Article

Shaping Ukraine's Cultural Image Through Intercultural Dialogue in the Global Information Space

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze the role of intercultural dialogue in the global information space in shaping Ukraine's cultural image. Because qualitative research is most suited for examining intricate and context-dependent processes, like the development of a state's cultural image, this study uses a qualitative design. We were able to pinpoint the key meanings created by different actors, ranging from the media to the planners of cultural events, and define the traits of intercultural discourse thanks to the qualitative approach. The results show that the main components of Ukraine's image are contemporary art (87.5% of mentions), historical memory (77.5%), and traditional culture as a marker of identity (72.5%). They function in synthesis, which indicates the continuity of cultural development from tradition to the present day. Historical traumas, such as the Holodomor and the war, play an important role in contemporary representation. The study also identified five key strategies: cultural relevance, culture of resistance, institutional diplomacy, emotional authenticity, and multimodality. The scientific contribution of the study was to combine approaches from cultural policy, memory studies, and public diplomacy, as well as to broaden the understanding of intercultural dialogue as a form of cultural resistance and the struggle for Ukraine's symbolic recognition at the international level. The conclusion emphasizes the importance of applying the results obtained in the strategic planning of cultural initiatives.

Keywords: contemporary art, culture of resistance, historical memory, intercultural dialogue, media, Ukraine.

Introduction

In the era of active globalization, shaping the cultural image of a country has become not only a matter of domestic policy but also an important part of international positioning (Kuzio, 2019). Thus, as presented in the global information space, Ukraine's cultural image plays an important role in shaping international public opinion, building diplomatic relations, strengthening cultural identity, and attracting support in security, economy, and culture. The Revolution of Dignity in 2013–2014, Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine since 2014, and the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022 have contributed to increased international attention to Ukraine. However, alongside the political and military aspects, there has been a need for a deeper understanding of the cultural phenomenon of Ukraine as an independent European state with a unique history, art, traditions, and culture (Pohuliaiev et al., 2025).

At the same time, given that in today's world, media and digital communications have become the main channels for shaping the image of countries in the global imagination, it is important to consider these tools' impact on a state's cultural image. A multidimensional vision of Ukraine is being formed through the prism of intercultural dialogue, which is implemented within the framework of international festivals, cultural exchanges, art residencies, cinema, literary translations, diplomatic events, and media projects. Scientific works, in particular studies by international experts in cultural diplomacy and Ukrainian researchers, have pointed to the significant opportunities for using soft power and cultural communication as important tools for strengthening the state's international image. However, as some studies have shown, the media representation of Ukraine worldwide is often fragmented or stereotypical (Salnikova & Savelyev, 2024). Such phenomena contribute to a reduced understanding of Ukrainian culture and its contemporary identity. Existing studies focus mainly on analyzing Ukraine's foreign policy image or historical aspects. At the same time, current work does not adequately consider communication strategies for intercultural dialogue. Therefore, the lack of systematic works showing the relationship between cultural diplomacy, international media, and cultural identity forms a significant scientific gap. There is a lack of comprehensive studies that summarize the practices of intercultural representation of Ukrainian culture in different regions. There is also a lack of a comprehensive analysis of contemporary cultural initiatives aimed at an international audience regarding their impact on Ukraine's image.

Literature review

The scientific study of a country's cultural image in the context of the global information space is an interdisciplinary issue that combines cultural studies, communication studies, international relations, sociology, and media studies. In contemporary scientific thought, the understanding of the *"cultural image of a country"* is a set of ideas, meanings, symbols, and narratives that circulate in the global space, shaping the perception of a particular nation or region (Törnquist-Plewa & Yurchuk, 2017; Ståhlberg & Bolin, 2016). Many scientific works are devoted to analyzing intercultural dialogue as a key element of international cultural interaction (Averianova & Voropaieva, 2020). Intercultural dialogue is seen as a system for reducing stereotyping, a means of marking cultural diplomacy, and a way of forming soft power. In this sense, the concept of *"soft power"* (Drohomyretska et al., 2024), according to which cultural values, language, art, and the promotion of traditions are perhaps the main instruments of influence in the international arena.

Ukrainian researchers (Borovyk, 2023; Lazarenko, 2018; Syvakivskyi & Krupskyi, 2023) analyzed the media space as a field of representation of Ukraine in the international arena. It has been established that the image of Ukraine has been actively constructed through its presentation in films, news, music, social networks, educational and cultural initiatives. However, in many cases, external discourses dominate, which do not always correspond to the internal value orientations of Ukrainian society. It gives rise to the need for further development of a national narrative that can integrate aspects of local identity within the framework of global communication strategies.

