

Master Thesis Proposal

MSC Business Administration – International Management & Consultancy

Cultural differences between Jordan and the Netherlands: Cultural influence on international business for Dutch expats in Jordan

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Abstract

During the last decades, the globalization of business has widely increased, and culture has become an important factor when it comes to business internationalization and decision-making of an organization's business agenda abroad. In the case of Jordan and the Netherlands, there has not been that much mutual business trade and globalization however, there are already a few instances where this has occurred. As of writing this paper, there have not been any researches conducted on exploring the way Dutch expatriates living in Jordan perceive the Jordanian cultural standards and behaviours in both professional and personal areas. This study seeks to explore the Jordanian culture in the perspective of Dutch expatriates living in Jordan by answering the following research question: **"How can cultural differences between Jordan and the Netherlands influence international business of a Dutch expat doing business in Jordan?"**.

In order to answer the research question in this paper, the qualitative theoretical framework of Thomas (1991) is followed. In this paper, the cultural standards of a specific culture or group are indicated based on certain possible cultural clashes. Due to this, the qualitative research interviewing technique of so called 'critical incidents' (Urquhart, et al., 2003) has been used in order to explore the Jordanian cultural standards from the perspective of Dutch interviewees that are currently living in Jordan and are working with Jordanian colleagues and people on a daily basis, and that have perceived the Jordanian culture during interactions with Jordanian nationals on both professional and personal levels.

The findings of this study have identified twenty three cultural behaviours that have been clustered in the following eight Jordanian cultural standards: Indirectness, Politeness, Shared community, Social division, Honour, Hospitality, Hierarchy, Acceptance of rules and bureaucracy. Surprisingly, certain critical incidents that were mentioned by the Dutch interviewees have led to new findings in regards to possible cultural standard differences within Jordanian nationals themselves. These differences can be due to different social and demographical factors, such as age, gender, and location of living in Jordan. Moreover, the following tentative values could be the underlying source that impacts the way Jordanians behave on both professional and personal aspects: Harmony, Social relationships, Compliance.

Keywords: Jordanian cultural behaviours, Jordanian cultural standards, Jordanian cultural values

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1. Introduction

In the last decades, there has been an expansion in trade from being limited in a specific geographical boundary to cross-border trade (Gurgul & Lach, 2014). When looking at this from an economic point of view, the term globalization often refers to the entire removal of, or at the very least the reduction in, foreign trade barriers. This is done in order to facilitate and improve the flow of goods across borders (Gurgul & Lach, 2014). Globalization can influence organisations in different ways, such as employing people from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, collaborating with international partners, as well as grabbing opportunities in the international market which can increase a company's sales abroad.

Based on the study by Fischer (2003), it can be seen that global trade is not only affected by the economic aspects, but it is also affected by non-economical aspects, such as the cultural, technological and political aspects, which can play an important role in shaping the term globalization. The cultural aspects in particular have been considered to be of great importance when it comes to, for instance, the decision-making on how to run the company in the future, of a company that does business abroad (Leidner, 2010). This is due to the fact that culture can indicate the norms and values of members within a specific social group and these norms and values can affect their behaviours (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). So therefore, if companies develop cultural awareness it can help them choose the appropriate communication tools as well as the strategies to approach different business partners and even customers abroad and can help avoid any possible disruptions which could affect the business negatively (Matthews & Thakkar, 2012). Since there are certain cultural differences between Jordan and the Netherlands, and because of the lack of studies, specifically qualitative studies, on Jordanian culture in relation to business and other countries are the main reasons for choosing Jordan and the Netherlands as comparing countries for this research.

The ETIC models however also have a few limitations. Cross cultural studies stand on the assumption that cultures to some degree are comparable (etic). However, researchers who conduct comparative studies should be cautious about the limitations of such an assumption. Surface cultural phenomena frequently are rooted in a set of beliefs that are implicit, requiring deeper exploration (Chang, 2003)

Based on cultural models created by Hofstede or Schwartz it can be seen that there are big cultural differences between certain nations. These specific models were chosen due their usefulness using the models when comparing countries, which is what is done in this research (Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson, 2006)

The above limitations may be overcome by an emic approach to study culture. This approach relies on qualitative investigation and allows to explore in-depth cultural differences. Concerning Jordan and

the Netherlands, there seems to be very few qualitative studies on the culture of Jordan, and there seem to be especially few qualitative researchers on the cultural differences between the Netherlands and Jordan. Indeed the few studies that address this comparison focus on how to implement organisational culture in companies located in Jordan and it's difficulties due to religion and the Arabic culture (Sawalha & Meaton, 2012) Yet, since there are more countries interested in expanding into the Middle-East, it is beneficial to understand the differences in culture in order to avoid conflict caused by cultural differences. For example, when we look at the Netherlands and Jordan, there can be different ways to approach employees that work higher in the hierarchy of the company which can lead to misunderstandings (Moon & Williams, 2000), and this can be managed by increasing the cultural awareness of the parties involved.

Based on the quantitative research of Sawalha et al. (2012), it is stated how the Arabic culture of Jordan has an impact on Business continuity management. In this study it is shown how culture has an impact on the continuity management. Another study shows the implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems in Jordan and its organizational structure, and the difference between the private and public sectors. The results are also shown via quantitative data, and was conducted over two decades ago. (Rabaai, 2009)

Because culture plays an important role in business globalization between countries nowadays, it essential for Dutch expats working in Jordan, or even Dutch investors looking to enter the Jordanian market to get in-depth knowledge on the certain cultural differences between the Netherlands and Jordan which may affect their business undertakings in Jordan. According to previous research conducted by Hofstede (2010), on the national culture of the Netherlands and Jordan, both cultures vary significantly from each other based on the cultural dimensions that Hofstede (2004) created. In these dimensions it can be seen that in the Netherlands the power distance dimension scores significantly lower than in Jordan. Where in the Individualism dimension the Netherlands scores a lot higher than in Jordan. Another big difference is that based on Hofstede (2004), the Netherlands is very long term oriented compared to Jordan. And according to research conducted by Meyer (2014) cultural differences can be divided into eight different scales. Which are communicating, evaluating, persuading, leading, deciding, trusting, disagreeing and scheduling. Meyer (2014)

As stated above, in the case of Jordan, and how international business can be affected by Jordanian culture has not been explored thoroughly, and only by broad and thin descriptions that were provided by using quantitative methods. Another problem is that it is difficult to differentiate the Jordanian culture from the Arabic culture as there has not been done a lot of research on this subject. So

therefore Jordan specifically was chosen because of the lack of studies with the study being qualitative, as it seems that most studies on Jordanian culture and business are quantitative studies.

In a research by Sawalha and Meaton (2012, p.92) the following was said about Jordanian culture: *'Jordan has a culture identical to the Arab culture. Attempts by the Jordanian Government and king are being made in order to develop organisational culture. Nevertheless, major changes/developments remain difficult to achieve owing to the fact that many of the components of the Arab culture are embedded in Arab society and individuals to a great extent.'* Meaning that it is difficult for the Jordanian government to make changes in organisational culture due to the Arab society and religion which date from a long time ago.

In order to address the research gap on how Jordanian culture influences international business in a qualitative study and how it affects Dutch expats when working in Jordan, the following central research question has been drawn up and should be answered: **"How can cultural differences between Jordan and the Netherlands influence international business of a Dutch expat doing business in Jordan?"**

To answer the main research question, the following sub questions need to be answered as well:

- Which cultural standards and values identify the Jordanian Culture?
- What are the main differences between the Dutch and Jordanian culture perceived by Dutch expats in Jordan?

To address this research question and provide practical information as well as recommendations for Dutch expats or investors planning to invest in the Jordanian market, this research will perform a more in-depth qualitative examination of the Jordanian culture through the perspective of Dutch expats that are currently living and working in Jordan. A series of interviews will be held with these Dutch expats, who will reflect on the differences that they have come across from their own culture and the Jordanian culture which has had an impact on business related issues. Specifically, this paper follows the qualitative research methodology by Thomas (2003), where cultural standards of specific cultures are investigated by performing critical incidents technique. Interview will be analysed by following both the Gioia et al.'s (2012) inductive coding methodology and the thematic analysis steps of Braun and Clarke (2006).

1.1 Theoretical and Practical relevance

By addressing the above research question, this thesis contributes to the literature on cultural differences and values in two ways. Firstly, most of the studies regarding Jordanian culture and business –in relation to other countries– seem to be quantitative studies, hence offering a general, bird-eye perspectives rather than deep insights (Sawalha & Meaton 2012). With this qualitative study, grounded in a rigorous qualitative methodology, we thus enrich cultural studies with thick descriptions of Jordanian culture. Secondly, given the very little research on the Jordanian culture and that it has been mostly national studies like the study by Sawalha and Meaton (2012) , we extend current knowledge on this topic by exploring its values and how they can influence behaviours and business practices.

