

Challenges and Facilitators in Professional Pursuits: A Qualitative Exploration of Work Experiences in Türkiye and Perspectives of Seaborne Professionals

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Abstract

To understand the challenges and facilitators of the business climate in Türkiye from an outsider's perspective, this qualitative and conceptual research examines foreign seaborne business professionals. The main goal is to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by male and female professionals using feedback from 37 international participants working within the Türkiye business realm. The analysis was based on a comprehensive qualitative content analysis conducted with the help of Maxqda software, which helped unveil prominent themes that define the Türkiye corporate world as expressed by the views and experiences of the respondents. This paper highlight and exposes the contrasts and similarities between expatriates' and their Turkish counterparts' experiences in seaborne business in Türkiye. Therefore, it contributes to knowledge of the operational mechanics of the Turkish business environment. The outcome of this research indicates that situational diversity, as well as flexible organizational practices, contribute significantly to creating a sustainable business environment and ensuring international business success. Türkiye's business culture offers both possibilities and problems for foreign professionals. Given these circumstances, research has established that a full-fledged global business requires sensitivity to the business culture and understanding local business practices, along with areas for improvement. This study is perceived to provide valuable perspectives for entrepreneurs who aspire to facilitate and improve the business climate in Türkiye, as well as policymakers and other administrators. In addition, it contributes to more comprehensive discussions related to Türkiye's international business environment.

Keywords: Turkish seaborne business environment, Challenges and facilitators in Türkiye, Qualitative analysis of Turkish business environment, Content analysis, Grounded theory

1. Introduction

The rationale behind this research stems from a significant gap in the literature regarding the business environment of seaborne professionals in Türkiye. The growing interest in understanding how business practices adapt to different cultural and economic environments highlights the necessity of this research, and it contributes to the literature on international business, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and management by providing empirical insights into the Turkish business environment from the perspectives and experiences of foreign professionals. Understanding the Turkish business environment is critically important for

global and multinational businesses. Türkiye's geographical location, serving as a strategic bridge between Europe and Asia, is of significant importance to international business and diplomacy. This study aims to fill this gap in the existing research by providing a detailed examination of the working environment of seaborne professionals in Türkiye. This highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptation to local business practices. By leveraging insights from industry and academia, this research offers valuable perspectives for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and international managers, contributing to more comprehensive discussions related to Türkiye's international business environment.



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The general landscape of Türkiye's business world is shaped by its strategic geographic location, dynamic economy, and cultural richness, offering a unique combination of opportunities and challenges. This qualitative research explores the experiences of foreign business professionals operating in or with partners in Türkiye, focusing on identifying the facilitators and challenges they encounter. The rationale behind this research stems from the growing interest in understanding how business practices adapt to different cultural and economic environments. Türkiye offers a distinct business environment that can be both challenging and rewarding for foreign professionals. This research contributes to the literature on international business and FDI and management by providing empirical insights into the Turkish business environment from the perspectives and experiences of foreign professionals [1].

In the 1980s, Türkiye adopted economic liberalization policies and an openness to globalization. This has increased the presence of foreign investors and integrated Türkiye into international trade. Relations with the European Union, in particular, gained importance during this period. Foreign capital is concentrated mainly in the finance, telecommunications, and energy sectors. Today, Türkiye is recognized as a strategic location and dynamic market for foreign investors. As part of global economic integration, foreign investors play a significant role in diversifying the Turkish economy and accelerating technological innovation [2].

The importance of the Turkish business environment for global and multinational businesses can be assessed as follows: Türkiye's geographical location, serving as a strategic bridge between the continents of Europe and Asia, is of significant importance to international business and diplomacy. This position makes Türkiye a physical and cultural connection between the two continents. Economically, Türkiye is a significant transit point for trade and investment between the East and the West. Understanding the Turkish business environment is critically important for global and international relations. Hosting various cultural and commercial interactions throughout history, Türkiye's rich heritage shapes its business practices and position in international relations [3].

On the other hand, Türkiye's political and economic structure enables it to establish relations with developing and developed economies. Türkiye plays an active role in significant international economic platforms like the OECD and G-20. In addition, it maintains close ties with regional organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. This dual approach allows Türkiye to become an influential player in global and regional economic systems. Additionally, connections such as the customs union with the EU and NATO membership facilitate

Türkiye's integration with both the western and the Eastern blocs. Thus, understanding the Turkish business world means comprehending this multifaceted and strategic network of relationships. Türkiye's role in global trade and politics, especially regarding energy lines and logistical routes, necessitates a deep understanding of its business environment. Understanding the business environment of Türkiye in the context of the global business world and international relations can be seen not only as an economic necessity but also as a strategic advantage [4].