Many European and American studies are based on understanding the role of digital media and social platforms in transmitting cultural images (Belavusau et al., 2021; Galchynska et al., 2024). For example, Szostek (2017) and Siddi (2016) emphasized the growing role of network communication in modern society, in which users act not only as consumers but also as content producers (prosumers). It raises a separate issue of the interactivity of cultural images, which are constantly changing under the influence of global discourses and regional contexts. This issue is still under-researched in scientific studies.

Research on cultural diplomacy has demonstrated the importance of this issue for the present day. Studies by Karagiannis (2016) and Escudero (2024) emphasized the importance of intercultural coding and understanding of cultural paradigms. Such prerequisites create an important background for effective dialogue at the intergovernmental level. Ukraine, as a young democratic state with dynamic social processes, is undergoing a stage of identity formation, which has been significantly

deepened by Russian aggression (Artemenko et al., 2023). As a result, this stage has emerged as a complex but promising direction in interstate cultural dialogue.

Despite numerous studies, there remains a noticeable gap in the comprehensive analysis of how intercultural dialogue affects the representation of Ukraine in the global media space. First and foremost, this concerns the conditions of war, digital transformations, and increased attention to issues of identity, security, and cultural subjectivity. There is also insufficient research on how Ukrainian arts, cinema, education, and mass media initiatives are changing the country's perception abroad and whether they contribute to the sustainable formation of a cultural image.

Research aim and questions.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of intercultural dialogue in the global information space in shaping Ukraine's cultural image. In particular, the article aims to study the strategies used in intercultural communication, identify the main themes and images that dominate international cultural initiatives, and identify the difficulties and barriers that arise in this process. The following research questions are proposed:

1. What aspects of Ukrainian culture (traditions, modernity, history) are often represented in intercultural dialogue in international media and cultural initiatives?
2. What strategies of intercultural dialogue are used to promote the cultural image of Ukraine?
3. What challenges arise in forming a positive cultural image of Ukraine through intercultural dialogue?

Therefore, this study aims to summarize existing approaches and form new directions for research and practical recommendations for improving cultural policy. Thus, the article will fill existing gaps regarding the interdisciplinary analysis of Ukraine's cultural image in the context of contemporary global media and forms of cultural diplomacy. The results of this study will influence the development of effective strategies for presenting Ukrainian culture at the international level and strengthening Ukraine's role in the global cultural discourse.

Methodology

Research design Research design

This research has a qualitative design, as this type is most appropriate for studying complex and context-dependent phenomena, such as forming a state's cultural image. The qualitative approach allowed us to identify the characteristics of

intercultural dialogue and point out the primary meanings constructed by various actors, from the media to the organizers of cultural initiatives. Such an approach was also the most optimal, as it allowed us to focus on the mechanisms of cultural representation in the modern information space. Since this research has a diverse cultural representation (historical, visual, symbolic, communicative), the quantitative type did not allow for the reproduction of its multidimensionality.

Sample and participants

To cover the topic, a purposive (deliberate) sample was chosen based on the relevance of participants to the sphere of shaping Ukraine's cultural image in the international information space. The sample includes both individual respondents and the analysis of specific case initiatives. Thus, 89 participants were involved in the study, who were directly or indirectly engaged in shaping the cultural image of Ukraine in the international information space. The sample was formed based on the principle of representativeness of key segments involved in intercultural dialogue, specifically considering institutional communicators, cultural figures, media experts, international partners, organizers of cultural initiatives, and analysts (see Table 1).

Table 1. Sample structure (N=89)