This research has also practical implications. By exploring these differences of both cultures, information and recommendations will be drawn to give future Dutch expats and investors in the Jordanian market on which communication tools could be used to approach Jordanian customers and employees and avoid any possible cultural clashes.

1.2 Structure of the report

In this research firstly, the theoretical background of this research is outlined, which is based on a solid literature research on the topic of this paper. Then the research design is indicated, and the following items are pointed out: research design, data collection, and information are given on the interview participants of project. Finally, a fixed planning scheme is outlined by the researcher to have an overview on the progress and feasibility of this research.

2. Theoretical background

During the last few years, more companies have started to expand their businesses abroad by setting up trade relations internationally, hiring multi-national employees, approaching international markets and establishing new contacts across their geographical borders. This all has to do with the trend of globalization where trade is expanded from restrictions of a specific geographical boundary to expansion across borders. The role of culture is one of the essential factors with impacts global

business performance of an organisation, where culture should be taken into consideration when moving internationally and approach a new market or international trade relationship (Sycara, Gelfand , & Abbe, 2013).

As globalization has increased the last few year, so has digitalization. The world has become more connected than ever before. Organisations should be aware of their communication approach strategies with customers as well as partners from the global market (Lifintsev & Wellbrock, 2019). For this reason, it is important for companies to be aware of publishing culturally sensitive content when engaging with a specific global market, which can be different from the domestic market that the organisations operate in. Being aware of the intercultural background of customers and partners may avoid cultural sensitive obstacles during the business communication. (Fletcher, 2006)

This chapter provides detailed and solid information on the topic regarding this research. It will start off with defining the term of culture. Secondly, the national culture level of analysing culture will be pointed out as well as the cultural dimensions of the theory of Hofstede and Meyer are used to show the general cultural differences between the Netherlands and Jordan (Hofstede & Hofstede, Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind, revised and expanded, 2004 & Meyer Eight-scale Tool for Mapping Cultural Differences, 2014). After that the cultural standards of Thomas (2003) are used in order to indicate cultural standards of the Netherlands and Jordan. Moreover, the evolution of culture is discussed, where a culture's continuous movement is argued. Finally, the relationship between culture and business globalization is mentioned.

2.1 The definition of Culture

Since the day people are born, they are immersed within certain social norms and values shared with their family and a specific social group network (Little, 2016). These social norms and values indicate their manners of handling and evaluating certain life situations, such as differences between allowed/not allowed, good/bad, acceptable/unacceptable, and moral/immoral. Social values and norms differ from an individual to another based on the individuals' specific cultural group. Due to this reason, understanding how the term of culture has been defined in literature is critical before starting to perform any cross-cultural research. (Levin, Park & Kim, 2007) Different researchers have explained what the term culture could indicate in different academic fields and contexts. Hofstede

(2010), as one of the most famous thinkers of intercultural studies has defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (p. 4). Moreover, Levin, Park and Kim (2007) define the concept of culture as ‘a collective phenomenon’ and is shared among the members of a specific social group. This can differentiate the members within the group from each other. (p.207). Other researchers have expanded these definitions to include more concepts, the term ‘culture’ could be associated to groups of people that share the same norms, beliefs, patterns, behaviours and patterns, which would have a major impact on a groups interpretation on how other groups act (Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Godwyn & Gittell, 2012).

For this research, the definition provided by Hofstede (2010), will be used when talking about culture since it is able to describe it’s meaning closest compared to the other definitions, and since Hofstede’s model is widely used when comparing culture cross countries (Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson, 2006).

In order to understand culture better, it is also crucial to note that there are different levels of culture, and that not all levels are visible when there is human social interaction. Culture, according to Dahl (2004) is based on the so called ‘Iceberg Model’. Based on this model there are two different levels of culture: The visible and invisible level, where the invisible level contains values that are not perceived by the other individual. But these values still play a key role which enables the visible level, namely the behaviours of individuals. To go even further, Hofstede (2004) expanded these levels from two to four. Namely, Rituals, Values, Heroes and symbols. Hofstede has shown that the upper layers of culture are dependent on the under-layers of culture, where the combination of these set layers are there to represent a specific culture. According to Hofstede (2004), rituals can be seen as collective activities that are shared within individuals of a certain cultural group, like the way individuals greet each other. Heroes can be seen as public figures that have a certain value for the culture. And finally, symbols are described as certain colours, words and logos that can have a special meaning within that cultural group.

To sum it up, culture can be defined as a certain group of people who share the same norms, beliefs, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, which can have a major impact on the interpretation on how other individuals should act (Godwyn & Gittell, 2012).

2.2 National Culture

Although the definition mentioned above is well-accepted and rather clear, there are certain controversies about the level of analysis that needs to be used in addressing cultural differences and culture in general. According to Hofstede (2004), culture has the following dimensions and levels: national level, gender level, organisational level, regional/ linguistic / religious level and individual level. When looking at national culture, Hofstede defines it as fundamental of early childhood socialization of people, that will later in life shape their core values and beliefs (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Hofstede's method belongs to the so called ETIC approach. The emic–etic distinction refers to the two traditional research strategies used to study phenomena in different cultures (Berry, 1989; Van de Vijver, 2010). Etic research seeks to define common phenomena across cultures which can be used to define a set of universal phenomena among all cultures, whereas emic research lacks this aspect (Berry, 1989; Van de Vijver, 2010). As mentioned before, individuals in a specific group can have the same cultural norms and values (Godwyn & Gittel, 2012), but they can still differ from each other, which is the so called 'Human unique personality'. Individuals can belong to different sub-cultures although they are in the same national culture. This makes it that cross-culture analysis and quantitative analysis can be tricky to perform (Dahl, 2004)

Because of this, different cross-cultural studies have led to new insights on different cultural dimensions within a culture. Hofstede's framework has been used widely in order to analyse national culture further. This led to four cultural dimensions, namely Power Distance, Masculinity, Individualism and Uncertainty Avoidance. Later on two other dimensions were added, Indulgence and Long-Term Orientation (Hofstede, 2004).

Since these cultural dimensions are widely used in the past years by Hofstede as well as other researchers in cross-cultural researches, the dimensions are briefly described (Hofstede, 2004).

Power Distance Index

The power distance index considers the extent to which inequality and power are tolerated. In this dimension, inequality and power are viewed from the viewpoint of the followers – the lower level. High power distance index indicates that a culture accepts inequity and power differences, encourages bureaucracy, and shows high respect for rank and authority.

Low power distance index indicates that a culture encourages organizational structures that are flat and feature decentralized decision-making responsibility, participative style of management, and place emphasis on power distribution. (Hofstede, 2004)

The masculinity vs. femininity dimension is also referred to as “tough vs. tender,” and considers the preference of society for achievement, attitude towards sexuality equality, behaviour. Masculinity comes with the following characteristics: distinct gender roles, assertive, and concentrated on material achievements and wealth-building.

Femininity comes with the following characteristics: fluid gender roles, modest, nurturing, and concerned with the quality of life. (Hofstede, 2004)

Individualism vs. Collectivism

The individualism vs. collectivism dimension considers the degree to which societies are integrated into groups and their perceived obligations and dependence on groups.

Individualism indicates that there is a greater importance placed on attaining personal goals. A person’s self-image in this category is defined as “I.” Collectivism indicates that there is a greater importance placed on the goals and well-being of the group. A person’s self-image in this category is defined as “We.” (Hofstede, 2004)

Uncertainty Avoidance Index

The uncertainty avoidance index considers the extent to which uncertainty and ambiguity are tolerated. This dimension considers how unknown situations and unexpected events are dealt with. A high uncertainty avoidance index indicates a low tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk-taking. The unknown is minimized through strict rules and regulations.

A low uncertainty avoidance index indicates a high tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk-taking. The unknown is more openly accepted, and there are lax rules and regulations. (Hofstede, 2004)

Indulgence vs. Restraint

The indulgence vs. restraint dimension considers the extent and tendency for a society to fulfill its desires. In other words, this dimension revolves around how societies can control their impulses and desires. Indulgence indicates that a society allows relatively free gratification related to enjoying life

and having fun. Restraint indicates that a society suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it through social norms. (Hofstede, 2004)

According to Hofstede's (2004) national culture study the Dutch and Jordanian cultures vary quite a bit from each other. In table 1, which is shown below, the differences between Jordan and Dutch cultures according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions are shown. (Hofstede, 2004) However, it should be noted that due to the lack of research on Jordanian Culture, even these numbers are 'estimated' by the tool provided by Hofstede's website.

