

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS CAUSED BY COVID-19 IN THE INTERCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT WITH REFERENCE TO ECONOMIC FACTORS

Željka Kadlec

Virovitica University of Applied Sciences, Department of Economics, Virovitica, Croatia

e-mail: zeljka.kadlec@vuv.hr

ORCID:0000-0001-7484-4933

Marija Žunić

Virovitica University of Applied Sciences, Department of Economics, Virovitica, Croatia

e-mail: marija.zunic@vuv.hr

ORCID: 0000-0003-4845-6915

Marijana Lovrenović

Drava Pulp, d.o.o., Croatia

e-mail: marijana3108@gmail.com

ORCID:0000-0002-4716-098X

© 2021 Željka Kadlec, Marija Žunić, Marijana Lovrenović

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

Quote as: Kadlec, Ž., Žunić, M., and Lovrenović, M. (2021). Analysis of the impact of the crisis caused by Covid-19 in the intercultural environment with reference of the economic factors. *Financial Sciences*, 26(2).

DOI: 10.15611/fins.2021.2.04

JEL Classification: G15

Abstract: The purpose of this paper was to determine how much the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic affected economic factors globally in the intercultural environment. The subject of the research refers to the analysis of the impact of the crisis on economic factors (foreign trade, GDP, GNP) of selected countries (Italy, Germany, Russia, China, and Croatia). In addition, special attention was given to the intercultural characteristics of the observed countries (intercultural communication, intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity and intercultural conflicts). The content analysis as a qualitative method examined publicly available official documents related to the factors and characteristics observed. The contribution of the paper refers to the analysis of the situation of the observed countries by connecting the key elements needed for further action.

Keywords: economic factors, interculturalism, Covid-19 pandemic.

1. Introduction

At the end of 2019, the Covid-19 virus appeared in China, which in 2020 spread around the world. A global threat was created, which caused problems in the global economy, such as rising unemployment, stagnant markets, a decrease in tourist demand and others. Under the influence of the crisis, many industries have seen a decline in production, which led to suspending their activities. The manufacturing sector reduced its operations, exports and imports of goods were kept to a minimum, which therefore affected national economies. In addition, almost all European countries introduced some form of restricted population movement, yet the pandemic crisis has continued to spread around the world. Today, there is still uncertainty and risk related to the functioning of the economy and society as a whole, due to the continued crisis in all the economic sectors.

The main issue of this article was to show how the global crisis affects various economic factors that are important for the functioning of society, the connectivity of transport, and the involvement of tourism and culture. The article investigates the possible implementation of growth and stabilisation strategies, in order to normalise the business activity of the observed countries as soon as possible, and to combat the negative consequences of the Covid19 pandemic, which differ among countries. The paper aimed to point out how and to what extent the crisis has affected the interculturalism of certain countries. In explaining how economic factors affect the business operations of certain countries, an analysis of their GNPs and GDPs was conducted, and foreign trade analysed under its influence of the crisis. Next, the impact of the crisis on the operations of selected countries (Italy, Germany, Russia, China and Croatia) was explained, and the potential causes of the crisis situation and the possibilities for resolving them were presented. A vital part of the paper refers to the intercultural aspects in the business activities of some countries and the opportunities facing them regarding successful crisis management in an intercultural environment, which will allow future analyses and comparisons to create stable and prosperous economies.

2. The impact of economic factors on the business activity of culturally diverse countries

The main priorities of economic development are to increase the goods and benefits in society associated with productivity growth, disposable income growth, better social welfare and healthcare, high employment and greater exports and competitiveness of the economy. The basic economic indicators which are key to economic development are highlighted: gross domestic product, annual growth rate of gross domestic product, per capita income, purchasing power of the population, unemployment rates, fiscal and monetary policy, inflation rates, interest rates, exchange rate of the

national currency, price levels, size of trade deficit of infrastructural conditions, and the possible economic integration of the country. The success of the economy largely depends on the success, profitability and competitiveness of companies that are an integral part of the particular economy. Sundać, Škalamera-Alilović and Babić (2016) singled out intellectual capital, which is the essence of a company's new economic success, depending on intangible factors such as quality, promptness, flexibility, design, image and especially information and knowledge.

2.1. Analysis of GNP as an economic factor of selected countries

Gross National Product (GNP) can be described as the value of completed final goods and services produced by domestic factors of production within a given period, whether in the country or abroad (Zagreb Innovation Center, 2022). GNP is commonly calculated by taking the sum of personal consumption expenditure, private domestic investment, government expenditure, net exports, and any income earned by residents from overseas investments, minus income earned within the domestic economy by foreign residents. Net exports represent the difference between what a country exports minus any imports of goods and services (Barnier, 2022). Real GNP shows its production value at constant prices from one year, so it only expresses changes in the quantities of goods and services produced. It differs from GDP (Gross Domestic Product) because it takes into account the value of final goods and services produced by all citizens of a country, regardless of where these goods and services are created (Zagreb Innovation Center, 2022). GNP is related to another important economic measure called Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which takes into account all the output produced within a country's borders regardless of who owns the means of production. GNP starts with GDP, adds residents' investment income from overseas investments, and subtracts foreign residents' investment income earned within a country (Barnier, 2022 according to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Concepts and Methods of the US National Income and Product Accounts," pp. 26 to 28, accessed 3 Jan 2022). As a broad measure of overall domestic production, it functions as a comprehensive scorecard of a given country's economic health. Although GDP is typically calculated on an annual basis, it is sometimes calculated on a quarterly basis as well. In the US, for example, the government releases an annualised GDP estimate for each fiscal quarter and also for the calendar year. The individual data set is adjusted for price changes and is, therefore, net of inflation (Fernando, 2022, according to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis. "Gross Domestic Product", accessed 28 Jan 2022). The calculation of a country's GDP encompasses all private and public consumption, government outlays, investments, additions to private inventories, paid-in construction costs, and the foreign balance of trade (exports are added to the value and imports are subtracted) (Fernando, 2022).

With the onset of the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic during the first quarter of 2020, there was major disruption of all spheres of social and economic life

worldwide. In February 2020, Italy was the first European country to be hit hard by the pandemic, which then spread globally. The economy suffered a massive shock as a result of the national lockdown. GNP in Italy in December 2020 amounted to USD 2.167.459 billion and increased compared to September 2020 (USD 1.997.845 billion). Italy's GNP data are updated quarterly, reaching a peak of USD 2.167.459 billion in December 2020, up from a record low in June 2001 (USD 430.685 billion).¹ Germany's GNP in December 2020 amounted to USD 1.072.746 billion and increased compared to September 2020 (USD 1.014.090 billion). Data on Germany's GNP are also updated quarterly, reaching a peak of USD 1.072.746 billion in December 2020, and a record low of USD 443,057 in June 1991.² Russia's GNP in December 2019 amounted to USD 1.466.356 billion and showed an increase compared to December 2018 (USD 1.629.191 billion). Data on Russia's GNP are updated annually. In 2013, it reached a peak of USD 2.212.869 billion and a record low of USD 188.191 billion in 1999.³ China's GNP in December 2020 amounted to USD 14.625.571 billion, an increase compared to December 2019 (USD 14.248.939 billion). GNP data for China are updated annually, and it reached a peak of USD 14.625.571 billion in 2020 and a record low of USD 43.521 billion in 1957.⁴ Croatia's GNP in December 2019 amounted to USD 59.830 billion, which marked a decrease compared to December 2018 (USD 60.478 billion). Data on GNP in Croatia are updated annually, with the highest level in 2008 of USD 67.939 billion and a record low of USD 21.230 billion in 2000.⁵ The ratio of GNP, GNP per capita and growth rate of the observed countries over a five-year period can be seen in Table 1, being the basis for future analyses and comparisons to create stable and prosperous economies.

Table 1. Comparison of GNP analysis of observed countries

GNP (billions of US \$)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Italy	2,004.02	1,938.26	1,898.26	2,045.19	2,092.16	1,917.86
Germany	3,740.02	3,646.62	3,612.25	3,912.54	4,038.53	3,911.49
Russia	1,725.23	1,426.95	1,352.32	1,505.18	1,651.80	1,565.77
China	10,894.02	11,398.88	12,111.24	13,371.98	14,519.06	14,880.75
Croatia	54.51	51.69	52.28	57.54	60.94	57.44

¹ CEIC, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/italy/gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).

² CEIC, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/germany/gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).

³ Macrotrends, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/RUS/russia/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05. 2021).

⁴ CEIC, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/china/gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).

⁵ CEIC, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/croatia/gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).

Table 1, cont.

GNP per capita (US \$)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Italy	33,000	31,970	31,370	33,850	34,860	32,200
Germany	45,780	44,280	43,700	47,190	48,600	46,990
Russia	11,780	9,730	9,210	10,250	11,250	10,690
China	7,940	8,270	8,740	9,600	10,390	10,610
Croatia	12,970	12,380	12,680	14,080	14,990	14,190
Growth Rate (%)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Italy	0.07	2.29	1.93	1.49	0.07	-8.72
Germany	1.78	2.45	2.48	1.59	0.57	-4.76
Russia	-1.21	0.29	1.87	2.94	1.26	-1.99
China	6.50	6.82	7.29	6.26	6.27	-
Croatia	3.96	1.01	5.07	2.81	2.79	-6.52

Source: own work based on different sources—adapted according to:

- <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ITA/italy/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021);
- <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/DEU/germany/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021);
- <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/RUS/russia/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021);
- <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/CHN/china/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021);
- <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/HRV/croatia/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).

2.2. Analysis of GDP as an economic factor of selected countries

GDP is a macroeconomic indicator that accompanies a country's performance appraisals. It can be described as the total value achieved by the production of all final goods in the economy in a certain period of time, usually one year. With the movement of GDP, experts know whether the economy is expanding or declining and how fast the economy is growing compared to other countries. Economic policies depend on GDP and its short-term forecasts, where GDP can be calculated through production, consumption and income. GDP's calculation methodology is internationally harmonised and calculated in the same way, which enables comparisons at international level. According to Obadić and Tica (2016) and Krueger (2009), the calculation of GDP is possible with a production, consumption and income approach.