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Figure 1 shows the general geography of participants. Ukraine - 42, Germany - 14, Poland - 10, France - 8, Canada - 5, USA - 7. Other countries - 3 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. General geography of participants
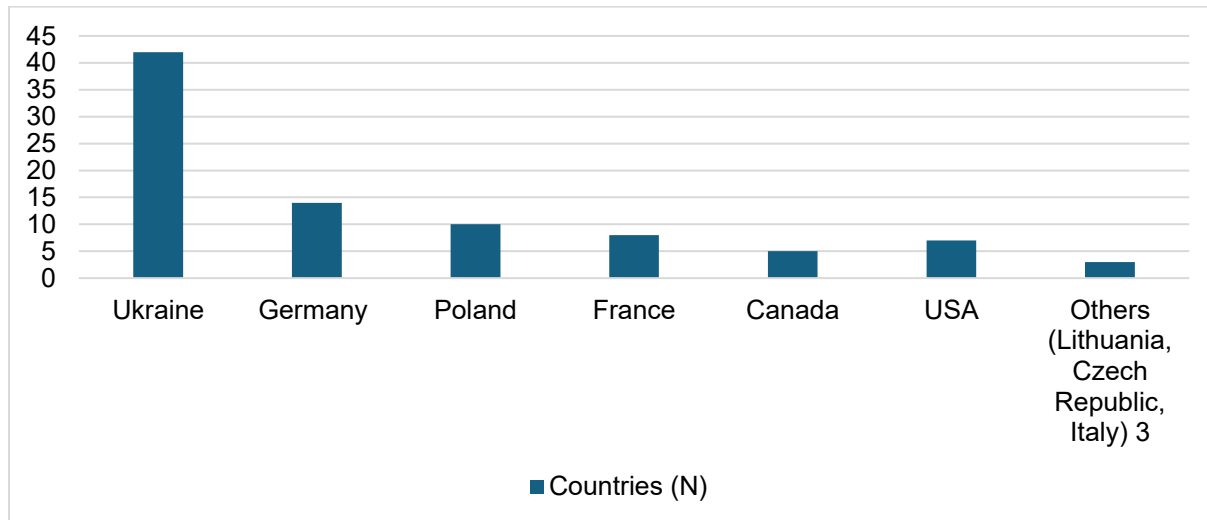
Distribution of respondents by category (n=89)

Representatives from various organizations, artists, and researchers from Ukraine and worldwide participated in the study. The largest group comprises artists and cultural figures from Ukraine (22.5%), which is logical given the empirical focus. A significant segment also consists of audiences of cultural events (16.9%). At the same time, participants from international cultural institutions provide an external perspective on the processes of cultural representation in Ukraine (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by category
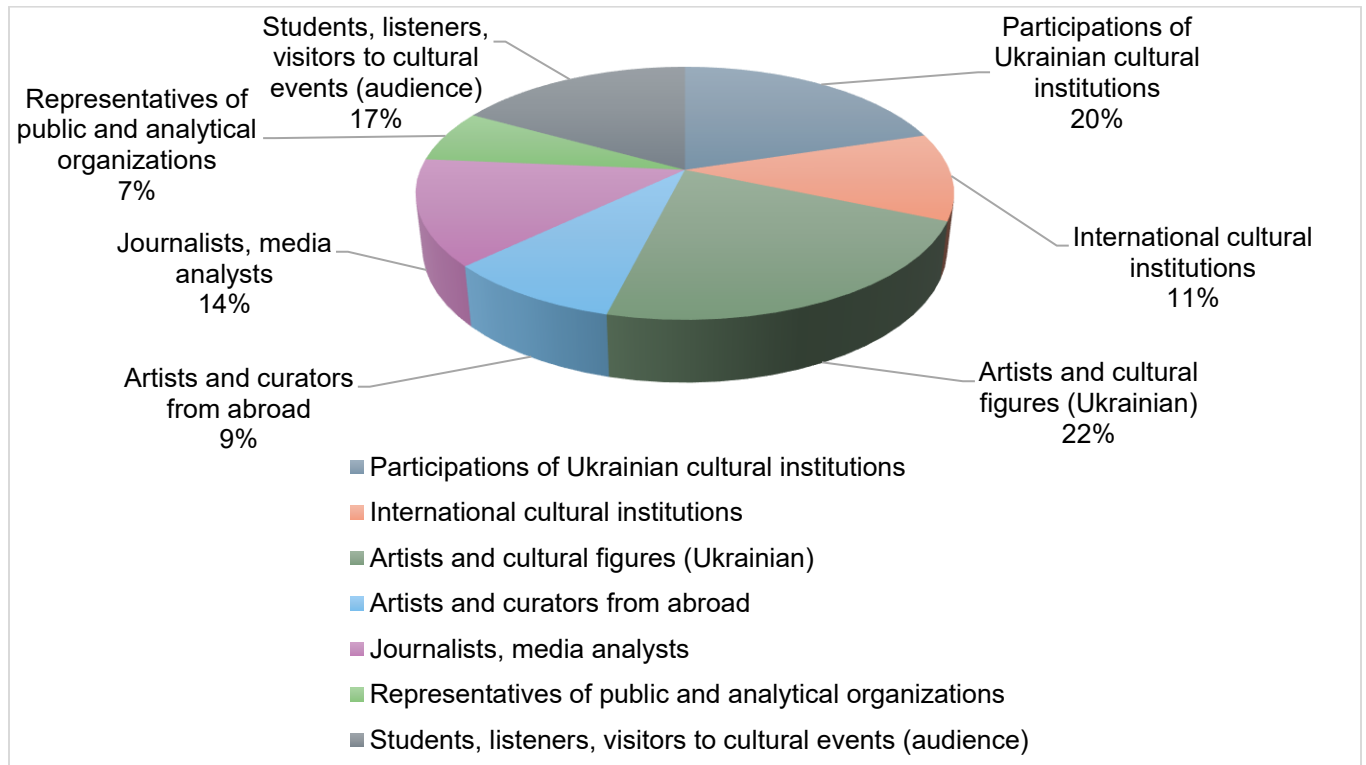
Tools