It is appropriate to conduct exploratory research to understand and analyze healthily the matters experienced and encountered by foreign professionals with Turkish professionals, partners, and affiliates of their companies. When the existing scientific literature is examined, it is seen that the motivation sources of foreign investors and the issue of prioritizing them are focused on [5-7]. This research, which adopts the grounded theory approach, provides a general picture of the business environment and business culture of Türkiye. Both general trends and essential themes within this context were identified from the interviews conducted [8,9]. Our research, which examines the business environment in Türkiye and the problems and perspectives that foreign maritime business professionals face when operating in this environment, leverages theories of intercultural business management and adaptation as the core theoretical basis. The theory of intercultural business management explores how to deal with relationships among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It can help shed light on how foreign professionals adjust to Türkiye's business environment and cultural challenges. In contrast, adaptation theories investigate how individuals and organizations adapt to new environmental conditions. The theory explains how expatriates can thrive or overcome problems they might experience in Türkiye's business climate and culture [10]. As this research identified, cultural sensitivity and the accommodation of Turkish business norms are vital variables to consider. This conceptual framework is intended to give insights into the complex aspects of the business environment in Türkiye as well as help understand how foreign business professionals can deal with these challenges [11].

Seaborne business professionals possess industry expertise and experience in shipping, logistics, trade, and other associated operations through the sea. Such professionals include individuals in ship management, maritime transportation, port management, maritime law, international maritime trade, maritime and port goods and services manufacturers, maritime security, and marine logistics. These professionals play significant roles where their skills are required to efficiently handle the movement

of goods and services via sea routes, resolve the challenges encountered in maritime transportation, and ensure compliance with complex rules governing global trade by sea. These professionals are vital workers who strongly influence international trade and economic indicators and have the right to receive a large amount of world trade by sea. Therefore, they were selected as the specific target group of research in the Turkish maritime business sector to help identify and analyze impediments and facilitators in the Business Environment of Türkiye. Their efficiency means they can provide recommendations and insights from various holistic and diversified perspectives.

Additionally, this paper helps explain how the findings can assist various stakeholders, such as foreign investors, policymakers, business educators, and international managers, in developing practical applications and strategies. This framework emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity and adaptation in the business world and enables foreign business professionals to develop the skills and techniques necessary to succeed in Türkiye. When the scientific literature is examined, it is generally seen that the comparative valuations of professionals and business environments stand out when deciding on investments. Since the 1970s, significant decreases in profitability rates have been observed in industrial sectors, especially in manufacturing, in developed countries. This situation is related to various social, political, and economic factors, such as production stagnation, changes in the capital-labor structure, and increased competition between domestic and international entrepreneurs [1,12].

Firms must restructure their production processes by moving to regions with lower production costs or closer to potential markets. This process has led developing countries to provide branch opportunities to multinational and small-and medium-sized enterprises in developed countries. In the 1980s, along with technological innovations in developed countries, manufacturing activities increased in intensity, leading to the globalization of some advanced technology industries. Looking at Türkiye from 1923 to the 1970s, except for a short liberalization period in 1950-53, economic policy was largely inward-looking and dependent on intergovernmental relations [13].

Opportunities for direct foreign investments and international business in Türkiye were limited during this period. However, the situation changed with the start of Türkiye's liberalization programs in 1980 and its adaptation to changes in the world economy. Türkiye became open to foreign capital, although investment values remained low compared to those in the Central and Eastern European markets [14].

Nevertheless, Türkiye's success in attracting foreign capital is noteworthy. The motivations of multinational corporations

for international production and the economic theory of this process have been addressed through an analysis of property rights and production locations [15]. Host country theories have been integrated into the economic theory of multinational corporations, and it has been emphasized that location decisions and internalization decisions continuously interact with each other [16,17].

Some studies into factors that influence FDIs have examined variables such as corruption, political risk, market size, human capital, and economic freedom. Notably, several findings indicate that although corruption negatively impacts foreign investments, it has the potential to encourage foreign investment. Another factor affecting investment is corruption in the investor's home country. The analyses thus reveal that dissimilar elements impinge on FDI performance due to their different characteristics. One of this paper's key findings is Türkiye's unique business environment, which presents opportunities and challenges for foreign professionals. The degree of adaptability to the business culture in a new market and sensitivity to local business practices can determine the success of any globalization operation. In this regard, one of the most valuable aspects is identifying the key stakeholders who will benefit from the research and determining how such findings can influence their decisions and strategies.

