

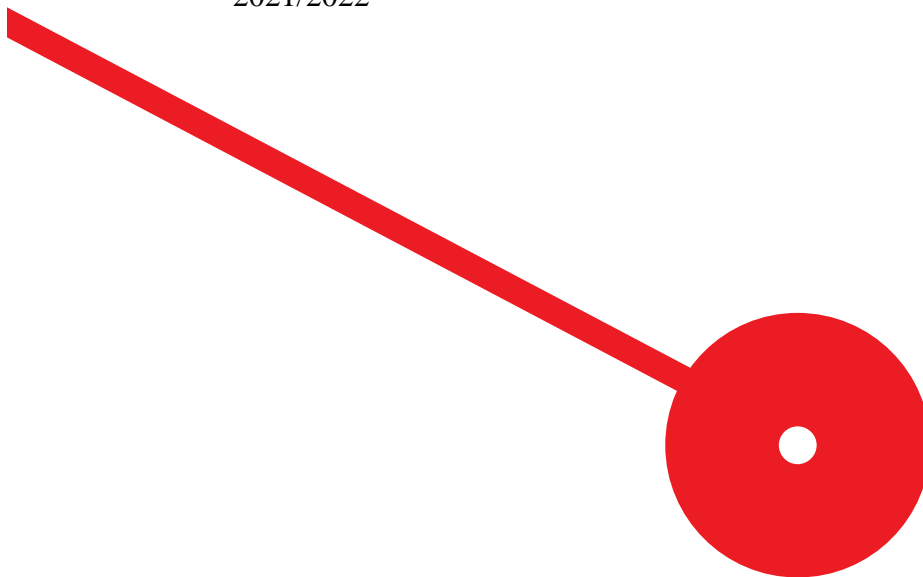


CultureWise: Analyze, Recognize, Maximize

Ana Rita Magalhães Lopes

Final version. *This version contains the jury's input and suggestions.*

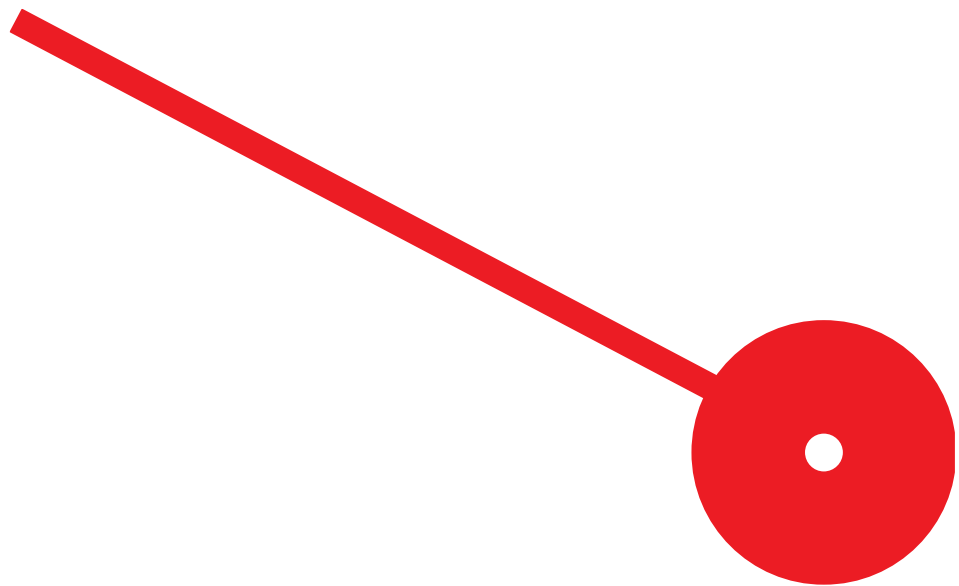
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CultureWise: Analyze, Recognize, Maximize

Ana Rita Magalhães Lopes

Trabalho de Projeto
Project Work presented to Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e
Administração do Porto/Porto Accounting and Business School to
obtain the master's degree in Intercultural Studies for Business,
under the supervision of Professor Marco Aurélio Ribeiro Lamas
and Carina Raquel Oliveira Cerqueira



Dedication

To my family, especially to my mother and siblings who have always believed in this project more than myself.

“Cultura não é ler muito, nem saber muito; é conhecer muito.”

(Fernando Pessoa, 1982)

Acknowledgements

During these two stimulating and challenging years, there have been people who have made this journey more rewarding and all the adversities easier to overcome.

First and foremost, I wish to show my heartfelt appreciation to my mother, Paula, due to the unconditional and continuous support, love and encouragement. I would also wish to acknowledge and give my warmest thanks to my siblings, Marta, Pedro and Tiago, for being my strongest support during this process, and for never letting me give up or weaken. Also, a great thanks to my grandparents and to my godparents, who were always caring, indefatigable and comforting.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues and the people who replied to the surveys conducted.

Resumo:

A cultura é um conceito em constante evolução e, por isso, o seu desenvolvimento deve ser estudado, compreendido e acompanhado, de modo a reconhecer as transformações próprias deste progresso. Vivendo num mundo cada vez mais globalizado, vamos gradualmente deparar-nos com mais e mais difíceis desafios relacionados com a globalização e respetivos desenvolvimentos tecnológicos. Portugal é um país reconhecido pela sua diversidade cultural e esta sua particularidade carece de competências relativamente à comunicação e interação intercultural o que pode ter impacto no mundo dos negócios. A globalização e consequentes fluxos migratórios tornaram as sociedades e as suas estruturas cada vez mais diversas a nível político, linguístico, social, económico e cultural.

Atualmente, as start-ups devem internacionalizar-se a partir do momento em que se estabelecem e os processos de internacionalização devem ser estudados, e bem planeados de modo a serem bem-sucedidos. O presente documento serve para mostrar que a competência intercultural é algo gradual e de longa aprendizagem. Visa, ainda, contemplar o entendimento de o que é e da importância de compreender-se a subjetividade e constante progressão do conceito de cultura e respetivas noções associadas. A aprendizagem relacionada com a comunicação, competência e consciência intercultural, será aliada ao setor dos negócios e à importância de um processo de internacionalização bem conseguido numa empresa start-up, desde o seu início.

O projeto “*CultureWise: Analyze, Recognize, Maximize*”, sendo inovador e educativo procura lidar com a diversidade cultural presente em Portugal, de um modo criativo, inclusivo e flexível com maior incidência no contexto de mercado português, concretamente no nicho de mercado de start-ups portuguesas. Através de um projeto inovador como o apresentado, o reconhecer-se, analisar-se e oferecer-se soluções sustentáveis para algumas questões socioculturais pode maximizar o desempenho das empresas visadas.

Palavras chave: Internacionalização; Competência Cultural; Consciência Cultural; Empreendedorismo em Cultura

Abstract:

Culture is a concept which is in constant evolution and, therefore, a concept that must be studied, understood and its development must be monitored, to recognize the inherent changes and transformations to this progress. Living in an increasingly globalized world, we are gradually confronted with more and more challenges related to globalization and its technological advancements. Globalization, inherent to the evolution that we witness every day, is a decisive factor when it comes to the business sector in international terms. Regarding both culture and entrepreneurship, evolution must be actively observed, and expertise, competence and mastery must be achieved in these two areas, in order to be inserted, without errors, in the intercultural business sector. These days, startups must internationalize from the moment they are established, and internationalization processes must be pondered, in order to be well achieved.

This document serves to show that intercultural competence is something gradual and a long learning process. It also aims to contemplate the understanding of what it is and the importance of understanding the subjectivity and constant progression of the concept of culture and its associated notions. By learning about intercultural communication, intercultural competence and intercultural awareness and combining this learning process with intercultural know-how in the business sector, it is highlighted the importance of a well-achieved internationalization process in a start-up company, since its inception.

The project “*CultureWise: Analyze, Recognize, Maximize*”, being innovative and didactic aims to deal with the cultural diversity present in Portugal, in a creative, inclusive and flexible way with greater incidence in the context of the Portuguese market, specifically in the niche of market of Portuguese startups. Through an innovative project like the one presented, recognizing, analyzing and offering sustainable solutions to some sociocultural issues can maximize the performance of the targeted businesses.

Key words: Internationalization; Cultural Competence; Cultural awareness; Entrepreneurship in culture

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List of Abbreviations

- ANJE – Associação Nacional de Jovens Empresários
- BMC – Business Model Canvas
- ESE – Escola Superior de Educação
- ESFS – Early Stage Funds
- FEP – Faculdade de Economia do Porto
- GILT – Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, Translation
- HR – Human Resources
- IC – Intercultural Competence
- IPO – Initial Public Offering
- ISCAP – Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto
- IT - Information Technology
- PEST – Political, Economic, Social, Technological
- PORTIC – Porto Research, Technology & Innovation Center
- PSS – Product-Service Systems
- RNI – Rede Nacional de Incubadoras
- SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

INTRODUCTION

*“Interculturality offers active business practitioners’ disposable observation,
interpretation, and action tools”*

(Cerqueira et al., 2021)

Culture may be defined as “a shared meaning system, found among those who speak a particular language dialect, during a specific historic period, and in a definable geographic region”. (Triandis, 2000, p. 146) Moreover, cultural distance foregrounds the likelihood of miscommunication and misunderstandings. Cultural competence is “the ability of a person to effectively interact, work, and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds.” (Guzman, et al., 2016) Cultural competence is a lifelong journey. It is a process of developing self-awareness and social skills when interacting with others. People and companies are extensions of culture in practice (Cerqueira et al., 2021).

According to Cerqueira, et al. (2021), with the relentless evolution of technology, through globalization and consequent openness of markets, companies begin to see internationalization as a necessary process. Nowadays, every startup is a born global startup and so they are already created with this aim of internationalizing their businesses. In cases as the ones mentioned before, born-global startups, both internationalization and globalization must be part of the business models since the very beginning so as to help the company to enter the global market. If a business is to thrive and last, effective relationships must be built; this effectiveness will depend on trust, flexibility, communication, and adaptation.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, new characteristics arose. Communication depends on reliable channels of contact and since the beginning of this pandemic the patterns of communication have changed and from a startup standpoint pros and cons are to be evaluated. This pandemic entailed time saving, cost reduction and cultural openness; it also made possible that people were always connected, for faster problem solving, by way of illustration; nonetheless, this constant availability is for the good and for the bad, people became somewhat always available (Cerqueira et al., 2021). Communication also relies on conviviality, dynamism and cultural adaptation; notwithstanding, we must be aware of cultural aspects and how a cultural mistake may lead a business to its failure. Accurate cultural adaptation is crucial on doing intercultural businesses and there are businesses dedicated to assist startups in this process. The current pandemic is not the only crisis we must examine and consider, there are other affairs to be deemed, such as the 2008 to 2013 crisis, the rapid evolution of technology, and the continuous and progressive change of customer’s expectations, needs, problems; all of these are key when reflecting on the business sector, especially the startup business sector. Entrepreneurship was and still is an engine that drives economies, which promotes employability, something that brings about

several new industries and something that brings to the fore innovation, creativity, renewal. Hence, entrepreneurship without culture and cultural components and angles becomes a fragile engine. According to Cerqueira, et al. (2021, p.4), “the importance of internationalization and interculturality rises, becoming essential for the success of startups and for their contribution to sustainable development”; this being said, one must bear in mind that the development of technology, the phenomenon of globalization and the constant change that these matters brought with them leads us to the topic of internationalization and its importance in the business world. If we are to traditionally analyze this matter, we may think about a startup created in its origin country and only then evolving to the international market through a slowly, gradual and very pondered process of internationalization (Isenberg, 2008 – cited in Cerqueira et al., 2021).

However, according to the Upsala model, created by Johanson and Vahlne, the nonexistence of knowledge in foreign markets is a serious obstacle to internationalization and people should gradually gather information and expertise, and learn about the respective markets that they are targeting in order to create a long-lasting relationship and to strengthen their cultural awareness to ease the internationalization process and hence support the company’s accomplishments. According to Lerner & Sahlman (2012) as cited in Cerqueira et al. (2021) we must assume that nowadays startups are born global, and their leaders must have access to assistance in the moment of internationalizing their companies; so, there is this need to help these individuals finding specialized experts so as to aid them with this paramount process of going international.

Recent startups are aiming at going global, but they may be about to walk through a minefield if they are not cautious with their choices; these innovators will be working in new markets other than their national market, which they are already familiar with; they will be operating in realities completely different from theirs. A very important matter to be regarded is the cultural standpoint of a leader of a startup; a leader must learn about culture, must learn about intercultural competence, about intercultural communication and must master these skills to allow its business to flourish; either that or hiring services or experts who will make sure to put culture onto a pedestal once internationalization is on the table.

Regarding startups, companies established by their dimension and newness are organizations that are open to dynamic dialogues, to untested methodologies, to different opportunities.

In business, where money rules but not reigns, that is: although, seen as the aim, goal, main objective, in reality, and marked by this fluent world, where anyone can be anywhere in any given time, to be hybrid, to be international and to speak interculturality fluently, is to create power: power to reign (Cerqueira et al., 2021, p.8).

Power of understanding, of recognizing, of experience, of expertise is vital to having money. In today's business world, the responsibility of a company is to survive in the international market; and due to this seek for survival and to this mandatory internationalization of firms, people must learn how to interact and recognize others. Companies must be able to balance both national and international presence and survive to its demands, and interculturality is a paramount asset and a true necessity for nowadays' business sector.

CHAPTER I – UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

Interculturalism is the grammar that connects the words of the global text and renders their juxtaposition understandable, communicative, and eventually translatable.

(Clara Sarmiento, 2014)

1 Understanding culture and its concepts

Language is essential to culture; however, culture is much more than language. Culture may be defined as the values, norms, and traditions that affect how individuals of a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave, and make judgments about their world (Chamberlain, 2005). This, consequently, leads people to have a preference in what concerns understanding and interacting. Nonetheless, a group view, a collective perspective has become subjective throughout time, some values, beliefs, behaviors etc. are only alive today because they were the ways of our grandparents and parents. If we are to assess our cultural background and our values, we keep them and pass them on to the next generations. “What we learn through our culture becomes our reality, and to see beyond that is often difficult” (Chamberlain, 2005, p. 199).

Our standpoint on others’ way of thinking, behaving, and acting depends on our cultural perspective and background. It depends on our way of understanding cultural difference and on our capacity to recognize this diversity among societies and cultural groups. By not understanding or recognizing it, we will stereotype people and judge them based on our cultural background and experiences, due to our perspective being merely from our own cultural lens. We must understand and recognize our culture to be able to understand and recognize differences, because different does not always mean bad; sometimes it is a great way to see the world, through other people’s lens. What people consider to be an appropriate behavior will depend on people’s cultural expectations (Anderson & Webb-Johnson, 1995).

A culture will be identified as different in terms of importance: of the group and of the individual. For instance, as Hofstede stated in 1997, mainstream U.S. culture emphasizes individualistic culture and this will consequently lead to competition, and individual achievement (Triandis, 1995). Contrarily, people from collectivist cultures seek to emphasize the well-being of the group and value group harmony, group achievements, etc.; individuals from collectivist cultures tend to place more importance on the well-being of the group. Characteristics of collectivism include valuing social relationships, group goals, group harmony, and cooperative learning.

According to Holliday, (2013) cultural practices are what define our nation, our daily basis, and our routines: how we eat, how we greet people, how we show respect towards other people, how we organize our environment; and also, our literature, our art, things that

portray our cultural essence. According to Holliday (2013), culture can be defined in many ways. We can have a general perspective of culture, in terms of nation, society, or group. We can, then, be culturally defined by our national culture, which may involve nation, religion, language, and economic system – all factors that we were brought up to. So, the concept of culture is very broad and very difficult to define. Culture is rather active, it is a not so much static subject of matter, it is constantly changing. According to Holliday (2013), we must have in mind that to understand culture, we must consider the circumstances of when we approach the topic, with whom, how, and only then may we see how far this notion of culture goes. We must bear in mind that we may discuss culture with someone who does not share “our culture” – our national culture – and that the concept perception may differ from both sides. Culture is not to be defined but understood.

According to Swidler (2000), culture has become increasingly important to social movement research throughout the years. It has become relevant to a point that several standpoints on the sociology of culture must be analyzed and discussed. For instance, Weber (1968) analyzed culture by trying to understand people’s viewpoint on life and trying to figure out what motivated them, “from what” did these people come and “for what” would they go. Weber focused his theories on the individual, on the ideas developed by self-interested actors, and so his analysis was always based on an individualistic perspective. On the other hand, Durkheim (1965) believes that culture is made of collective representations and that culture consists of the vehicles of a process in which shared values, symbols, etc.; it helps to constitute social groups, as well as to provide structure to individual consciousness. Durkheim bases his theories not on an idea but on several representations, practices, symbols, etc. The author also states that symbols concretize “collective consciousness”, making the power of the group more evident. (Durkheim, 1965) We may also consider Geertz’s (1973) perspective, an anthropologist who argued that culture should be studied for its meanings and not for its effects on the action; he added that no object of culture is a meaning for people but a symbol that is available for everyone – either an aesthetic object, a practice, or other cultural “texts”. What we may conclude after analyzing and comparing these theories is that culture is not to be used to justify individual actions or group discrepancies. Quoting Geertz “Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” (1973) so, culture does not influence action, but it rather gives it meaning for its symbols (Swidler, 2000).

Furthermore, the variation of other domains, such as cultural resources or global positioning and politics may influence our culture, as well. The way we were educated and brought up, our national institutions, our manner of governing, our media, and our economy, are all different from other nations, and this will impact who we will become as people. Contrarily to what one might think, these cultural resources might have little to do with our way of thinking, since “our culture” goes beyond our national culture. If we seek to understand other domains such as global positioning and politics, Holliday (2013) states that we may conclude that we are influenced by the way we position ourselves and our national society regarding the rest of the world. The way we, as westerners, see easterners and vice versa; the way Portugal sees Spain and vice versa; the way Portugal sees Europe and vice versa; it is all fruit of our sense of power – and the concept of power is rather important, as narratives provide background to construct identity – and we may conclude that we base ourselves on our culture, in what is familiar to us.

All humans share the same biological structure; what distinguishes one person from another is their culture (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2012 as cited in Swidler, 2000). People may or may not share this uniqueness of theirs or their cultural characteristics and may, therefore, be faced with rejection, prejudice and intolerance from others who do not share the same values, practices, language, beliefs, norms, etc. The difference is what makes us unique; cultural differences or similarities are what distinguish or bring groups of people together and help provide them with a social structure. This may lead to a social status based on people’s cultural differences and/or similarities, which consequently will lead to power, to cultural power. Cultural power is related to social power, which considers the size of a group, its norms, and location; it separates cultures onto a variety of minority cultures and dominant cultures – dominant cultures are the ones that are supported by a major amount of people compared to other groups, and which have more shared values, beliefs, norms, a shared location, a shared language and, hence, are believed to be the prevailing cultures; moreover, not just cultural and social traits are to be cited when mentioning these cultures, but also the fact that they hold powerful economic and political influence over other cultures. From the moment when a dominant culture exists, other cultures might be entitled as minority cultures and will inevitably be influenced and controlled by the dominant group, either consciously or unconsciously since the prevailing norms or rules will make individuals follow them as they want to fit in and feel like they belong; an inherent trait of being human. In a nutshell, cultural power is about where we stand on the social strata, if we are part of the dominant group or

part of a minority; if we are or are not included in a society; if our race, religion, language, beliefs are an impediment to our social integration in society (Libretexts, 2020). So, after analyzing the cultural power concept, we have the opportunity to recognize, understand and reflect upon other's culture, being aware of our culture and the restraint that comes with it – seeing the world through ethnocentric eyes. Hence, we may assume that this need to belong refers to the collective and is concerned with the construction of individual or collective identity and not so much a question of culture, it is rather a question of identity construction.

As part of a minority, people may face cultural intolerance from other social groups, specially the dominant ones; when confronted with different values, norms, language, behaviors, etc. people may not be compelled to understand and prefer to ignore or neglect these, in order to avoid discomfort and difference so that they can feel superior and affirm the presumed prevailing culture, which they believe is the more “correct” one to follow. When challenged with cultural differences, people might have different reactions: either they understand and recognize other cultures, even if it is rather challenging; or they can ridicule and neglect other cultures. When we are born, we are imputed with a certain social status, with our gender and our race. Social and political hierarchies are what we call the “social status”, which labels us from our class, race, ethnicity, gender, education, age, and career up to our family. People from the dominant groups are higher in this pyramid of social status and dictate the prevailing norms, beliefs, etc. (Swidler, 2000). Humans are ethnocentric, there is no denying it; ethnocentrism is when we see the world and others through our cultural lens, through our own experiences, and through our culture; however, we can see others through our cultural lens and be willing to fight that tiny spectrum and turn into a bigger one, to get a bigger and real picture. We see others from our perspective of life, we judge them basing ourselves on our values, norms, morals, and culture; notwithstanding, not only our culture is correct, appropriate, and acceptable. So, understanding other's culture is a matter of willingness, tolerance and, above all, respect (Swidler, 2000). To see others, we must see ourselves first, and sometimes we reflect our culture onto others' cultures and not even notice until the moment we understand and recognize their culture and the differences between cultures. Our culture is imprinted in ourselves since it is a long-standing construction, and it becomes very hard to know who we are concerning others. The way we see ourselves and our culture and the way we see others and their respective cultures goes from our education, institutions, upbringing, traditions, and media representations.

All of these matters differ from culture to culture, we must be able to accept the difference, to know ourselves, our culture, and our uniqueness, then, be open to seeing others through our cultural lens and still understand others and their uniqueness. So, picking up on Holliday's theories (2013) we might look upon more individual experiences and personal trajectories and be culturally defined differently from our national culture, due to elements such as our origins and our ancestors, among many others like globalization, pop references, web culture, minority culture, etc. So, up from here, there can be dialogue with particular social and political structures, which might even cross foreign domains and this will consequently underly universal cultural processes and, hence, link our national culture to foreign cultures, creating an intercultural environment. Very important to mention that everyone, everywhere, and everything we get in contact to on our daily lives is a way of dealing with a diversity of cultural realities; having said this, there is not one concept or one reality of culture but several ways to define this subject of matter, as there are several points of view on it. According to Holliday (2013), the hardest of all the domains is the statements about culture, this being how we present ourselves, what we choose our cultures to be; nonetheless, what we choose to call our culture and what we choose to say that represents us may rather be our ambitions, aspirations, intentions, how we wanted things to be, how we wanted to impact others' lives and not our true cultural structures. The cultural narrative that we select as a representation of what we are. Every discourse that we use, no matter the subject, is a representation of our culture and identity. Regarding culture, the narrative is not a conscience choice; cultural narratives, mainly the rooted ones, are unconscious, are taught to us, are absorbed by us from our family circle, for instance. We understand our culture differently from others; our trajectories and experiences influence our cultural reality and our sense of national culture. These personal experiences enable people to create their cultural realities into already existing structures; if it is or is not successful, this will depend on how solid the existing structures are. Culture is not to be defined, culture is to be analyzed, recognized and understood.