Italy ranks 8th in terms of nominal GDP in the world and 13th in terms of real GDP. According to the Italian authorities and Eurostat, in 2019 the balance of payments in Italy reached 1.6% of GDP, while the gross national debt amounted to 134.8% of GDP. According to the Stability Programme for 2020, Italy planned a deficit of 10.4% of GDP and a debt of 155.7% of GDP. Data for 2019 point to insufficient

progress in aligning with the debt reduction benchmark. In considering all factors related to GDP, the European Commission took into account all relevant factors and the strong economic shock of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁶ Growth was estimated at USD 2,610,563 trillion for the period to the end of 2021, which represents an increase of 5.2%, which would allow the continuation of positive trends in GDP growth, although in 2020 there was a decline of 10.6% due to crises caused by the pandemic Covid-19.⁷ Germany is among the top five countries on the global GDP scale, and among the 20 countries with the highest GDP per capita as one of the leading exporters and importers. Germany has a low national debt of about 60% of GDP, which is steadily declining; it also has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the European Union. All the signs seem to point to a very bright future for the German economy, and the pandemic Covid-19 should not affect the economy too much. However, the country has been battling with a shortage of skilled labour for some time, and many companies are desperately looking for interns. This is partly due to the very low population growth, but also the growing unpopularity of apprenticeships. Germany is approaching the nominal estimate of GDP for the period 2021 at USD 4.31 trillion, and the PPP⁸ estimate was USD 4.74 trillion by the end of 2021.⁹ Russia's GDP accounts for 1.42% of the world economy, and in 2020 it declined by 3.0% compared to the contractions of 3.8% in the global economy and 5.4% in advanced economies, according to leading World Bank economists. Russia's GDP growth was projected at 3.2% in 2021, followed by growth forecasts of 3.2% and 2.3% in 2022 and 2023, according to the latest World Bank economic report. The global economic recovery, i.e. higher oil prices and soft domestic monetary conditions in 2021, is expected to support a recovery driven by household consumption and public investment. Nominal GDP in 2021 was estimated at USD 1.71 trillion.¹⁰ In the first quarter of 2020, the Chinese economy declined by 6.8% due to the impact of the pandemic. Despite a turbulent start to the year, China was the only major economy to record growth in 2020, albeit the weakest in decades, at 2.3%. As China brought the Covid-19 pandemic under control, economic growth recovered quickly. According to the averaged projections in April 2021, China's GDP was expected to grow by 8.6%. In the first quarter of 2021, the Chinese economy grew by a record 18.3% compared to the same quarter last year, and nominal GDP for 2021 is estimated at

⁶ European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2020:0535:FIN:HR:PDF> (21.05.2021).

⁷ European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2020:0535:FIN:HR:PDF> (21.05.2021).

⁸ Purchasing power parity (PPP) is the measurement of prices in different countries that uses the prices of certain goods to compare the absolute purchasing power of the currencies of those countries.

⁹ Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/295444/germany-gross-domestic-product/> (26.05.2021).

¹⁰ World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/05/26/russia-s-economic-recovery-gathers-pace-says-new-world-bank-report> (26.05.2021).

USD 16.64 trillion.¹¹ Its high reliance on tourism makes Croatia very vulnerable to adverse external shocks such as the current Covid-19 pandemic. Croatia's GDP decline of 8.4% in 2020 was one of the largest in the European Union and Central Asia. Therefore, EU funding from various sources aimed at restoring the economy and overcoming crises should play a key role in supporting the country's economic recovery. In 2019, the GDP of the Republic of Croatia amounted to USD 60.75 billion.¹² Table 2 shows a comparison of GDP, GDP per capita and growth rate as an economic factor of selected countries over a five-year period.

Table 2. Comparison of GDP as an economic factor of selected countries

GDP (billions of US \$)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Italy	1,836.640	1,877.070	1,961.800	2,092.140	2,004.910	1,886.450
Germany	3,357.590	3,469.850	3,672.600	3,963.770	3,861.120	3,806.060
Russia	1,363.480	1,276.790	1,574.200	1,657.330	1,687.450	1,483.500
China	11,061.550	11,233.280	12,310.410	13,894.820	14,279.940	14,722.730
Croatia	49.530	51.600	55.480	61.380	60.750	55.970
GDP per capita (US \$)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Italy	30,242	30,961	32,407	34,626	33,567	31,676
Germany	41,103	42,136	44,553	47,811	46,468	45,724
Russia	9,313	8,705	10,720	11,287	11,498	10,127
China	8,067	8,148	8,879	9,977	10,217	10,500
Croatia	11,782	12,361	13,452	15,014	14,944	13,828
Growth Rate (%)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Italy	0.78	1.29	1.67	0.94	0.29	-8.87
Germany	1.49	2.23	2.60	1.27	0.56	-4.90
Russia	-1.97	0.19	1.83	2.81	2.03	-2.95
China	7.04	6.85	6.95	6.75	5.95	2.30
Croatia	2.43	3.50	3.44	2.81	2.86	-8.37

Source: own work based on different sources—adapted according to: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/v1201202/gdp-italy-current-prices/> (21.05.2021); <https://www.statista.com/statistics/295444/germany-gross-domestic-product/> (26.05.2021); <https://tradingeconomics.com/russia/gdp> (26.05.2021); <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview> (26.05.2021).

¹¹ World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview> (26.05.2021).

¹² World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/croatia/overview> (26.05.2021).

GDP values in the five-year period are expressed in trillions of US dollars and it can be concluded that China is by far the leading country in terms of GDP, and in 2020 it managed to indicate a stable economy that can recover more easily from the pandemic and its effects. On the other hand, Croatia is in the worst position among the observed countries due to the lowest GDP, but has a similar path of GDP over time (although much lower than other countries), which is a positive trend in its development.

2.3. Foreign trade of Italy, Germany, Russia, China and Croatia

Interactions between supply and demand, trade in goods and services, surpluses and deficits in an economy open to the world market, characterise foreign trade. All countries have the goal of making as much profit as possible in their GDP based on the placement of goods and services on foreign markets (Kovačević & Sabolović, 2002). In a narrower sense, foreign trade means the exchange of goods, while the exchange of services is called invisible exchange and encompasses a very broad meaning (Matić, 2004). The key differences between internal and external trade are:

- different monetary systems in different countries,
- political borders of individual foreign trade partner countries,
- international immobility of production factors,
- specificity of foreign trade in greater geographical distances that lead to higher transport costs (Babić & Babić, 2000).

According to ISTAT¹³, out of a total of 195,745 export companies in Italy, about 45% are active in the manufacturing industry, which has traditionally been a key sector for Italian exports, especially for machinery, fashion and luxury goods, and furniture. With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the IMF estimates that Italian exports dropped by 17.8% and imports follow a similar trend of – 19%. They predicted that both indicators would recover during 2021. Italy's main trading partners were Germany (12.2%), France (10.5%), the United States (9.6%), Switzerland (5.5%) and the United Kingdom (5.2%). The main countries for Italian imports were Germany (16.5%), France (8.7%), China (7.5%) and the Netherlands (5.4%).¹⁴ German trade accounted for 88.1% of GDP, according to the World Bank in 2019, and was the third largest importer and exporter in the world. Germany is one of the world's largest car exporters, accounting for just under 19% of total car exports worldwide, but also exports parts of motor vehicles, machinery, medicines and aircraft. According to IMF estimates, German exports in 2020 dropped 12% year-on-year, while imports followed a similar trend – 8.4%. Improvements were expected in 2021 for exports by 9% and imports by 7.7%. Germany's main trading partner

¹³ ISTAT – Central Bureau of Statistics of Italy.

¹⁴ Santandertrade, https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/italy/foreign-trade-in-figures?url_de_la_page=%2Fen%2Fportal%2Fanalyse-markets%2Fitaly%2Fforeign-trade-in-figures&actualiser_id_banque=oui&id_banque=0&memoriser_choix=memoriser (28.05.2021).

was the European Union, which accounted for about 68.2% of exports and 67.8% of imports. At international level, the main export destinations in 2021 were the USA (8.9%), China (7.3%), and the United Kingdom (5.9%), while imports were in most cases from China (10%), the Netherlands (7.9%), the US (6.6%), France (6%) and Poland (5.2%). Germany is one of the most open G7 economies.¹⁵ Russia is one of the European Union's main trading partners. Since Russia joining the WTO in 2012, EU-Russia trade relations have been encompassed by the WTO multilateral rules. It is the fifth largest trading partner of the European Union, accounting for 4.8% of the EU's total global trade in 2020. The EU is Russia's largest trading partner, accounting for 37.3% of its total global trade in 2020; 36.5% of Russia's imports come from the EU, and 37.9% of its exports go to the EU. Russia's main buyers are China (13.4% of exports), the Netherlands (10.5%), Germany (6.6%), Belarus (5.1%), and Turkey (5%), while its very important suppliers are China with (21.9%) of imports, Germany (10.2%), Belarus (5.5%), USA (5.4%) and Italy (4.4%).¹⁶ Russia's exports in December 2020 decreased by 9.16% compared to December 2019, while imports increased by USD 1.12 billion, or 4.83%, from 23.1 billion to USD 24.2 billion.¹⁷ Thanks to a huge trade surplus in recent years, China has become the world's largest exporter and ranks second among the world's largest importers. Although it is known for its strict policy, China is open to foreign trade, which accounted for 35.7% of its GDP in 2019, according to data from the World Bank in 2020.¹⁸ China was one of the few economies with a positive trade growth in 2020, a period affected by the pandemic Covid-19 crisis, when exports grew by 3.6%, while imports decreased by 0.7%. ASEAN¹⁹ was China's largest trading partner, with a combined trade volume, growing 7% year-on-year. Other major and important trading partners of China in 2021 were the European Union (5.3%), the United States (8.8%), Japan (1.2%) and the Republic of Korea (0.7%).²⁰ In 2019, Croatia was the world's 78th largest economy in terms of GDP, and currently 75th in total exports and 68 in total imports, and one of the 59 top economies of GDP per capita and 37th most complex economy, according to the ECI. The countries to which Croatia exports the most are: Italy (USD 2.35 billion), followed by Germany (USD 2.24 billion), Slovenia (USD 1.82 billion), Bosnia and Herzegovina (USD 1.63 billion) and Austria (USD 1.01 billion). Croatia imports mainly from Italy (USD 4.13 billion), followed by Germany (USD 4.12

¹⁵ Santandertrade, <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/germany/foreign-trade-in-figures> (28.05.2021).

