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#TheCultureFactor

GLOBAL REPORT 2024

A CULTURAL GUIDE TO MANAGEMENT
UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE NEEDS
AND EXPECTATIONS



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WELCOME TO THE GLOBAL REPORT 2024

This report offers essential insights for leaders navigating the complexities of a globalised workplace. By understanding and respecting cultural variations, organisations can optimise team performance, increase employee satisfaction, and achieve greater business success.

ABOUT US

We are a cultural analytics and strategy advisory with over 35 years of experience.

Our data-driven analysis pinpoints the role and scope of culture in your organisation's success. Our global network of expert Associated Practitioners blend this knowledge with a deep human insight. This unique combination delivers unrivalled results, time and again, powerful interventions that unleash transformative change.

More information on www.theculturefactor.com/about-us



UNLOCKING CULTURE WITH DATA



Executive Summary

This report explores the influence of national culture on workplace dynamics, examining key areas such as decision-making, leadership styles, work-life balance, clarity, and motivational drivers.

DECISION-MAKING

Employees worldwide show a strong preference for being involved in decisions that affect them. The less hierarchical the culture, the stronger (generally) the preference for this becomes.

The world is surprisingly clearly divided between those who prefer a consultative leadership style, and those who prefer a more paternalistic approach.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

There is a growing global expectation for employers to support a balance between personal and professional life, particularly pronounced in cultures with strong work ethics or hierarchical setups.

CLARITY

Clear communication on the 'what,' 'how,' and 'why' of tasks is essential to drive engagement. Regular check-ins and tailored guidance are vital.

MOTIVATION

Motivational factors vary significantly across cultures, ranging from individual achievements to collaborative success and promotion opportunities.

MANAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities are crucial across global teams. Open communication and culturally tailored guidelines are key to avoiding the pitfalls of mismatched expectations, which can be more harmful than differences in expectations themselves.



Key Recommendations

ADAPT LEADERSHIP STYLES

Effective leadership requires adaptability to cultural contexts. Tailor your leadership approach to align with the cultural norms of your team.

EMPHASISE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Actively foster work-life balance, even in regions where legislation does not enforce it, to create a supportive and motivating workplace environment.

PROVIDE GUIDANCE

Ensure clarity through regular strategic check-ins, particularly for younger team members or those working remotely, to maintain alignment and satisfaction.

CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS

Explicitly define and communicate roles and responsibilities to prevent misunderstandings and enhance team performance.



INTRODUCTION

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW CULTURE INFLUENCES THE WAY PEOPLE WORK?

Our comprehensive study reveals fascinating global differences in workplace expectations, management styles, and decision-making, derived from an extensive analysis of our global organisational culture survey data. We've explored how these patterns align with different national cultures and have analysed the underlying reasons for these cultural trends using the 6-D Model of National Culture.

This exploration helps us understand the complex interplay between National and Organisational Cultures and will equip you with the knowledge needed to enhance both employee satisfaction and leadership efficacy within your varied teams.



150 000
Respondents



600
Organisations



180
Countries

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Organisational Culture Scan is a survey designed to measure a company's unique culture. The survey gathers data directly from the employees of the company by asking about common practices in the organisation.

For this comprehensive study, we analysed the Organisational Culture Scan responses from 150,000 individuals across approximately 600 organisations all over the world.

This robust dataset provides valuable insights into the diverse range of workplace cultures, and allowed us to uncover intriguing patterns across countries. To interpret these findings, we used the 6-D Model of National Culture (more details on page 8) to shed light on the trends we observed.

In each section of this report, you'll find four graphs that present the data in different ways, allowing you to explore the findings at various levels of detail.

Highlighted countries: This graph focuses on countries where we have at least a thousand respondents. We've specifically chosen countries that provided particularly interesting answers or that serve as excellent examples of how national culture can influence responses.



Cultural comparison: This graph builds upon the first by adding relevant national culture scores. This allows you to see how the highlighted countries compare to one another in terms of their cultural values and norms.

Highest respondent countries: This graph shows results from the countries in our database that have the largest number of respondents. This gives you an insight into the countries where we have the most comprehensive data.

More countries: This final graph displays results from 90 additional countries included in our database, providing a complete overview of the findings across more nations.

To discover all the graphs simply select the hand icon in each of the sections.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT



Interactive element, click on it for more data.



Key information if you only read one thing read this.



Definitions of the terms used in the report.

ABOUT THE 6-D MODEL OF NATIONAL CULTURE

The 6-D Model of National Culture, offers a way to understand a country's culture through its distinctive values. This framework has been instrumental in helping organisations enhance communication and collaboration among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It serves as a valuable tool for grasping how cultural differences can impact business interactions.

It comprised of 6 Dimensions:

PDI - POWER DISTANCE

The extent to which the less powerful members of society accept that power is distributed unequally.



UAI - UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

The extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity, and try to avoid such situations.



IDV - INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism: People only look after themselves and their immediate family. Collectivism: People belong to in-groups (e.g. families, organisations, etc.) who look after them in exchange for loyalty.



