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**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ITALIANS AND
KAZAKHS: AN ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL VALUES**

Supervisor:

Ch. Prof. Fabio Caon

Assistant supervisor:

Ch. Prof. Sveva Battaglia

Graduand

laureanda Aisulu Omirbekova

893609

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INTRODUCTION

In the labyrinth of our interconnected world, the fabric of society is continuously woven by threads of diverse cultural interactions. Among these, the dialogue between Italian and Kazakh cultures stands out, offering a unique lens through which the complexities of intercultural communication can be examined. This thesis posits itself at this intersection, aiming to unravel the nuanced ways in which cultural values shape the exchange of ideas, emotions, and meanings between these two distinct communities.

Italy and Kazakhstan have followed distinctive development paths, shaped by different socio-political events, economic milestones, and cultural movements. This research investigates these historical narratives to understand the roots of contemporary cultural values and their effects on communication practices. By tracing the origins of these cultural identities, the thesis illuminates the context in which current interactions occur, providing a rich understanding of present dynamics.

Theoretical frameworks underpinning intercultural communication studies are central to this exploration. Through the application of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Hall's concepts of High-Context and Low-Context Communication, and Trompenaars' Model of National Culture Differences, this thesis aims to dissect the complex interplay of verbal and non-verbal communication between Italians and Kazakhstanis. These theories provide a foundation for analyzing communication styles, negotiation techniques, and cultural conflict resolution, enriching empirical observations with academic insights.

Globalization has brought distant cultures into closer contact, creating new opportunities for interaction and exchange. This thesis explores how technological advancements, global economic networks, and the mobility of people and ideas have intensified cultural exchanges between Italy and Kazakhstan. It examines both the opportunities and challenges that arise from these encounters, shedding light on the evolving nature of intercultural communication in the face of globalization.

Despite increasing interest in intercultural communication, the dialogue between Italian and Kazakh cultures remains underrepresented in academic literature. This thesis attempts to fill this gap, presenting original research that contributes to academic discourse and provides practical insights for professionals in international relations, business, and cultural exchange programs.

By broadening the perspective on intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhstanis, this thesis seeks to provide a significant academic resource that bridges cultural divides. Through

a detailed study of historical contexts, theoretical frameworks, and the impact of globalization, this research aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the subtle yet profound ways in which cultures communicate and coexist in our global society.

Research objectives. The main objective of this dissertation is to analyze intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhs, focusing on cultural values and their impact on marketing and business strategies. The study aims to explore the following aspects:

- Understanding Cultural Differences: Examine the key cultural values, norms, and practices that shape the behavior and interactions of Italians and Kazakhs.
- Impact on Marketing and Business: Investigate how these cultural differences influence marketing strategies and business processes in the context of international cooperation.
- Developing Intercultural Strategies: Propose effective to enhance intercultural communication and interaction between companies and organizations from both countries.

The aim of the project. To analyze cross-cultural communication, marketing, and cultural influence between Italians and Kazakhs, providing cross-cultural information for businesses and organizations operating in both countries.

CHAPTER 1 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

This chapter is based on the book of Caon F., Battaglia S. (2022), *La comunicazione interculturale in azienda e nelle organizzazioni*. In this chapter, the role and importance of intercultural communications will be discussed. Also, the main benefits, unique aspects of the interaction between Italians and Kazakhs, and the necessity of understanding some cultural nuances are highlighted.

1.1 Emphasizing the global importance of intercultural communication and its role in business and marketing

According to Gudykunst (Gudykunst, W.B., and Kim, Y, Y., 2003, pp. 23-25), intercultural communication plays a vital role in today's interconnected world. In an era when borders fade away and communication technologies advance, the ability to understand and interact with different cultures becomes not only possible but also essential. Through international interactions, people from different cultures can cooperate, avoid misunderstandings, work cohesively together, share information and ideas, and enhance each other's knowledge while tackling global concerns. It supports cross-border commercial operations, acknowledges cultural diversity, and adapts to the changing dynamics of the global market. This is particularly crucial in business and entrepreneurship, where Hofstede (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., and Minkov, M., 2010, pp. 165) says success often hinges on the capacity to comprehend and adjust to cultural differences.

Intercultural communication in the business industry incorporates a wide range of activities, such as advertising, marketing, behavior of customers, negotiations, and human resource management. When expanding their presence internationally, companies must take into account the cultural nuances and preferences of their target audiences. This may involve adapting products and services to align with local cultural characteristics. Adapting products to different cultural markets and meeting everyone's specific needs demonstrates the flexibility of businesses and their ability to grow and flourish in a diverse environment, making them more likely to succeed globally and outperform their competitors.

Also, effective intercultural marketing forms a key component in developing businesses and requires a thorough understanding of cultural values, customs, and consumer preferences. Companies seeking to expand in the international market must take into account the cultural nuances and preferences of their target audience, as emphasized by Samovar (Samovar, L.A., Porter, R. E., and McDaniel, E. R., 2009, pp. 54). This goes beyond just adapting language and extends to considering cultural symbols, color palettes, social norms, and etiquette. By

successfully navigating these cultural barriers, companies can forge long-term relationships with customers and foster their decision-making and loyalty. Companies' thorough cultural understanding helps them avoid inappropriate and offensive content and shed light on their respect for people with diverse identities and backgrounds, building trust and credibility.

In the global business landscape, it is crucial to understand and respect cultural differences, as it is not just an advantage but a necessity. Companies that excel in intercultural communication can avoid costly misunderstandings that can damage their finances and reputation as it says in the book of Fabio Caon. Companies can also gain a better comprehension of the needs and expectations of their international clients, leading to improved service and higher customer satisfaction. For instance, the "Alibaba" company, which is one of the top 10 most valuable companies in the world. "Alibaba" was founded by Jack Ma in 2001 in Hangzhou, China, and its core values are strongly connected to Chinese culture. However, despite strong Chinese cultural features, the company has achieved success due to the adoption of Western-style reward systems and its ability to adapt to other cultures. By understanding specific cultural behaviors, negotiations in business can be substantially enhanced. For instance, in some cultures, a direct approach might be appreciated, while in others, building a relationship and trust is crucial before business discussions.

Therefore, intercultural communication is a fundamental aspect of successful business globalization. Ting-Toomey (Ting-Toomey, S., and Chung, L.C., 2012, pp. 61) says that it ensures effective interaction and cooperation at the international level while fostering sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships between companies and their international partners.

1.2 Highlighting the unique aspects of intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhs

Italian and Kazakh cultures differ greatly from each other, influenced by historical, geographical, and sociocultural factors. Italian culture, rooted in antiquity and the Renaissance, places special emphasis on the arts, family, architecture, music, food, and social interactions. On the other hand, Kazakh culture developed under the influence of a nomadic lifestyle, Islam, and the Soviet heritage, which is reflected in hospitality, collectivism, and respect for traditions. However, the common thing between Italians and Kazakhs is family values. Both nations tend to love, respect, and enjoy celebrating events and spending quality time together with their parents, siblings, and relatives.

One of the main barriers in intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhs is the linguistic differences between the Italian and Kazakh languages because of different language

families. Kazakh is a Turkic language and includes sounds that do not exist in Italian, which is a Romance language that is renowned for its unique melodiousness. Additionally, communication styles in both cultures vary significantly. Italians frequently express emotions and highlight ideas using lively hand gestures, facial expressions, and body language. Their communication is significantly influenced by this expressiveness, while Kazakhs tend to be more reserved and indirect in expressing their thoughts and feelings. The communication style in Kazakhstan is often modest and cautious. Behaving loudly or excessively expressively could be seen as impolite or disrespectful.

Cultural values also play a crucial role in intercultural communication. According to table 1, Italians value flexibility and casual lifestyle, whereas Kazakhs place great emphasis on punctuality and organization. Respect for elders, and traditions, personal relationships, and trust are common among these cultures. These differences can impact various aspects of business interactions, such as decision-making, negotiation style, and management strategies, and have some negative consequences, such as communication obstacles that lead to misinterpretations in business deals. Additionally, some cultures favor strong and warm relationships and consensus at work instead of schedules and strict working relationships with their colleagues.

Table 1. Cultural Differences and Similarities between Kazakhs and Italians

Italian people	Similarities	Kazakh people
strategic planning and decision-making is less formal and can be centralized	Both cultures place a high value on personal relationships and trust in business	In Kazakhstan, society and business structures are highly hierarchical, with a clear respect for age and position
Italian meetings tend to be less formal, with a casual approach to punctuality. Meetings might start late and include friendly small talk	Respect for traditions, customs, and elders is a common theme in both cultures but with different approaches	Kazakh business meetings start with formal greetings, often involving handshakes with both hands. Meetings often start on time

Table 1 highlights some similarities and differences between Kazakh and Italian cultures. While these cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communication, they also provide opportunities for enrichment and learning according to Samovar's words (Samovar, L.A., Porter, R.E., and McDaniel, E.R., 2009, pp. 73). Understanding and adapting to these differences can facilitate successful cross-cultural exchanges, business

development, and the strengthening of international relationships. Many viewpoints and ideas come from diverse cultural backgrounds. More original and imaginative solutions may result from this diversity. According to Hofstede (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., and Minkov, M., 2010, pp. 430), realizing all the cultural differences and adaptation to them play a huge and significant part in intercultural communication in International Business. In addition, navigating cultural differences requires and fosters improved communication skills. This includes learning to be clear, concise, and considerate of different communication styles. These advantages show how cultural differences can be a big advantage in business partnerships when they are handled well, fostering creativity, innovation, growth, and competitive advantage.

The unique aspects of intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhstanis require careful study and understanding to ensure effective interaction and cooperation. By understanding and adapting to these differences, one can achieve success in multicultural communication and international business.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Although there is some research on intercultural communication, which includes a variety of global perspectives, particular studies looking at the Italian and Kazakhstani interaction are very limited and scarce. This dissertation aims to address these significant gaps in the literature, which are crucial for a profound understanding of the unique dynamics present in Italian-Kazakh relations.

One of the primary gaps in the existing research is the limited focus on relationships between Italians and Kazakhs. A broad approach, which covers large regions or more frequently studied country pairs, is usually taken by most intercultural communication studies. Consequently, there is a noticeable lack of insight into the special nuances, concerns, and opportunities arising from negotiations between Kazakhstan and Italy.

This lack of specificity can lead to an oversight of the unique cultural, historical, and social factors that shape the business and communication practices related to these two nations. Because of this, the knowledge and conclusions gained from broader studies might not be fully applicable or sufficient.

Another significant gap is the lack of case studies focusing on real-world business scenarios and strategies employed by companies and organizations within Italy and Kazakhstan. Case studies are vital as they provide practical examples and insights into how businesses navigate the challenges of intercultural communication and collaboration.

Furthermore, there is a significant lack of comparative analysis that compares and analyses cultural values and communication strategies. Comparative studies are essential as they highlight the similarities and differences between cultures, providing a clearer understanding of how these factors influence business interactions.

This gap in comparative analysis makes it difficult to develop target strategies that can effectively bridge cultural gaps. Without a detailed understanding of how specific cultural values and communication styles of Italy and Kazakhstan compare, businesses and individuals may struggle to adapt their approaches effectively to suit the intercultural context.

2.1. Basic Theories of Intercultural Communication and its Application

This section provides an overview of key concepts and theories of intercultural communication and marketing, with special attention to the impact of cultural values in the contexts of Italy and

Kazakhstan, highlighting the work of Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, G., 1984, pp. 141) and other researchers.

2.1.1 Geert Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede identified several "cultural dimensions" that can help us understand differences in values and behavior between cultures. These dimensions include individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity, long-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint.

Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions provides a framework for understanding the variations in values and behaviors across different cultures and how cultural differences affect the various areas of business communication, management, and cooperation with foreign countries. These dimensions provide a framework for understanding cross-cultural interactions and behaviors. These dimensions can be used to analyze the cultural differences between Italy and Kazakhstan, especially in the context of business and communication.

1. Individualism vs Collectivism

This dimension reflects the degree to which people in a society are integrated into groups. Individualistic societies emphasize personal achievements and individual rights, while collectivist societies focus on group goals, what is best for the collective group, and strong family values.

According to Geert Hofstede's work (Hofstede, G., 1980, pp. 95), Italy is generally characterized as a moderately individualistic society, with a focus on personal achievements and individual rights. This is reflected in business through an emphasis on personal success and innovation.

Kazakhstan tends to be more collectivist, with a stronger emphasis on group objectives and family ties. In business, this may translate into a greater focus on group harmony and collaborative decision-making.

2. Uncertainty Avoidance

This measures how much a culture feels threatened by unclear situations and how much they try to avoid them.

Italians might have a lower score in this dimension, suggesting a greater tolerance for ambiguity and a more flexible approach to business and decision-making, which is crucial in dealing with uncertainty and rapidly changing market conditions. Italy's global reputation in fashion, design, and manufacturing is evidence of its innovative and creative approach. Italian businesses often

thrive in sectors that require a high degree of creativity and design thinking, which involves comfort with ambiguity. In contrast to the general flexibility, Italian culture does exhibit a relatively high level of uncertainty avoidance according to Hofstede's theory (Hofstede, G., 1980, pp. 42). This means that there is a significant emphasis on clear rules in some areas, but this coexists with a casual and adaptive approach in decision-making and different operations.

Kazakhstan has a high score in uncertainty avoidance. This suggests that Kazakh businesses prefer to have clear rules and structure. They might avoid taking risks without careful consideration and prefer to have long-term plans and stability, focusing on long-term planning and sustainable growth. Innovation may be approached more cautiously, with a preference for proven methods and technologies. When introducing new ideas or changes, businesses in Kazakhstan favor gradual over radical changes.

3. Masculinity vs Femininity

This refers to the distribution of emotional roles between genders and is not strictly related to gender.

Italians tend to lean towards what Hofstede defines as 'masculine' traits, like competitiveness, ambition, achievements, and material success. In business, this might result in a competitive environment and a focus on achievement and performance. Italian business culture often rewards being the best in the field. This is evident in Italy's strong brand presence in industries like fashion (e.g., Gucci, Prada), automotive (e.g., Ferrari, Lamborghini), and design.

The cultural orientation in Kazakhstan may be different, potentially placing a higher value on quality of life and nurturing relationships. Kazakhstan's cultural orientation may present a mix of masculine and feminine traits. In societies with a balance between masculine and feminine values, there is often an emphasis on work-life balance, quality of life, and the importance of relationships. In businesses, there might be a greater focus on employee well-being, teamwork, and collaborative decision-making.

4. Long-term Orientation vs Short-term Normative Orientation

This dimension measures the extent to which a society shows a practical future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historical short-term point of view.

Italians might have a more short-term orientation, focusing on preserving tradition and achieving quick results in business. Italian companies, especially family-owned businesses, prioritize established methods and short-term gains, focusing on immediate outcomes rather than long-term strategic planning.

Kazakhstan representatives can be more long-term oriented, focusing on future rewards and being more persevering. Kazakh businesses might invest more in long-term strategies like innovation, market development, and capacity building. Also, initiatives like “Kazakhstan 2050 strategy” reflect a forward-looking vision, focusing on sustainable development and improving the quality of life for future generations.

5. Indulgence vs Restraint

This reflects the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses.

Italy is known for its indulgence; Italian culture often embraces enjoying life and its pleasures. In business, this might translate to a more relaxed attitude towards time and deadlines. Deadlines can be seen as more fluid, and meetings might not always start on time or run longer than anticipated due to the value placed on thorough discussion and relationship building.

If more restrained, this would suggest a stricter control of gratification and a more disciplined approach to social norms and work in Kazakhstan. The primary reasons can be historical and social factors. For example, the Soviet era introduced a more structured approach to business, controlling and planning every detail. Societies with high restraint typically prioritize work over leisure, have a more cynical view of life’s pleasures, and maintain strict social norms to regulate behavior. This could translate into a more formal and reserved business environment in Kazakhstan, with a stronger focus on responsibility and less emphasis on enjoyment in a professional setting.

Understanding these cultural dimensions can greatly assist in navigating the business and communication practices in both Italy and Kazakhstan.

2.1.2 Milton Bennett's Theory of Intercultural Sensitivity

Melton Bennett’s theory is described below to reveal and learn stages of adapting to cultural specifics that are essential to know and integrate into real life. People should be aware of these stages to make their adaptation process softer.

Milton Bennett (Bennett, M.J., 1993, pp. 21-71) developed a model that describes the different stages a person goes through when adapting to a new culture, from denial to integration. This model can be found in the book “Education for the Intercultural Experience”.

Application: This model can help understand how employees and managers from Italy and Kazakhstan adapt to cultural differences within international business.

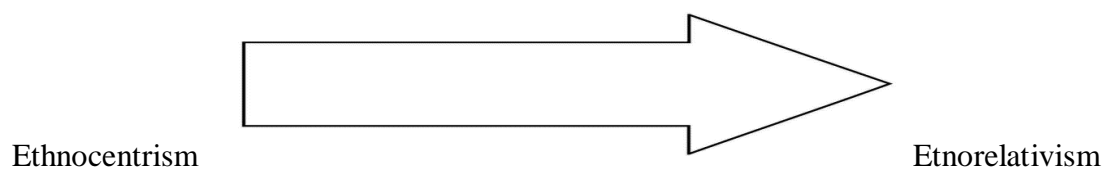
The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, created by Milton Bennett, outlines a progression from ethnocentric stages (denial, defense, minimization) to ethnorelative stages (acceptance, adaptation, integration) in understanding cultural differences. This model illustrates

how individuals move from a lack of recognition or even denial of cultural differences to integration and appreciation of these differences, fostering more sophisticated and competent intercultural relations. It highlights the importance of recognizing and adapting to cultural diversity to achieve effective communication across cultures. Milton Bennett's Theory of Intercultural Sensitivity is a useful framework for understanding how employees and managers from different cultures, such as Italy and Kazakhstan, adapt to cultural differences within international business contexts. This model outlines a progression of stages that individuals typically go through when they are exposed to, and interact with, cultures different from their own.