The study's primary tool for collecting empirical data was conducting semi-structured interviews. This interview was specifically tailored for each category of participants, depending on their role in shaping Ukraine's cultural image. This format allowed for a standardized structure with freedom for open responses. The structure of the interview included the following sections:

1. General information about the respondent

What is your profession/role in the field of culture or media?

What experience do you have in participating in intercultural initiatives related to Ukraine?

2. Perception of Ukraine's cultural image Perception of Ukraine's cultural image

What are the main cultural traits of Ukraine that are most recognizable in the international context?

Has the image of Ukraine in the world changed in recent years?

Experience in intercultural projects

Which cultural projects you participated in were aimed at an international audience?

What themes/images/symbols of Ukraine did you try to convey through these projects?

Communication mechanisms

What strategies do you use to convey Ukrainian cultural identity to foreign audiences?

Which platforms (media, festivals, social networks) are most effective?

Audience perception assessment

How does the international audience react to Ukrainian cultural initiatives?

Problems and challenges

What difficulties arise in the process of Ukraine's intercultural presentation?

Is the influence of stereotypes or the political context felt?

Suggestions and vision for the future

What changes, in your opinion, could strengthen Ukraine's presence in the international cultural space?

Interview format and accompaniment

Such interviews were conducted in a mixed format. Some were conducted in person, online (via Zoom, Meet platforms), and in the form of written responses upon request.

For data recording, the researcher used audio recordings with subsequent transcription and field notes. Exceptional interview guides were also developed for the six main categories of respondents (institutions, artists, journalists, analysts, etc.).

Data analysis

Data analysis was carried out using qualitative analysis methods. Thematic analysis, elements of discourse analysis, and coding were used. This approach allowed for identifying important meanings, hidden narratives, and representative models that formed Ukraine's cultural image.

At the preparation stage for analysis, all interviews (in-depth, express-format, and focus groups) were manually transcribed. Initially, the audio recordings were rechecked to ensure accuracy. Later, the data were organized into temporal and thematic blocks according to the interview guides. Case materials (press releases, speeches, posters, reviews, visual and video materials) were archived and classified by type (visual/textual, media/institutional).

Next, a thematic analysis of the interviews was conducted, which took place in six phases. At the data familiarization stage, an initial reading of the transcripts was conducted to identify general impressions. At the coding stage, manual thematic coding of the text was carried out using key semantic blocks. The next stage was the search for themes: the formation of initial themes ("the image of Ukraine as a victim," "art of resistance," "traditional culture vs contemporary art") and the verification of themes with the text and the elimination of duplicates. Next, the category names were finalized, and the themes were interpreted.

As a result of the thematic analysis, five key themes were identified:

- The image of Ukraine as a country of struggle, resilience, and humanity.
- Tension between contemporary perceptions of culture.
- Western perception of Ukraine through the lens of war and geopolitical situation.
- Cultural diplomacy as a tool for reformatting the image.
- Challenges of linguistic, visual, and emotional communication with foreign audiences.

An inter-coder agreement procedure was used to ensure the reliability of thematic coding. Two independent researchers coded a representative sample (approximately 15%) of the interview transcripts using a shared codebook. Consistency between their coding was assessed using Cohen's coefficient, demonstrating a high level of agreement ($\kappa = 0.82$), indicating reliable interpretation of thematic categories. Once agreement was achieved, the principal investigators

completed coding of the entire data set. This process increased the reliability of data interpretation and minimized subjective bias during thematic analysis.