In the table below it can be clearly seen that the Dutch culture has low power distance, which means that there is a lower level of hierarchy in place and employees can be expected to provide their opinion in important decision making within a company, while in Jordan, power distance is high, a higher level of hierarchy which higher ups are expected to use for their personal gain as well as the fact that employees are not expected to provide opinions on important decisions. On the dimensions of masculinity, the Netherlands scores extremely low, meaning that gender is not a factor when distributing the roles within the workspace or at home, while in Jordan there is an average score on this dimension. Meaning that the roles can be distributed based on gender, and that the society in Jordan is driven by achievement, success values and competition. Then there is individualism, which the Netherlands scores very high in. This shows that individuals in the Netherlands are not interdependent on other individuals and can focus on their own personal goals and issues. In contrast to that is Jordan, which is more of a collectivism society. Jordanian culture relies on social relations and networks that are interdependent on the cultural group members one is in. Due to this, it can be that conflicts and complaints are more often than not avoided in order to keep the harmony within the group. Furthermore, the Jordan culture scores quite high when it comes to the uncertainty avoidance dimension. Meaning that there is fear of the future, while the Netherlands has an average uncertainty avoidance index, this shows that flexibility and innovation are accepted more in the Dutch culture. As for the Indulgence dimension, The Netherlands scores quite high, meaning that society allows individuals to enjoy live and have fun without control from other individuals. Jordan scores below average in this dimension meaning that there can be other individuals that influence the happiness of people living in the Jordanian culture. And for the final dimension, it can be seen that the Netherlands scores high in long term orientation, while Jordan is more short term oriented. (Hofstede, 2004)

Table 1: *the differences between the Jordanian and Dutch national cultures according to the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (2004)*

Hofstede's Dimensions	Jordan*	NL
Power Distance Index	70	38
Masculinity	45	14
Individualism	30	80
Uncertainty Avoidance Index	65	53
Indulgence	43	68
Long term orientation	16	67

Notes: *Numbers are estimated

Furthermore there are also some limitations when using a quantitative study for cultural research. Firstly, quantitative research usually requires quite a large sample size (Science, 2001). Secondly, it could lead to an improper representation of the target population, which might hinder the researcher for achieving the desired aims and objectives. Thirdly, it can lead to limited outcomes due to structured questionnaires with close ended questions. And finally, quantitative studies can be very expensive and time consuming as it can require a lot of time to randomize and correct the designation of control groups (Morgan, 1980).

2.3 Cultural values of Jordan and the Netherlands

Both ETIC and EMIC approaches are viewpoints and can be useful to understand a culture in a systematic way. Based on the EMIC perspective, it is possible to study or understand a culture with its internal elements for its functioning. This is called the EMIC perspective. This perspective is more considerable and vital for its functioning. When using this perspective, it is possible to study or decide the culture's importance or standard (Berry, 1989; Van de Vijver, 2010).

2.3.1 Jordanian cultural values

Jordan is a country located in the Middle-East, and the culture of Jordan can be seen as almost identical to the Arab culture (Sawalha & Meaton, 2012). Given this feature and the scarcity of research focused specifically on Jordanian culture, the Arabic culture is taken as primary point of reference to depict as close as possible the Jordanian culture. The Arabic culture is characterised as bureaucratic, difficult to change, mainly based on religion and tribalism and has a lack of democracy. The Arab society has considerable influence on the working environment in Jordan (Sawalha & Meaton, 2012). As stated before, in the Arab culture, family honour is an important factor, and traditionally a woman's activities are restricted to the domestic domain only, leaving the Jordanian culture more to the masculine side of society. However due to the so called 'Arab Spring' major

political and social changes have been taking place causing for reform, making it more attainable for female individuals to obtain jobs in other sectors which were not possible beforehand (Perthes, 2011).

According to Sawalha and Meaton (2012), the Arabic language is a major component of the Arab culture, and can be seen as a symbol of its identity. Language is a defining aspect of culture, as it helps to exchange and express ideas and enables people to communicate (Kulatunga, 2010).

Jordanian organisations are influenced by the Arabic language greatly, since most of the employees as well as senior executives use Arabic as the main language in which they communicate in business (Ababaneh, 2010; Sabri, 2008; Sawalha, Meaton, 2012). Due to the fact that most organisations in Jordan still use Arabic as their main language, they are still considered traditional: compared to modern organisations and management system that make primarily use of the English language (Sawalha & Meaton, 2012). The use of Arabic as the first language in Jordanian organisations causes individuals to attach more to the entire set of Arab beliefs, inherited values and traditions. This should not be taken that only English-speaking organisations are able to be innovative, however due to the Arabic language being very influential on individuals, due to its strong relation to religion, it can be harder on individuals as well as organisations to implement innovative ideas. (Sawalha & Meaton, 2012)

The Arab society can be characterised by features, including gender segregation. This is also true for Jordan. Jordan has had a low rate of female employment and participation in the labour force. Women that are successful in getting jobs are mostly concentrated in non-executive positions, limiting their involvement in decision making and top level management (Sawalha & Meaton, 2012). When looking at education levels, these can also vary depending on gender in Jordan, which is similar to many other Arab countries. Traditionally, women perform home centred activities of nurturing and caring of children while men do work that requires more physical strength (Al-Rasheed, 2008; Miles, 2002; Jansen, 2006). However, since the 'Arab Spring' there have been reformations of female employment as well as education in Jordan. With more females able to educate themselves for higher positions within organisations (Perthes, 2011).

In the Arab culture, the tribal system is often legitimised due to the 'conservative' nature of the Arab society in order to preserve tribal values and protect the family interests. The traditional tribal structure in Jordan has a deep rooted Bedouin culture (Ledger, 2010). Furthermore, in Jordan, there are many organisations in various sectors that are family-owned (Al-Rasheed, 2008; Sabri, 2008) where the father is the CEO or owner/manager, and most of the employees hired are members of the same family or extended family, close friends or from the same tribe (Al-Rasheed, 2008; Sabri,

2008). In Jordan, tribalism plays more of a significant role in politics compared to other countries in the region. This is due to the fact that the state itself, in many cases, is dependent on the tribal laws for assisting the government and the tribal system for authority. The tribal system in Jordan is deemed by certain individuals to be outdated, selective and Bedouin system (Ledger, 2010; Rowland, 2009). However most of the studies in the field are quite outdated and are from before the 'Arab Spring', and since there have been on-going changes in the politics of Jordan as well as changes made in the so called tribal system in Jordan (Ledger, 2010; Rowland, 2009).

Based on the thesis study by Joy Quarmout (2019), Jordan has the following cultural values, seen from an US perspective.

- Religion:

Religion holds a dominant role in understanding Jordanian culture, due to the association of Arabs with their religion. Moreover, the religion is tied to beliefs and values, which in turn influence the behaviour and on a majority level, becomes the accepted norm of customs and practices. However, despite the assumptions that most Jordanians are Muslim, there is a significant population that are Christian. (Al-Hazzan et. al, 2010) As well as the fact that almost 60% of the population of Jordan has a mixed-faith Palestinian community, due to Jordan being a transit country in the past (Gandolfo, et al., 2010).

- Family:

Family is held in the highest regard in the Jordanian culture. Family in Jordan is an essential part of social functioning, and from a young age children are brought up with the mentality to be good husbands/wives and fathers/mothers. (Sidani & Thornberry, 2010). It has only been recently, due to the economic situation, that both woman and man have needed to work due to the high cost of living.

- Community:

Another facet that can display the value of the Jordanian culture is community. Due to the high cost of living, geographical dynamic, hospitable spirit and people's generosity, there is a very tight community in Jordan. In Jordan, many families live near each other, which allows for late night gatherings in which they build interpersonal relations and communities (Quarmout, 2019).

- Generosity and Hospitality:

Another trait of Arabic culture is the hospitality. According to Adnan Almaney (1981), “As hosts, the Arabs are entirely charming, and the generosity of their hospitality is almost unlimited. They are a people who like to please, and who are always warm hearted and more than cordial to their guests”. A sign of hospitality and generosity, and especially with the Bedouins in Jordan, but also the general population is inviting strangers for coffee. (Layne, 1989). Hospitality is one of the most impactful character traits of Jordanians and Arabs in general, leaving a lasting impression (Quarmout, 2019).

The studies on the Jordanian values are useful but scarce. And since these are so scarce there are certain limitations in terms of the methodology. By focusing on cultural clashes that are possible to occur when people from different backgrounds and different cultural standards cooperate together. The interviewing technique which is used in qualitative research is called ‘critical incidents technique’, will be useful to mitigate these limitations. (Thomas, 2003)

In order to get a good look at what different cultural standards and backgrounds could clash together it is important to also understand the Dutch cultural values, which are explained in the next paragraph.

