Reconstructed Southeastern European Identities in the Tourist Western World: Phenomenological Research

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The article analyzes the experiences of modern Southeastern Europeans regarding social and economic mobility in Western tourist areas. It aims to investigate Southeastern European seasonal workers who have not remained silent, even after their visas expired in developed countries. This study seeks to understand how these Southeastern European identities are constructed while working as immigrant students, conceptualizing language learning, and contributing as multicultural members in a service-oriented tourist society. In higher education, within a democratic paradigm, the content of ethnographic and global sociolinguistic literature is supported by cultural capital, where constructed identities are understood from a critical perspective. This study uses qualitative data underpinning Husserl's phenomenology. Qualitative methods include interview protocols, ethnographic observations, and individual narratives. Overarching themes from seven semi-experienced individuals in Southeastern Europe who faced accountability, intercultural adaptation, and educational integration reflect the progressive education that evolved from home to the new tourist world abroad. The findings revealed three main themes: individual acculturation, evolved identity view, and social incisiveness in a multicultural society. Furthermore, Southeastern European immigration rises daily and collaboratively, opening new global perspectives in educational policies, global citizenship education, and social justice curricula within the hospitality industry, where tourists' identities seek protection for their initial Western jobs. These findings suggest that, through an experiential curriculum, ESL learners integrate Southeastern potential tourist workers and become students to understand social and economic perspectives while incorporating them into corporate higher education. The implications contemplate how tourist identity is formed, transformed, and plays a significant role in modern society, with limited potential in the Western tourist world. The policy challenges of higher education for immigrants, such as those from Southeastern Europe affected by the brain drain phenomenon, emphasize social injustice, language barriers, and cultural anxiety. Therefore, higher education policy acknowledges this vulnerable group of Southeastern individuals and creates educational pathways for social and emotional support.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary tourist agencies in Southeastern Europe have a high demand for multilingual students to fulfill the criteria for seasonal hospitality work on land and at sea in the Western tourist industry. European and American hospitality sectors have struggled with the workforce, especially recently. The tourist market has increased along with the economy, and authorities have extended their recruitment policies to meet the demand for international students (UNWTO, 2020). In other words, hospitality jobs in Western Europe and the USA offer fast and stable financial support, which is desirable to students and youth workers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, such as Southeastern Europeans. Young Southeastern immigrant seasonal workers from Europe seeking opportunities abroad have enrolled in higher education at universities in Western countries, where they began working in hospitality services (Dinkovski, 2018). The critical element of cultural capital in globalization is Southeastern European tourist workers, who can adjust their status through time limits and become taxpayers. This research study shows how mobile Southeastern students who have experienced a tourist identity are affected by varying skills in Western society, particularly in understanding cultural inclusion and democratic skills. According to Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital (1994) and Globalization (Giddens, 2003), individuals become educated across borders and possess democratic skills and practices that impact their well-being and that of others. Globalization drives the movement of services, goods, and capital in the 21st century (Giddens, 2003). According to the sociological approach of Shaffer (2018), inclusive curricula must be prepared and applied for international immigrants, teaching them how to adapt to colleges as English as a Second Language (ESOL) learners to become good citizens. Shaffer states that post-secondary education is one of the most significant investments for cultural and social mobility in a competitive hospitality sector based on tourism. Bourdieu (1994) and Shaffer (2018) argue that inclusive curricula need to be flexible so that labor and educational policy can collaborate, especially for those who become students and have been integrated into Western hospitality, gaining educational business skills for better hospitality services. Southeastern European seasonal workers were not included in the official language institutions, where they were limited in adapting and remained with low skills, particularly in ESL for services and law-abiding policies (Eubanks, 2015).

Additionally, Spring (2015) claimed that educational policies for international workers contribute to economic growth by gaining cultural and educational values that affect both the global economy and individual perspectives as responsible human beings. An additional peer-reviewed article in 2022 reportedly reveals more than 11.4 million undocumented individuals in the U.S. and 1.1 million students on student visas yearly (U.S. Global Guide, 2022). On the one hand, few Southeastern European tourist workers have become successful and gained high academic skills through their free choice to study and work in the Western tourist world. Southeastern European students are present in the Western community with their hospitality skills. Epistemological studies show that Southeastern immigrants struggle to reach Western universities (Hasanbašić, 2020).

Furthermore, Walker (2019), in his qualitative study related to worker-aliens, describes immigrant students' resilience against non-inflexible monolingual marginalization, which leads to individuals being negatively labeled as cultural 'outsiders' who experience injustices and unequal treatment in Western hospitality jobs. On the other hand, individual success highlights the academic challenges of how and why these tourist workers choose to study at Western European or American universities. The double benefit remains for international workers and students, who learn how to become taxpayers on one side and achieve greater self-esteem by learning languages and living temporarily or permanently in a democratic culture (Bourdieu, 1994). International immigrant workers represent an upward identity that enables students to

achieve results and become competitive in professional roles within Western tourism. A practical evaluation of tourist identity was conducted, as these dual beneficiaries create partnerships between Western and native universities to provide advice and services for scholarships, build and train tourist agencies, and support language centers as Twinning does with exchange programs, students, and staff, similar to the EU Erasmus programs (Brix & Busek, 2022).

Modern educational policies do not justify seasonal immigrant worker groups, such as Southeastern European tourist workers who overstayed their work and travel or seasonal work visas in the Western world. Educational policies are designed to support immigrant tourist groups working in hospitality, making them safer taxpayers with accountability in organizations like language and vocational colleges. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What have you learned about understanding a new culture and seeing yourself in a role of Western hospitality?
2. How do seasonal Southeastern European workers understand their opportunities while working in the Western hospitality industry?

