



## Research Articles

# A 10 Nation Exploration of Trustworthiness in The Workplace

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## Abstract

In the context of the workplace, and especially in today's often fast-paced, cross-cultural and virtual work environment, a basic type of trust—"swift trust"—forms quickly based on cognitive processes and beliefs, or stereotypes, of another. Interpersonal trust is in large part based on these contextualized assessments of the extent to which another person is trustworthy. While trust across cultural boundaries has been examined, there is a lack of research investigating how trustworthiness is determined cross-culturally, especially with respect to what heuristics are used in the development of trust. The current project explored how trustworthiness is conceptualized and described for both colleagues and supervisors across 10 nations using the Stereotype Content Model. Qualitative descriptors of trustworthy supervisors and colleagues were coded based on the importance ascribed to warmth and competence, and these codes were used as the basis for cluster analyses to examine similarities and differences in descriptors of role-based trustworthiness. Both differences and similarities in the expectations of trustworthiness were found across the national samples. Some cultures emphasized both warmth and competence as equally important components to developing trustworthiness, some emphasized only warmth, while others emphasized only competence. Variations of trustworthiness stereotypes were found in all but two national samples based on role expectations for supervisors and colleagues. Data from the GLOBE project related to societal cultural practices and cultural leadership prototypes were drawn on to discuss findings.

**Keywords:** trust, trustworthiness, culture, workplace, supervisor, colleague

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Cross-cultural interactions in the workplace have become inevitable for many employees, requiring increased attention to communication, collaboration, and cooperation. Trust has also received increasing attention as it functions as a lubricant to facilitate interpersonal interactions (Spreitzer, Shapiro, & Von Glinow, 2002). In the workplace, individuals often work across cultural divides without a long history with each other, and thus, trust that is formed quickly—*swift trust* (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999; Meyerson, Weick, & Kramer, 1996), becomes important. Swift trust results from initial impression formation, yet has an effect on relationships (Schilke & Huang, 2018) and how longer-term trust develops (Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013). Stereotypes are an important component in this swift trust, since they draw on heuristics meaning that trustworthiness of others can be based on social cues such as membership in socially relevant categories (Kramer, 1999). Accumulated evidence provides strong support for the idea that these social judgements are influenced by stereotypes, informed by an individual's culture (Greenwald & Lai, 2020).

Trust development across societal cultures may be particularly challenging, given that different cultures place different emphases on what is important to the development of trust. In organizational settings, teamwork is built on the bonds team members have with each other in some cultures, while in others the ability to carry out tasks are more important than relationships (Zakaria & Yusof, 2015). These differences impact what cues organizational members rely on to decide whether or not to trust someone, as being willing to trust someone is “merely the expectation that the person will most likely be trustworthy” (Hardin, 2002, p. 31). The importance of trustworthiness is well documented as it is associated with a wide range of outcomes promoting cooperative and supportive networks in organizations (Wasti, Tan, & Erdil, 2011).

Role expectations can also impact assessments of another’s trustworthiness. That is, these expectations are concerned with how the person in specific roles *should* behave (Biddle, 1986), and the intention and ability to carry out those role expectations dictates the level of trustworthiness (Kwantes & McMurphy, 2021). Within an organizational context, employees and leaders are ascribed with specific expectations to their roles, and subsequently, these role expectations manifest and are evaluated in the form of various work outcomes. For example, a trustworthy employee may be someone who is able to meet the organizational expectations through performance, while a trustworthy leader may be someone who is able to meet the needs of both the organization (e.g., performance output) and the employees (e.g., psychological and physical well-being). However, while role expectations play an important factor to formulate this trust within an organization, other research also suggest the possibility to assess the trustworthiness of an individual based on social category alone (Brewer, 1981), functionally through stereotyping (Foddy, Platow, & Yamagishi, 2009; Schniter & Shields, 2020). Stereotypic expectations related to trust within organizational roles have consequences, as, for example, supervisors perceived as trustworthy can facilitate better performance from their followers (Casimir, Waldman, Bartram, & Yang, 2006). Further, perceptions of trustworthiness in organizations can have a generalized effect throughout the organization, as when supervisors experience trusting relationships they are, in turn, more likely to behave in a trustworthy manner to their subordinates (De Cremer, van Dijke, Schminke, De Schutter, & Stouten, 2018).