There is a table below that incorporates several stages of experiencing differences. These stages are stemming from the Milton Bennett's theory.

Table 2. Milton Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Denial	Defense	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation	Integration



In the Denial stage, individuals do not recognize cultural differences or consider their own culture as the only "real" one. For instance, an Italian manager might assume that direct communication and individual decision-making, typical in Italy, are universally accepted, not recognizing the more collective and indirect approach prevalent in Kazakhstan.

The defense stage is marked by recognizing some differences but seeing them in a negative light. A Kazakhstani employee working in Italy might perceive the Italian emphasis on punctuality and deadlines as rigid and stressful, contrasting it negatively with a more flexible approach back home.

In the Minimization stage, individuals acknowledge cultural differences but downplay their importance. An Italian employee might recognize that Kazakhstanis value collective decision-making but still believe that, at the end of the day, all employees everywhere essentially want the same things (like job security and fair pay).

The acceptance stage involves recognizing and appreciating cultural differences in values and behaviors. An Italian manager in Kazakhstan might come to understand and respect the local emphasis on building personal relationships and trust in business, rather than just focusing on contracts and terms.

At the Adaptation level, individuals are able to adapt their behavior and communication to be effective in different cultural contexts. For example, a Kazakhstani manager in Italy might adopt a more direct communication style to align with Italian business norms, while still maintaining their inherent cultural values.

Integration, which is the final stage, is marked by a deep understanding and ability to move in and out of different cultural perspectives. An Italian employee in Kazakhstan might not only adapt to but also incorporate some aspects of Kazakhstani culture into their own identity, leading to a more enriched personal and professional life.

In international business, Bennett's model helps in understanding that adaptation to a new culture is a process. For instance, Italian and Kazakhstani employees and managers may initially experience confusion or misunderstandings due to different communication styles, attitudes towards hierarchy, or decision-making processes. As they progress through these stages, they develop a greater sensitivity and skill in navigating these differences. This progression leads to more effective communication, smoother collaboration, and ultimately, more successful business outcomes in a multicultural environment.

2.1.3 Edward Hall's Theories of Communication Styles

Edward Hall (Hall, E.T., 1976, pp. 35-50) introduced the concepts of high-context and low-context communication, explaining how information is transmitted and perceived differently in different cultures. Edward Hall's concepts of high-context and low-context communication reflect how communicators rely on context versus explicit verbal information. High-context communication heavily relies on situational cues, non-verbal signals, and shared knowledge between communicators. It is prevalent in cultures that emphasize personal connections and community. Conversely, low-context communication relies on direct, clear, and specific verbal messages, common in cultures that prioritize efficiency, precision, and individualism. This framework aids in understanding cross-cultural interactions.

In high-context communication, much is unsaid, with context, non-verbal cues, and shared understanding conveying messages. This style is typical in closely-knit societies where relationships and history contribute to meaning. In contrast, low-context communication prioritizes explicit verbal information with less reliance on assumed knowledge. Clarity and

efficiency are key, making it common in individualistic cultures where interactions are more transactional and less relationship-based. This dichotomy influences how messages are constructed, interpreted, and valued across cultures.

Application to Italy and Kazakhstan: Analysis of how Italian (prone to high-context communication) and Kazakh cultures (with elements of both high- and low-context communication) influence business interactions and marketing strategies.

Edward Hall's theories of high-context and low-context communication provide valuable insights into understanding how Italian and Kazakh cultures, with their respective communication styles, influence business interactions and marketing strategies.

High-Context Communication in Italian Culture

- **Implicit Communication:** In a high-context culture like Italy, non-verbal cues, tone of voice, and context are often relied upon to convey information. Unsaid messages can be as important as spoken words.
- **Business Interactions:** During meetings and negotiations, Italians may expect others to understand unspoken nuances or read between the lines. This can lead to misunderstandings with cultures that are more direct. Building relationships and trust is crucial in business dealings.
- **Marketing Strategies:** Marketing in Italy should focus on aesthetics, brand history, and building an emotional connection with the audience. Implicit messages and symbolism can be more effective than direct sales pitches, this part will be revealed more in detail in Chapter 3.

Mixed Context Communication in Kazakh Culture

Kazakh culture exhibits both high- and low-context communication elements, making their business interactions and marketing strategies more flexible.

- **Combination of Direct and Indirect Communication:** While Kazakhs appreciate explicit information, especially in legal and business documents to avoid ambiguity, they also value harmonious relationships, social cohesion, and non-verbal cues in communication.
- **Business Interactions:** In Kazakhstan, it is important to provide clear and detailed information when needed, while also being attentive to non-verbal signals and the importance of interpersonal relationships. This balance can be challenging for those accustomed to purely high- or low-context cultures. Foreign professionals and diplomats

working in Kazakhstan frequently note the importance of understanding local communication styles.

- **Marketing Strategies:** A hybrid approach works well in Kazakhstan. Clear and informative advertising can be combined with storytelling and cultural references. Understanding the specific audience segment in Kazakhstan is key, as different groups may lean more toward high- or low-context communication. Real-life examples of a hybrid marketing approach in Kazakhstan, which combines direct, informative advertising with storytelling and cultural references, can be seen in various sectors. For instance, companies such as Halyk Bank, one of the largest in Kazakhstan, use a direct approach to communicate the features and benefits of their financial products. However, they also engage customers through stories and narratives, such as advertisements where they present their products through quality time with family, friends, and relatives that, thanks to their innovations, people can spend more time with people they love, or advertisements where they talk about the bank's history of more than 100 years.

Cross-Cultural Business and Marketing Implications

Adaptation and Flexibility: According to the information discussed earlier, we can make a conclusion that Italian companies operating in Kazakhstan, or vice versa, should train their staff to recognize and adapt to different communication styles. Italians may need to be more explicit than usual in Kazakhstan, while Kazakhs might need to focus on non-verbal communication cues when dealing with Italians.

Cultural Sensitivity in Marketing: Marketing campaigns should be tailored to respect and leverage the communication preferences of each culture. In Italy, this might mean focusing on brand storytelling and emotional appeal, while in Kazakhstan, a blend of clear messaging and cultural relevance would be more effective.

Building Relationships: In both cultures, but especially in Italy, building strong personal relationships is key to business success. This means investing time in face-to-face meetings and understanding the importance of social context in business dealings.

Understanding and adapting to the high-context communication style of Italy and the mixed-context style of Kazakhstan can significantly enhance business interactions and marketing strategies. This adaptation requires a deep understanding of the nuances of each culture's communication style and a flexible approach to both verbal and non-verbal cues.

2.2 Cultural Values in Marketing

De Mooij (De Mooij, M., 2010, pp. 112) describes how cultural distinctions significantly impact the development of global marketing strategies and consumer behavior. Companies expanding into international markets must navigate a complex environment shaped by diverse cultural norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors. Recognizing these cultural subtleties is crucial for devising effective marketing strategies that resonate with varied consumer segments. Here is an examination of fundamental areas where cultural differences exert influence on global marketing and consumer behavior:

1. Consumer Preferences and Values:

Cultural Diversity: Various cultures exhibit unique preferences, tastes, and values. For instance, discussing a beauty and skincare area, lighter skin tones are preferred and skincare products with whitening capabilities are very popular in South Korea and Japan. Organic and natural beauty products are becoming more and more popular in Western societies, which is indicative of a larger societal movement towards environmental sustainability and health concerns, or the meaning of colors differs widely across cultures; while red may symbolize good fortune in China, it signifies danger or love in Western societies. According to the book *La comunicazione interculturale in azienda e nelle organizzazioni* written by Caon and Battagila (pp. 179), most companies opt for an adaptation of the message to an inter-culturally diverse environment, a verbal, visual, and acoustic level: regarding the use of images, colors, and writing. It is possible to find cultural differences here in some interpretations and preferences. In reference, to the various color meanings, it may be useful to know that in Hong Kong eggs are dipped by traders in tea to switch them from white to ocher, since white is a symbol of death and should therefore be avoided. For Americans, the most virile color is blue. While in China and Japan, gray products convey an idea of “not expensive product”, in the USA goods of this color are considered expensive, safe, and prominent.

Marketing Ramifications: Products and advertising initiatives need to be customized to align with local values and preferences, which might involve adjusting product attributes, packaging, or promotional themes to connect with the local audience. Adapting global products or services to fit the preferences of a local market means glocalization. The word fuses the concepts of “globalization” and “localization”. A “glocalized” product often performs better because marketing localization makes it better suited to the specific environment and needs of a local market. Glocalization is providing a personal touch in each region that means “We got you and your preferences”.

2. Communication Styles:

High vs Low Context: As Hall's theory suggests high-context cultures (e.g., Japan) rely on implicit communication embedded within context, whereas low-context cultures (e.g., the United States) prefer explicit and direct communication.

Marketing Approaches: In high-context cultures, visual storytelling combined with symbolism may demand greater emphasis in marketing efforts, while clear-cut messaging could prove more effective in low-context settings.

3. Decision-Making Processes Individualism vs Collectivism:

Cultures emphasizing individualism (e.g., the USA) prioritize personal choice and autonomy, whereas collectivist one's value group decisions and conformity. Looking at the consumer behavior aspect, marketing aimed at individualistic societies could underline personal benefits and distinctiveness. At the same time, collective cults underlying family, community, and social approval can wield more influence on purchasing decisions.

Shedding light on the attitudes towards brands, some cultures are more receptive to foreign brands, associating them with quality and prestige, while others prefer local brands that align with local tastes and sensibilities. Additionally, in the advertising approaches the tone, content, and style must consider local attitudes. Humor, emotional appeals, and celebrity endorsements might have varying levels of effectiveness across cultures.

In the digital penetration and media consumption field, different cultures have varying levels of access to and preferences for certain media channels (TV, online, social media, etc.). In digital marketing, it is crucial to understand local media consumption habits to determine the most effective channels for advertising and engagement.

Touching on the theme of economics and purchasing power, economic conditions and social norms can influence spending habits and consumer priorities. Marketing strategies must account for economic factors, adjusting pricing, quality, and value proposition accordingly.

Different countries have diverse regulations on advertising, product safety, and consumer rights. Also, global marketing strategies must adhere to local laws and ethical standards to avoid legal issues and maintain brand integrity.

Understanding and adapting to cultural differences is crucial for global marketing success. Companies must conduct thorough cultural research to tailor their products, marketing messages, and campaigns to each unique market. This not only helps in effectively reaching and engaging

with diverse consumer groups, but also in building long-term brand loyalty and trust in different cultural contexts.

International brands often face the challenge of adapting their strategies to align with the cultural preferences of different regions, which is crucial for success in global markets. This adaptation enables brands to resonate with local audiences, comply with regional norms, and compete effectively with local businesses. Product Localization plays a significant role in this process, where brands modify their products to suit local tastes and cultural norms. For instance, fast-food chains like McDonald's might offer region-specific menu items, such as numerous smoothies with tropical flavors of mango, coconut and mint in Hong Kong, or Macchao in Japan (Caon F., and Battaglia, S., 2022, *“La comunicazione interculturale in azienda e nelle organizzazioni”*, pp. 179). Altering packaging and branding to reflect local languages, cultural symbols, and aesthetics is also part of this process.

When it comes to Localized Marketing and Advertising Campaigns, brands tailor their advertising to reflect local values, humor, and lifestyles. This includes using local languages, idioms, and cultural references, and choosing advertising channels that align with local media consumption habits. Adjustments in Pricing Strategy are also important, with strategies often reflecting local purchasing power and economic conditions, and brands adjusting prices to remain competitive with local businesses.

Distribution and Supply Chain Adaptations are crucial for navigating logistical challenges and meeting consumer expectations. This involves establishing local distribution channels or partnerships and localizing supply chains by sourcing materials and manufacturing products locally to reduce costs and align with local practices. Cultural Sensitivity and Compliance are also key, ensuring that brands' products, marketing, and operations do not offend local sensibilities, including being sensitive to religious, social, and political norms, and adhering to local laws and regulations.

Engagement with Local Communities through corporate social responsibility activities and local collaborations can enhance cultural relevance and appeal. Digital and Social Media Localization involves using region-specific social media platforms and creating content that reflects local languages, trends, and cultural events. Brands like IKEA, Starbucks, and Apple demonstrate this by adapting their product designs, menus, and services to comply with local regulations and cultural preferences. Successful international brands effectively balance maintaining a consistent global brand identity with adapting to local cultural nuances. This comprehensive approach, encompassing product design, pricing, distribution, and communication, ensures that the brand is

recognized globally while being relevant locally.

2.3 Existing Research on Intercultural Communication between Italians and Kazakhstani and gaps in the literature

In many studies, the question of cultural differences between Italy and Kazakhstan has been a major focus, with aspects such as language barriers, communication styles, or business manners also being addressed. Theoretical frameworks developed by prominent scholars such as Geert Hofstede and Edward Hall can often be found in this collection of research. This chapter focuses on the detailed analysis of aspects of the intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhs, relying on the studies of Edward Hall (Hall, E.T., 1976) and Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., and Minkov, M., 2010, pp. 220). These frameworks provide a structured approach to understanding the complex interplay of cultural elements and their impact on international communication and business practice.

2.3.1 Application of Hofstede's Dimensions

Individualism vs. Collectivism: Research focusing on this dimension often contrasts the Italian leaning towards individualism with the more collectivist orientation of Kazakh culture. According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, Italian culture is typically characterized by a strong emphasis on individual achievements and autonomy, which influences their approach to business and communication as being more self-oriented and personal. In contrast, Kazakh culture, with its collectivist tendencies, prioritizes group objectives and values community and familial ties, which is reflected in their business practices that favor group consensus and collective decision-making.

Power Distance: Studies in this area explore the acceptance and expectation of power distribution within societies. According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, Italian culture, which tends to have a lower power distance, promotes more egalitarian relationships in business and social settings. Conversely, Kazakh culture, with a higher power distance, demonstrates a greater acceptance of hierarchical order and authority, which influences organizational structures and communication protocols in business.

Uncertainty Avoidance: This dimension addresses how cultures deal with the uncertainty and ambiguity of future events. Italian culture, scoring high on uncertainty avoidance, tends to adhere to established norms and rules, preferring structured circumstances and clear expectations. This is evident in their detailed planning and risk-averse strategies in business. On the other hand, Kazakh culture, with a lower score in uncertainty avoidance, may exhibit more flexibility and adaptability, allowing for a more dynamic and responsive approach in business operations.

2.3.2 Hall's High-Context and Low-Context Communication

Edward T. Hall's theory on high and low-context communication styles is a fundamental concept in intercultural communication. It differentiates cultures based on how they communicate with each other. Hall argues that high-context cultures tend to be more effective in building and maintaining relationships, as they emphasize social harmony and group cohesion. In contrast, low-context cultures tend to be more efficient in achieving individualistic goals.

Hall's concept of high-context communication is particularly relevant in analyzing Italian communication styles. In high-context cultures like Italy, much of the communication is implicit, relying heavily on the environment, context, non-verbal cues, and established relationships. This is evident in Italian business communication, where emphasis is placed on the tone, body language, and the context in which the communication occurs. Understanding these nuances is crucial for successful interaction and negotiation in Italian business environments.

Kazakh culture presents a unique blend of high- and low-context communication styles. This duality reflects the country's diverse ethnic and cultural composition and its history. While there are tendencies towards indirect communication, especially in maintaining harmony and respect, there is also an adoption of more direct and explicit communication styles as Gudykunst highlights (Gudykunst, W.B., and Kim, Y.Y., 2003, pp. 46-49), possibly influenced by modern business practices and international interactions. This amalgamation requires a nuanced understanding of effective communication in Kazakhstan, as the context and the nature of the relationship significantly influence the communication style.

The studies of cultural differences between Italy and Kazakhstan, grounded in the theories of Hofstede and Hall, offer profound insights into the distinct communication styles and business etiquettes of these two cultures. Understanding these differences is pivotal for navigating the complexities of intercultural interactions in the global business arena. This body of research not only aids in bridging communication gaps but also fosters a deeper appreciation and respect for the diverse cultural practices that shape business interactions between Italy and Kazakhstan.

The table below provides shortened information based on the data about Edward Hall's theory described above.