LTO - LONG TERM ORIENTATION

Short Term Orientation vs Long Term Orientation
The extent to which people show a future-oriented or pragmatic perspective rather than a normative or short-term point of view.



MAS - MOTIVATION TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

Decisiveness: The dominant values in society are achievement and success. Consensus: The dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life.

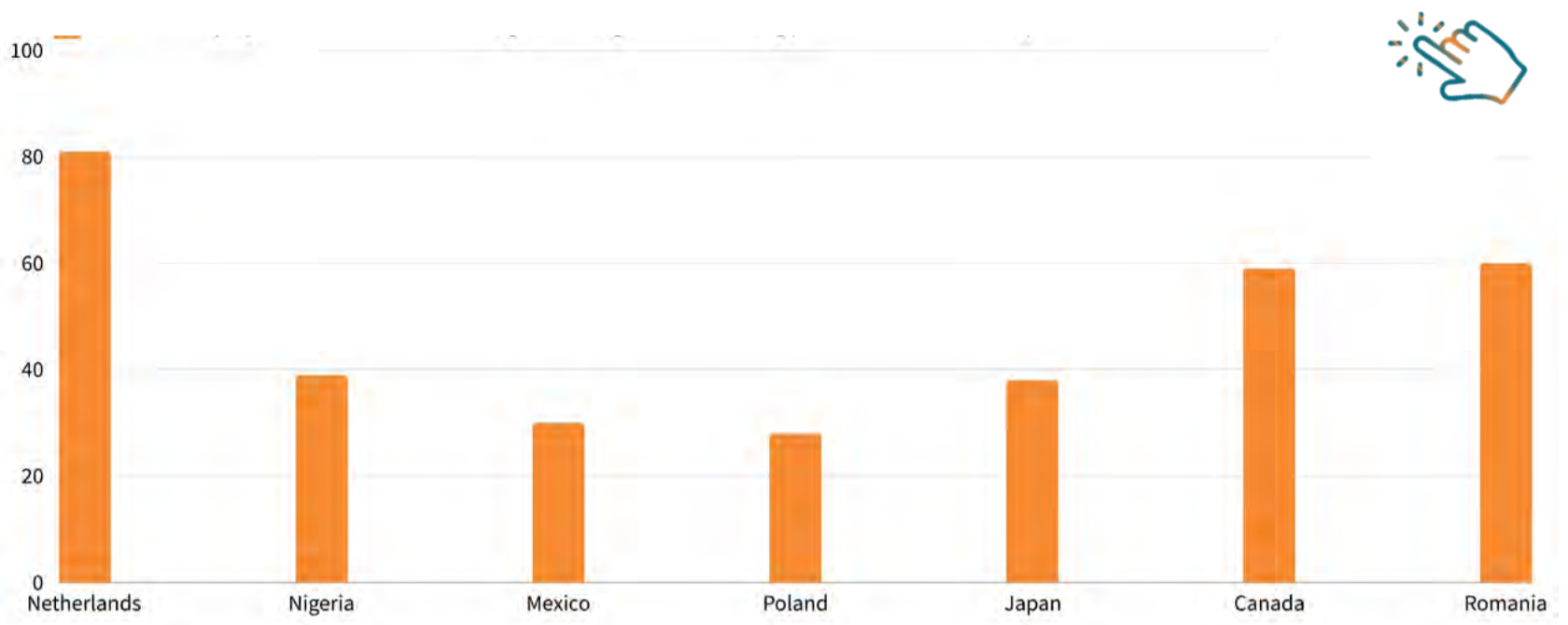


IVR - INDULGENCE

The extent to which people express their desires and impulses. Relatively weak control is called "Indulgence" and relatively strong control is called "Restraint".



Percent of employees that think one can be a good manager without having precise answers to most questions that subordinates may raise about their work.



FLEXIBILITY

PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES THAT THINK ONE CAN BE A GOOD MANAGER WITHOUT HAVING PRECISE ANSWERS TO MOST QUESTIONS THAT SUBORDINATES MAY RAISE ABOUT THEIR WORK.

In cultures with lower Power Distance (PDI*), and a strong Long-Term Orientation (LTO**), managers are not expected to be omniscient experts. Instead, their role is seen as facilitating collaboration, fostering knowledge-sharing, and guiding strategic thinking.

Conversely, in cultures with higher Power Distance (high PDI) and Shorter-Term Orientation (low LTO), such as Mexico, Poland, and Nigeria, or a potent combination of high Achievement focus (high MAS) and high Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI) such as Japan, there's a stronger expectation for managers to possess expert knowledge and provide precise solutions.



KEY TAKEAWAYS!

For optimal teamwork and clarity, explicitly define the roles and expectations for both managers and employees within your organisation.

The challenge isn't differing expectations but rather unvoiced assumptions about what each party should do or provide.

Open communication and clear guidelines can bridge these gaps in understanding, leading to a more productive and harmonious work environment.