While other research has identified the reliance of stereotypes in the initial evaluation of trust (Foddy et al., 2009; Kong, 2017), how trustworthiness is determined cross-culturally, especially with respect to what heuristics are used in the development of swift trust, is not well understood. The Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) provides two universal dimensions to assess stereotypes of all social categories, warmth and competence, which are the two defining factors that establish trust between two parties (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). The purpose of this project is to apply the universal dimensions introduced in the SCM, warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002), as the basis for exploring stereotypical expectations of a trustworthy supervisor and a trustworthy colleague in 10 countries. The SCM specifically focusses on the impact category membership has on the expectations and judgements of group members and is an appropriate pancultural tool for examining stereotypes across cultures (Cuddy et al., 2009).

## Stereotype Content Model

The SCM (Fiske et al., 2002) is a theoretical framework which posits that every socially determined demographic group is subjected to being evaluated on the basis of stereotypes: that is, beliefs characterizing and associating specific groups or categories of people with overgeneralized qualities or traits (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Schneider, 2005). The SCM outlines what characteristics are ascribed to group members based on

perceptions of a group's perceived intentions and abilities—known as warmth and competence respectively (Fiske et al., 2002). Warmth is associated with characteristics such as good-naturedness, tolerance, and sincerity, while competence is associated with characteristics such as capability, skill, intelligence, and confidence (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008).

Some social groups receive positive or negative evaluations on both dimensions, creating “positive” stereotypes and “negative” stereotypes. However, since the dimensions of warmth and competence are orthogonal, some social groups are evaluated with positive expectations on one dimension, while receiving negative expectations on the other, creating “ambivalent stereotypes” (Fiske et al., 2002). Thus, based on various combinations of positive and negative evaluations on warmth and competence, four general clusters of stereotype content emerge, with evaluations either consistently low or consistently high across both dimensions, or high on one dimension while low on the other. For example, in the United States, housewives and the elderly are stereotyped as warm but incompetent, while Asians and career women are stereotyped as competent but lacking in warmth (Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske et al., 2002). Prototypical social groups, such as Whites and Christians, are viewed as high in both warmth and competence. Homeless and welfare recipients are evaluated negatively on both dimensions as incompetent and cold.

## SCM Across Cultures

Societal culture determines salient categories and the stereotypes and biases associated with those categories (Caprariello, Cuddy, & Fiske, 2009). The theoretical conceptualizations and applications of the SCM have been replicated across several national and cultural contexts. Researchers have investigated the stereotype content of various social groups (many of which are culturally unique), across a number of different nations such as China (Guan, Deng, & Bond, 2010), Germany (Asbrock, 2010), New Zealand (Sibley et al., 2011), Norway (Bye, Herrebrøden, Hjetland, Røyset, & Westby, 2014), and Romania (Stanciu, Cohrs, Hanke, & Gavreliuc, 2017). The SCM has also been used to compare cultural stereotypes of subgroups across national contexts, for example, stereotypes of rich people in China and the US (Wu, Bai, & Fiske, 2018).

In a more pancultural project, Cuddy and colleagues (2009) tested the SCM across 10 nations to explore the universal similarities and differences of stereotyping principles across cultures. Specifically, data for this study were collected from seven European nations (i.e., Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and UK) representing individualistic cultures, and three Asian nations (i.e., Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea) representing collectivistic cultures. The authors concluded that the fundamental dimensions of the SCM—warmth and competence—are universal, albeit with some notable cultural differences between individualistic and collectivistic countries. Across all cultures, the dimensions of warmth and competence reliably distinguish stereotypes of both culturally universal and unique social groups. Many societal out-groups across cultures received ambivalent assessments of their stereotypes; for example, Belgian participants rated elderly people to have low competence but high warmth and educated people to have low warmth but high competence. Interestingly, collectivistic cultures did not demonstrate obvious in-group favoritism. Unlike individualistic cultures that rated their societal reference groups distinctively more positive across both warmth and competence dimensions, collectivistic cultures rated their societal reference groups with ambivalent stereotypes. In fact, none of the collectivistic cultures provided high ratings across the warmth and competence dimensions in this study.