Table 3. Comparative analysis of Italian and Kazakh communication styles

Aspect	Italy (High-context)	Kazakhstan (Mixed-context)
Communication style	Implicit, relies on non-verbal cues	A mix of indirect and direct communication

Non-verbal cues	Tone, body language, context	Harmony, respect, and modern practices
Business communication	Understanding nuances is crucial	Requires nuanced understanding
Cultural influence	Strongly high-context, relationship-focused	Influenced by diverse ethnicities and modernity

2.3.3 Business Research

In the overview of interactions, literature dedicated to cross-cultural business interactions between Italy and Kazakhstan delves into how these cultures impact various business practices. In a cross-cultural context, it includes negotiation techniques, leadership styles, and management methods. The differences in style and strategy are often highlighted by studies on negotiation practices. For example, Italian negotiators may focus on building relationships and understanding without always saying it directly because of their culture, saying such phrases as “How can we work together to achieve a solution beneficial for both of us?”, or “Let’s take our time to understand each other’s perspectives”. On the other hand, Kazakh negotiators might use both direct and indirect communication, which shows their mixed-context style. The impact of cultural values on these areas in both countries is explored in research on leadership and management. Italian leaders may combine traditional and family-based methods with a focus on being creative. In contrast, Kazakh leaders may emphasize hierarchical respect and collective decision-making. Additionally, Solomon’s studies (Solomon, M.R., 2014) show that Italian consumers are focusing more on style, aesthetics, and quality, while Kazakhs are looking for practical goods and clothes. Moreover, researchers look at how differences in culture affect trade deals and partnerships between countries. Case studies of Italian and Kazakh companies, which provide practical insight into how businesses deal with cross-cultural challenges and opportunities, are included in the research segment of real-world examples. Within the context of marketing adaptation strategies, these case studies illustrate how businesses accommodate their marketing approaches to appeal to various cultural target audiences. For example, when an Italian fashion or food firm enters the Kazakh market, it may change its advertising to better reflect the cultural values and preferences of Kazakhstan while keeping its Italian identity. Adapting promotion methods to different cultures can significantly affect and expand the brand. According to the book *La comunicazione interculturale in azienda e nelle organizzazioni* written by Caon and Battagila, religious knowledge about peculiarities of Islam can exert an influence on the market in Islamic countries (pp. 199). For instance, marketing opportunities offered by the month of Ramadan, a month of

fasting for Muslims, to get in touch with customers, even online: numerous companies launch special products during this month for Muslims, who tend to purchase clothes, shoes, cosmetics and plenty of food for gatherings with family, friends, and colleagues, since there is a tendency to be together at sunset, the moment in which the fast is broken. Also, Italian profit organizations might need to adapt to collective decision-making processes and hierarchical structures more prevalent in Kazakh culture. Organizational behavior study looks at how businesses handle diversity, resolve conflicts, and foster collaborative spirit among staff members. These case studies offer valuable insights regarding the significance of cultural sensitivity and flexibility in international business.

A comprehensive view of how these different cultures influence business practices can be found in the cross-cultural business interactions between Italy and Kazakhstan research bodies.

2.3.4 Language and Nonverbal Aspects

An essential field of research is the study of linguistic differences between Italian and Kazakh speakers, which highlights the challenges and inherent obstacles to communication. These studies extensively examine how language proficiency or its lack of impact on various facets of business and personal connections. Even minor misunderstandings and misinterpretations due to language barriers can lead to dramatic issues in negotiations.

There are several studies exploring the subtle differences in how language affects interpersonal dynamics. As an example, the direct communication style prevalent in Italian might contrast sharply with Kazakh, which can be more indirect. This contrast can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts if not properly managed. Additionally, the research often touches upon the impedes faced by non-native speakers in comprehending idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and industry-specific jargon in a business context.

Research focuses on understanding how Italians and Kazakhs use and interpret body language, gestures, facial expressions, and other forms of nonverbal signals in the area of nonverbal communication. For instance, some certain gestures or facial expressions common in Italian culture might carry different meanings or be absent in Kazakh culture, such as the Italian expressive use of hand gestures as part of communication.

Linguistic Interpretation and Translation Studies, especially in formal contexts such as business or diplomacy, pay particular attention to the complexity of translating and interpreting between Italian and Kazakh languages. This research is important in highlighting the importance of skilled interpreters and translators who do more than simply translate words from one language to another; it also illustrates cultural context and nuance. These studies examine different approaches and

difficulties in interpretation and translation, highlighting the importance of having a thorough comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties. In addition to linguistic expertise, it is also essential to understand both cultures' business practices and legal frameworks in order to translate legally or technically related documents. Similarly, in diplomatic settings, interpreters must navigate the subtle nuances of language and diplomacy, ensuring that both linguistic accuracy and cultural sensitivities are maintained.

Overall, the complexity and importance of effective communication in a multicultural context is highlighted by research on language and visual aspects among Italy's and Kazakh cultures. In order to promote effective communication and mutual understanding in international interactions, people need to be aware of the necessity for both linguistic proficiency and a thorough understanding of cultural nuances.

CHAPTER 3 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

This chapter is devoted to a thorough and detailed analysis of aspects of intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhs. The focus is on the linguistic features, communication styles, and nonverbal cues that shape the unique patterns of interaction between these cultures.

3.1. Analyze intercultural communication aspects between Italians and Kazakhs, including language use, communication styles, and non-verbal cues

The Language Barriers section of this dissertation provides an in-depth exploration of the communication challenges arising from the linguistic differences between Italian and Kazakh speakers. Italy and Kazakhstan, with their distinct linguistic heritages, present unique obstacles in intercultural communication, particularly in the realms of business and social interaction.

3.1.1 Language Use

Talking about native language challenges the primary focus is on the inherent challenges posed by the native languages of both countries. Italian, a Romance language, is characterized by its fluidity, expressiveness, and a wide array of idiomatic expressions. In contrast, Kazakh, a Turkic language, has its own unique structure, syntax, and linguistic nuances. Kazakh and Italian languages have very different grammatical structures, phonetics, and vocabularies. In contrast to English, which is taught and used widely around the world, Italian is not taught much in Kazakhstan and Kazakh is not taught much in Italy. This lack of mutual language exposure reduces opportunities for natural language learning and cultural exchange. The study examines how these inherent linguistic differences and challenges can lead to complications in understanding, especially when nuances, subtleties, and cultural connotations are lost in translation.

Role of English as a Lingua Franca. A lingua franca is a language or way of communicating that is used between people who do not speak one another's native language to negotiate for educational, commercial, political, religious, and cultural purposes. This term is derived from the mixture of Romance languages in the Mediterranean varieties that were used in the Middle Ages, especially in the Crusades and maritime trade. Another critical aspect is the role of English as a common language of communication, often used as a lingua franca in business dealings between Italian and Kazakh entities. English provides a neutral communication platform that eliminates the direct influence of either party's original language because it is a widely recognized language. When both sides communicate in a language that is not intrinsically biased towards one culture,

this can facilitate effective business interactions. English enables us to relate with others, to share our ideas, and thoughts, to understand others, and to be understood. While it provides a common platform for communication, varying levels of proficiency in English can lead to unequal footing in negotiations and discussions. The analysis delves into how proficiency, or lack thereof, in English can influence the dynamics of business meetings, negotiations, and correspondences.

Misinterpretations and Misunderstandings. The research looks at how language differences can cause misunderstandings, especially in business situations. It shows how certain words or phrases in business can have various implications in different languages, which can cause problems. Body language and non-verbal cues also vary among different cultures. Different cultures have different ideas about what is considered good manners or normal body language. This can lead to misunderstandings because what might be appropriate in one culture could be seen as disrespectful in another. The research also looks at how these misunderstandings affect relationships between businesses, negotiations, and the overall success of collaborations between different cultures.

3.1.2 Communication Styles

A direct style of communication is often present in Italian culture. Generally, Italians tend to express their feelings and opinions in a simple way with limited room for any misunderstanding. The Italian parties are likely to make clear their positions from the outset in business negotiations. Italians do not shy away from expressing their objectives, preferences, and limitations at an early stage of the debate, unlike cultures that can begin with a broad discussion or indirect approach. By being straightforward, everyone is certain to understand one another's positions, which cuts down on time wasted on speculating or figuring out hidden meanings.

Italians are inclined to express expectations in a straightforward manner. For instance, a manager in Italy could directly communicate the required results, deadlines, and performance standards. This clarity may be especially useful for the purpose of establishing clear targets and objectives, which are essential to avoid misunderstandings in the later stages of business agreements.

The preference for direct communication extends to the negotiation of terms and conditions in commercial agreements. The details of the contract or agreement are likely to be specified by the Italians. This involves a clear discussion of the terms of payment, delivery schedules, and other contractual obligations. Such preciseness helps to foster a clear understanding and agreement between all parties involved.

The Italian negotiation tactic is also influenced by direct communication. Italians are more likely to speak openly and honestly, sometimes even being assertive in order to make their ideas

understandable and taken into account than other cultures which may resort to less subtle methods of negotiation. But this directness is usually balanced with respect and diplomacy.

Kazakh culture, on the other hand, might be more prone to indirect communication. This involves a more nuanced approach, in which messages are often communicated implicitly, relying on context and nonverbal signals for interpretation. In negotiations, Kazakh professionals may prefer to express their messages and intentions in a more indirect way rather than simply stating them out loud. Instead of declaring them, or expressing disagreement in a subtle way, this could involve suggesting rather than demanding. As an example, people from Kazakhstan might utilize phrases like “we might consider other options” to demonstrate a disagreement, instead of directly saying “we disagree.”

In the context of Kazakhstan’s business environment, nonverbal communication plays a crucial role. A lot of information can be conveyed by gesture, facial expression, and voice tone without being explicitly stated. It might be that a pause in the conversation or change of tone would indicate hesitation or disagreement, which is commonly verbalized in another culture.

Reading between the lines is a frequent part of Kazakh business culture’s decision-making process, which also entails an appreciation of the hierarchy and dynamics at play. Decisions at meetings may not be made public or discussed openly. Instead, they are often reached through a series of informal discussions and consensus-building, where understanding the implicit messages and the opinions of key influencers is crucial.

The importance of building relationships and trust is central to indirect communication in Kazakhstan’s culture. Business dealings often go beyond the transactional aspects and involve developing a deep understanding and rapport with business partners. As a result, there will be considerable time to work in an informal and comfortable ambiance, sharing meals together for example.

For international business professionals working with Kazakh counterparts, it is essential to develop skills in the interpretation of implicit signals and adapt them to this communication style. Misunderstandings may result from misinterpreting these details. Being sensitive to the indirect nature of communication and understanding the broader context in which it occurs is key to successful business interactions in Kazakhstan.

The indirect communication style prevalent in Kazakh culture significantly influences business practices. It requires a nuanced understanding of non-verbal cues and an ability to interpret messages within their broader context. This approach to communication shapes everything from

negotiations and decision-making to relationship building and finalizing agreements. International business professionals engaging with Kazakh counterparts need to develop an appreciation for this subtlety and an ability to navigate the indirect communication landscape effectively.

3.1.3 Nonverbal Signals

This segment covers the use of gestures and facial expressions in Italian and Kazakh cultures. It discusses how Italians, known for their expressive gestures and emotive communication, may differ significantly from Kazakhs, who might exhibit more reserved body language. The analysis includes the interpretation and potential misinterpretation of these nonverbal cues in intercultural interactions.

Italian culture's emphasis on direct and prolonged eye contact in communication is well known. Maintaining eye contact is seen as a sign of trust, honesty, and willingness within this culture ("*Italian Etiquette and Culture*," n.d.). Italian professionals tend to maintain steady eye contact in the context of business so as to demonstrate their sincerity and competence. During negotiations or discussions, avoiding eye contact might be interpreted as a lack of interest. This part of the chapter explores the nuances of how eye contact is used in various professional interactions in Italy and how it can influence the outcomes of these interactions.

On the other hand, a more reserved and situational approach to eye contact can be observed in Kazakhstan culture. In contrast to Italian culture, direct eye contact is still used, but it is less intense and prolonged. In some situations, particularly when communicating with someone of higher status or in formal settings, excessive eye contact might be considered disrespectful. This section of the chapter delves into the subtleties of eye contact in Kazakh culture, examining how it varies depending on the context, the relationship between the individuals involved, and the setting of the communication.

Another important aspect of nonverbal communication in Italian culture is physical space and proximity. Italians prefer to talk in close physical proximity, which reflects the warmth and openness of their social connections. Closer seating arrangements, warm back pats, or even longer handshakes than in more restrained cultures can all be examples of this in professional situations. This section analyzes how these norms of physical proximity can impact business interactions, from establishing rapport to negotiating deals.

The rules about personal space can vary greatly in Kazakh culture. Generally, there is an appreciation for a slightly larger personal space compared to Italian norms. This respect for personal space is often linked to traditional values of respect and courtesy. In professional settings, physical contact is usually more reserved and formal. Here is a comparative table based on the

passage you provided regarding the use of gestures and facial expressions, eye contact, and physical space in Italian and Kazakh cultures:

Table 4. Aspects of nonverbal communication

Aspect of Nonverbal Communication	Italian Culture	Kazakh Culture
Gestures and Facial Expressions	Known for expressive gestures and emotive communication.	Exhibits more reserved body language.
Eye Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct and prolonged eye contact is emphasized. - Seen as a sign of trust, honesty, and willingness. - Important in professional interactions to demonstrate sincerity and competence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reserved and situational approach to eye contact - Direct but less intense and prolonged - Excessive eye contact can be seen as disrespectful in certain contexts.
Physical Space and Proximity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prefers close physical proximity reflecting warmth and openness. - Examples include closer seating arrangements, warm back pats, and longer handshakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appreciates a slightly larger personal space, reflecting traditional values of respect and courtesy. - Physical contact is more reserved and formal in professional settings.

This table summarizes the key differences between Italian and Kazakh cultures in terms of nonverbal communication. It highlights how cultural norms and values influence the interpretation of gestures, eye contact, and physical space in intercultural interactions.

3.2. Impact on Business Conduct and Interpersonal Relationships

In both Italy and Kazakhstan, the influence of cultural traditions and norms is extended to a variety of aspects of business activities as well as interpersonal relations.

In Italy, the negotiation style can be more straightforward and expressive. Italians may approach negotiations with greater emotion and passion and frequently appreciate direct, unambiguous communication. This could include lively conversations and a strong focus on developing interpersonal connections. Whereas in Kazakhstan, it may consist of more indirect communication as well as a focus on reaching an agreement.

In Italy, the approach to management and leadership can focus more on individualism and personal charisma, whereas in Kazakhstan there may be an emphasis on common decision-making and respect for hierarchy.

Building trust and rapport is essential in both cultures, although the methods may vary. In Italy, it may involve dressing appropriately to demonstrate confidence and style, decency, and establishing close relationships through networking, while in Kazakhstan it is comprehension and respect for cultural and social hierarchies and status.

Being able to adapt to cultural differences is mandatory in today's worldwide business environment. To improve cross-cultural communication, people from Kazakh and Italian cultures apply a variety of behavioral and communicative strategies.

Italian professionals often embrace indirect communication when interacting with cultures that prefer deeper conversational cues. This adaptation involves a more refined language use and an increased awareness of nonverbal cues are required for this adaptation. Additionally, Italians place significant emphasis on building relationships across cultural boundaries. Activities like shared meals or informal gatherings become pivotal in establishing trust and mutual understanding with international partners. Italians are adaptable in negotiations, changing their strategy to accommodate group decision-making and less confrontational styles of other cultures.

Kazakh professionals, in contrast, might adopt a more direct Communication style in business contexts where straightforwardness is valued, particularly when dealing with Italian counterparts. Understanding and respecting the hierarchical structures prevalent in Italian business culture is also key for Kazakhstanis, ensuring smoother negotiations and decision-making processes. Enhancing cross-cultural competence through training and exposure to different cultural norms is another strategy that Kazakh professionals employ to adapt to diverse business environments.

Italians and Kazakhs participate in cross-cultural training to learn about each other's communication and business etiquette. Even at the most basic level, studying the language of another culture is a useful tool for language learning that promotes mutual respect and greater understanding. Additionally, in order to clear up misunderstandings and promote good communication, the use of mediators or cultural liaisons who are knowledgeable about both cultures can be quite helpful.

Adapting to the Nonverbal Cues of the other culture enhances understanding and rapport while demonstrating Patience and Openness to different communication styles and business practices is key to facilitating smoother intercultural interactions. The ability to navigate the complexities of intercultural communication is crucial for fostering successful global business relationships. In both Italian and Kazakh contexts, recognizing and respecting the nuances of nonverbal cues, such as gestures, facial expressions, and personal space, can significantly enhance mutual understanding and cooperation. Moreover, demonstrating patience and openness to different communication

styles and business practices serves not only to facilitate smoother interactions but also to build enduring partnerships. As global business continues to evolve, the emphasis on cultural competence and adaptability becomes increasingly important. Both Italian and Kazakh professionals can benefit from ongoing education and exposure to each other's cultures, fostering a climate of mutual respect and collaboration. This approach not only bridges cultural gaps but also enriches the global business landscape with diverse perspectives and innovative solutions

3.3. The Role of Cultural Values in Forming Effective Communication between Businesses and Consumers

A rich tapestry of traditions and contemporary influences can be found during the study of cultural values, beliefs, or norms that affect business practices, marketing strategies, and consumer behavior in both Italy and Kazakhstan. Cultural factors play an important role in shaping the way businesses operate, market themselves, and understand their customers within these two countries, according to the studies of Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., and Minkov, M., 2010).

3.3.1 Italian Cultural Influences

Family and Relationships: Italian culture places a high value on family and personal relationships. Family activities are a focal point of social life in Italy. Family time revolves around meals in particular, and sharing meals is highly valued as a fundamental part of family gatherings. Relationships with neighbors and other community members are important to Italians in addition to those with the immediate family. Strong ties to the community are common, particularly in smaller cities and villages. This extends into the business world. This often means that business decisions and partnerships may be influenced by personal connections and long-standing relationships. Trust and loyalty are highly valued. For example, Prada that is one of the most recognized luxury fashion houses in the world. Prada is deeply intertwined with the values and legacy of the Prada family. It all began in 1913 when Mario Prada and his brother Martino opened a small leather goods shop in Milan, Italy, named Fratelli Prada, which means “Prada Brothers”. When Mario Prada approached to retirement, he trespassed the family business to his daughter Luisa Prada. She took the helm of the business for nearly 20 years, defying her father’s beliefs. Luisa’s daughter Miuccia Prada joined as Head designer and began designing luxury handbags and luggage for the brand in the 1970s. Today, Prada is not just a fashion label but a cultural pride, with Miuccia Prada continuing to serve as head designer, ensuring that the family legacy of innovation and quality endures.