Understand the phenomenon of immigrant workers' adaptation by exploring the identity transformation experiences embedded in an educational context (Berry, 1997). This means that private business sectors, like hospitality, tourist chambers, and government and education, create policies to support Southeastern European workers who want to study and become equal citizens without human or academic fear of authority.

The implications for workers who overstayed their student visas include human and ethical challenges regarding social justification. Therefore, educational policies that protect individuals regardless of color, status, race, class, or identity should support health, social, and fair benefits (Flinders & Thornton, 2003). Favorable policies in higher education have created the right pathways toward human rights in Western education, established good role models for citizenship, and contributed to business tourism as an experiential profession that can enhance both the economy and tourism together.

2. Background of the Problem

Sociolinguistic studies show that Southeastern European immigrants from less developed countries struggled to pursue their careers at home and often started jobs in the hospitality industry abroad (Hasanbašić, 2020). Those countries include North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and countries that belong to the European Union and its enlargements, such as Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria (E.U. Enlargements: Facts and Figures, 2022). Their pursuit of work and study in the E.U. and America often contradicts the reality of being an 'illegal' or 'unwelcome immigrant' worker in the global hospitality industry (Walker, 2019). This role forces them to remain in hardship. Chomsky (1997) considered that some scientific leaders have become powerless in supporting priority groups of non-native ESLs, and several recruits have become obsolete. As Chomsky (1997) said: "Education is a system of imposed ignorance because the funds for scientific research are becoming less important, and budgets are being cut for scientific innovation" (p. 157).

Western Europe and the United States faced massive immigration waves from Southeastern European countries (E.C., 2020; PEW, 2020). Brain Drain presents many skilled adult workers from Southeastern European immigrants who have temporarily or permanently moved to the E.U. and America (UNHCR, 2016; W.B., 2021; OECD, 2022). Undoubtedly, a small number

of individuals in higher education have joined post-secondary education, representing the measurable pattern for immigrants to gain citizenship from officials (WB, 2021 and OECD, 2022). There is still a dichotomy regarding this immigrant group of workers and students who are exposed to various democratic and cross-cultural barriers. In the aftermath of socioeconomic motivation, there were various reasons and challenges. It was inevitable for immigrants to identify gained or lost resources such as education and family orientation in the era of privatization and building safe, prosperous communities (Portes & Rumbaut, 2005). In a post-positivist approach, evaluating the relationship between college and immigrant students plays a significant role. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2020 revealed regional and global network indexes of invasive immigration as demographic factors to and from the European Union. Indexed among the most prominent hostile countries are Germany, the UK, France, and the USA (Ingleby et al., 2020).

Previous sources emphasized that immigration has risen seven percent in E.U. countries in the last few years. In the U.S., that number has surpassed 11.4 million undocumented individuals in the previous decade, tripling since then. U.S. statistics from 2017 revealed that international students with H-1B visas had temporary employment and numbered 108,100 per year, with F-1 companies hiring immigrants at most 65,000 per year. Furthermore, only 300,000 international students who chose OPT were enrolled in STEM programs in the U.S., constituting just 95 percent of that group (IIE, 2020). Eurostat and the E.U. Commission reported that 2020 there were 1.265 million non-EU citizens, including Southeastern European youth immigrants, in the E.U. and abroad.

Table 1.
The Trend of Demographic Immigration in the SEE Countries, Depopulation Statistics

SEE Country	Population by Census EUROSTAT 2019	Population abroad In and out UNESCO, 2019
North Macedonia	1.9 mil	21%
Albania	3.7 mil	20%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.1. mil	23%
Serbia	6.5 mil	15%
Bulgaria	6.8 mil	13%
Croatia	3.9 mil	10%
Greece	9.9 mil	7%

Source: Multiple sources were embedded (Eurostat, 2019 & UNESCO, 2019).

The table shows Albania, where 2.2 million people have left for Italy, Germany, the USA, and Canada. Albania and all other Southeastern European countries share a common issue of social efficacy regarding massive immigration. According to the Institute of Statistics in Albania (Instant), from 2011 to 2019, 14 percent of the population left Albania, along with North Macedonians and Bosnians. That data is relatively recent. The data was compiled between January and July. More than 55 percent of graduates with advanced degrees, primarily young people, left the country, and 80 percent claimed that the reasons were unemployment and poor living standards (AL: Instant, 2020).

3. Theoretical Framework

Husserl's phenomenology examines the realities of individuals and nuances in describing experiences through interview protocols (Edi, 1987). For example, it explores Southeastern European tourist workers in Western culture exposed to democratic values alongside cultural differences such as language, mixed-community living, and an inclusive curriculum. This setting of identity learning influenced how tourist identity evolved, participants' feelings, and transformed engagement with the Western tourist world.

In tourism literature, contemporary views of identity growth are linked to mobile changes, business challenges, and language opportunities for marginalized workers (Hog, 2016; Walker, 2019). For instance, scientific language learning applies profound concepts, technology, and mobility so that students understand how to achieve desired goals and prosperity (Hog, 2016). About the scientific method, Husserl presented the meaning of lived experiences as a notion of self-consciousness, where individuals shifted along with technical production and framed self-knowledge (Welton, 2003).