¹⁶ Santandertrade, <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/russia/foreign-trade-in-figures> (28.05.2021).

¹⁷ OEC, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/rus> (30.06.2021).

¹⁸ Santandertrade, https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/china/foreign-trade-in-figures?url_de_la_page=%2Fen%2Fportal%2Fanalyse-markets%2Fchina%2Fforeign-trade-in-figures&&actualiser_id_banque=oui&id_banque=0&memoriser_choix=memoriser (29.05.2021).

¹⁹ ASEAN (*Association of Southeast Asian Nations*).

²⁰ Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-01/14/c_139667906.htm (29.05.2021).

billion), Slovenia (USD 3.25 billion), Hungary (USD 2.17 billion) and Austria (USD 1.65 billion).²¹ In the period from January to April 2020, the coverage of imports by exports was 61.3%.²² The level of exports in 2020 compared to 2019 was almost the same, i.e. exports decreased by 0.7%, and imports by 6.9%, while the deficit of foreign trade in 2020 decreased by about 17%.²³ Table 3 shows the percentages of decline or growth of selected countries in terms of imports and exports for the period 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 3. The impact of the crisis caused by the pandemic Covid-19 on imports and exports of selected countries for the period 2020

	Import (2020)	Export (2020)
Italy	↓ 19.00%	↓ 17.80%
Germany	↓ 8.40%	↓ 12.00%
Russia	↑ 4.83%	↓ 9.16%
China	↓ 0.70%	↑ 3.60%
Croatia	-6.9%	-0.7%

Source: own work based on different sources – adapted according to: Santandertrade, https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/italy/foreign-trade-in-figures?url_de_la_page=%2Fen%2Fportal%2Fanalyse-markets%2Fitaly%2Fforeign-trade-in-figures&&actualiser_id_banque=oui&id_banque=0&memoriser_choix=memoriser (28.05.2021); <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/germany/foreign-trade-in-figures> (28.05.2021); <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/rus> (30.06.2021).; http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-01/14/c_139667906.htm (29.05.2021); <https://www.tportal.hr>, <https://www.tportal.hr/biznis/clanak/izvoz-u-2020-godini-pao-za-0-7-posto-a-uvoz-za-6-9-posto-20210625> (30.06.2021).

The table shows that Italy had the largest decline in 2020 in terms of imports and exports and was one of the most negatively affected countries in the EU. The decline was also visible in other countries. Russia was the only country with an increase in imports of almost 5%, and China was the only country with a positive export trend of about 4%, and which has ‘benefited’ from the pandemic Covid-19, as did not fall into crisis and quickly recovered, precisely because the exports increased and there was a great demand for various medical and other products originating from China.

²¹ OEC, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/hrv> (29.05.2021).

²² Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia, https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2020/04-02-01_03_2020.htm (29.05.2021).

²³ [tportal.hr](https://www.tportal.hr), <https://www.tportal.hr/biznis/clanak/izvoz-u-2020-godini-pao-za-0-7-posto-a-uvoz-za-6-9-posto-20210625> (30.06.2021).

2.4. Intercultural aspects in the business of selected countries

Piršl (2007) stated that intercultural aspects of business and communication can be divided into three groups: perceptual processes, verbal communication and non-verbal communication. These three groups belong to the constituent elements of intercultural communication. Social perception is the process of helping create a social reality that is unique, giving meaning to objects and events that are part of the environment. Within an organisation it can be described as the form in which culture has organised itself and its institutions, which affects the way members of a particular culture perceive the world and how they communicate. Verbal communication is not just about the tone of speaking and addressing others, but also includes internal elements such as thinking and understanding the comprehension of individual words used during a conversation. Each culture has its own characteristics, which describe its cultural activity, and on this basis, language is the primary means of its culture with which it interprets the transmission of the characteristics of its culture. Language enables a sense of secure connection and togetherness in interaction with other members of their culture (Bedeković, 2010). Although non-verbal communication is given less importance, the recipient of the message pays more attention to this form than to oral or written communication. According to Rouse and Rouse (2005), the psychologist A. Mehrabian noted that nonverbal parts of a message may in some cases be more important than the features of spoken words, and he divided the message into a verbal, sound, and an expressive message. Non-verbal channels, unlike verbal channels, convey attitudes and emotional relationships. Successful communication means a combination of verbal and non-verbal ways of communication, which can fully understand the message, attitude or emotions of a certain group of people (Benjak & Požgaj Hadži, 2005).

According to Vujić, Ivaniš and Bojić (2012), Italy is a country that keeps family ties and is prone to non-compliance, avoidance and manipulation of regulations during business contacts. Therefore, one-third of economic activities take place through the 'grey' or 'black' market. Business culture in Italy presents the characteristics of a classic organisation with a chairman at the head of the board under which there is the managing director, and does not strive for a clearly written and formulated strategic plan. Authority is transferred personally to trusted individuals, and informally through the organisation. It is said that in Italy, a title or position in a business entity is not a measurable indicator of an individual's actual knowledge; "About management structure and style, Italian companies tend to have a pyramidal hierarchy; final decisions are centralised and taken by the persons positioned in the upper levels of the pyramid. Employees also have a great respect for their bosses and they tend to look for consensus with their colleagues."²⁴ Italians are very open to

²⁴ Management structure and style – Italy. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).

different comments, opinions and ideas, and it is possible that the decisions that were agreed upon at the meeting will never be implemented. For a successful business career, family ties are important, as well as being a member of the ruling political party. Italians can be open, curious and tolerant at their own expense. They love humor and good mood, they also love irony and jokes at their own expense. It is very important for them to enjoy life, food and work (Vujić, Ivaniš, & Bojić, 2012). Italians are known for using most body language out of all European nations.²⁵ “The ability to use the right language and the right gestures when communicating is very important, especially in Italy. Hand gestures and personal contacts are a feature of Italian conversations. If you move away or keep your distance, this can be considered unfriendly. Italians are often guided by their feelings and trust is very important in establishing a good business relationship. During a meeting, try not to create a sense of urgency since this can appear rude or a weakness. You should make small talk and demonstrate your interest in Italian food, art, fashion or sports.”²⁶ During face-to-face communication, Italians tend to gesture to emphasise their speech. According to a popular joke, to stop an Italian talking just block his/her hands. They are also very tactile: upon meeting and leaving, embraces and kisses are common between close friends and relatives. Eye contact is vital because it is considered to be a sign of interest, openness and frankness, whereas looking away is not appropriate and would send negative signals. Business cards can be exchanged at any time during a meeting. Italian business cards normally contain all important business information including contact details, business position, education degree and/or professional titles. Sometimes, such titles are crossed out when the card is handed over. This is to indicate that a less formal relationship has been established and the formal title is not required when addressing your Italian partner.²⁷ In personal contacts, Italians generally establish relaxed personal relationships, often from the very first acquaintance; they also tend to be eloquent and curious. Questions about you, your family and your personal interests are all possible topics of conversation. Be aware, however, that this does not necessarily mean that you and your business have gained their trust. In fact, during the earlier contacts, the establishment of trust in a business relationship is as relevant as the presentation of a business project.²⁸

²⁵ Doing business in Italy. (2022). Today Translations, Consult Advise Translate, <https://www.todaytranslations.com/consultancy-services/business-culture-and-etiquette/doing-business-in-italy/> (02.04.2022).

²⁶ Business communication – Italy. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).

²⁷ Face-to-face communication – Italy. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).

²⁸ Business Relationship – Italy. (2019): 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).

The Professional Employment Organisation (PEO) emphasises the importance of making the right impression with the right people is the key to success in Italy, and it is important to back this up with the right research on the market and potential business associates. It is vital to become acquainted with the business culture of the country where one works.²⁹

In Germany, trade unions have great independence and power, and there is often a trade union representative in the management of business entities; trade unions are serious partners both for employers and the state. Business power and authority remain in the hands of a small number of people at the top of the company. All managers and employees are required to behave professionally according to the work process and perform tasks, and to do everything on the basis of prescribed rules and procedures (Vujić, Ivaniš and Bojić, 2012). It is required that German is spoken when making a deal, and English can be used in informal socialising. German managers are disciplined and work hard, and they strictly separate career from private life.³⁰ Meetings are formal and planned in advance, and it is necessary to avoid presenting unprepared and unargued views, dogmatic reflections or unformed ideas (Vujić, Ivaniš, & Bojić, 2012). First impressions are very important, and may impact upon the outcome of business relations with one's German counterpart. Ample personal distance is found between speakers in a conversation. Eye contact is expected and respected, but uninterrupted eye contact can be awkward for those not used to such ways, however eye contact signals attention and interest in a conversation. On the other hand, avoiding eye contact may be interpreted as conveying the opposite message. German behaviour in public is generally reserved and formal, thus waving and shouting at a person who is far away may attract negative attention. Germans enjoy quietness and privacy, and while they may often close their doors yet will be happy to receive you if you knock on their door. A closed door does not necessarily mean that the person cannot be disturbed. Germans may show their appreciation of a presentation at the end of a business meeting by rapping their knuckles against the table top.³¹ Gestures and styles of conversation may vary between one's own country and Germany. Topics and gestures deemed normal and acceptable in one's own country, could possibly be viewed as taboo here. Such errors in communication may have a serious impact on the success of the negotiation process. While Germany is an extremely culturally aware nation, they also have expectations when it comes to others understanding their culture as an independent country – hence preparation is a must in order to build a positive image from the beginning of negotiations. To become successful as a cross-cultural communicator in Germany:

²⁹ Italy Work Culture. (2021). Bradford Jacobs, <https://www.bradfordjacobs.com/countries/italy-work-culture/> (02.04.2022).