Aesthetics and Quality: According to De Mooij (De Mooij, M., 2010), Italy's rich history in art

and fashion translates into a business culture that values aesthetics, emotional connection, and quality. Italian products, especially in the fashion, furniture, and automotive sectors, are globally renowned for their prominent design and craftsmanship. This emphasis on aesthetic excellence is a key selling point in Italian marketing and branding strategies. Also, Italy is home to some of the world's most famous fashion houses and designers. Brands like Gucci, Prada, Versace, and Armani symbolize luxury and quality, reflecting the importance of aesthetic appeal and workmanship in their products. Basically, Italian businesses embrace beauty, artistry, and the skill of creating things well, thus incorporating aesthetics and quality into business operations is more than simply a marketing strategy. It is a reflection of a deeply ingrained cultural value system.

Direct Communication: Italians typically value directness and clarity in communication, avoiding complex or ambiguous language. In business, this means that marketing messages are often straightforward and emphasize the authenticity and heritage of products or services. Italian business culture encourages open and honest feedback. In meetings and discussions, Italians are likely to express their opinions directly, even if they are critical and are not meant to offend. To conclude, people in Italy always strive to emphasize clarity, credibility, and honesty.

Consumer Behavior: Pellegrini's studies (Pellegrini, L., 2008) show us that Italian consumers often value quality over quantity, showing a preference for products that are durable, stylish, and well-crafted. They have a profound sense of pride in their country's history, which translates into loyalty to homegrown brands and goods. Brands that represent Italian craftsmanship and tradition, especially in sectors like fashion, automobiles, and culinary products, are highly esteemed.

3.3.2 Kazakh Cultural Influences

Collectivism: According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (Trompenaars, F., and Hampden-Turner, C., 1997, pp. 73), Kazakh culture, stemming from its nomadic roots, and values community and collective over individualism. In business, this translates into a focus on building consensus and group harmony, often reflected in collaborative corporate environments and decision-making processes. Collaborative work environments that place a high importance on teamwork the evidence of the desire for collectivism. For the benefit of the company as a whole, employees are urged to collaborate and exchange knowledge. In Kazakhstani companies achievement is viewed as a group endeavor, and individual honors are typically recognized as part of a team effort.

Respect for Tradition and Modernity: Kazakhstan's culture in the business area is considered as a conjunction of traditional and modern aspirations. This combination is ingrained in marketing approaches that often combine traditional features with contemporary design to reach a broad audience. Additionally, there are many artists and brands who create paintings and clothes with traditional elements For instance, Zhanar, an artist from Kazakhstan, showcases paintings on her

official Instagram page that depict modern Kazakhs adorned with beautiful historical and traditional designs (Zhanar’s Instagram, n.d.)." (fig.1. A modern Kazakh woman and fig.2. Daily life of Kazakhs).



Figure 1. “A modern Kazakh woman”



Figure 2. “The daily life of Kazakhs”

The Turan Ensemble, also known as Тұран or Turan Ethno Folk Band, exemplifies this blend of tradition and modernity in the music industry. Formed in 2008 by students of the Kazakh National Conservatory named after Kurmangazy, the ensemble focuses on revitalizing Kazakh folk music

through traditional instruments like the dombra, zhetigen, kobyz, and sybyzgy (fig.3-fig.5). The diversity of Kazakh musical instruments, prominently featuring the dombra and the kobyz, highlights the rich cultural heritage of Kazakhstan (KazakhTV, 2021). Exploring the realm of Kazakh musical heritage further, the zhetigen is showcased in educational initiatives (Pavlodar Regional Library, n.d.). Handcrafted sybyzgy flutes available on Etsy illustrate the contemporary craft and commercial presence of Kazakh musical traditions (Etsy seller, 2021). Supported by the Kazakh Ministry of Culture, Turan has showcased Kazakh musical heritage across Central Asia, Europe, and the United States, promoting a modern appreciation for traditional sounds.



Figure 3. “Kobyz and Dombra”



Figure 4. “Zhetigen”



Figure 5. “Sybyzgy”

The national airline of Kazakhstan, Air Astana, incorporates Kazakh cultural elements in its branding and service. The design of its cabins and uniforms often includes traditional Kazakh patterns and motifs, providing passengers with a unique cultural experience (Figures 6 and 7). The state-owned oil and gas company, KazMunayGas, integrates Kazakh traditions into its corporate culture and public events. The company often sponsors cultural events and initiatives that celebrate Kazakh heritage.



Figure 6. "Air Astana logo"



Figure 7. "Business class overview"

Indirect Communication: In contrast to Italian directness, Kazakh business communication often leans towards being more indirect and nuanced, which is a significant component of Kazakh culture. Kazakhs prefer to talk in an indirect manner rather than a straight method, and they frequently deliver information in a gentle and diplomatic way. Marketing strategies may need to be more subtle, focusing on building relationships and trust with consumers.

Consumer Behavior: Kazakh consumers may exhibit a preference for products that reflect both traditional values and modern trends. Products showcasing both modern and traditional Kazakh design are highly favored by consumers. There is an openness to international brands, but those who respect local culture and tastes tend to be more successful.

The cultural values, beliefs, and norms in Italy and Kazakhstan deeply influence business practices, marketing strategies, and consumer behavior. While there are distinct differences in how these two cultures approach business, common themes of relationship importance, respect for tradition, and the need for cultural adaptation in marketing strategies emerge. Understanding and respecting these cultural nuances is essential for businesses to succeed in these diverse markets. Effective communication between businesses and consumers is a vital aspect of successful market engagement, particularly in culturally diverse contexts like Kazakhstan and Italy. The role of cultural values in shaping this communication is significant and can deeply influence the success of business endeavors in these countries.

3.4. The cultural values, beliefs, and norms that influence business practices, marketing strategies, and consumer behavior between Italians and Kazakhs

Analyzing the impact of cultural values on marketing approaches and consumer preferences in Italy and Kazakhstan involves understanding the distinct cultural characteristics of each country. These cultural nuances play a pivotal role in shaping how businesses approach marketing and how consumers make purchasing decisions.

Common considerations in marketing to both cultures

Localized Marketing Strategies: For both Italian and Kazakh markets, localized marketing strategies that reflect the unique cultural values and preferences of each country are essential for success. Marketers in Italy should show affection for the fine details and design excellence, considering Italian appreciation for aesthetics and beauty that resonate with consumers and focus on building relationships. Marketers in Kazakhstan should be aware of a rich mix of ethnicities and traditions and ensure that their campaigns are respectful and inclusive of these diverse cultural aspects and know how to attract Kazakhstani consumers with a preference for products that offer practical benefits at a reasonable cost as Kozhakhmetova highlights (Kozhakhmetova, A., 2015). Also, Kazakhstan is one of many Central Asian cultures that strongly values family and community. Campaigns for marketing that are in line with these ideals and highlight the advantages for the community and the family unit are probably going to be remarkable.

Cultural Sensitivity: Marketers need to be culturally sensitive and aware of the social, religious, and historical nuances that influence consumer behavior in both countries, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

Adapting to Consumer Values: This might involve ongoing market research and consumer feedback mechanisms to stay attuned to consumer needs and preferences. The cultural values of Italy and Kazakhstan have a profound impact on marketing approaches and consumer preferences. Understanding and adapting to the evolving values and preferences of consumers in these culturally diverse markets is crucial for marketers aiming to effectively engage with these distinct audiences. In Italy, the focus on quality, design, and emotional connection drives marketing strategies, while in Kazakhstan, practical benefits, value, and social responsibility are key components of successful marketing efforts.

The cultural values of Italians and Kazakhs considerably affect promoting methods and consumer preferences in their respective countries. In Italy, the focus is on prominent products, design, and direct communication, reflecting the country's rich artistic heritage and family values. In Kazakhstan, a conjunction of tradition and modernity, along with a collectivist spirit and respect

for cultural features, shapes consumer behavior. Understanding these cultural specifics is vital for marketers and business leaders aiming to successfully engage with these diverse audiences.

The key role of business-consumer communication is in Italy's rich artistic and historical heritage. Businesses incorporate elements of this artistic legacy into their advertisements and branding. This emphasis on aesthetics, craftsmanship, and style is a reflection of the cultural values and resonates strongly with Italian consumers. Moreover, the Italian market is characterized by a high regard for personal relationships and trust. This translates into business communications that are more personalized and relationship-oriented. Marketers often interact with consumers through storytelling, sharing the story of their company and its becoming with all the difficulties in their ways. This is an effective method that creates a personal and warm connection with the brand. Additionally, the cultural norm of directness and expressiveness in Italy means that businesses tend to communicate in a straightforward and clear manner. Advertisements and promotions in Italy are usually known for their clarity and expressiveness, combining concise messages with emotional content.

Conversely, in Kazakhstan, there is a unique blend of traditional and modern influences that shape business-consumer communication. The harmonization of these traditional and modern values is reflected in how businesses approach their communication strategies. There is an emphasis on incorporating traditional Kazakh values alongside modern marketing practices, creating resonance with a diverse consumer base. The collectivist nature of Kazakh society influences a community-oriented approach to business communication. Marketing campaigns and corporate messaging often emphasize the collective benefits and social responsibility, aligning with the values of the larger community. Additionally, given the cultural preference for indirect communication, Kazakh businesses might adopt more subtle and less direct marketing strategies. This approach involves greater emphasis on non-verbal cues and contextual messaging, focusing on creating a respectful and culturally sensitive dialogue with consumers.

Adapting communication strategies to each cultural context is crucial for businesses operating in these markets. In Italy, a more direct and emotive approach might be effective, whereas in Kazakhstan, a strategy that is more indirect and community-focused could be more successful. Understanding consumer preferences, driven by cultural values, is key in both markets. Italian consumers may respond more positively to branding that highlights quality and style, while Kazakh consumers might prefer marketing that emphasizes practical benefits and community impact. Furthermore, respecting the cultural nuances and sensitivities in each market is essential to avoid miscommunications that could alienate consumers.

The impact of cultural values on forming effective communication between businesses and consumers in Kazakhstan and Italy is profound. By aligning their messaging and strategies with these cultural values, businesses can forge stronger and more impactful connections with their consumers. This alignment not only enhances market engagement but also fosters a deeper understanding and respect for the diverse cultural landscapes in which these businesses operate.

In summary, being culturally sensitive in marketing involves a mix of respect for local traditions and customs, understanding regional differences, adapting communication styles, and leveraging digital platforms in a way that resonates with the local audience in both Italy and Kazakhstan.

CHAPTER 4 CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

This chapter describes the research methods used to analyze intercultural communication, marketing, and cultural influence between Italians and Kazakhs, with particular emphasis on the use of questionnaires.

4.1 Data collection techniques and sources, and the role of questionnaires in gathering valuable insights

Data collection techniques:

One of the data collection techniques is the usage of questionnaires. A questionnaire is a list of questions or items used to gather data from respondents about their attitudes, experiences, or opinions. In order to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data, questionnaires are carefully designed to include a mix of closed-ended questions, Likert scale, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. Designing a questionnaire means creating valid and reliable questions that address the research objectives, placing them in a useful order, and selecting an appropriate method for administration.

Depending on the availability of target demographic groups, they can be distributed online through different platforms, such as SurveyMonkey, and Google Forms, or in person.

There are a lot of advantages to utilizing questionnaires. In particular, data from the questionnaires can be collected in a very short time especially using the Internet. Also, they can be distributed to a large number of people across different geographic locations, enabling researchers to collect information and easily reach a global audience. The ability to provide anonymity with an online questionnaire is a significant benefit, particularly when you are looking to survey responses on sensitive issues. When anonymity is provided, it makes respondents feel comfortable and encourages them to answer truthfully, which is great when you are trying to obtain a more accurate picture of the subject you are researching. Compared to other data collection approaches, questionnaires are generally less expensive to administer, especially when using online and electronic formats. This makes them accessible to researchers with limited budgets.

The data reported here is based on primary research conducted using a thorough questionnaire given to professionals with particular cultural backgrounds (i.e., Italians working in Kazakhstan and Kazakhs working in Italy). The purpose of this questionnaire was to investigate the effects of cultural variations on professional communication. Because they occupy a unique place at the intersection of these two disparate cultures, the participants were chosen to provide insights into the complex issues and accommodations related to cross-cultural communication in professional settings.

To ensure a broad and representative understanding of these experiences, the questionnaire was shared to a purposively sampled group of individuals who have been actively engaged in frequent intercultural interactions. This sampling strategy was aimed at capturing a wide range of perspectives and experiences, thus enhancing the richness and depth of the data collected.

The questionnaire comprised open-ended questions that allowed respondents to describe their experiences in detail, focusing on specific instances where cultural differences influenced their communication styles, strategies for overcoming barriers, and the overall impact of these differences on their professional interactions and outcomes. The responses were then anonymized and analyzed qualitatively to identify recurring themes and patterns.

This methodological approach ensures that the findings are grounded in real-world experiences, providing a tangible connection between theoretical concepts of cross-cultural communication and their practical implications in international business settings. By drawing directly from the experiences of individuals navigating these cultural intersections, this research offers valuable, context-specific insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

4.2 Description of the questionnaire design, distribution, and collection process. Highlighting the questionnaire's importance in gathering insights for the thesis Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was meticulously designed to capture a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication dynamics between Italy and Kazakhstan.

Part 1: Demographic Data of Respondents: This section collected essential information about the respondents, including their age, gender, nationality, professional background, and their experience in working within a multicultural environment. This data provides context for the analysis and helps in understanding the diverse perspectives of the respondents.

Part 2: Cultural Values and Beliefs: Questions in this section aimed to gauge the importance of traditional cultural values in influencing business decisions. This part was crucial in understanding how deeply ingrained cultural norms shape business practices.

Part 3: Communication Styles: This section focused on preferred communication styles and approaches to negotiations, particularly with representatives from other cultures. This helped in identifying preferred modes of communication and negotiation tactics influenced by cultural backgrounds.

Part 4: Marketing Preferences: Here, the emphasis was on assessing marketing preferences, including the types of advertising messages that resonate and the use of cultural symbols in marketing campaigns.

Part 5: Business Practices and Consumer Behavior: This part aimed at analyzing how cultural norms influence consumer behavior and business practices, offering insights into culturally driven consumer patterns.

Part 6: Problems in Intercultural Interactions: This section studied the significant challenges faced in intercultural communication and strategies to overcome them, providing a real-world perspective on intercultural challenges.

Part 7: Intercultural Training Feedback: The final part gathered feedback on intercultural training programs and their effectiveness, highlighting the need and impact of such training in professional settings.

Dissemination and Data Collection:

The questionnaire was Distributed Through Various Channels, including online platforms, social networks, professional communities, and partner organizations in Italy and Kazakhstan. The Target Audience comprised specialists in marketing, management, and sales, and those with experience working in multicultural environments, ensuring a diverse and relevant respondent base.

Importance of the Information Collection Form:

The questionnaire served as a Valuable Data Collection tool, providing insights into perceptions of intercultural communication, marketing preferences, and the influence of cultural values on business practices. This data was instrumental in conducting a thorough Analysis of Intercultural Features, identifying key cross-cultural differences and similarities. These insights are critical for forming effective communication and marketing strategies, offering a Basis for Practical Recommendations for businesses operating in these culturally diverse contexts.

4.3 Description of the research methods and including the use of questionnaires for analyzing intercultural communication, marketing, and the influence of cultural values between Italians and Kazakhs

The method of implementing questionnaires in the research can be extremely helpful and useful to make a leap forward, seeing immediate progress. Those questionnaires help make accurate conclusions according to the answers in a very short time and reach a plethora of people all over

the world with the help of the Internet and social media. Also, there are many online tools that will help create a list of various questions in the special Google form.

To start the research, the Google form with 17 questions was created and shared through social media platforms like Instagram, Telegram or Facebook. These questions can be found at the end of the dissertation. The questionnaire for this study was meticulously designed to encompass crucial aspects of intercultural communication. This includes probing into language preferences, communication styles, and perceptions of marketing messages, which are pivotal in understanding the dynamics of intercultural interactions between Italians and Kazakhstani. To ensure cultural relevance and sensitivity, the questions were carefully adapted to reflect the unique cultural characteristics of both Italian and Kazakh respondents. The questionnaire aimed to elicit responses that provide insights into how individuals from these cultures perceive and engage in intercultural communication, especially in the context of business and marketing. The target respondents for the questionnaire comprised a mix of marketing professionals, consumers, and business people from both countries. This diverse participant pool was intended to gather a wide range of perspectives and experiences, thereby enriching the data collected and enhancing the robustness of the study.

The first three questions were general and asked about such information as name, nationality, and gender. According to the statistics of people's answers, there were 55% of Kazakhs and 45% of Italians, where Kazakhs work in Italy and Italians work in Kazakhstan.