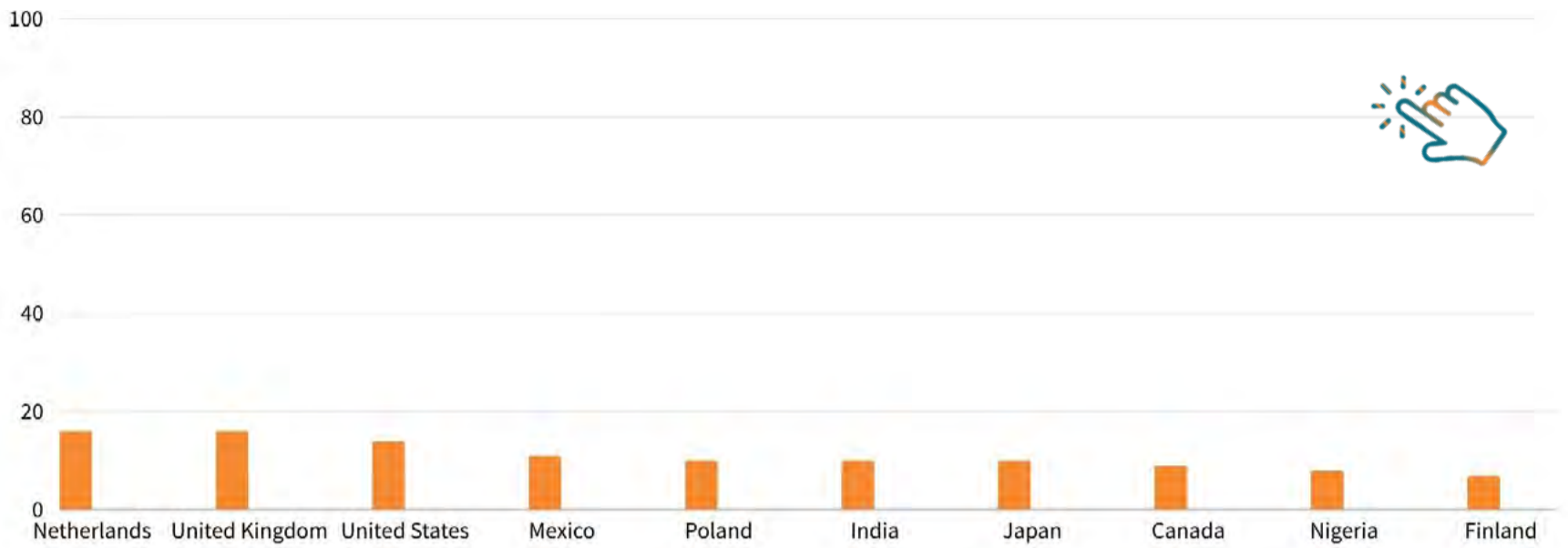
*POWER DISTANCE

How much less powerful members of society accept unequal power distribution.

**LONG TERM ORIENTATION

whether a society values tradition and norms (low score) or takes a pragmatic, future-oriented approach (high score).

Percent of employees that want the most important decisions to be taken by individuals.



DECISION-MAKING

PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES THAT WANT THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN BY INDIVIDUALS.

The Dimensions of National Culture appear to significantly influence the preferences for individual or consensus-based managerial decision-making.

In countries like the [Netherlands and Finland](#) (low MAS*), there is a strong emphasis on collaboration and minimising power imbalances. Thus, individual decision-making is often discouraged in favour of group-based consensus.

Nations like [Poland, India, and Nigeria](#) (high PDI**), might prefer group decision-making, but still demonstrate a greater acceptance of individual decisions due to the inherent respect for hierarchy.

In cultures like the [USA, UK, and Canada](#), managers are expected to set clear targets. Strong IDV and MAS promote independent decision-making, especially when managers have a proven track record. However, lower LTO and UAI suggest an emphasis on results rather than a rigid focus on how to obtain those results.

[Mexico and Japan](#) exhibit a preference for consensus. This can be attributed to the high scores in Achievement Focus (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). The desire for achievement is tempered by the need to minimise risk, encouraging a collaborative approach, even in a hierarchical setting (high PDI, especially in Mexico).

KEY TAKEAWAYS!



Globally, employees prefer to have a voice in decisions that affect them. This desire for involvement is even stronger in more hierarchical cultures (high PDI).

Conversely, in low PDI societies, a call for more individual decision-making often signals dissatisfaction with existing leadership or decision-making processes.

Understanding the cultural nuances of decision-making expectations is key for managers seeking to build trust and engagement across global teams.

The same behaviour can have very different reasons behind them. Understanding the reasons is key to addressing potential issues.