According to the research, Türkiye is one of the most favorable countries for business, based on its strategic location and its ability to adapt to foreign investment. The research pointed out the need to make foreign investors adaptable to Türkiye's business culture and practices. Such information can aid foreign investors in creating suitable adaptation strategies to be effective in their investment schemes in Türkiye. The findings of this research can contribute to policymakers' establishment of policies to support foreign business ventures and enhance the ease of doing business. Given the challenges and opportunities within Türkiye's business environment, policymakers can easily develop more valuable strategies. For business educators, the research offers helpful information on the peculiarities of Türkiye's business world and cultural patterns, which are essential to help them understand how these factors impact businesses in Türkiye. Therefore, the educators will use this knowledge to provide future business leaders with the skills and academic backgrounds required to meet global standards and successfully operate in other countries. Gaining insights into the Turkish business environment and culture can help international managers create an effective global-local balance in the formulation of business strategies. In connection with this, we would like to add that executives can use the results of our investigation as an effective tool for adapting to the Turkish business world. Consequently, these results may enable stakeholders to make more accurate decisions and correctly identify the business

environment in Türkiye. Therefore, to develop successful strategies.

This article examines the issues and dynamics of foreign maritime business professionals and companies' business operations in Türkiye and their Turkish counterparts. By analyzing these dynamics from both sides and exploring how local team members, partners, and employees perceive these factors, a comprehensive understanding. It is also a matter of increasing real-world significance because foreign businesses conduct their activities in various contexts influenced by unique mechanisms and perspectives that govern different markets [18].

2. Literature Review

Since the late 1970s, a significant decline in profitability rates has been observed in many industries in developed countries, particularly in the manufacturing sector. This phenomenon, including stagnation in productivity growth, disruption in the capital-labor structure, and intensifying competition among domestic and international entrepreneurs, results from complex social, political and economic factors that have emerged in developed countries. Many firms have been forced to rationalize their production processes by relocating to areas with lower production costs or greater access to potential markets.

Additionally, the development of modern communication and transportation technologies has enabled the geographical expansion of production. Consequently, many developing countries have hosted branch facilities of multinational corporations and small- and medium-sized enterprises from developed countries. Initially, this globalization process in output occurred in labor-intensive manufacturing industries. In the 1980s, due to technological innovations in developed countries, manufacturing activities increased in intensity, leading to the globalization of some advanced technology industries. Therefore, despite the economic slowdown in the 1980s, these countries received significant FDI from developed countries. However, developing countries have gradually pushed labor-intensive industries to other developing countries with lower levels of technological development and cheaper labor [19].

However, the situation in Türkiye from the establishment of the new Republic in 1923 until the late 1970s (except for the short period of liberalization in 1950-53), Türkiye had an inward-looking economic policy that was largely dependent on intergovernmental relations [9]. As in many developing countries, the Turkish public sector was the primary trade provider during the initial period. Direct foreign investments and international business in Türkiye were limited.

The environment changed in 1980 with Türkiye's stabilization, adapting to the changes in the world and the

workings of FDI and partnerships, and began implementing liberalization programs. A series of legislative changes in Türkiye liberalized the conditions for direct foreign investment, leading to a continued, even accelerated, increase in multinational business activity into the early 2000s. Despite a dramatic increase in the number of foreign capital ventures in Türkiye, the total value of foreign investment is relatively low compared to emerging markets in the Far East and Latin America. However, when evaluated in different periods, Türkiye's success in attracting foreign capital is remarkable [20].

Analyzing the current situation in Türkiye, along with the foundations and criteria of importance to FDI and foreign professionals in the existing business literature in foreign countries, the economic theory of multinational enterprise (MNE) addresses two main aspects of international production: The ownership of assets used in overseas production and the location of such production activities. Several scholars have analyzed motivations for international output using the transaction cost paradigm [15].

Cost minimization implies that a company chooses the least costly location for its production activities [16]. Thus, the elements of host country location theories have been integrated into the economic theory of MNE, where location decisions continuously interact with internalization decisions. Similarly, location factors have also been included in Dunning's eclectic paradigm of international production, consisting of ownership and internalization factors, where each group of factors moves in connection [17].

Wheeler and Moody [21] used data from the United States to conduct company-level analyses. They discovered that FDI was not significantly impacted by "corruption" in the host nation. Erramilli and Rao [22] asked 14 service companies about entering overseas markets. They examined firms' preferences for shared and complete control entry modes. One of the research's conclusions was that FDI is hampered by sovereign risk. Multinational corporations were advised against investing in host nations with a high "political risk" profile [21].