Educational research literature on international migrant workers focuses on low- and high-skill identity adaptation and social integration (Berry, 1997). Many qualitative and quantitative educational research studies navigate identity reconstruction that involves language conceptualization, working habits, multicultural understandings, and belonging. To understand Husserl's concept that individuals must be connected and reflect on the relationship of new ideas, we can compare this environment to the business environment. Welton described Husserl's phenomenon of identity belonging as a concept of sympathy that begins with personal necessity and is linked to Adam Smith's theory of moral sentiments (Welton, 2003). According to Welton's article, epistemological findings of identity construction depict a picture of bricolage, underlining themes such as alienation, unrecognized workers, and the trajectory from mobility to global citizenship. For instance, non-experiential language learners' practices were related to the perceptions, beliefs, and understandings of marginalized international immigrants who struggle to express their feelings and knowledge and empower their voices (Leavy, 2018; Osei-Kofi, 2021).

Critical studies in education mediate international non-native English speakers, motivating immigrant workers to think critically and incorporate creativity and flexibility when facing learning challenges (Chaffee, 2018). Similarly, in the peer-reviewed sociological article, Crisan defined that immigration goals have convergent and divergent meanings, ranging from religious to scientific goals related to hospitality as an accessible, in-demand job in America and Western Europe (Crisan, 2013). However, there is a gap in understanding how postmodern Southeastern European tourist identity was constructed and how seasonal workers perceive the opportunities in Western hospitality, which needs to be addressed.

3.1. Cultural Capital Theory

Cultural Capital Theory analyzes the strength of language learning, self-esteem, and the mobility of independent living, social justice, and business networking in Western civilization, impacting the cross-cultural roles examined (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory (1986) explains cultural knowledge and employability globally. Immigrant students are the focus of higher education, recognizing themes of life stories, entrepreneurial experiences, and socioeconomic status. This explanation is valuable in epistemological and ontological contexts in hospitality management, where students learn to explore and apply these themes professionally—for example, Southeastern European immigrant tourist workers in the Western world.

On one side, sociometric theory summarizes immigrant workers' experiences of their silent fear in a service-oriented world at home and abroad. For example, Massey's article "Five Myths and Immigrants" explicitly unfolds the biggest fallacy about the myths surrounding undocumented immigrant workers in the U.S. (Massey, 2002). Furthermore, these myths are based on misconceptions embedded in grounded causal understandings stemming from illegal international immigration in hospitality, lack of economic development, immigrant intentions, and low immigrant wages (Massey, 2002).

On the other hand, the immigrant challenge attracts workers from back home regarding job positions and tourist identity status (Chaffee, 2018). Chaffee described how international students understand and adapt to Western acclimatization in institutions through law-abiding beliefs and perceptions. Therefore, Southeastern European tourist workers with critical thinking skills strive to understand themselves in other cultures to compare the opportunities they gain for better service in democratic cultures.

Within the inclusive curriculum of the 21st century, universities in tourist-attractive cities attempt to incorporate freedom by engaging foreign workers, improving tourist production, and implementing worker training. Furthermore, the advantages of cultural capital provide social goods while addressing unbalanced issues related to segregation, inequality, inequity, discrimination, and human selfishness (Friedman, 2012). Like *The World Is Flat*, related to Bourdieu's (1977) theory of the "mother making do," stretches hospitality economies and habitats by focusing on instructed social capital rules in developed countries and states through the service-oriented curriculum while fostering 'tourist' immigrants for self-personal growth. In line with that, Bourdieu, regarding language, found that immigrant workers showed significant fear reflected by cultural and language barriers dichotomy (Baum & Flores, 2011). For example, Uwemedimo et al. (2017) described a win-win situation in how immigration policy changed the rules in the United States when their parents illegally crossed the border.

The following research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What have you learned about understanding a new culture and seeing yourself in a role within Western hospitality?
2. How do seasonal Southeastern European workers perceive their opportunities while working in the Western hospitality industry?

4. Methods

4.1. Research Design

This study used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to address the understanding of Southeastern European workers abroad who pursue careers in hospitality and share their experiences. Hermeneutical phenomenology was built on the research question that participants and the researcher collaborate by discussing some biases and uncovering a new way of truth (Moustakas, 1994). Within a traditional approach, Husserl (Edie, 1987) and Moustakas (1994) conceptualized the progressive movement of realistic lived experiences of practice and the influence on learning, and this new study opens a new paradigm of research. Moustakas (1994) developed the methods of the divine 'lived world' that Husserl undertook in hermeneutical cycling, where researchers might return to understand new phenomena by exploring participants' experiences. Phenomenology uses a research question that explores thoughts, meanings, feelings, and notions of the familiar story of 'what and how' happens to understand a phenomenon (Gilles, 2018). To justify phenomenology and to have a discussion, researchers, through participants' storytelling in the E.U. and the U.S. tourist identity, draw a place that these diasporic immigrants sought in specific manners, places, and behavior that understood relationship and language to identify educational journeys and contribute toward changes by discovering immigrant self-identity practices. Therefore, the researcher might capture the relationship in deep social meaning and the new phenomenon of creating a new tourist identity that needs to be understood as a salient meaning from the participants' stories.

4.2. Data Gathering

The collected data from the hermeneutic study provided evidence of the participants' experiences, where researchers interpreted the stories about feelings and some events that happened at a particular time. Southeastern European tourist workers in the E.U. and U.S. were supported by a participant restorative story that explored the umbrella of the Brain Gain phenomenon and how Southeastern European participants understood opportunities in their tourist identity formation.