*MOTIVATION TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

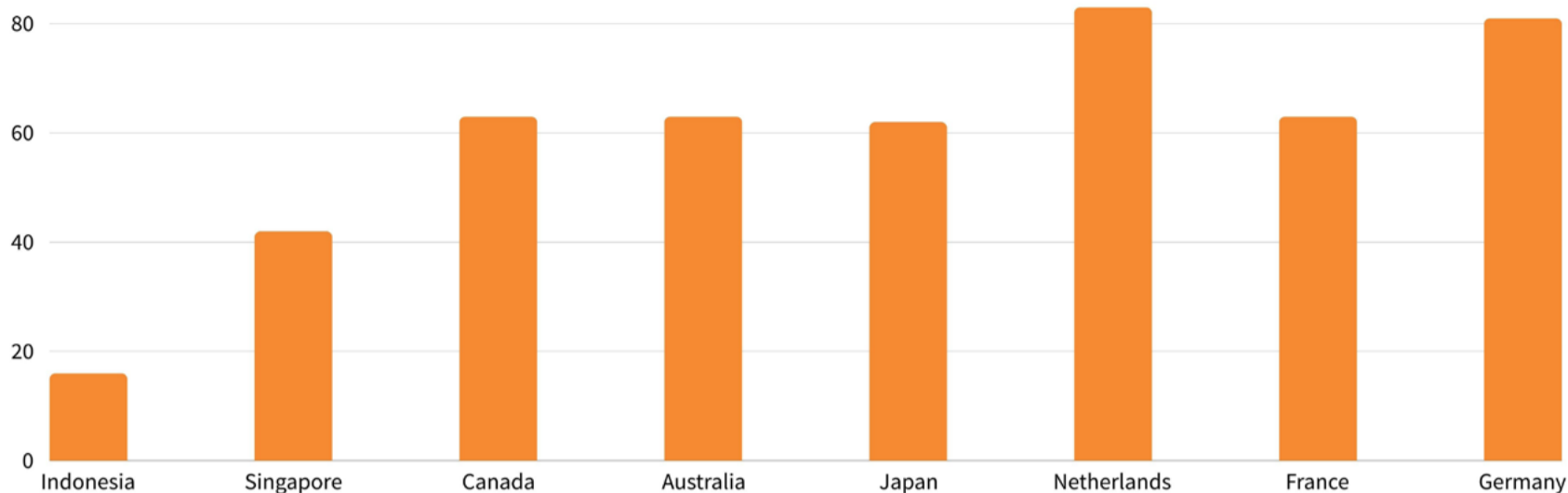
Whether a society is driven by competition and success (Decisive) or by caring for others and quality of life (Consensus-oriented).

**POWER DISTANCE

How much less powerful members of society accept unequal power distribution.



Percent of employees that want their personal problems to be taken into account at work.



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES THAT WANT THEIR PERSONAL PROBLEMS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AT WORK.

The extent to which managers consider employees' personal problems is shaped by cultural expectations regarding empathy, loyalty, and the role of work in individuals' lives. The main Cultural Dimensions we see in play are IDV* and MAS**.

In Collectivist cultures like [Indonesia and Singapore](#) (low IDV), work assumes a more prominent place in individuals' lives. This, combined with expectations of strong leadership, fosters acceptance of work-related demands that may intrude one's personal time.

Countries like [Canada, Australia, and Japan](#) (high MAS) exhibit a nuanced perspective. Work is viewed as a significant aspect of self-identity, yet somewhat higher Individualism (IDV) emphasises the importance of personal time. This leads to an approach, where expectations towards addressing personal problems depend on individual circumstances.

Countries like [the Netherlands](#) (high IDV, low MAS) place less importance on work-life overall. Employees expect organisations to accommodate personal needs.



KEY TAKEAWAYS!

The ongoing focus on talent retention and evolving work arrangements, such as remote work, has led to a global increase in expectations for employers to respect employees' private lives. In some countries, such as [France and Germany](#), legislation now protects personal time with measures like limiting after-hours work communication. This highlights the growing need for organisations to understand and adapt to these changing expectations.