Singh and Jun [23] empirically analyzed macroeconomic and socio-political factors influencing the spatial distribution of FDI in 31 countries between 1970 and 1993. They discovered that the BERII "political risk" index positively impacted FDI [23]. The study conducted by Noorbakhsh et al. [24] investigated the correlation between a host country's level of human capital and the spatial allocation of FDI. Thirty-six developing countries from Latin America, Asia, and Africa were included in this study. The empirical results show that Human capital is one of the most significant and statistically significant predictors of FDI; human capital is becoming increasingly vital. The report also claims that political risk factors and democracy have no discernible effect on

FDI [24]. In a study published in 2002, Kolstad and Tondel examined 61 developing countries between 1989 and 2000 and found that externality variables and market size had a significant impact on FDI. Furthermore, no discernible link was discovered between socio-economic circumstances and FDI. The study found that corruption was not a significant factor. However, it affected FDI when considered alongside other control variables [25]. FDI and corruption were negatively correlated. This implies that FDI increases with corruption. Using the same corruption measure, Wei's [26] research produced results that conflict with these findings. Internal conflict, disputes between different religions and ethnic groups, political rights, civil liberties, and democratic accountability are critical factors that impact FDI. Based on these findings, nations that grant their citizens greater political and civil rights typically attract more foreign direct investors. Democracy, internal strife, and ethnic tension affect the admission of FDI. However, FDI requires more than political authority, bureaucracy, external conflicts, and the rule of law [26].

Between 1995 and 2003, Van Wyk and Lal [27] studied how institutional and macroeconomic factors affected FDI in 31 developing countries. According to the study, political risk discourages investments, whereas economic freedom encourages FDI. This study concludes that FDI increase with decreasing political risk. The findings also indicate a favorable correlation between GDP growth rate, FDI, and market size. These findings show that low inflation, rising value of the host nation's currency, and a low current account balance all promote FDI [27].

Using the panel gravity approach, Subasat and Bellos [28] examined the relationship between governance and FDI in a few Latin American countries between 1985 and 2008 [26]. The findings demonstrate how poor governance in target countries attracts more FDI. Governance variables had negative and significant coefficients, except for "democratic accountability", a correlation between high amounts of FDI and weak governance. "Democratic Accountability" was a slightly yet auspicious sign. These findings imply that Latin America and transitioning nations benefit from FDI promoted by poor governance. Additionally, a negative and marginally significant sign for the "Regulatory Quality" variable, suggesting that lax regulations do not discourage FDI. According to the findings, high levels of corruption in source nations have prompted multinational corporations to increase their investments in Latin America. The source had higher "democratic accountability" and "bureaucratic quality".

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Theoretical Framework

In this research, by adopting the Grounded Theory Approach, the methodology provides flexibility and a unique research process [29].

The Grounded Theory Approach aims to uncover an event or situation and develop a theory explaining its social processes by identifying concepts that describe the process through comparative data analysis. In Grounded Theory, data collection and analysis are expressed as interrelated processes. The approach focuses the researcher on collecting and analyzing qualitative data to understand and explain social issues. In Grounded Theory, phenomena are compared in terms of similarities and differences. Concepts are labeled, compared with pre-existing concepts, and grouped. The Grounded Theory Approach offers an exploratory and qualitative research method for understanding and explaining phenomena [30].

In this study, we examine the challenges and facilitating factors in the business world of Türkiye from the perspectives of foreign professionals, grounding our analysis primarily on two scientific theories:

The first is the Theory of Cross-Cultural Business Management, which investigates how business relationships between individuals from different cultural backgrounds are managed. This research focuses on the interaction among people from diverse cultures and how such interaction impacts business outcomes. Our research uses this theory to understand how foreign professionals adapt to Türkiye's business environment and cultural challenges. Geert Hofstede defined the dimensions of national cultures to understand how different cultures behave in work environments. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory is a framework used to measure intercultural communication in any business, institution, or individual within a social structure [31-33]. Fons Trompenaars, who extended Hofstede's work, addressed intercultural differences and challenges encountered in the business world. Trompenaars' approach focuses on various cultural dimensions, analyzing how cultures create conflict and cooperation. His dimension provide a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and business interactions. These dimensions allow business leaders and managers to develop more effective communication and collaboration strategies in different cultural contexts. Trompenaars highlighted the importance of cultural richness and diversity in business [34]. Additional research within this management theory by Edward T. Hall has developed concepts like high-context and low-context cultures, which are fundamental to intercultural communication. Hall, emphasizes the importance of awareness of these concepts and developing

culturally sensitive approaches to effective communication in different cultural contexts. His work shows that increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity are essential for successful international cooperation and communication. Understanding these two contexts in intercultural communication paves the way for more effective and meaningful interactions among people of different cultural backgrounds [22]. Hall stressed that not recognizing the differences between these two communication styles can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in international relations and intercultural interactions [35].

