Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

Faculty of European Studies

Cross-Cultural Understanding of Contemporary Global Multicultural Workforce

CONDUCĂTOR DE DOCTORAT

DOCTORAL COORDINATOR

Professor Dr. Gabriela Ciot

Student-doctorand

Doctoral student

Mr. Ronen Shay

2020

Table of Contents

Introduction

October 26 marks the 26th anniversary of the Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement. The pact was more than a formalization of an actual ceasefire. In essence, it profoundly altered the nature of the Israeli-Jordanian relationship, increasing safety, stability, and U.S. interests in a chaotic region. However, the peace-building process did not manifest in the way it was envisioned. The expectation that the peace agreement would lead to warm and neighborly relations based on coexistence, mutual cooperative endeavors, and an acceptance of the other has failed to materialize. Israel was unable to stimulate the governmental system to instigate economic collaboration, proposals, and projects. Concurrently, the internalization of the peace by the Jordanian people did not actualize, and the bureaucracy exhibited suspicions towards Israel. Therefore, in practice, despite hopes and aspirations, the peace between the nations has remained "cold."[1]

Due to the rarity of cooperation between the two states, this study focuses on a recent endeavor, "the Eilat project," which signifies a new era in Israel and Jordan's relations. The Eilat project permits Jordanians to cross the border to work in the hospitality industry in Eilat. It allows 700 Jordanians to work in the Red Sea resort city and eventually consent to 2000 workers. The project is strictly regulated. It compels the Jordanian workers to return to Jordan by 23:00 each evening, prevents them from leaving the Eilat city perimeters, and restricts them to cleaning jobs. The incorporation of Jordanian workers in the hotel industry in Eilat presents a window of opportunity to start a new chapter in Israel and Jordan's relations. The case study was chosen to show that Jordan and Israel's interaction can progressively improve and expand via direct and daily interactions between both countries' civilians. To wit, a business endeavor can bring with it prospects for warmer relations and adds a civilian dimension to governmental coordination.

---

[1] Zeynep Sütalan, "Explaining Cold Peace in The Middle East: The Cases of Egyptian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli Peace Processes" Doctoral dissertation (Ankara: The Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University, 2015), 227; Moomen Sallam and Ofir Winter, "Egypt and Israel: Forty Years in The Desert of Cold Peace," *Strategic Assessment* 20, no. 3 (2017): 21-34.

Eilat, the most Southern city of Israel, hosts 12,000 hotel rooms, averaging occupancy between 65%-75% (2005-2015), including hotels from one star to five stars deluxe. Till the initiation of the project, the hotel sector relied on illegal African migrant workers. The constant shortage of employees, especially in the needed departments like housekeeping and stewarding, created continuous chaos. Hence, Israel decided to explore a new frontier and agreed to incorporate Jordanian employees into the Israeli hospitality industry.

Research aims and questions

The research aims to detect novel and practical ways to sustain and improve cold peace. It examines the opportunities and shortcomings of implementing the project model and investigates its replicability in other regions and countries. Three subsidiary goals accompany the chief objective: (a) to ascertain issues related to intercultural business management between the Jordanian employees and Israeli managers. (b) To investigate how the Jordanian employees and the Israeli managers are coping with cross-cultural issues, i.e., religion, mentality, and quality control points of view. (c) To observe the entrepreneurial aspects involved in employing Jordanian workers within the hospitality industry in Israel.

Ultimately, the study strives to answer two fundamental questions:

1. What are the opportunities and shortcomings of implementing the project model, recruiting culturally diverse employees from across the border to work in the hospitality industry?

2. What is the feasibility of replicating the model to other countries with similar characteristics as Israel and Jordan? Is it possible to identify common ground between the EU and the Israel-Jordan Eilat project?

Literature review

Cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce has been studied extensively since the beginning of globalization. Yet, this study emphasizes distinctive features that derive due to the cold peace (e.g., national animosity, security issues, and political affiliation) that were not investigated in the realm of a global multicultural workforce. The study is based on four theoretical pillars: international relations approaches, cross-cultural issues, international business management, and cross-border management. The first pillar, International relations approaches and their application, entails the basis and the foundation of the study. The