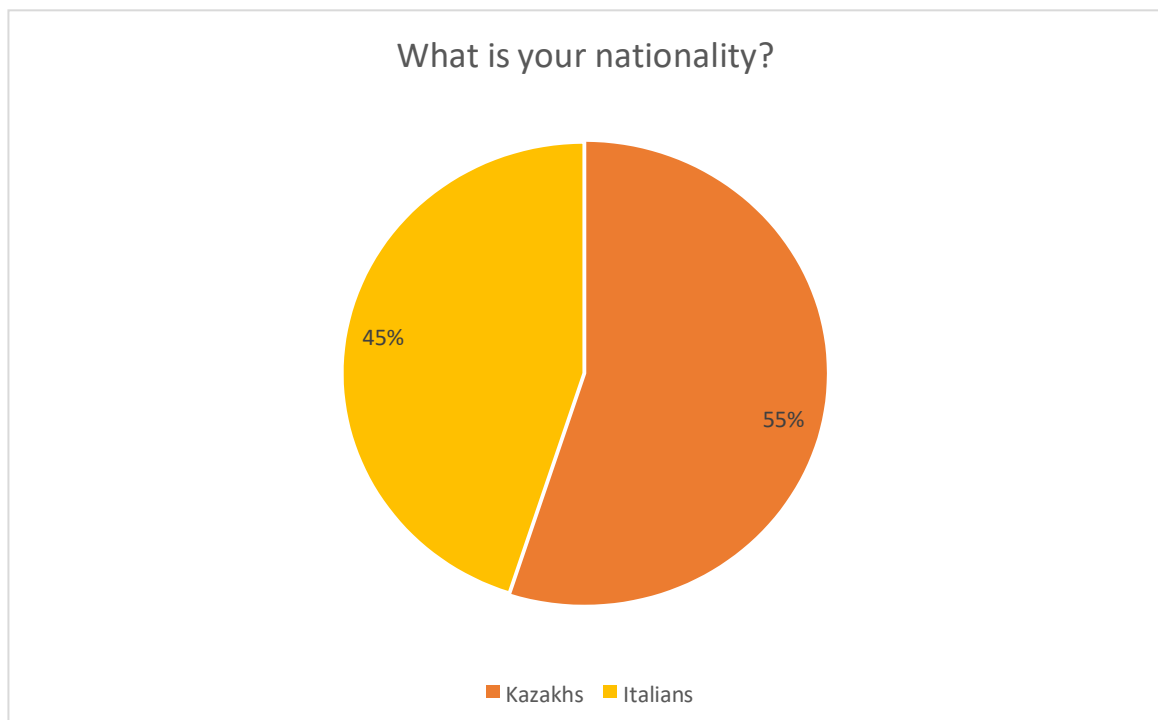


Chart 1. Nationality Statistics

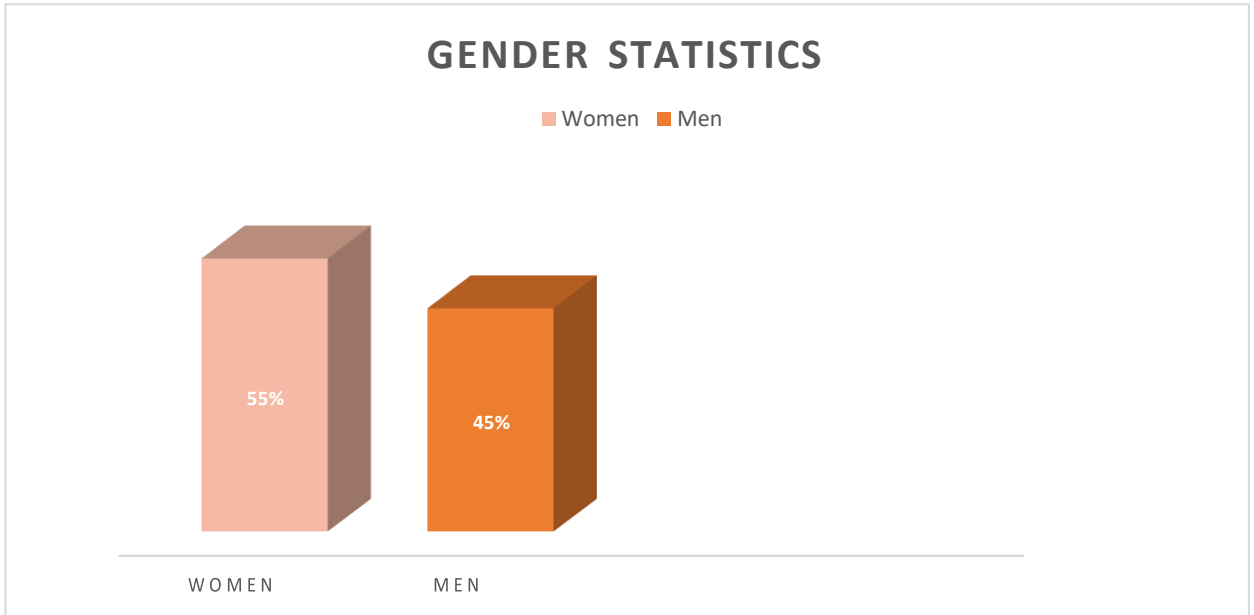


Chart 2. Gender Statistics

The fourth question is asking about the audience’s professional background in the business and entrepreneurship areas. According to the answers, 45% of people are working in the marketing department, as social media specialists and salespeople; 15% are entrepreneurs and founders of their own companies; 25% are financiers; and 15% are data analysts and IT specialists.

In the fifth question, we can explore more about people’s years of experience in a multicultural business environment. This question is created to know how many individuals have commercial and professional intercultural communications in their lives and how long they have them. Results display that 80% of people are well-experienced in striking up professional relationships with international staff members, and face such situations pretty often for 5 and more years. The remaining 20% of people were never experiencing negotiation with Internationals at work.

The sixth question incorporates a scale of 1-5, where people should rate their attitude toward traditional cultural values in their own business. 1 being least important, 5 being most important.

A significant 70% of Kazakh respondents opted for Level 5, followed by Italians at 50%. At Level 4, Kazakh representation decreased to 20%, still trailing behind Italians at 30%. For Level 3, both Italian and Kazakh percentages dipped by 10%. Interestingly, Levels 1 and 2 saw no representation, suggesting that Kazakh and Italian respondents highly regard the incorporation of traditional cultural values in their work.

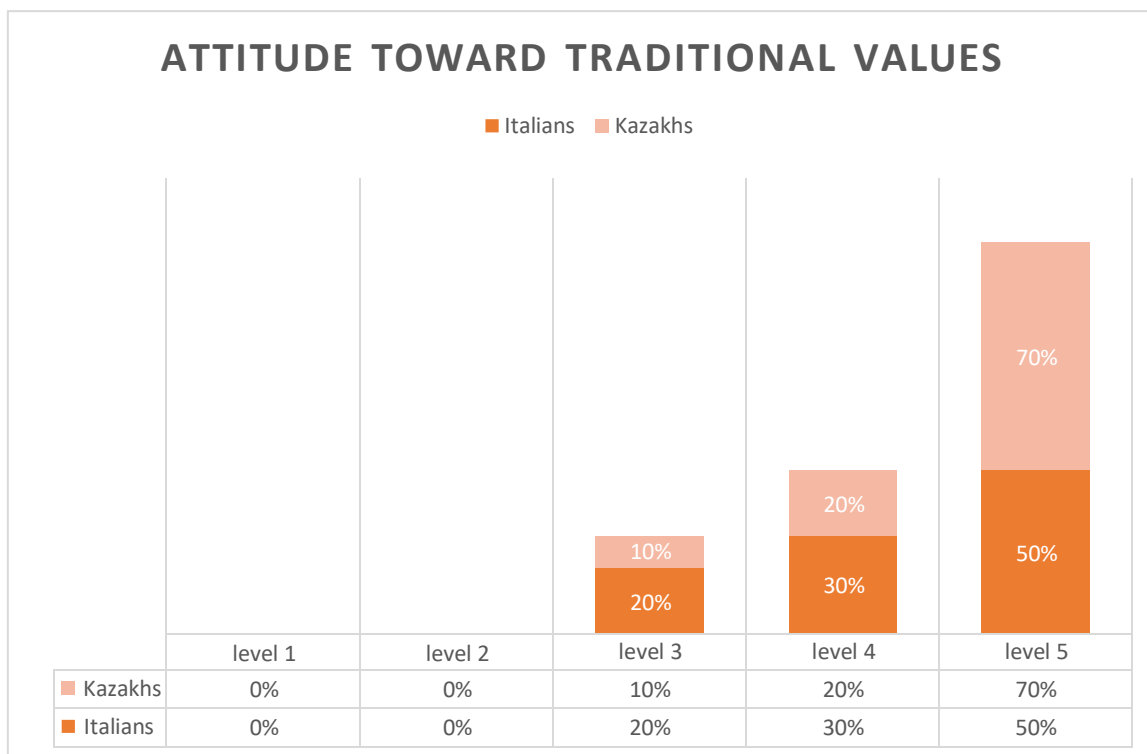


Chart 3. Traditional Values

The examination of the seventh question provides a detailed understanding of how people from different cultural backgrounds perceive the role of family and community in business relationships. This topic is relevant, considering the thesis's previous discussions about the intersection of culture, family bonds, and business practices. A common theme appears in the range of responses: the tendency to establish or participate in family-owned or family-run businesses goes beyond geographical and cultural limits. This observation aligns with the theoretical framework set up in earlier sections, where the importance of family ties was suggested as a universal value with specific implications in business contexts. The literature highlights the influence of cultural norms and values on business practices. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, for instance, helps us understand the impact of collectivism versus individualism on these practices. In societies that prioritize group needs over individual ones, business operations naturally involve family and community. This is seen in the structuring and management of businesses, where family members often hold key roles. While this is more common in collectivist cultures, even individualistic societies value the trust, loyalty, and shared understanding inherent in family relationships as vital business assets.

Empirical studies support this view. Research shows that family businesses are widespread and have distinct advantages such as increased trust and cohesion. These can lead to competitive advantages and business resilience. However, they also present unique challenges, including potential nepotism and conflicts of interest.

Thus, the respondents' tendency to involve the family in business ventures reflects a broader, cross-cultural appreciation of the family unit's role in establishing a stable foundation for business endeavors.

In synthesizing these insights, the connection between the individual's cultural background and their perception of the role of family and community in business becomes evident. This connection not only validates the thesis's earlier points but also enriches our understanding of the complex interplay between culture, family, and business. It underscores the universality of family as a pivotal institution, while also highlighting the variability in how its significance is enacted in business practices across different cultures.

The eighth question asks about an example where cultural beliefs significantly influenced a business decision or communication. One of the answers to this question was from the Kazakh female who uses KIKO cosmetics, which is an Italian brand that is also present in Kazakhstan. In the book, Fabio Caon highlighted that the division between halal and haram does not only include food but also applies to cosmetics and medicines, as they may contain prohibited ingredients (p. 203). Therefore, according to the person who answered this question, nail polishes are prohibited in Kazakhstan because of their inclusion of certain animal products or alcohol. This religious belief in Islam impedes KIKO company from selling their nail polishes in Kazakhstan.

The critical importance of cultural intelligence to the global market is illustrated by the case of KIKO cosmetics, which navigates the cultural and religious landscape of Kazakhstan. The term “cultural intelligence” refers to the ability of an individual to understand and respond effectively to a variety of cultures, as defined by Earley and Ang (Earley, P. C., and Ang, S., 2003, *Cultural intelligence: Individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford University Press). In the context of business, this information is becoming a vital advantage for multicultural companies that want to adapt their products and marketing strategies to a local market and culture. The need for businesses to adapt their offerings is underlined by the prohibition on nail polishes from KIKO cosmetics in Kazakhstan because they do not comply with Islamic law on Halal products.

Furthermore, the situation with KIKO cosmetics aligns with a theory of cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede's Theory on Uncertainty Avoidance and Long Term Perspectives (Hofstede, G., 1980, pp. 35). In addition to affecting consumer preferences and business strategies, companies with a high level of uncertainty avoidance are more likely to follow strictly religious and cultural norms. In order to successfully manage these challenges, businesses in such situations must be highly sensitive and able to adapt their culture.

The economic impact of matching business operations with cultural and religious beliefs is further

demonstrated by empirical studies. According to a 2010 study by Alserhan (Alserhan, B. A., 2010, 34-49) on Islamic branding and marketing, the market for halal products – which go beyond food to include medicines, cosmetics, and other consumer goods – is expanding. This market expansion reflects a broader trend of consumers seeking products that align with their cultural and religious identities, presenting both opportunities and difficulties for global brands and companies.

In conclusion, the adaptation strategies employed by international businesses, as exemplified by KIKO cosmetics in Kazakhstan, reveal the complex interplay between cultural beliefs, religious practices, and business decisions.

The ninth question is asked about the preferred style of communication in a business setting (e.g., direct, indirect, formal, informal). According to the answers, most Kazakhs favor the indirect communication style (95%). In Kazakhstan, it is more valued to observe formality in interactions. Kazakhs are a mixed-context culture, as defined by Hall (1976). Therefore, it is possible to see some features of high-context communication in this nation. Rather than explicit verbal messages, a large part of the communication is transmitted through context, nonverbal signals, and relationships among communicators. A number of cultural factors, such as the emphasis on maintaining harmony, respect for hierarchy, and the importance of saving face in Kazakh society, can be attributed to this preference. In this style of communication, a nuanced understanding of nonverbal signals and a greater emphasis on relationship building is appreciated. 80% of responses from Italians are about their preferences to speak in a direct manner. This directness in communication can be attributed to a cultural value placed on clarity, efficiency, and expressiveness in interactions. The variance between formal and informal preferences among Italians further illustrates the flexibility and adaptability in their communication practices, potentially reflecting differences in organizational culture, industry norms, or individual personality.

To conclude, misunderstandings arising from differing communication preferences can lead to conflicts, misinterpretations, and inefficiencies, highlighting the need for cultural competence and adaptability among global business professionals. Therefore, comprehension and adapting to the preferred communication styles of different cultures are essential for building strong relationships, facilitating effective communication, and achieving business success in a diverse global marketplace.

The analysis of responses to question ten, focusing on approaches to business negotiations with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, aligns seamlessly with the overarching objectives of the thesis. It highlights the pivotal role of cultural diversity in shaping negotiation strategies and

emphasizes the propensity of both Kazakh and Italian respondents to favor a collaborative approach.

People who answer the question are able to choose only one option among six, which are collaborative, competitive, accommodating, avoiding, compromising, and the last option is other. The collaborative option is for people who freely reach out to individuals from different cultural backgrounds and can work together without any hesitations or concerns. In cultures that value harmony and long-term relationships, the collaborative approach can be extremely effective as Kazakh and Italian residents chose the “collaborative” option. The main reason why all the respondents collaboratively approach business negotiations with international people is the cultural diversity there. This cultural diversity is a consequence of a combination of historical, geographical, and social factors. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Kazakhs and Italians tend to work and live in a diverse ethnic environment and have a long history of interactions with various cultures, quickly adapting to different cultural communication specifics. Respondents from Italy and Kazakhstan chose the collaborative option, indicating a deeply ingrained cultural tendency to value and thrive in a diverse work environment. The collaborative approach to negotiations is not merely a strategic choice, but an expression of fundamental societal values in cultures such as Kazakhstan and Italy which prioritize harmony. This method, which is important for diversity and intercultural settings, helps to build mutual respect, and understanding as well as lasting relationships. The literature on conflict resolution and negotiation, which suggests that a collaborative approach can lead to more lasting and beneficial outcomes, supports the effectiveness of collaboration in this context. (Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991). Understanding and fitting into different cultural backgrounds is essential for achieving a competitive advantage in the global market.

In summary, both Kazakh and Italian people prefer to work collaboratively when making business deals. Valuing cultural features and unique aspects is key to good business dealings worldwide and strong international partnerships. According to the answers, it is clear that knowing about cultural impacts on business is useful for coming up with good negotiation tactics in a world where companies are from many different cultures.

Question eleven is about people’s life experiences when they encountered communication barriers due to cultural differences.

This answer is from Alex, an Italian citizen, and a software engineer in Kazakhstan

“I am a software engineer from Italy. Recently, I joined a multinational company in Kazakhstan, obviously with many Kazakhs there. Coming from a culture that values

directness, I always openly expressed my thoughts and opinions. During team meetings there, I provided straightforward feedback and expected the same directness from others too. However, my colleagues from Kazakhstan always remained silent during meetings. Lately, I reached out to a more experienced person, who explained that in many Asian cultures, including Kazakhstan, direct criticism, especially in group meetings, can be seen as embarrassing and disrespectful. This information helped me adapt my communication style and use one-on-one meetings to discuss opinions or concerns. This experience actually helped me develop my cultural sensitivity.”

One notable example from the questionnaire received is of Kazakh expert employed in the fashion industry in Milan, Italy. Accustomed to the indirect and formal communication style prevalent in Kazakhstan, this individual initially found the direct and often informal communication approach of their Italian colleagues challenging. Expressing disagreement or criticism directly, especially in group meetings, is avoided to maintain harmony and respect. On the other hand, direct communication is appreciated for its effectiveness and clarity in Italy. During a team discussion, the Kazakh professional recounted an example where his Italian colleague provided immediate and straightforward feedback and criticism on a project proposal. The Kazakh expert was first surprised by the directness of the feedback but subsequently found value in it for its ability to foster clear comprehension and rapid progress on projects. This adaptation involved learning to not perceive direct feedback as personal criticism but as a constructive part of the professional process.