The second theory this study is based on is Adaptation Theory. This theory explains how individuals and organizations adapt to changing environmental conditions. In the context of business and management, it mainly focuses on cultural adaptation and organizational adaptation. John Kotter and Leonard Schlesinger have significantly contributed to organizational change and adaptation. They concentrated on how organizations should approach change processes and facilitate employee adaptation. The core elements of Kotter and Schlesinger's adaptation theory are the Causes of Resistance to Change, Change Management Strategies, the Importance of Communication, Participative Approaches, and the emphasis on Flexibility and Dynamic Management. Their approaches help organizations understand the challenges they face in change processes and manage them more effectively. This theory offers valuable guidance for managers and leaders, especially in today's rapidly changing and adaptation-demanding business world [36].

The theories and models mentioned above are widely used to understand and manage cultural differences in the global business world. This research supports foreign business professionals in developing the necessary skills and strategies to succeed in Türkiye by highlighting Türkiye's strengths and weaknesses in the business world. This study emphasizes cultural sensitivity and the importance of adapting to local business practices, highlighting the need for foreign business professionals to develop skills and strategies essential for success in Türkiye. These theories, forming the foundation of the research with their theoretical framework emphasizing cultural diversity and adaptation, provide valuable insights for foreign business professionals aiming for success in Türkiye. This study explores how foreigners conducting business in Türkiye perceive the business environment and culture. Participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the research. After posing questions, the participants were given time to gather their thoughts. The participants' opinions were recorded through interviews, and notes taken at the end of the interview were shared for confirmation [23,37].

3.2. Procedures and Sample

Data were collected from 37 participants using structured interviews during the research process. Care was taken to ensure that the participants were completely voluntary and willing, and all participants were informed about the purpose and goals of the research. The research sample consisted of participants from as many countries and sub-sectors of the maritime industry as possible to ensure diversity in the data collection. Participants were included in the study using a convenience sampling method, and interviews were conducted in a single session lasting 15-20 minutes. Interviews were conducted independently to prevent mutual influence.

Participants were from the UK, Singapore, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Spain, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Germany, India, Norway, and Pakistan. They also stated that they were in middle and upper management roles in maritime businesses. It is observed that the participants, who were interviewed through convenience sampling, were well-informed about the business environment in Türkiye due to the maritime industries they work in. Participants' companies' areas in seaborne businesses are mainly seaborne logistics, shipping agencies, ship software producers, shipowners, and consulting companies.

The responses of the participants were subject to content analysis. The analysis was conducted using Maxqda 20 The Analytics Pro software was used, and care was taken to ensure as much original coding as possible.

In analyzing interviews and participants' responses, existing literature codings were evaluated to discover themes and codes, and participants' statements were divided into meaningful smaller units and subgroups. Two evaluators and coders independently and individually coded the participants' expressions.

After the initial coding phase, the codes identified by the two evaluators were carefully compared in terms of what they represented, and a reduction and augmentation process was performed. Subsequently, the evaluators re-coded all interviews using mutually agreed codes.

Subsequently, the formula proposed by Miles and Huberman [38] $[(\text{Consensus})/(\text{Disagreement} + \text{Consensus})] \times 100$ was used to determine the consistency and evaluator reliability in these codes and themes. As a result of the analysis, 133 of the expressions evaluated from the research were in consensus, while the remaining five disagreed. Thus, the reliability coefficient between the evaluators was 96%. This acceptable level of reliability [39] was considered sufficient for the reliability of the study. In addition, the 5-coding differences between the evaluators were understood and resolved.

As a result of applying the stages of the Grounded Theory Approach, the codes mutually agreed upon by the evaluators were linked to create a higher-level structure; thus, the codes were categorized. The evaluators worked separately to determine the names of the established codes and the codes under them and then again collectively re-determined the themes and their subdivisions.

This study used MAXQDA, a robust qualitative data analysis tool, for multiple purposes, including coding and classification. The Maxqda algorithm enabled us to code qualitative data such as interview transcripts, open-ended survey responses, and focus group discussions. The codes were then organized into categories to identify patterns and themes. Text Analysis: This software helps extract essential themes, concepts, and relationships from textual data. It supports various text analysis methods, such as word frequency analysis and contextual keyword search. Memo writing: The Maxqda function for writing memos and comments. The researchers used these features to record their thoughts, reflections, and insights during the data analysis. Visualization Tools: This software includes mind mapping, concept mapping and network diagrams, which help visualize the connections between different topics and concepts. Data Organization: Maxqda helps organize qualitative data into manageable chunks and group data according to demographics, project stage or other relevant criteria. By leveraging these capabilities, we ensure a comprehensive, systematic qualitative data analysis approach, increasing the depth and reliability of the results.