The semi-structured, in-depth interview protocol consisted of 10 open-ended questions created by the researcher. The interview protocol for the phenomenology study was developed and adjusted for immigrant tourist individual workers to reflect on their attitudes, lived experiences, and the nebulous nature of specific places, events, and relationships with team members, staff, customers, and their self-transformative identity actions. The researcher focused on the contemporary experiences of Southeastern European youths, opportunities for achievement, and challenges to self-esteem in hospitality in the E.U. and the U.S. The criteria for the protocol were predetermined: participants must be at least 21 years old, speak English, and have at least a year of experience. The researcher selected places from TripAdvisor with carefully chosen samples where Southeastern European participants experienced the phenomenon and met the criteria. Locations included Southeastern European and Romanian restaurants in Florida, a Southeastern European restaurant in Hanover, Germany, and a hotel in Brighton in the United Kingdom. The researcher reached participants through three gatekeepers in three countries who carefully selected four restaurants and two hotels in the U.K., Germany, and the U.S. Recruitment and sampling in qualitative research explore phenomena that do not generate a large population (Creswell, 2009). This allowed the researcher to focus on and analyze the relationship in depth afterward. The Southeastern European identities are professionals who live in Western countries and work in hospitality, where it is recognized how participants play different roles, maintain family relationships, pursue self-development, and engage in community involvement in the creation of a new identity.

The researcher studied and worked in Germany and the U.S. and speaks English, German, and Slavic languages. Furthermore, the researcher contacted gatekeepers with a recruitment letter in German, English, and Serbo-Croatian. Upon gatekeeper approval, the researcher obtained consent from the Southeastern European participants, who were deemed reliable according to protocol criteria in English. Participants must have experience with the phenomenon. Each participant took approximately 60 minutes for a Webex interview. The interviews were voice-recorded, and VoIP software was used for transcription. Furthermore, the researcher used MAXQDA software to examine code themes and thematic elements. Seven interviews were transcribed, checked, and prepared for analysis.

4.3. Phenomenological Analysis

In phenomenology, Husserl focused on participants who had experienced phenomena to understand and answer questions (Moustakas, 1994). In education concerning phenomenological analysis, Moustakas provides tools to describe the phenomenon of complexity, and the researcher engages with the participant's lived experiences, such as a.) Collect data, b.) data analysis, c.) highlight statements and quotes, d.) develop bracketing, and e.) the researcher seeks to understand their own experiences and situations related to the new phenomenon.

The figure below (Figure 1), Phenomenological Analysis, shows how data must be collected and analyzed to highlight it through statement codes and themes. Then, participants' textual descriptions of the phenomenon influenced how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). When

the process started to unfold, the researcher immersed herself in the data, annotated, reflected on the restorative part, and excelled in thematic analysis. Furthermore, the researcher must understand the participants' experiences related to that phenomenon.
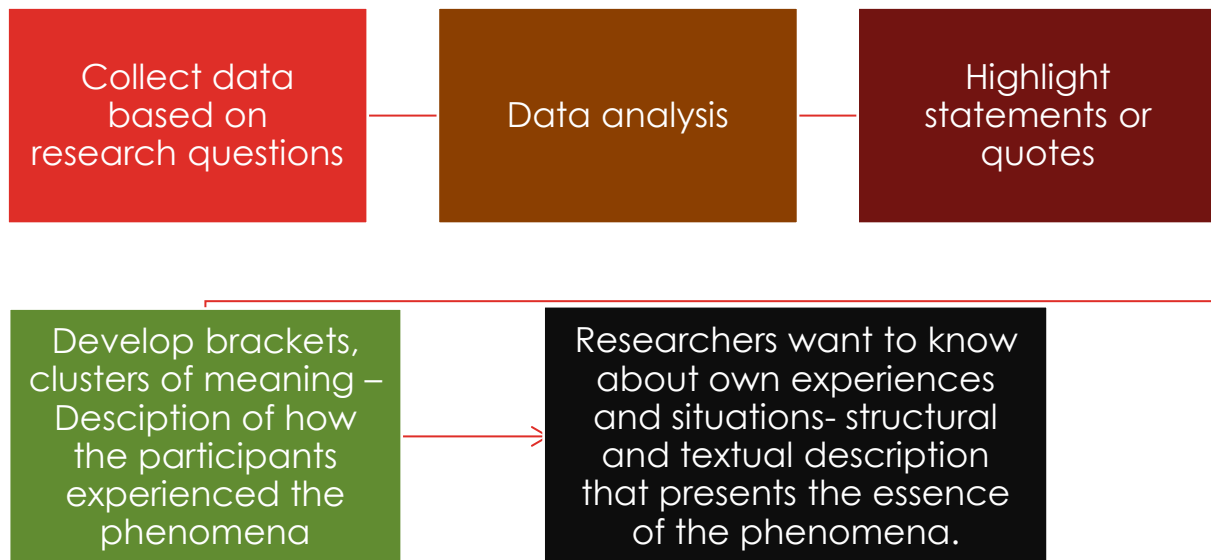

Figure 1. Phenomenological Analysis
Resource: *Phenomenology*, Moustakas, 1994

Similarly, like Moustakas, Creswell (2009) addressed the researcher's experiences conducting semi-structured interviews and summarized the analysis fundamentals. Once participants agreed to participate in the study, the researcher collected demographic information from each participant (Saldana & Omasta, 2016). In a single approach, the researcher collected and analyzed qualitative data using MAXQDA qualitative software (Radiker & Kuckartz, 2019).

