking. You just need to have the approach of how to talk with them. Also, you need to have good open ears, listening well is very important.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

I do, the main thing is, you will be happy if you can help someone and then that someone is happy because someone tried to help him or her. And everyone is satisfied in the end.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I think for people in general, that includes me as well. First lesson, good listening. Even though you are not happy, I am sure you are not happy all the time when someone tells you something that you do not like, but try to look at the solution from every possible angle. I think it is the patience that everyone is lacking. Okay, I would say patience and understanding.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

I would tell them to be themselves, but also you need to blend into the culture because you are coming to someone else country. So, you need to listen to them, you need to obey their rules, you need to follow their laws because even though we are all residents of this country, they have their own rules, and we all have to follow them. And I think you need to learn. It is a learning experience, a big learning experience and a big step in your life. In resume, listening, learning, and following the rules and laws, and work hard, very hard.

Interviewee 7 (Germany):

Interview conducted 19/04/2021 at 1pm

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

I do not have challenges. It is mostly timekeeping and work ethics. Maybe different productivity notions of what the productivity is sometimes when it is not nice.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

Authority in some cultures, but it is not necessarily a cultural thing I suppose. It depends on the company or position. What I mean by authority is when a person feels that they are not significant enough in the position to voice some concerns, because of their boss authority let us say.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

The issue that I had was timekeeping. When I say it is eight o'clock, it has to be 8 o'clock. I am originally from Germany where we are obsessed with timekeeping.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

As soon as you give any information or ask for feedback, see how the person has perceived the information. Okay, would be asking them again to make sure that they understood the question properly.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

I particularly do not have any technique. I am a very straightforward person. Maybe just ask them again to see if they understood properly.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

I think it is good, just to make sure that everyone is on the same page. It helps the work environment as well.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I think having some sort of networking events and more certain work events where people can be passionate in a way to just be more relaxed. Okay, a less formal environment where people feel they can change shots and discuss different views on non-work related topics, to kind of get to know the members and feel more comfortable with them.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

Put yourself out, socialize and trying to hang out with people from different nationalities, and you will be able to realize different cultural differences and you educate yourself and be open to different perspectives.

Interviewee 8 (Vietnamese):

Interview conducted 19/04/2021 at 4pm

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

The different approaches I guess because different cultures can sometimes lead to small misunderstandings. In my case, not much, but there are a few.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

I was lucky, it never affects my work. I can say it is a barrier of the language for some other immigrants when they come over here. For example, I do work with some people from different backgrounds, different countries and I found that often they do not understand the whole conversation, or in the meeting sometimes they do not understand 100% the point that I am trying to make, so it can be bad sometimes.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

Not now, but I experienced it when I arrived here. I think native English speakers, do not understand your struggle because most of them never really experienced it, it seems they do not have much patience, they do not want to carry on the conversation, or the questions anymore.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

I would try not to argue back because I can understand that they do not have a clue of my culture or other people's culture and they only know the general pain. So, it is easy for them to presume that because you are from a certain part that you will behave this way, where it does not apply to everyone. I just think it is not worth it, arguing with people.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

I would try to find a common ground to talk about and break the ice. Normally starting up with some general talks, like where they are from, food culture, or a certain place. Nice things to talk about, I think it helps to get to know them better.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

I think it is helpful, effective, or not, I do not have a better method to approach people with different cultural backgrounds, so I found this really useful because people are more open to you and it is easier to talk and understand each other.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

From my point of view as a foreigner here, it is easy to say that I tried to be more understanding of different cultural backgrounds, but I found that it's very hard for certain Irish people, local people to understand different backgrounds. What I found is, if you can be more open-minded, considered, put yourself in someone else's shoes, then you will understand how I feel.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

I would say, try to not get offended too much. Be more confident in yourself, because first, they do not really know who you are, you do not really know who they are. So, it is very easy to offend each other and if you take it very seriously, you might not get on well with a person for a long term, which is not good in a work environment, and in life as well.