Ethical aspects

The study was conducted in compliance with ethical standards, which include voluntary participation, informed consent of respondents, and guarantees of confidentiality. Before the interviews, participants received information letters explaining the purpose of the study, and all agreed to have their conversations recorded. The names of the respondents are hidden since the study provides anonymity.

The study did not require formal approval by an institutional ethics committee, as it did not involve vulnerable populations or sensitive personal data. However, the research followed the general principles of ethical academic practice and adhered to the ethical standards established by the institution.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity was guaranteed throughout the research process. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences.

Results

Representation of Ukrainian culture in intercultural dialogue

Current international events and media initiatives (about 72%) begin or are developed using elements of traditional culture. It applies, first, to visual motifs. Motifs such as embroidery, symbolism, and folk ornaments are actively used. Folk music and gastronomy are also actively used. However, as the content of the interview shows, traditional culture often serves as an entry point for a foreign audience, after which the initiators seek to reveal contemporary meanings. A representative of the intercultural initiative noted that *"Tradition is a hook. It is familiar, it is colorful. But we always try to show something more, something modern, something meaningful. Because Ukraine is not a museum"*.

Instead, contemporary culture appears as a form of resistance, transformation, and self-awareness. In 64% of cases, examples of contemporary visual art, experimental music, auteur cinema, and conceptual literature are mentioned. These representations depend on the context of the war, although most artists and event organizers strive to go beyond this and present Ukrainian art as intellectual and European art:

"Contemporary Ukrainian culture is a culture of interpretation. We deal with pain and memory but turn it into something alive, not for pity, but for understanding."

(Interview with the curator of an international residency)

However, the use of historical narrative plays a prominent role. In 44% of the cases analyzed, there was fragmentary involvement of historical events: from Kievan Rus to the Holodomor and Euromaidan. History must not appear as a linear chronology but as evidence of experience and the struggle for subjectivity. The media prefer historical motifs that are emotionally readable and fit into black-and-white schemes.

The table below summarizes the frequency of representation of each category in different types of cultural events (n = 89):

Table 2. Type of initiative and its frequency of representation in categories such as tradition, modernity, and history

Initiative Type	Tradition (%)	Modernity (%)	History (%)
Exhibitions and Visual Projects	83%	72%	40%
Musical Events	60%	81%	22%
Literary Presentations and Events	48%	85%	45%
Educational and Diplomatic Programs	75%	60%	58%
Online Campaigns / Cultural Diplomacy	70%	77%	46%

This table shows contemporary culture dominates literary and musical projects, while tradition dominates exhibitions and protocol events. History appears more actively in formats that are educational or diplomatic in nature.

From a discursive point of view, traditional culture is used as a marker of identity, contemporary culture as a tool for modernizing the image, and historical culture plays an important role in explaining and legitimizing the present.

Key strategies for representing Ukraine in intercultural dialogue

In today's global space, various strategies are actively used to shape and promote Ukraine's cultural image in the international information space. These strategies vary depending on the target audience and the resources of the initiators (McGlynn, 2020). However, an important unifying factor is the common desire to present Ukraine as a full-fledged, culturally rich, and modern subject of world culture (Makhortykh & González Aguilar, 2020).

The cultural adaptation strategy is one of the most popular in the world. It aims to adapt cultural products to the codes of perception of foreign audiences. In this way, event organizers and artists focus on formats familiar to the Western world (festivals, art installations, documentary films) and use images aimed at easy integration into the global cultural space. The festival coordinator in Frankfurt pointed out: *"We present*

Ukrainian culture in a space familiar to the audience. If it is a contemporary music festival, we choose projects that combine the local with the universal." In this way, such a strategy makes it possible to avoid exoticization and ensures the recognition of Ukrainian products without losing cultural authenticity.

The following strategy involves the formation of a culture of resistance, which became widespread in 2022–2024. It involves positioning Ukrainian culture as an important means of resistance and survival in wartime. It manifests through visual and verbal narratives of resilience, indestructibility, traumatic experience, and the transformation of pain into art. This emotionally powerful approach creates a clear sense of solidarity among the audience, especially in EU countries and Canada.

"Ukrainian culture today is not about folklore. It is about survival. It is about art that documents tragedy in real time."

(Interview with the project curator in Toronto)

Institutional diplomacy also plays a prominent role today. A network of contemporary cultural institutions, including the Ukrainian Institute, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, and House of Europe, is implementing a platform strategy. Through systematic work with international foundations, festivals, and the media, these institutions act as providers of Ukrainian cultural discourse.