topic of this paper, Israel and Jordan's joint endeavor, embodies the values and notions of the Liberal perspective. Without the ideas, values, and notions of the Liberal and Neoliberal view, this kind of collaboration could have never existed. Thus this pillar provides a summary of the central ideas of the Liberal and Neoliberal philosophy. The second pillar, cross-cultural issues, constitutes the axis of the study. Cross-cultural issues clarify multicultural issues in a diversified workforce. They highlight the difficulties and misunderstandings that might arise due to intercultural communication, cultural differences, language barriers, and diverse customs and norms. The relations between the Jordanian employees and their Israeli co-workers are likely to face cultural differences. Hence cultural and cross-cultural issues are the core of the study, and cultural diversity is at the heart of the interactions between the parties involved. The third pillar, international business management, delves into the human resource aspect. It encompasses planning, categorizing, organizing, leading, and supervising employees and various resources to realize organizational goals across multicultural and multinational boundaries. The human resource aspect was ultimately responsible for incorporating Jordanian workers into Eilat's hotel industry and hiring the right people for the job. The case study portrays a situation in which human capital was "bought" and imported from a different country due to Israelis reluctance to do manual labor. The Jordanian workers provided skills that were much needed in the Israeli labor market; hence, this pillar illuminates the basics notions that generated the crafty strategy of combining Jordanian workers into the workforce. The fourth pillar, cross-border management, stresses that border policy modifications result from negotiation between stakeholders, who share mutual interests, viewpoints, and values. Borders mirror the historical, political, and cultural framework of a state. They echo the societies and cultures they encompass and reflect specific social relationships in space and time.[2] Therefore, this pillar underlines that border control is the outcome of collaborative management, including domestic (i.e., intra-service and inter-agency cooperation) and international dimensions (i.e., transnational collaboration).[3]

Research design

---

[2] Todd Hataley and Christian Leuprecht, "Determinants of Cross-Border Cooperation," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 33, No. 3 (2018): 317-328.

[3] Rusdiyant Rusdiyant, "Collaborative Border Management as the Strategic Revitalization of State Border Management in Indonesia," *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics* 116, No. 24 (2017): 415-426.

The research emphasizes the significance of cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce by focusing on a single, descriptive, and instrumental case study- the 'Eilat project.' It is a qualitative study that focuses on understanding a phenomenon as a humanistic approach. The objective is to capture the delicate social reality of Israelis and Jordanians and comprehend their perceptions, beliefs, and feelings. Hence, to understand Israelis and Jordanians' perspectives about the project and build a theoretical model, a multi-methods qualitative methodology was utilized. The chosen research tools: interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis, enable us to grasp the standpoints, insights, and assessments of the various stakeholders involved in the project.

The research design is based on interviews with key people (i.e., politicians, legislators, business people, and administrators) from Jordan and Israel. Individuals who can shed light on the power of cross-cultural communication in cultivating trust and respect between people from different religions and nationalities. The research population is homogenous yet diverse. All the participants have a direct or an indirect connection to the hotel industry or the decision to incorporate Jordanians in Eilat's hospitality industry. The research population concludes 38 participants from four fields and different professions: politics (e.g., mayors), legislation (e.g., member of the Knesset), business (e.g., CEOs, entrepreneurs, and business people), and administration (e.g., hotel managers, administrators, human resource managers, coordinators, and line employees). The participants also differ regarding age, gender, work experience, education, and residence (i.e., participants from both sides of the border).

The research used semi-structured interviews. Twenty face-to-face interviews were conducted with diversified people from different lines of work. Four questionnaires were prepared to address the participants' occupation and their relevance to Jordanian workers' integration in Eilat's hotel industry. The four interview formats were assigned to human resource managers, hotel managers, housekeeping managers (i.e., administrators), business people, and decision-makers (i.e., politicians, legislators). The interviews included an assortment of questions that aimed to uncover the respondents' stances and attitudes towards integrating the Jordanian workers and items that tried to comprehend the effect of economic, cultural, political, and security factors on the success or failure of this endeavor.

Furthermore, three focus groups were conducted, two groups encompassed five people, and one group included eight people. One focus group comprised Jordanian workers, and the other

two contained business people from Eilat and Aqaba. The focus groups were directed by a moderator's guide, which included engagement, exploration, and exit questions. The Jordanians were asked about their concerns, the screening process, their level of satisfaction, collegial feelings, and the impact of financial aspects. Business people were interviewed about security issues, the project's effect on the Israeli employment market, cultural diversity, challenges, and political implications.