Therefore, national structures are no synonym for cultural realities since cultural reality differs from person to person and from nation to nation. Each nation has its cultural reality, and each individual has its own cultural reality, as well; thus, cultural reality will depend on people's viewpoints and experiences, individual experiences, or in a group (Holliday, 2013).

1.1 GILT – Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, Translation

GILT is about the correlation of processes of globalization, internationalization, localization and translation and their functions; their alignment will help a company to upgrade its business in international markets successfully. The development of a company requires this globalization step-up in the sense that the product or service becomes the best as it possibly could be. Nowadays, if we plan to have a company, we must think about going international as soon as possible and so services such as these four must not be underestimated but rather valued; multicultural management is crucial for nowadays' business world (Sartore, 2017).

Globalization

If we seek to understand globalization, we may look at dictionaries and get definitions such as “the development of closer economic, cultural, and political relations among all the countries of the world as a result of travel and communication becoming easy” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) or “the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets” (Merriam-Webster, 2018) but according to Mitchell & Boyd (2001), “structurally, globalization is made both possible and necessary by the development of two transforming technologies – transportation and communication”. The term “globalization” dates to the 1960s; nonetheless, it has evolved a lot in the past decades. Socially, globalization started with the flows of people; our ancestors started what is now called globalization with migration flows. Politically speaking, our ancestors built their community lives where they went, and consequently political systems were created and became common across frontiers. These flows of people led to cultural spreading and expansion of technologies and cultural features; so, “new” cultures were generated around the world through “original” cultures as a result of this blending of cultural aspects, and this introduced the concept of living in a mixed cultural society in a “third space” in a hybrid culture. According to Bhabha (1994), hybridity stands for the “in-between” cultures, it refers to the conception of new transcultural ways within other cultures; as for the “third space”, it is a space for cross-cultural exchanges, since it has a tight relationship with power and the unbalanced relationships between cultures and societies. People being connected and having similar political systems, came to facilitate trade and exchanges, hence, came to make economic globalization easier. It allows nations to profit from each country's advantages,

and economic advantages, and so this will turn nation interdependent and connected. If there is a better and bigger connection between countries and no barriers across frontiers, there will be common political systems, and cultural aspects and this will consequently lead to integration, into a globalized economy and society.

According to E. & Yildiz (2012), recent literature either portrays globalization as international spatial awareness or uses it to emphasize the transformation processes of intercultural interaction. In this sense, when mentioning the international spatial awareness standpoint, globalization has to do with intercultural networks that arise among the world, which will create group consciousness since we live in what is known to be a global village (E. & Yildiz, 2012). Concerning globalization and according to Carnoy (2005) as cited in E. & Yildiz (2012) entrepreneurial organizations of higher education strive for making the most of the diminishing geography as less capitalist organizations need to adapt and take action. On the other hand, if we seek to understand the processes of intercultural interaction, globalization changes its colors to the practice of cultivating social communication, to connecting with others around the world, to create interdependence; (Levin, 2001; Marginson, 2007 as cited in E. & Yildiz (2012) which will, according to Castells (1997) as cited in E. & Yildiz (2012), lead to the creation of a “network society”. Economic and technological changes impact social and cultural structures and globalization is around those differences. According to Kellner (2002) as cited in E. & Yildiz (2012), globalization has generated a “new social environment”; Held, et al. (1999) refer to globalization as something wider, bigger, and deeper, which speeds up worldwide interconnections; Chomsky (2006) refers to it as international integration; so, globalization has come to transform people’s relationships, to bring people together, people who share the same values, beliefs and causes; to create new forms of society or new ways of living in a society; to get national communities more plural (Cevre, 1995; Hannerz, 1996 as cited in E. & Yildiz (2012).

Globalization in international business

According to Islam et al. (2019), one may define globalization as opening to a wider stance of an interdependent global market, in which capital, goods and services across borders are free. Nonetheless, still according to the same authors, it may also be defined as the shrinking of the globe, through the decline of barriers between frontiers, such as tariffs, export fees, etc., so that the world becomes more united economically. When accurately effected, globalization may help the world becoming more equitable in terms of wealth.

Globalization may as well be described as the blending of the national market with international networks (Islam et al., 2019).

When addressing international business to globalization, we may be referring to the exchange of services and goods between individuals and multiple nations. It covers all commercial operations between two or more countries or locations; international businesses are centered on worldwide resources and the aims of organizations are engaged on global opportunities and threats. So, politically and economically speaking, countries allocate power and divide it; this power is used to influence people, in terms of culture, beliefs, values; to persuade people to do something based on their culture (Islam et al., 2019). So, culture must always be considered when the topic is international business.

Globalization brought with it an increase of competition between organizations, a competition for prices, products, services, quality of the product, the usage of technology, the target markets, etc. and so the competition for the success is in the global market. Furthermore, globalization has contributed to an increase of opportunities all around the world. Due to the growth of the number of industries and resources, there was the creation of many job opportunities and so people were given the chance to evolve both economic and socially. The impact of globalization in international business is increasingly leading the trade and investment impediments to a gradual decrease. International trade takes place when a good or a product is provided to customers from other countries and so globalization came to help this exchange to become easier by bringing all countries together and reducing trade and investment barriers. In this manner, foreign direct investment increased through globalization and promoted technology allocation, industry reforming and the growth of global organizations. Additionally, it led to a stimulation of new technology progress and enabled companies to enlarge their businesses (Islam et al., 2019).

Globalization opens frontiers and facilitates the interactions between people, business and money. This will be a benefit for both the entrepreneur and customer as they make their decisions in the global market with a variety of choices and possible comparison of prices, quality and hence the purchase of the better product/service. Nonetheless, globalization can have a negative side, too. Political stability, for instance, is crucial to facilitate direct foreign investment and business activity, and so it is rather challenging to set a business up or to cooperate with an international business of a politically unstable country. Trade agreements among countries are only possible due to globalization; the main intention

is to reduce tariffs between countries, to reduce possible barriers and impediments. However, some countries tend to protect their domestic industry as some global companies went through tough times and “deglobalization” starts taking place in some nations (Islam et al., 2019).

A company will not only compete with local organizations but also with global corporations; additionally, establishing a business in the global market and managing an international business is much more difficult than launching a business at a national level as we must consider different cultures, traditions, beliefs, consumer behaviors and attitudes (Manolica & Roman, 2013). Besides, a product or a service is only created to fulfil customers’ needs or to solve consumers’ problems and so when a business starts to venture across international borders it is presented to a larger target audience as it is offered in the global market. Globalization, if treated and applied appropriately, is a great asset for companies to thrive and for startups to set off. Having said this, international businesses require a well-thought and well-conceived globalization process, in order to achieve the company’s goals and to reach customers’ satisfaction (Islam et al., 2019).

Internationalization

If we look for the concept “internationalization” in a dictionary, we may find a very simple and summarized information. For instance, according to the Cambridge Dictionary (2022), internationalization is “the action of becoming or making something become international”. It is too broad, too unspecific to understand its meaning and consequently its importance. Internationalization is much more than merely an action of becoming international. Internationalization is indeed a broaden topic, which therefore can be defined in several manners. According to Wagner (2020, p.6), internationalization mainly consists of the “thought of as outward movement” which adapts a product to a foreign market, in order to increase its attractiveness. In a nutshell, to Wagner (2020), internationalization has to do with the pursuit for the maximization of a company or a product/service. Having in mind that we live in a globalized world, companies must not forget culture and its importance when thinking about their internationalization processes. Since internationalization relies on the process of designing and adapting products to meet the needs of users in many countries, it becomes extremely difficult to achieve fully the goals predefined if culture is not to be addressed. If one thinks about this concept in the sector of economics, it may refer to a company that is trying to maximize its footprint or capture greater market share abroad by

branching out into international markets. Thus, internationalization must be inherently connected to culture, its concepts and characteristics to be succeeded. The world went global due to economy and commerce since these went cross-borders, abroad, and as such national economies are impacted by international economies and some countries depend on other countries' economy (Hayes, 2021).

Internationalization is a corporate strategy; some consider it a global corporate strategy since it is connected to economy and since it involves the adaptation of products/services to enter different markets other than the national market. This process requires experts in several fields such as IT, culture, finance, etc. (Lionbridge, n.d.). If we consider a company seeking to sell its product/ service abroad, we have to bear in mind that there may be several barriers in the way, technical barriers, perhaps related to culture; to the lack of intercultural competence; to the lack of intercultural communication know-how. These difficulties may be overcome; however, companies must not trivialize culture and must instead seek for help in this field; either to have another company making sure that their internationalization process is accomplished or in order to prepare the company's team to this very same ending. In this specific case, if the technical barriers to the internationalization processes are culturally related, companies may solve it through consultancy or cultural mediation, by seeking for a service which will assure the company that culture is not an impediment to their success. Additionally, internationalization processes must be reflected on by the companies since these may benefit from these processes by reducing the cost of business by making use of outsourcing; nowadays, the majority of products are sold by multinational companies in several different countries, so this will lead to product internationalization as it may also contribute to a reduction of costs for these companies (Hayes, 2021).

Localization

Localization is a rather recent area of studies for language and culture experts. According to Yunker (2005), localization may be defined as a "process of modifying a product for a specific locale"; it facilitates people from a particular location to use a product or a service without struggling with language, for instance. Localization has as its main goal the transformation of a product to make it consumable for an international consumer audience (Sandrini, 2008). Since we live in a "global village", customers no longer depend on geography to purchase. If customers are to purchase something, preferably they will go

for companies which offer their products using the customer's native language, therefore companies must be provided with the proper assets to do so, for instance, consider localization. Localization is a process of adaptation of the content/product/service to a specific local market; it refers to the preparation of a business in a specific "locale", at a specific location. Localization is far from being compared to translation; translating a message is not enough when mentioning localization; by translating we are adapting a message from one language to another and preserving its meaning; nonetheless, a localization process is about not only adapting the text but also its colors, format, design, etc. (Pieterse, 2020). In order to do this, companies must make sure they prepare their business for this process of localization, by gathering enough data about the location they are determined to explore. To increase the chances of succeeding in marketing a product, a company should go through a localization process, adapt their product to their target audience's location/values/beliefs/language. By doing so, this process will provide opportunities for business continuity, growth and expansion to new markets (Famuyide, 2021).

According to Sandrini (2008), by addressing localization we may be referring to software localization, hence, referring to electronic systems in which tools will be adjusted to every location, such as operating systems, hardware drivers, functions and testing tool, databases, image manipulation, games, etc. On the other hand, we may also speak about localization in websites; before putting localization into action in a website, we must consider language choice, for example. Localization enables for people from different locations to use different languages without any difficulty, and so messages must be adapted so that they can be suitable for the majority of cultures as possible, thus, they must be neutral, culturally neutral (Sandrini, 2008).

According to Pieterse (2020), localization helps companies' competitive approach; at a local level, by localizing a product/service, it will make it more trustable in the local market; also, if your company is competing against other companies that will not localize their product/service, your company will be in advantage and will be more credible amongst the others. What's more, localization will show commitment to the target local audience. Through localization, a company will offer their products in a smart way, in an adapted way. By localizing, we are presenting a way that makes the customer target audience comfortable, so, if a product meets the expectations and fulfils the needs of a consumer group, and in addition is presented appropriately, in a way that the target audience fully understands it, it

is very likely that it will be succeeded. This process of gaining the customers' trust will, consequently, lead to customers' loyalty to the brand, a very important factor for the longevity and continuity of a company. Therefore, localization becomes pivotal to every contemporary company, which must implement localization into their business strategy in order to help to prevail over cultural obstacles and to simplify their entrance into new markets (Pieterse, 2020).

Translation

The term translation and localization are every so often inaccurately interchanged concerning the cross-linguistic interpretation and interpretation of content. In fact, these two share the same objective, notwithstanding the approach is different. (Baloiu, n.d.). According to the Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.), translation is “the activity or process of changing the words of one language into the words in another language that have the same meaning”; moreover, in the business context it is the process of converting a text from one language to another and it is often tangled with localization, especially if the area of business is marketing translation (Baloiu, n.d.). Translation alone is not enough in business, and so it must be correlated with localization, in order to deliver the message accurately (Baloiu, n.d.). Translation concerns linguistic operations, which replace expressions from one language into another but as translation is a way of adaptation, this process must go further and include localization later on, so these two concepts must be intertwined in business (Baloiu, n.d.).

1.2 Interculturalism and Intercultural Learning

Due to the phenomenon of globalization, the more recent generations are taught since a very young age that the world is a small village and that they must be tolerant and respect the other and their cultures. However, how will we respect and tolerate the other if we do not understand what cultural differences are and what do they represent? Under the appreciation of global interdependencies, it is required for a leader to develop a globally focused education, to master language capabilities and to embrace cultural differences. Cultural diversity does not rely merely on sharing ideals, experiencing new things, etc.; cultural diversity, interculturalism, interculturality are beyond that. Culture is the way we see the world through our own lens, through our cultural background, our group and individual experiences, our life. When facing cultural difference, we may not be completely aware of what may occur, and we may even fail to cope with them and such situation might

lead to misinterpretations, misunderstandings, which consequently lead to miscommunication; this becomes a serious obstacle because we are not prepared to cope under these conditions, since we are unaware of what culture and interculturalism are. So, as this may arise on a personal level, it might also happen when doing business. Towards efficient intercultural communication, we must learn, practice and put to action until we manage to do it correctly. To communicate effectively is already defying, but to communicate effectively across cultures is even more challenging. If we stop to think about this, cultural obstacles, misunderstandings and misinterpretations may cost millions to companies and may draw their businesses to failure. It is still very much trivialized the notion of interculturality as it is still particularly undervalued; nonetheless, it plays a decisive role for the business sector. So, in order to communicate effectively in an intercultural situation, first we must understand concepts such as interculturality and interculturalism.

According to Sarmiento (2014), interculturality relies on the interaction and societal cohesion without putting everyone who share the same culture in the same box, per say. As Wood et al. (2006) state (cited in Sarmiento, 2014, p.609), “an intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds” and here there are implicit signs of the importance of English, our lingua franca. Alongside with the prominent British Empire and its extension, several aspects such as political, economic, military power spread the strength of this language that became our “go-to” language when communicating with groups that do not share the same language.

Interculturalism emerged in the 1970s, in France, in the context of migration and mostly for the reason that people needed to include their children and to help them to adapt to the different circumstances that they faced. (Sarmiento, 2014) However, it began more as multiculturalism at the time, since it was inserted in a multicultural society context, rather than intercultural; so, cultures would exist separately but the interaction between them almost did not exist. While interculturalism stands for the interaction of a variety of cultures, multiculturalism simply holds for the coexistence of these many cultures either in a class-conscious or hierarchical structure. Culture and people share the trait of not being static but rather active (Sarmiento, 2014) and according to Meer and Modood (2012) as cited in Sarmiento (2014), interculturalism is one step ahead of the mere cultural coexistence; Modood goes even further to state that the concept of multiculturalism, and the living in such a context, transformed biological racism into cultural racism. Interculturalism is more focused on cultural interaction with other cultures rather than just existing next to someone

who does not share our culture. Also, contrasting with multiculturalism, interculturalism goes beyond groups, it is more individualistic; it stands for societal cohesion and not for societal coexistence (Sarmiento, 2014).

We may not see it at first and we might even confuse these topics but once we seek to fully understand them, we come across some differences between matters such as intercultural, multicultural and cross-cultural, mainly in terms of perspective; the perspective of the person who is interacting with someone from a different culture. (Schriefer, 2020) Thereby, multicultural implies a society that includes several cultural groups, people who live in the same location, although it does not implicate any interaction. As for cross-cultural, it suggests the comparison of cultures, where differences are understood and recognized, which will lead to a dominant culture and the “others”; it is about individual transformation, not about collective change. Intercultural illustrates societies where there is deeper understanding and respect for all cultures, whether they are a lot similar or very distinctive from our own. It implies an exchange of ideas, cultural customs, etc. and it requires the development of relationships. In an intercultural society everyone learns from each other and grows together (Schriefer, 2020). Intercultural learning is a lifelong process and it is crucial since it is meant to diminish ethnocentric perspectives, to battle against prejudice, to stimulate societal cohesion, in order to respect the plurality of cultural identities and so it becomes really relevant not only in educational terms but also in the business sector (Cunha & Gomes, 2009). Intercultural learning is not merely about cultural difference, it helps creating new meanings and new narratives; it means understanding the complexity of cultures, respecting cultural diversity, which subsequently leads us to multiple perspectives and shifting insights on culture. Intercultural learning positions itself against discrimination, prejudice, bias and other forms of intolerance. Moreover, it offers assets to break stereotypes and to try to anatomize ethnocentrism. Additionally, interculturalism permits people to have a dialogue, to interact between distinct cultures, to develop as an interconnected society. (Schriefer, 2020)

According to Hofstede “Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster.” When thinking about intercultural we immediately think about conflict; however, conflict in intercultural learning is actually seen as a source of development and not as an obstacle to interaction. Whenever a diversely cultural group meets, there is potential for conflict but if this disagreement means exchanging of perspectives, then there is potential for learning and to become more efficient

when in need to interact interculturally as it helps us to become more aware and to understand better others' standpoints. To avoid conflict is to avoid learning (Georgescu, 2018).

1.3 Intercultural Competence

Having in mind that we live in an increasingly globalized and connected world, intercultural competence is, consequently, becoming progressively crucial to our daily basis and even more, if we want to develop international businesses. Nonetheless, not all people are familiar with the definition of such a concept. Simplifying this subject of matter, it mostly leans on the ability to communicate effectively across cultures and to work with people from different cultures. According to Dervin & Suomela-Salmi (2010), one may see intercultural competence as an anticipated product of the insertion of interculturality in learning a language or in teaching, for instance. IC is a competence which is of the utmost importance in today's globalized world, particularly for teachers, translators, and consultants engaged in mediation (Dervin & Suomela-Salmi, 2010).

According to Matson (2018), intercultural competency is the capability to communicate and interact appropriately with others from different cultures, social groups, in a manner that one does not disregard others' values, norms, expectations, etc. We live in a world where people's preferences may vary from their ethnicities, social, economic and political backgrounds and where one size no longer fits all people; globalization brought with it the increase in mobility of humans, goods and services, the increase of capital and knowledge and of interconnection and the increase of cultural and linguistic diversity. The world is going smaller, and diversity is more and more prominent as it is about the acknowledging, understanding and recognizing differences that may distinguish individuals and groups; nations are becoming increasingly diverse and cross-border higher education is becoming common with student mobility and this requires cross-cultural competences from students and from lecturers. Intercultural competence consists of ensuring equal treatment and equal opportunities for people from all different cultures, by improving intercultural skills of people in order for them to be effective in functioning across cultures and diverse environments (Matson, 2018).

According to Guzman et al. (2016), intercultural competence relies on the "ability of a person to effectively interact, work, and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds" and hence it becomes a lifelong journey as it is not something that we can achieve in a day or a year. Intercultural competence is a process of developing

self-awareness and a process of education which implies skills that must be attained through training, of course, but also through experience, intercultural experience. This process of learning involves willingness and is a long-learning process, since one oughts to recognize, analyze and manage to deal and cope with cultural differences and cultural diversity in all contexts. Intercultural competence is “the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions” (Ehliion Team, 2020), whereas Triandis (2000) supposes that intercultural competence holds four stages, being unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence and unconscious competence. This is, Triandis considers that unconscious incompetence stands for being subconsciously unaware of the lack of cultural knowledge; conscious incompetence means being aware of the lack of skills and being in the beginning of the learning process, understanding that there is a gap there; unconscious competence lays on experience, meaning that people begin to learn about other cultures already trying to communicate effectively and, finally, conscious competence stands for those who have a variety of skills that enable communication easily with cultural “others”; further developing their understanding ability and adjusting to cultures with more expertise.

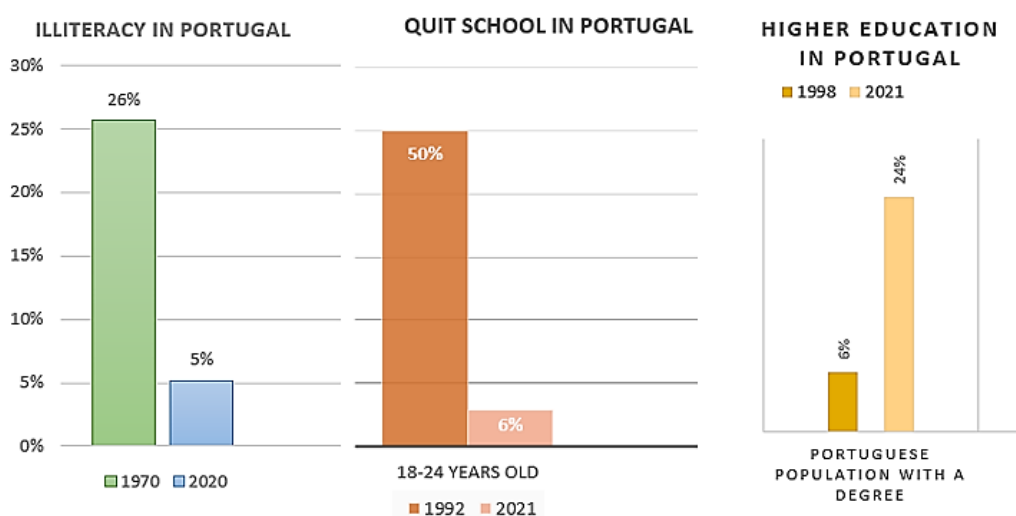
Living in such a globalized world, in which societies are increasingly diverse, we must be able to react when faced with intercultural challenges and possible upcoming communicational changes. To be interculturally competent is no synonym to merely know how to speak a foreign language or to know that people from a certain culture eats with their hands; it goes beyond those superficial matters. We live in a culturally diverse society and the richness of this diversity should be exemplified by the diversity of our intellectual approaches, which will ultimately help in attempts to anticipate and respond to human needs (Kim & Ebesu Hubbard, 2007). Having said this, to master intercultural communication implies to be interculturally competent.