2.3.2 Dutch Cultural Values

The Netherlands is located in western part of Europe and is considered to be part of the western culture. Twelve values that rule the Dutch society are given below based on the book by Enklaar (2007) in which the Dutch values are depicted:

The first four values are from Christianity:

- *Salvation*, sacrifices and efforts are rewarded in the future. The Dutch, just as any other people who live in Christian cultures are strongly oriented towards the future, so progress and innovation are important (Enklaar, 2007).
- *Guilt*, responsibility for the good and bad things which have consequences. The degree of personal responsibility in the Dutch culture is high (Enklaar, 2007).
- *Love thy neighbour*, others wellbeing is considered. The Dutch feel greatly involved with other people, this is evident from the extensive social security systems and high budget for development aid in the Netherlands (Enklaar, 2007).

- *Truth*. The Dutch often find it more important to tell the truth to someone else rather than be polite (Enklaar, 2007).

The next five values come from Protestantism:

- *Work*, it is good to work. The Dutch think that it is better to work than to sit by idly. The higher an individual is on the corporate ladder, the harder they work (Enklaar, 2007).
- *Order & Tidiness*, it is important to be well organized. The Dutch appreciate an organized life that is dictated by the clock and agenda. The Netherlands is a relatively neat and clean country, in which a lot of rules tells an individual how to behave (Enklaar, 2007).
- *Reliability*, What is said or promised must be kept. The Dutch are very literal about their agreements and promises, if an individual agrees to something, it is important to uphold that agreement, or this individual can be seen as unreliable (Enklaar, 2007).
- *Moderation*, exercise self-control and do not overdo. In daily life the Dutch hate extremes and exaggeration, the Dutch applaud self-restraint and frown on expressing strong emotions (Enklaar, 2007).

The final three values are typical Dutch values and explain why certain things are done differently in the Netherlands compared to surrounding countries.

- *Consensus*, always try to compromise. The Dutch dislike conflict and aggression, and consistently strive for consensus and harmony, which they refer to affectionately as *gezelligheid*. Instead of letting the democratic majority rule the minority, they prefer to find a solution that appeals to everyone; a compromise (Enklaar, 2007).
- *Equality*, an individual should not think of themselves as more important than another. In the Netherlands, all hierarchy and differences in social status are carefully smoothed over and disguised. The Dutch do not apply politeness to superiors, but rather reverse politeness towards inferiors (Enklaar, 2007).
- *Self-determination*, Dutch people want to decide what to do for themselves. The Dutch find it more important that people can make their own choices, than that they are told what to do. Children are not so much raised to respect their elders or general moral principles – but to think for themselves and to speak for themselves. Dutch employees are expected to demonstrate a high degree of responsibility and initiative (Enklaar, 2007).

3. Research Methodology

In order to carry out research as accurate as possible, a correct collection and analysing of data is needed. Therefore, this chapter will indicate the research design, how the data will be collected, samples used for this research, and the data analysis techniques. And to close this section of, the elements that are required for validity and reliability in this research will be explained.

3.1 Study Design

Since quantitative design of cross-cultural studies are not able to grasp the development and richness of cultural values and culture (Clausen, 2010), qualitative research methodology will be used for the duration of this study. Specifically the so called 'Emic' approach. 'Emic' refers to the study of a specific culture, which gives the inner perspective and views of individuals from other cultural backgrounds. By using this approach, it is possible to understand how Dutch nationals perceive the Jordanian culture, which might result in indicating possible new Jordanian culture standards (Markee, 2012). According to Quadros Rigoni, R. (2016) qualitative research can bring a more in-depth understanding of processes and behaviours, which would not be easily indicated by using quantitative design. However, despite the advantages of qualitative design in cross-cultural studies, there are also potential disadvantages to be considered (Kvale, 1996). The researcher's objectivity could be biased due to empathy or showing feelings with the interviewees, this could affect the outcome of the study. And when comparing cross-cultural differences and similarities, it can be difficult to process diverse context of data, which can vary from each other, but it should also have common cross-national patterns (Quadros Rigoni, 2016).

An inductive approach will be used in order to analyse the data. The benefits of an inductive approach, are that it allows flexibility, attends closely to context and supports the generation of new theory.

Thomas (2003), who is a social psychologist working on cross-cultural differences, started using a rigorous qualitative research approach in order to indicate the cultural differences among national cultures, from which he could establish cultural standards. He focused on cultural clashes that are possible to occur when people from different backgrounds and different cultural standards cooperate together. The methodology he used in this qualitative research is called 'critical incidents technique'. Which has been used by Thomas (2003), this can show what the participants seem as an incident that has had significant impact on their experiences in another culture. This technique will

be used in order to find correlation between certain 'critical incidents' and reactions of the participants to these incidents.

3.2 Data Collection

This paper focuses on Dutch expats' perception on the Jordanian culture and their view on it. More specifically, the cultural standards that are emerging from their perspective will be compared to the cultural standards that are currently known, and are mentioned in the literature review of this research. On the basis of the results of this paper, it might be possible to show how the different cultural standards between the Netherlands and Jordan affect the way of doing business in Jordan for a Dutch expat.

The sample that has been chosen for this research consist of 12 Dutch nationals who are currently living in Jordan and work together with Jordanian colleagues. The conditions for choosing the participants were that they have perceived or perceive professional experience with Jordanian culture by working in Jordan. Ideally, they should not work in an international company. Through purposive sampling, the aim was to have a mix in gender when it comes to the participants, due to the high masculinity in Jordan compared to the Netherlands, which may provide different outcomes. The interviewees will be approached from friends of relatives living in Jordan, while also contacting the Dutch embassy in Jordan in order to find participants that fit the criteria, as well as using social media like Facebook groups or LinkedIn as tools to gather interviewees.

Table 1 Interviewees

Number	Experience in Jordan	Age	Gender	City	Job position	Sector of company
1	1 year	27	Male	Amman	Marketing	Car industry
2	2,5 years	29	Male	Aqaba	Sales	Travel Agency
3	4 years	34	Male	Amman	Team Manager	Finance industry
4	3	42	Female	Amman (around)	CEO	Cosmetics industry
5	2	31	Male	Amman	Manager	Finance industry
6	6	33	Male	Amman	Engineer	Engineering Industry

7	3	37	Male	Zarqa	Team Manager	Banking Industry
8	2	41	Male	Amman	Manager	Finance Industry
9	1	28	Male	Amman	Sales	Banking Industry
10	7	43	Male	Amman	IT officer	IT Industry
11	4	32	Male	Petra (around)	Travel coordinator	Tourist Industry
12	2	29	Male	Dead Sea	Hotel employee	Tourist Industry

3.3 Research instruments

By using the explanatory, in-depth semi-structured, interviews, where besides the pre prepared questions, the researcher may ask the interviewees additional questions needed to extract more relevant information (Galletta, 2001), the data will be collected. This method is used to explore a more in-depth perspective as well as opinions of various respondents from the same topic. It is in a semi-standardized format, so it can be used to interview respondents from all sorts of educational, professional and personal backgrounds. But when necessary questions outside of the format will be asked in order to provide more detailed and informational answers. The aim is to have interviews between half an hour and an hour long (Barriball & While, 1994).

The interviews have been done via video calls. This was due to the small window that the interviews had to take place and not every participant being able to find time in that window. The questions have been mostly asked in the native language, which is Dutch, with important answers needed for the research being translated to English to implement these answers in the coding scheme. Open questions have been asked to the interviewees which have been prepared by the interviewer beforehand, however there was the possibility to ask follow up questions in order to get a more in-depth answer from the interviewees. The interviews have been recorded and were stored in the University cloud, this was only be accessible to the author and supervisors. The interviews have been transcribed by the interviewer himself, and the interviewees remain anonymous in order to avoid privacy concerns.

3.4 Data analysis

By using the inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006) through the structure of Gioia et al. (2012) the interviews were analysed. This thematic analysis allows the author to indicate differences in data more easily, divide large interviews in codes and themes, as well as discover possible new insights that can address the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are 6 steps in the thematic data analysis:

- Familiarizing yourself with the data
- Generating the initial codes: the interviews will be analysed by initial codes across the transcripts
- Developing first order codes, based on the Gioia method (2012)
- Developing the second order codes, based on the Gioia method (2012)
- Developing the aggregate dimensions, based on the Gioia method (2012)
- Producing the report

By using these steps in thematic data analysis the interviews were analysed in order to indicate the differences in data more easily.

4. Results

In this chapter the overall findings of the conducted research are indicated. These findings aim to answer the sub-questions of this research in order to answer the main research question:

“How can cultural differences between Jordan and the Netherlands influence international business of a Dutch expat doing business in Jordan?”