"We work not only with art, but also with its meaning. It is important that culture speaks and is heard in the right halls."

(Interview with a representative of the Ukrainian Institute)

In this way, these institutions contribute to developing sustainable partnerships and support artist mobility, translations, and co-productions. Some respondents noted their experience in mobility programs provided by Ukrainian institutions in Canada, Munich, Berlin, Paris, and other countries worldwide.

A separate role is also played by strategies of emotional authenticity (personalization of cultural experience through personal stories of artists, city residents, refugees, and veterans) and multimodal presence. The latter involves the combination of visual, auditory, and textual formats, placing the cultural product simultaneously in physical and digital spaces. Current events (for example, "Ukraine: A Cultural Code) highlighted the importance of cross-communication conducted between different social networks (see Table 3).

Table 3. Cross-communication is conducted between different social networks

Strategy	Key Codes	Illustrative quotes from the interview

Cultural Conformity	Adaptation of formats, familiar narratives	"We present Ukrainian in a space familiar to the audience" (Frankfurt festival coordinator)
Culture of Resistance	Art as a response to war, documenting experience	"Ukrainian culture now is not about folklore. It is about survival. It is about art that documents tragedy in real time" (Toronto project curator)
Institutional Diplomacy	Platform promotion through institutions	"It is important that culture speaks, and that it is listened to" (Ukrainian Institute representative)
Emotional Authenticity	Personal stories, trauma, intimacy	"We support Ukrainian scientists and artists whose projects aim to represent Ukrainian culture worldwide."
Multimodal Presence	Combination of online/offline, visual/textual content	(Academic Exchange Program Manager)

However, many interviews criticized excessive folklore or stereotypical coverage. Accordingly, one of the most common problems was the international audience's tendency to have simplified and often stereotypical ideas about Ukraine. In particular, the curator of an international project noted: *"We often encounter foreigners who expect to see 'traditional Ukraine', where embroidered shirts and folk songs reign supreme, but few are prepared for modern, innovative cultural forms."* On the other hand, language and cultural barriers come into play. Even well-prepared cultural products can be misinterpreted. A Ukrainian artist participating in an international festival noted, *"Sometimes we must explain elements obvious to us but perceived differently abroad. It causes a certain loss of meaning."* In addition, it is worth noting that the war leads to Ukrainian cultural products often being interpreted through the prism of political positions. In the international arena, this can cause both support and resistance. Problems such as resource constraints and lack of institutional support are also evident. Insufficient funding, a lack of qualified personnel, and poor coordination between different cultural actors create barriers to implementing various initiatives.