Durante and colleagues (2013) undertook another large cross-cultural effort and tested the SCM across 37 cultures across the globe. Specifically, the SCM was tested across 25 nations, using multiple cultural samples within eight countries (e.g., two samples from Australia: Asian- and European-Australians). Similar to Cuddy et al. (2009), Durante and colleagues (2013) found the warmth and competence dimensions to be universal, and that societal out-groups were evaluated with ambivalent stereotypes. In addition, the authors also found some disparities between cultures, specifically through differences of income inequality. Results suggested countries with larger income inequality to report more ambivalent stereotypes, while countries with relatively equal income reported significantly lower levels of warmth towards competitive group—demonstrating greater dislike towards out-group competitions.

Societal cultures are not monolithic, however. Cultural subgroups within a given cultural context may have differing perspectives. Stereotypes of groups reflect social constructions of what clusters of characteristics are salient in a given culture, and that the resulting perception of groups is dependent, at least in part, on the status that group members have within a society. Various individual characteristics are valued differently according to cultural orientation. For example, Asian American students evaluated stereotypes of Asians as “model minority” differently, depending on their individualist or collectivist orientation (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997).

## Application of the SCM to Workplaces

The SCM has been applied to understanding biases at various levels in organizations. Organizations as a whole are subject to stereotypic expectations of warmth and competence, impacting the extent to which job seekers view the organization as an attractive place to work (Peiffer, Habibpour, Jegers, & Pepermans, 2018). Similarly, demographic subgroups within organization may be perceived differently. For example, Rast, Gaffney, and Yang (2018) examined attitudes towards Asian immigrants in a large organization in the United Kingdom and found that perceptions of warmth and competence were related to minority employees' willingness to interact with their White British colleagues. The framework of the SCM has also been used, although sparsely, in workplace research examining stereotypes and their impact on various organizational functions, such as leadership, selection, and performance appraisals outcomes. For example, Falvo, Capozza, Di Bernardo, and Manganelli (2016) conducted a cross-sectional study using questionnaire responses to investigate the impact of a leader's warmth and competence on employee's organizational commitment. Results suggest warmth ascribed to a leader to be the significant predictor impacting employee's organizational commitment. Competence, on the other hand, did not show a significant impact. In the areas of hiring and selection, Martinez, White, Shapiro, and Hebl (2016) found applicants who disclosed their cancer history are evaluated as higher in warmth, but less favourably in competence. As a result, those applicants who disclosed their cancer history were rated unfavourably as potential employees and were discriminated against in hiring assessments. Leslie, Mayer, and Kravitz (2014) conducted a meta-analysis and integrated the SCM framework to study why marginalized groups hired through the Affirmative Action Plans (AAP; e.g., women, ethnic minorities) are evaluated more negatively on performance outcomes. Results of the meta-analysis found individuals hired through the AAP were stereotyped negatively across both warmth and competence dimensions. Members of the marginalized target group then internalize those external negative expectations, causing feelings of self-doubt and incompetence to arise, which leads to negative impact on their organizational performance.

Organizations are inherently hierarchical, and employees are hired to fulfill specific roles. Although the current literature provides insights particularly on the impact of warmth and competence on various organizational

outcomes (e.g., group interactions, leadership performance, recruitment and selection), no work using the SCM—to the authors' knowledge—has examined stereotypical expectations of employees within roles across different cultural contexts. Organizational culture often reflects the societal culture that the organization is embedded in (Kwantes & Dickson, 2011), and Status Characteristics Theory (SCT; Berger & Fisek, 1970) suggests that particular roles, such as leadership roles, tend to result in ascribed characteristics based on the status of that role in a given cultural context. Status characteristics in turn impact performance expectations of those in a given group (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972). These expectations reflect culturally based group stereotypes. Being able to deduce the expectations of different organizational roles based on warmth and competence is critical to advance the understanding of stereotypes on organizational interactions and outcomes, especially in a fast-paced and globalized environment. Many interactions in today's workplace take place in the context of temporary teams, including global virtual teams. "Swift trust" is important to the success and ease of team members working together. Heuristics, such as stereotypical expectations of others based on their organizational roles, play a key role in its development (Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013).