According to Leung et al. (2014), intercultural competence relies on the ability to perform effectively across cultures, to reflect and act appropriately, when communicating and working with people from different cultural environments, either at home or abroad. Intercultural Competence Programs to students must be delivered to them while they are still studying, either in a high-school situation or in a posterior phase, in a bachelor’s degree, master’s, doctoral program, etc. So, in order to become interculturally competent, we must be able to learn how to achieve that; we need to be educated, if possible at a very early age

so that it becomes easier to understand that we will encounter different values, norms, gastronomies, languages and so that we do not disrespect and neglect those things, so that we may face these challenging situations and recognize and understand them and so that we can cope with them easily. If we are taught that difference is normal, a trivial thing, it will not sound odd to us and consequently we will not perform in a discourteous way. Intercultural competence should be taught to children, to teenagers, to adults, to all people in all sort of ages; if we teach a child that one plus one is two and that is normal, we can also teach them cultural aspects from other cultures other than ours so that they are not shocked later when in need of dealing with them and avoid them being disrespectful even if not meaning to be; after all, knowledge is power. There should be more offer of intercultural competence programs to students, even if not curricular units, lectures or presentations, adapted to the age and knowledge of the students; this would enable them to be more competent from a very young age, and this would help to avoid many possible future disrespects, affronts, and communicational barriers. (Leung et al., 2014)

Moreover, in the business world, it is not enough to be interculturally sensitive, one must be interculturally competent. Intercultural sensitivity is about having the ability to respect, accept and value other cultures and this is not enough to rely our business on. To succeed, one must rely on intercultural competence. Thus, more than being interculturally sensitive to work effectively with several cultures, one must be interculturally competent. To an increasing extent, our labor market requires people that hold specific skills, either emotional skills or hard skills, but no longer looks for unskilled people. This labor market transformation led to an increase in the number of people who hold a bachelor's degree. Picking up on Portugal's example, in 1978 only 81.582 people enrolled in college, whereas in 2021, 411.995 students enrolled in college. According to PORDATA, 25,7% of the Portuguese population was illiterate by 1970; however, in 2020 only 5,2% of Portuguese population is illiterate. From 18 to 24 years old, back in 1992, 50% of the Portuguese population quit school; in 2021, only 5,9% of youths quit school. People used to quit school to work; however, nowadays to work in Portugal people must have at least high school completed, this to work in unskilled positions. Labor market is increasingly demanding. There was a progression from 1998 to 2021 in terms of Higher education, in Portugal. In 1998, 6,1% had a degree; in 2021, 24,1% of the Portuguese population holds a degree. This might have to do with government support; in 1991 only 5,9% of the Portuguese higher

education students benefited from government support but in 2020 data show that 20% of the students benefit from government's support to study (PORDATA, 2021).



Source: PORDATA (*Alunos Matriculados No Ensino Superior: Total E Por Sexo, 2021*)

Figure 1 – Portugal’s educational evolution

This concludes that the younger generations, which are the brains who run startup ideas, and who set up their startups are mostly educated people; however, most of them are not interculturally competent. According to ANI’S 2020 report (*Observatório ANI Spin-Offs E Start-Ups de Base Académica Em Portugal Relatório Final Julho de 2020*, n.d.), 13% of Portuguese startup collaborators’ have not completed high school, 12% have completed high school, 36% have a bachelor’s degree, 23% a master’s degree and 17% have a PhD.

Schools lack IC programs and in college, only if we are to study something related to social or cultural matters are we able to learn how to be interculturally competent, which in today’s world is vital and would be an excellent tool for these students at a later moment, perhaps when launching their project ideas. For instance, if we analyze standard goals for students from 1st to 9th grade of Portuguese schools when referring to English language teaching, the goals are merely linguistic, not cultural. From 1st grade to 9th grade the curricular targets are language related; as an illustration, 9th grade’s main aim is only to understand easily produced speeches in English, and this is the 9th year of learning this foreign language (*Direção-Geral Da Educação, 2015*); it would be of great impact and of great importance to include cultural assets, in these curricular goals, for the students to be more tolerant, to understand people from English cultures not only linguistically but culturally, too. By not having had proper education on the field of cultural competence, they

will be at a disadvantage once they get to a more advanced phase of their lives, especially if and when they decide to set their business up in an international environment. Since the business world is becoming more and more globalized, there is this need to hold the correct skills to succeed in international environments, hence, building intercultural competence is pivotal to a startup head (Lane, 2021). Acquiring knowledge in the intercultural competence field enables people to pursue the best path possible in the international business world. In today's labor market, having a good set of skills is equal to having greater opportunities. Intercultural competence is a factor that distances you from others. IC is an essential set of skills for today's business market. Acquiring IC skills is an excellent manner to make a person more hireable and to make a person understand better the world and its features since culture/cultures are considerable matters to have expertise in when living in such a globalized world (Lane, 2021).

1.4 Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Communication

According to Holliday (2013) the first moment that people may consider culture strange is when people first encounter cultural practices that differ from theirs. Cultural practices are particular from each cultural environment and may be unknown, atypical, unusual and strange to newcomers. In some cases, the complexity of cultural practices can feel both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time, and this duality will help us finding the everyday connections between what we usually do and not do and what we know and do not know. Particular cultural products, for instance, may represent specific characteristics of a certain society and bring up the most important part of that group, culturally speaking; we are now mentioning tangible culture, which will be particular to the group in question. On the other hand, cultural practices can be implicitly created, sometimes we hardly notice the practices that are "normal" to us until we have the chance to compare them to others, by experiencing and getting in contact with other cultures. In this regard, cultural practices are the most perceptible differences to newcomers. Some cultural practices are associated with particular societies or groups, whereas others are associated with several other factors such as decision making, traditionalistic view on upbringing, attitude related to power, way of dealing with the climate, particular/familiar traditions, resistance against tradition, respect of elderly people, way of treating customers, variation between family generations, all of these factors may or may not be related to different ideologies, religions, or more particular things (Holliday, 2013).

In the business world, we may look at particular cultural practices such as office doors, meetings, time keeping, for instance. As an illustration, as for the door situation, there might be people who always have their office door open and anyone who visits the office is welcome to enter the room; there may be others who have the door closed and request their visitors to wait before entering their office; and there are people who leave their door open but anyone who wants to enter the office must knock on the door and get permission first. Other example is the way people address to other people in a meeting context; there are members that address each other by their family names and titles, other people may address each other by the name solely and not make use of the titles except for the Chair, due to the superiority and formality, and there might be people who treat others by their name, their title and even show appreciation for their level of seniority. On other matters, such as time keeping, people may arrive at a meeting up to 10 minutes late and even make excuses, while there are others that arrive on time and look down on anyone who arrives late to the meeting. All of these factors depend on cultural environments and may affect business relationships, hence, one must pay careful attention to particularities as the ones mentioned above, because they may seem unimportant, nonetheless sometimes business depend on little things. Therefore, there must be a reading of us and others and this universality that exists between all of us; this universality, the universal cultural processes, are key to newcomers to help them make sense of unfamiliar cultural practices and understand them, eventually (Holliday, 2013).

CHAPTER II – CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding.

Albert Einstein

2 Cultural Differences

Companies do not set off businesses with an eye on failure, they expect and anticipate success. Today's companies are almost all global since their birth, and so interculturality is present since day one. Cultural diversity may be an advantage or a challenge for firms; stereotypes, unfamiliarity, unawareness, and illiteracy may lead to conflicts, cultural conflicts, and consequently to a poor, substandard, and inadequate business dealing with foreign customers or with international team members. Cultural differences are related to expectations, what do we expect from others, and vice versa, but we must not forget that not all cultures are similar and that there can be different communication approaches and gestures that differ; the importance of relationships may also diverge and so understanding cultural diversity in business is very important. Understanding, and being able to analyze and recognize other cultures is a first-class method to prevent difficulties and a great way to overcome possible cultural barriers and thrive.

In order to be succeeded in today's business world, leaders must foster globally focused education, must master to speak as many languages as possible, must know about as many cultures as they can, and above all must embrace cultural differences. Today's world is a globalized and technological place and, hence, it is in constant transformation, and regarding this last mentioned, change and conflict usually go together and so these two are very difficult but very important to control in the business world. Conducting a business requires leaders' capability to build trust, reliability, and loyalty and to build all of these there is the need to understand; to understand each other's cultures, to demonstrate empathy and decisiveness, although it's difficult; if the leader is not informed, if the team is not enlightened, the process is much more difficult and easier to end up being a failure. To know about culture and cultural features is a strong point, an advantage for leaders and teams working in intercultural businesses (*The Culture Map by Erin Meyer: A Summary and Review*, 2022).

According to Erin Meyer (*The Culture Map by Erin Meyer: A Summary and Review*, 2022), people from different countries react to inputs, communicate, and make decisions in different ways. Still according to the same author, "getting culture right should never be an afterthought", companies should focus on their team's education so as to avoid possible future collapse and failures. For decades, people worked in companies that were mostly local and intercultural interaction was hardly any; to work abroad for a local company was not

common; however, firms started to internationalize and started to have their employees spread around the globe – due to the phenomenon of globalization – and this led to the understanding that people react differently to ideas, act in different ways and communicate in a system that it is not familiar to them. Moreover, miscommunication may take place in situations like the mentioned before and may be an obstacle to the internationalization process of the companies in question.

To avoid difficulties regarding the internationalization processes of companies, teams and their respective leaders must be properly educated (*The Culture Map by Erin Meyer: A Summary and Review*, 2022). A company only works if its members are accurately educated and appropriately trained, it is not sufficient for its leader to be perfectly prepared and culturally educated, the team must be, as well. Cross-cultural teams are increasingly common, and businesses may benefit from this diversity through different insights, perceptions, reactions, and decisions. Recognizing and understanding culture is crucial to avoid misunderstandings either with colleagues or with clients. It is pivotal that people working in the international business sector are familiar with the requirements of being succeeded interculturally. It is crucial to consider and understand the role of culture in international business; in every sector, cultural differences impact prosperity and companies should work on building intercultural competencies to become competitive and to work an advantage compared to other companies. There are some key factors to be considered when doing international business, such as communication, basic customer needs awareness, body language, and target market research. It is essential to be genuinely interested in knowing more about the other parties and it is pivotal to have a proper mindset, to be curious, to be involved, to be predisposed to bridge cultural differences and find a way to do business and preserve the business correlations and associations. By being open to understanding and knowing about other cultures, people will become professionals who will, at a later moment, be able to analyze and recognize others' cultural characteristics and act in line with those features.

2.1 Cultural Differences: Invisible Barriers in Business according to Erin Meyer's "*The Culture Map*"

This subchapter will be centered on Erin Meyer's book "*The Culture Map*" a manuscript from 2014 in which we can find a guide to deal with cultural differences in business. According to Meyer (2014), biologically, people are people, are the same species,

and are all the same in their biological structure; we all feel anxious, sad, happy, exhausted, enervated, emotional, etc. but every individual is different and even when raised in the same environment, by the same parents, or working in the same cultural background, no two people can be the same, neither in identity nor in culture. It is very important for us to not assume that a person is something based on what we think we know about their culture. However, the culture we are brought up in does have an impact on our way to see the world; we are conditioned to understand the world in a particular way, to observe some patterns as effective or not, to find arguments persuasive or not, to consider cultural values as “natural” or “strange”. Business leaders of the 21st century now need to be prepared to understand and to be able to analyze what characteristics are indeed personality traits or a result of differences in cultural perspective. Globalization transformed the workplace and the way of working; now, there is the need to decode cultural differences to work effectively with people around the world. It is a very challenging task, to understand, recognize, and analyze cultural differences and work from them but it is also intriguing, captivating, and fascinating; it is a process of continual learning and an always active career.

In order to succeed in managing across diverse cultural contexts of today’s workplace, a leader and their team must be guided and well informed since communicating across cultures may be one of the greatest challenges of doing business. According to Dr. Didier CL Bonnet, the global head of practices of Capgemini Consulting, in 2014, “Global leaders know that blending cultural and individual diversity in teams is a sure recipe for better business outcomes. But this diversity needs to be first understood and then proactively managed” and business leaders should be able to become “cultural bridge builders” to the benefit of their organizations. Additionally, according to the head of brand solutions of Google in Europe, Pedro Pina states that “Commerce may be global but culture isn’t” and so it is essential to understand that “culture shapes people who shape business” (Meyer, 2014).

According to Erin, the majority of managers who operate businesses internationally have little understanding of how cultural differences may affect and impact their work; if a business leader is not able to pick up contextual cues that will help understand people’s way of living, that will help to decode their communication and adapt more easily, it will be an incredibly difficult task to cease a business with international partners. As a way of illustration, if you are American and go to India to perform a business and the Indian partner half-nods their head or half-shakes your hand, you may perceive this as disagreement and

uncertainty when in fact it is their way of showing interest, enthusiasm and to show that they are respectful listeners. Culture may impact communication and, hence, may affect businesses (Meyer, 2014).

Moreover, with this pandemic situation, we were forced not to be physically together with our international partners, and this could be even more challenging; the absence of visual contextual cues and the absence of what physical presence in communication, made it more difficult for us to recognize some cultural features and sometimes we were incapable to realize that something cultural was taking place. According to the same author, “Many well-intentioned people don’t educate themselves about cultural differences because they believe that if they focus on individual differences, that will be enough.”; being open to individual differences is never enough, we need to take a look at the big picture and not go into every interaction assuming that culture does not matter; our default mechanism is to view others through our cultural lens and to judge them accordingly. (*The Culture Map by Erin Meyer: A Summary and Review*, 2022) We need to bear in mind that every individual is indeed different, but that does not mean that learning about their cultural backgrounds is unnecessary; we need to both respect individual differences and have an appreciation for cultural differences because in the business world they are both essential. We must consider cultural patterns and start from there towards a better understanding of others; cultural patterns are our assessments, what we see, what we think, and what we do, according to our perception of the world. (Meyer, 2014)

Erin Meyer is a speaker and professor who is specialized in cultural differences and their impact on business, she is also an illustrious author who wrote a book where she designed a map, a cultural map that helps leaders and intercultural team members to improve their effectiveness by analyzing this map, which positions cultures concerning each other, and which helps these people to reach a better understanding of cultures and their respective differences; additionally, she provides strategies to deal with this cross-cultural complexity. This map is composed by eight dimensions and helps us to decode how people may think, how people may conduct their businesses and how different are their views from ours; this will promote understanding and better chances of success for both leaders and employees. The eight scales are respectively: Communicating: low-context vs. high-context; Evaluating: direct negative feedback vs. indirect negative feedback; Persuading: principles-first vs. applications-first; Leading: egalitarian vs. hierarchical; Deciding: consensual vs. top-down;

Trusting: task-based vs. relationship-based; Disagreeing: confrontational vs. avoids confrontation; and Scheduling: linear-time vs. flexible-time.

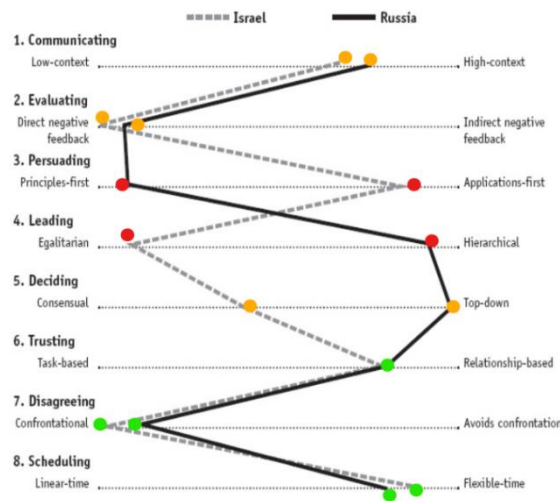


Figure 2 - Russian and Israeli Business Cultures on The Map

If we are to operate a transnational business, we need to focus on our partners and their respective cultures; Meyer's map can be very helpful in the sense that it positions cultures in relation to each other. For instance, we may exemplify it with a case that is presented in her book; picturing an Israeli executive working in a Russian company; through her map, we are able to determine the points that we need to analyze before we get caught up in a trap. We may see the position of Russian business culture and compare it to Israeli culture and determine how can we better understand and how can we avoid misunderstandings when doing business. Taking one of Meyer's examples (figure 2) we can recognize the common and the contrasting cultural aspects of both cultures and analyze how we would cease to operate a business given this information without coming into conflict.

As we analyze this map, we conclude that there are more contrasting aspects than common ones; we can perceive that these two cultures are similar in some aspects but very different in others. They both start trusting their business partners by starting a relationship based on time spent together; also, they both disagree in a confrontational way and they both perform under a flexible-time scheduling manner. However, they differ big time in cultural aspects such as their leading character – Russia works in a rather hierarchical leading pattern whereas Israeli business culture performs under an egalitarian leading pattern and this can provoke conflict, disagreement, and misunderstandings, which will have a negative impact in business. In this chapter, there will be a thorough analysis of these eight scales and their meanings, illustrated with examples.

Eight Cultural Scales according to Erin Meyer's Culture Map

Erin Meyer's map does not scale every country in the world; however, it scales the positions of twenty to thirty countries along a continuum and conducts people through loads of situations commonly occurring in our global business world. As the author states in her book "Culture can be a sensitive topic. Speaking about a person's culture often provokes the same type of reaction as speaking about his mother. Most of us have a deep protective instinct for the culture we consider our own" (Meyer, 2014, p. 28), so when analyzing these scales, we need to consider that both cultural and individual differences influence each transnational interaction. Furthermore, it is a crucial factor to understand that these eight scales rely on the concept of cultural relativity.

Cultural relativity is key to understanding the impact of culture when the matter is human interaction; cultural relativism happens when we evaluate and analyze other cultures having ours as a reference, we make assumptions, and we judge others basing our judgment on our culture and our values (Meyer, 2014). When analyzing these scales developed by Meyer, what matters is not the positioning of a culture on a particular scale, but rather the relative positioning in comparison to our culture.

1. Communicating Across Cultures: Listening to The Air

This scale focuses on cultural types of communication whether the cultures are high-context or low-context in communicational terms. Low-context cultures are cultures that do not depend on context to communicate, which are rather explicit in order to pass their message; it is not a conscious attitude, it is a cultural feature. The lowest-context culture in the world is the United States. On the other hand, a high-context culture like Japan, which holds the title of the highest-context culture in the world, depends on context to communicate, depends on the atmosphere; it does not require to be explicit, indeed, it is often inappropriate to be too explicit. As an exemplification, Meyer tells a story of her explaining in detail this communication scale and that there was a Japanese executive that reinforced this scale with a precious observation, which is very helpful to Americans or members of low-context cultures. The Japanese HR executive stated the following:

In Japan, we implicitly learn, as we are growing up, to communicate between the lines and to listen between the lines when others are speaking. Communicating messages without saying them directly is a deep part of our culture, so deep that we do it without even realizing it. To give an example, every year in Japan there is a vote for the most popular new word. A

few years ago, the word of the year was “KY.” It stands for *kuuki yomenai*, which means “one who cannot read the air”—in other words, a person sorely lacking the ability to read between the lines. In Japan, if you can’t read the air, you are not a good listener. (...) If I am in a meeting in Japan and one person is implicitly communicating disagreement or discomfort, we should be able to read the atmosphere to pick up on that discomfort. If someone else doesn’t pick up the message we say, ‘He is a KY guy!’ (Meyer, 2014, p. 34)

Japanese culture focuses on listening with all of their senses to pick up all the contextual cues that are in the air; whereas Americans are rather explicit and if not called to attention to be aware of these implicit cues, they are, in fact, “KY”, and this may affect businesses. In many Asian cultures, messages are often conveyed implicitly, requiring the listener to read the air, to read between the lines. To a lesser degree, Latin European cultures such as Spain, Italy, and Portugal are also included in the range of the high-context cultures, where effective communication is layered and depends on the context.

2. The Many Faces Of Polite: Evaluating Performance and Providing Negative Feedback

Feedback is inherent to work; and, in the workplace, leaders must be capable of giving negative feedback to their team members either directly or indirectly. This is where problems may arise; leaders must carefully choose their words and their way of giving negative feedback and let the feedback be completely understood by the other part and this can be a quite challenging task. What may be considered constructive in one culture might be seen as destructive in another culture. Getting negative feedback right may be motivational and may strengthen teams, whereas getting it wrong may demoralize and earn leaders an unfair reputation as insensitive managers. By way of illustration, the English use downgraders when giving negative feedback and cultures like the Dutch may not perceive them as they wish. Ripmeester’s “Anglo-Dutch Translation Guide” circulated in several ways on the Internet, and it went viral. Picking up three examples from this guide:

- A) When the British say “With all due respect...”, they mean “I think you are wrong” but the Dutch will understand “He is listening to me” (Meyer, 2014, p. 62)
- B) When the British say “Oh, by the way” what they mean is that that the following criticism is the purpose of the discussion, but the Dutch will understand “This is not very important” (Meyer, 2014, p. 62)

- C) When the British say “Please think about that some more” they mean “It’s a bad idea. Don’t do it”, but the Dutch will understand “It’s a good idea. Keep developing it” (Meyer, 2014, p. 62)



Figure 3– Evaluating Negative Feedback

Analyzing these examples, we may understand that giving negative feedback requires that you know about the counterpart’s cultural background to guarantee that the negative feedback is properly noted and taken into consideration. This confusion is generated because, in the Netherlands, people give negative feedback directly and frankly, whereas the British are not that direct in giving negative feedback, they give negative feedback more subtly. If we are to analyze this scale, we may witness that in relation to the UK, the Netherlands is rather on the left side of the scale. To wrap this scale up, as the author (Meyer, 2014, p. 64) states that “politeness is in the eye of the beholder” and a leader must learn to adapt to its employees or clients.

3. Why Versus How: The Art of Persuasion in a Multicultural World

The art of persuasion is a vital skill to master when doing business. How we seek to persuade others and the arguments we use are rooted in our cultural background, so persuasion is far from being universal; “the art of persuasion is one that is profoundly culture-based” (Meyer, 2014, p.80).

There are two styles of reasoning which are “principles first” and “applications first”. In this scale, the Asian cultures do not appear as their structure of reference is different from the Westerners; Asians usually take a more holistic view and want to see the whole picture. Principles first refer to deductive conclusions; concluding things from general principles or concepts, as Meyer illustrates in her book, we may start with “all men are mortal”, to “Justin Bieber is a man”, to conclude that “Justin Bieber will eventually die” (Meyer, 2014, p. 83). Applications first refer to inductive conclusions; we reach a conclusion based on factual observations, as the author illustrates:

For example, if you travel to my hometown in Minnesota one hundred times during January and February, and you observe every visit that the temperature is considerably below zero, you will conclude that Minnesota winters are cold (and that a winter visit to Minnesota calls for a warm coat as well as a scarf, wool hat, gloves, and ear warmers). In this case, you observe data from the real world, and, based on these empirical observations, you draw broader conclusions (Meyer, 2014, pp. 83-84).

So, regarding this scale and according to the same author “unless we know how to... avoid easy-to-fall-into cultural traps, we are easy prey to misunderstanding, needless conflict, and ultimate failure”. For instance, France and Italy are “why” oriented – are deductive reasoners and are principles-first, familiar with having to present a thesis, an antithesis, and then a synthesis, whereas the Anglo-Saxon nations are “how” oriented, more focused on practical applications to reach conclusions. This may affect the communication in what concerns emails and the way presentations are prepared.



Figure 4– Persuading Scale

For instance, in relation to other European cultures, the United Kingdom is applications-first. However, if we compare the United Kingdom with the United States, we conclude that the US is more principles-first than the UK, this is a striking illustration of the power of cultural relativity (Meyer, 2014).