³⁰ Business forum, www.poslovniforum.hr/about/bon-ton.asp (05.06.2021).

³¹ Face-to-face communication – Germany. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/western-europe/business-culture-in-germany/business-communication-in-germany/> (01.04.2022).

- Remember that while your own culture provides an acceptable framework for behaviour and belief, your preferences and behaviour are culturally based and not necessarily the 'correct' or the only ones.
- Become sensitive to a range of verbal and non-verbal behaviour.
- Have an open mind to other views and ways of doing things.
- Remember there are no universal gestures.³²

Germans value order, privacy and punctuality. They are prudent, hardworking and industrious. Germans respect perfectionism in all areas of business and private life, and in their approach to work they tend to focus on achieving the task at hand. This, coupled with their well-defined structures, implies that interpersonal relationships play a secondary role in business dealings. There is a strict separation between private life and work in Germany and therefore it takes time to forge more personal relationships. Business relationships with Germans are often based on mutual advantage, with the overall task as the central focus. The attention paid to targets to be achieved is evidenced, for example, in the precision of timetables, meeting planning and achievement of milestones. Close adherence to time schedules is also considered vital. Following the established protocol is critical to building and maintaining business relationships in Germany. As a group, Germans are suspicious of hyperbole, promises that sound too good to be true, and displays of emotion. Business communication is very formal and Germans tend to be direct, almost to the point of bluntness. German businesspeople do not operate an open-door policy. People often work with their office door closed and counterparts are expected to knock and wait to be invited in before entering.³³

In Russia, professionalism in negotiations and business is very important, both in agreements and in business communication.³⁴ They make business decisions emotionally in order to show their passionate commitment and certainty for them. They appreciate mutual sympathy between business partners (Vujić, Ivaniš and Bojić, 2012). Doing business in Russia requires a high level of preparation and patience, and can be defined as a rigorous and professional business process. Russia is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and entering the Russian market marks a major undertaking.³⁵ It is a country of cultural contradictions. There is a general sense of pessimism not only about the future but also about the present as well. Russia

³² Business communication – Germany. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/western-europe/business-culture-in-germany/business-communication-in-germany/> (01.04.2022).

³³ Business Relationship – Germany. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/western-europe/business-culture-in-germany/business-communication-in-germany/> (01.04.2022).

³⁴ Business culture in the world, <http://prospera-viva.hr/zanimljivosti/poslovna-kultura-u-svijetu/> (05.06.2021).

³⁵ Business culture in the world, <http://prospera-viva.hr/zanimljivosti/poslovna-kultura-u-svijetu/> (05.06.2021).

is a country that considers itself isolated from the rest of the world, surrounded by neighbours who want to take advantage of it. This has created a fortress mentality – outsiders are not trusted. This is in contrast to the extensive hospitality normally shown to visitors. Russians are often very closed and formal in public, but open, warm and informal in private. In communication, Russians tend to be direct and do not avoid confrontation. They can be extremely emotional and yet reserved in the same meeting.³⁶ Ironically the ideologically egalitarian policies of communism have bred an extremely hierarchical structure in private and public organisations in Russia. The boss is a very distant, powerful figure, and is surrounded by visible demonstrations of his/her position. Wealth and status are demonstrated openly and emphasise the difference in authority. Promotions are rewarded not just financially but with a bigger office, better car and other visible privileges. Junior team members are expected to respond immediately to any request by their boss, regardless of any other duties they may have to perform.³⁷ “Russia is a fairly polychronic culture, which means they tend to be flexible in the way they organise time (MacLachlan, 2010). As opposed to monochronic cultures, that emphasise scheduling, they can be focused on more activities at once with greater fluidity in the way time is perceived and schedules are not strictly followed (Neulip, 2012). Although they would usually expect foreigners to be on time, they may themselves run a little late. Patience, therefore, is important. Being polychronic also means people are more prone to multitasking rather than doing one thing at a time (Bergelson, 2003). They may also answer phone calls during business meetings. Negotiations in Russia may be somewhat time consuming and people are not likely to rush into decisions (Switzerland Global Enterprise, 2015)” (Zaykova, 2016).

China is considered to be one of the oldest civilisations with a rich history and tradition and the largest population in the world. Chinese business communication is linked to its conservative and traditional culture.³⁸ The Chinese do not tolerate changes to the contract on your part, they believe that once you sign a contract with them, it is a done deal. China’s culture, especially business, is different from European business culture. Businesses in China invest a lot of effort and time in building strong relationships with their suppliers, banks, authorities, and so on. Pride and honor in China are extremely important because the business image of an individual and a company also depends on them. The Chinese are known as difficult negotiators (Vujić, Ivaniš, &Bojić, 2012). In business communication the Chinese

³⁶ Business Meeting Protocol and Etiquette in Russia. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/blog/2014/07/13/business-meeting-etiquette-in-russia/> (02.04.2022).

³⁷ Hierarchy and status in a business meeting. (2019). Business Meeting Protocol and Etiquette in Russia, 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/blog/2014/07/13/business-meeting-etiquette-in-russia/> (02.04.2022).

³⁸ Business culture in the world, <http://prospera-viva.hr/zanimljivosti/poslovna-kultura-u-svijetu/> (07.06.2021).

often nod while a person speaks. This does not necessarily indicate agreement, but rather suggests that the listener understands what the speaker is saying. It is considered rude to interrupt, so refrain from doing so. Furthermore, if the natural conversation dynamic between you and your colleagues is to talk over one another, a Chinese person will not interrupt you to make their point heard. Therefore, try to slow down and pause between your points to give them an opportunity to speak. Do not immediately reject a proposal from a Chinese person or company. When you reject someone's idea, there is a risk of this being interpreted as you rejecting the person. Never write something in red ink. Writing in red indicates that you are someone's blood enemy.³⁹

In Croatia, traditions and customs are valued and respected, but it varies from region to region. What still characterises Croats as a nation is that they are relaxed people who love fun and jokes, good food, but they are also people who use swear words in almost every context.⁴⁰ Croats are known for their relaxed attitude towards business, but still maintain a high threshold of professionalism. They are friendly and cheerful, but they need a few meetings with their business partners to get to know them before they feel comfortable in their presence. Since Croatians like to know their business partners well, it could be mean mixing pleasure with business, but it is important not to cross lines.⁴¹ Eye contact is important and is considered a sign of respect. They like to tease others, especially foreigners, but that does not mean they do not respect business partners and also expect to be treated in the same way.⁴² Most business people in Croatia speak several languages, and the main business languages besides Croatian are English, German and Italian. Croatians prefer face-to-face communication, as it provides an opportunity to look into the eyes of their business partner and assess their commitment to a project or collaboration.⁴³ Business relations in Croatia are very formal, but receptive to cross-cultural management. This means that they are ready to accept foreign ideas if they are approached in a respectful way, whereas any dictatorial or forceful approach to business by a foreigner will not be tolerated. Croatians are often direct and view soft-spoken or shy people as vulnerable and weak. Eye contact is essential and is considered a sign of respect. Croatians enjoy irony and dark humour and will often laugh at difficult situations and personal flaws. Croatians find humour in sarcasm and do not typically change their tone of voice or facial expression when telling a joke. For these reasons, it can be

³⁹ Chinese culture. (2022). Business culture, business communications, <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/chinese-culture/chinese-culture-business-culture> (02.04.2022).

⁴⁰ Dnevnik.hr, <https://punkufer.dnevnik.hr/clanak/zanimljivosti/25-cudnih-stvari-koje-rade-sa-mo-hrvati---595752.html> (08.06.2021).

⁴¹ Business culture in Croatia, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/> (08.06.2021).

⁴² Country Croatia, <https://www.communicaid.com/country/croatia/> (08.06.2021).

⁴³ Business etiquette in Croatia, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/business-etiquette-in-croatia/> (08.06.2021).

difficult for foreigners to understand Croatian humour. Personal space is important, but a large distance indicates dislike. Croatians are personable and will want to know about your family and where you come from. Do not talk about money or personal problems, because they view this as a sign of weak character and the discussion will leave your colleagues feeling uneasy.⁴⁴

Table 4 shows the specifics related to intercultural aspects in the business of the examined countries; + (plus) indicates specifics that are important for the country, while – (minus) indicates those that are not so important for the country.

Table 4. Specifics of intercultural aspects of the observed countries

	Family ties	Compliance with regulations	Title	Trade unions	Strictness and formality	Patience and professionalism
Italy	+	–	–	+	–	+
Germany	–	+	+	+	+	–
Russia	–	+	+	–	+	+
China	–	+	+	–	–	+
Croatia	+	+	–	–	–	+

Source: own work based on different sources – adapted according to: (Vujić, Ivaniš, & Bojić, 2012); www.poslovniforum.hr/about/bon-ton.asp (05.06.2021); <http://prospera-viva.hr/zanimljivosti/poslovna-kultura-u-svijetu/> (05.06.2021); <http://prospera-viva.hr/zanimljivosti/poslovna-kultura-u-svijetu/> (05.06.2021); <https://punkufer.dnevnik.hr/clanak/zanimljivosti/25-cudnih-stvari-koje-rade-samo-hrvati---595752.html> (08.06.2021); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/> (08.06.2021); <https://www.communicaid.com/country/croatia/> (08.06.2021); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/business-etiquette-in-croatia/> (08.06.2021).

The table shows that almost every country respects the regulations when doing business, except for Italy, where regulations and agreements are not as important as family ties. Germany is a country in the business world that wants decisions to be made quickly and thoroughly and to be professional, separating private life from business. Russia is considered to be the most professional business country, it is important for them to respect the law, but they are also slow in making decisions because they consider all the facts in order to make the most professional and appropriate decision. China is one of the world's leading economies, and decisions are made slowly and thoroughly. Croatia is a country that, like Italy, cares about family ties, but it is important to respect regulations and laws in business, and Croats

⁴⁴ Face-to-face communication – Croatia. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/business-communication-in-croatia/> (01.04.2022).

are also slow in making decisions. Different authors⁴⁵ look at interculturalism, intercultural competences and sensitivity and state that intercultural communication is a very important item in different economies because it denotes the relationship of communication of people of different ethnic groups, communication as an interaction of cultural values arising from the need to connect with other persons from different cultures. Achieving effective communication in different cultures requires a high level of intercultural competence, which requires appropriate skills, attitudes and knowledge of language, traditions, society and culture, values and customs and social characteristics (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2013).