## Stereotypical Expectations Based on Role Relationships

Alan Fiske (1992) proposed that social relationships tend to be organized according to the roles that we inhabit, and the nature of the role relationship impacts expectations of those who fulfill those roles. While types of role relationships may be universal, societal cultures apply these models differently to relevant domains. For example, in some cultural contexts, a communal sharing model may be applied to organizational relationships more strongly than in others, where an authority ranking model may predominate. Such social factors impact the way an individual within a given role is expected to behave. SCT (Berger & Fisek, 1970) also posits that culture impacts expectations in roles as "beliefs about ability differences associated with diffuse status characteristics originate from widely shared cultural values and societal contexts within which groups are imbedded" (Bianchi, Kang, & Stewart, 2012, p. 342). Performance expectations are also associated with these specific, societally ascribed, status characteristics (Berger & Fisek, 1970). Russell and Fiske (2008) found that social groups perceived as having higher status are likely to be evaluated as higher in competence than lower status groups, and those perceived as competitive over resources are evaluated as lower in warmth in comparison to non-competitive groups. In organizations, group members were found to defer to higher status members with the assumption that higher status equated to greater competence (Oldmeadow, Platow, Foddy, & Anderson, 2003). In other words, organizational rank was correlated with stereotypes related to competence.

## The Current Study

Group membership is a salient factor in developing expectations of others. Stereotyping reflects a set of expectations or beliefs that characterize specific groups of people (Schneider, 2005), while assessments of trustworthiness reflect these group level expectations as well as expectations of an individual group member's intention and reliability (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).

Trustworthiness has been conceptualized as based on three assessments: ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995). Of these, expectations and beliefs of a person's ability and benevolence closely resemble the concept of competence and warmth introduced in the SCM (Kong, 2017). Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) asserted that the formulation and maintenance of trust differs based on role relationships within organizations.



However, how expectations of trustworthiness differ based on role relationships across cultures has not yet been investigated.

Given that the SCM dimensions are closely related to the dimensions of benevolence and ability (Kong, 2017), and that the warmth and competence dimensions can be used universally to assess stereotypical expectations across cultures (e.g., Asbrock, 2010; Guan et al., 2010), this project integrates the trustworthiness dimensions to assess trustworthiness expectations of colleagues and supervisors across 10 different nations. Research shows that societal cultures may be distinguished across a number of dimensions. Hofstede (1980) for example, proposed that cultures may be distinguished based on the endorsement of values (individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance). Research has also shown that the degree to which generalized social beliefs are endorsed differs across cultures (Leung et al., 2002) with beliefs about social cynicism, social complexity, reward for application, spirituality and fate control varying across societal cultures. More recently, House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004) proposed that societal cultures may be thought of as being comprised of values (how things *should be*) and practices (how things *are*). This latter approach, perceptions of actual cultural practices, was incorporated into the current project. Further, the GLOBE studies identified culturally implicit leadership (CLT) types for various cultures. Given that the current project focused, in part, on expectations of supervisors, these leadership expectations were expected to be germane to understanding stereotypical trustworthiness expectations of supervisors. In addition, given the very practical implications of determining what makes a fellow employee (supervisor or coworker) trustworthy, the perceptions of culture *as it is* rather than what the values are in a given culture is most pertinent.

As this project was exploratory in nature, no hypotheses were proposed. However, two expectations emerged from the literature review consistent with the *two-dimensions hypothesis*, which suggests that when societal groups are assessed, cluster analyses will result in multiple clusters solutions (Cuddy et al., 2009). First, the content of trustworthy expectations was expected to differ based on organizational role such that trustworthy supervisors would be described differently than trustworthy colleagues, and that descriptions of trustworthy supervisors would reflect higher competence than for colleagues (Fiske et al., 2002). Second, in line with previous cross-cultural work (*ambivalent stereotypes hypothesis*; Cuddy et al., 2009), some descriptions were expected to display ambivalent trustworthy expectations, with positive expectations on one dimension and negative on the other (i.e., warmth and ability). Societal practices were expected to impact stereotypes of trustworthy colleagues with cultural implicit leadership prototypes impacting stereotypes of trustworthy supervisors.