Conversely, an Italian engineer working in the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan shared her experience adapting to the more hierarchical and indirect communication style prevalent in Kazakh business culture. Coming from a background where hierarchy is less pronounced and direct communication is the norm, the Italians found it challenging to negotiate the nuances of giving ideas and comments in a way that was respectful of hierarchical connections and the tendency for indirect communication. One particular learning moment came when the Italian suggested improvements to an existing project plan during a large meeting. The suggestion, though well-intentioned, was not received well because it inadvertently challenged the senior team member's authority in a public setting. Realizing the importance of face-saving and respect for hierarchy in Kazakh culture, the Italian engineer learned to approach such situations by first discussing ideas privately with senior colleagues or framing suggestions in a way that acknowledged the existing work and contributions of the team.

Overall, there were 34 answers to this question. The majority of people replied that they encountered communication barriers due to certain cultural differences and most of them were

direct and indirect communication styles.

In the exploration of marketing preferences across different cultures, as detailed in question #12 of our research, we discovered significant insights into the types of marketing appeals that resonate with people in Italy and Kazakhstan. This question is asking about what type of marketing appeals to people more. There are four options, such as emotional appeal, logical appeal, combination of both, and other.

75% of Italians think that in their country marketing specialists strive to create advertisements within the emotional context and consider them as effective ones. 25% of people there think another way, voting for the “logical appeal” option. Consequently, Italians prefer emotional appeal more. This supports the theory presented in Chapter 2, which suggested that the Italian culture's emphasis on art, history, and emotional expression might favor marketing strategies that elicit feelings. This preference highlights the importance of storytelling and emotional engagement in Italian marketing, affirming earlier points about cultural tendencies towards expressive communication.

In Kazakhstan, 65% of residents voted for the “combination of both” option. 10% of Kazakhs chose the “logical appeal” option and the remaining ones voted for emotional appeal. This aligns with the insights from Chapter 3, which discussed the hybrid communication styles in culturally diverse environments like Kazakhstan. The strong preference for incorporating both logical and emotional elements in advertisements verifies the hypothesis that Kazakhs value balanced communication, indicative of their broader cultural context that appreciates both rationality and emotional resonance.

The insights we have gathered in our study play a significant role in enhancing our understanding of how variations in culture can have a considerable impact on marketing strategies and the responses of consumers. These findings offer concrete evidence that supports the assertions we made earlier in our research. This evidence underscores the pivotal role of culture in molding consumer behavior and shaping attitudes toward diverse marketing strategies. This underscores the pressing necessity for marketers to adapt and tailor their approaches. They must take into account the cultural values and communication preferences of their target audiences in order to effectively engage them. In this globalized world, a one-size-fits-all approach to marketing is no longer viable. A nuanced understanding of cultural differences and their impact on consumer behavior is essential for developing successful marketing strategies.

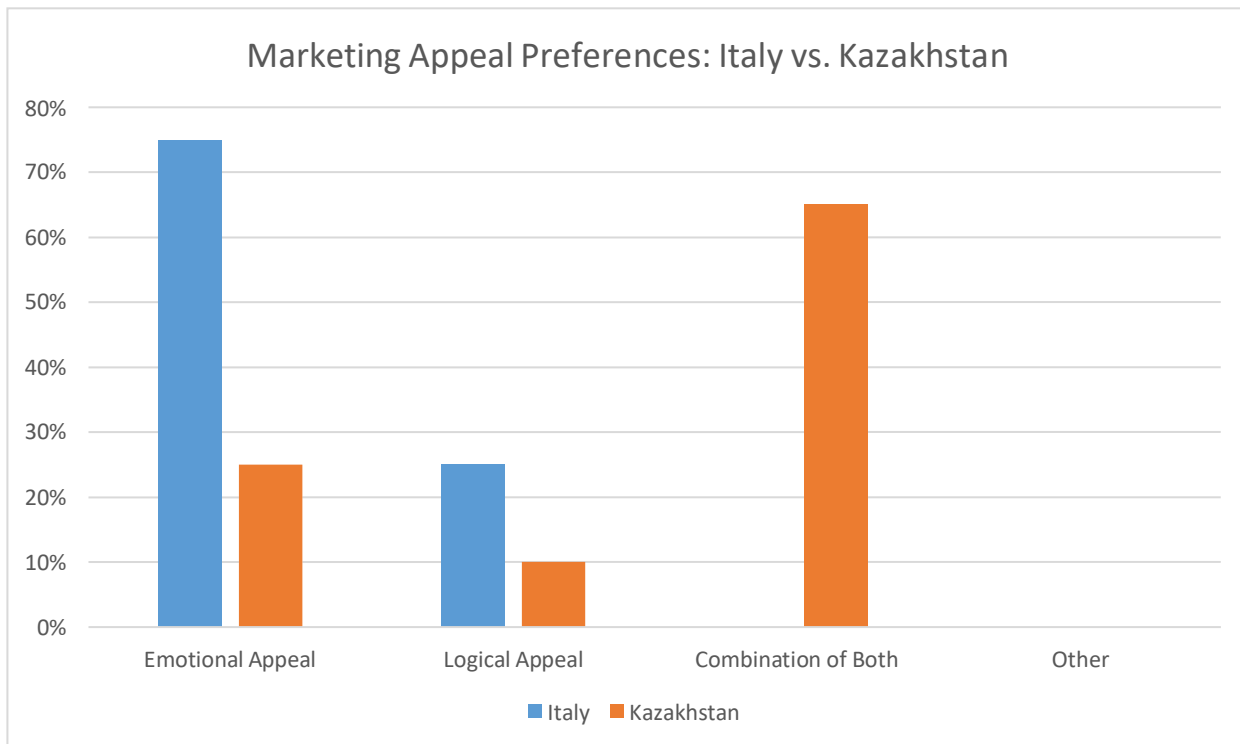


Chart 4. Marketing Appeal Preferences

Question #13 asks for a personal opinion about how important is the use of cultural symbols in marketing from 1 to 5, utilizing the scale.

The responses to this question reveal a strong consensus among both Italians and Kazakhs on the significance of this practice, with the majority of answers from both countries rating its importance as 4 out of 5.

This finding aligns with the writings in previous chapters, specifically chapters 2 and 3, which go into great detail about how cultural identity and symbols influence consumer choices and preferences. The utilization of cultural symbols also helps in creating effective marketing messages.

The majority of Italians answered number 4 out of 5. In Italy, many cultural symbols are used in marketing, including the Italian flag, which symbolizes the country's green hills and plains, the red bloodshed during the wars of independence, and the white snowy peaks of the mountains. These symbols, laden with historical and cultural significance, evoke a sense of identity, belonging, and patriotism among Italian consumers. By leveraging these symbols, marketers can forge a stronger emotional connection with their audience, enhancing the appeal and effectiveness of their campaigns.

Many Kazakhs also chose number 4 out of 5. Similarly, in Kazakhstan, the incorporation of national patterns, ornaments, images of the great steppe, traditional musical instruments like the

dombra, and national costumes into marketing strategies reflects the country's rich cultural heritage and the importance of national identity in the Kazakh psyche. These symbols not only celebrate Kazakhstan's history and traditions but also serve to differentiate Kazakh products and services in a globalized market. By embedding cultural symbols in marketing, Kazakh companies can communicate their unique identity and values, resonating with both local and international audiences who are increasingly interested in authentic and culturally rich experiences.

Finally, the fact that Italian and Kazakh marketing of cultural symbols is highly valued by both countries not only demonstrates what was stated earlier but also provides practical lessons for advertisers who want to use cultural identity as part of their strategy. The emphasis on the importance of cultural symbols underlines the continuing relevance of cultural considerations in the global market, providing a key strategy for brands seeking to connect more closely with their audiences. The responses to this question demonstrate a clear understanding among consumers of the power of cultural symbols to communicate complex messages. Furthermore, it highlights the necessity for marketers to deeply engage with and understand the cultural contexts in which they operate, ensuring that their use of symbols is respectful, authentic, and aligned with the values of their target audiences.

Question #14 asks about an instance of a marketing campaign that is particularly effective or ineffective due to its cultural approach. In our survey, a response from a Kazakh entrepreneur provided a compelling case study of McDonald's entry into the Indian market. The example of McDonald's successful cultural adaptation in its global marketing strategies underscores the critical role of cultural sensitivity. Specifically, the company tailored its menu to local dietary preferences in India by excluding beef and pork in favor of vegetarian options. This strategic decision not only demonstrated McDonald's commitment to cultural understanding but also significantly contributed to its acceptance and success within the Indian market. It emphasizes the importance of aligning marketing campaigns with the cultural and societal norms of the target market. The McDonald's case study in India illustrates that understanding and respecting cultural norms and dietary preferences can be a cornerstone for international marketing success. This aligns with our survey findings, where instances of marketing adaptability correlated with higher market penetration and customer satisfaction rates.

McDonald's strategic adaptation in India serves as a compelling example of how cultural sensitivity can profoundly impact a brand's global success. It highlights the need for multinational corporations to thoroughly research and integrate local cultural elements into their marketing strategies. This approach not only fosters local market acceptance but also enhances global brand reputation, demonstrating that cultural adaptability is a critical business imperative for global

expansion, not just a marketing strategy.

The fifteenth question is asked about how cultural norms impact consumer behavior in countries of people who fill out the form.

The replies from respondents in both nations shed light on the ways in which deeply ingrained cultural specifics and historical legacies impact consumer choices. The observations of the marketing specialists from Kazakhstan highlight a common desire for products that not only fulfill functional needs but also preserve cultural traditions and a sense of community. This trend towards merging the old with the new shows that people want to keep Kazakh traditions while also accepting modern ways.

In Kazakhstan, people tend to buy goods that combine both traditional and modern elements at once. They also value quality, cultural relevance, and practicality.

“Looking at how people shop and what they buy, you can really see how much our traditions and modern vibes mix together. We love things that bring us together, like food or stuff for the house that makes hosting friends and family better. We often blend something traditional with modern features because it is very popular here.”

- This answer is from a Kazakh female, who is a marketing specialist.

In Italy, it is common to purchase top-notch and stylish clothes and products that also can correlate with their history and culture.

“Here in Italy we really value craftsmanship and quality. Whether it is a beautifully tailored jacket or a perfectly crafted espresso, if it is not made with care and attention to detail, it is not going to cut it. We also love good looks and smart design in everything from clothes to cars and home decor because it is our natural tendency. This tendency is stemming from our incredible history of art and design. There is a lot of pride in local traditions and products, which shapes what people buy.”

- This answer is from an Italian woman, who works as a social entrepreneur.

The remarks of Italy's Social Entrepreneur clearly demonstrate that, in terms of consumer behavior, appreciation for beauty, functionality, and historical importance is very influential on purchase patterns. This cultural predisposition towards items that embody both aesthetic appeal and a connection to Italy's storied past reinforces the thesis's discussion on the role of cultural identity in shaping market preferences.

The examples of Kazakhstan and Italy illustrate the overall argument that cultural norms have a significant impact on consumer behavior, with each country having unique tendencies that reflect its own history, values, and societal norms. Consumer goods in Kazakhstan that combine traditional and modern aspects demonstrate a culture that has evolved to value tradition while meeting modern needs. In Italy, the search of quality and design perfection, rooted in a historical legacy of art and craftsmanship, highlights how consumer decisions are influenced by cultural pride and identity.

These insights confirm what was said before in the work about how culture affects what people purchase. They also give real examples of how this works in Kazakhstan and Italy. This provides a more complete understanding of the complex interaction between tradition, modernity, and consumerism through an examination of these cultural foundations, pointing to the need for businesses and advertising agencies to adopt culturally informed strategies in order to be able to effectively compete in diverse markets.

Question #16 is “Do you believe understanding cultural values is essential for successful marketing strategies?” Most people despite their nationalities answered “YES”. Only 5% of people ticked “NO”. It means that both cultures, Italians and Kazakhs, understand that comprehending specific cultural nuances and values is crucial in marketing because it helps to align with a target audience and meet their preferences and beliefs. It ensures that advertisements and content on social media are relevant, respectful, and effective in engaging with customers. Cultural sensitivity can prevent potential offenses, enhance brand perception, and make deeper connections based on trust with diverse consumer groups.

This collective acknowledgment, which comes from both Italians and Kazakhs, together provides strong support that cultural knowledge influences marketing effectiveness. It reflects a common belief that one of the key success factors in today's interconnected world is the ability to navigate and include diverse cultural values in marketing methods and advertisements. Therefore, cultural values have a major impact on consumer behavior, choices, and expectations.

Furthermore, the almost agreement of respondents highlights the recognition of the risks stemming from cultural insensitivity, including misunderstandings and offenses that can negatively affect the brand and its relationships with consumers.

The results from question 16 do not just back up what was said earlier, but also show strong evidence that good marketing is more than just translating words or making small changes to products. It is about really getting to know and understand the culture of the customers, whether they are in Kazakhstan, Italy, or anywhere else. This deep connection with the culture makes sure that marketing strategies are not only relevant and respectful but also successful in connecting with

the people they are aimed at in a meaningful way.

To conclude, the answers to question 16 support the main idea of the thesis: understanding cultural values is key to creating good marketing plans in a global market. This conclusion comes from looking at what people from Kazakhstan and Italy think. It shows how important it is for marketers to really study and be sensitive to different cultures. For companies wanting to do well in varied places like Kazakhstan or Italy, it is crucial to know and include cultural values in their marketing.

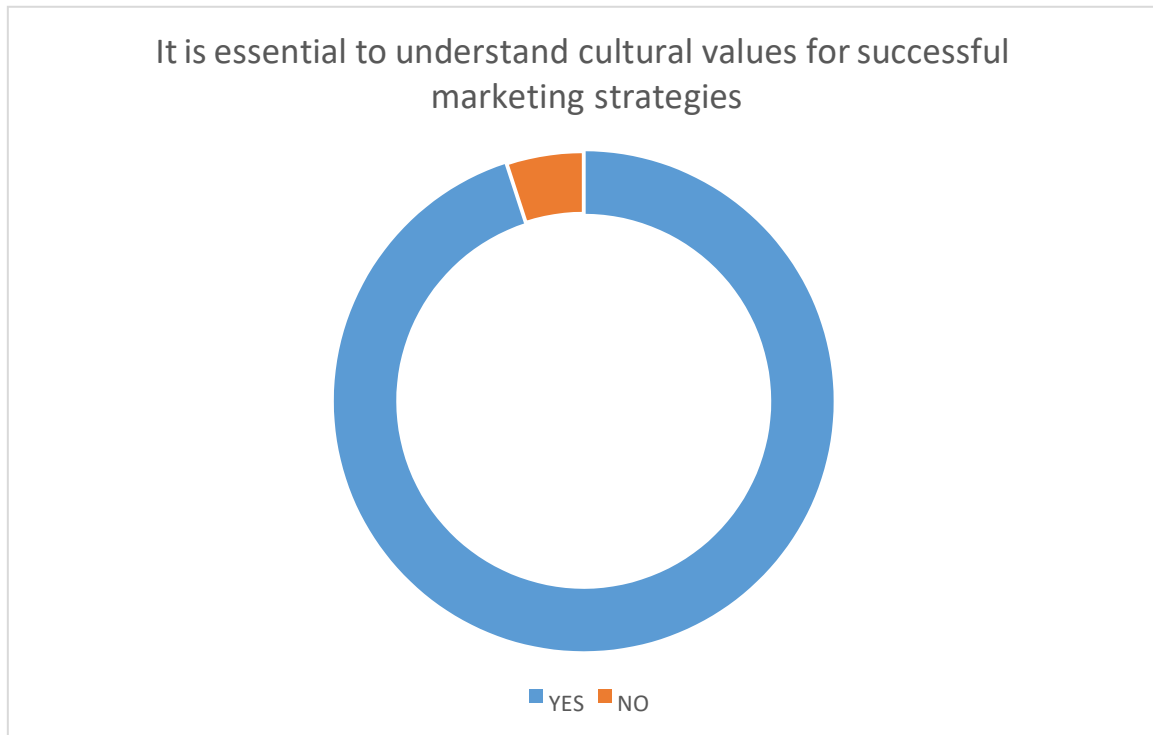


Chart 5. Understanding Traditional Values

Question #17 is “Any additional comments or experiences you would like to share about intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhs?”

Eusebi is one of the leading companies in the fire-fighting market for the design, supply, installation, start-up, and maintenance of systems. Sales offices and branches opened in various parts of the world: Poland, Russia, Kazakhstan, China, and Chile. The answer to this question is from a Kazakh woman, who was a financier in the “Eusebi Impianti” company in Almaty City 20 years ago, in 2004:

“During my work there, I communicated with a representative from Italy. He was a very kind and cheerful Italian elderly man who helped me learn Italian and taught me how to cook Italian pasta. We also both knew Russian and communicated very often in it. He communicated with everyone very openly and friendly. His name is

Paolo.”

The next answer was from an Italian respondent, who has worked on a cooperative project with Kazakh coworkers, emphasized the initial difficulties in figuring out the nuanced signs and indirect communication methods common in Kazakh culture. This reflection is in line with the discussion on the importance of understanding and adapting to different communication preferences in order to foster effective cooperation. However, the respondent also noted the rich learning opportunities offered by these challenges, leading to a deeper appreciation of Kazakh traditions and business practices. This experience underscores the thesis's argument that intercultural communication is not just about overcoming barriers but about enriching one's own perspective and understanding.