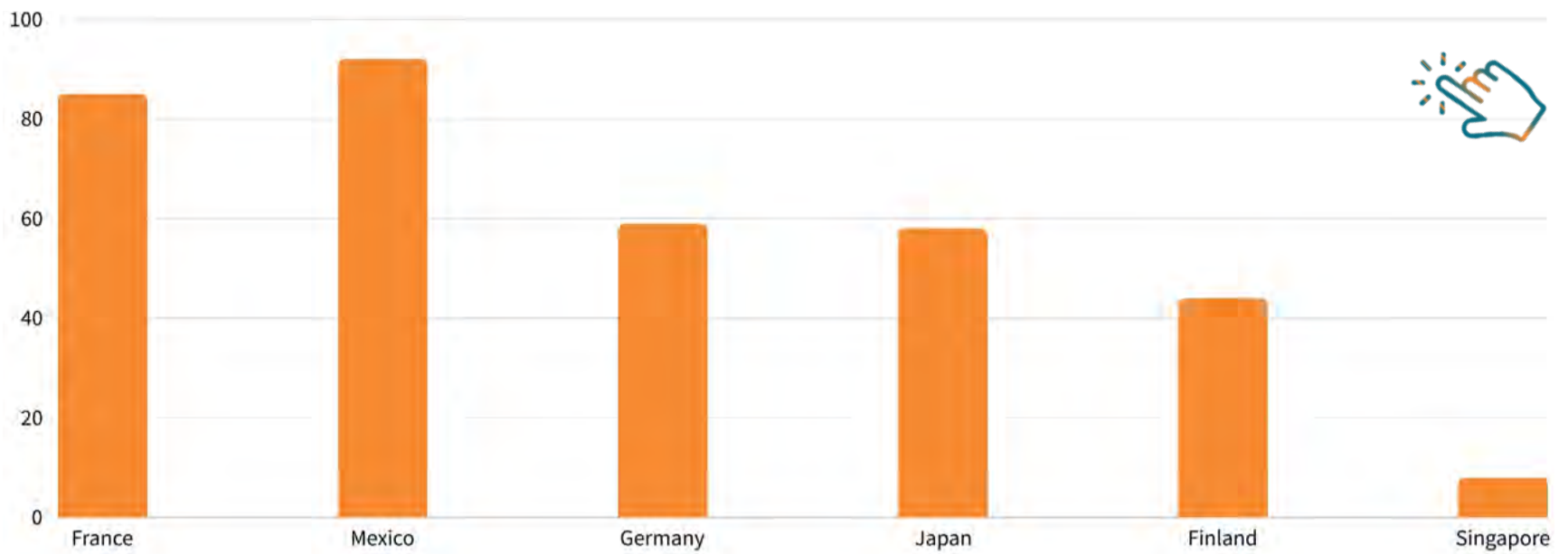
*INDIVIDUALISM

Whether a society values independence ("I") or group loyalty ("We").

**MOTIVATION TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

Whether a society is driven by competition and success (Decisive) or by caring for others and quality of life (Consensus-oriented).

Percent of employees that have a well-defined job, in which it is clear what is expected from you.



CLARITY

PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES THAT HAVE A WELL-DEFINED JOB, IN WHICH IT IS CLEAR WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM YOU.

Cultural Dimensions shape employee expectations regarding clarity, and ownership. Thus it's important to understand the rationale behind tasks.

Generally speaking, in Long-Term Oriented (high LTO*) cultures, understanding the 'why' behind work is crucial. In contrast, cultures with lower LTO focus more on the 'what' – the immediate actions and outcomes required. Those with high Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI**) prioritise the 'how', valuing detailed instructions and established processes for stability and predictability.

Both **Mexico and France** (high UAI) strongly prefer well-defined work expectations. They need clarity on the 'how' aspect of their tasks.

Germany and Japan, while both demonstrating high Individualism (IDV) and Achievement focus (high MAS), differ in their need for detailed information. This divergence can be attributed to their Power Distance (PDI) scores. Germany's lower PDI fosters a more collaborative environment with freer information exchange. This reduces the need for employees to seek detailed instructions for every aspect of their tasks.

Despite opposing scores on several dimensions, **Finland and Singapore** show a similar lack of emphasis on detailed instructions. For Finland, low PDI and low MAS reduce hierarchy and the importance placed on work. Singapore's low MAS and UAI foster a more adaptable, less process-driven work environment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS!

Certainty fosters action, while uncertainty breeds inaction.

Across cultures, employees expect clarity from leaders on the "what" (goals), "how" (methods), and "why" (purpose) of their work. Failure to provide this clarity leads to hesitation and delays.

This presents a paradox for managers: younger generations (Gen Z and Millennials) typically want more guidance, yet managers face increasing time constraints due to larger teams and virtual work settings. To address this, managers should proactively schedule regular check-ins, focusing on strategic alignment on the "why" at the outset of projects and ongoing support on the "what" and "how".



*LONG TERM ORIENTATION

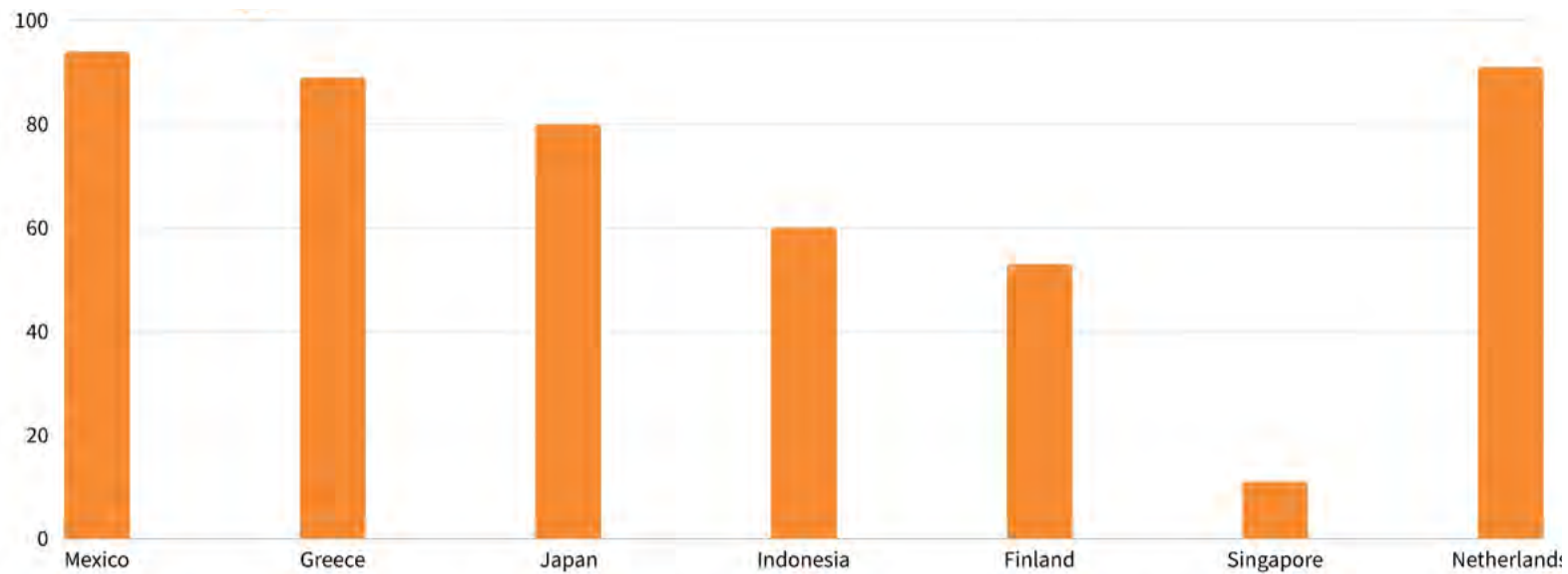
Whether a society values tradition and norms (low score) or takes a pragmatic, future-oriented approach (high score).

**UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

How much a society feels threatened by unknown situations and seeks to avoid them through rules and institutions.



Percent of employees that have challenging tasks to do, from which they can get personal sense of accomplishment.



MOTIVATION

PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES THAT HAVE CHALLENGING TASKS TO DO, FROM WHICH THEY CAN GET PERSONAL SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

What motivates individuals to excel in the workplace?

This section explores how Cultural Dimensions shape the pursuit of personal achievement. We can again see most of the cultural dimensions playing significant roles.

In some cultures (high MAS* and high UAI**), individuals are motivated by becoming experts in their field, gaining recognition for their knowledge and skill.

In others (high IDV and high MAS) a focus on building a personal track record of success is key, and motivates people to excel.

Finland, Indonesia, and Singapore exhibit a lower focus on finding personal achievement through work itself. This can be partially explained by being consensus-oriented (low MAS), suggesting that factors like work-life balance and social connections might be greater motivators in these cultures.

In other countries highlighted in the graph, higher achievement focus (high MAS) and/or Uncertainty Avoidance (high UAI) correlate with a stronger desire to excel at work. This drive can manifest as a pursuit of expertise, individual success, problem-solving, or advancement.

The Netherlands presents an interesting exception. Despite shorter average work hours, the Dutch demonstrate a desire to be efficient and effective, maximising their productivity within their work time, in order to spend as much time as possible outside of work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS!

In a globalised world, recognising the cultural roots of motivation is essential for organisations seeking to maximise employee potential and drive success.

In cultures where individual achievement and expertise are less emphasised (low achievement focus, low Uncertainty Avoidance), fostering collaboration and supportive management can be powerful motivators.



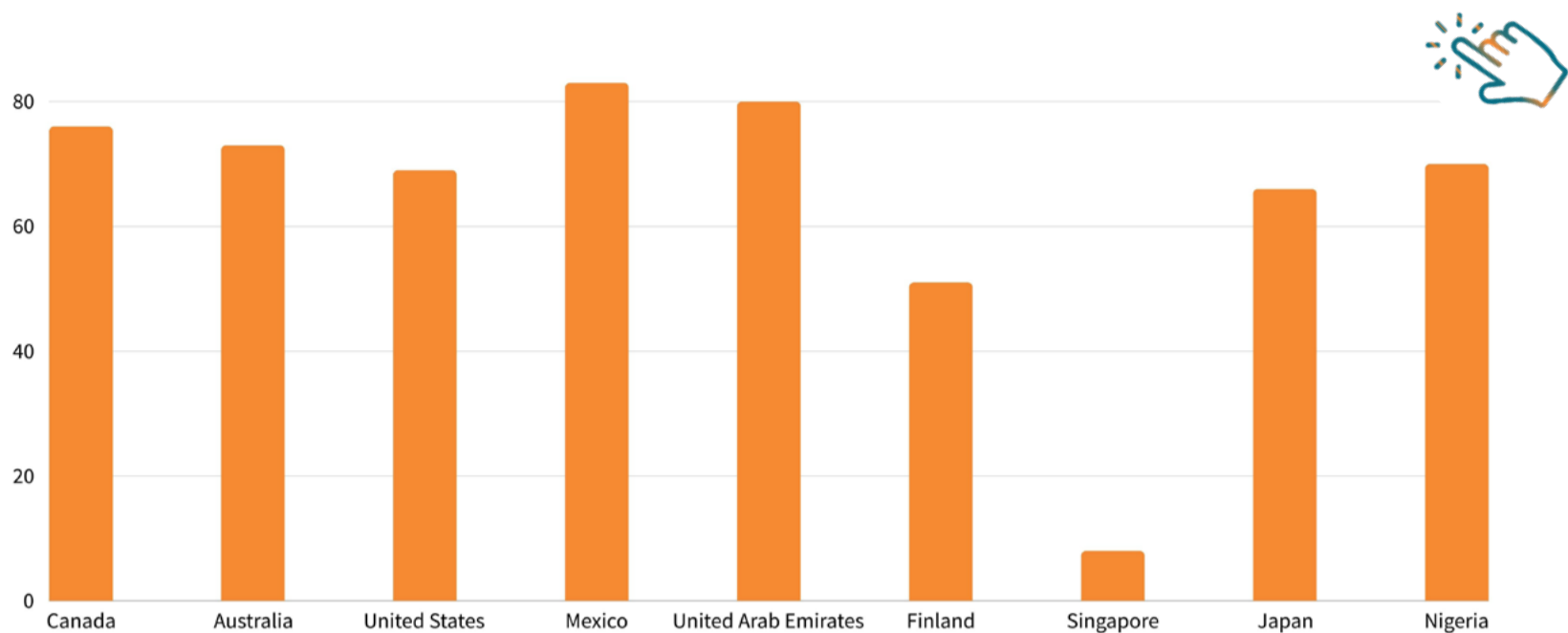
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How much a society feels threatened by unknown situations and seeks to avoid them through rules and institutions.