## Method

Data were archival, drawn from the International Trustworthiness Study (Kwantes, 2021). Participants were employed undergraduate student participants, recruited through university psychological pools—or their equivalent—across 10 countries: Brazil, Canada, China, India, Iran, Israel, Japan, South Africa, Taiwan, and the USA (see Table 1 for sample characteristics). Cases with missing data were removed listwise. Respondents were asked to complete two sentences: “A trustworthy supervisor is someone who is or does\_\_\_\_\_” and “A trustworthy colleague is someone who is or does\_\_\_\_\_.” Participants were instructed and responded to the items in their own languages. In cases where countries have multiple official languages, such as French and English in Canada, all responses were requested and recorded with the most commonly used language of that Country (i.e., English in Canada). All data were translated and back translated by bilingual speakers,

or translated and reviewed by bilingual speakers when the responding language was not English. The English versions were coded according to the extent to which the responses reflected benevolence (or warmth) and ability (or competence). Specifically, several researchers (undergraduate and graduate psychology students) were trained by senior researchers (faculty and graduate students) using a codebook that was developed by the first author. Two of the trained researchers then coded each response independently using the definitions from Mayer et al. (1995) for ability and benevolence, then met to reconcile any differences in coding. The reconciled data were used for this project.

**Table 1***Sample Characteristics*

Country	N	Male		Female		Mode age
		n	%	n	%	
Brazil	147	51	35	96	65	19
Canada	211	112	53	99	47	19
China	150	70	47	80	53	19
India	319	48	15	271	85	21
Iran	147	20	14	127	86	20
Israel	144	65	45	79	55	23
Japan	234	178	76	56	24	18
South Africa	193	42	22	15	78	20
Taiwan	85	29	34	56	66	20
United States	319	68	21	251	79	18

The quantitative coding ranged from “0” where the attribute was not at all present in the response to “4” where the attribute was strongly emphasized in the response. Using the code “0”, researchers were able to code for the absence of specific elements; in contrast, if the element is present in the response, researchers were given the option to code with “1” to “4” depending on the perceived emphasis of the element being coded. The coding of the qualitative responses resulted in a Likert-type scale that accounts both for the absence of specific elements using “0,” as well as ordinal-level data to be used in subsequent inferential statistical analyses (Sandelowski, Voils, & Knafl, 2009). This approach to transforming qualitative responses into quantitative value is a common practice in mixed-method research (de Block & Vis, 2019; Sandelowski et al., 2009). The data used for this project were therefore Likert-type responses reflecting the extent to which respondents viewed warmth and competence as characteristic of a trustworthy leader and of a trustworthy colleague. See Table 2 for representative responses.

In order to examine how the two dimensions clustered across cultural samples, and due to potential issues with response bias, all data were standardized using the mean across all cultural contexts, and the standardized values were used in all analyses. In line with analyses performed in previous SCM research (e.g., Fiske et al., 2002), hierarchical cluster analyses were conducted, using Ward’s method and the Squared Euclidian distance, to assess the number of cluster solutions for both trustworthy colleagues and supervisors. Ward’s method was used to minimize the variance within-cluster, and to maximize the variance between-cluster (Ward, 1963). Following the cluster analyses, a series of analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to investigate the similarities and differences between clusters for both colleagues and supervisors.

**Table 2***Representative Responses*

Dimension	Supervisor	Colleague
<b>Warmth</b>	"Understand that situations out of an employee's control do happen sometimes. This is also someone who will take responsibility for his or her mistakes, as opposed to using employees under his or her watch as a scapegoat." (USA)	"Who will not turn against you, they will always support you even though they don't get promotions when you are getting one" (South Africa)
<b>Competence</b>	"Very reliable, and has the ability to lead the group for better results" (Taiwan)	"Be dependable, someone you can rely on and trust to do their work accordingly" (Canada)

Published data from the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness or GLOBE project (House et al., 2004; <http://www.globeproject.com>) were used to identify differences between clusters on specific cultural dimensions. GLOBE societal values and practices were used to identify cluster differences related to stereotypes of trustworthiness of colleagues (see Table 3) and GLOBE's culturally endorsed implicit leadership prototypes were used to identify cluster differences in stereotypes of trustworthy supervisors (see Table 4).