During observations, the researcher took the stance of the observer as participant. The focus was on the interaction and relationship between Israeli and Jordanian workers, the social and professional incorporation of Jordanian workers in the workplace, and tourists' attitudes towards the new employees. The study also researched and examined various documents such as press releases, program proposals, survey data, organizational and institutional reports, public records, immigration policies, government decisions, labor and employment laws, administrative guidelines, municipal plans, regional forum statements, and bilateral agreements. These documents provided necessary information about the context and background that enabled the incorporation of Jordanian workers in the hotel industry and helped strengthen the research's scientific method, credibility, and reliability.

The study uses the content and comparative analysis technique. The technique was executed to analyze interviews, observations, documents, and governmental and municipal proposals. The research process followed all the necessary stages and steps. Large quantities of text were organized and classified into fewer content categories. Patterns and themes directly expressed in the text or derived from it were identified, and links among categories were detected. During the coding process, a coding scheme was created and developed.

The studied phenomenon inspects the case's depth and scope from diverse angles such as cultural, political, financial, and occupational. Therefore, the theories and methodic approaches yielded five themes (cultural aspects, Israel and Jordan relations, interpersonal interactions, human resource management, and entrepreneurship) that relate to the research questions. Each theme instigated categories that portray the essence of the general topics. Three issues (1) cultural aspects: language, ethnicity and race, and religion and political affiliation, (2) Israel and Jordan relations: security issues and fear of terror attacks, bureaucracy, and nationality and citizenship, and (3) interpersonal relations: building trust and credibility, respect, and recognizing each other's unique characteristics, relate to the first research question; What are the opportunities and the

shortcomings entailed by implementing the project model, recruiting culturally diverse employees from across the border to work in the hospitality industry? The fourth and fifth subjects, human resource management (i.e., screening, recruitment, and training, compliance with local standards, job execution, interaction with the other employees) and entrepreneurship (i.e., business opportunities, regional impact), refer to the second research question; What is the feasibility of replicating the model to other countries with similar characteristics as Israel and Jordan?

Findings

The results generated from the first research question demonstrate that different aspects hamper the Eilat project's progression. Features such as language barriers, historical background, security issues, bureaucracy, religion, ethnicity, and political affiliation put a spoke in the initiative wheel and complicate the process. Yet, the project manages to flourish despite the setbacks. Its merits exceed difficulties and obstacles. In a short time, the project succeeded where political peace has failed. It forged friendships and business plans. Hence, all in all, the project's virtues surpass its shortcomings. The upshots stemming from the second research question discover that the project has a significant monetary impact on Israel and Jordan's economies. The initiative encouraged entrepreneurship and facilitated dreams about expanding the program and realizing it in more cities. However, there is no definite answer to the feasibility of duplicating the project. The initiative may be implemented in other areas in Israel, copied to the Israeli-Egyptian border, or even applied in the U.S. and Mexico. Perhaps implementing the initiative in different regions will solve unemployment issues, help overcome poverty, and strengthen the hotel industry.

Conclusion

Several factual conclusions emerged from research question 1. The first theme, cultural aspects, generated three deductions. First, language barriers hinder communication and inhibit social interaction. However, willingness to teach, learn, or speak a foreign language, implementation of technological tools, or simple human gestures can bridge linguistic differences and gaps. Thus, a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is associated with a steady communication flow through mutual language. Second, on the subject of ethnicity and race, it was observed that a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is related to the cultural knowledge of the ethnicity and the race of

the other side. Third, regarding religion and political affiliation, it appears that a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is facilitated by cultural and intercultural sensitivity, which is based on mutual respect to religious customs, opinions, beliefs, political tendencies, and sacred laws.

The second theme, Israel and Jordan relations, gave rise to numerous conclusions. Primarily, for the foreseeable future, security issues and bureaucracy will be entangled and inseparable from the Eilat project. Yet mutual interests and social interaction are a step in the right direction to guarantee a warmer peace and to safeguard the initiative's progress while the execution of the current global multicultural workforce approach is taking place. Concerning security issues and fear of terror attacks, it was detected that a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is characterized by a fear of terror attacks that necessitate continuous monitoring and border security checks. Regarding bureaucracy, it was noted that a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is strongly associated with inevitable bureaucracy procedures that enable the continuation of the project. On the subject of nationality and citizenship, it was perceived that a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is associated with mutual interest and close cross-cultural encounters that facilitate good working relations between the parties.