The critical incidents that are mentioned by the interviewees have been coded into first order themes, which represent Jordanian cultural behaviours that were mentioned by the interviewees on a professional and personal level. First order themes that were similar in this research were then linked together to form the second order themes, which are namely specific Jordanian cultural standards. In order to be able to deeply understand (some) of the cultural logic behind the conducted Jordanian cultural standards when interacting on both a professional and cultural level, third order themes have been identified, which are namely the tentative underlying cultural values. These third order themes, or tentative underlying cultural values engender the interactions between various second order themes. And finally, the social and demographic differences were mentioned by several interviewees and the impact that these social and

demographic variances have on the Jordanian cultural standards and are discussed briefly based on the conducted interviews.

4.1 Jordanian cultural standards

During the interviews there were several critical incidents that were mentioned, in Table 3 below, it can be seen that these have led to 23 typical behaviours which were seen from the perspective of Dutch expatriates living and working in Jordan, towards the Jordanian typical behaviours. These Jordanian typical behaviours were then coded into 8 Jordanian cultural standards. Each of the cultural standards mentioned in Table 3 objectively represents a specific group of the similar typical Jordanian behaviours. Furthermore, the Jordanian cultural standards are further explained in the sub-chapters.

Typical Jordanian cultural behaviour (first order themes)	Number of interviewees mentioning this behaviour	Cultural standards (second order themes)	Number of interviewees in total mentioning this cultural standard	Definition of this cultural standard
Not open for direct feedback or questions	5	Indirectness	10	When using one-to-one and non-confidential techniques are being used there is unclarity and indirectness in the self-expression
Individual contact rather than in a group	2			
Indirectness of communication by being unclear in self-expressions	4			
Avoid conflicts by giving compliments	3			
Friendliness during communications with strangers	8	Amicable	9	Interactions and discussions with fellow locals and expatriates are calm and friendly in both professional and personal areas
Readiness to help others	10			
Treating others the way you want to be treated	7			
Family oriented	10	Shared community	11	Showing loyalty and trust in one another is valued higher compared to just doing business and is more relationship oriented.
Focus on building genuine relationships in businesses and private life	8			

Private and work life mixture	2			
Different layers in society regarding demanded respect	4	Social division	8	There are certain separations in society in terms of gender certain jobs as well as nationality which all contribute to there being differences in society.
Separation in roles and social activities between genders	6			
Reserved in dealing with strangers	4			
demanding respect in certain higher positions in an organization	6	Prestige	7	Showing others in both professional and personal events pride in heritage, social status as well as work related positions.
caring for the family above all else	8			
Pride in heritage and traditions	3			
Welcoming and generosity towards guests	12	Hospitality	12	Showing generosity towards guests and provide guidance towards expatriates or colleagues that might face certain problems.
Resolving private or professional problems of strangers	4			
Hierarchy in the family	5	Hierarchy	10	The way people treat each other according to their hierarchical and social positions within an organization or society.
Hierarchy within the company	9			
Vertical hierarchy in communication	5			
Following rules without questioning	8	Acceptance of strict rules and bureaucracy	5	The expected and acceptance of higher ups dictating the rules and regulations with their higher positions.
Wanting managers to explain even simple tasks	5			

4.1.1 Indirectness

In the interactions with their fellow Jordanians or with expatriates, Jordanians tended to use communication styles which could be described as highly indirect in professional and personal aspects. The following typical Jordanian behaviours which were perceived by Dutch expatriates refer to the cultural standard 'Indirectness': not open for direct feedback or questions, indirectness of communication by being unclear in their self-expressions, individual contact rather than in a group, avoiding conflicts by giving compliments. This meant that Jordanians would rather not express their opinions and emotions directly, but instead would try to reformulate them into indirect and

sometimes constructive feedback, which could in turn lead to conflicts as it can be seen as offensive to outright call people out if their work is not sufficient. Due to this reason, individual contact was more often used than public or group discussions when it comes to suggesting ideas and questioning people. In terms of the characterization of the Jordanian professional personnel the indirectness in communications can be seen as one of the most important indicators. Participants for instance noted:

‘Yes, I would say that the communication and punctuality is very different compared to the Netherlands. There have been instances where I’ve asked certain other parties involved with the vacations about availability as well as special needs for certain customers, and would get the response or objects either not in time or not at all. Which was difficult at first.’ (interviewee 2)

‘there are a lot of differences working here compared to the Netherlands. For example being on time, asking questions if there is something uncertain, correcting other employees on their mistakes and a lot more. If this was different it could lead to more efficient working atmosphere in my opinion.’ (interviewee 3)

Therefore, in the eyes of the Dutch, Jordanians use indirect, mostly one-to-one and open-ended communications. While also trying to please higherups by sometimes making promises that cannot be kept in order to keep the harmony. This is due to the fear of possible conflicts and to avoid them if possible.

4.1.2 Amicable

The following Jordanian typical behaviour which was perceived by Dutch expatriates is regarding the cultural standard ‘kindness’: the friendliness in communications with strangers as well as readiness to help others. Since being unpolite and rude is seen as offensive which can ruin relationships with Jordanians, it can be seen that Jordanians often express their politeness by having friendly and civil discussions in order to resolve a problem. Participants have noted the following things:

‘I’ve had a lot of positive experiences in Jordan already! But what comes to mind mostly is how helpful and kind most of the people are when I ask them for help. My Arabic is not

good, but with English and hand gestures I am able to get the help I need when buying certain products for my shop!’ (interviewee 4)

‘... But I also wanted to say that the readiness to help is very present. Even when there is a difference in opinion on how to solve a matter, my Jordanian colleagues are still willing to help. At least in the division that I work in.’ (interviewee 6)

‘The way we treat each other. A saying in Dutch is ‘Behandel een ander zoals je zelf ook behandeld zou willen worden’ which means treat others the way you want to be treated. And I think that is something that the Jordanians also apply. Especially in the tourist world.’ (interviewee 12)

So, in the eyes of the Dutch, it can be seen that Jordanians are said to be friendly and calm in the interactions with expatriates and fellow Jordanians on professional matters as well as personal matters.

4.1.3 Shared community

Jordanian people can be seen as group-oriented people, this cultural standard is clearly seen through their behaviour in both professional and personal areas. The following Jordanian typical behaviours perceived by the Dutch expatriates represent the so-called cultural standard ‘collective society’: family oriented, focus on building genuine relationships in both business and private life, and having a mixture of private and work life. This means that Jordanians do not only have an appreciation for strong bonds in their own cultural group, such as family or extended family, but also seek to establish a genuine and intimate relationship with their business relations compared to only focusing on business topics. Jordanians often spend their free time talking about private matters with friends or family members, which in turn can be seen as proof of their loyalty and strong relationships. Moreover, it can be seen that Jordanians are more often than not rather busy with other activities outside of work. Making their professional and private life very mixed. Participants for instance noted:

‘I can only talk for the UAE and Jordan nationals, but I don’t see much of a difference there if I’m being honest. But it has not been something that I’ve been focusing on. I would say the most important value for Jordanian nationals is being social.’ (interviewee 7)

'Having a social life even when working. I see a lot of people going out on weekdays with their friends. And the fact that I am being invited to a lot of those evenings is a really good experience.' (interviewee 9)

'I would say, for Jordanians, the way friendships are formed and stay the same throughout life mostly. Which also counts for me too, I still have friends from when I was young from the Netherlands.' (interviewee 9)

'I would definitely say the way people talk with each other, the people in Jordan are genuinely being interested in your story and listen very carefully. I think in the Netherlands it was more of a polite way to talk, but not really cared for the answers that were given.' (interviewee 10)

It can be seen, based on the eyes of the Dutch that Jordanians are relationship-oriented, where showing trust and loyalty is more often than not more important than doing business. It can also be seen that Jordanian nationals are more interested in building genuine and intimate relationships with other individuals whether this is on a professional or personal scale.