There is no complete harmony between people, but it is important to establish the origin and consequences of conflicts and the ways to resolve them. Conflicts in business and personal life, within the same and different cultures, can be destructive and unproductive. Each member of ethnicity has own views and values regarding the world and other ethnicities, and analyses them in connection with their own, and therefore stereotypes and frustrations occur, and other intercultural barriers, and conflicts may arise.⁴⁶ One can say that Italy is characterised by a combination of loyalty and interest. This combination is often dominated by opposition from interest groups. They understand power as a set of different lobbies, each working for themselves. Political parties in Italy have great power and importance on social and economic life.⁴⁷ In Italy, avoid talking about corruption and the mafia, and talking about football is welcome (Vujić, Ivaniš, & Bojić, 2012). Germany is a country with a high level of decentralisation. The provinces have great political and economic independence. The division of Germans in terms of interaction and integration of immigrants is visible, so modern diversity policy has the task of bringing citizens into dialogue through ethnic, cultural and religious elements. This requires the existence of institutions that act as intermediaries, providing support to people as they express their interests to each other and develop a common commitment.⁴⁸ Discussions about the conflicts between Ukraine and Russia are very well known. The clashes focus on Russian language status, unpaid energy and gas bills, the withdrawal of the Black Sea Fleet, Russia's invasion of Georgia, support for Crimean separatism and the future of NATO membership.⁴⁹ The relations between China and the United States are turbulent due to the trade war, however the economic conflict between the two countries has also a cultural aspect. Chinese collectivist culture emphasises teamwork, family, and group goals above individual needs and desires. In contrast, the United States values individual achievements. For Americans, freedom of choice,

⁴⁵ (Bedeković, 2010; Bovee & Courtland, 2012; Dragojević, 1999; Piršl, 2005, 2007, 2016; Samovar et al., 2013).

⁴⁶ European Commission, <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/hr/blog/interkulturalno-obrazovanje> (05.06.2021).

⁴⁷ Business forum, <http://www.poslovniforum.hr/about/bon-ton.asp> (05.06.2021).

⁴⁸ Bertelsmann, <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/our-projects/religion-monitor/projektnachrichten/how-do-germans-deal-with-cultural-diversity/> (05.06.2021).

⁴⁹ The Jamestown, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-ukrainian-russian-cultural-conflict/> (07.06.2021).

personal autonomy, and self-fulfillment are signs of independence.⁵⁰ In Croatia, there is intercultural conflict caused by the Homeland War, during which there are individual conflicts and tensions.⁵¹ Looking at the causes of intercultural conflicts in these countries, it can be pointed out that in Italy and Germany the reason is an increase in immigration, in Russia and Croatia the conflict with neighbouring countries, while China is marked by trade war.⁵²

Given that the economies (GNP, GDP, foreign trade) of these countries were strongly affected by the pandemic Covid-19, the paper also observed the impact of the crisis on unemployment and business in certain industries. Table 5 shows the most affected business activities and the impact on unemployment.

Table 5. Affected activities of selected countries and the impact on unemployment

	Tourism	Aviation industry	Car industry	Construction industry	Non-processing industry	Unemployment
Italy	+	+	+	-	+	+
Germany	-	+	+	-	+	-
Russia	-	-	+	-	+	+
China	-	-	-	+	+	+
Croatia	+	+	-	-	+	+

Source: own work based on different sources – adapted according to: <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/reflections-covid-19-views-italy> (29.05.2021); <https://www.dw.com/en/german-economy-hit-harder-than-expected-by-covid-crisis/a-57650920> (29.05.2021); <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7974352/> (30.05.2021); <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1112869/covid-19-impact-on-value-added-by-sector/> (30.05.2021); <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/gch2.202000090> (30.05.2021); <https://www.ventureexchange.hr/post/the-economic-impact-of-covid-19-in-croatia> (30.05.2021).

The table shows that all the countries, except for Germany, have recorded problems such as an increase in the unemployment rate. Germany is the only country where the unemployment rate dropped to 6.2% in October 2020 from 6.3% in September 2020, thus proving how strong the country is, because employers used

⁵⁰ The Journal, <http://blogs.shu.edu/journalofdiplomacy/2018/06/the-u-s-china-relationship-a-clash-of-cultures/> (08.06.2021).

⁵¹ Culture trip, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/croatia/articles/things-you-should-know-about-croatian-culture/> (09.06.2021).

⁵² Adapted according to: <http://www.poslovniforum.hr/about/bon-ton.asp> (05.06.2021); Vujić, Ivaniš and Bojić, 2012.; <https://www.lifescienceglobal.com/pms/index.php/ijcs/article/view/3179> (05.06.2021); <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/our-projects/religion-monitor/projektnachrichten/how-do-germans-deal-with-cultural-diversity/> (05.06.2021); <https://jamestown.org/program/the-ukrainian-russian-cultural-conflict/> (07.06.2021); <http://blogs.shu.edu/journalofdiplomacy/2018/06/the-u-s-china-relationship-a-clash-of-cultures/> (08.06.2021); <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/croatia/articles/things-you-should-know-about-croatian-culture/> (09.06.2021).

various salary-support programmes, which allowed to retain their employees.⁵³ In addition, in each of the countries, certain business activities were more traumatised by the pandemic, as reflected in their GNP, GDP and foreign trade.

The economy has a key role to play in creating the recovery of every country. For example, the introduction of the lockdown for some countries means disaster for a longer period, such as with Croatia which can survive a shorter lockdown period, while Germany, a much more developed country, can survive a year, or maybe even two, of a lockdown. Germany is one of the countries with a large fiscal capacity in the world, and the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic started with a public debt-to-GDP ratio below 60% (Croatia with 73.2%), which gave Germany strong fiscal impulses (Šonje & Kotarski, 2020). Moreover, the health shock deepened the crisis, and caused the supply shock, because the promotion of healthcare measures disrupted global and local supply and production chains. In addition to the health and human tragedy caused by the Covid-19 virus, it is known today that the pandemic triggered the most serious economic crisis since World War II. Many economies will not recover their levels of production from 2019 until 2022 – at the earliest. The return of the pandemic in the autumn of 2020 increased the uncertainty. The nature of the crisis is unpredictable, as apart from short-term repeated health and economic shocks, the long-term effects on human capital, productivity and behaviour can be long-lasting. The crisis Covid-19 has massively accelerated some already existing trends, especially digitalisation. It shook the world by driving waves of change in a wide range of possible trajectories.⁵⁴ A Europe without national borders, has suddenly fallen apart. Border controls and the closing of borders within the EU, followed by bans on the export of medical equipment even to other EU countries, resulted in a blatant combination of national, regional and local chaos in decision-making. The exponential spread of the Covid-19 virus, the rapid transmission of media and information has negatively affected not only the business of countries around the world, but also of every person.⁵⁵ The fact was that GDP in 2020 at the European level decreased by 6.6%, while in 2019, total annual inflation decreased from 1.2% to 0.3%. The fall in energy prices was a major consequence of the decline, although energy prices were also affected by factors related to the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, sectors such as the transport sector and the hotel industry, hit hardest by the crisis, have contributed to falling inflation in the second half of 2020.⁵⁶ On the whole, the developed economies have made strides in vaccinating growing percentages of

⁵³ Aljazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/economy/2020/10/29/neocekivan-pad-nezaposlenosti-u-njemackoj> (30.06.2021).

⁵⁴ OECD, <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-territorial-impact-of-covid-19-managing-the-crisis-across-levels-of-government-d3e314e1/> (02.06.2021).

⁵⁵ Merck, <https://www.merckgroup.com/en/the-future-transformation/how-the-covid-19-crisis-changes-our-world.html> (02.06.2021).

⁵⁶ European Central Bank, <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/annual/html/ar2020~4960fb81ae.hr.html> (02.06.2021).

their populations, raising prospects of a sustained economic recovery in late 2021 and into 2022 and, in turn, a recovery in the broader global economy. However, new variants of the virus and a surge in the diagnosed cases in large developing economies and resistance to vaccinations among some groups in developed economies have raised questions about the speed and strength of an economic recovery over the short term. The resurgence of infectious cases in Europe, Latin America, Russia, the United States, Japan, Brazil, India, and across much of Africa, has renewed calls for lockdowns and curfews and threatened to weaken or delay a potential sustained economic recovery into late 2021. The economic fallout from the pandemic has had a disparate impact on certain sectors of the economy, particularly the service sector, and certain population groups and could risk continued labour dislocations. In some cases, workers are reconsidering their career choices and work patterns, which may imply post-pandemic economies marked by more varied labour arrangements and altered urban environments (Jackson, 2021).

3. Research overview

The first appearance of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, i.e. Covid-19 occurred at the end of 2019 in China. In 2020, it spread around the world and resulted in the pandemic which caused implications for the global economy, such as market stagnation, rising unemployment, falling tourist demand, etc. The research sought to determine in what way and how much the global pandemic affected and still affects different economic parameters and how the observed countries cope with these challenges subject to different cultural characteristics. It was the multicultural differences that triggered the selection of countries (Italy, Germany, China, Russia and Croatia) for this study.