4. Findings

The segmentations (themes) of foreign professionals' experiences and perceptions and the coding related to

these components are detailed in Table 1. The frequencies of these codes are also displayed in the table. Accordingly, the evaluations of professionals regarding the business environment in Türkiye have been divided into the following themes: Regulatory and government Factors, economic and financial perspectives, human factors, and Workplace.

Upon examining the codes in Table 1, it is observed that the most frequently used codes in the participants' interviews, in order of frequency, are adaptability, highly skilled labor, motivation, resilience and non-structural practices. These five codes are more prominent than the others. Therefore, evaluations related to human factors were predominantly positive (47% of all themes and codes). However, assessments concerning the workplace and Regulatory and government Factors are perceived as unfavorable.

In Figure 1, the components displayed in terms of frequency are adaptability (16%, highly skilled labor 9%, motivated 9%, non-structural policies (8%), resilient (8%), excessive uncertainty (6%), lack of rule of law (5%), regulatory difficulties (5%), and overbureaucratization (4%).

The relationships between evaluations of Turkish business life can be understood through the thickness of lines. Notably, the thickness of these lines is generally more pronounced between adaptability, resilience, motivation, highly skilled labor, and non-structural practices. In other words, participants more frequently associated these business life components with each other (Figure 2).

However, when we carefully examine the participants' statements, it is observed that the abilities and capabilities related to Turkish professionals are collectively expressed, and there is a significant concentration. For example,

Table 1. Codes and themes

Codes	Frequency	Codes	Frequency
Regulatory and Government Factors		Human Factors	
Lack of the rule of law	7	Adaptability	22
Regulatory difficulties	7	Motivated	12
Over-bureaucratization	5	Highly skilled labor	12
Government instability	4	Being resilient	11
Labor legislation advantages	1	Extraversion	3
Responsive-bureaucracy	1	Innovative	3
Economic and Financial Perspectives		Workplace	
Fertile environment	3	Non-Structural practices	11
Embracing new opportunities	3	Excessive uncertainty	8
Strong financial system	3	Chaotic order	4
Currency and exchange complexities	2	Unethical situations and demands	3
Non-existence of difficulty	2	Robust structure	4
Economic instability	1	Inadequate infrastructure	1