LEADERSHIP STYLE

PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES THAT WANT TO BE CONSULTED BY THEIR SUPERIOR IN THEIR DECISIONS.

The Consultative leadership style (see next page for a detailed definition and maps), characterised by seeking input from subordinates while retaining decision-making authority, is the most widely preferred approach globally. This preference is particularly strong in cultures where there is less need for hierarchy (low PDI) and higher need for individual expression (high IDV), such as the [USA](#), [Australia](#), and [Canada](#).

In cultures with high Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), leaders are expected to possess expertise. This might lessen the perceived importance of involving subordinates, explaining [Finland](#)'s average score despite its egalitarian nature.

[Singapore](#)'s preference for less involvement aligns with its Cultural Dimensions: higher Power Distance (PDI), lower Individualism (IDV), and very low Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI). This combination can foster a sense of trust in authority figures and a focus on executing instructions efficiently.



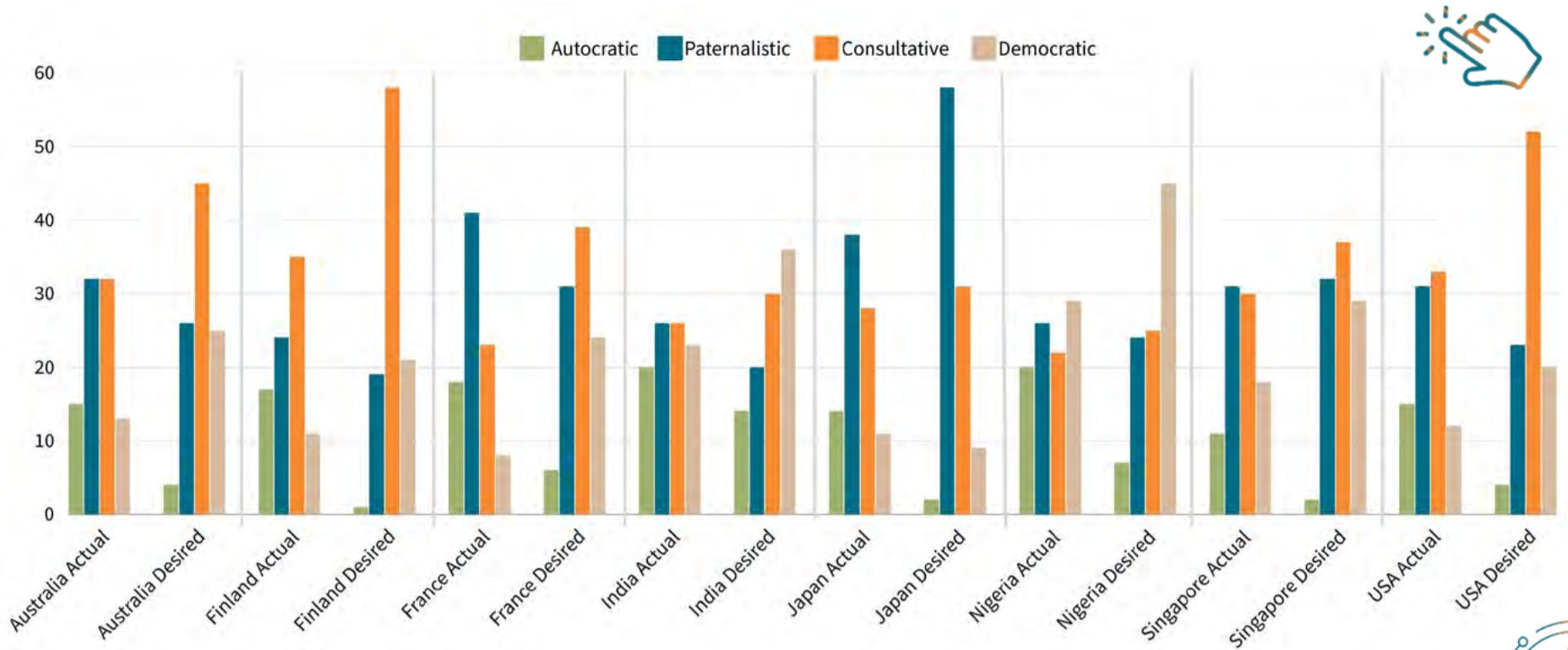
KEY TAKEAWAYS!