In preconceived texts and ideas, transcriptions constituted a bracketing 'epoch' in a phenomenological reduction to typify knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). Software coding and interview themes were discovered from qualitative data, helping illuminate the participants' responses to the research questions. Interpretations of phenomenological data were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of the codes and merged into three themes to connect the preliminary data analysis context where the literature overlapped the research questions.

4.4. Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The researcher owned a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Program (CITI), a certificate in collaboration with a methodologist and university committee members under the researcher's supervision. In that context for ethical considerations, Creswell & Creswell (2018) anticipated issues of ethical considerations, so all examinations must be fulfilled according to professional association standards. Data was sorted on the researcher's computer and locked with a password for safety reasons. There was no risk to the participants. Individual representation provides the essence of the phenomenon that was determined.

5. Study Findings

The researcher collected qualitative data from the seven (*N*=7) Southeastern European participants. Seven participants responded, and interviews were conducted online using a snowball sampling method without coercion for further thematic analysis. Upon transcription, the researcher captured the thematic meaning and created a restorative component to unfold

the participants' tourist identity phenomena. The participants were between 21 and 50 years old and had at least one year of experience working in the E.U. country and the United States hospitality industry. Three were male, and four were female. Of the seven, two were in Florida's restaurant services, three worked in a hotel and restaurant in North Germany, the last participant worked in a hotel in the United Kingdom, and one shifted to a different profession. One participant had less than two years of experience, while the others had more than four years. Two participants appeared uncomfortable and answered questions curtly, while the other four were comfortable and discussed phenomena in depth. Qualitative and mixed methods MAXQDA software merged 18 subcodes and 13 codes into three themes: a) evolved identity view, b) social inclusiveness, and c) individual well-being.

The researcher used reduction (bracketing) to construct seven storytelling and one restorative story from participants' discussions that revealed the essence of the new phenomenological research's overarching participants' questions about how Southeastern European workers' identities are formed and how they understand opportunities in Western hospitality.

In this study, Southeastern tourist workers in Western hospitality justified their beliefs about moral values, wealth, business education, business tourism, leadership, and safe family as essential for being productive human beings, immigrated to the wealthy E.U. and the U.S. country. On the table, the researcher captured three themes from the seven stories and created a restorative story.

Table 2.
Refined Codes and Themes in Phenomenological Analysis

Initial Coding		Merged Codes	Coding from redundancy/Epoch		Retrieved Themes for Phenomenon
Subcodes	*Codes*		*Codes*	*Subcodes*	
Stranger	Isolated		Push Factors	Inequity and corruption	Evolved Identity View
Lonesome culture	Family Support		Belong	Knowledge Biases	
Deportation		Critical Thinker		Law-abiding	
Online Representation	Self-Esteem		Services	Business Partnership	
	Financial identity		Safety		
Language Comfortability	Social Justice		Interconnection		Social Inclusiveness
Citizen entrepreneurial	Capital Knowledge	ESOL Identity	Acceptance	Respect / Accountable Identity	
Low income	Networking		Changed Rules	Community Religion	Individual Well-being
Manager Duties				Traveler Visa	

5.1. Themes in Phenomenological Research

Participants addressed the overarching themes of the research question and ensured that coded segments merged into the main themes of an evolved identity view, social inclusiveness, and individual well-being. Existential momentum, speaking holistically, defines the appropriateness of what participants can understand, what kind of practical experiences were absorbed based on what was unknown, and encounters through service identity transformation in the hospitality industry between others and self.

Husserl's hermeneutic phenomenological approach to tacit knowledge takes the unexpected essence for granted, learns through procedures involving emotional memory, and creates the phenomena of previous and current practices (Edie, 1987). Husserl's phenomenology suggests that human emotions are embedded in the knowledge of common sense and self-transformative influence (Edie, 1987).

The results revealed several negative and positive outcomes in this study. In the beginning, five immigrant workers reported that their lifestyle was related to worsening conditions due to overworked hours. Three participants pointed out that the reason for quitting or changing jobs without social or medical support was mistreatment related to injustices in hospitality and fewer growth opportunities.

5.1.1. Theme: Evolved Identity View

Five immigrant workers implied a shift from traditional to non-traditional travel experiences. By developing critical thinking skills, seven Southeastern European participants experienced personal values that they understood through the opportunity to learn English in service tourism, business curriculum, opening new restaurants, collaborating with other ethnicities, learning other languages, and building networks in the community. Seven participants reported strong relationships and ELS language skills, improving low self-esteem and anxiety from being far from home. Norton (2008) discussed English as a second language and explored the international concept of relationship discourse between power and knowledge in social institutions and practices that do not have beneficiary boundaries.

5.1.2. Theme: Social Inclusiveness

The theme of social incisiveness emerged from seven participants' codes about how they benefit from learning in a multicultural environment where they serve 'others and eventually become us.' Learning how to be law-abiding citizens, five Southeastern European participants reached out to educational institutions and three to business colleges. Participants recognized employment availability and were hired by individuals of different races, genders, and nationalities, bringing technical and socioeconomic perspectives and broader problem-solving solutions. Two participants who transitioned from busboys became hotel and restaurant managers, while two others opened their own businesses in Germany and the United States. Incisiveness is a personal characteristic in tourist identity that reflects self-driven motivation and explains how students and international workers successfully achieve their goals (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Meanwhile, four workers who reach out to ESOL and other language institutions are motivated to belong to an inclusive society through their willingness to pursue their interests in learning. In other words, Portes (1998) argued that international students learn how to avoid penalties or the forced demands of instructions related to their goals and subject areas of practical knowledge to autonomously build their need for profit in the community.