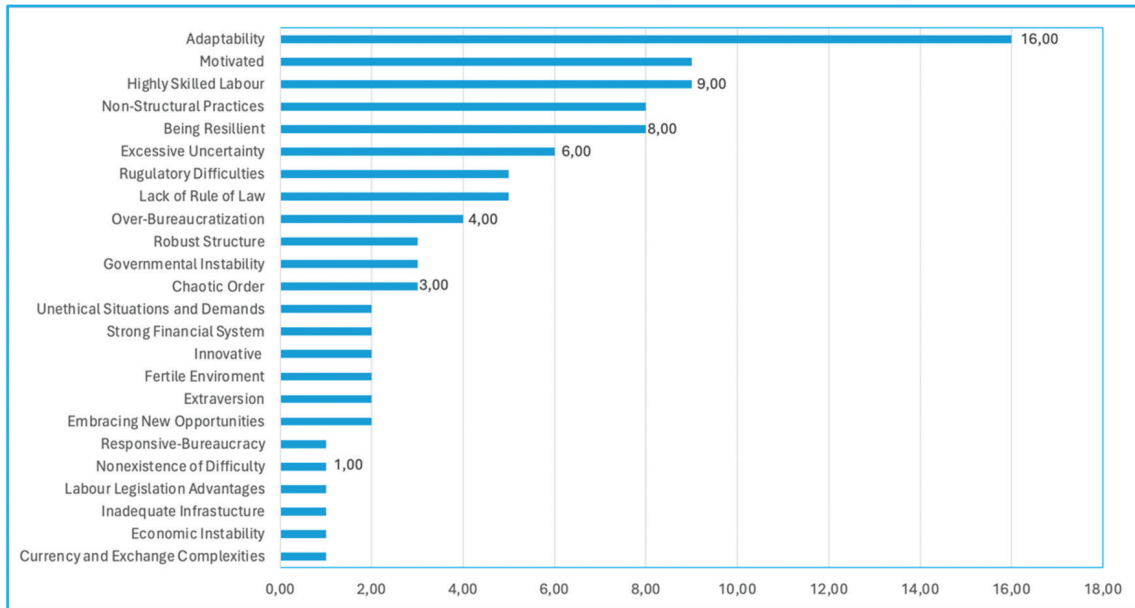


Figure 1. Code statistics

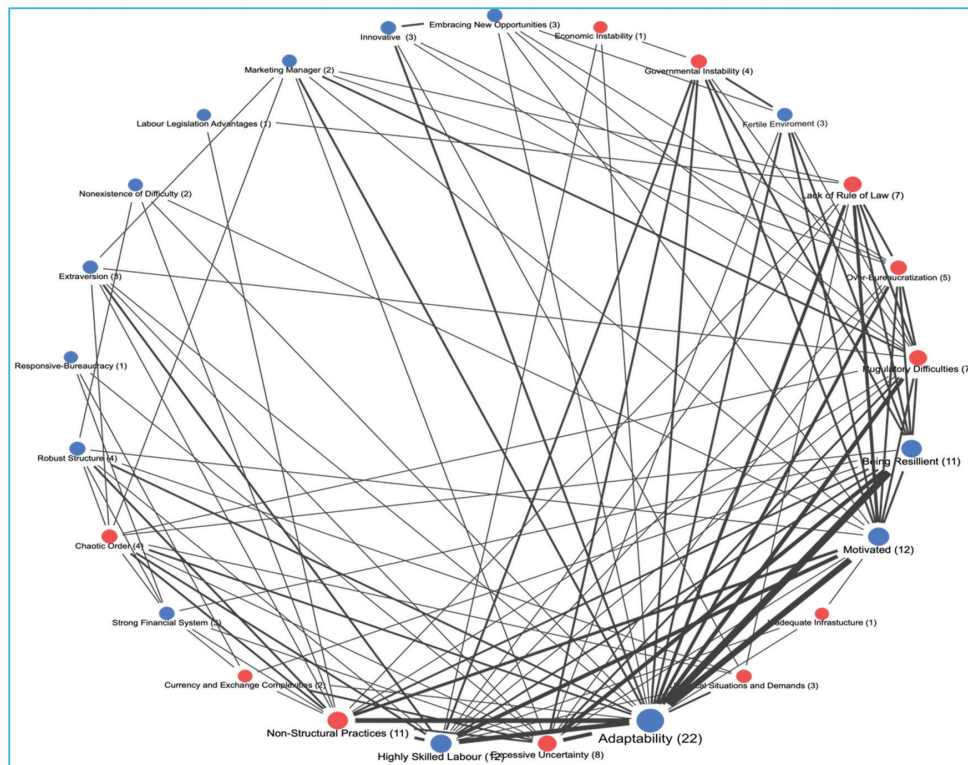


Figure 2. Relationship between codes

Participant #2’s statement is as follows: “Skilled & Educated & Hardworking Workforce. We often have the chance to business with highly educated people. Our Turkish partners are extremely experienced and talented. We can reach our team in Türkiye even on weekends and in the evening. They never quit or take a break until the job is completed”. On the

other hand, in Participant #3’s statement: “The adaptability of the workforce and the Turkish business world is quite high, despite everything, the business focus is very high// Despite the ongoing crises, it is seen that effective crisis management is developed in every event and situation, and its adaptation power is high”.

When we analyzed the coding results, we observed a high concentration of coding and factors related to human factors. Furthermore, it is noticeable that all these factors can be positively evaluated in Turkish business life. The experiences and perceptions regarding human factors in Turkish business life are positive and well-positioned compared to other elements. When we evaluate the results related to the working environment, it is observed that 27 out of the 31 codes are related to negatives in business life. Similarly, when “Regulatory & Government Factors” are evaluated, 23 out of 25 codes are related to negative factors affecting the business environment. When considering the “Economical & Financial” category, only 3 out of 15 codings can be said to exhibit negative characteristics.

5. Discussion

5.1. Interpretation of Results

This study strives to contribute to the literature on international business, FDI, and management by leveraging insights from the perspectives and experiences of foreign business professionals. This chapter seeks to provide significant insights into the Turkish business environment and Turkish Business Culture. Furthermore, it is believed to offer various experiences and viewpoints that help analyze the complexities and conveniences brought by working with Turkish business partners and in Türkiye. These insights aid in better understanding the interactions among global business strategies [38].