3.1. Methodology

The main purpose of the paper was to analyse the impact of the crisis caused by the pandemic Covid-19 on the economy and business in the intercultural environment of the selected group of countries, and to determine the trend of economic factors and intercultural competence of these countries over a five-year period. The first research question relates to determining the impact of economic factors and foreign trade on the business activities of culturally diverse countries. The second research question was prompted by the relations between culturally diverse business environment, with reference to the impact of the pandemic Covid-19 on the economies of culturally diverse countries. The analysis of three unusual parameters in the comparison of different countries sought to confirm the thesis that intercultural competencies help to strengthen economic actions in the event of a crisis situation. The obtained results can serve as a basis for solving the intercultural and economic problems of the studied countries. The paper highlights the basic trends in gross national product, gross domestic product and foreign trade, which outline the decline in the performance

of a particular economy due to the pandemic crisis. The detailed analysis of the theoretical framework of economic factors aimed to increase awareness of the economic trends and intercultural relations of countries affected by the crisis caused by the Covid-19 virus. This can contribute to better awareness and proactive action in the future. The research was conducted using various methods, such as methods of analysis, classification, content analysis and description that helped analyse and interpret the relations and impact of the crisis on the observed countries such as Italy, Germany, Russia, China and Croatia. The economic development of each country refers to the increase of available goods and prosperity in society.

3.2. Findings and discussion

The emergence of the crisis situation was caused by the sudden, unexpected outbreak of the pandemic Covid-19, which produced many negative economic factors for the whole world. The economy has a key role to play in creating the recovery of each country, influenced by a particular period of time. Ramos (2020) points out that “with 825 million students out of school, 340 million jobs at risk, and up to 100 million additional people projected to enter extreme poverty, the Covid-19 crisis has exposed and exacerbated vulnerabilities, fragilities, and inequalities in a manner unprecedented in recent history. Evolving on top of an already mounting crisis of civic trust, and a low ebb of commitment to multilateralism, the pandemic represents a unique threat to social peace, working against the very solidarity and cohesion that is needed to find equitable solutions in the current moment. But the crisis has also served to underscore humanity’s fundamental interconnectedness and interdependence, showing that solidarity and empathy can, and indeed must, become the cornerstones of building back better. Peace is as an essential enabler, and an ultimate outcome of a fairer, sustainable world”. This indicated a growing need for intercultural competences and intercultural sensitivity. “Apart from the immediate threat to health posed by the pandemic, the ‘future’ is already announcing more challenges to our human rights acquis, social, economic and institutional structures, with obvious implications in all areas of our shared daily reality. From an intercultural perspective some challenges that we should avoid are: threats to equality due to an increase in social inequalities, threats to positive interaction through the temptation of privileging individual solutions, threats to diversity and restrictions of human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Intercultural Cities, 2022). Intercultural dialogue is an important deliberative tool for enhancing peace-building and sustainable development within and across societies. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, and its focus on physical distancing and immobility, the practice has shifted mainly to online platforms. This shift has facilitated and maintained much needed conversations across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic lines (Mansouri, 2020). Global GDP is expected to grow by 4.4% by the end of 2021, but global revenue by the end of 2022 will still be around USD 3 trillion, less than expected before the crisis started.

Another positive aspect of the pandemic Covid-19 is that it has catapulted millions of people around the world into a new work environment in one fell swoop. People work from home and the current term for this is “home office”. Overnight, the home office became a universal reality, not only for companies but also for civil servants. The real-world pandemic has finally made it possible to break into the digitalised world of work. Digitalisation will be seen as an advantage more than ever. The ability to solve the crisis situation caused by the pandemic Covid-19, means solving or reducing its negative impact by forming a crisis team, and being surrounded by the right people capable of progress and development. Each country had a crisis headquarters, which managed all the control over the crisis situation caused by the coronavirus nationally and informed the public about the current state of affairs. Finances and business affairs were regularly controlled, just as communication with the media, and with the employees within the organisations, which enabled a feasible plan for the development and progress of countries. At the same time, this enabled further development in new frameworks, such as the virtualisation of culture, spatial dispersion and increasing tourist representation of small towns and rural areas in response to the crisis in cultural tourism (see: Vodanović Lukić and Lukić, 2020). The need for dialogue during the pandemic has become even more pronounced as it not only exposed vulnerabilities and inequalities, but also generated new forms of discrimination that require urgent action by governments, civil society activists, and health practitioners. The amplification of social inequalities and vulnerabilities, the rise of xenophobia and ethno-cultural racism, increased gender-based violence and rising discrimination against non-citizens were some of the negative impacts to directly undermine the core agenda and programmes with the emphasis on inclusion, empowerment and respectful inter-personal engagement (Mansouri, 2020). According to Kublashvili (2021), most economic and policy analysts and experts of international relationships assume that the main characteristic of the post-pandemic/post-crisis world will be deglobalisation. The world has seen clearly that in conditions of globalisation, regional/local infection has rapidly spread globally. However, on the other hand, it has also become clear that only global technological achievements and mechanisms can bring innovations in the medical field, including the real and even the only possibility of defeating the virus. In this regard, the adequate response to the new challenge of the world should not be deglobalisation, but even more globalisation, “neo-globalisation”, i.e. the development of joint strategic plans and mechanisms, strengthening economic, political, and cultural links/chains.

In February 2020, Italy was the first European country to be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and changes are taking place that impacted on GNP, GDP and foreign trade. The economy suffered a massive shock as a result of the closure of most of the country’s economic activity. In considering all the factors related to GDP, the Italian authorities took into account all credible factors and the strong economic blow due to the pandemic crisis, Covid-19 when Italian exports dropped by 17.8% while imports dropped by 19%. Both indicators were projected to recover

during 2021, and Italy was taking every precautionary measure to recover from the crisis. As an example of the activities that Italy carried out in thinking about the development and sustainability of the Italian economy, one can address the impact of the Covid-19 emergency on the Italian Network of Intercultural Cities (Città del Dialogo-Italian network of Intercultural Cities), which was quite big even before the national lockdown. The more the difficult the situation, the more the member cities enhanced their efforts to ensure one basic principle that the so-called “social distancing” could not erase social solidarity (Intercultural Cities Newsroom, 2020). Research has shown that the pandemic Covid-19 should not have too much of an impact on Germany’s economy, as it has good economic predispositions and was approaching a nominal GDP estimate for 2021, up by USD 4.31 trillion. Although Germany also suffered a decline in foreign trade in line with the observed factors, exports were expected to increase by 9% annually in 2021, while imports by 7.7%, which determines a strong economy and rapid recovery. Germany also emphasised its strength through humanitarian actions⁵⁷, such as donations and ensuring transparency and access to vaccines, even in countries that are not as strong and do not have sufficient financial resources. Kislyakov and Shmeleva (2021) showed that Russia’s prosocial orientation during the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting an understanding of diversity and caring for others and oneself, as one of the intercultural competencies. However, the decision regarding the obligation to vaccinate solely with the Russian vaccine Sputnik, enforced a strict and professional attitude of Russia and the confidence in its resources (such as the Sputnik vaccine). This strengthened the resistance of the citizens due to the impossibility of obtaining the anti-Covid vaccination certificate, enabling private and business trips to other countries. This confirms the statements that Russians make business decisions emotionally in order to show their passionate commitment and conviction for them. It also confirms the fact that Russia is a country which considers itself isolated from the rest of the world. All this results in the reduction of income and economic indicators of the country. Russia is one of the world’s leading exporters of natural gas and the second largest oil producer in the world after Saudi Arabia, with favourable GNP, GDP and foreign trade. According to some research, the global economic recovery will cause higher oil prices and the soft domestic monetary conditions in 2021 would support a recovery driven by household consumption and public investment. According to the previously mentioned data, it can be seen that China is the only one of the selected countries, which profited from the pandemic, i.e. achieved GDP growth in 2020. China had a GDP of USD 14.34 trillion in 2019. The country brought the coronavirus under control and managed to start a quick economic recovery. Regarding China’s

⁵⁷ <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service/EinreiseUndAufenthalt> (06.04.2022); <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/gesundheit/pandemie-bekaempfung>, (06.04.2022.); <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/fight-against-covid-19-germany-makes-available-additional-150-million-euro-humanitarian> (06.04.2022).

positive economic factors, they are directed towards future developments in various fields. For example, pointing out how the education and Chinese students should prepare for the evolving globalisation and the challenges of deglobalisation, and examining the intercultural experience of a highly mobile group within the trend of Chinese student populations studying in foreign countries, one can consider how to build a global competence to prepare for a changing world after the pandemic (Wang, 2020). Liu, Zhu and Liang (2021) emphasized the importance of integrating Confucian culture into managing intercultural conflicts, with a special role given to the pandemic. These are just some of the considerations about interculturality. Croatia recorded the lowest gross national product, compared to the other countries shown. Its high reliance on tourism, with almost 20 million foreign tourists and a 20% share of GDP, makes Croatia very vulnerable to adverse external shocks such as the current pandemic Covid-19. The reduction of GDP in Croatia in 2020 by 8.4%, was one of the largest in the European Union and in the Central Asian region. Therefore the country focused on funding from various EU sources aimed at restoring the economy and overcoming crises, which should play a key role in the country's economic recovery.

The specifics of intercultural aspects that are important for international business show how almost every country complies with regulations, except for Italy, which is one of its particularities. Germany and Russia have proved to be the most professional countries for business where decisions are thorough and professionally sound, while China, as the world's leading economy, has shown its importance in slow and thorough business decisions. Croatia has distinguished itself by respecting regulations and laws in business and slow pace in decision-making. The research on these countries has led to the conclusion that the intercultural conflict in Italy and Germany stems from the increase in immigration, making countries feel insecure, as well as fearing for their integrity. The recommendation is to enable better intercultural awareness of countries and provide opportunities for coexistence. The conflictual relations of countries with their neighbours, as well as trade wars, also disrupt good business relations and impede success.