In a nutshell, if we intend to persuade Asian cultures it is vital that we regard the bigger picture, that we notice details, and that we explain to them the whole scenario. Meyer cites a Chinese participant of a class of hers “Chinese people think from macro to micro, whereas Western people think from micro to macro” and the author follows this thought and states that “It’s easy to see how these differences in the characteristic sequence of thinking may cause difficulty or misunderstanding when people from Asian and Western cultures are involved in conversation”.

4. How Much Respect Do You Want? Leadership, Hierarchy, and Power

Hofstede was the first one to come up with the concept of “power distance” and quoting Meyer, Hofstede defined power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations accept and expect that power is distributed unequally” (Meyer, 2014, p. 107). On Meyer’s scale, it is used the word egalitarian instead of low power distance and hierarchical instead of high-power distance. Meyer explores a case of Danes and Russians’ cultural differences in leading. While working with Maersk, a multinational container-shiping company, a Danish executive complains about the Russians’ attitude towards him. He starts by explaining that:

Danes call everyone by their first name and I wouldn’t feel comfortable being called anything but Ulrich. In my staff meetings, the voices of the interns and administrative assistants count as much as mine or any of the directors. This is quite common in Denmark (Meyer, 2014, p. 103).

The Danish executive, someone from an egalitarian leadership cultural style, complains to Meyer that his Russian employees call him “Mr. President”, that they defer to his opinions, that they are reluctant to take initiative, that they are constantly asking for his approval and that they treat him like a king. During group interviews, Meyer found out that the Russian management team that was working with the Danish executive was also upset with this situation since they saw him as weak, an ineffective leader, and incompetent. If we stop to analyze the leading scale, to the Danish executive, the ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low and to the Russian members the ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high; Denmark stands for an Egalitarian leading pattern, and Russia stands for a rather hierarchical way of leading and this is why these people were in conflict, cultural conflict.



Figure 5– Leading: Egalitarian Vs Hierarchical

There is a big difference in cultural terms concerning the way to lead in the business sector. Bearing in mind the information in figure 6, we may understand why the Danish and

the Russians, without being aware of each other’s cultural traits may cause conflict and generate misunderstandings.

General traits of egalitarian cultures:	General traits of hierarchical cultures:
It’s okay to disagree with the boss openly even in front of others.	An effort is made to defer to the boss’s opinion especially in public.
People are more likely to move to action without getting the boss’s okay.	People are more likely to get the boss’s approval before moving to action.
If meeting with a client or supplier, there is less focus on matching hierarchical levels.	If you send your boss, they will send their boss. If your boss cancels, their boss also may not come.
It’s okay to e-mail or call people several levels below or above you.	Communication follows the hierarchical chain.
With clients or partners you will be seated and spoken to in no specific order.	With clients or partners you may be seated and spoken to in order of position.

Figure 6 – Egalitarian Cultures Vs Hierarchical Cultures

5. Big D or Little D: Who Decides, And How?

Decision-making is crucial in business, and it can either be consensual or top-down. Most egalitarian cultures are consensual in their decision-making; nonetheless, the US, an egalitarian culture, sees consensual decision-making as too slow and inflexible. Speaking of exceptions, Germany is more hierarchical than egalitarian and prefers decision-making based on consensus.

While Americans perceive German organizations as hierarchical because of the fixed nature of the hierarchical structure, the formal distance between the boss and subordinate, and the very formal titles used, Germans consider American companies hierarchical because of their approach to decision making. German culture places a higher value on building consensus as part of the decision-making process, while in the United States, decision-making is largely invested in the individual (Meyer, 2014, p. 127).

In a consensual culture, the decision-making process may take a long time since everyone is consulted and so the Americans see it as too slow as mentioned before. So, the consensual decision-making scale looks like the one mentioned in figure 7:



Figure 8– Consensual Decision-Making Timeline

In a top-down decision-making process, the responsibility is invested in an individual, the boss. Decisions are very quick and early in the process. In the decision-making process, curiously, cultures that may be very similar in other scales are very different; picking up on Japanese and Chinese examples, we may see that although Japan is a rather hierarchical business culture, but it supports a consensual decision-making policy, unanimously.

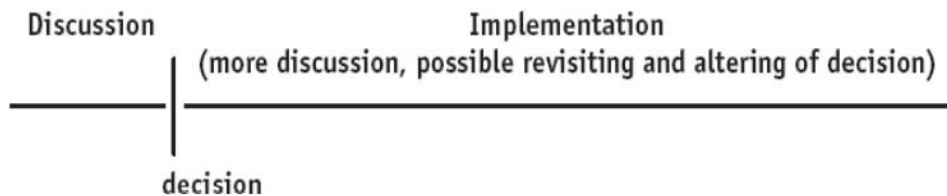


Figure 7- Deciding after discussing it with inferior members of the hierarchy

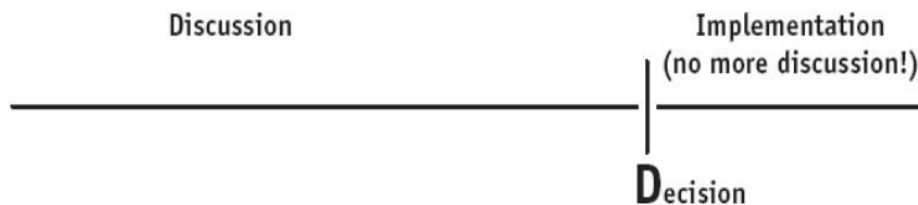


Figure 9 - Top-Down Decision-Making Timeline

6. The Head or The Heart: Two Types of Trust And How They Grow

There are two types of trust in business – cognitive trust and affective trust. According to Meyer, “Cognitive trust is based on the confidence you feel in another person’s accomplishments, skills, and reliability. This is trust that comes from the head” and “Affective trust, on the other hand, arises from feelings of emotional closeness, empathy, or friendship. This type of trust comes from the heart. We laugh together, relax together, and see each other at a personal level so that I feel affection or empathy for you and sense that you feel the same for me. Result: I trust you.” Additionally, there are task-based cultures and

relationship-based relationships in the business sector - task-based trust refers to the trust we build through business-related activities and enjoy working with a person, there is good work, and the other person is reliable, so we trust them; relationship-based trust refers to the trust we build through sharing personal time, knowing the other well and consequently trusting them. These two trust types are portrayed in figure 10.

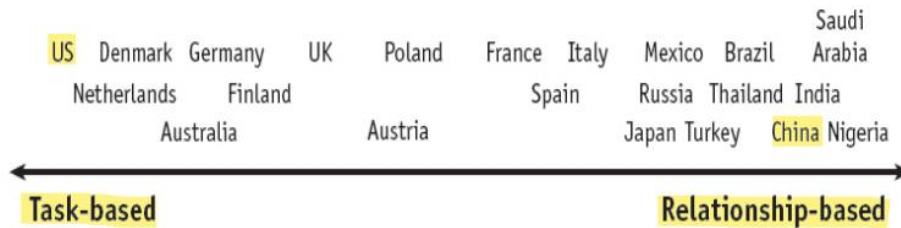


Figure 10 – Trusting

7. The Needle, Not he Knife: Disagreeing Productively

Nations disagree in different ways; in cultures such as Israel and France we are expected to get confrontational when it comes to disagreements, and this will not influence the business relationship negatively. Nonetheless, in East Asian cultures, we must avoid confrontation altogether since it can cost us the relationship that we have been building.

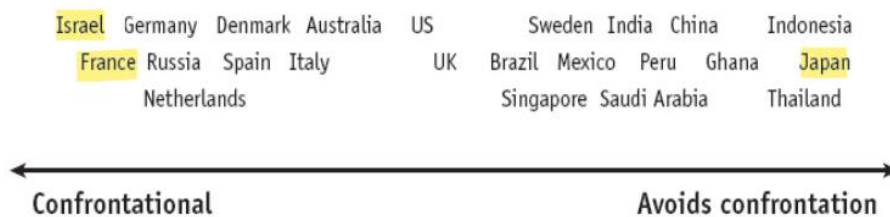


Figure 11 – Disagreeing

Regarding this topic and this scale, there is a Bahamian Proverb that portrays this situation “To engage in conflict, one does not bring a knife that cuts but a needle that sews.” This means that we shall not bring a knife that will cut and turn the disagreement into more fragments to generate even more discord but a needle to enable us to sew and unite and try to fix in the best way possible the argument. So, we shall not approach a disagreement with a “knife” attitude – with a very incisive and confrontational attitude – we shall instead bring a “needle” attitude with us, an attitude that intends to sew, unify, and bring together the matter being discussed to reach a resolution and not a conflict (Meyer, 2014, p.146).

8. How Late Is Late? Scheduling And Cross-Cultural Perceptions

Concerning scheduling, we must know that what is considered late in one culture may be acceptable to others; if we are to do business with linear time cultures, we must make sure to be on time where we should be. As an example of scheduling cultural conflict, if we have a meeting at 9 o'clock and we are running 10 minutes late and we are from a linear-time culture, such as Germany, the US, or the UK, we will make a call to whoever we are meeting, letting them know that we are probably going to be late; we do not risk annoying our counterparts. If we are from France or Italy, we will probably not make a phone call to let the counterpart know that we will be 10 minutes late, it is acceptable, we show up late and apologize for it. Nonetheless, if we are from flexible-time cultures, such as India, South America, or Africa, 45 minutes late is common and acceptable. So, it is all relative. We may see ourselves as part of linear-time cultures but there could be cultures that are more linear than us; let's illustrate this with an example from the book:

One global team was composed primarily of British and French consultants, and throughout their work the British complained that the French were disorganized, chaotic, and lacked punctuality. "They take so many tangents and side routes during the meeting, it's impossible to follow their line of thinking!" one British team member said. On another team, made up of mainly Indians and French, the Indians complained that the French were rigid, inflexible, and obsessed with deadlines and structure to the point that they were unable to adapt as the situation around them changed. "If you don't tell them weeks in advance what is going to happen in the meeting, in which order, it makes them very nervous," one Indian team member said. (...) When I described this experience to a group of Germans and British collaborating on another global team, one of the Germans laughed. "That's very funny," he told us. "Because we Germans always complain that the British are disorganized, chaotic, and always late—exactly the complaint the British in your example lodged against the French." (Meyer, 2014, p. 26)

It is all relative, we need to compare cultures and their positions on the scales to achieve a better understanding of their cultural features accordingly. In figure 12, we may notice that although the stereotype of punctuality mostly refers to the UK, Germany is more linear than the UK.

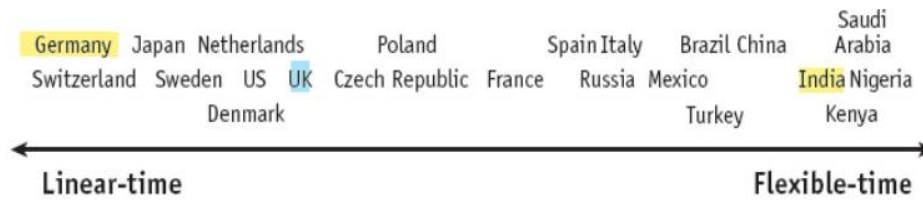


Figure 12 – Scheduling

To understand and to analyze these scales and make them useful, we must start by putting it all together, beginning with plotting our culture using the scales and then having a map to be able to compare it to those of our business partners.

2.2 Cultural Mediation

According to Meyer (2014, p. 211), “The more aware the team becomes of how culture is impacting their work, the more effective they will be at bridging the differences.”, every team and every leader needs to know how to bridge cultural differences, how to bridge the fault lines between business cultural features for them not to be an obstacle and so cultural mediation is to be considered. According to Triandis (2000), people from different cultures evaluate other cultures through different kinds of information. Some may focus more on communicational aspects such as tone of voice, gestures, etc., whereas other people may draw their attention to others’ attitudes, beliefs, etc. Some people may find information about ethnicity, race, and religion more relevant while others find it more appropriate to focus on people’s beliefs, values, and attitudes. All of the aforementioned will determine the probabilities of possible cultural conflicts. Regarding cultural conflict, we may bring up cultural distance as Triandis (2000, p.146) states “differences in standards of living can create cultural distance” and cultural distance, as the name suggests, distances people and might even dissociate groups and give rise to conflicts:

The phenomenon is that if we agree with a particular position we believe that most other people also agree with it; if we disagree with a particular position we believe that most people disagree with it. The phenomenon is even stronger when we interact with people who are similar to us in dress, profession, etc. (Triandis, 2000, p. 146)

In a nutshell, Triandis (2000) deduces that regarding cultural conflicts, cultural distance may increase the chances of people miscommunicating and that there are trainings to help overcoming these problems. Thus, these learning processes should be considered,

and people should be predisposed to attend them, especially individuals that operate in the business sector or that teach other people about foreign languages and cultures.

Concerning modern language education and the entrepreneurial culture in business, there should be considered matters such as cultural awareness and cross-cultural mediation. According to Dasli (2011), cultural awareness is about being aware of the equation culture-country, whereas the second one refers to the development of intercultural competence through tolerance. According to the same author, when addressing cultural awareness, we are considering the national culture and exploring its respective behaviors, attitudes, tendencies, and every form of culture that is expressed by the people of that nation; it is about the observation and consideration for a specific national culture idea. Whilst cross-cultural mediation is more related to the notion of the intercultural speaker, when someone encourages foreign language learners to understand the other more richly and deeply, pushing these people to know how to handle cases of cultural conflict, miscommunication and to adapt, to be flexible, to be tolerant in the making of a cultural platform of shared intercultural knowledge. (Dasli, 2011)

What is also addressed by Dasli (2011) as the cultural awareness “moment” is the connection between the culture and the country; briefly, for decades intercultural academics asserted that modern language education should offer students opportunities to be more familiar with the culture of a particular country or group of people (Dasli, 2011). For instance, in Portugal, when learning English as a foreign language, English and North American cultures are indicated and students learn about those two countries’ gastronomy, traditions, etc., through texts from their student books. Nonetheless, it is not enough to know that in England fish and chips is the most traditional dish as it is not enough to know that the Industrial Revolution started there; culture is beyond these items mentioned just now, and foreign language education must go along with foreign culture education and so it must go deeper and there must be further understanding, awareness and enlightenment about what culture is and these students should have a better understanding of the underlying values of different cultures. The sooner students understand what cultural differences are, the sooner will they understand and be tolerant towards others’ cultural characteristics, which is fundamental on preventing intercultural conflicts.

Schools only prepare students to be sympathetic to people from different cultures; however, education should be standing for a more intercultural awareness idea and

consequent tolerance, respect, and curiosity. Societies are increasingly intercultural since people no longer just exist in the same place but interact with each other. If schools' programs are not yet prepared to give children and students, in general, the required cultural training, there should be someone who does. There should be explanatory speeches on the matter, there should be intercultural activities. All of the above-mentioned will have an impact once these students enter the business world and so there should be a service to help them become more and more educated in the intercultural field. What we learn is what we put to action, if we do not learn we will not put it to action and so cross-cultural mediation becomes crucial in certain situations, especially in the business world. (Dasli, 2011)

Cultural mediation is a process of connecting individuals or groups of people from different cultures. In a world where we live among several cultures, it can be rather challenging to interpret and decode every culture within the context of our lives. As we live in a constantly connected intercultural society, we may be presented with numerous social environments and exposed to cultures with aspects that we may not understand or recognize. In cases where people are not able to recognize and understand cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, etc., there should be a mediator to assist this process of realization, to help individuals to figure out and to learn about others' cultures and different cultural values to be tolerant, informed, conscious, observant, sensitive and to avoid unnecessary conflict.

There may be cultures and cultural traits which will intrigue us, and, in those moments, we should have access to someone or some service that helps us to fully comprehend the situation for us not to be misinterpreted or misunderstood, particularly if the situation is business related. Cultural mediation essentially consists of supporting individuals in their journey to understand other cultures and in encouraging cross-cultural cohesion. Cultural mediation aims at combining the creation of different limits from what people are used to and different means of expertise to enhance understanding, acceptance, respect, and tolerance across frontiers. A cultural mediator is a source of expertise, someone who facilitates cultural development unity, by conveying information and creating coherence between two or more cultures with accuracy. Additionally, cultural mediation serves to simplify and to help solve some disagreements; to recall information to bring the parties to an understanding (MySmartJourney, n.d.).

The Council of Europe describes, in the migration sector, a cultural mediator as “a professional who facilitates the communication (including interpretation) between people

speaking different languages and coming from different cultural backgrounds”, so we may conclude that cultural mediation is a process of facilitating intercultural communication. Additionally, the council of Europe state that cultural mediators are providers of information on different sets of beliefs, values, etc. by helping to clarify specific cultural concepts, notions, and visions, which may bring about misunderstandings. Notwithstanding, and very important to mention, intercultural mediation is not a registered profession; people often confuse an interpreter with a cultural mediator when these are two different things. Intercultural mediation is much broader than interpreting (Migration and Home Affairs, n.d.). It is important to denote that language is a cultural aspect and problems may arise when two parties cannot communicate due to not knowing how to speak each other’s language; among several other possible cultural obstacles, language may be a barrier to communication. Every difficulty related to communication in an intercultural level is a reason for mediation to exist (Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM), n.d.).

CHAPTER III – “*CULTUREWISE*”: BEHIND THE CONCEPT

Ideas come from curiosity.

Walt Disney

3 Behind the Concept

In the general run of things, it can be observed the absence of cultural know-how in companies' teams; on top of that, companies should invest more in globalization and internationalization processes, since problems such as poor negotiation planning or not having an adapted system may compromise business' success. When approaching topics such as cultural consciousness and taking countries such as Portugal and the US as examples, we may come across two different cultural aspects that may influence the accomplishment of a business; the fact that Portugal has a more implicit culture, whereas the US has a more explicit one, for instance. An implicit culture or high-context culture relies on implicit communication and that counts heavily on context, while an explicit or low-context culture refers to communicating in a direct, explicit and detailed way. Considering such characteristics, when ceasing to operate a business, misinterpretation may occur and may be fatal to the mediation between members of these two cultures. Since nowadays most startups are born-global startups, and since most of them do not follow a step-by-step model, several problems may arise when it comes to the company's internationalization process. In this sense, it is of my belief that Portuguese startups should have more access to services of cultural mediation or cultural consultancy so as to increase their skills and expertise in the cultural competence field, so as to avoid spoiling their chances of doing business due to cultural barriers.

A startup is, according to Steve Blank (Harvard Business Review, 2022), "an organization formed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model", in an article from Forbes, Paul Graham defines a startup as "a company designed to scale very quickly" (Khan, 2022) and according to Eric Ries (2011) "a human institution designed to bring something new under conditions of extreme uncertainty." Uncertainty is bad for someone who is starting a business; however, it is also an advantage for never letting the guard down; for always wanting to make sure that everything is being done to achieve success. According to the European Startup Network (Yaroulnia, n.d.) a startup is "an independent organisation, which is younger than five years and is aimed at creating, improving and expanding a scalable, innovative, technology-enabled product with high and rapid growth." This definition is divided into the following aspects: age, independence, and scalability; organization and innovation; and technology-based & high growth potential. According to TechCrunch (Wilhelm, 2014), a company is considered to be a startup if it is a "technology company either hunting for or actively avoiding an IPO: \$50 million revenue run rate

(forward 12 months);100 or more employees; worth more than \$500 million, on paper or otherwise.” In a nutshell, the term “startup” refers to a company in the first stages of operations and startups are established by entrepreneurs who want to develop a product or service for which they believe there is demand in the market. So, these companies generally start with high costs and limited revenue, and so entrepreneurs look for capital from a variety of sources such as venture capitalists. A startup may be restrained to 5 years, and it is any company that with 5 years makes 50 million per year, and which has 100 employees and that values less than 500 million.

3.1 Problems Around Lack of Cultural Awareness & Competence

All societies, including the Portuguese one, are increasingly multicultural and so an interchange of different values, ideas, principles, norms, etc. created new challenges. Nonetheless, this does not mean that we know about every culture that surrounds us in a deeper and satisfactory way and when entering the business world, this becomes even clearer to us. Drucker also states that the post-capitalist society is made of skilled workers (Drucker & Collins, 2008 as cited in E. & Yildiz (2012)). We live in a society surrounded by rapid changes, uncertainty, and higher local and global competitiveness – changing in what concerns the “lifelong career” – holding a both economic and social unstable situation and so we must seek for solutions. Nowadays, entrepreneurship is what drives economy and what promotes employment, giving birth to new industries and innovating organizations, institutions, and even nations (Lamas, 2012). When deciding to set up a startup, even if we decide to build it in the Portuguese market, we need to be aware of the utter necessity to internationalize the business and so we need to be conscious about our choices. If an entrepreneur sets a business off, in today’s globalized world the business will require an internationalization process, a process that will involve the need of skills in many fields, such as cultural competence; there will be the need for experts in the cultural competence area and not all entrepreneurs are interculturally competent; besides, most entrepreneurs are not sufficiently aware and conscious about the importance of culture in the business world and tend to belittle such topic and it can sentence their startups’ success.

Erin Meyer, a famous writer and professor, states in her book “*The culture map*” that “If you go into every interaction assuming that culture doesn’t matter, your default mechanism will be to view others through your own cultural lens and to judge or misjudge them accordingly” (Meyer, 2014, p. 18). In order to further understand this passage, we may

consider an example of Meyer's book, too; the situation concerns a meeting of Meyer and executives at Peugeot Citroën, where she would prepare these executives for the cultural adjustments they would need to make in their upcoming move to China. Meyer would be assisted by a Chinese journalist who volunteered to help during the training session. During the training session, the professor paused her speech and looked to the Chinese journalist several times, but the journalist did not say a word. This situation puzzled Meyer, who was intrigued and who was not understanding why the journalist volunteered and did not participate in the training session. After 3 hours of speaking, Meyer decided to ask directly if the Chinese journalist had something to add to the training session, and surprisingly he thanked her and started to describe several examples with a lot of enthusiasm. Meyer, at the moment, judged the Chinese journalist by the stereotype that she had of the Chinese people, who are often seen as shy, reserved people; the author even thought about the Chinese journalist as a not very good communicator; also, she mentions that she thought about herself as an incompetent facilitator. This situation was not about character but about culture and it might be very difficult to understand, especially when we are faced with these situations and not sufficiently interculturally competent. The journalist's behavior lined up with a familiar cultural stereotype, and the journalist when asked about his lack of input, explained to the executives, referring to Meyer, that "As she is the senior person in the room, I wait for her to call on me. And, while I am waiting, I should show I am a good listener by keeping both my voice and my body quiet. In China, we often feel Westerners speak up so much in meetings that they do this to show off, or they are poor listeners" and even added "I would have liked to make one of my points if an appropriate length of pause had arisen. But Erin was always talking, so I just kept waiting patiently" (Meyer, 2014, p.12). In this case, the cultural context shaped the situation and to know how to deal with these unexpected and damaging misunderstandings is crucial when one is ceasing to operate a business. Leaders who usually trivialize cultural concepts, such as hierarchy, for instance, are one step closer to not being succeeded; perhaps, some of us live in more egalitarian cultures and hierarchy may be seen as irrelevant; nonetheless, hierarchy is a cultural vital element that when not taken into consideration can cost businesspeople a deal. If people are not aware of the magnitude of some cultural aspects in certain cultures, they may be surprised with business failures. Situations related to not understanding about the other parties' cultural aspects and misunderstand them are, sometimes, fixable. Notwithstanding, it would be preferential not to repair these situations but to avoid them by learning about cultural competence.