Globally, most people expect to be involved in decisions that directly impact them. This makes consultative leadership, where leaders seek team input before making final calls, a broadly advisable approach.

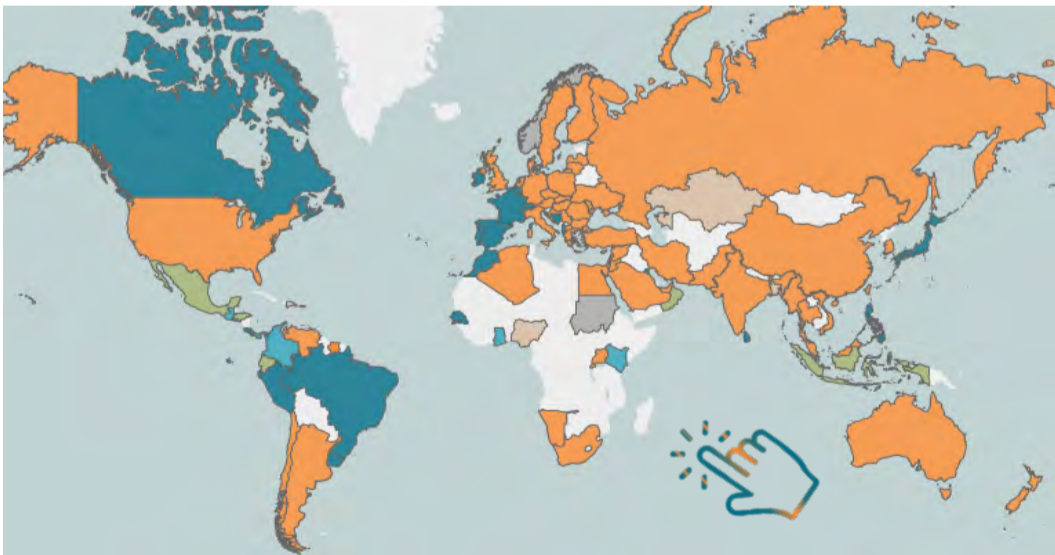
However, some cultures, like Japan, where work pressure is high, may see benefits from a clearer, more directive style (paternalistic). This reduces decision-making burdens for employees, giving them breathing space to focus on tasks and potentially decreasing stress.

Interestingly, there are exceptions like [Nigeria](#) and [Mexico](#). Due to what we call the "pendulum effect," people in these hierarchical, collectivist cultures often desire a more democratic leadership style – the opposite of the autocratic leadership they're accustomed to. This increased involvement in decision-making can initially help alleviate stress, by feeling empowered.

Leadership Styles Desired and Actual for selected countries



Desired Leadership Style



Actual Leadership Style

PATERNALISTIC LEADER

Usually makes decisions promptly, but before implementing them tries to explain them fully to his/her subordinates. Provides the reasons behind the decisions and answers whatever questions they may have.

CONSULTATIVE LEADER

Usually consults with subordinates before reaching a decision. Listens to their advice, considers it and then announces their decisions. In return, the leader expects all to work to implement the decision, regardless of whether or not they are in accordance with their opinions.

DEMOCRATIC LEADER

Usually calls a meeting with subordinates when there is an important decision to be made, and puts the problem before the group and invites discussion. Leader accepts the majority viewpoint as the decision.

AUTOCRATIC LEADER

Usually makes decisions promptly and communicates them to subordinates clearly and firmly. Expects them to carry out the decisions loyally and without challenge.



TAKE THE NEXT STEPS

After gaining insights into how culture shapes workplace dynamics, your next step is to dive deeper into understanding your organisation's unique challenges and opportunities. Here's how you can continue your journey.

GO FURTHER WITH THE WEBINAR

Cultural Guide to Management:

Insights from the Global Report

JULY 16 2024

16:00 EEST / 09:00 EDT/ 14:00 BST

This interactive webinar will walk you through the key findings of this report. We'll explore how cultural values influence workplace dynamics across the globe, focusing on areas like decision-making, leadership styles, work-life balance, and employee motivation.

We will also address real-time queries from the audience, offering personalised advice and strategies to overcome cultural challenges in your specific context.

REGISTER

MEASURE AND CHANGE THE CULTURE OF YOUR ORGANISATION

Design a culture that supports your strategy. Our Organisational Culture Transformation package helps you uncover the culture you currently have and change it to give you the best opportunity for long-term success.

[Read more](#)

TAKE YOUR LEADERSHIP TO THE NEXT LEVEL

It is designed just for you and organised around your timetable, KPIs and goals. This fully tailored exclusive coaching programme will equip you with the necessary competencies to effectively respond to the challenges that global leaders are faced with today. More information send us a message at sales@theculturefactor.com

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QUESTIONS?

More data available, contact us
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