**Table 3***GLOBE Data for Each Country (Societal Cultures and Practices)*

Country	UA	FO	PD	IC	HO	PO	IGC	GE	AS
Brazil	3.60	3.81	5.33	3.83	3.66	4.04	5.18	3.31	4.20
Canada	4.58	4.44	4.82	4.38	4.49	4.49	4.26	3.70	4.05
China	4.94	3.75	5.04	4.77	4.36	4.45	5.80	3.05	3.76
India	4.15	4.19	5.47	4.38	4.57	4.25	5.92	2.90	3.73
Iran	3.67	3.70	5.43	3.88	4.23	4.58	6.03	2.99	4.04
Israel	4.01	3.85	4.73	4.46	4.10	4.08	4.70	3.19	4.23
Japan	4.07	4.29	5.11	5.19	4.30	4.22	4.63	3.19	3.59
South Africa	4.59	4.64	4.11	4.39	4.34	4.66	5.09	3.66	4.36
Taiwan	4.34	3.96	5.18	4.59	4.11	4.56	5.59	3.18	3.92
USA	4.15	4.15	4.88	4.20	4.17	4.49	4.25	3.34	4.55

*Note.* UA = Uncertainty Avoidance; FO = Future Orientation; PD = Power Distance; IC = Institutional Collectivism; HO = Humane Orientation; PO = Performance Orientation; IGC = In-group Collectivism; GE = Gender Egalitarianism; AS = Assertiveness.



**Table 4***GLOBE Data for Each Country (Leadership Orientation)*

Country	CV	TO	SP	PA	HO	AU
Brazil	6.00	6.17	3.49	6.06	4.84	2.27
Canada	6.15	5.84	2.96	6.09	5.20	3.65
China	5.56	5.57	3.80	5.04	5.19	4.07
India	5.85	5.72	3.77	4.99	5.26	3.85
Iran	5.81	5.90	4.34	4.97	5.75	3.85
Israel	6.23	5.91	3.64	4.96	4.68	4.26
Japan	5.49	5.56	3.60	5.07	4.68	3.67
South Africa	5.16	5.23	3.62	5.04	4.79	3.94
Taiwan	5.58	5.69	4.28	4.73	5.35	4.01
USA	6.12	5.80	3.15	5.93	5.21	3.75