3.2 Solution – Improving Leaders Ability to Be Culturally Competent

A nation's culture has great impact in the performance of international business. As the global market evolves, participants in the global marketplace will have to keep up and learn how to find the way with cultural differences. In order to build healthy and long-termed business relationships, individuals should work on building their cultural awareness. It is required to learn about global business, about the international marketplace, the customers' expectations, cultural differences and all of these will have great impact on the ceasing of the businesses. As globalization turned out to be a process that became undeniably a driving force of today's business world, companies started to globalize having in mind that to achieve such thing, considering other cultures would be a forte; cultural sensitivity is a key skill when dealing with several cultures, especially when doing business.

Entrepreneurship is generally associated to creativity, innovation, and growth. The skill to thrive, to prosper and put ideas into action is the key skill of an entrepreneur; to have attitude, to start something, to be fearless, to take risks – this is what being an entrepreneur is (Lamas, 2012). Nonetheless, entrepreneurs may be very active and may want to start a business on an area of their expertise but there might be some areas that they are not proficient at but there are still required to this set-off; entrepreneurs may need proper education in some crucial sectors for people who want to operate businesses internationally. A very important aspect when doing business across cultures is communication and communicational problems are exacerbated when communication takes place across cultures; and this is not necessarily due to translation, but due to the difficulties for non-natives to catch cultural nuances when discussing in a foreign language, cultural cues that may influence and impact communication. With the right directions, proper education, willingness to understand the other, doing business may be efficient and quite easy.

After evaluating and considering that the lack of cultural competence may be a problem for startups throughout their internationalization process, and in order to provide an effective solution, the idea of this project consists of the creation of services of consultancy, speeches and mediation, all focused on intercultural competence and intercultural communication, which will help startup's staff and younger generations to be enlightened and prepared for some of the international market needs. So, under the name "*CultureWise*" followed by its slogan "Analyze, Recognize, Maximize", the main goal of this project is to help startups maximizing their businesses by being culturally wiser; however, it also aims at

being educational and providing informational speeches to younger generations at high-school or college level, so as to provide them with the proper tools in case they eventually want to be in contact with other cultures or ultimately in case they decide to start their own businesses. In order to do so, the intention is to bring down the importance of the cultural component in the business world. “*CultureWise*” is a project tailored to address socio-cultural issues related to intercultural competence and communication, and it is intended to start off with Portugal as its first target audience. This organization aims primarily at supporting Portuguese startups with their internationalization processes in order to make these companies sustainable and effective. Moreover, it aims at being a both educational and professional assistance company, by helping professionals or individuals in need of help in the intercultural area.

Being Portugal a country where small and medium-sized companies dominate the market, and being increasingly common the emergence of startups, whether they are physical, fully digital or a hybrid, it is necessary to keep in mind that we live in a globalized and increasingly interconnected world. However, despite the fact that the whole process of globalization is common knowledge, the importance of topics such as cultural awareness and cultural competence remain too trivialized when it comes to business. In this sense, in order to bridge this gap, “*CultureWise*” intends to take action essentially in the Portuguese market and to assist, first, national companies enabling these to have the opportunity to grow in a conscious way and to be able to make this growth something long termed.

The “*CultureWise*” team offers a service that aims at helping Portuguese startups, born global startups, to avoid failure due to cultural unconsciousness. Adaptation is key for nowadays’ business world and interculturality and global business depend on cultural adaptation from the companies’ delivering services. Without cultural consciousness, most of the companies would not be able to internationalize and to succeed in their internationalization process, would not become well-known and a reference, competition. There is more than language to capture and to decode, there is culture, there is cultural background and cultural know-how is a crucial matter to be considered when it comes to cross cultural businesses and to global companies.

3.3 Market Study

According to Roudometof (2016), being “*glocal*” is not only a new term but a new concept; it earned its popularity in the 1990s, and since then its use has risen. According to

O’Byrne and Hensby as cited in Roudometof (2016), glocalization is “a process of transformation...of becoming global” and it can be employed in several areas. Before, people would not care so much with localization when adapting to the markets where they would promote and sell their products and services; nowadays, there is no success without localizing the business. In business, we refer to “glocalization” which is a blend of the words “*globalization*” and “*localization*” and it is a term that describes a product/service which is distributed globally but adjusted to the target audience’s local market (Hayes, 2022). It is very important to know the target market and to adjust to the target market’s context either economically or culturally.

In order to achieve success is essential to do a market study, to evaluate, to assess and to do some research on the target niche of market. The major competition for “*CultureWise*” in Portugal is “*Five Thousand Miles*”. It is a company that provides internationalization services and that helps companies with all aspects of enlarging to new markets. “*Five Thousand Miles*” presents services such as market research, digital content generation, promotion, schedule of meetings, business trips, and commercial follow up. Although “*Five Thousand Miles*” is competition to “*CultureWise*”. “*Five Thousand Miles*” is a company that aims to be bigger not only in the national market but also abroad and developed its path towards the foreign market; however, “*CultureWise*” aims at focusing more on the national market, more specifically on Portuguese startups, rather than moving towards international companies. Furthermore, “*Five Thousand Miles*” offers services that are not proposed by “*CultureWise*” and vice versa, so competition is relative. According to the company’s LinkedIn description “*Five Thousand Miles*” is a Portuguese company which specializes in international business development in Europe, North America, South America and Africa. Five Thousand Miles has African and European private shareholder capital owned by investors from 5 different countries. Five Thousand Miles has offices in Lisbon (Portugal), Madrid (Spain), Miami (USA), São Paulo (Brazil), Accra (Ghana), Johannesburg (South Africa), Lagos (Nigeria), and more than 50 staff from 9 different nationalities”. (FIVE THOUSAND MILES, n.d). Thus, the company that reassembles more to “*CultureWise*” is, in fact, “*Five Thousand Miles*”, but neither the services offered, nor the target audience are the same; while “*Five Thousand Miles*” aimed big and has offices around the globe, “*CultureWise*” aims smaller and intends to have only one office in Portugal and offer services of consultancy, mediation and educational speeches. “*Five Thousand Miles*” offers services to companies that are already stable and that want help to internationalize, whereas

“*CultureWise*”’s main aim is to help Portuguese unstable startups to become stable and to enter the international market with proper education and prepared to face any cultural obstacle or barrier with flying colors achieving their goals and maximizing their businesses. Another possible competitor for “*CultureWise*” could be “*Ahptus*” (*Ahptus - Consultoria e Formação.*, n.d.). which is a consulting company that has as its main activities training entities and responding to the needs of business management support in the most diverse areas, namely one of the trainings is “*How to improve approaches to customers*” so, some services provided by this company meet the services provided by “*CultureWise*”. Moreover, this company offers services as consultancy in internationalization, from market prospecting to consulting and support international assignments that entities might have; another common ground between “*CultureWise*” and “*Ahptus*” is that this second company also aims at supporting national companies to place their products in the foreign market. “*CultureWise*” excels due to its innovation factor, due to its inventiveness.

Additionally, there is a company CBC – Cultural Business Consulting – in the international market that is very similar to what “*CultureWise*” pretends to be in the Portuguese market. It has coaching services in cultural consultancy, which has as one of its main goals to highlight the impact of culture in the workplace, and which has other services such as live training, one-on-one coaching, etc. It is a flawless example of competition for this project. (*Cultural Business Consulting – the Gateway to a Culturally Connected Workplace.*, n.d.)

3.4 Surveys

Two surveys were conducted during this dissertation’s development to further understand if the services provided are indeed needed and pertinent in the Portuguese market. Also, surveys help to support the relevance of the project and serve as a test. The two surveys were conducted to collect information on opinions, needs, expectations, and behaviors of the Portuguese people. The surveys were pointed to Portuguese people mainly young people who just graduated, people which are possible future entrepreneurs. Moreover, the collection went further and, fortunately, people from several areas answered these surveys. The main objective of these two surveys was to understand better if people are aware of culture’s paramount role in their lives and in intercultural business, more specifically, and to understand if people would go for services as the ones presented by “*CultureWise*” so as to enable the improvement of the business model or to stick with the

plan and actually offer the services proposed as they are intended. The surveys were sent to a specific group of people, people who are experts in the areas that involve the project such as culture, entrepreneurship, and education. Also, the first survey was additionally sent to companies such as StartupLisboa, ANJE, Portugal Ventures and Fábrica de Startups but, unfortunately, it was not possible to collect answers from these entities.

The first survey “*CultureWise: Analyze, Recognize, Maximize*” was a presentation of the company and the questions were towards the services and if they would fulfil the Portuguese market needs regarding the Portuguese startups’ internationalization processes’ demands. 72.2% of the answers of this survey belonged to women and the remnant 27.8% to men. As for the range of ages, the predominant group was from 18 to 25 years old (66.7%) followed by 26 to 35 years old (27.8%) and a very little percentage was from 36 to 45 years old (5.6%). The range of ages is very important to analyze in this specific case because according to COMPETE 2020 (Compete2020, n.d.), Portuguese people have the proper attitude to undertake and the potential to do so in the startup sector. Most Portuguese continue to take a positive attitude towards establishing their own companies but not in all groups of ages. According to the GEM report of 2016 (*Entrepreneurship in Portugal*. GEM Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, n.d.), in Portugal, most entrepreneurs were in the age group of 25 to 34 years old. Moreover, the age classes with the shortest percentage were those between 55 and 64 years old and those between 18 to 24 years old. So, with this survey, I was aiming at these ages to further understand the target audience’s feedback, behavior and know-how on the intercultural business area regarding the startup sector. After analyzing the range of ages that have replied to the survey, the following step was to analyze the answers to the questions raised. There were no generic questions in this survey, the questions were all very to the point to understand how people saw the intercultural business world and how it could impact Portuguese startups.¹

Another survey was conducted not only with the aim of drawing conclusions about the services offered by “*CultureWise*” but also to understand how informed the Portuguese residents are about the concept of culture and its consequent impact in business. This second survey was performed with the intention of understanding on a deeper level how people assess their own cognizance on culture and how prepared they are to perform in the business world. There are several issues that influence how people behave either in their local cultural

¹ Appendix 1 – Survey “*CultureWise – Analyze, Recognize, Maximize*”

environment or in intercultural settings. Whereas the first survey aimed at very specific questions in the intercultural business context, this second survey focuses more on the individual perception of culture and its impact when interacting with others. Starting by assessing the range of ages that answered to this survey, the majority of people replying to the survey were between 18 and 25 years old (66.7%), followed by people within 26 and 35 years old (20.8%), subsequently 36 and 45 (4.2%) and coating with 45 and 65 (4.5%); so even if in small percentages, the range of ages was quite interesting to do this analysis and to assess the cultural know-how and openness of Portuguese people regarding culture. For starters, besides getting to know the inquired people ages, the aim was to know about their occupations: 66.7% were students, 4.2% were professors and 29.2% answered to having “other” occupations such as communication designer, waitress, hotel receptionist, sales technician and lawyer.²

After analyzing all the replies, and given the context of this project, there were some questions – such as question number 9 where 29.2% of people alleged to know their culture extremely well but do not see how it can influence their view of others and the last question where we are able to see that 20.8% of people are inclined to believe that people must question and show what is “normal” depending on the context people are inserted in and where 16.7% believe that cultural aspects may be questioned because they defy other cultures – which served to prove the lack of cultural competence and cultural consciousness of the Portuguese population. All the questions were towards a further understanding of individual perspectives and there were some interesting items to point out overall but specifically the last question. It is very important to highlight the subjectivity of culture and to draw people’s attention to cultural diversity and cultural consciousness importance; cultures do not “defy” other cultures, cultures are unique and distinctive, are to be recognized by their features and are different from one another; may be a challenge but never a threat. It is important to mention that the majority of replies belonged to students, and this makes one think about the lack of cultural consciousness and competence programs either in schools or colleges. This survey helped to prove that improvements are to take place in the intercultural segment of people’s education, because we are what we see, what we are used to live by, what we are taught and if we are advised and educated properly, we may get a

² Appendix 2 – Survey “Am I Culture...Wise?”

clearer picture of culture and all its features and understand that culture and cultural values are not to be questioned but analyzed, recognized and acknowledged.

3.5 Position

“*CultureWise*” positions itself in the cultural competence and cultural conscience sector, specifically in the Portuguese startup niche market. It is planned to be a project that solves sociocultural problems within Portuguese startups that are in their processes of internationalization. It is intended to help entrepreneurs to become culturally aware and to help them maximizing their businesses to other markets by providing them with educational and professional services.

Mission

“*CultureWise*”’s mission is to help Portuguese startups with their internationalization processes and to help entrepreneurs becoming better and more skilled, for them to be fully prepared to the intercultural business world. Since our customers own not only functional but also social and emotional obligations, the “*CultureWise*” team enters the picture precisely in issues like these: to help them not having to worry with social or emotional obligations, to help them on focusing more on working on their product or service and to relieve their social and emotional discomfort culturally related. “*CultureWise*” works for its customers, and its mission is to create a pleasant business environment where the customers can share their thoughts, ideas, and fears and be listened to in order to be aided; in order for them to be properly educated on the cultural matter and culturally pain relieved from that moment on. The protection of these organizations from possible cultural barriers that could spoil a business is one of the missions of “*CultureWise*”. Also, this project looks forward to seeing customers comfortable and confident, being “*CultureWise*”’s work to adapt its team to their needs and make sure that in the end the customers have solid businesses through solid cultural education and training.

Vision

“*CultureWise*” intends to implement an embryonic project in the Portuguese market, something that has never been done or thought about, forecasting more informed, educated, aware and well-prepared entrepreneurs. This project is created with the intention of educating, training and preparing Portuguese entrepreneurs for the intercultural businesses that they will face once they begin and put to action their internationalization processes.

“*CultureWise*” in the short run aims at supporting Portuguese startups by assisting their internationalization processes and facilitating their intercultural progress. In the long run, “*CultureWise*” might go further and aim at supporting international startups, because with time comes experience and “*CultureWise*” will always seek for progress and to encompass this active matter that is culture.

Goals

“*CultureWise*” has very simple goals but somehow hard to achieve; the main goals of this project are to bring knowledge, proper cultural competence, intercultural education and awareness to entrepreneurs who are thinking about maximizing their businesses. It seeks to protect Portuguese startups from possible failures due to cultural obstacles. It is already hard to set a startup business off in Portugal, if entrepreneurs have no easy access to services of consultancy, mediation and training, it gets even tougher and trickier to enter new markets, and so the goal is to protect Portuguese entrepreneurs from collapse regarding the intercultural business field.

Branding

Efficient and proper branding favors companies to differentiate themselves from their competition. Moreover, it is part of a process of creation, part of the delivery of a company to its target audience, which is crucial for the instigation of customers’ curiosity; it is during the branding process that customers should be startled and interested about the company’s service or product.

Logo

“*CultureWise*” aimed at a logo that would go along its simplicity and easiness since it aims at being a quite simple company. Nonetheless, the psychology of colors was applied; the colors of the logo are blue and white, and all of this has a meaning behind it; blue is a color associated to trust, wisdom, and stability, whereas white symbolizes peace, protection and balance. All the characteristics mentioned are to be considered in “*CultureWise*”’s mission, since the project aims at protecting Portuguese startups from cultural obstacles and watching over the stability, trust, and balance of Portuguese startups.



Figure 13- CultureWise logo - Source: Personal Collection

Slogan

The logo is simplistic in order to accentuate the slogan since it is the motto of the project – to help Portuguese startups to analyze cultural backgrounds and cultural features, to, at a later date, recognize those features and backgrounds and use all the information gathered in their advantage to maximize their businesses. It is a tuneful and melodic slogan, to call the attention of customers and so as to make the slogan/purpose of the project of simple understanding.

Concept

This project is intended to be a consulting organization designed to have 3 main services, all of which in the intercultural competence & awareness area. It was thought, above all, to be a support for Portuguese startups during their internationalization processes, through proper intercultural education and training; it aims at providing customers with the appropriate tools for the intercultural business world. It aims at improving and simplifying the process of taking an easier and effective step outside. It is a project based on doing a proper analysis of the other, by helping entrepreneurs to recognize cultural features and to become aware, tolerant and respectful to enable the maximization of their businesses and, also, to offer them new lens to see the world, to see other cultures and cultural characteristics through different perspectives, in general. Obviously, the project's first aim is the Portuguese market, specifically the niche of market of Portuguese startups; and it will always remain as this company's priority, but if the opportunity of going global arises, "CultureWise" will help and support more entrepreneurs who need to sooth their intercultural business' pain.

3.6 PEST and SWOT Analysis

PEST and SWOT analysis are decisive decision-making tools and help to evaluate a project or plan's pros and cons. This evaluation process will help to assess the possible success of a business and the factors that might affect the business and its accomplishments. This examination intends to identify potential threats to the business and enables the reduction of the impact of those threats on the business; also, it intends to explore new opportunities and to evaluate the impact of decisions before employing them.

PEST

In order to further understand the market progress, to achieve a better understanding of our position and potential in the market, there should be analyzed political, economic, social and technological factors that may influence and impact the business and its prosperity. PEST analysis is an asset for people who intend to set a business off and to understand which factors may have greater impact and be possible obstacles for their path. To evaluate external factors that may impact the business is crucial to protect it and to enable it to thrive.

PEST ANALYSIS

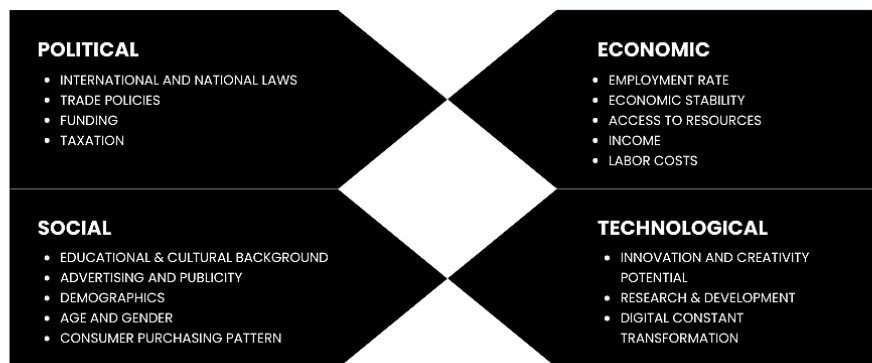


Figure 14 – CultureWise’s PEST Analysis - Source: Personal Collection

Political factors

- International and national laws
- Trade policies
- Funding
- Taxation

A wide spectrum of key points such as country laws, government, taxation, policies must be considered. Politics will influence the business and by doing this analysis, we will perceive which factors will have more impact and the need for special consideration. Political factors that may impact a business are crucial to the expansion of a company into different markets, for instance, and laws, taxation policies, systems might differ from nation to nation. By getting to know more about these factors, the company will be able to achieve the proper tools to cope with the political sector of the business. Regarding “*CultureWise*”, the political factors are mainly related to international laws, government trade policies, taxation, and funding. To be succeeded we must be aware of the legal terms and conditions of a country’s laws and system, we must understand the obstacles that our project may face at a later moment and by assessing all of these factors, it will enable us to structure our business and its strategy around them.

Economic factors

- Employment rate
- Economic stability
- Access to resources
- Income
- Labor costs

If the goal is to internationalize and enter new markets, economic factors must be considered. To evaluate country's economy in order to further understand the chances that the business has to grow, we need to focus both on entering new markets and economic stability in the national market. For instance, when considering new markets, currency is important to reflect on, along with economic policies, but it may go beyond that; economic factors that are to be considered regarding “*CultureWise*” may be the employment that the company will be able to generate, the income of the company, the stability of the company in the national market, the labor costs and the access to resources, economic resources, which are fundamental to the structure of a company.

Social factors

- Educational & Cultural background
- Advertising & Publicity
- Demographics

- Age & Gender
- Consumer purchasing pattern

Although “*CultureWise*” aims at being helpful for local startups by establishing contacts with several cultures we must not forget that the company is inserted in the Portuguese market hence the Portuguese society. Portuguese culture must be understood by all members of the “*CultureWise*” team, either national or international members. This company intends to work with cultural mediation which may position its members and the company in different social settings and social factors must be considered in order to achieve positive results. So, factors such as educational and cultural backgrounds, demographics, age and gender, consumer purchasing patterns, advertising and publicity are pivotal to thrive.

Technological factors

- Innovation & Creativity potential
- Research & Development
- Digital Constant Transformation

The 21st century heightened the concept of globalization and turned it into a very important process for the global market growth. To succeed in today's market and its constant transformation it is crucial that companies are able to adapt to be creative to be innovative to be flexible and to dominate technology. Since globalization and the world of today are in constant mutation, we must be able to overpass technological obstacles and to use technology in our advantage, so we must focus on constant research and development and investigation in order for us to be able to encompass these transformations that the world suffers each and every day. Also, digital disruption is one of the main concerns when addressing technology to the business sector.

A PEST analysis comprises elements that are of underlying value to a company. This analysis intends to support entrepreneurs with a framework through which will raise their awareness of how external elements may affect their businesses. This specific PEST analysis enabled the foreseeing of the future of the project “*CultureWise*” and helped to focus the efforts merely on the factors that are pivotal for this firm's competitive position. Given this analysis, in the specific case of “*CultureWise*”, the PEST analysis was important to understand what could be the possible external factors that could impact negatively on the business and to consider these precisely to avoid any associated difficulties.

SWOT

A SWOT analysis examines the strongest features, the vulnerabilities, the opportunities and the threats of a business' idea; it aims at increasing the awareness of the entrepreneur of all the factors that may influence the business' decision-making process and the strategy establishment before it is put to action.

SWOT ANALYSIS



Figure 15– “CultureWise” ’s SWOT Analysis - Source: Personal Collection

Strengths

- Accessible & Affordable services
- Young & Creative staff
- Innovative features
- Very embryonic project in the Portuguese market
- Flat hierarchy

Every business has its strengths, which are their advantages over their competition and over their target audience. The project “CultureWise” is a business idea that is embryonic in the Portuguese market, and this can be an advantage for its customers, to go for a service that no other organization has – at least there is no business in Portugal that offers the same services with the exact same characteristics in the Portuguese market – and this counts both for the competition reduction and for innovation potential. The initiative aims at providing accessible and affordable services, through a very young and creative staff, different and distinguished by its innovative features, and by its flat hierarchy.