5.1.3. Theme: Individual Well-being

The theme of well-being emerged from the seven participants' codes, which showed how they benefitted from self-motivation and belonging in different societies. At the same time, they compare service practices in building partnerships. Tourism and well-being identity are connected through mental measurements (Smith, 2017). Three female and male participants contributed to institutional training and significantly impacted their self-businesses and communities, involving individual success and valuable experiences. Two participants in the U.S. and Germany faced challenges related to low-skilled jobs in creating a tourist identity with limited citizenship. Kresin (2015) argues that traveler identities are often complex and can frequently be improved. They operate in different time zones and unite people through shared

interests by enhancing individual knowledge. On the other hand, the two other tourist workers shifted from cross-cultural hospitality to educational leadership knowledge and became academics to gain acceptance into the professional community.

5.2. Participant's Stories

The stories of Albanian Sabina, Macedonian Gjoko, Bosnian Alena, Moldavian Nicol, Jashar from Kosovo, and Ivan from Serbia had a restorative aspect. They unfolded the phenomenon of Southeastern tourist identity, which adapted, evolved, and learned from the Western world how to become an entrepreneurial identity.

Two immigrant workers from Southeastern Europe experienced uncomfortable treatment at home and abroad, particularly in their relationships with their bosses, management, and staff during their first year. Sabina, a female Albanian server in Germany, said, "We do not get the full percent of what we sell." Additionally, they were not protected by the hospitality union for tourist workers. Their time working did not measure the production quality, and their salaries remained the same for years. One of the participants asked for assistance when they noticed during holidays that individual management had a lack of training standards. Gjoko, a North Macedonian hostel clerk worker in Germany, stated that managers are often changed, and all have their own rules; if you like, you can work regular hours, and if you do not, they can quickly fire you or tell you that you will be deported. Everywhere is the same. The workers usually lived with worry and panic through their constructed lifestyles. Meanwhile, Nicol is a Moldavian night shift worker in the USA who underlined, "There is no social and medical; we do not ask, and if you ask, you are out. It took me five years to change that."

International student workers see the most significant challenge as dual competition: building a dual identity, being self-aware when opening their businesses, and balancing home and abroad. Learning courses from institutional and community networking on one side and building professional hospitality skills, like languages and international business law practices, on the other (Bourdieu, 1977). For example, Jashar, a Kosovo busboy in Germany, mentioned that he learned the culture, looked at people like euros, and gave them what they wanted. He continued, "I learned how to open my restaurant on the sea, but I needed a partner."

Many participants worked in the service industry before changing careers and enrolling in school to gain high-level skills or become entrepreneurs. One of them is Maria, a North Macedonian food and beverage server and bartender in the U.K., who stated, "While I worked in the hostel in Brighton, I enrolled in the planetarium department; thank God I have a visa now."

Southeastern European tourist workers are still a dogma in many Western European and American cities, and they feel uncertain while waiting for the legal process, which has become integrated into their social identity (OECD, 2018). Ivan, a Serbian storage worker, noted, "No one cares for us; everyone cares that we must provide good service, and that is it." Like Alena, a Bosnian housekeeper in the U.S., mentioned, "After I worked on the ship, and now here in America, respect for humans has disappeared. Moreover, now, in school, we learn awkward subjects.

5.3. Reconstructed Southeastern European Tourist Identity

Struggle for my goals.
"I am North Macedonian, and I learned English from my friends in the community because I was in elementary school in the village of Gevgjelija. Our teacher in the '80s taught all subjects.

My father, Mishko, was a carpenter and never liked other languages; he hardly spoke to my mom, a housewife. She encouraged me to learn and listen to older people."

Brane is in his late 40s, saying he has not had a modern T.V. "We never watched English programs," he heard from his school peers for three decades. Even though there were barely any programs in the small towns and villages in other languages, everyone learned Serbo-Croat as one language. Now, they are separate groups of languages. "My father became ill from leukemia, and he needed expensive medication. I did not have a choice, as a male who must take responsibility and care for the house; that was part of the patriarchy. "I was ready to wash dishes." The answer came quickly, rudely, and depressingly…

legal Immigration
Brane's son experienced internal aggravation and frustration, asking himself what he or his father did wrong and why it was like that. As a youth, Brane faced many social and emotional obstacles and was tempted to help his sick father.

I applied for a restaurant dishwasher job in Thessaloniki, Greece. My experience was nonexistent, but I learned. I was terrified, but nothing was more important than my father, so I decided not to continue the education I loved at the technical college and university. I did not speak Greek, a specialty in two countries with many decades of renaming issues. One night, for two hours over the hill, I illegally crossed the border and ended up in the first village because that was the only chance to find some work. I asked the first man in English where to get a job. He said, "You are young; go home." He showed me the path with his hand toward my country. He was an Albanian in Greece...Not long after, we became friends, and he taught me how to care for the farm machines. I helped him, and one winter night, he had a fever; I took care of his duties so he would not be fired. He said he had eight children in Albania, and he was like me, having crossed the border illegally; it was too dangerous to go back, and he could not find a job back home. We spoke English and some words in Greek, and he taught me basic Albanian. During that year, my ranch owner, a civilized man, asked me about my dream in life and how I liked this job. "I want to open my own restaurant."