Interviewee 9 (South African):

Interview conducted 20/04/2021 at 11am

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

I think the biggest challenge has been the communication side of it. Communication is the biggest thing, and cultural differences. Coming from South Africa, we are very abrupt and straits to the point. We do not like to go around, and the point here is, especially with the laws and the way things are, you need to be so careful as to what you say or how you say it because it could be determined in an incorrect way. So, I think those are the two biggest aspects.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

It does not really affect if you know how to approach and manage it.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

Definitely language, we obviously use Google apps and things like that where you can translate, it's a little bit more of a roundabout lane, and a longer route, but at the end of the day, you cannot argue with someone for not working or disallow somebody from not working for you because their English is not 100%.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

When I am presenting myself, so I have to think about who is my audiences, and most of the time, it would be a lot more visual, so that people can actually kind of see what is going on. I usually ask them again to make sure they understood, or maybe go into a Google Translate, or even go as far as getting somebody that speaks the same language to help me. I do not want my team to feel they are left out or feel that they are not part of the group, because they are, and they are all important.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

Everything has to be prepared beforehand. So, would be preparation.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Yes, I think so. It is obviously up to the people that are using it. But most of the time, you need to have an understanding of what you are doing.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I think learning the pieces of other people's cultures. That is something that I have had to do well. Coming from South Africa, we are obviously got 11 official languages in South Africa. So, you always come across somebody that speaks a different language, especially in Ireland. I think about 75% of my staff were from other countries, whether it be English speaking countries or Italian, it does not really matter, but understanding that person and how they see life to me is very important.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

I think the advice would be not to overthink it. Also, if you feel that you can do something, then you must be able to go for it.

Interviewee 10 (Brazilian C):

Interview conducted 21/04/2021 at 12am

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

I particularly do not feel much different because I have been working in sales my entire life, and I believe that sales are most of the time, more relationship than any other thing. So, what I try to do is just be very polite, in my emails, my calls. I think as we are foreigners, we tend to write things well explained when we are sending emails to clients, and for that reason, it is easy for them to understand what you are trying to explain.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

Sometimes, let us say if I am talking to someone from the UK, so they have different accents in the UK right, the Scottish accent is different, like from someone from the north, for example from Belfast. Some people have a different way of speaking, some people just speak really fast. So, I would say it is just time-consuming maybe. But inside my company, there are also people from Western Europe, from different parts of Europe, Italians, Spanish, so many different futures. And sometimes I feel it is harder to communicate with people inside the company, than outside, because if someone is a native speaker, and then you are trying to explain something. Even though you are not saying it correctly, they will automatically understand what you are saying, but If you are talking to someone who does not have English as the first language, and English is not your first language as well, sometimes the communication does not flow properly and can generate small misunderstandings.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

I do not face many barriers apart from that, just the language and usually more with non-native English speaker.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

I am always checking if I have got it right, I am rephrasing and confirming. If something gets really complicated in terms of understanding, I usually call them instead of exchanging a lot of emails. I think with verbal communication it is much easier for someone to understand something. I am also trying to be always friendly and nice to people, even though if it is a hard problem, I think they will be more open if you are like this.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

When I am in a meeting or on a phone call, I am usually very polite, and I try to break the ice at the beginning, just small conversations about the weather, where they are based. I also usually prepare all my meetings in advance, and I like to double-check after the meeting to make sure they understand everything correctly.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Yes, absolutely. I try to build a really close relationship with my clients. So, every time after finishing the negotiation, they answer a survey about the process and everything, and I have been getting a lot of good scores. I think I am going on a good path.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

If you are doing a cross-cultural negotiation, and if you are the person who English is not your first language, sometimes you will feel afraid of sending an email, checking if you are writing the right thing, checking grammar, very afraid of being in contact with people, and you should not be, especially talking over the phone. I think that is a really important thing, especially for negotiations, because even though we live in a technology era, where everything is so fast and practical, people still want to talk to someone, to know their lives. I believe if you are afraid of talking to people, that could be a problem. Because negotiation is not about price is about relationship.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

My advice would be just go for it, there is nothing to worry about. Apply for jobs and try to do your best, but also try to understand, and try to improve as much as you can your English and your cultural knowledge.