3.3. Further research

Recommendations for successful crisis management caused by the pandemic Covid-19 include monitoring the steps of crisis management, preventive action and control of key elements and activities of the business. Instead of passively waiting for the situation to develop, proactive action can mitigate the consequences of the crisis. Proactive action is one of the essential elements of effective crisis management (Giba, Kadlec, & Bedeković, 2021 according to Bulajić, 2010). In addition, effective crisis management requires adherence to several accepted principles that help manage crisis situations, such as acting quickly and decisively, dealing with reality, protecting people as an absolute priority, having a calm leader at hand and open

communication (Kešetović & Korajlić 2008). Additionally, one of the important elements in solving potential problems and crisis situations is the intercultural action of countries that have some business contact with each other.⁵⁸ By increasing intercultural awareness and competencies, countries become even stronger and resolve crisis situations easier. The pandemic Covid-19 has brought many losses, and at the same time created many opportunities not only for recovery, but also for the transition to a higher level of economic well-being, and the solution of problems accumulated in the previous decade. According to Spinger, who analyses studies on Russian economic development, the transition to a new socio-innovative-ecological model of economic development would become the only possible alternative to the stagnation and weakening of Russia's position in the world. It is a model that brings new insights and knowledge about Russia related to socialism, innovation and ecology, focuses more on the application of technology, with environmental awareness of environmental care, which affects the well-being and development of the country.⁵⁹ What is needed now is not so much targeted design and incentives as a systematic policy of economic breakthrough and social reconstruction. Techmonitor⁶⁰ expects global economic growth in 2021 to be 5.8%, a sharp forward revision compared to the December 2020 economic outlook projection of 4.2% for 2021, all brought about by the action of encouraging the population to vaccinate. All this is a motivation to overcome the crisis in order for the countries to recover from the economic shock and continue to successfully make a profit for their economy.⁶¹ Digital technology will play a major role in the recovery of any country where digitalisation of the health and energy sectors, digital skills and education, digitalisation of SMEs and

⁵⁸ <https://businessculture.org/western-europe/business-culture-in-germany/business-communication-in-germany/> (01.04.2022); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/> (08.06.2021); <http://prospera-viva.hr/zanimljivosti/poslovna-kultura-u-svijetu/> (05.06.2021); <https://businessculture.org/blog/2014/07/13/business-meeting-etiquette-in-russia/>, (02.04.2022); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/>, (01.04.2022.); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022); <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/chinese-culture/chinese-culture-business-culture> (02.04.2022); <https://www.todaytranslations.com/consultancy-services/business-culture-and-etiquette/doing-business-in-italy/> (02.04.2022); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/business-communication-in-croatia/> (01.04.2022); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022); <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022.); <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page>, (05.04.2022.); <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/citta-del-dialogo-challenges-and-renewed-goals-for-the-2nd-semester-of-2020>, (06.04.2022); <https://www.bradfordjacobs.com/countries/italy-work-culture/> (02.04.2022).

⁵⁹ Spinger Link, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1075700720060027> (02.06.2021).

⁶⁰ Techmonitor, <https://techmonitor.ai/leadership/strategy/how-digitisation-underpin-post-covid-19-recovery> (02.06.2021).

⁶¹ Spinger Link, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1075700720060027> (02.06.2021).

the construction of fast and secure infrastructure will be key sectors and areas to help rebuild and develop. More and more people are turning to the use of technology, precisely because it is the future and this is the key to the recovery of each country's economy.⁶² Ability, skills, knowledge and experience will be crucial features required of members of crisis teams to successfully manage the crisis situation and enable the creation of favorable conditions for faster economic growth and development. Monitoring the economic performance indicators of each country will enable analysis and competitive benchmarking that will create a stimulating development environment, while the acquisition of intercultural competencies will enable better communication and the creation of a positive dialogue between countries.

4. Conclusion

The crisis caused by the pandemic Covid-19 came unexpectedly and disrupted the entire world economy, to a greater or lesser extent depending on a number of economic elements and the capabilities of each of the countries. It was important for each country to protect jobs and workers, hence many countries within the EU withdrew subsidy measures issued by the European Central Bank and the European Investment Bank. The issue of work refers to the crisis situation that the Covid-19 virus brought to the selected countries, i.e. Italy, Germany, Russia, China and Croatia. It also led to raising awareness of shortcomings in crisis management with regard to economic factors and intercultural characteristics contributes by providing details about each country. It was concluded that countries such as China and Russia, with their vaccines, enabled faster recovery of the population, but also of their economy. On the economic side, it is important to introduce innovations aimed at economic policy measures and the development of innovative ways of working, and to provide assistance to all businesses and citizens who need it most. Some companies are operating at a loss and some at a profit, such as pharmaceutical organizations that profited from the sale of vaccines during the Covid-19 crisis; for them, this period was difficult, but from an economic point of view, very good.

The paper lists many aspects of the countries recovery, which according to research forecasts should have been felt by the end of 2021, and that entails the recovery of GNP, GDP, as well as foreign trade. The only country that had a positive GNP growth was China, which seemingly has left the coronavirus behind, while other countries are still struggling to recover their economic condition. Considering that the presented data showed that Italy, Germany, Russia and China are much more developed than Croatia, they were not so negatively affected by the pandemic and returned to their old ways faster. It can be concluded that in less developed economies it is hard and arduous work to be able to develop satisfactorily by joining those leading at the global level. It is also important to point out that not all the parameters

⁶² Techmonitor, <https://techmonitor.ai/leadership/strategy/how-digitisation-underpin-post-covid-19-recovery> (02.06.2021).

of the economy were so negative, and that in future crisis situations one should act in accordance with the possibilities, and benefit from some favourable opportunities that are provided. Proactivity in action contributes not only to the normal course of affairs but also to growth and development because one acts in advance by looking at the emerging opportunities. The research for this paper contributes to the comparison of intercultural characteristics and economic factors, which will create a good basis for future research and comparisons, and at the same time the definition of relations between different countries.

References

- Aljazeera, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/economy/2020/10/29/neocekivan-pad-nezaposlenosti-u-njemackoj> (30.06.2021).
- Babić, A., & Babić, M. (2000). *Međunarodna ekonomija*, Zagreb: Mate d.o.o.
- Barnier, B. (2022). Gross National Product (GNP), The Investopedia Team, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gnp.asp> (29.03.2022).
- Bedeković, V. (2010). *Interkulturalni aspekti menadžmenta*. Virovitica: Visoka škola za menadžment u turizmu i informatici u Virovitici.
- Benjak, M., & Požgaj-Hadži, V. (2005). *Bez predrasuda i stereotipa: interkulturalna komunikacijska kompetencija u društvenom i političkom kontekstu*, Rijeka: Izdavački centar Rijeka.
- Bergelson, M. B. (2003). Russian cultural values and workplace communication styles. *Communication Studies 2003: Modern Anthology* (pp. 97-112). Volgograd, Russia: Peremena.
- Bertelsmann, <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/our-projects/religion-monitor/projektnachricht-en/how-do-germans-deal-with-cultural-diversity/> (05.06.2021).
- Bovee, C. L. (2012). *Suvremena poslovna komunikacija*, Zagreb: Mate.
- Bulajić, M. (2010). *Krizno komuniciranje*, Medix: specijalizirani medicinski dvomjesečnik, 16, 87-88.
- Business communication – Germany (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/western-europe/business-culture-in-germany/business-communication-in-germany/> (01.04.2022).
- Business communication – Italy. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).
- Business culture in Croatia, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/> (08.06.2021).
- Business culture in the world, <http://prospera-viva.hr/zanimljivosti/poslovna-kultura-u-svijetu/> (05.06.2021).
- Business etiquette in Croatia, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/business-etiquette-in-croatia/> (08.06.2021).
- Business forum, <http://www.poslovniforum.hr/about/bon-ton.asp> (05.06.2021).
- Business forum, www.poslovniforum.hr/about/bon-ton.asp (05.06.2021).
- Business Meeting Protocol and Etiquette in Russia. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade, a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/blog/2014/07/13/business-meeting-etiquette-in-russia/> (02.04.2022).
- Business Relationship – Germany (2019): 2.0 Passport to Trade, a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).

- Business Relationship – Italy (2019): 2.0 Passport to Trade, a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022.)
- CEIC, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/china/gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- CEIC, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/croatia/gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- CEIC, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/germany/gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- CEIC, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/italy/gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia, https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2020/04-02-01_03_2020.htm (29.05.2021).
- China BNP 1962-2021, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/CHN/china/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- Chinese culture (2022): Business culture, Business communications, <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/chinese-culture/chinese-culture-business-culture> (02.04.2022).
- Country Croatia, <https://www.communicaid.com/country/croatia/> (08.06.2021).
- Croatia GNP 1997-2021, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/HRV/croatia/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- Culture trip, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/croatia/articles/things-you-should-know-about-croatian-culture/> (09.06.2021).
- Dnevnik.hr, <https://punkufer.dnevnik.hr/clanak/zanimljivosti/25-cudnih-stvari-koje-rade-samo-hrvati--595752.html> (08.06.2021).
- Doing business in Italy. (2022). Today Translations, Consult Advise Translate, <https://www.today-translations.com/consultancy-services/business-culture-and-etiquette/doing-business-in-italy/> (02.04.2022).
- Dragojević, S. (1999). *Multikulturalizam, interkulturalizam, transkulturalizam, purikulturalizam: su-prosta ili nadopunjujući koncept*, Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski Turk.
- DW, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-economy-hit-harder-than-expected-by-covid-crisis/a-57650920> (29.05.2021).
- Entry and quarantine regulations in Germany. (2022). Covid-19: entry and quarantine regulations in Germany, Federal Foreign Office, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/visa-service/EinreiseUndAufenthalt>, (06.04.2022).
- European Central Bank, <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/annual/html/ar2020~4960fb81ae.hr.html> (02.06.2021).
- European Commission, <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/hr/blog/interkulturalno-obrazovanje> (05.06.2021).
- European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2020:0535:FIN:HR:PDF> (21.05.2021).
- Face-to-face communication – Croatia (2019): 2.0 Passport to Trade, a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-croatia/business-communication-in-croatia/> (01.04.2022).
- Face-to-face communication – Germany (2019): 2.0 Passport to Trade, a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).
- Face-to-face communication – Italy (2019): 2.0 Passport to Trade, a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).
- Fernando, J. (2022). Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Investopedia, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gdp.asp> (30.03.2022).
- German support. (2022). Covid-19: German support, Federal Foreign Office, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/gesundheit/pandemie-bekaempfung>, (06.04.2022).
- Germany GNP 1972-2021, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/DEU/germany/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).