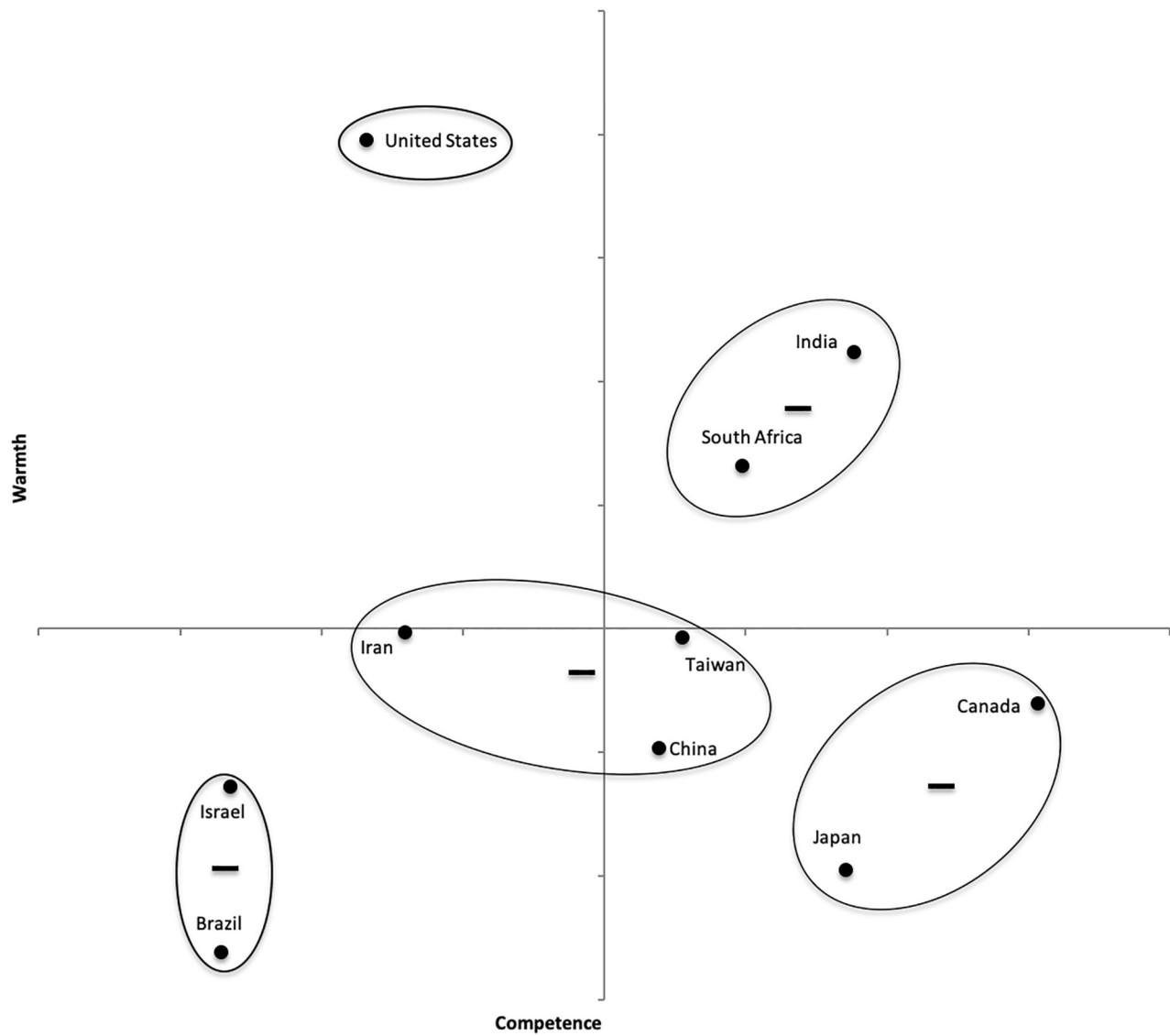
*Note.* CV = Charismatic/Value-based; TO = Team-Oriented; SP = Self-Protective; PA = Participative; HO = Humane-Oriented; AU = Autonomous.