4.1.4 Social division

There are different social layers in the Jordanian society, as in any other society. The following Jordanian typical behaviours perceived by the Dutch expatriates represent the cultural standard called 'social division': the different layers in society, the separation in roles and social activities between genders, reserved in dealings with strangers and prejudgment based on nationality. Jordanians have different layers in society, and the higher the occupation of an individual the more respect it can have in society. Furthermore, there is a difference in roles and social activities between genders in Jordan. While this is very apparent for Dutch expatriates, it is not often seen by Jordanian nationals due to its normality in the culture. Furthermore, even if the Jordanian culture is seen as hospitable, there is still prejudgement based on nationality in Jordan. This all can lead to the creation of unequal chances in the Jordanian society, which then consequently leads to social division. Participants noted the following:

'When talking about people's age..... Having to be careful to respect other people is also something I had to worry about less in the Netherlands.' (interviewee 3)

'I would say that the communication between men and women are quite different in the Netherlands compared to Jordan, but only with certain people of course.' (interviewee 4)

'As a woman myself, I would say that the male population here was acting in a way that I had never experienced before. And I thought it was because they didn't like me at all. However I spoke to some women that were helping me at first and they explained to me that it was because of the respect they have towards the other gender, so now when this happens I still am uncertain if it is because of these reasons or because they don't like me, but it is something that I can deal with.' (interviewee 4)

'I noticed that it was quite difficult to find new 'good' friends here since everyone knew each other from when they were young as well.' (interviewee 9)

'I'd have to say the way we speak with women. It is mostly not allowed to speak to female middle eastern people if the husband is there as well. Mostly due to not wanting to offend anyone. But it is of course allowed to speak if it is okay with them. This is not the case in the Netherlands.' (interviewee 12)

So, when looking at it from a Dutch perspective, the Jordanian society is divided in social levels, which indicates the type of respect another individual might demand. As well as the fact that there are differences in roles and social activities between genders. And the fact that it can be difficult to find new 'good friends' due to the prejudgement of different nationalities, can lead to social division in Jordan.

4.1.5 Prestige

Jordanians often seek to prove their assets and social status in society. The following typical behaviour perceived by the Dutch expatriates represents the following cultural standard: 'Social status and family honour': demanding respect in certain higher positions in an organization, pride in heritage and traditions, caring for the family above all else. It can be seen that the Jordanian nationals often take pride in their work and want to be first in what they do in order to climb the ranks and gain more of a social status. Furthermore, Jordanian nationals take pride in their traditions and heritage and prefer to live more to those traditions compared to more westernized countries. Even though a lot of Jordan is modernized, especially the capital, Jordanians often still tend to keep

their religious and cultural traditions. Even the younger generations are encouraged to stick to these traditions making them proud of their heritage. Participants noted the following:

'I would say at first I found it really strange that not that many people were consuming alcohol.... And I later found out that it was about not wanting to harm the family in a disrespectful way' (interviewee 3)

'There are not that many couples walking the streets and be intimate' (interviewee 3)

'The willingness to achieve certain goals. I've heard before that the work ethic in the middle east is different compared to the 'western' countries. However, what I've noticed is that the people that I work with are extremely work oriented and also very proud when a project is finished and successful.' (interviewee 6)

'It would be work related similarities. People here are eager to work' (interviewee 7)

'I would definitely say the caring for family and hospitality are very different. In Jordan a big part of my family lives together with my aunt and uncle. Including my grandparents. I remember hearing from my friends that their grandparents are sometimes send to caring homes, which is not something we would do over here. (interviewee 9)

'I can see at work that people really care about their jobs, and want to do the most so that they can climb the ranks and have respectable jobs for the people in their lives to live comfortably. (interviewee 10)

To sum this up, it can be seen, from a Dutch perspective that Jordanian nationals prefer to show others, both personal and professional, their social status. As well as how proud they are of their work and how important it is to them to care for their family and eagerness to climb the social ladder in a professional setting and take pride in the achievements made. As well as their pride in heritage and traditions.

4.1.6 Hospitality

Jordanians are seen as helpful, warm and a generous people. This can all be attributed to their hospitality. This does not only translate in the professional setting, but also in a personal setting. More often than not they offer to help out others whether that be professional problem or that of strangers. The following typical Jordanian behaviours perceived by Dutch expatriates form the

cultural standard 'Hospitality': generosity and welcoming towards guest and the resolving of professional or private matters. This means that Jordanians offer you to have dinner at his/her house, drive you back home, and many more. Another big aspect of their generosity is that they are very willing to help out people, especially expats. Not only at work, but also on different personal levels if they are asked to do so. And sometimes even without asking to do so. This cultural standard of hospitality and generosity shows that it can go back and forth making it more often than not equal to give and take. Participants mentioned the following:

'The one thing that comes to mind is that I really like that my co-workers had invited me for dinner with their families when we barely had met. Which was very different to how it used to be in the Netherlands' (interviewee 3)

'What directly comes to mind is the middle eastern hospitality. You hear about it a lot from people, but I have to say that I've had many experiences where this was the case..... So that would be it for me.' (interviewee 6)

'I think this might be a common answer, since it was also something that I heard quite a lot when asking around about it, but the hospitality has been a great experience so far.' (interviewee 8)

'In the desert, the people were very welcoming of travellers, shared dinner with one another. Other parts of Jordan were happy to see more tourists come to their country and were happy to help showing the way, and even offered to drive people to other locations if needed.' (interviewee 11)

Hence, it can be seen that Jordanians show their guests high generosity and hospitality and are willing to help their expatriate colleagues business partners or even strangers to resolve any problems that they may face during their stay in Jordan when looking at it from a Dutch perspective.

4.1.7 Hierarchy

In professional life, Jordanians follow a high hierarchy communication style when interacting with their colleagues, clients and business relations. The following Jordanian typical behaviour perceived by Dutch expatriates represents the cultural standard 'Hierarchy': hierarchy within the family, hierarchy within the company and vertical hierarchy in communications. This means that more often than not the older people in the family are to be respected more by the younger generations within the family. The same goes for within a company. However, there is another variable that forms the

hierarchy there. Which is the type of position that an individual has. The higher the position, the more respect that position demands. Participants have mentioned the following:

'I would say for me the biggest thing is hierarchy within the company. I've known that sort of hierarchy from home but I've never experienced it while having so called side jobs in the Netherlands.' (interviewee 1)

'in terms of culture there is a big difference in hierarchy, both in the social part of life as well as in business life. Respect towards the elders is more prominent in the Jordanian culture I would say compared to what I've seen in the Netherlands.' (interviewee 1)

'I would say that the differences in the work floor are different here compared to the Netherlands. There is a clearer structure here on who has a 'higher' job compared to what I was used to in the Netherlands.' (interviewee 6)

'Me and my father for example have a very different relationship than other people here have with their father. We joke around a lot more, sort of like friends. And this sometimes has been perceived as disrespectful against my father, which is obviously not the case!' (interviewee 9)

So, in terms of hierarchy, based on a Dutch perspective it can be seen that the Jordanian value respect towards the elders and that they have a higher hierarchy, as well as in business relations. The manager more often than not is seen as the one that needs to make important decisions.

4.1.8 Acceptance of rules and bureaucracy

Besides having hierarchical communications at work, Jordanians more often than not accept and follow the rules without questioning. The following Jordanian typical behaviour perceived by Dutch expatriates is representative of the cultural standard 'Acceptance of strict rules and bureaucracy': following the rules without questioning, both in personal life as well as in professional life. Which correlates to the next aspect which is wanting managers to explain simple tasks. Due to it being their job to listen and accept what the higher ups are demanding. The participants mentioned the following:

'This was mostly due to the fact that it seemed they had already accepted that they had different working environments before and they wanted to accommodate to them.' (interviewee 1)

'That would have to be decision making. I find that here in Jordan I have to make a lot of 'simple' decisions for people here. When I was working in Germany or the Netherlands, people would be more independent.' (interviewee 8)

'I would let people work independently on certain things, but that was perceived as me not doing my job correctly. I got the feeling that since I'm the manager I need to tell people what to do a lot more.' (interviewee 8)

To sum it up, when looking at a Dutch perspective, Jordanians expect people with higher positions, mostly managerial positions, to lay down the rules and regulations and having micro management. And most of the time, without question these rules and regulations are accepted as they trust that that manager has the knowledge and experience that it would benefit them in the long run as well.

4.2 Tentative underlying values: interaction among the findings

After indicating the Jordanian cultural behaviours through the interviews of this research, which have led to 8 Jordanian cultural standards, which have been mentioned in chapter 4.1, most of these Jordanian cultural standards can be merged together to form an overarching theme indicating the underlying cultural values. Values can be seen as the underlying beliefs, which strongly affect the evaluation behaviours and selection of people (Schwartz, 1999). Cultural values cannot be observed directly, but are deducted from the cultural standards and behaviours, which are observable during certain interactions. In table 4 below, the distribution of the first and second order themes, namely Jordanian cultural behaviours and their associated cultural standards, with the third order themes, which are the tentative underlying values of the Jordanian culture, it is possible to find a correlation between them. Since indicating the real underlying values that are behind cultural standards is a difficult process, which needs a thorough research in order to effectively identify these underlying values, this paper uses the term 'tentative underlying values'. This is due to the fact that the tentative underlying values of the Jordanian culture have been indicated based on certain perspectives of the twelve Dutch interviewees.