- Giba, J., Kadlec, Ž., & Bedeković, M. (2021). Business of small and medium enterprises during a pandemic and their challenges, 10th International Scientific Symposium "Region, Entrepreneurship, Development". Osijek: Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Economics in Osijek, 433-452.
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Italy from 2010 to 2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1201202/gdp-italy-current-prices/> (21.05.2021).
- Hierarchy and status in a business meeting. (2019). Business Meeting Protocol and Etiquette in Russia, 2.0 Passport to Trade, a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/blog/2014/07/13/business-meeting-etiquette-in-russia/> (02.04.2022).
- Intercultural Cities. (2022). Covid-19 Special page, Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/covid-19-special-page> (05.04.2022).
- Intercultural Cities Newsroom. (2020). Citta del Dialogo: Challenges and renewed goals for the 2nd semester of 2020, Council of Europe, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/citta-del-dialogo-challenges-and-renewed-goals-for-the-2nd-semester-of-2020> (06.04.2022).
- Italy GNP 1962-221, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ITA/italy/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- Italy Work Culture. (2021). Bradford Jacobs, <https://www.bradfordjacobs.com/countries/italy-work-culture/> (02.04.2022).
- Jackson, J. K. (2021). Congressional research service, Global Economic Effects of Covid-19, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R46270.pdf>, (05.04.2022).
- Kešetović, Ž., & Korajlić, N. (2008): *Krizni menadžment*, Travnik: Univerzitet, Pravni fakultet.
- Kislyakov, P. A., & Shmeleva, E. A. (2021). Prosocial orientation of Russians during the Covid-19 pandemic: Caring for others and yourself, *frontiers in psychology, personality and social psychology*, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.629467/full> (06.04.2022).
- Kovačević, B., & Sabolović, D. (2002). *Stanje i razvojne tendencije vanjskotrgovinske razmjene Republike Hrvatske*, Zagreb: Ekonomija 2.
- Krueger, D. (2009). *Makroekonomika*. Pennsylvania: Sveučilište u Pennsylvaniji.
- Kublashvili, M. (2021). Intercultural communication challenges in the period of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) (The case of Qatar Airways). *European Scientific Journal*, ESJ, 17(16), 1, <https://eujoournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/14315> (05.04.2022).
- Lifescience Global, <https://www.lifescienceglobal.com/pms/index.php/ijcs/article/view/3179> (05.06.2021).
- Liu, X., Zhu, W., Liang, Y. (2021): Integration for the Confucian Culture on Cross-Cultural Conflict Management: The role of the Covid-19 Pandemic, *Frontiers in Psychology, Environmental Psychology*, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.694646/full>, (06.04.2022).
- MacLachlan M. (2010). Challenges of doing business in Russia. Communicaid. Retrieved March 14, 2016 from <https://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/blog/challenges-of-doing-business-in-russia/> (02.04.2022)
- Macrotrends, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/RUS/russia/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- Management structure and style – Italy. (2019). 2.0 Passport to Trade a bridge to success, European Commission, <https://businessculture.org/southern-europe/business-culture-in-italy/business-communication-in-italy/> (01.04.2022).
- Mansouri, F. (2020): The socio-cultural impact of Covid-19: exploring the role of intercultural dialogue in emerging responses, Social and Human Sciences Sector, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizational, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374186> (05.04.2022).
- Matić, B. (2004). *Međunarodno poslovanje*, Zagreb: Sinergija.
- Merck, <https://www.merckgroup.com/en/the-future-transformation/how-the-covid-19-crisis-changes-our-world.html> (02.06.2021).
- National Law Review, <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/reflections-covid-19-views-italy> (29.05.2021).

- NCBI, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7974352/> (30.05.2021).
- Neuliep, J. W. (2012). *Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach*. (5 th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Obadić A., & Tica, J. (2016). *Gospodarstvo Hrvatske*, Zagreb: Ekonomski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.
- OECD, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/hrv> (29.05.2021).
- OECD, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/rus> (30.06.2021).
- OECD, <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-territorial-impact-of-covid-19-managing-the-crisis-across-levels-of-government-d3e314e1/> (02.06.2021).
- OECD, <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-territorial-impact-of-covid-19-managing-the-crisis-across-levels-of-government-d3e314e1/> (02.06.2021).
- Piršl, E. (2005). *Verbalna i neverbalna interkulturalna komunikacija*, Rijeka: Izdavački centar Rijeka
- Piršl, E. (2007): *Interkulturalna osjetljivost kao pedagoška kompetencija*, Zagreb: Hrvatsko pedagoško društvo.
- Piršl, E., Benjak, M., Diković, M., Jelača, M., & Matošević, A. (2016). *Vodič za interkulturalno učenje*. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak.
- Ramos, G. (2020). Covid-19: intercultural dialogue is essential for building back better, Unesco, <https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-intercultural-dialogue-essential-building-back-better> (05.04.2022).
- Reliefweb (2020): The fight against Covid-19: Germany makes available an additional 150 million euro for humanitarian assistance, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/fight-against-covid-19-germany-makes-available-additional-150-million-euro-humanitarian>, (06.04.2022).
- Rouse, M. J., & Rouse, S. (2005). *Poslovne komunikacije*, Zagreb: Masmedia.
- Russia GDP, <https://tradingeconomics.com/russia/gdp> (26.05.2021).
- Russia GNP 1991-2021, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/RUS/russia/gnp-gross-national-product> (20.05.2021).
- Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., & McDaniel, E. R. (2013). *Komunikacija između kultura*, Zagreb: Naklada Slap.
- Santandertrade, https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/italy/foreign-trade-in-figures?url_de_la_page=%2Fen%2Fportal%2Fanalyse-markets%2Fitaly%2Fforeign-trade-in-figures&&actualiser_id_banque=oui&id_banque=0&memoriser_choix=memoriser (28.05.2021).
- Santandertrade, <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/germany/foreign-trade-in-figures> (28.05.2021).
- Santandertrade, <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/russia/foreign-trade-in-figures> (28.05.2021).
- Santandertrade, https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/china/foreign-trade-in-figures?url_de_la_page=%2Fen%2Fportal%2Fanalyse-markets%2Fchina%2Fforeign-trade-in-figures&&actualiser_id_banque=oui&id_banque=0&memoriser_choix=memoriser (29.05.2021).
- Šonje, V., & Kotarski, K. (2020). *Korona ekonomika*, Zagreb: Arhivalitika d.o.o.
- Springer Link, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1134/S1075700720060027> (02.06.2021).
- Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1112869/covid-19-impact-on-value-added-by-sector/> (30.05.2021).
- Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/295444/germany-gross-domestic-product/> (26.05.2021).
- Sundać, D., Škalamera-Alilović, D., & Babić, M. (2016): *Poslovno okruženje i intelektualni kapital*, Rijeka: Ekonomski fakultet Sveučilišta u Rijeci.
- Techmonitor, <https://techmonitor.ai/leadership/strategy/how-digitalisation-underpin-post-covid-19-recovery> (02.06.2021).
- The Jamestown, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-ukrainian-russian-cultural-conflict/> (07.06.2021).
- The Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations, <http://blogs.shu.edu/journalofdiplomacy/2018/06/the-u-s-china-relationship-a-clash-of-cultures/> (08.06.2021).

- portal.hr, <https://www.tportal.hr/biznis/clanak/izvoz-u-2020-godini-pao-za-0-7-posto-a-uvoz-za-6-9-posto-20210625> (30.06.2021).
- Venture X change, <https://www.venturexchange.hr/post/the-economic-impact-of-covid-19-in-croatia> (30.05.2021).
- Vodanović Lukić, I., & Lukić, A. (2020). Small is beautiful (and safe): utjecaj pandemije Covid-19 na kulturni turizam, Institut za turizam, http://www.iztzg.hr/files/file/RADOVI/2020/COVID-19/Vodanovi%C4%87-Luki%C4%87-I_Luki%C4%87-A_2020.pdf, (05.04.2022.)
- Vujić, V., Ivaniš, M., & Bojić, B. (2012). *Poslovna etika i multikulturalizam*. Rijeka: Sveučilište u Rijeci.
- Wang, T. (2020). The COVID-19 crisis and cross-cultural experience of China's international students: A possible generation of glocalized citizens?, *ECNU Review of Education*, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2096531120931519>, (06.04.2022).
- Wiley Online Library, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/gch2.202000090> (30.05.2021).
- World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview> (26.05.2021).
- World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/croatia/overview> (26.05.2021).
- World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/05/26/russia-s-economic-recovery-gathers-pace-says-new-world-bank-report> (26.05.2021).
- Xinhuanet, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-01/14/c_139667906.htm (29.05.2022).
- Zagreb Innovation Center (2022): <https://www.zicer.hr/Poduzetnicki-pojmovnik/Bruto-nacionalni-proizvod-BNP> (20.05.2021).
- Zaykova, A. (2016). Business communication in Russia, <https://midnightmediamusings.wordpress.com/2016/05/08/business-communication-in-russia/> (02.04.2022).

ANALIZA WPLYWU KRYZYSU SPOWODOWANEGO COVID-19 W ŚRODOWISKU MIĘDZYKULTUROWYM Z ODNIESIENIEM DO CZYNNIKÓW EKONOMICZNYCH

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest określenie, w jakim stopniu kryzys wywołany pandemią COVID-19 wpłynął na czynniki ekonomiczne w skali globalnej w środowisku międzykulturowym. Przedmiotem badań jest analiza wpływu kryzysu na czynniki gospodarcze (handel zagraniczny, PKB, PNB) wybranych losowo krajów (Włochy, Niemcy, Rosja, Chiny, Chorwacja). Ponadto szczególną uwagę zwrócono na cechy międzykulturowe obserwowanych krajów (komunikacja międzykulturowa, kompetencje międzykulturowe, wrażliwość międzykulturowa i konflikty międzykulturowe). Analiza treści jako metoda jakościowa obejmowała analizę publicznie dostępnych dokumentów urzędowych pod kątem zaobserwowanych czynników i cech. Wkład artykułu dotyczy analizy sytuacji obserwowanych krajów poprzez powiązanie kluczowych elementów potrzebnych do dalszych działań.

Słowa kluczowe: czynniki ekonomiczne, międzykulturowość, COVID-19.