In addition, there is a problem of lack of sustainability, which leads to the dispersion of efforts and the temporary nature of the effect of individual initiatives: *"Often, projects work only once and are then forgotten, so it is important to build a long-term strategy"* (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Relative weight of the main challenges arising in the process of forming a positive cultural image of Ukraine through intercultural dialogue
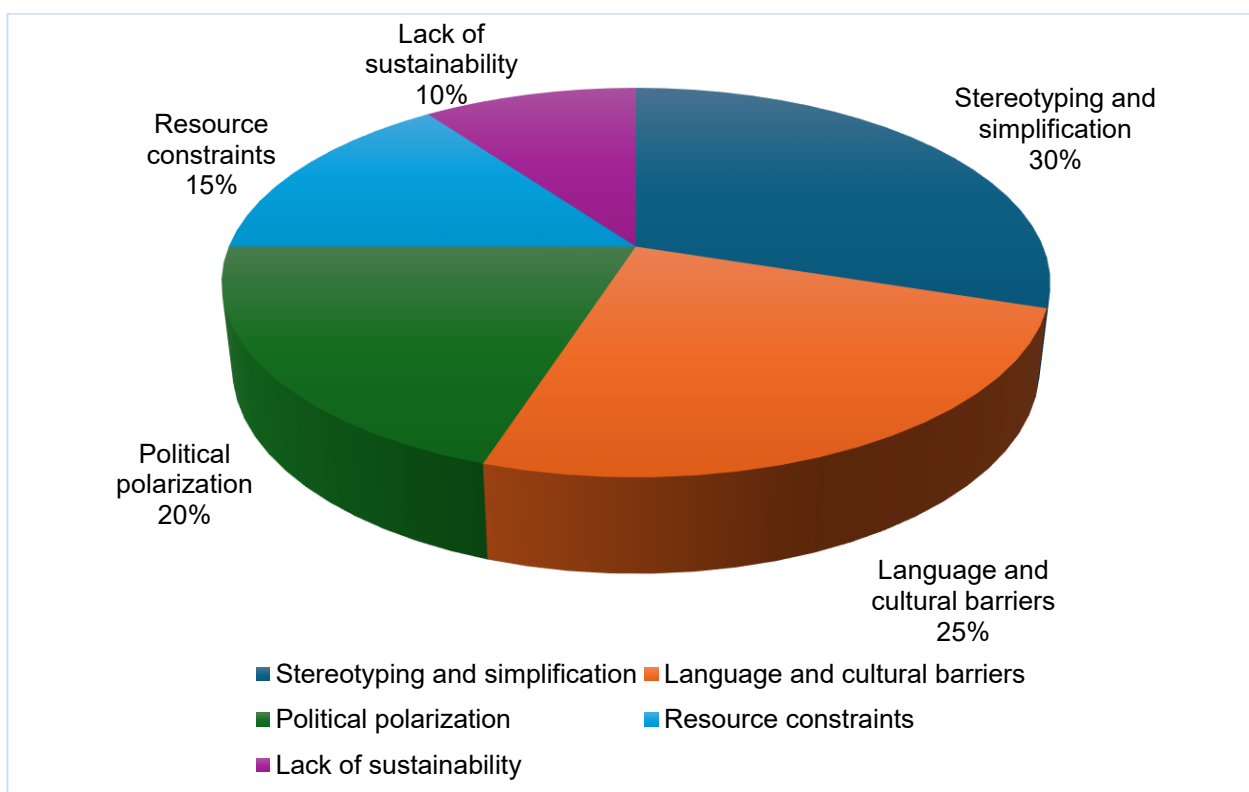
Thus, as seen in Figure 2, stereotyping is the most significant challenge to which most respondents pay attention. Moreover, a significant problem is also the language and cultural barriers. It affects the complexity of effective communication and the understanding of cultural messages. Overall, these challenges require attention to effective intercultural dialogue and the promotion of Ukraine's cultural image.

Discussions

This study aimed to determine the role of intercultural dialogue in the global information space, which influences the formation of Ukraine's cultural image. The results show that the key aspects of Ukraine's representation are the combination of traditional and modernist cultural codes, the actualization of traumatic historical memory, and the artistic interpretation of war. An analysis of the primary forms of representation of Ukrainian culture in intercultural dialogue has revealed a structured dynamic between local meanings and global media frames. In the international information space, the image of Ukraine is formed through several key cultural categories that are interrelated and hierarchical in their use. Most often, these are tradition, modernity, and history, but their presence in cultural initiatives is not only formal but also functional (Kulyk, 2016a; Mazur et al., 2025).

A general thematic analysis of interviews and case studies showed that most contemporary international events and media initiatives (about 72%) begin or are designed using elements of traditional culture. It primarily concerns visual motifs.

Motifs such as embroidery, symbols, and folk ornaments are actively used. Folk music and gastronomy are also actively used. However, as the content of the interviews shows, traditional culture often serves as an entry point for foreign audiences, after which the initiators seek to unfold contemporary meanings. It confirms the conclusions of Brooks & Rensimer (2024), which state that contemporary intercultural dialogue is an important tool for promoting image and shaping new geopolitical perceptions of different countries' space. In this way, contemporary cultural narratives play an important role in reconfiguring the international perception of Ukrainian subjectivity.

The first research question concerned the cultural elements that are most often represented. The results confirmed that three axes are key: tradition (as a point of entry), modernity (as proof of modernity), and history (as a tool for explaining identity). It is consistent with the study by Halukha et al. (2025), which shows that historical memory plays an important role in national self-expression in cultural formats. In addition, the works of other historians prove the uniqueness of Ukraine's past and its separation from Russian narratives (Mereniuk, 2024; Kulyk, 2016b).