Typical Jordanian cultural behaviour (first order themes)	Cultural standards (second order themes)	Tentative Jordanian values (third order themes)
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Not open for direct feedback or questions	Indirectness	Harmony
Individual contact rather than in a group		
Indirectness of communication by being unclear in self-expressions		
Avoid conflicts by giving compliments		
Friendliness during communications with strangers	Amicable	
Readiness to help others		
Treating others the way you want to be treated		
Welcoming and generosity towards guests	Hospitality	
Resolving private or professional problems of strangers		
Family oriented	Shared community	
Focus on building genuine relationships in businesses and private life		
Private and work life mixture		
Different layers in society regarding demanded respect	Social division	
Separation in roles and social activities between genders		
Reserved in dealing with strangers		
Demanding respect in certain higher positions in an organization	Prestige	
Caring for the family above all else		
Pride in heritage and traditions		
Hierarchy in the family	Hierarchy	Compliance
Hierarchy within the company		
Vertical hierarchy in communication		
Following rules without questioning		
Wanting managers to explain even simple tasks		

- Harmony

This study shows that certain cultural standards, namely indirectness, politeness and hospitality emerge from the tentative underlying cultural value called 'harmony'. The people from Jordan tend to be polite but also indirect in their interactions with other Jordanians or expatriates in both professional and personal conversations. It is to make sure that they do not directly express their own ideas and preferences, especially in public, as it can be seen as offensive or rude and may not

be in correspondence with the general societal preferences. This can mean that they put the interest of the group ahead of their own personal interest, which also correlates with why they are so welcoming of guests with other opinions and are considered to be very hospitable. The mentioned behaviours come into action by Jordanians in order to keep the harmony amongst each other and to avoid any possible problems.

- Social relationships

This study underlines that these cultural standards, namely collective society, social division and social status and family honour emerge from the tentative underlying cultural value called 'Social relationships'. The people in Jordan tend to be very family oriented, as well as the fact that they are focused on building relationships with people in both their professional and social life, while trying to keep a good balance between those types of lives. However, there is also a difference in roles and social activities between genders which needs to be considered when living in Jordan and engaging with the Jordanian people. These differences can also be seen when talking about the respect that is demanded when people participate in a certain position in an organization. Because Jordanians are very family oriented, they care deeply for their family. Mostly so much that they are very proud of their family which can create a type of family honour which is very important to them. This is combined with their pride for their traditions and heritage that they are confronted with and embedded with at a young age. The above-mentioned behaviours come into action by Jordanians in order to keep social relationships with their family members, as well as others in both their professional lives and personal lives.

- Compliance

This study underlines that the cultural standards such as, hierarchy and acceptance of strict rules and bureaucracy emerge from the tentative underlying value called 'compliance'. There tends to be a hierarchy within a lot of different areas in a Jordanian person's life. There is often a hierarchy within the family. A hierarchy within the company which is more often than not a vertical hierarchy when communicating. Another thing that Jordanians tend to do is follow the rules that are applicable to them both in personal and professional life without questioning these rules. In the professional life this can mean that they wait and also want for managers to explain even the simplest tasks, because it is necessary to be told what to do by someone that has a higher position in the hierarchy in the company. And in personal life this can mean that they will do what an elderly person from the family has to say about certain topics. The above-mentioned behaviours come into action by Jordanians to be in compliance with the hierarchy that exists in both personal and professional life, as well as their acceptance of strict rules and bureaucracy.

5. Discussion

The aim of this research was to answer the following research question: **“How can cultural differences between Jordan and the Netherlands influence international business of a Dutch expat doing business in Jordan?”**. This question was answered in this paper through exploring the Jordanian cultural behaviours, in which similar behaviours were consequently related to certain specific cultural standards, after which the tentative underlying cultural values have been identified. By answering the specific main research question, and the sub questions, the researcher in this chapter seeks to strengthen the results of this research by comparing it to the already conducted previous research in as well as provide practical implications for Dutch managers and expatriates dealing with the Jordan culture.

5.1 Theoretical implications

As for the academic importance, this paper has made use and slightly adapted the framework of Thomas (1991) regarding the terms ‘cultural behaviours’, ‘cultural standards’ and ‘cultural values’. In this paper, these terms were considered as different concepts, whereas in the paper by Thomas (1991) these concepts were interchangeably used. Based on their frameworks the terms cultural standard, cultural behaviour and cultural values have been used interchangeably, but this is not always the case since cultural values are not directly observable during certain human interactions since they represent the underlying invisible source of certain typical cultural standards and behaviours that strongly affect the selection and evaluation behaviours of people (Schwartz, 1999). For these reasons, this paper has modified the research framework of Thomas (1991) by not using the mentioned terms interchangeably, but rather separately. Meaning that this paper has considered cultural behaviours as directly observable, typical behaviours that can emerge during interaction, where similar cultural behaviours are clustered under a certain term ‘cultural standards’. With on the other hand the (tentative) cultural values that are used in a separate ‘cultural standards’ and ‘cultural behaviours’ as they are different terms altogether. Furthermore, after comparing the indicated Jordanian cultural standards and the respective tentative cultural values with the known Jordanian characteristics from previous studies, it can be seen that the results of this thesis confirm some of the findings from existing literature regarding the Jordanian culture.

The cultural standard ‘indirectness’ has been mentioned shortly in the intercultural literature by Rizk-Antonious (2020), it was discussed more generally in relation to the whole Arab cultural standards, and not specifically catered towards the Jordanian culture. This study confirms these

findings of (Rizk, 2020), which showed that the Arab cultural standard 'Indirectness' is also applicable to the Jordanian culture. Furthermore, in agreement with (Al Omoush, et. al ,2012; Hofstede, 2004 and Rizk, 2020), this paper also shows that Jordan is a collective society or shared community in this paper, where the Jordanian people are strongly loyal and bonded to their own cultural group. Where social shame and face loss are a realistic consideration on both personal and professional levels. To extend on the professional level, Jordanian culture is in line with the results of (Tahir ,2018) on the Arab culture and Jordanian culture that Jordanians prefer to establish more genuine relationships with their customers, business relations and colleagues instead of talking strictly business.

However, it also contradicts other findings by bringing new themes into consideration. This is once again due to the separation of the terms 'cultural standards', 'cultural values' and 'cultural behaviours' which was done in previous research (Thomas ,1991). It can be seen from these results that certain cultural standards were neglected or not yet found in previous studies. In particular, this paper enriches the Jordanian culture by adding these cultural standards as novelty: 'Kindness', 'shared community', 'social division' and 'acceptance of strict rules and bureaucracy'. More specifically, the Jordanian cultural standard 'amicable has not been mentioned in other literature (Rizk-Antionious, 2020;Thomas , 1991) , and it illustrates that Jordanian nationals behave calm and friendly in their interactions and discussions with fellow Jordanian nationals or expatriates in both professional and personal matters. Furthermore, the cultural standard 'acceptance of strict rules and bureaucracy' shows that Jordanians expect the people with higher (managerial) positions lay down the rules and regulations for them, and these (bureaucratic) rules are then easily accepted by them, without questioning these rules as there is a trust in the individual that has the higher authority and lies higher in the hierarchy line. This does not only apply on a personal level, but also on professional and national level, who use their power and knowledge for the benefit of other people.

Furthermore, the cultural standard 'social division', with its cultural behaviours, has never been discussed in the literature before. This paper brings the cultural standard to the Jordanian cultural standards as novelty, that shows that the Jordanian society is divided in different social levels. This can lead to unequal opportunities for some expatriates compared to Jordanian expatriates from different nationalities, mostly looking at it from a professional aspect.

Previous literature (Rizk-Antionious ,2020; Thomas 1991) have neglected most of the emerged cultural behaviours from the cultural standard 'social division'. However, the Jordanian behaviour of being a bit reserved when dealing with strangers has already been briefly mentioned and discussed before in the literature as an Arabic cultural behaviour (Al Omoush et al., 2012; Hofstede and

Hofstede, 2004). This paper confirms the findings of Al Omoush et al. (2012), which shows the Arab cultural behaviour of being reserved towards strangers can also be applicable on the Jordanian culture.

This paper also extends the body of knowledge on Jordanian cultural standards by adding different behaviours to it, which are namely: 'not open to direct feedback' and 'wanting managers to explain simple tasks' by showing what different cultures expect from both employee and employer side and how these expectations differ from reality sometimes. New tentative Jordanian values were also added to the Jordanian culture, such as: 'Harmony' and 'Compliance'. Based on this paper, it could be that these tentative values may be the underlying source that could impact the way Jordanians behave on both professional and personal aspects.