The third theme, interpersonal relations, derived various notions. The concept of building trust and credibility elicited that a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is characterized by fostering confidence and trustworthiness due to employers' and employees' behavior, i.e., instilling a sense of equality, respect, and commitment. Regarding respect, the findings showed that a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is instigated by providing a culture of equality among the employees in relation to salaries, honor, and consideration. Concerning recognizing each other's unique characteristics, it was evident that cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce can only succeed if both parties utilize the maximum benefit from their employees.

Diverse factual conclusions arose from research question 2. The fourth theme, human resource management, exhibited different ideas. On screening, recruitment, and training, the study demonstrated that cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is associated with a rigorous recruitment process under clear human resource

management principles. Regarding compliance with local standards, the findings indicated that cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is related to the workers' close compliance with their employers' work standards and expectations. As to job execution, it could be concluded that cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is characterized by a high level of job execution by professional workers fit for the job. Concerning interaction with the other employees, it was perceived that cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is allied with intercultural communication and interaction.

The fifth theme, entrepreneurship, revealed clear conclusions. Concerning business opportunities, it is prominent that cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is associated with business opportunities that bring about prosperity for all. Regarding regional impact, it was noticeable that cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is related to an atmosphere of Neoliberalism where individuals are free to pursue prosperity through implementing shared economic interests, thus enhancing regional benefits.

Conceptual conclusions

The conclusions that emerged from this study enabled the advance of an evidence-based model of a cross-cultural contemporary global multicultural workforce. The model provides a new conceptual framework of procedures to facilitate cooperation between countries that do not necessarily maintain friendly or peaceful relations. The model combines two main factors; **intercultural management aspects** and **cross-cultural aspects**. When synergy takes place between these aspects, one can achieve a global multicultural workforce project.

Cross-Cultural Understanding of Contemporary Global Multicultural Workforce
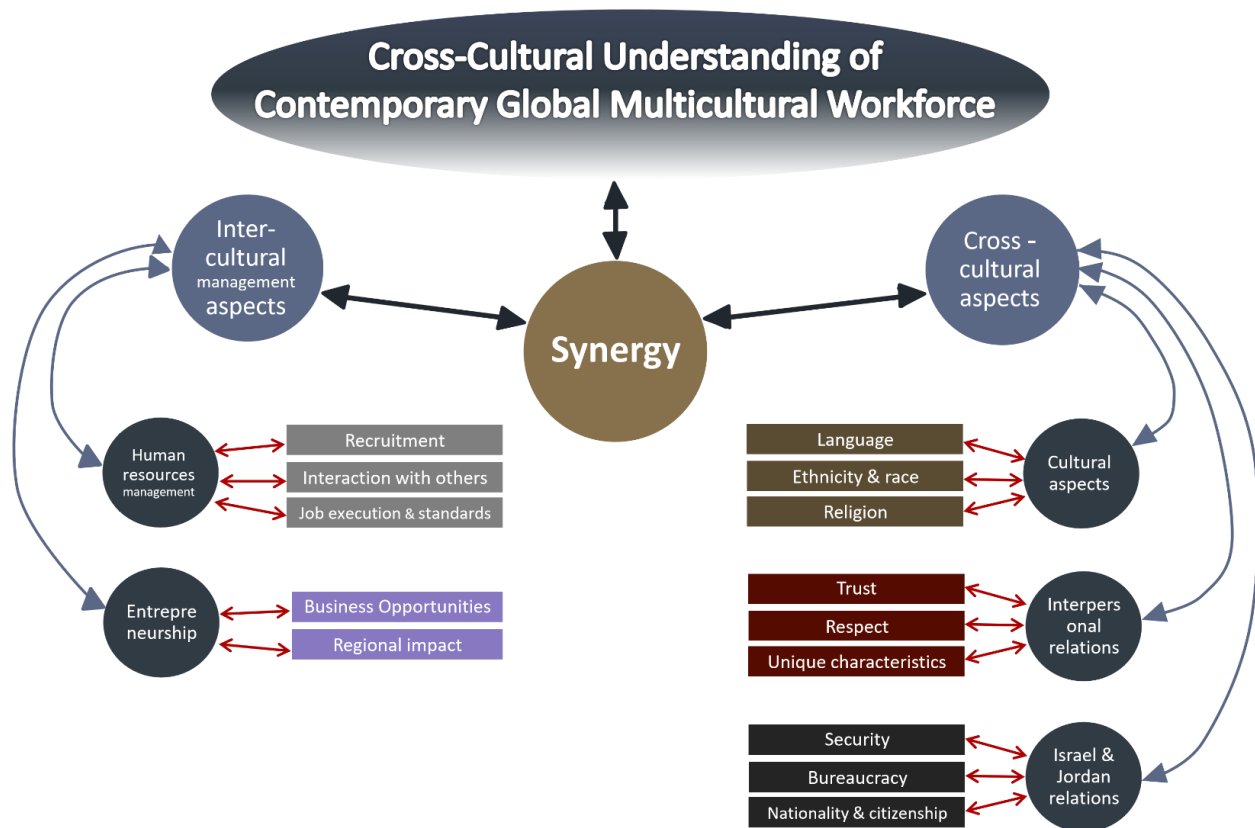
As can be seen, intercultural management and cross-cultural workforce encompass five main segments:

1. *Cultural aspects*- a cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is facilitated by cultural and intercultural sensitivity, which are based on mutual respect to religious customs, opinions, beliefs, political tendencies, and sacred laws. In the study, hoteliers and employees understood that for the endeavor to thrive, they have to comprehend and appreciate a culturally diverse workforce and be able to work in a setting that holds varying norms, values, views, and beliefs. Both sides grasped that the best way to integrate diverse notions and faiths is by building a strong relationship through mutual understanding.

   • Language- linguistic barriers hinder communication and inhibit social interaction. The willingness to teach, learn, or speak a foreign language, implementation of technological tools, or simple human gestures can bridge over linguistic differences and gaps.

- Ethnicity and race- cultural aspects have an immense impact on people's perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs. It is a human characteristic to judge individuals according to their race and ethnicity. However, even primordial features can be modified and amended through close and personal encounters, gratifying gestures, and pleasant experiences.

- Religion- ordinary activities like work can be kept separate from religion and political affiliation. People do not have to share their insights and personal beliefs. Namely, they decide whether to instigate religious or political discussions.

2. *Interpersonal relations*- cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is depicted by forming trust and credibility due to employers' and employees' conduct, i.e., introducing an awareness of fairness, respect, and devotion. Interpersonal relations are instigated by providing a culture of equality among the employees concerning wages, respect, and consideration.

    - Trust- cross-cultural understanding portrays people in a different light. Due to mutual efforts, individuals are viewed as trustworthy, dependable, fair, decent, and honorable.

    - Respect- relationships and friendships are cultivated owing to an open-door policy, a sense of unity and equality, optimal work conditions, and respect for religious holidays.

    - Unique characteristics- unique characteristics can assist in elevating productivity and the level of satisfaction of all parties involved.

3. *Israel and Jordan Relations*- cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is associated with mutual interest and close cross-cultural encounters that facilitate good working relations between nations.

    - Security- security issues will always be an integral part of the cross-cultural aspects. Ultimately, monitoring, screening, and inspections are imperative. Nonetheless, mutual understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce and joint interests enable the project's continuation and empower cooperation and collaboration.

- Bureaucracy- bureaucracy is an integral part of the cross-cultural aspects. Strict protocols, background checks, rules, procedures, and codes of conduct are essential to the initiative's continuation.

- Nationality and citizenship- peaceful and honest relations between culturally and nationally contradicting societies can be achieved through human connections. Social encounters generate trust, kinship, and closeness and eradicate prejudice and misconceptions.

4. *Human resources management*- an organized and structured recruitment process is essential for attainment and success.

- Recruitment- a rigorous recruitment process under clear human resource management principles is key to success. The recruitment process must be extensive and professional.

- Interaction with others- communication ought to be warm and friendly to attain positive interaction.

- Job execution- a high level of job execution by professional workers fit for the job is the key to elevate the standards.

5. *Entrepreneurship-* cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is allied with business opportunities that manifest in prosperity and an entrepreneurship wave.

- Business opportunities- accomplishments and achievements of an initiative present business opportunities to all the parties involved; It allows further investments, enables more endeavors, and helps families from both sides of the boarders to build businesses and prosper.

- Regional impact- cross-cultural understanding of the contemporary global multicultural workforce is related to the notions of Neoliberalism. Individuals are free to pursue prosperity by implementing shared economic interests, thus enhancing regional benefits.