Weaknesses

- Lack of capital/investment
- Very embryonic project in Portugal
- No previous experience in the area of business
- Short list of customers
- Reliant on partnerships
- Bureaucratic issues

Weaknesses are internal disadvantages that need to be analyzed. Presenting this idea to a specific niche of market where there is no particular competition is an advantage; however, when there is competition is proper competition, with experience; “*CultureWise*” weaknesses may be the lack of capital or investment, the short list of customers, the fact that it needs to be reliant on partnerships and the bureaucratic issues, and also the fact that it is a very embryonic project in Portugal – and this may cause suspicion from the customers and investors sides; but the fact that the staff has no previous experience in the area of business may be the major weakness for this business’ success. Being competitive is great, being overpast by competition is dangerous.

Opportunities

- Enter a specific niche of market
- Increase international demand
- Creation of employment
- Use of new technology

Looking at the several possibilities that a business may have in order to evolve, we must consider all the possibilities of making our business to expand, to grow. “*CultureWise*” holds opportunities such as entering a specific niche of market, increase its demand from other nations, use new technology, and generate employment.

Threats

- Competition with experience
- No loyalty from customers
- Political & economic issues
- Customer dependency

It is essential to evaluate possible threats so as to avoid meeting unnecessary obstacles. The main threats of this project are the competition with experience, the fact that in the beginning there will be no loyalty from the customer side, political and economic issues, and customer dependency.

After assessing the strengths, it was possible to anticipate that “*CultureWise*” is capable of becoming competitive due to its strengths being solid; concerning weaknesses, it was possible to predict what would be the Achilles heel of this project and then by evaluating the opportunities and threats, it was possible to draw conclusions and to understand where shall the project be adjusted, so the SWOT analysis was a very constructive examination for this project.

CHAPTER IV – CULTUREWISE: BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

A goal without a plan is just a wish.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

4 Business Model Canvas

Peter Drucker said that “the best way to predict the future is to create it.” Entrepreneurship is believing, creating, innovating, and bust a move. Peter Drucker (1997), states that entrepreneurship must be considered as a process of conceiving something new and different with the aim of generating richness both for the individual and the society, to be sustainable. So, creativity and innovation are key concepts of entrepreneurship.

Internationalization as evidenced is an alternative but more than that an obligation for startups, for the opportunity to enter in new markets but moreover to get access to strategic partnerships, research and development results, investors and even specialized human resources, thus being essential elements for its survival and growth (Cerqueira et al., 2021, p. 17)

In the business sector, there is no deal without trust, without consistency, without empathy, without knowing the parties working on the other side; to be sensitive, to be empathetic, to be open-minded, to be interculturally skilled is what it takes to be one step ahead of competition. Nonetheless, how will an entrepreneur be capable of doing so, without proper planning? It is not viable. Through the business model one can foresee the how, what and why – how is the business going to be developed, what is being developed and why it is being developed. While developing a business plan we need to consider the “why?” factor and plan the organization’s primary goals such as the strategy, the credibility of the company, the development of a proper and educated team; then the “what for” factor and determine the internal issues – managing the team and its employees, its features – and external issues like potential partners and potential investors.

According to Blank (Harvard Business Review, 2022), traditionally, a business plan strategy was implementation driven, so the product or service were operated, and the market was prepared to follow this linear step by step plan and the speed of the business would be measured; entrepreneurs would work on complete data; and as for failure possibilities, entrepreneurs would expect failure to be an exception and not the rule. Nonetheless, the lean startup model came forth, presented by Eric Ries and startups of today are more hypotheses driven, do not put the product or service in the market without putting the product/service to the test and without proper customer’s development; moreover, failure is something that is in the entrepreneurs back of mind and so they are to operate fast and efficiently and make an effort for their business not to fail.

It is important to develop a business model since it is the foundation of a company; nonetheless, we must not forget to develop a business plan since it refers to the structure of the company; a business plan is a researched document where it is described the company and where there are identified the purpose of the business, the business goals, the company's structure, the product or services offered by the company, the required resources to put the key activities to action, the financial plan, and the management and operation structures.

A business model is the main idea of the business together with the description of how it is working. The business plan goes into detail to show how this idea could work. A business model defines the process of planning and creation of a company and how it is accomplished; it is about the creation of an idea, the delivery and the capturing of value from that idea. In a nutshell, a business model is required since it is the analysis of the business both internal and externally. It is a way to predict the future of the business and to know how to develop the idea of the project without harming the business' possible success. With the confluence of a project proposal, an environment analysis, a market study, the prior determination of the business strategy, the definition of the marketing plan, the economic and financial planning, we can do an executive summary and detect where the main possible issues are that may cause harm to our business. Basically, by elaborating a business model, we put our concept to the test, and this will allow us to understand the project's viability, so, we must plan to be able to implement, adapt, customize and humanize our business, otherwise, success may be far, and failure may become the star. (Harvard Business Review, 2022)

4.1 Value Proposition

According to Kotler (2017), companies should use "Co-creation" in their advantage; organizations should invest in co-creation since it involves customers early in the idea stage, when the idea is being created; through customers, entrepreneurs are able to see the possible success or failure and are able to improve their product or service and, hence, improve their value proposition. A value proposition is a clear-cut statement which condenses why the customer chooses a product or service, and in which is described the solution for the customer's need or problem. The particular case of "*CultureWise*" aims at educating entrepreneurs and serving as mediator when needed in the intercultural business environment. Since entrepreneurs work for the customers and towards the fulfilling of a market gap, "*CultureWise*" looks forward to protecting companies from cultural barriers that

may spoil their businesses but above all looks forward to seeing its customers comfortable and confident with solid businesses.

This project's origin was due to the gap that exists in the Portuguese market concerning interculturality in business. As portrayed in figure 16, Portugal is above Europe average in all stages of a startup formation but in the growth stage it is in disadvantage. In the growth stage is where we can find the internationalization process and here we may witness a lack of know-how in many sectors, but the one that interests us is the intercultural business part. Since this may be a problem, “*CultureWise*” intends to fulfil that market gap, at least for Portuguese startups.

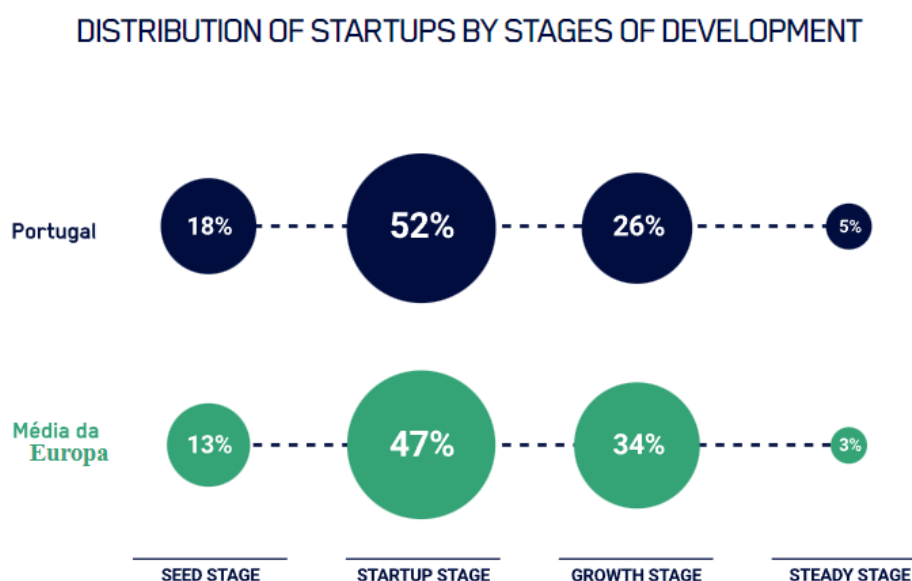


Figure 16 – Distribution of Startups by stages of development Source: StartupPortugal

By improving the Portuguese entrepreneurs' know-how and by providing them with the required tools to face intercultural business situations, we add value to that specific niche of market. With the uniqueness, originality, innovation, and creativity of “*CultureWise*”, the customers' needs, and problems are valued. It is not intended to seek for random solutions in terms of intercultural business, but specific solutions for each and every client in particular. “*CultureWise*” services are “pain relievers” for the customers, since they aim at helping them with their social or emotional obligations or even not having to worry with social or emotional obligations, since the mediation service allows customers to remain focused on their products solely and leave the intercultural part for the “*CultureWise*” team to deal with, in order to relieve their social and emotional pain culturally related.

4.2 Customer Segments

When establishing a business or developing a project, the target audience must be the first thing one thinks about. Target audience followed by the market gap that one is trying to fulfil are crucial parts to be reflect upon. To design specific products and services, we need to know about the target audience in order to meet their expectations and needs. We need to be aware of the range of ages, if it is a mass market or a market niche, we must be informed in cultural, social, economic and political terms. “*CultureWise*” aims at working for Portuguese startups, with entrepreneurs who set off their startup ideas and need help in their internationalization processes concerning intercultural business. Since the culture in question is Portuguese and the founder of “*CultureWise*” is Portuguese, we could assume that it would be easier to help the entrepreneurs and it would be done without any effort; nonetheless, it takes more than sharing a national culture to understand the market and its demands, since culture is not merely national culture - it is essential to take into account the culture of the region, the industry, the profession, the startup – and “*CultureWise*” is a segmented business since it aims at looking for working with a target audience that presents several customer types and several nationalities.

Portugal is increasingly a place of notoriety for its quality of life, its safety, its climate, its culture, its talent and for its business-friendly environment, which has been a determinant element for the creation of a dynamic and rapidly growing startup ecosystem. (Estrutura de Missão Portugal Digital, 2022) According to Startup Portugal, “the Portuguese startup ecosystem is still young, but it is one of the best assets Portugal has, with small-scale but fast paced and steadily growing companies representing over 1% of the country’s GDP” (*Portugal, the best place to startup*, 2022); this complemented by Portuguese quality of life, the sun and sea, the costs of labor, and the Portuguese specialized talent contributed to the significant progress on the development of the startup ecosystem that has occurred lately. Hosting the WebSummit in 2016 was, certainly, a highlight for the Portuguese startup ecosystem to blossom since it put Portugal on the map and in vogue. Being a trend country, Portugal has received international and experienced capital, along with the growth of local investors which attracted talented entrepreneurs with a global mindset. Transforming a vulnerability onto power, the Portuguese market by being small, forced startups to focus on international markets, which became an advantage for the Portuguese startups since the internationalization processes most often come later in the path of these companies. This enabled Portuguese startups to build their structures more turned to the global market and to

global product validation from the very beginning. So, not all entrepreneurs working in and from Portugal are Portuguese and so we must be aware of the multicultural Portuguese environment and take that into consideration when reflecting on our target audience. So, we must know our customers' preferences, origins, interests, how to work and cope with them. Moreover, this project targets a specific market niche – Portuguese startups – and it is, primarily, constrained to the Portuguese environment.

During the development of this project, there were surveys conducted aiming at people such as Portuguese entrepreneurs or possible future Portuguese entrepreneurs, in order for the project to have its customer segmentation well studied and analyzed. These surveys were forwarded to a specific group of people, as mentioned before, people who are experts in culture and/or in entrepreneurship and/or education, in order to further understand the possible consumers that the project would accomplish to be useful for; nonetheless, one of the surveys was directed to companies related to entrepreneurship and to Portuguese startups, companies and organizations such as ANJE, Portugal Ventures StartupLisboa, and Fábrica de Startups.

4.3 Customer Relationship

When the topic is entrepreneurship, value is key, and the disruption of customers' value is vital. "*CultureWise*" wants to implement "Co-creation" and get customers' feedback on its services first, when the idea is still a caterpillar, in order to turn it into a butterfly with the customers' input. "*CultureWise*" intends to create a singular relationship with its clients so that trust may be established. Moreover, we intend to enable customers to have personalized services suitable for their companies and this is one of the main goals of this project in terms of customer relationship. Also, we aim at taking advantage of user communities to become more involved with customers; this will facilitate networks and relations. We intend to create a community online in order to allow both us and customers to exchange information and help solving each other's problems. Besides, this community will help the "*CultureWise*" team understanding better the customers' needs. "*CultureWise*" intends to create a company that has its customers into account in a deeper level; and also intends to enable customers to build long-term relationships with the "*CultureWise*" team through regular interaction. In order to do so, "*CultureWise*" wants to implement systems of personal assistance; we want to have team members solely dedicated to communicating with customers and help them directly with their problems, through call centers, e-mail, or

through presential meetings. Besides that, “*CultureWise*” aims at dedicating a customer representative sector, to enable the creation of trust and reliability, the people who are on the behalf of “*CultureWise*” will be the same all along and this will help the maintenance of personal relationships with customers, and consequent healthy business relationships. Overall, a predisposed team to help customers with any dilemma, impediment, predicament that emerges, with a dedicated personal assistance, committed to the most ethical proposals that safeguard both enterprises.

4.4 Distribution Channels

Distribution channels are the route products and services take from their starting point up to its offer to its target audience. In this case, distribution channels will be the networks chosen to distribute and publicize “*CultureWise*” business proposal to possible future customers. Distribution channels will enable the company to raise awareness to its business plans and will permit the company-customer relationship to be more balanced and sustainable. So, by using proper advertising methods like billboards, partnerships, social media like LinkedIn, academic and professional events, “*CultureWise*” hopes to catch the attention of possible partners and of possible customers and, so, of possible future business opportunities. Moreover, making use of the website to create a platform, a community will also help distributing “*CultureWise*”’s business idea. In short, “*CultureWise*” will aim at delivering its message through billboards, through its partnerships, through social media, through events, mostly external events in the first impact, and through its website. Regarding these items mentioned, they were chosen due to their potential to sustain the company’s marketing strategy and to offer easier access to the company’s services.

4.5 Key Activities

“*CultureWise*” was created with the intention of protecting others from possible cultural barriers concerning the intercultural business marketplace. The company’s main goal is, then, to help others to be more aware and conscious of the role of culture in the intercultural business world; hence, intercultural support must be a key activity, along with research – since the main topic is culture, a very active and in constant transformation matter – and, of course, intercultural management. So, to do this, the company must be able to analyze data, do the required research, and put to action through useful and valuable services to their target market. Our main task is to present services that help Portuguese startups to act on an intercultural business context without problems. With this, our key activities are:

- Research
- Data assessment
- Cultural Support in intercultural context
- Consultancy, Management and Mediation services
- Training
- Marketing

Regarding key activities we may mention our services of cross-cultural mediation for intercultural business insertion, the mandatory research to understand the different cultures and thereby simplify the company's interaction with their target audiences, cross-cultural management, and consultancy in relocation and integration, all of these, with the required and essential training and all within the intercultural business area. Also, marketing since nowadays it is as transversal key activity to any type of company.

4.6 Key Resources

Resources are what allow entrepreneurs to put to action what they have designed their companies to be. Resources are mandatory to put a business into motion; they can be material, intellectual, human and financial. In order to materialize our key activities, we need to know which key resources will be required. Without proper key resources, companies struggle to establish their businesses, and therefore specifying key resources is vital. Regarding “*CultureWise*” key activities, we may consider essential the following key resources:

- Reputation
- Brand
- Business Culture
- Customer Database
- Software
- IT expert team
- Skilled team: experts in intercultural business, finances, lawyers
- Licenses and Patents
- Partnerships
- Marketing Team

The above-mentioned key resources respect the project's required items to move forward; beginning with items that appeal customers such as the reputation, brand and the business culture of the company, followed by items that help maintaining the project's key activities such as the customer database, infrastructure, software and IT expert team; next, items that help the key activities to become real through skilled team members to ensure the best performance, of the services, as possible; not forgetting about bureaucratic issues and adding items such as partnerships, licensing and patents. It is essential that the company resorts to the appropriate and necessary resources for the business to become viable, feasible and valuable. To conclude, a marketing team since it progresses and employs strategies to promote the brand of the company, along with its products and services.

4.7 Key Partners

Establishing a business from nothing has its associated concerns and companies need appropriate help to overcome these issues; by assessing their problems, entrepreneurs must be able to gather proper partners to assist this process of foundation. Key partners are those who will be responsible for supporting the project as external helpers. With reference to “*CultureWise*”'s necessities, key partners could be:

- Colleges
- Startup Portugal
- UPTEC
- Investors
- RNI - Rede Nacional de Incubadoras
- PORTIC

Possible and viable partnerships would be colleges such as FEP, ISCAP and ESE due to the services we are aiming at; it would be good for both since both would help each other mutually – colleges would have access to internships and educational speeches and the company would have fresh, creative and innovative brains to be part of the project. Additionally, Startup Portugal, due to their programs and opportunities offered to startups; moreover, Startup Portugal is a database for entrepreneurship that maps startups to make people or companies be aware of what kind of service certain startups are proposing, so in order to advertise our services, Startup Portugal would be a great partnership. Furthermore, this partnership is a way of promoting “*CultureWise*”'s services and search for services that the project also needs to add to its range of services. As for UPTEC, “*CultureWise*” is an

embryonic and brand-new project in the Portuguese market and hence need all sorts of knowledge in order not to fail the client's needs, so one of "*CultureWise*"'s main partners would be UPTEC – a midpoint that promotes the development of business projects - where "*CultureWise*" could join the program of "Startup Schools" and where the members of the project would have the opportunity to learn how to be entrepreneurs and how to eventually surpass difficulties that may appear. Likewise, investors, people who would invest in the business not only with money but with mentorship, experience and a list of clients. Furthermore, another possible partnership could be the national network of incubators (RNI) which is a firm that aims to map and connect the existing incubators and accelerators in the country – Portugal in the case – created by universities, autarchies, private companies or foreign entities. Closing with other possible partner for this project would be PORTIC since it brings together research hubs from Polytechnic of Porto with technological companies, startups and research and development organizations. Since it is a corporation dedicated to research, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship, it becomes a viable and excellent possible partnership.

4.8 Revenue Streams

Revenue streams consists of the revenue flow of the business. We need to ask ourselves what value the customers are willing to pay for our services in order to know how the money will enter the company. Evaluating the business' potential revenue streams will enable the company to assess if it is feasible and sustainable or not. "*CultureWise*" would be maintained by:

- Usage Fees
- Subscription Fees
- Brokerage Fees

Starting with the usage fees, every time customers would choose to use our service, they would be paying for it with a usage fee. The more the customers choose to use our services, the more the customers would pay. This fee would be used to punctual situations, isolated situations where the customers needed "*CultureWise*"'s services. Other possible revenue stream would be the subscription fee, where customers would have continuous access to a certain service; this revenue stream would be charged monthly, for instance. Brokerage fees would be an option, too, since they provide a percentage of the value of a service performed, through intermediation between the parties. "*CultureWise*" especially in mediation services

would act as a broker, since a broker can refer “to the role of a firm when it acts as an agent for a customer and charges the customer a commission for its services” (Smith, 2022). So, a brokerage fee is a fee that a broker charges to perform specialized services on behalf of clients, so they should be part of the Revenue Streams of this project (Ganti, 2022).

4.9 Cost Structure

Cost structure is an assessment of the expenses that a business has ahead of it; it is a precise analysis of the required funds to establish a business and how they are going to be distributed through resources, personnel, assets, and performances. It is a representation of how companies spend their resources and revenue streams. In respect of the costs, “*CultureWise*” presents general deficits; the company would not function without the proper inputs, proper means and insightful members. “*CultureWise*”’s finances may be distributed as below. The costs concerning the project’s requirements are:

- Technological Maintenance
- Employees
- Traveling Expenses
- Support And Research
- Marketing
- Third-party supplies and services

The above-mentioned are essential to support the company; technological maintenance, employees, travelling expenses, support and research, infrastructure are all mandatory costs for this business to work and to meet the customers’ needs and expectations. Moreover, all marketing and standard ESFS related to the standard business of the company.

4.10 Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy “refers to a business’s overall game plan for reaching prospective consumers and turning them into customers of their products or services” (Barone, 2022). Marketing strategy covers the company’s value proposition and its target audience, and it is essential to achieve sustainable competitive advantage over our competitors. Furthermore, marketing strategy must encompass the company’s value proposition since it is the feature that transmits the value of the services and goals to the consumers – how the company works, what are the company’s purposes and how the company understands consumer’s needs and desires. In order to create a marketing strategy, we must understand fully our ambitions and

aspirations, we must know our target audience, we must build our point, we must define our financial plans, we must determine how are we going to diffuse information of our company and we must assess our chances of succeeding.

Regarding marketing strategy, and according to Kotler, there are 4P's which are very helpful once it is the time to establish our company's marketing strategies. The 4 P's consist of "Product", "Price,", "Promotion" and "Place" – which means that, in brief, the 4 P's will cover a very important range of factors when planning a new business venture, since this theory includes what consumers want to acquire or get; how the product or service meets the consumers' needs and expectations or fails to meet them; how it distinguishes from competition; and how the company communicates and conveys their information to consumers.

Concerning "*CultureWise*", the project's target market is a very specific niche of market and so its position favors its marketing strategy already. As "*CultureWise*" is a both consulting and educational project, it intends to establish partnerships with other companies and with colleges, which enables the presence of the project in many events, which will consequently help promoting the brand, presenting its value and marketing the company. "*CultureWise*" marketing strategy is based on the several possibilities that the project has to transmit its idea; for instance, through UPTEC, a possible partnership to this project; UPTEC's motto is "better business, better world" and it is a meeting point concerning different contexts and experts, which is an advantage for both sides: for UPTEC because it could partner up with "*CultureWise*" that is an embryonic and innovative project, and for "*CultureWise*" since UPTEC has a very broad community and strategic partners which may lead this project to great opportunities. "*CultureWise*" in its beginning would focus in participating in several events, conferences, congresses in order to spread the message and to deliver the presentation of its purpose and description of the respective services, to show consumers why they should become customers. Since it is a very embryonic project in the Portuguese marketing, and since the target audience are entrepreneurs with their startups in the Portuguese market – and as an entrepreneur must be a technological and innovative person – social media would play a crucial role in the marketing of this brand. A didactic Youtube channel, an Instagram page with interactive posts and a LinkedIn to share all the business' information; besides being good means of spreading the company's brand, it is a great means of directly interact with possible future customers.

4.11 Products & Services

To put an idea to action, to create a business and to set off a company, it is crucial to have a clear and detailed plan of what we are offering to our customers. Moreover, it is crucial to understand if we have a product, a service or both to offer. We all think about products and services in the traditional way, as the product means something tangible and a service something intangible. Nonetheless, according to Kotler et al. (2017), a product is “anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organizations and ideas”. According to Reim et al. (2015), the integration of products and services is a growing tendency among today’s companies. Different from the world of before, nowadays companies are inclined to the Product-Service Systems (PSS) which are systems that provide the customer with the functionality of the product and not the product itself, Barquet et al. (2013) as cited in Marques (2021) explain that “PSS focuses on offering services and the product becomes simply the means to provide the offer. In other words, products are seen as distribution mechanisms for service supply” (Barquet et al., 2013, p.694) as cited by Marques (2021) and so in order to be more sustainable and to deliver just the enough amount of product/service, and to be more efficient, companies are increasingly adopting this system. “*CultureWise*”, after this brief analysis, offers a product in the form of services, since nowadays a service is a product that is offered to a customer to fulfil their needs and solve their problems.