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The Theory of Cross-Cultural Business Management addresses how individuals from different cultural backgrounds perceive and manage business relationships. The observations and findings of participants, predominantly engaged in business within the EU, as included in this research article, distinctly illustrate how cultural awareness, diversity, and sensitivity influence modes of conducting business. This scenario serves as a fitting practical example of the proposed theory. Adaptation theory explores how individuals and organizations adjust to new environmental conditions. Specifically, cultural sensitivity and adaptation to local business practices, as observed in this study, hold significant roles in facilitating and overcoming business success. Moreover, this research underscores the emphasis in adaptation theory on adapting to environmental conditions, flexibility, and resilience. It highlights that the ability to swiftly adapt in the presence of uncertainties, unpredictability, and even chaotic environments-aspects negatively perceived in this research-is a skill developed by Turkish business professionals. This aspect demonstrates that Turkish business practices exemplify the characteristics and outcomes that support adaptation theory [40].

5.3. Managerial and Practical Implications

The study results have significant implications for managers of multinational corporations operating or considering business in Türkiye. The dynamics of the Turkish business environment, with its strengths and weaknesses, enable decision-makers to adopt proactive approaches and implement measures to maximize potential benefits.

Specific areas and topics are the focus when Turkish professionals and culture are analyzed by foreign professionals. The perception of Turkish professionals and culture, which can be summarized as adaptation, crisis management, and resilience to crises, is considered beneficial in comparison to those considering doing business in Türkiye and/or in regions including the Balkans, the Middle East, and West Asia [41].

Additionally, legislators and administrators in Türkiye need to improve certain areas to enhance business culture development, increase FDIs, and achieve a higher level of integration in Turkish business life [42]. The existence of a legal system, the effectiveness and efficiency of bureaucracy, and the creation of a more predictable business environment, as evaluated by foreign professionals, should be prioritized by the Turkish Republic’s authorities and incorporated into short- and medium-term legislative and executive programs [43,44].

Foreign business professionals and companies wishing to establish or expand their operations in Türkiye are seen to benefit from conducting detailed risk analyses on matters evaluated in the research under the headings of A- “Regulatory & Government Factors”, B- “Economical/Financial Perspective”, and C- “Workplace”. This approach can prevent potential difficulties and facilitate the development of healthier business plans, growth strategies in Türkiye, and business development. Furthermore, under D- “Human Factors”, developing plans for adapting and effectively utilizing the skilled Turkish workforce and providing training to align existing management with the Turkish business environment and its people are seen as beneficial [45,46].

6. Limitations of Study and Future Studies

This research contributes significantly to both theory and practice. However, it has certain limitations. First, the use of non-probability sampling techniques in this research limits the generalizability of the findings. The sample size in this research needs to be more prominent due to difficulties in attracting competent business professionals and convincing them to participate. For the results to be more widely applicable, future researchers should consider replicating this study with a more extensive and diverse sample, including business professionals from different sectors and

regions. A comparative analysis with other countries or a quantitative approach to validate the qualitative findings could be considered.

Additionally, in this study, comparative analyses can be conducted with quantitative research on the prominent characteristics of Turkish business professionals and areas for improvement in Turkish business life. Such research can also be expanded to influence policymakers and civil society organizations.

7. Conclusion

The research's exploratory nature makes it possible to arrive at tentative conclusions based on the observations and experiences of foreign seaborne business professionals in Türkiye. Furthermore, information obtained from the interviews provides a basis on which more rigorous investigations can be built in the future. Türkiye, with its location bridging Europe and Asia, not only offers advantages as a part of the EU Customs Union agreements but is also thought to provide a suitable and effective business environment for foreign partners and investors, thanks to its talented and accessible workforce and dynamic business climate. As far as can be seen from the experiences and perceptions of foreign professionals, the Turkish seaborne business world and culture emphasize vital aspects like a skilled and efficient workforce and resilience to crises, which lawmakers and administrators prioritize. The international nature of maritime affairs and maritime trade indicates that foreign professionals involved in maritime activities provide invaluable sources of experience and knowledge about the Turkish business world. However, there is a need to prioritize and work on areas that need improvement in Turkish business life and its elements in terms of administrative, legal, and structural aspects. The governance and regulatory factors in Türkiye can address prominent issues such as economic/financial perspectives and workplace conditions, working conditions, administrative order, and legal matters by developing skills and "strategy improvements" while considering vital aspects like adaptability, resilience, and motivation. In this context, the success of foreign business professionals in Türkiye depends on their thorough understanding of the current situation. Therefore, foreign investors and professionals with high situational awareness can produce better and more effective results in Türkiye.

Footnotes

Authorship Contributions

Concept design: Ö. Sert, and İ. S. Mert, Data Collection or Processing: Ö. Sert, Analysis or Interpretation: Ö. Sert, and İ. S. Mert, Literature Review: Ö. Sert, and İ. S. Mert, Writing, Reviewing and Editing: Ö. Sert.

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