Interviewee 11 (Uruguayan):

Interview conducted 21/04/2021 at 2pm

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

As I work with sales, and my company is in an international context. I mean, we sell English courses to people who are not currently living in Ireland but intend to live. So, these people have to trust us, they want to make sure that we are real. So, I think this is the big challenge we face when we are selling our product, people's doubt if we are real or not.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

I would not say that it affects much, but I think if we have a physical place in the country would be better. Because doing the negotiations by internet, WhatsApp, Instagram, so it can take a little longer, so maybe would be the time.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

Yes, it happened, and I think it has positive and negative sides. When you deal with different cultures, it can lead to misunderstanding. When you communicate, especially when it is not your native language, you are making an effort and the other person as well, sometimes it is not their native language too. Even in your language when you are talking by WhatsApp or something it can lead to misunderstands, can you imagine in another language. And the positive side, I think you will grow as a person, your knowledge.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

Well, I think we need to develop patience, a lot of patience. Become more tolerant of those things and ask things again if you do not understand. So, it implies more patient from both sides, I think. The good thing is that Irish people are quite tolerant, which helps a lot.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

I research a little bit about the new markets that are coming to us. Even our own markets, I mean in our own country, depends a lot on the age as well, because nowadays in the new generation, teenagers are communicating, and they use different words, slang. So, I realize that I have to always update myself. The way and channels to communicate where we can reach this audience.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

Yes, I think they are effective, but we are always looking for different new strategies. Everything changes very quickly, especially with the current global situation. We are in a pandemic now, and that affects a lot the international market.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I think the most important thing, say what the customer wants, what they need, and then come up with a good proposal. In every communication process, communicate back to them with something that can delight them, try to be flexible as well.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

I think it is important we respect and understand each other. Communicate is a healthy way to understand other cultures and see other perspectives. So, open your mind, be more tolerant and I believe it will change your life for good.

Interviewee 12 (Brazilian D):

Interview conducted 21/04/2021 at 4pm

- **What challenges do you face while negotiating with people from different backgrounds?**

Well, I think the main challenge is of course the language because it is not my native language. So, sometimes I struggle to communicate, but especially because many of my negotiations are made through social media, it is not face to face, and I cannot see the person speaking, and I think it a bit harder.

- **How do communication barriers affect your work in cross-cultural negotiation?**

It can affect because sometimes it can create some awkward situations, which can lead to hard relationships at work. As an example, I worked with some Asian people, and I would not say they are less friendly, but I think they are shy, they are not very open, and I remember when people tried to make some jokes at work. They usually did not get it properly and sometimes they felt offended.

- **Can you provide any examples of communication barriers that you have experienced with someone from another culture?**

When I have to communicate my brand in my business through Instagram which is a social media, I need to be kind of informal, and when dealing with my clients I need to be more formal. So, I have this problem, make a certain difference between the approach of the language. Because through social media, people want to feel connected, and I have to be more informal, but as I am not a native speaker, I feel I cannot talk exactly the way I should do. Maybe a little lack of confidence, especially in the informal language.

- **How do you deal with communication barriers and cultural conflicts when it occurs?**

I always try to explain again and make sure I am giving the right information. I try to speak as clear as possible, not using slang, or making any jokes, especially in a work environment.

- **What negotiation techniques do you use when engaging in a cross-cultural negotiation?**

Be prepared for sure. As I am not a native speaker, I try always to improve my language, and to use the appropriate language, depending on the situation. Sometimes you really have to be more informal, casual, and in some environments, you have to be more formal and polite. So, I try to separate things and make the right choice in terms of approach.

- **Do you believe that the techniques used are effective in the negotiation process? Why?**

I do believe because until now I did not have any issue. I have got good results when I was doing my negotiations. I mean, I could reach my goals.

- **What changes would you consider necessary to overcome communication barriers and conflicts in cross-cultural negotiations?**

I think keeping the work environment as mixed as possible. I have worked in different places, and I think it is much easier and you feel much more confident when you are working in a mixed cultural workplace. Also training or events in the companies about the cultures, it is always worth to people understanding a bit more about different countries and cultures. This is going to help them to build better relationships because people will feel connected.

- **With a particular emphasis on cultural differences and conflicts. What advice would you give to immigrants who are considering entering the Irish labour market?**

Always improve the language, for me is the main thing. If you feel confident with the language, you will feel more confident to communicate, and you will be able to communicate better. Also, try to understand that we are all different and have different cultures, be more respectful, understand that sometimes a joke in your country can be offensive to other people. Have a balance. Another thing that I think really important is listening. If you want to have two-way communication, you cannot only speak, you have to listen as well.