Learning culture
That was a year of learning skills. After a year, I went home to bring money when my mom was crying, and on the candle was my father's picture. She was not the same anymore. I will remember my father's words, "Learn something new every day; you cannot learn from older people." It was hard to have my goals and work for no reason, but I kept an eye on my mom's health. I went back often, watching her get older and needing help. I became an independent maintenance man for the ranch, learning to call and order field machines from Japan and Germany. I talked to German exporters daily. The second time, my mom stopped and smiled like she never had; that was when I needed to be there. I started to build my house from scratch. I left my Greek boss.

Back Home
In the late 90s, I ordered a machine from Germany to Greece using my phone and Skype via an internet connection from my house. My Greek and German grammar improved daily, and even though I usually forgot words, they were still acceptable. The man I talked to via Skype told me I must finally meet him in person and visit the Hanover offices in Germany for a day or two.

Facing a Big Decision
With a big smile, the factory manager offered me a business partnership in hospitality to manage a restaurant with 80 workers. The German restaurant was on the land and surrounded by organic food. You had to serve fresh food right in front of customers while they sat in the

yard, enjoying meat and vegetables. "Why me?" I asked. He sharply replied, "You work hard and have a great personality; you are honest, you learned English, German, and Greek, and now you know about seeds, animal care, behavior, and technology. Your boss has been my friend for years and has always spoken highly of you. The restaurant's owner was Mr. Hinrich, who owned multiple restaurants and organic farms throughout Germany. He sponsored me as his partner while I was undocumented in Germany. At 26, I became a legal manager of the restaurant. The day I received my permanent work permit, I left Germany and my loyal workers for good.

Between Two Worlds

My mom was not mobile when I built the restaurant and named it after her. It was located on the main road at the Macedonian-Greek border, and we served domestic and international tourists on their way to Greece. Many cars with European plates stopped, and our customers enjoyed traditional organic food from the Mediterranean and domestic. I had a ranch with restaurants, an organic garden filled with vegetables, and a children's mini-zoo to explore before going on vacation and entering Greece. Today, this restaurant is located in Mrzenci, Gevgjelia.

Today, my two adopted children are playing. At the same time, I watch my favorite cooking show and enjoy my children with a T.V. in every room. I hear different languages while watching Ms. Lydia's Kitchen on the PBS channel in the United States, creating fancy recipes for our domestic and international visitors while traveling through North Macedonia and Greece. We have a five-star restaurant now! [laughs].

5.4. Study Implications

The Southeastern European identity evolved in the Western tourist world by recognizing different hospitality values and enabling immigrants to adopt students' mindsets, critical thinking skills, and awareness. Additionally, Bourdieu's concept involves balancing a professional tourist lifestyle with wellness by engaging in Western tourist services for customer care, developing leadership, accountability, and personal knowledge, such as language proficiency, understanding others, and embracing multiculturalism while maintaining their ethnic identity values (Bourdieu, 1977). The unique cultural capital of building trust and developing identity in Western tourist cities creates a professional identity with a global perspective and the phenomenon of a homogeneous group. Cultural capital theory helps explain how to engage with the local community in the service industry and share tourist experiences (Bourdieu, 1986). These Southeastern Europeans affirm trust in social media, exposing followers and influencers through online platforms to enhance tourism and highlight where identity becomes valuable by learning through doing, such as a) cultural identity capital and economy, b) cultural identity capital and social skills development, and c) cultural identity capital and educational policies.

a) Cultural identity capital is embedded in the inclusive purpose of identity with cost-effective ties, such as immigrants' belongingness and membership tied to individual members' economic satisfaction. To achieve this membership, one must base it on knowledge within a particular organization (Bourdieu, 1986). Opportunities for Southeastern European tourists rely on understanding their prospects for higher salaries and personal growth in the global workforce. Spring (2015), in the economics paradigm, responds to how immigrants play a significant role in individual success and affect curriculum specialists, instructors, and evaluators who achieve competitive and accountable jobs by testing themselves and considering their social life experiences. Stability through tourist identity can foster a higher standard of work with technology in well-resourced urban areas and mobility that affects global tourism and services.

According to the educational array and interpersonal skills, Pierre Bourdieu argued that immigrants gained capital knowledge with a dual impact on institutional identification, forming a network between the economic and non-economic benefits (Bourdieu, 1986).

b) Sociolinguistic views of tourist identity indicate how foreign instruction, such as that of the European Union (E.U.) language, is learned in home countries and shifts constructively to the tourist's perspective abroad. Cultural goods like language and skills are identified as the primary tools for identity to gain power in society (Bourdieu, 1986). Southeastern European tourist identity involves acquiring multiple languages to work, travel, or become included in non-native-speaking institutions with higher socioeconomic values. According to Bourdieu (1977), investing in higher education skills like languages improves individuals' social stratification class.

c) It is essential to address the necessity of reminding new educational policy recruitment processes to recognize a vulnerable category of immigrants in hospitality and to show them that they would not be excluded. The findings from the phenomenological approach argue for educational policies that support these individuals, particularly those who may have overstayed their visas, by providing inclusive opportunities and addressing their unique challenges as immigrants in the hospitality industry. Reconstructed Southeastern identity in Western world studies seeks to understand tourist identities and their experiences, including inequalities and social justifications.

This Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986) tests the strength of integrity and honesty, which impacts cross-cultural roles in ethnic order. Southeastern tourist identity bridges a heterogeneous societal element by building trust connections in business relationships, characteristics, skills, and networks. For example, with Southeastern European tourists, workers collaborate, develop, and seek institutions to learn in order to belong.