Products

Since a product is no longer seen as something strictly tangible, “*CultureWise*” provides customers the opportunity to have a preview of the company and respective products and services on the website. Moreover, it offers the customers the opportunity to participate in events.

Website

The website serves to provide the needed information to customers in order for them to know more about the company and its features; besides, it includes a part dedicated to exclusive data got by the “*CultureWise*”’s team throughout its journey. Additional to this, the website offers customers the opportunity to participate in Q&A forums, related to intercultural competence worries and questions, and members of the “*CultureWise*” team

will analyze the questions and answer to the questions that seem to be more important and will enlighten the customers and website users in general on the topics questioned.

Services

The “*CultureWise*” team offers a service that aims at helping Portuguese startups, born global startups, to avoid failure due to cultural unconsciousness. Adaptation is key for nowadays’ business world and interculturality and global business depend on cultural adaptation from the companies’ delivering services. Without cultural consciousness, most the companies would not be able to internationalize and to succeed in their internationalization process, would not become well-known a reference or competition. There is more than language to capture and to decode, there is culture, there is cultural background and cultural know-how is a crucial matter to be considered when it comes to cross cultural businesses and to global companies. To wind this up, Erin Meyer, also in her book “*The culture map*” claimed that “Cultural patterns of behavior and belief frequently impact our perceptions (what we see), cognitions (what we think), and actions (what we do).” (Meyer, 2014, p. 19). So, this quote makes us think about the significance of culture in the business sphere. To maintain loyal and long termed relationships, businesspeople must take culture accurately into consideration and must be aware of what is required in order to cease to operate a business with certain cultures. Entrepreneurial activity influences cultural values and whoever is dealing with multiple cultures must be conscious of it, otherwise, the situation will fail due to cultural negligence and there will be several barriers to success the “*CultureWise*” team aims at delivering a strategy so that, as the name says, customers be wiser in cultural terms and to maximize their businesses, when a window seems to be closing, inhibiting drawbacks to emerge.

A) Cultural Mediation

Despite globalization and the political, economic and social changes that are a breakthrough for the 21st century, the importance of topics such as cultural awareness, cultural consciousness and cultural competence remain too trivialized, especially when it comes to business. In order to bridge this gap, “*CultureWise*” intends to enter the picture essentially in the Portuguese market – specifically in the niche of market of Portuguese startups – and provide assistance so that these companies are able to maximize their growth opportunities in a conscious and sustainable way. In order to do so, “*CultureWise*” offers mediation in the area of language and culture, seeking to help the clients in organizing and carrying out international businesses without experiencing difficulties due to cultural barriers. Taking into account the different aspects of the several different cultures involved, through cultural mediation, “*CultureWise*” aims at finding the best solution for mutual understanding.

This service is aimed at Portuguese startups, which need help in their internationalization process, or which are merely in need of an intercultural party when in contact with international business partners or clients; either in the mastery of other languages or other cultural elements, which are crucial to maximizing their business. In this section, “*CultureWise*” adapts to its customers and offers two sub-services: direct cultural mediation and/or negotiation assisted by the “*CultureWise*” team. Direct cultural mediation would be functional in cases where clients are not sufficiently efficient, competent or qualified in intercultural terms to do the cultural bridge during intercultural business; negotiations assisted by the “*CultureWise*” team when clients are capable of handling the whole process but want to refine their cognizance and skills in order to ensure success, because when setting off a startup, entrepreneurs know that failure is certain, and success is attainable. It is up to the startup leader/team to decide whether “*CultureWise*” service is merely to study their business and prepare the members of the company to perform the cultural bridge of the business or whether “*CultureWise*” is to proceed with the negotiation through members of the “*CultureWise*” team along with members of the startup’s team; in brief, “*CultureWise*” holds a team which is ready to present and implement a dynamic negotiation and take an active approach, which means that the “*CultureWise*” team is also ready to be present at the negotiating table and ensure intercultural interaction.

B) Consultancy – Training in Intercultural Awareness & Competence

The “*CultureWise*” team also offers clients an advisor service; starting with a cultural diagnosis, so to present solutions to implement with the client’s team, or to establish an effective and sustainable cultural setting. Taking into account the culture in which the company is inserted, this service aims to take into account the values, customs, norms of the cultural environment in which it is located, as well as the values and respective culture of its intercultural partners. In this way, it is aimed the implementation of a proper cultural environment for the establishment of an efficient and healthy business relationship. The goal of this service is to help clients to build a solid foundation, in terms of cultural awareness and competence, in order to facilitate both the internationalization process and the maintenance of intercultural relations in the long term.

Wherever we go, people think and behave differently. In order to sail across different cultures in a globalized world, we need to understand cultural diversity and we need to know how to behave competently. “*CultureWise*” creates awareness, improves cultural competencies of individuals, and walks towards proper education and brings together technical insights along with business methods through services of consultancy, research and training. By understanding how culture affects the way people feel, behave and think, we become more aware and more capable and more conscious while making decisions, solving problems, communicating and leading, and this will impact interaction and performance.

Within the consulting services, there is a service of cross-cultural management services where individuals will be enlightened and provided with insights into the correct mindset and correct behavior, by creating self-awareness and detecting discomforts related with intercultural interactions in order to help forming more conscious and mindful professionals. Moreover, the most important service that “*CultureWise*” has to offer is the consultancy service in relocation and integration where cultural awareness trainings and intercultural competence assessments occur and support businesses’ international position. The culture we are brought up in may shape us and may shape the way we see others, so we must be able to be informed to see others and to be able to understand them. How we express emotions, how we feel, how we behave, how we relate and cope with others is influenced by our cultural background. These services will advise individuals on how to adapt to cultural differences, to help individuals to become more aware of their unconscious morals, norms and values and behavioral tendencies; to understand what they should and should not

do when faced with an intercultural interaction; to anticipate potential obstacles regarding intercultural deals and the impact that these might have in intercultural businesses. In essence, cultural business consulting offers training in cultural know-how, expertise, skill to allow diverse business teams to perform in harmony in intercultural terms. This service aims at providing teams or individuals with a rich and deeper understanding of the dimension of culture, improving, boosting, maximizing their efficiency and prosperity.

C) Educational Speeches/Events

“*CultureWise*” is quite an embryonic project in Portugal and keeps an eye on matters that are not quite developed in Portugal. For instance, the importance of culture and its impact while doing business, which is pivotal for an entrepreneur to know about before they jump onto their business’ set off. Topics such as intercultural awareness’ importance and intercultural competence in business are important to be approached and it is significant that events such as conferences on intercultural awareness and intercultural competence in business, so, these speeches must take place and so, “*CultureWise*” aims at participating in events such as academic events or professional events, conferences, etc. where educational speeches of enlightenment on the topic may take place in order for the Portuguese entrepreneurs/ younger generations to be informed and well-prepared for the intercultural business world that awaits them. Since culture is not static, it is necessary to acquire tools that allow continuous interaction, so that the company's team is constantly updated. In order for this progress to take place, within the range of “*CultureWise*” services there would then also be training and lecture services for company teams. Therefore, these lectures would be addressed to members as an integral part of a company or to all those who seek to develop their cultural recognition; thus, this service would then be aimed at companies, schools, universities and even individuals.

4.12 Investment Plan

In order to set a business off there must be an investment plan which presents costs that are mandatory in the building of the business. The investment plan comprises occasional and isolated purchases, and here there are not analyzed the fixed costs. Moreover, the investment plan of “*CultureWise*” consists of the primary costs, to launch the company to the market. The table presented below was estimated for the initial costs and estimated for approximately 10 members. For starters, “*CultureWise*” would ponder to stay in an incubator or coworking space, and so, the costs to consider would rely on:

MATERIAL COSTS	
<u>COMMODITY</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
OFFICE SUPPLIES	1500€
TRASH BINS	120€
DESKS & CHAIRS	6000€
STORAGE CABINETS	1000€
IMMATERIAL COSTS	
<u>ITEM</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
MARKETING PLAN	6000€
LICENCING & RELATED FEATURES	5000€
TECHNOLOGICAL COSTS	
<u>ITEM</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>
WEB SITE CREATION & DEVELOPMENT	10 000€
IT EQUIPMENT	21 000€

Table 1 – *CultureWise’s* Investment Plan *Source: Personal Collection*

The afore-mentioned items and commodities are essential to start a business. Regarding material costs, in order for the company members to have a proper place to work, for starters it would be ideal to ponder to stay in an incubator or a coworking space, such as PORTIC or UPTEC. More than an infrastructure, there must exist proper physical means to work, such as office supplies, desks, chairs, lighting, storage cabinets, trash bins. Nonetheless, we live in a technological world where there is the need for IT equipment. Also, the development of the website is particularly significant due to its importance within the project. Immaterial costs such as the marketing plan and the licensing are critical to the

building of a company and must be included in the investment plan of the project. So, “*CultureWise*” initial investment would surround 50 870€ around the expenses in the cost structure plus the management fund of 10 000€, which would give a total of 60 870€.

An investment plan is crucial for investors to have a proper insight into the business, so that they can assess the situation, to evaluate the profits and losses and consider it well enough; furthermore, an investment plan is written to make investors feel secure by investing their money, mentorship and experience into some business. This presentation of the investment plan allows investors to envision the company’s future and make decisions prudently.

4.13 Funding

Entrepreneurs must be aware that in the modern business world funding is vital. In “*CultureWise*”’s case, funding is the only way to put the business to action. Funding methods that could be applied in this specific case are:

- Donations – 15%
- Business Angels – Mentoring/Experience/Money – 40%
- Personal Investment – 25%
- Crowdfunding – 20%

The conjecture of this project’s funding would go through donations, business angel’s mentorship/experience/money, some personal investment and crowdfunding a business like “*CultureWise*” could definitely become a company. All of these, along with support or incentive programs, provided by possible partnerships or even the government may be good funding ways for the business. It will depend on the company’s initial activity and where the project will be incubated.

CONCLUSION

Globalization and all its inborn advancements, i.e., the technological transformation, were door openers for new cultural and technological environments that changed and renovated the world in many levels, being the business sector one of the segments affected. Change may be beneficial or deleterious for businesses; globalization represented a challenge for its constant changes and active progression. Living in a globalized and always connected world is rather challenging; intercultural issues may arise more often, and people must be aware and prepared to face these possible difficulties and overcome them. Culture and entrepreneurship are intertwined and sometimes it goes unnoticed. With little understanding of the connection between these two topics, a business may not be achieved and succeeded as it would be expected to. Generally, people trivialize culture and often see it as unessential when it comes to business; nevertheless, it is unlikely for an entrepreneur to build up a global organization or establish their business on an international basis without taking culture into consideration. Entrepreneurship is vital to both national and international business activity, encompassing multiple cultures. The evolution of business models influenced companies, made companies smarter and these companies grew into increasingly competitive entities. Culture is often put aside from the imperatives of doing business efficiently, when in fact it should be at the basis of any business when it is aimed at an audience larger than the local one. Discerning this, it is detected a market need: the absence of cultural consciousness, of cultural know-how, of intercultural competence when ceasing to operate a business. In particular, this dissertation concerns Portugal and its market, more specifically the market niche of Portuguese startups. Portugal is considered to be a more and more notorious country either for its quality of life, safety, climate, culture, and talent, so it is crucial to invest in and to support what is national, national economy (*Portuguese startup ecosystem*, 2022).

This Master's Degree provided the appropriate techniques and knowledge to facilitate the implementation of international projects, as it also helped to identify and to find possible responses to the needs and gaps in diverse cultural environments; moreover, it provided communication tools, which were crucial to establish a project that envisions to be the bridge between different business cultures and to deal effectively with intercultural situations, supporting integration and growth. Being qualified to develop sustainable and culturally aware business projects, the development of this specific project was crucially influenced by this master's and its Course Units, especially the Curricular Unit *Entrepreneurship in Culture*, which instigated this idea and possible accomplishment.

Through proper investigation, going through topics such as culture and its inherent concepts and through its understanding, moving on to the cultural differences and their impact in business to the building of a project that intends to bridge different business cultures, this project was the result of a culmination of qualities provided by this master's degree.

The project “*CultureWise: Analyze, Recognize, Maximize*” aims at becoming a useful means to entrepreneurs who intend to learn to analyze their businesses from a deeper level in cultural and entrepreneurial perspectives, to recognize the cultural traits and characteristics and to use this advantage of being a connoisseur, an expert of knowing more about interculturality and apply it to entrepreneurship and maximize their businesses to a bigger market, to the international market. Through the research and the formulation and to carry this project out, the conceiving of the Business Model was crucial to define how the project would work and how could it be achieved. Since understanding political, economic, social and technological factors which might impact the project, to the analyzing of possible threats and opportunities, by defining the resources, activities and partnerships, to what it would cost to establish this business and from whom the help could come from, and by defining what the project proposes to its customers, the Business Model played a vital role in the building of this venture. This project aims not merely at helping Portuguese startups to level up and to perform in the finest way in business, but also to empower individuals and entities with knowledge and access to proper training in interculturality to enable people to live harmoniously in the intercultural, global and connected society that we live in nowadays. Moreover, over the past decades, globalization proved companies that adaptation, flexibility and innovation are crucial when businesses are to endure, and this project although it is aimed at being implemented in the Portuguese market, it is easily adjustable to any other market, being transversal a project to all countries and cultures, which is a fundamental characteristic of a successful company of today, its adaptability.

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Appendix I – [Survey “CultureWise – Analyze, Recognize, Maximize”]

Questions and replies to the survey “CultureWise – Analyze, Recognize, Maximize”

- “Consider the importance of cultural awareness in a business context” - from 1 to 5 (being 1 not important and 5 extremely important) - a 100% of people answered 5: extremely important
- “Consider the importance of cultural competence in a business context” – from 1 to 5 (being 1 not important and 5 extremely important) - 88.9% of people replied “5: extremely important” and the remnant 11.1% replied “4: important”
- “To what extent do you think startups lack internationalization processes?” – within a range of 1 to 5, being 1 – startups do not lack internationalization processes and 5 – startups lack internationalization processes, people selected the options that leads us to understand that in their view, startups lack internationalization processes, 38.9% selected 3, 38.9% selected 4 and 22.2% selected 5.

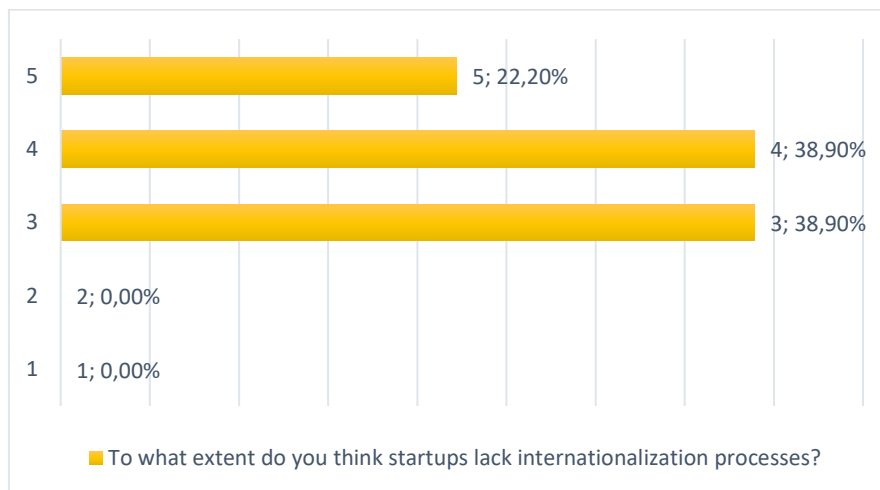


Figure 17- To what extent do you think startups lack internationalization processes?

- “Due to the possible lack of cultural awareness and competence, do you consider that Portuguese startups may be affected in accessing internationalization opportunities, transforming that into a potential financial loss?” - 16.7% - 3 // 66.7%: 4 // 16.7%: 5 (being 1 not affected and 5 extremely affected)

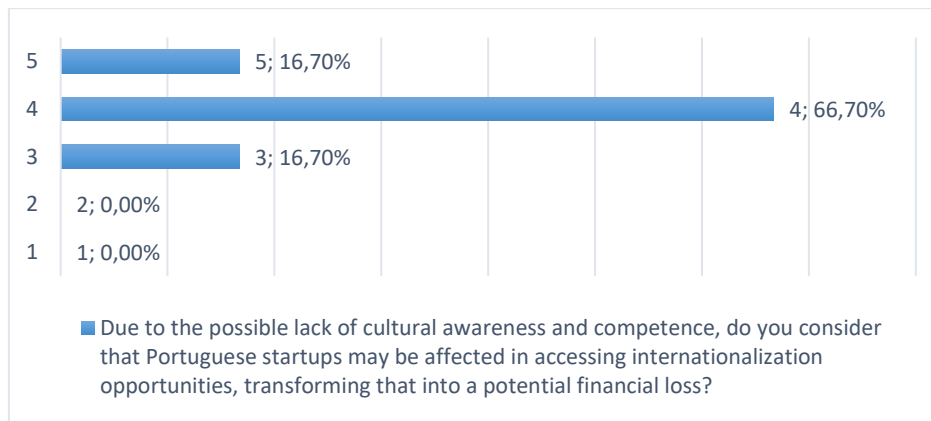


Figure 18- Due to the possible lack of cultural awareness and competence, do you consider that Portuguese startups may be affected in accessing internationalization opportunities, transforming that into a potential financial loss?

- “Do you think that Portuguese startups can be equated with multinational companies in terms of cultural competence?” - 66.7% - No / 33.3%: Yes
- “Do you consider the lack of cultural awareness and competence factors that contribute to the non-evolution of Portuguese startups in an international environment?” Yes: 94.4% / 5.6%: No
- “How advantageous would a cultural mediation service be for startups in Portugal?” - from 1 to 5 (being 1 not advantageous and 5 extremely advantageous) 33.3% alleged it was a 4 on this scale from 1 to 5 and 66.7% considered it to be a 5 – extremely advantageous
- “How advantageous would a cultural competence consulting service be for startups in Portugal?” - 33.3% - 4 // 66.7%: 5 (being 1 not advantageous and 5 extremely advantageous)
- “How advantageous would a direct support service be in negotiating with intercultural partners for startups in Portugal?” - from 1 to 5 (being 1 not advantageous and 5 extremely advantageous) - 11.1% considered it to be in the middle - 3 - 27.8% of people considered it a 4 and 61.1% considered it to be a 5 - extremely advantageous
- “In the specific case of a startup, which of the below mentioned services do you consider to be the most suitable?” A - cultural mediation service / B- cultural competence consulting service / C- a direct support service in negotiating with intercultural partners - A: 66.7% // B: 72.2% // C: 55.6%

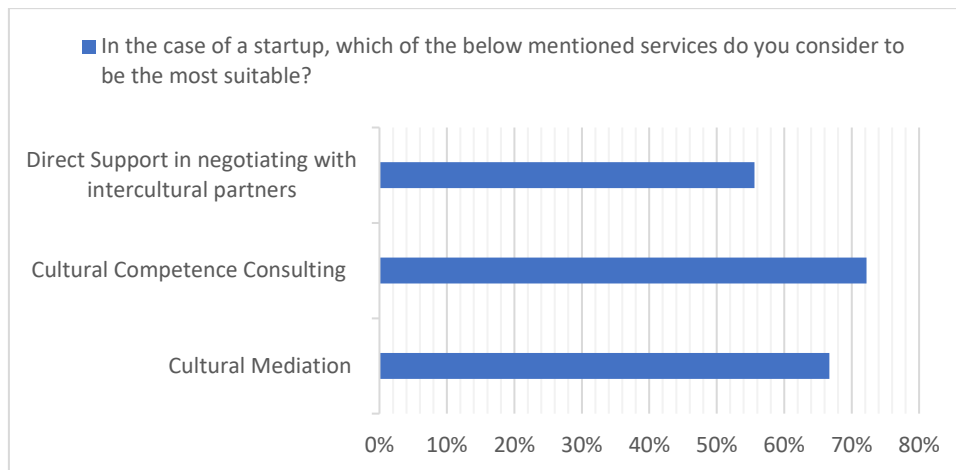


Figure 19- In the case of a startup, which of the below mentioned services do you consider to be the most suitable?

- “Do you think that it is enough to master the lingua Franca (English) to establish a business with an intercultural partner, effectively?” - 77.8% - No / 22.2%: Yes
- “Do you consider that is enough to master the language of your business partner so that the business becomes a success?” - 61.1% - No / 27.8% - Yes / Other: 11.1%
- If people had selected "other" in the previous question, they were asked to kindly elaborate and the answers were:
 - Understanding cultural issues also helps
 - Learning a language always presupposes cultural learnings about the target language(s)
 - A common language is an advantage, but mediation by a translator is equally effective, the most important thing for a successful business is an alignment of values and goals, which may be affected by cultural issues
- “Do you believe that you master the concept of cultural competence?” Yes: 77.8% / 22.2% - No

After analyzing the data provided by the collection of information through this survey, which was merely sent to Portuguese people, we can assume that Portuguese people are unsure if their knowledge and awareness are enough to perform in the intercultural business sector, we can also deduce that, in general, people see the lack of cultural awareness and competence as key factors to the intercultural business world. Moreover, it was possible to see that people are aware of the current Portuguese startup’s

situation and to assess where the project would be more useful, where should “*CultureWise*” be more active and useful to enlighten people more on specific topics.

Appendix II – [Survey “Am I Culture...Wise?”]

Questions and replies to the survey “Am I Culture...Wise?”

After assessing the ages and the careers of the Portuguese people answering this survey, there were the following questions to analyze:

- “How well do you think that you know the meaning behind the word “culture”?” – from 1 to 5, being 1 (Not sure), 2 (Hardly know), 3 (Know), 4 (Know Well), 5 (Know Very well) – 50% affirmed to know very well the meaning of culture (5), 45.8% claimed to know about the meaning of culture (4) and 4.2% acknowledged to have poor information on the meaning behind culture.

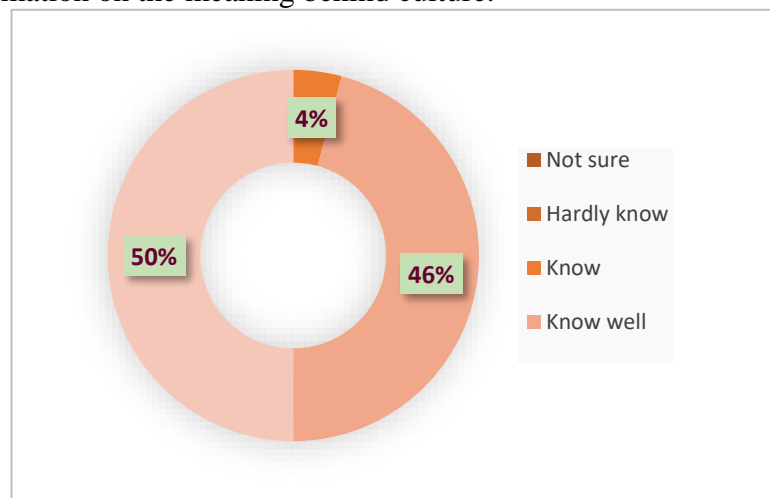


Figure 20 - How well do you think you know the meaning behind the word “culture”?