On the other hand, a Kazakh participant shared his experience of studying in Italy, which was initially overwhelming with its expressive and direct communication style. Yet, this directness eventually led to a clearer and more straightforward exchange of ideas, highlighting the benefits of exposure to a variety of communication styles. This narrative supports the assertion that intercultural interaction can be a foster for growth in individuals and careers, promoting adaptability and openness.

Another insightful story came from an Italian entrepreneur in Kazakhstan, who wrote about the importance of cultural gestures and symbols in building business relationships. By incorporating traditional Kazakh symbols into their branding and taking the time to celebrate Kazakh holidays with their team, they found a deeper level of engagement and loyalty among their Kazakh employees and customers. This example vividly illustrates the point about the power of cultural sensitivity and the tangible impact it can have on business success.

These shared experiences not only validate the exploration of the complexities of Kazakh-Italian intercultural communication but also highlight the mutual benefits that arise from such interactions. They provide concrete examples of how cultural understanding and adaptation can lead to more meaningful connections, enhanced cooperation, and mutual respect between Italians and Kazakhs. These stories confirm that, despite the difficulties, intercultural understanding is important, contributing to the creation of personal growth, respect, and cooperation.

General conclusion:

The responses highlight the widespread recognition of the profound influence cultural values and norms have on consumer behavior, marketing strategies as well as intercultural

communication. Cultural sensitivity is of great importance to both Kazakhstan and Italy, recognizing its essential role in ensuring the effectiveness of marketing as well as facilitating successful intercultural exchanges. These findings support the core argument of this thesis, which is that fundamental cultural understanding is essential for dealing with complex global relations and business issues. The examples of marketing strategies adapted to local preferences, the blending of traditional and modern elements in consumer products, and personal experiences of intercultural communication highlight the nuanced ways in which culture shapes interactions and expectations. These narratives affirm that bridging cultural gaps requires more than a superficial knowledge of another culture; it demands an immersive engagement with the cultural ethos that defines consumer groups and influences intercultural dynamics.

4.4 Case studies and real-life examples of businesses operating between Italians and Kazakhs

This paragraph outlines several case studies on Italian and Kazakh business interactions, focusing on companies like Brunello Cucinelli, Loro Piana, ANNA VERDI, Damiani, and Barilla. These case studies illustrate the importance of cultural values and communication styles in shaping business transactions between the two nations. They highlight strategies employed by Italian brands to adapt to Kazakh market preferences, such as incorporating halal certification for Barilla products and engaging in cross-cultural collaborations as seen with Damiani.

The company operating in Kazakhstan is Brunello Cucinelli, which is an Italian luxury brand founded in 1978 and specializing in cashmere tailoring. The fabrics can be luxurious, but the clothes themselves are very comfortable and unusual. "We combine colors and shapes, but the most important thing we care about is having this image of light chic and fine craftsmanship, qualities that disappear if you wear sports or strictly formal clothes," Brunello Cucinelli said (Interview on "Permanent Style" on March 23, 2012). If it was necessary to describe the brand in one word, that word would certainly be dignity. Dignity is present in design, branding, and character.

Secondly, Loro Piana is an Italian clothing company specializing in high—quality, luxurious cashmere and wool products. He founded the Pietro Loro Piana brand in 1924, which used exclusively natural materials: Australian and New Zealand merino wool, Mongolian and Chinese cashmere, and lotus fibers from Myanmar. The company's motto – "To be aware, not in plain sight" has been preserved for six generations. When traditions are combined with modern technologies, and quality and comfort are the priority, it is possible to meet the expectations of the

most sophisticated customers. This is the philosophy of the Italian brand.

Italian brand ANNA VERDI, created in 2003, is engaged in the design, production, and sale of women's clothing. ANNA VERDI creates a wide range of exclusive clothing: from sophisticated business to refined, for formal occasions and free time. Inimitable Italian chic in every detail, quality fabrics, multicolors, original prints, and accessories - have become the trademark of the brand.

Italian fine jewelry brand Damiani first opened stores in Almaty and Astana in 2005, following the brand's strategy for global expansion under the leadership of third-generation Damiani family members, Guido, Giorgio, and Silvia. The brand's sensuous Italian style and commitment to hand-crafted detail quickly captured the attention of Kazakh women, whilst the Damiani siblings, who travel frequently to the country on business, became increasingly fascinated and enamored by the culture and traditions there. Alsara collection is evidence of this collaboration. The collection began as a conversation between Aliya Nazarbayeva and Damiani's designers, during which Aliya educated the brand on ancient Kazakh ornaments, such as the traditional tumar necklace (fig.8) and bilezik cuff (fig.9).



Figure 8. "Traditional Tumar Necklace"

The Kazakhstan Tumar antique talisman silver necklace exemplifies the rich tradition of Kazakh craftsmanship and cultural heritage, available through specialized online platforms like Turkish Folk Art (Turkish Folk Art, n.d.).



Figure 9. "Bilezik cuff"

An absolutely exquisite, one-of-a-kind piece on Etsy showcases the unique blend of tradition and modernity in contemporary Kazakh artisanal work - bilezik (Etsy seller, n.d.). A deep and mutual affection grew organically between the brand and the country, leading to the idea of cross-cultural collaboration. This is another evidence that Italy pays attention to quality, style, and refinement as was described earlier.

In a compelling demonstration of intercultural engagement, Damiani's Instagram presence (fig.10) varies distinctly between the original Italian account and the Kazakh subsidiary (fig.11). The Italian account (@damianiofficial) showcases a universal appeal, with imagery that emphasizes the brand's global signature style and luxury appeal, reaching a broad, international audience. Contrastingly, the Kazakh account (@damiani_kazakhstan) displays a nuanced adaptation of local preferences and cultural symbols.

In the Damiani Italian account, the visuals are sleek and modern, emphasizing individual jewelry pieces. The high-contrast imagery places the jewelry against minimal backgrounds, highlighting them as standalone pieces of luxury and craftsmanship. This presentation style appeals globally, aligning with international luxury branding standards.

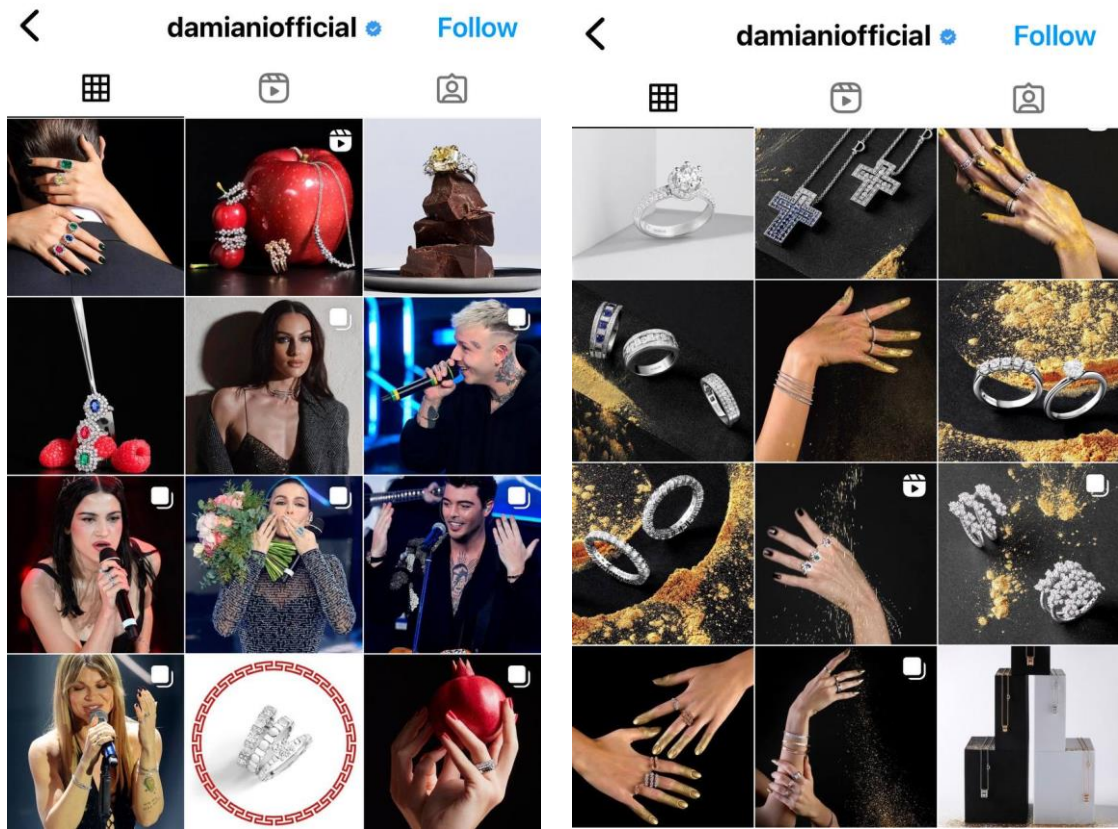


Figure 10. “Instagram feed of @damianoofficial”

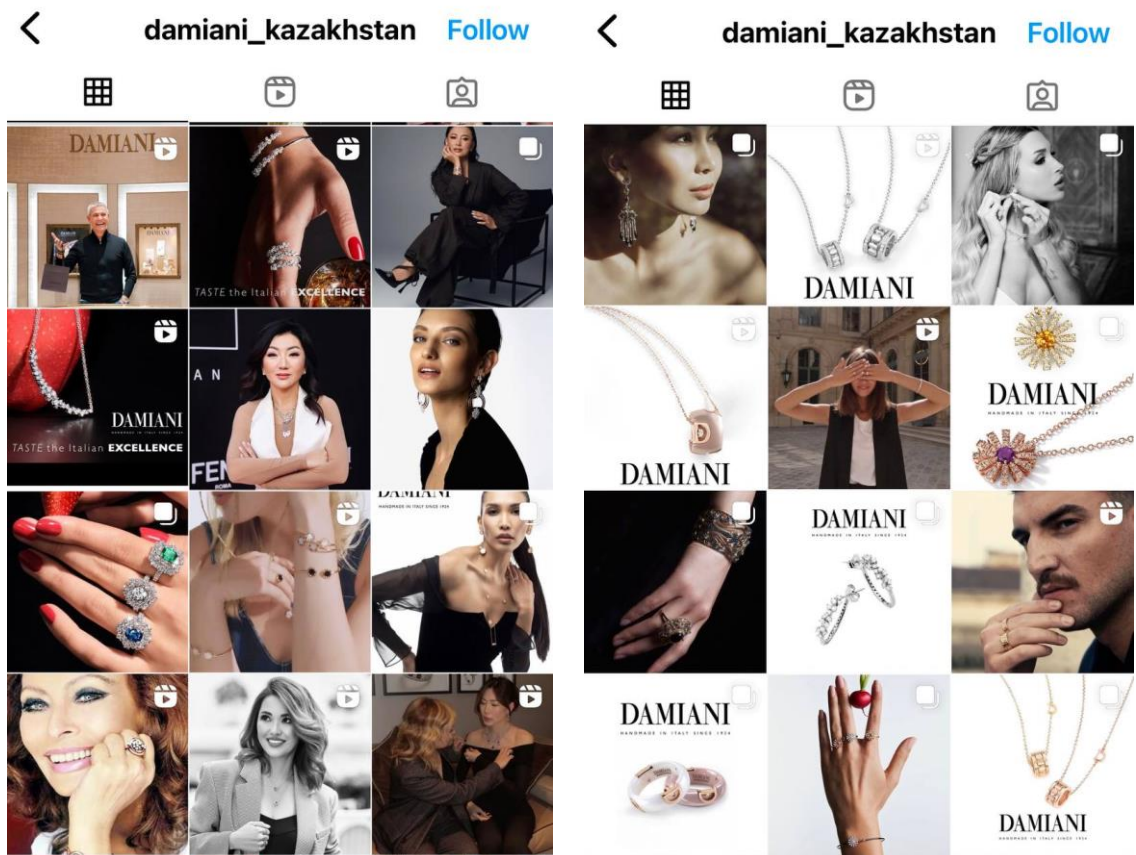


Figure 11. “Instagram feed of @damiani_kazakhstan”

Conversely, the Kazakh account blends Italian design with Kazakh cultural elements. The Kazakh

account does not merely display the jewelry; it embeds it into a narrative that reflects local heritage. Damiani cleverly bridges Italian luxury and Kazakh tradition by presenting their pieces in settings that echo Kazakhstan's cultural aesthetics. This strategic alignment allows Damiani to communicate using the visual language of their Kazakh audience, showing respect and appreciation for local culture while maintaining their Italian elegance and quality. This approach provides a successful model for international brands seeking to establish a meaningful presence in diverse markets.

One striking example is the portrayal of a woman adorned with Damiani jewelry that resonates with the traditional Kazakh "tumar"(fig.12). The 'tumar' is a triangular amulet believed to protect wearers from the evil eye. The Damiani piece mirrors the 'tumar's triangular shape and intricate design, creating cultural resonance for Kazakh consumers. The woman's attire and style in the photo also take inspiration from traditional Kazakh fashion, solidifying the brand-local customs connection. This thoughtful localization strategy not only honors the cultural artifact but also signifies Damiani's commitment to respecting and integrating local traditions into their brand narrative. This approach exemplifies the brand's dedication to fostering a deeper connection with its Kazakh clientele, by intertwining Italian craftsmanship with Kazakh cultural heritage, thereby enhancing intercultural communication and consumer resonance in the Kazakhstani market.



Figure 12. "Tumar by Damiani"

The Damiani brand's adept integration of Kazakh cultural motifs into its jewelry designs is

exemplified in the 'bilezik' inspired pieces (fig.13), a traditional Kazakh bracelet. The particular item showcased on the Damiani Kazakhstan Instagram account is a testament to this synthesis. The design intricately weaves Italian craftsmanship with patterns that echo the ornate swirls characteristic of Kazakh artistry. The bracelet's lavish embellishments and the bold, central black stone are reminiscent of the grandeur found in traditional Kazakh jewelry, yet are unmistakably crafted with the precision and luxury associated with Italian jewelers. This fusion not only appeals to the aesthetic sensibilities of Kazakh consumers but also symbolizes the respectful blending of cultures—a core aspect of effective intercultural business communication. The accompanying image, therefore, not only promotes a product but also narrates a story of cultural harmony and the brand's adaptability to local traditions while maintaining its high standards of elegance and quality.

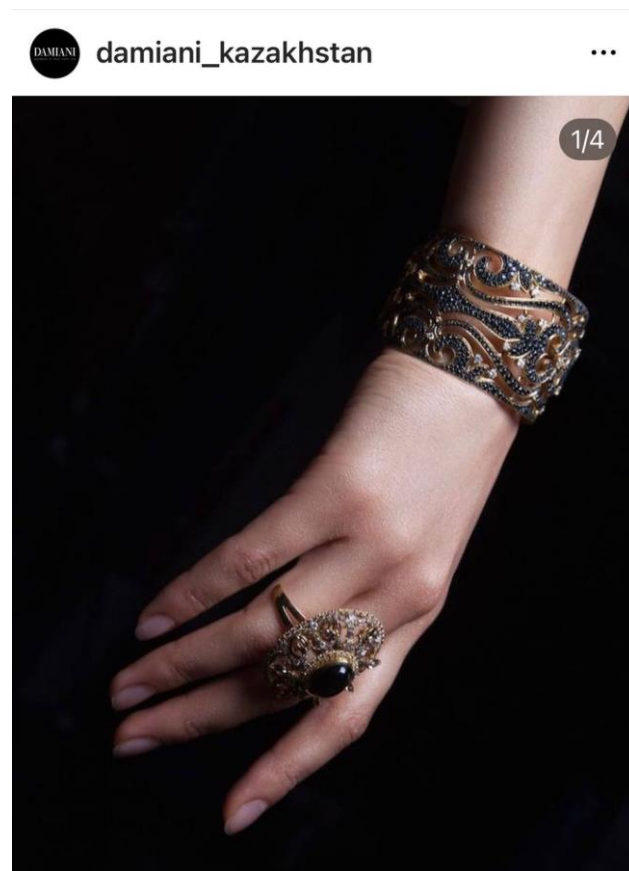


Figure 13. “Bilezik by Damiani”

The image sourced from Damiani Kazakhstan’s Instagram illustrates the brand's dedication to incorporating traditional Kazakh ornaments into its jewelry, resonating deeply with local customs and heritage. The earrings depicted in figure 14 reflect the ornamental beauty of Kazakh design, with intricate silver work and black.

Damiani's approach to intercultural communication within the Kazakh market is emblematic of a broader business imperative: to harmonize global brand ethos with local cultural nuances. This strategic blend of Italian sophistication with Kazakh cultural elements illustrates a successful

model of intercultural exchange, where respect for tradition enhances brand prestige and market presence. Damiani's engagement with Kazakh aesthetics does not merely translate into commercial success; it signifies a mutual exchange of values and artistry, fostering a deep and enduring bond between Italy and Kazakhstan. Ultimately, this intercultural dialogue is not only profitable but also enriches the cultural fabric of both nations, demonstrating that in the realm of international business, cultural fluency is as precious as the gems adorning the jewelry itself.



Figure 14. “Earrings with ornaments by Damiani”

Italian cuisine is renowned worldwide, with pasta standing as its quintessential symbol, akin to fish and chips in the UK, hamburgers in the USA, sausages in Germany, and besbarmak (boiled meat served with wide, flatnoodles) in Kazakhstan. Among the myriad of pasta producers in Italy, Barilla has emerged as a beloved brand over the last century. Originating in Parma in 1877 as a modest bakery and pasta shop, Barilla has since expanded its reach globally, now offering its products in over 100 countries. “Our journey starts in Parma in 1877, as a small bread and pasta shop. Today, 146 years later, our products can be found in more than 100 countries and have become icons in the food industry. Still, we are family-owned, not listed on any stock exchange.” This quote is taken from the official website of the Barilla company.