5.5. Study Limitations

The limitation in hermeneutical phenomenology might be that the Southeastern European Brain Drainers had seven participants, and a small sample size is necessary to understand the relationship and merge the themes. Phenomenological biases could be found in the participants' stories who suffered and struggled with legal visa restriction policies regarding their living experiences. Furthermore, Western policies in tourism and immigration argue for international standards and determine the responsibilities for institutional inclusion and the consequences that affect my contributions to tourism and the economy (OECD, 2018). Southeastern European-born participants do not belong to the European Community Act (Acquis Communautaire) countries and have formed their tourist identity in Western hospitality. Therefore, brain drainers suffer from low wages and underemployment (IIE, 2020; Dinkovski, 2018). The policy barriers of professional network workers in America and the European Union need accountability, so these vulnerable worker groups can secure jobs and pay monthly taxes to accomplish their dreams. Intelligence jobs require proficient language skills in the E.U. and America. This was addressed to workers' unions, business chambers and associations, recruitment and tourism websites, educational lobbies, and researchers for training Brain Drainers in a democratic society. For example, Florida in the U.S. does not unionize hospitality workers and lacks someone to protect their rights while they serve and learn in a foreign country (Lavan & Katz, 2013).

Regarding the additional limitation of collecting data for tourist indicators, a transparent and twofold approach needs to be taken to promote international tourist workers and prepare them for a long-term data strategy that provides evidence in a yearly fluctuating market affecting immigrants and international students before they obtain work permits for the tourism sector

in the attractive Western tourist zone (OECD, 2018). Stable hospitality jobs for international seasonal workers, including Southeastern European workers, represent a dichotomy between planning and worldview perceptions.

6. Discussions

Through the phenomenological study, the researcher contributed to and enriched the research literature by exploring Southeastern tourist identity in the Western world. Researching qualitative phenomenology in education focuses on forming academic and professional tourist identities (Oliveira et al., 2024). This type of empirical study opens pathways to critical and academic rigor not only for immigration types like Brain Drainers and identity formation but also for insights into sustainability and networking in the global world.

Tourist identity encompasses economic, well-being, social, and cultural complexities that underpin Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital in the tourist attraction industry within Western cultures (1977). Gained knowledge improved and influenced home and host cultures, where role models demonstrated entrepreneurial skills adopted in Western civilization by starting companies. Bourdieu (1986) helped initiate discussions about the phenomenon of professional seasonal workers and conceptualized how to create a democratic curriculum for this category. This category was shaping a new generation of Southeastern tourist workers, or "Brain Drainers," who seek integration in higher education while facing dual challenges at home and in Western countries. Western European and American universities must address university programs for 'alienated' individuals who have overstayed their visas and are still present in hospitality to create an educational safety environment for these potential students to be included and live between two worlds. The future challenge of this research for further studies was to reach a consensus between educational policies and the development of global opportunities in Western hospitality countries.

Popular tourist hospitality destinations need constant training for managers and workers. Furthermore, they must stay in touch with university recruitment alerts to support immigrant youth in tourism for a new social identity, uphold civic rules, and shift toward success (Oliveira et al., 2024). Moreover, the broader educational strategy corroborates and ultimately aims to highlight opportunities to include in the school system 'undocumented' or 'partially documented' individuals to achieve socioeconomic goals:

- The immigrant workers and students contribute to the tax system and remain silent in a democratic tourist society,
- The business industry observers and educates international vulnerable voices to promote their understanding from their very first jobs,
- The democratic curricula with revision instruction in tourism and hospitality management and evaluation enable hospitality to develop equal opportunities for all,
- Educational recruitment and cultural global advancements guidelines.

7. Conclusion

Scientific methods support cultural capital in phenomenology studies in the era of measurement and identity (Bourdieu, 1986). This study's contribution exposes and adopts the Southeastern European tourist identity within Western tourist cultures. It addresses concerns about the safety of immigrant workers in the Western tourist world, who must be included in international higher education. International students learn to live together in a well-being society and seize opportunities for promising careers, quality lives, and learning experiences in service curricula within hospitality to improve lawful income (Lyotard, 1984; Flinders & Thornton, 2003).

Today, in the 21st century, alternative voices for ESL marginalized groups in the tourist industry are supported by the democratic curricula industry. They provide a platform where international individuals can find and express their discontent due to ineffective methods (Flinders & Thornton, 2003). In that context, study findings suggest that immigrant non-citizens need democratic skills, accountability, liberal and experiential policies, and encouragement for our young electoral population. Technological innovations in hospitality attract tourists, workers with multilingual international skills, and students with dreams (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015).

Phenomenology unpacks ontological meaning for the tourist identity process as a cyclical experience (Stephenson et al., 2018). Hermeneutic phenomenology nurtures a humanistic view of identity transformation and how decision-making regarding identity has evolved (Stephenson et al., 2018). Statistics about the Southeastern European brain drain as part of the global immigration of seasonal workers have increased (OECD, 2018; UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2020). As evaluated in this study, academic institutions must navigate further alarm. It is essential to convey that immigrant tourist workers care about their professions, seeking well-being and an inclusive path to a broader global perspective. The relationship of care for others is a global necessity that immigrants, particularly this group of Southeastern Europeans, prioritize concerning the quality of life, building independence, gaining experiences, and continuous learning, which deserves attention.

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