Practical implications and recommendations

　　The unique and ambitious 'Eilat project' overcame multiple problems and difficulties. For instance, the cold peace that prevails between Israel and Jordan, cultural differences, and political disputes. Both sides conquered apprehensions and fears and agreed on processes and procedures that ensure the Israelis and Jordanian employees' security and safety. The initiative has a positive financial effect on Jordan and Israel. Jordan was able to reduce its unemployment rate, while Israel could save the hospitality industry in Eilat. Other sectors, such as transportation, human resources, changes, and housing, also profited from implementing the project. Moreover, the project benefited all the parties involved; The Jordanians earn high salaries, hoteliers are pleased with the work level, and guests enjoy clean and tidy hotels. The project's screening, recruitment, and training processes proved to be effective; Turnover decreased, Jordanians integration into the workforce was successful, and hoteliers could focus on other initiatives. To sum up, the accomplishments of the project manifested in the initiation of more cooperative projects.

　　The themes and categories create a theoretical model that can be implemented in different regions and countries. For example, the Dead Sea, Tiberias, Eilat/Taba, and El Paso–Juárez. With the right modification, adjustments, and alterations, the 'Eilat Project' can be duplicated and applied in these regions. The initiative holds the potential to prevent illegal immigration, fill unattractive jobs and unwanted positions, and decrease unemployment rates. It is noteworthy that the situation in Europe is different. Contrary to Israel's setting, European countries deal with immigration and refugees who want to assimilate into the community. Perhaps implementing the initiative on European soil will solve unemployment issues, help overcome poverty, and strengthen the hotel industry.

Contribution to knowledge

　　The research has theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the paper incorporates different approaches and lines of thought intertwined in a single case study (i.e., integrating Jordanian workers in the hotel industry in Eilat) and produces an innovative model. The model is rooted in theoretical thought. It considers and incorporates the premise of Liberal theory, the importance of culture at the workplace, the significance of human capital management, and the influence of cross-border management on people's transport. Hence, the proposed model,

which includes various aspects (e.g., cultural, economic, managerial), maintains the potential to impact the field of international relations and European studies.

Practically, the study findings and conclusions can be implemented and executed in other regions in Israel or worldwide. The model helps future endeavors in the planning process. It contributes to the realms of knowledge, efficiency, finance, trust-building, screening, recruitment, and training. Moreover, the model yields a reliable management tool since it takes into consideration various aspects and needs, such as culture, security, economy, human resource management, and intercultural relations.

Limitation of the research

Despite the study's contribution to understanding the power of cross-cultural communication, it has several limitations. The primary limitation derives from the nature of the research paradigm and the decision to focus on a single case study. Second, semi-structured interviews and focus groups might generate social desirability. Hence, to overcome this shortcoming, no judgments were formed during meetings to allow for candid and sincere outlooks to be collected. Third, qualitative research holds high validity yet maintains a low-reliability level. Therefore, to enhance the findings' confidence, numerous approaches and methods were utilized to validate the data and display a robust body of conclusions. Thus, generalization is restricted; nonetheless, it is applicable if comparable settings are located. Fourth, the student might be defined as an involved researcher due to his vast experience in the hospitality industry. Yet, the proficiency and knowledge enabled him to find compelling data sources, locate prominent interviewees, and highlight significant outcomes of the 'Eilat project.'

To conclude, the research examines a new endeavor between two states that usually refrain from collaboration. It sheds light on the power of cross-cultural communication in cultivating feelings of trust and respect between people from different religions and nationalities. The study's significance reflects the understanding that recognizing the validity and legitimacy of an individual's cultural patterns generates honor and loyalty. The implication is that cultural aspect significantly impact people's perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs. Thus, realizing the cultural base through close and personal encounters, gratifying gestures, and pleasant experiences can overcome apprehensions, concerns, prejudice, and fear. The study demonstrates that for the endeavor to thrive, comprehension and appreciation of a culturally diverse workforce must be achieved.

Namely, working in settings with varying norms, values, views, and beliefs necessitate building a strong relationship through mutual understanding, cultural sensitivity, knowledge, and integrating diverse notions and faiths.

References

Hataley, Todd and Leuprecht, Christian. "Determinants of Cross-Border Cooperation." *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 33, No. 3 (2018): 317-328.

Rusdiyant Rusdiyant, "Collaborative Border Management as the Strategic Revitalization of State Border Management in Indonesia," *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics* 116, No. 24 (2017): 415-426.

Sallam, Moomen and Winter, Ofir. "Egypt and Israel: Forty years in the desert of cold peace." *Strategic Assessment* 20, no. 3 (2017): 21-34.

Sütalan, Zeynap. *Explaining Cold Peace in The Middle East: The Cases of Egyptian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli Peace Processes*, Doctoral dissertation. Ankara: The graduate school of social sciences of Middle East technical university, 2015.