This paper also confirms the findings of Hofstede (2004), in that there are differences between the Jordanian culture and Dutch culture, especially in business. Which was expected of course due to the differences in individualism, power distance and masculinity scores from both countries. One of the most important differences between the Netherlands and Jordan in terms of cultural standards is 'directness of communication.' This paper shows that Jordanians can be very indirect in their way of communicating as it can be seen as offensive to express emotions or give feedback directly. Where the findings of (Enklaar, 2007) show that the Dutch culture is very direct in their communication, and are quick to express their own opinion and emotions. Furthermore, there is a big difference regarding 'hierarchy' in both cultures. The Dutch culture has a lower hierarchy rate where people with different social positions still deal equally and informally with each other, compared to the Jordanian culture where there is a vertical hierarchy in the dealings of people with higher (social) status. This then in turn leads to differences between the 'acceptance of bureaucracy' in both cultures. In the Jordanian culture, Jordanian nationals expect that (strict) rules should be laid down by people with certain (managerial) positions and accept these rules often without questioning them. While Dutch people often question every rule and regulation. Even if these rules are laid down by management of people with high social or political status. Which is due to the Dutch cultural standard 'anti-authoritarianism' (Enklaar, 2007).

Furthermore, according to (Enklaar, 2007) the Dutch people give everybody with a high potential of growth a job opportunity. Which is identified as the cultural standard 'Job Opportunity', which means that these opportunities are equal based on experience and merit. Compared to Jordan, where the cultural standard 'Social division' shows that both cultures are different in that regard. Jordanians often make more use of their network to achieve better job opportunities or personal objectives than Dutch nationals.

So as for the theoretical implications, and as for the academic importance, this paper has made use and slightly adapted the framework of (Thomas ,1991) regarding the terms 'cultural behaviours', 'cultural standards' and 'cultural values'. In this paper, these terms were considered as different concepts, whereas in the paper by (Thomas , 1991) these concepts were interchangeably used.

5.2 Practical implications

This study can be considered important by future Dutch employees seeking work in Jordan as well as for international managers in Dutch companies that are planning to approach or expand in the Jordanian market for a number of reasons. Firstly, this paper captures the critical incidents that are culturally related from a Dutch expatriates' perspective. These critical incidents were captured from the interactions with Jordanians from both a professional and personal aspects. By analysing these critical incidents, the researcher has indicated Jordanian typical behaviours, cultural standards as well as the tentative values that could explain these cultural standards. These may help Dutch nationals and professionals to create a better understanding on how Jordanians behave and why they behave in that specific way.

Furthermore, since this paper discusses the differences between both the cultures, this study can help reduce cultural barriers and potential clashes by giving practical recommendations to Dutch nationals, employees and investors that are planning to work with Jordanians in the future, to better understand the Jordanian culture and that into consideration. As well as which behaviours should be adjusted or avoided all together in order to ensure a successful business or personal relationship.

More specifically, the researcher suggests the following practical recommendations based on the findings of this paper:

- Try to avoid the Dutch directness by answering more politely and not letting the fellow Jordanian colleagues or nationals feel confronted as Jordanians are indirect in their communications. Therefore, try avoiding direct questions that can entail 'yes' or 'no' answers, since this could lead to uneasiness with the other party.
- Jordanians are very flexible with their appointments and business as well. It can happen that meetings or plans are changed last minute or cancelled all together. In the Netherlands it is important to be punctual and a sign of respect to show up on time and be punctual. This is not the case in Jordanian culture. Therefore, it is recommended to not cling onto specific times and often remind the other party of certain plans and meetings, and to be prepared

for plans and meetings that can take longer, or where the other party might show up late and to show patience.

- Try to use one-on-one communication with business partners or colleagues when you want to share opinions or provide feedback. Jordanians prefer this to group discussions and feedback since this could lead to face loss and shame which could affect their honour, and in turn negatively affect the relationships with these business partners and colleagues.
- Jordanians tend to build genuine connections with people. Dutch businessmen can often aim to keep things professionally and work straight to the point. Try to not start the communications with business talk when talking to Jordanian business relationships. Try talking about different mutual points that there might be in personal life. Talk about family, or other social interests in order to start building a genuine relationship and build up trust. This can reduce the reserved behaviour of Jordanian Business partners.
- The Jordanian culture has a high hierarchy compared to the Dutch culture. In this high hierarchy culture, younger people respect individuals with higher social or job positions as well as their elderly. Hence, try to consider what the social status of an individual is in order to appropriately address them. For this reason, it can be seen as disrespectful to send a young and unexperienced representative from the Netherlands to Jordan, and they can be not taken seriously purely based on their hierarchical status and not their skill.

6. Limitations and future research

Just as with any exploratory inter-cultural research, there are limitations that should be considered by the researcher. In the paper presented, the sample size is limited with 12 Dutch expatriates living in Jordan were interviewed. Based on the lack of control by the researcher on the sample size and the distribution (11 males and 1 female, aged between 27 and 43 years old), the results may be biased and not fully representative of the Dutch society living and working in Jordan, which might have led to a sample selection bias. Hence, the generalization of results might be limited, and these findings should be interpreted with caution. Therefore, qualitative studies in the field of inter-cultural research in the future should consider of extending the results in this paper by considering including more interviewees with a more equal distribution between genders to gather a more generalizable finding. Also choosing interviewees from a younger demographic could lead to other or potentially new Jordanian cultural standards as these might have different values in another generation.

Furthermore, this paper mentioned the different variances within Jordanians and how different demographical and social factors (e.g., gender of manager/employee, study locally or abroad and where Jordanians come from and live) can affect the typical Jordanian behaviors. And could lead to differences among nationals on both professional and personal aspects. Because this was beyond the scope of this research, the factors were not further explored in this paper. However, the importance of these factors that emerged by the critical incident method, future research may wish to explore the different impact of such factors through both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

7. Conclusion

To conclude, this paper addressed the Jordanian culture by exploring the Jordanian culture behaviours and the cultural standards which are perceived by Dutch expatriates living in Jordan and working with Jordanian nationals. This study shows that Dutch expatriates in Jordan perceived 23 Jordanian cultural behaviours, which can then be summarized in the following 8 cultural standards: Indirectness, kindness, hospitality, shared community, social division, honour, hierarchy and acceptance of strict rules and bureaucracy. According to this paper, the mentioned cultural standards can be explained by the following tentative values, where each of the tentative underlying values can explain multiple cultural standards: Harmony, social relationships and compliance. The critical incidents that were mentioned by Dutch expatriates living in Jordan have led to new findings regarding certain possible cultural standard differences within Jordanian nationals themselves. These differences could be due to different demographic and social factors. Moreover, based on the results mentioned above, theoretical implications and practical recommendations have been given to Dutch businessmen, investors, employees and national in order to start or enhance business trade with Jordanian nationals and organizations. These recommendations focus on how to approach the Jordanian market by gaining in-depth knowledge on the typical Jordanian cultural behaviours, values and standards, which can enable Dutch nationals to avoid potential cultural clashes that can affect their business or personal relationships with Jordanian nationals. In sum, this paper has shown that regardless of how both the Dutch and Jordanian cultures vary, that having in-depth cultural awareness regarding the Jordanian culture, a bridge can be built between both cultures in order to overcome the cultural differences and achieve common goals, in both business and personal encounters.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview

Interview Protocol:

1. Why and how did you decide to start working in Jordan?
2. What were your expectations regarding Jordanian culture and its people before having first contact?
3. Were there positive experiences regarding the Jordanian culture? If so, why would you rate these as positive experiences?
4. Were there negative experiences regarding the Jordanian culture? If so, why would you rate these as negative experiences?
5. What are aspects between the Dutch and Jordanian culture that can be seen as similar?
Why would you say these are similar?
Are there any examples that you could give?
6. What are aspects between the Dutch and Jordanian culture that can be seen as different?
Why would you say these are different?
Are there any examples that you could give?
7. At any point while living in Jordan, did you experience some sort of cultural shock? If so, are you able to point that out?
Why would you think this happened?
How was your behaviour during this cultural shock?
If this were to happen again, would you react differently?
8. Can you point out one or more events when a Jordanian has failed to perceive your behaviour?
Why would you think this happened?
How was your behaviour during this cultural shock?
If this were to happen again, would you react differently?
9. How has the experience been communicating with Jordanian people?
Which language is used during the communication?
Are there any problems communicating due to language?
10. Is there anything you would like to improve on in order to enhance the communication with Jordanian people in future business meetings?
Why should this aspect be improved?
To what extent will this affect the communication with Jordanian people?
11. Are there any differentiations between Jordanian nationals and other nationalities within the middle east?

What are the most important values for a Jordanian?

12. What would you say are the most important characteristics for a Dutch person

13. If there was one cultural aspect that you could swap with the Jordanian culture, what would you take from the culture and what would you give to the culture? Would you be able to explain why?