The second research question concerned the identification of key strategies that reveal a multi-vector model. It is noted that these strategies are dominated by adaptability, emotional authenticity, and institutional platform. Such approaches partly echo city diplomacy, which was presented in detail in the study by Matiaszczyk (2024). This work indicates that cultural projects represent the country and create centers of international solidarity and support. The results are generally consistent with contemporary approaches to cultural diplomacy as a tool for overcoming the ontological crisis (Dobrolyubska et al., 2024). Respondents emphasized that Ukraine is not simply *"telling the world about itself,"* but is contributing to forming a new role concept in the system of international relations, namely, from an object to a full-fledged actor in cultural and political communication. These data can be compared with the thesis of Popova & Shevel (2024), who pointed to the transformation of the perception of Ukraine as an organic part of the European cultural and civilizational space. As shown in the study by Koziura (2024), such reformatting is accompanied by the active involvement of cultural memory. This process takes place primarily in the form of narratives about the Holodomor (Koziura, 2024), World War II (Honcharenko, 2025), and post-Soviet trauma (Shnirelman, 2025; Homanyuk & Panchenko, 2024). In addition, the *"culture of resistance"* practices identified in the study are consistent with those about the mobilization of collective memory as a factor of cultural self-defense (Polishchuk, 2024; Tashchenko, 2024).

At the same time, the results obtained partially contradict the notion of *"soft power"* as a neutral cultural presence. According to respondents' observations, Ukrainian cultural discourse is often emotionally charged, politically charged, and traumatically motivated. Such facts call into question established models of neutral cultural exchange (Mitter, 2025). Thus, the Ukrainian situation is more an example of *"resistance through art"* than classic institutionalized cultural diplomacy.

The last research question concerned the main challenges. In particular, the analysis showed that stereotypes, lack of consistency, language barriers, and excessive politicization are significant obstacles. The challenge of stereotyping is significant. The problem of losing emotional depth in conveying the war experience was noted separately, as pointed out by writers in Shestopalova's analysis (2024). In addition, several respondents confirmed that intercultural dialogue often refers to reactive practices rather than strategic policy. It aligns with the above-mentioned views on the symbolic potential of cultural representation without strategic reflection.

Several strategic recommendations can be made based on the analysis of the results. It is worth implementing a system of institutionalizing cultural policy as part of Ukraine's foreign policy, with clear indicators of impact and support for sustainable initiatives. It requires funding and cross-sectoral coordination (between the state, civil society, and cultural institutions). In addition, the intercultural competence of cultural diplomacy actors should be developed. For example, as presented in the study by Mereniuk & Parshyn (2025), this can be achieved through various educational programs that combine knowledge of historical memory, communication, and international cultural codes. It is also worth providing practical support for developing local cultural environments. However, it is worth supporting Ukrainian communities abroad, acting as informal cultural diplomacy agents. As shown in the work of Trzeszczyńska & Demel (2025) and Trzeszczyńska & Demel (2024).

Their role in shaping a positive image of Ukraine in other countries is growing. Finally, it is important to ensure consistency and a strategic nature. As shown in the study by Zavershinskaia (2025), reactivity and situationality should be avoided in intercultural dialogue, as this is relevant in war as a long-term conflict and struggle for meaning.

Despite its effectiveness, the study has a few limitations. It is worth noting the limited sample of respondents. In addition, the focus is also on cultural cases from 2022 to 2024. It does not consider the dynamics of cultural policy changes before the full-scale invasion. Geographical concentration on Europe and North America extends the results to the global South. These limitations have determined the need for further

empirical research with an expanded sample, regional coverage, and the inclusion of non-institutionalized cultural practices.

Conclusion

Forming a positive cultural image of Ukraine through intercultural dialogue is an important instrument of soft power and ensures national security and identity. The article showed three main components: contemporary art, historical memory, and traditional culture as an identity marker.

These elements are usually presented not separately, but in synthesis, indicating the continuity of Ukraine's cultural development from tradition to modernity. Historical traumas (the Holodomor, war) must often become the backdrop for current cultural expression.

At the same time, the study identified five key strategies that are most often used: cultural relevance (adapting formats to audiences), culture of resistance (art as a reaction to war), institutional diplomacy, emotional authenticity (personal stories and traumatic experiences), and multimodality. These strategies point to a combination of "soft power" with political meanings and narratives of solidarity. However, the study also points to key challenges, particularly stereotyping, language and cultural barriers, political polarization of foreign audiences, resource constraints, and the lack of a consistent policy.

Thus, the scientific contribution of the work lies in broadening the understanding of intercultural dialogue as a form of cultural resistance, an element of national self-representation, and a mechanism for fighting for symbolic recognition in the global information space. The study also combined approaches from cultural policy, memory studies, and public diplomacy.

The practical contribution of the results lies in the fact that they can be used in the strategic planning of cultural initiatives, the formation of policies by the Ukrainian Institute, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, etc., as well as in the training of specialists in the field of cultural management, international communications, and public relations.

Acknowledgement

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