- “Are you willing to learn from people who are from different cultures, that is, who do not share your values, norms, beliefs, etc.?”- from 1 to 4, being 1 (Not sure), 2 (I am not willing to learn), 3 (I am willing to learn), 4 (I am extremely willing to learn) – 79.2% answered that they were extremely willing to learn from people from different cultures who do not share the same values, norms, beliefs as they do and the remnant 20.8% claimed to be willing to learn from others from different cultures.

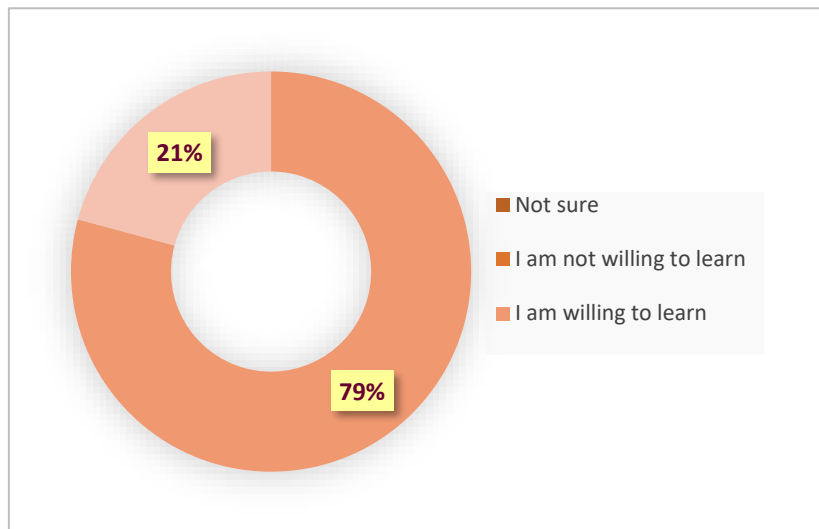


Figure 21- Are you willing to learn from people who are from different cultures, that is, who do not share your values, norms, beliefs, etc.?

“To what extent are you curious about values, norms, cultural practices different from yours and how willing would you be to explore them?” – from 1 to 5, being 1 (Not sure), 2 (Neither curious nor willing to explore), 3 (Curious but unwilling to explore), 4 (Curious and willing to explore), 5 (Extremely curious and willing to explore) – 75% of people claimed to be extremely curious and willing to explore (5) and 25% curious and willing to explore (4).

- “How capable do you consider yourself to be in the shoes of someone from a different culture and see the world from their lens?” – from 1 to 5, being 1 (Not sure), 2 (Not capable), 3 (Capable), 4 (Very capable), 5 (Extremely capable) – 4.2% were not sure, 4.2% considered that they cannot position themselves in others’ shoes, 29.2% considered themselves capable of doing so, 29.2% believed to be very capable and 33.3% alleged to be very capable of seeing the world through others’ lens.

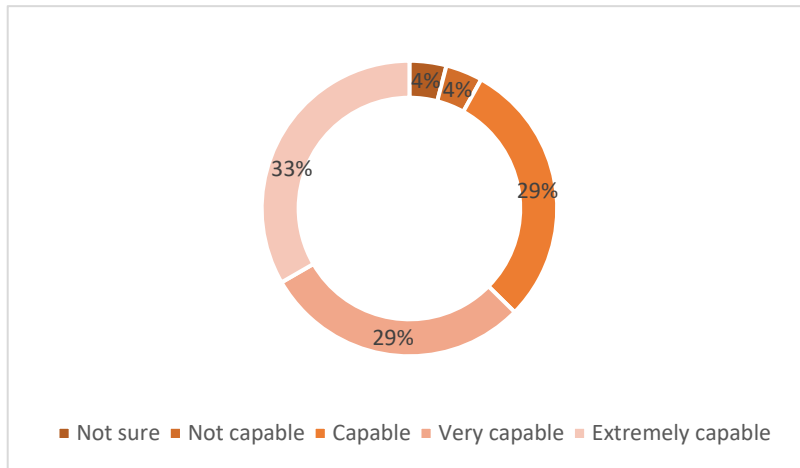


Figure 22- How capable do you consider you to put yourself in the position of someone from a different culture from your own and see the world from their lens?

- “How well do you cooperate when you do not understand where the accent is from or when you do not understand someone else's behavior?” - from 1 to 6, being 1 (Not sure), 2 (Uncooperative), 3 (I do not cooperate very well, nor do I try), 4 (I do not cooperate very well, but I try), 5 (I cooperate reasonably), 6 (I cooperate well) – 58.3% considered to cooperate very well under these circumstances; 37.5% of people believed to cooperate reasonably and the remnant 4.2% were not sure.

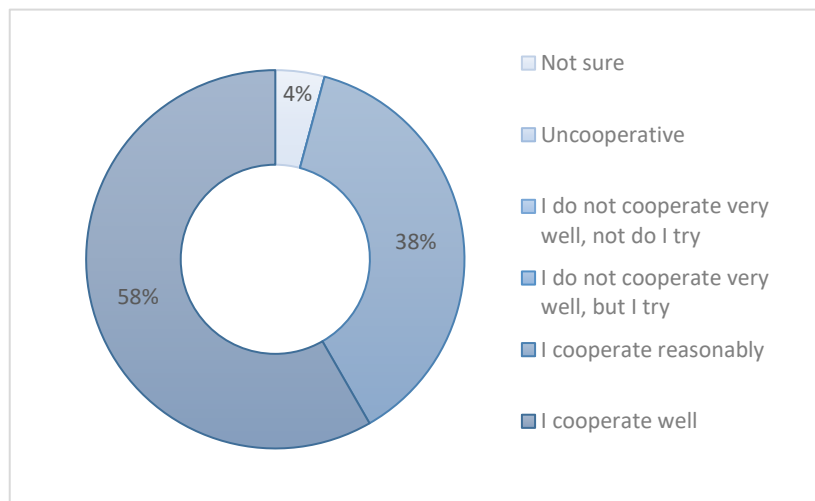


Figure 23- How well do you cooperate when you do not understand where the accent is from or when you do not understand someone else's behavior?

- “To what extent are you comfortable adapting your behavior and communication during an intercultural interaction?” – from 1 to 5, being 1 (Not sure), 2 (Very uncomfortable), 3 (Uncomfortable), 4 (Comfortable), 5 (Extremely comfortable) – 70.8% alleged to be extremely comfortable, 25% comfortable and 4.2% uncomfortable.

- “To what extent do you attempt to understand and learn about cultures other than your own, through people who share different cultural values from your own?” – from 1 to 5, being 1 (Not sure), 2 (I do not try, nor do I want to), 3 (I do not try because I do not think I will understand), 4 (I try but cannot understand), 5 (I try to take advantage of having the opportunity to get to know and to better understand the diversity of cultures) – 95.8% claimed to taking advantage of the opportunity given to further understand about other cultures and 4.2 % affirmed that they try but cannot understand
- “If someone from a different culture has an uncomfortable or strange behavior, to what extent do you try not to judge them and not to speak up to the person about their behavior?” – from 1 to 5, being 1 (Not sure), 2 (I judge, do not try to understand and share my opinion), 3 (I judge, do not try to understand but I share no thoughts), 4 (I judge but I try to understand), 5 (I try not to judge and seek to understand) – 75% answered that they try not to judge and seek to understand and 25% alleged to judge but try to understand.
- “How well do you think you know your own cultural environment and understand the salient features of your own culture, aspects of which are part of your identity, and to what extent can this influence your judgment of others?” — from a to e, being a) I do not know my culture well or the impact it has on me and my view of others; b) I know my culture, but I don't know to what extent I know the impact it has on me and my judgment of others; c) I know my culture and what it represents in me, but not what it reflects in my view of others; d) I know my culture extremely well and what it represents in me and I understand that due to my customs/values/etc. judge others; e) I know my culture extremely well and what it represents in me, but I don't see how it can influence my view of others) – 58.3% affirmed to know their culture extremely well and what it represents to them and understand that due to those values, they judge others; 29.2% alleged to know their culture extremely well and what it represents to them, but do not see how it can influence their view of others; 8.3% stated that they know their own culture and what it represents to them but not what it reflects in their view of others; 4.2% affirmed to know their own culture extremely

well and what it represents to them and understand that due to their customs/values/etc. they judge others

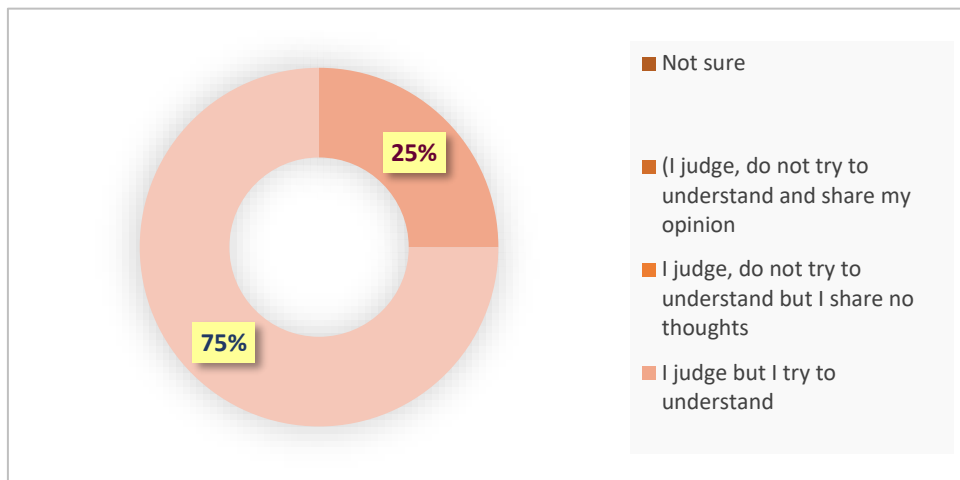


Figure 24 - How well do you think you know your own cultural environment and understand the salient features of your own culture, aspects of which are part of your identity, and to what extent can this influence your judgment of others?

- “To what extent are you aware and able to control your thoughts and emotions in relation to people who share customs, cultural practices, beliefs, etc. different from yours?” – from a to f, being a) I am aware that it is difficult to control emotions, but I am extremely thoughtful; b) I am aware of my emotions and it becomes difficult to ponder and not judge/etc.; c) I am aware of my emotions, but I cannot control my thoughts, so as to avoid thinking badly; d) I am aware of my emotions and cannot control my thoughts towards others; e) I am not fully aware and do not control what I think of others; f) Not sure – 70.8% claimed to be aware that it is difficult to control emotions, but that they are extremely thoughtful; 20.8% affirmed to be conscious of their emotions and that it becomes difficult to ponder and not judge; 4.2% stated that they are conscious of their emotions, but cannot control their thoughts, so as to avoid thinking badly; 4.2% are not sure

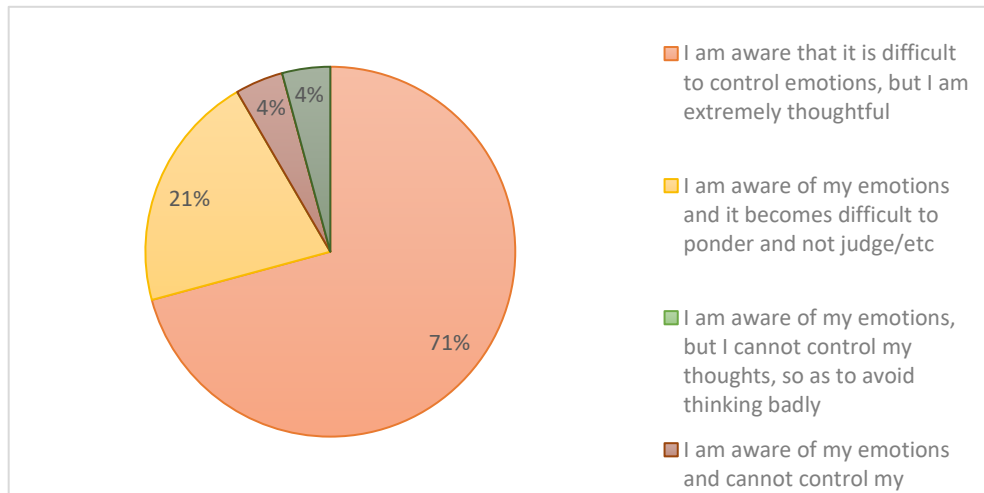


Figure 25- To what extent are you aware and able to control your thoughts and emotions in relation to people who share customs, cultural practices, beliefs, etc. different from yours?

- “In an intercultural situation, to what extent do you think you are able to put yourself in an objective position? Can you / do you often discern and look for various explanations before drawing your conclusions?” – from a to e, being a) I feel able to be objective and I can also discern and seek possible clarifications for the situation in question before drawing any conclusions; b) I feel able to be objective, but I cannot assume and consider various explanations, so I end up drawing my conclusions right away; c) I can't be objective, my culture is almost always evident and I jump to conclusions; d) I don't know how to be objective on a cultural level and my cultural identity makes me immediately judge people from other cultures and not question or seek explanations; e) not sure – 79.2% affirmed to feeling capable of being objective and discern and seek possible clarifications for the situation in question before drawing any conclusions; 12.5% asserted that they feel able to be objective, but cannot assume and consider various explanations, so they end up drawing conclusions straightaway; 8.3% alleged not to be sure.

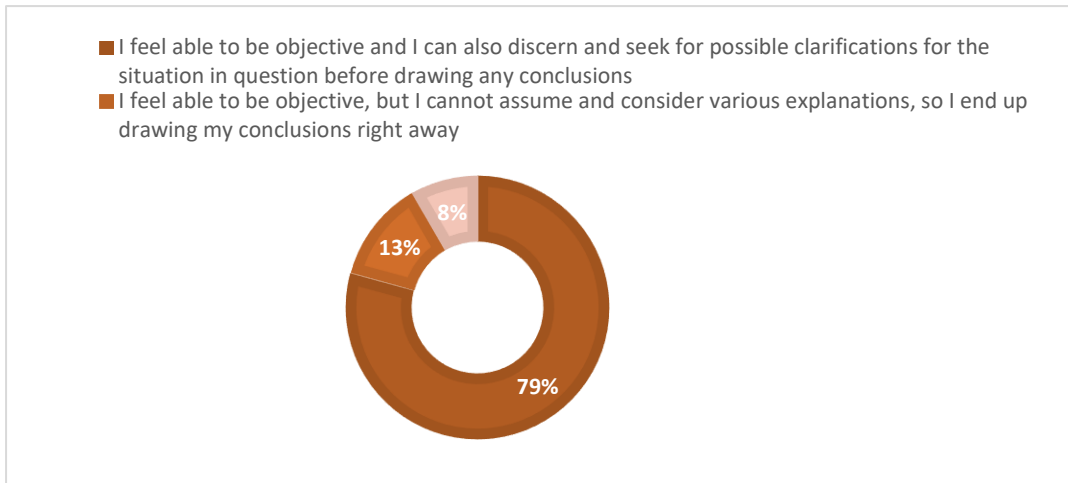


Figure 26- In an intercultural situation, to what extent do you think you are able to put yourself in an objective position? Can you / do you often discern and look for various explanations before drawing your conclusions?

- “How humble do you consider yourself in cultural terms? Do you see your culture as superior to others, or do you think yours is flawed?” – from a to e, being a) Extremely humble, my culture also features a number of flaws; b) Very humble, my culture has flaws, too; c) Humble, my culture presents few flaws; d) Not very humble since my culture has very few or no flaws; e) Not sure – 75% declared to be extremely humble since their culture presents several flaws and 25% claimed to be very humble due to their culture having flaws, too.
- “Although sometimes inciting discord, it is plausible to challenge people from different cultures, who are inserted in a cultural environment other than their own, regarding their attitudes, beliefs, norms, etc. is the culture different from yours?” – from a to d being a) Yes, we must question and show what is the common practice, depending on where we are, being that sharing the same country/Place/space, etc., we should share the same customs/norms / etc. so that there is cultural harmony; b) Perhaps beliefs, norms, behaviors can be questioned, because they challenge our beliefs, practices, customs and disrupt our cultural environment; c) Cultural aspects should not be questioned, and these differ and are extremely subjective; they should be respected, recognized and analyzed, so that we understand and these are not considered "disturbing" cultural environment; d) Not sure – 54.2% alleged that we ought not to question cultural aspects since these are extremely subjective; 20.8% stated that we must question and show what is the "common" practice depending on the context we are inserted in; 16.7% believe that values, beliefs and cultural aspects

may be questioned due to their defying position towards others' beliefs and cultures; 8.3% were not sure.

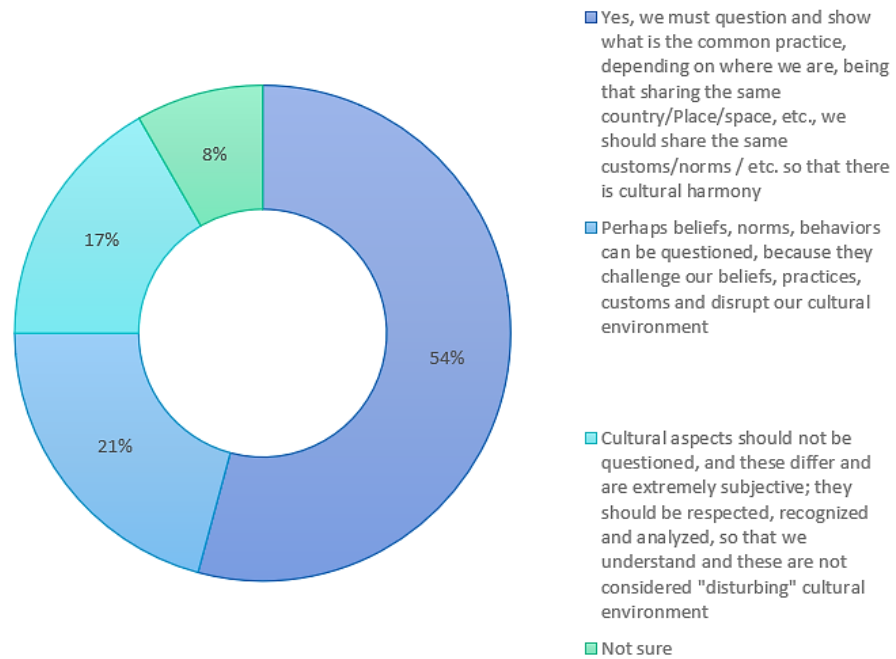


Figure 27- Although sometimes inciting discord, it is plausible to challenge people from different cultures, who are inserted in a cultural environment other than their own, regarding their attitudes, beliefs, norms, etc. is the culture different from yours?

Appendix III – CultureWise’s Business Model Canvas

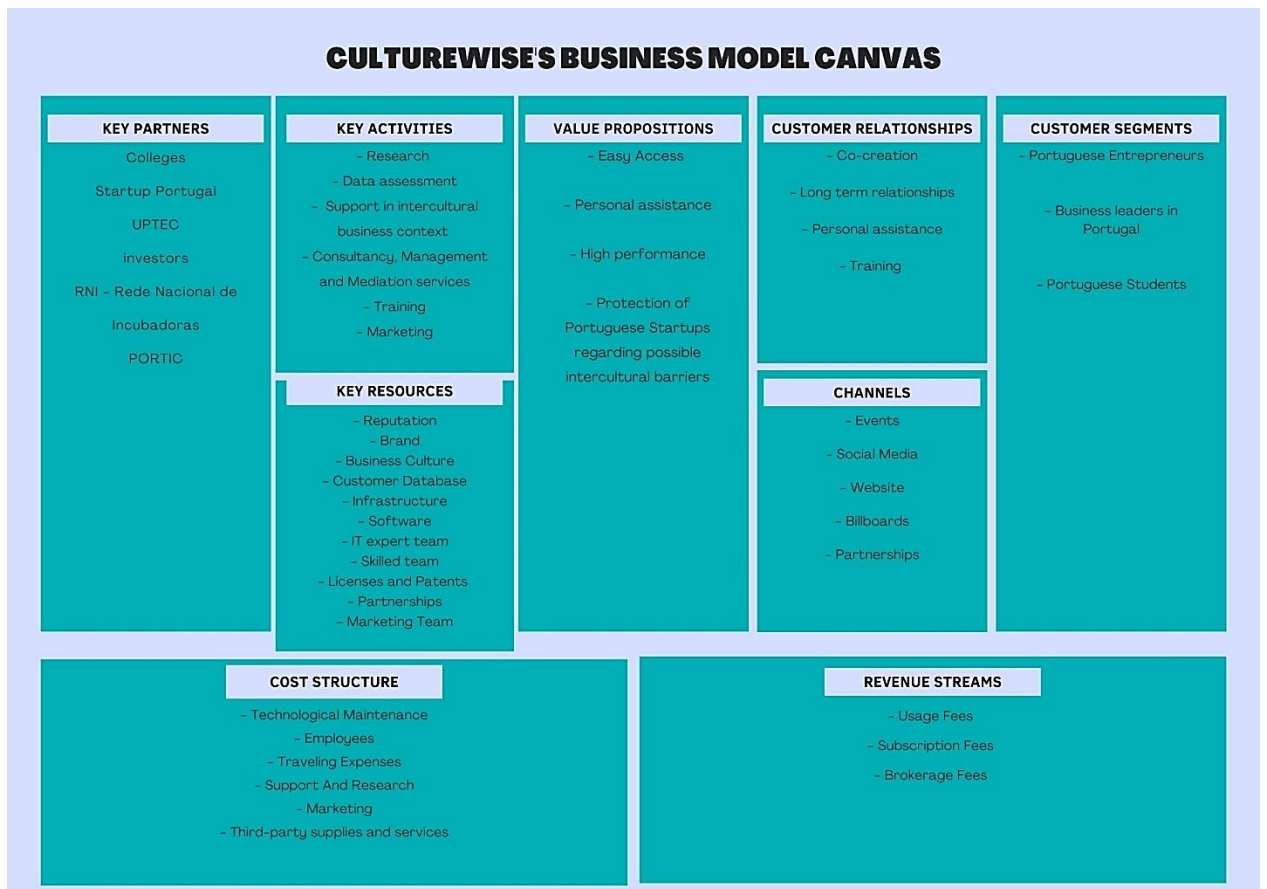


Figure 28 - CultureWise’s Business Model Canvas