However, the marketing of Italian Barilla changed when the product is sold in Kazakhstan. The Barilla company has a seal on the packages indicating that the products produced for Kazakhstani

residents are Halal certified compared to products from this company in Italy (fig.15). The Barilla company got this seal on the 2nd of March, 2023 in order to spread and make popular its products in Kazakhstan. According to the book of Caon F., Battaglia S. (2022), *La comunicazione interculturale in azienda e nelle organizzazioni*, (pp. 203), introducing the concept of halal becomes fundamental. The authors emphasize that understanding and integrating the concept of Halal is crucial in Muslim-majority countries, where it represents more than just a dietary preference—it is a reflection of a way of life governed by faith. Halal is an Arabic word that translates to “permissible” in English. In the Quran, the term halal is contrasted with the term haram, which means “forbidden”. It must not be a prohibited food and must have been purchased legally; furthermore, it must be pure and healthy.

The halal certification sign is located in the left bottom corner.



Figure 15. “Halal certificate of Barilla”

Barilla's strategic approach to entering and expanding within the Kazakhstani market underscores a vital aspect of global business: the importance of cultural and religious sensitivity. By securing Halal certification for its products, Barilla not only adheres to Islamic dietary laws but also demonstrates a deep respect for the cultural and religious practices of its customers in Kazakhstan. This move is indicative of a broader trend in international business, where companies increasingly recognize the value of cultural adaptation in their global marketing strategies. Such adaptations are not merely about complying with local regulations but about forging a deeper connection with consumers by acknowledging and respecting their cultural norms and values.

In conclusion, Barilla's journey from a small bread and pasta shop in Parma to becoming a global icon in the food industry exemplifies the blend of tradition, innovation, and cultural sensitivity.

This strategy, rooted in respect and understanding, paves the way for building lasting relationships with consumers across the globe, proving that the essence of successful international business lies in the nuanced appreciation of cultural differences.

4.5. Advanced Intercultural Communication Strategies in Italian and Kazakh Businesses

Intercultural communication has become a key factor in the success of businesses due to globalisation of markets and increased interaction among various cultures. Exceptional case studies on the efficient implementation of intercultural communication strategies are provided by Italy and Kazakhstan enterprises. These businesses have managed intercultural communication challenges to achieve remarkable results in two culturally different environments. The complexity of their strategies, the difficulties they have encountered and the resulting impact on their business and market presence is explored in this chapter.

4.5.1 Case Study 1: Italian Business Strategy

An Italian fashion house expanded its operations into Kazakhstan, recognizing the need to adapt its marketing and communication strategies to resonate with the local culture. In order to gain an understanding of Kazakhstan's cultural values, preferences, and communication style, the company has carried out extensive market research.

In order to appeal to Kazakh tastes, such as traditional patterns and colors, the fashion house has used a specific approach and adapted its product lines so that they retain a classic Italian character. They have also organized community events and fashion shows, in order to integrate themselves into the cultural life of their communities.

Challenges: The company initially faced resistance due the lackof local market knowledge in relation to Italian luxury goods. The challenge of overcoming language barriers and understanding the subtleties of Kazakh business etiquette was also a problem.

Highlighting the outcomes, the company has successfully bridged the cultural gap by using local influence and designing advertising campaigns that reflect Kazakh familial values. The strategyhas resulted in increased brand awareness and a growing customer base, which appreciates the combination of Italian craftsmanship with Kazakh cultural elements.

Expanded case study: Italian fashion house strategy in Kazakhstan.

The prestigious Damiani jewelry brand illustrates one of the most notable examples of Italian luxury cooperation in Kazakhstan. In 2005 Damiani, the famous Italian fine jewelry brand founded by a third-generation family of Guido, Giorgio, and Damian Silvia has entered Kazakhstan's

market. In line with a subtle understanding of the potential of the Kazakh market for luxury goods, the brand's expansion strategy was part of an overall initiative to make its presence felt worldwide.

Approach: Damiani curated collections that appealed to the Kazakh clientele's appreciation of luxury and design, highlighting its rich Italian heritage and unparalleled craftsmanship. This strategic cultural engagement is highlighted by the Alsara collection, which was created with Aliya Nazarbayeva and Damiani's design team. This collection was inspired by traditional Kazakh ornaments, marrying them with the Italian technique of design in order to create pieces that celebrate Kazakhstan's and Italy's respective art traditions.

Challenges: For Damiani, it was a unique challenge to navigate the cultural and consumer landscape in Kazakhstan. The Italian brand had to carefully balance the cultural values and preferences of the Kazakh market in a way that matched its legendary Italian identity. The building of brand awareness, trust, and a deep understanding of local tastes and preferences was required to establish a luxury brand in this market unfamiliar with it.

Outcomes: Damiani's tailored approach, characterized by cultural sensitivity and high-quality offerings, successfully captivated the Kazakh market. Its recognition and popularity with Kazakh consumers have been enhanced by the brand's commitment to understanding and integrating Kazakhstani cultural elements into its collections. This case exemplifies how Italian luxury brands, through careful market analysis and cultural adaptation, can thrive in diverse international markets by embracing and respecting local traditions and values.

The crucial role of intercultural communication in managing global markets has been underlined by this expansion strategy. Damiani not only established a strong presence in Kazakhstan but also set an example for other luxury brands that intend to enter similar markets by adopting the cultural information approach.

4.5.2 Case Study 2: Kazakh Business Strategy

This section delves into the intercultural communication strategies, challenges, and outcomes of Kazakh businesses penetrating the Italian market, focusing on strategic agreements between Eni and Kazakh companies, the expansion of Kazakh exports to Italy, and the Kazakh-Italian Business Forum. In facilitating successful business ventures between Kazakhstan and Italy, these examples demonstrate the practical application of intercultural communication theory.

Strategic Agreements between Eni and Kazakh Companies:

Eni, an Italian energy company, and Kazakh companies, including KazMunayGas (KMG), embarked on a collaborative project featuring a 250 MW Hybrid Renewables-Gas Project in

Zhanaozen City, Mangystau Region, Kazakhstan. This project signifies a pioneering step towards integrating renewable solar and wind energy, supplemented by gas power for stability. In addressing the challenges of integration of different energy sources, as well as navigating both countries' legal landscapes, this cooperation has been supported by Eni's industrial experience and KMG's domestic insight. This results in a model of sustainable energy production, demonstrating the synergy between Italian technological innovation and Kazakhstan's management of its natural resources (Eni.com, 2024)

The cooperation between Kazakh enterprises and the Italian multinational Eni highlights a deliberate attempt to combine Kazakhstan's abundant natural resources with Italian technological expertise, particularly through a major project focused on renewable energy in Zhanaozen City. The challenge was to navigate complex regulatory frameworks, align diverse corporate cultures, and ensure technological adaptability, which posed considerable challenges. The success of this project is not just a testament to the potential for sustainable energy production but also serves as a benchmark for future international collaborations in renewable energy.

Similarly, to strengthen economic relations between the two countries, Kazakhstan has been expanding its exports to Italy in 110 commodities items worth over EUR 900 million. The challenge here was to adapt Kazakh products to meet the Italian market standards and preferences, which was compounded by the need to comply with the EU's strict trade rules.

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of intercultural communication strategies in promoting economic growth between countries, this increased turnover by 55 % represents a significant strengthening of trade relations with each other (Sakenova, S., 2023).

The dynamic interplay of communications strategies has also been demonstrated by the Kazakh Italian Business Forum, which generated significant interest from Italy in Kazakhstan. Overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers was a notable challenge, necessitating clear and effective communication to ensure mutual understanding and alignment of business practices. The tangible benefits of strategic intercultural engagement, including increased investment and collaboration opportunities, are highlighted by the Forum's success, through the signature of key Memorandums of Understanding and the promotion of direct business contacts (Khassenkhanova, G., 2019).

These instances collectively highlight a strategic approach that leverages direct communication, mutual adaptation, and regulatory navigation to overcome intercultural challenges, leading to enhanced bilateral trade, investment growth, and sustainable project development. Such outcomes not only benefit the involved entities but also contribute to broader economic and environmental

goals, underscoring the critical role of intercultural communication strategies in international business success.

The importance of intercultural communication strategies in expanding business worldwide is underlined by the case studies on companies from Italy and Kazakhstan. Businesses can generate significant growth and foster international partnerships by adapting to challenges, dealing with them in a way that does not hinder culture integration. The potential of intercultural communication to be a strategic asset in an increasingly interconnected global market is highlighted by the lessons learnt from these examples.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, we looked at how people from Italy and Kazakhstan communicate with each other on business terms and immersed ourselves in the dynamics of marketing and collaboration, exploring specific features of both cultures. The study has shown the crucial role of cultural understanding in shaping business practices and marketing strategies.

Developing successful marketing strategies and guaranteeing successful business operations require an understanding of and respect for the cultural differences between Kazakhstan and Italy. The distinctive cultural features of each country significantly influence communication styles, consumer preferences, and marketing effectiveness.

In Italy, people with their expressive and emotionally communicative language value aesthetics, quality, and creativity in products and all the goods they possess. This cultural trait underscores the importance of marketing strategies that emphasize design and craftsmanship. Italian consumers illustrate a strong loyalty to brands that embody quality and style, resonating with the country's rich artistic heritage.

In contrast, a more restrained and harmonious type of communication style has emerged in Kazakhstan, indicative of its culture's preference for simplicity and clear information. Marketing strategies in this context are most effective when they are direct and informative and highlight the practical value of products, demonstrating how useful they are in a daily routine. Kazakh consumers tend to prioritize functionality and value, aligning with the country's practical and community-oriented cultural ethos.

For businesses active in these diverse markets, cross-cultural understanding is an essential requirement. International companies must, in order to align their marketing and communication strategies, not just understand but take full account of the differences between these two cultures. This approach is not just about language translation but involves a profound adaptation of marketing narratives, communication styles, business practices, and special promotion techniques. The key to a business strategy is flexibility and adaptability. Companies must be agile and responsive to the differing cultural norms and expectations in Italy and Kazakhstan. This adaptability considerably helps engage effectively with consumers and other stakeholders in these markets.

Practical Recommendations:

The adoption of a narrative and emotionally resonant marketing approach is recommended for companies targeting the Italian market. In order to strengthen a deeper connection with consumers, this strategy should focus on the quality and attractiveness of products while taking into account elements of Italy's culture and tradition.

In Kazakhstan's markets, marketing messages should be clear, and informative and focus on the practical value of products. Companies should also highlight their social responsibility efforts and contributions to society, aligning with the market's preference for practicality and community orientation.

It is crucial to comprehend the cultural nuances when engaging in the complex business interactions between Italians and Kazakhs. Businesses venturing into these markets must prioritize cultural sensitivity training for their employees. Understanding the specifics of every culture, such as distinct communication styles, consumer preferences, and business etiquette, requires this training. Furthermore, in order to figure out local consumer behavior, interests, and socioeconomic aspects impacting purchasing decisions, local market research is essential in Kazakhstan as well as in Italy.

When it comes to Tailoring Marketing Practices, different approaches are required for each market. The emphasis on aesthetics and quality should be the main focus of marketing strategies for Italian companies. The Italian markets are making high-quality visuals and elegant designs in advertising, which is particularly effective. Additionally, employing Narrative-Driven Marketing can create an emotional connection with consumers, resonating strongly when it incorporates aspects of Italian culture and tradition.

Conversely, in Kazakhstan, the approach should involve practical and informative marketing. Promoting strategies and advertisements should be straightforward, focusing on making products practical. Clear, informative advertising that outlines product benefits aligns well with Kazakhstani cultural preferences. Also, businesses should highlight social responsibility, as Kazakh consumers often appreciate companies that demonstrate a commitment to social safety and community well-being.

In both cultures, it is important to build a solid relationship with customers. Engaging with a local community through participation in local events and community initiatives can significantly boost brand trust and loyalty. Moreover, regular collection of reviews from customers and the willingness to adapt products, services, and marketing strategies based on this feedback are critical

for maintaining relevance and resonance with the target audience.

In conclusion, the insights gained from this study highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity in international business. By adapting communication and marketing approaches to align with the specific cultural sensitivities of Italy and Kazakhstan, companies can foster greater understanding, and successful interactions, and build lasting relationships with consumers and other stakeholders in these unique cultural contexts.

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SURVEY in English

Dear participant,

Welcome to our survey on intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhs. This research forms part of an in-depth study aimed at understanding how cultural values influence business practices and decision-making processes. Your insights will contribute to a broader comprehension of the nuances in multicultural business environments, enhancing strategies for effective communication and negotiation across cultures.

This questionnaire seeks your personal experiences, perceptions, and practices in a multicultural business context. It will take approximately 5-7 minutes to complete. Please rest assured, your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

Your participation is invaluable, and we are grateful for the time and effort you invest in completing this survey. Thank you for contributing to this important research endeavor.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What is your name?

2. What is your nationality?

3. What is your gender?
 - a) Female
 - b) Male
 - c) Other:

4. Please write about your professional background (e.g., Marketing, Management, Sales)

5. How many years of experience in a multicultural business environment do you have?

6. On a scale of 1-5, how important are traditional cultural values in your business decisions? (1 being least important, 5 being most important)

7. How do you perceive the role of family and community in business relations in your culture?
8. Can you share an instance where cultural beliefs significantly influenced a business decision or communication?
9. What is your preferred style of communication in a business setting? (e.g., direct, indirect, formal, informal)
10. How do you approach business negotiations with individuals from a different cultural background?
 - a) Collaborative
 - b) Competitive
 - c) Accommodating
 - d) Avoiding
 - e) Compromising
 - f) Other:
11. Have you encountered any communication barriers due to cultural differences? If yes, please elaborate.
12. What type of marketing appeals to you more?
 - a) Emotional appeal
 - b) Logical appeal
 - c) Combination appeal
 - d) Other:
13. How important is the use of cultural symbols in marketing for you from 1 to 5? (where 1 is not important and 5 is very important)
14. Can you provide an example of a marketing campaign that you found particularly effective or ineffective due to its cultural approach?
15. In your experience, how do cultural norms impact consumer behavior in your country?

16. Do you believe understanding cultural values is essential for successful marketing strategies? (Yes/No). Please elaborate.

17. Any additional comments or experiences you would like to share about intercultural communication between Italians and Kazakhs?

Attachment 2

SURVEY in Russian

Уважаемый участник,

Добро пожаловать на наш опрос по межкультурной коммуникации между итальянцами и казахами. Это исследование является частью глубокого анализа, направленного на понимание влияния культурных ценностей на бизнес-практики и процессы принятия решений. Ваши взгляды помогут лучше понять нюансы в мультикультурной бизнес-среде, улучшая стратегии для эффективного общения и переговоров между культурами. Этот вопросник предлагает поделиться вашим личным опытом, восприятиями и практиками в контексте мультикультурного бизнеса. На его заполнение уйдет примерно 5-7 минут. Пожалуйста, будьте уверены, что ваши ответы останутся конфиденциальными и будут использоваться исключительно в академических целях. Ваше участие крайне ценно, и мы благодарны за время и усилия, которые вы вкладываете в заполнение этого опроса. Спасибо за ваш вклад в это важное исследовательское дело.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Как вас зовут?

2. Какая у вас национальность?

3. Ваш пол?
 - a) Женский
 - b) Мужской
 - c) Другое:

4. Пожалуйста, расскажите о вашем профессиональном опыте (например, маркетинг, менеджмент, продажи)
5. Сколько лет у вас опыта работы в мультикультурной деловой среде?
6. Насколько важны традиционные культурные ценности в ваших бизнес-решениях по шкале от 1 до 5? (где 1 - наименее важно, 5 - наиболее важно)
7. Как вы воспринимаете роль семьи и сообщества в деловых отношениях в вашей культуре?
8. Можете ли вы поделиться примером, когда культурные убеждения значительно повлияли на бизнес-решение или коммуникацию?
9. Какой стиль общения в деловой среде вам ближе? (например, прямой, косвенный, формальный, неформальный)
10. Как вы подходите к деловым переговорам с людьми из другой культурной среды?
- a) Совместная работа
 - b) Конкуренция
 - c) Уступки
 - d) Избегание
 - e) Компромисс
 - f) Другое:
11. Сталкивались ли вы с барьерами в коммуникации из-за культурных различий? Если да, пожалуйста, расскажите подробнее.
12. Какой тип маркетинга вам нравится больше?
- a) Эмоциональный
 - b) Логический
 - c) Комбинированный
 - d) Другой:
13. Насколько важно для вас использование культурных символов в маркетинге по

шкале от 1 до 5? (где 1 - не важно, 5 - очень важно)

14. Можете ли вы привести пример маркетинговой кампании, которую вы нашли особенно эффективной или неэффективной из-за её культурного подхода?

15. На ваш взгляд, как культурные нормы влияют на поведение потребителей в вашей стране?

16. Считаете ли вы понимание культурных ценностей важным для успешных маркетинговых стратегий? (Да/Нет). Пожалуйста, объясните.

17. Есть ли у вас дополнительные комментарии или опыт, который вы хотели бы поделиться о межкультурной коммуникации между итальянцами и казахами?