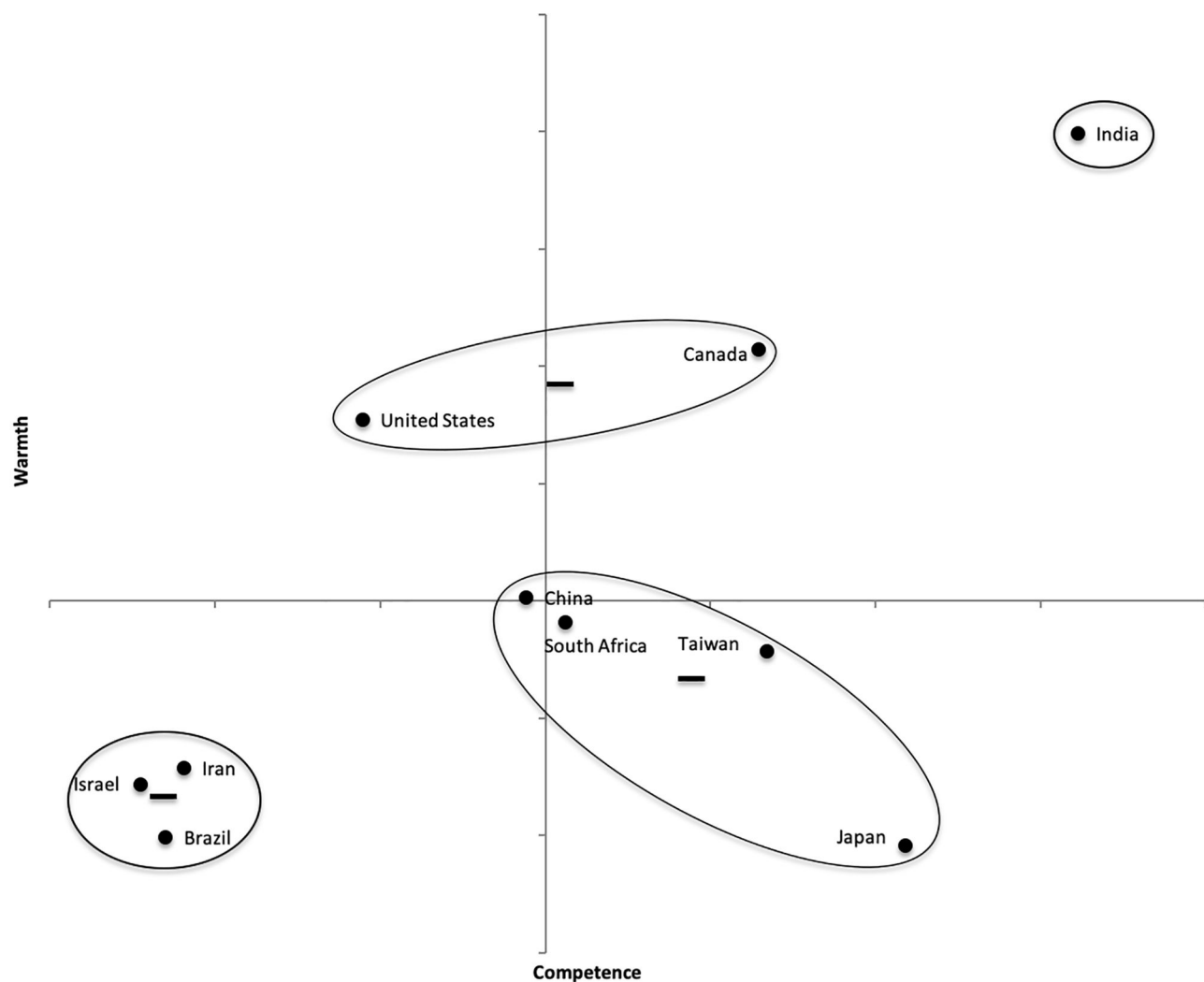
## Results

Mean ratings on warmth and competence for trustworthy colleagues and supervisors of the 10 countries can be found in [Table 5](#). The first expectation for this research was that the two dimensions of warmth and competence would result in clusters of samples, consistent with the *two dimensions hypothesis* (Cuddy et al., 2009), and that these clusters would differ for stereotypes of trustworthy supervisors and trustworthy colleagues. Hierarchical cluster analyses found that descriptions of trustworthy supervisors and trustworthy colleagues resulted in plausible cluster solutions along the two dimensions of warmth and competence, and these cluster solutions differed depending on organizational role (see [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 2](#)).

**Table 5***Colleagues and Supervisors Competence and Warmth Ratings*

Country	Colleagues competence		Colleagues warmth		Supervisor competence		Supervisor warmth	
	<i>M</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>z-score</i>
Brazil	0.05	-1.36	0.07	-1.31	0.33	-1.15	0.10	-1.01
Canada	0.75	1.53	0.24	-0.30	0.99	0.65	0.43	1.07
China	0.43	0.19	0.21	-0.48	0.73	-0.06	0.26	0.01
India	0.59	0.88	0.48	1.12	1.34	1.61	0.58	1.99
Iran	0.21	-0.71	0.29	-0.01	0.35	-1.09	0.14	-0.71
Israel	0.06	-1.32	0.18	-0.64	0.31	-1.23	0.13	-0.78
Japan	0.59	0.85	0.12	-0.98	1.15	1.09	0.09	-1.04
South Africa	0.50	0.49	0.40	0.66	0.78	0.06	0.24	-0.09
Taiwan	0.45	0.28	0.28	-0.03	1.00	0.67	0.22	-0.21
United States	0.18	-0.84	0.62	1.98	0.55	-0.55	0.38	0.77

**Figure 1***Five-Cluster Solution of Trustworthy Colleagues Across 10 Nations*

**Figure 2***Four-Cluster Solution of Trustworthy Supervisors Across 10 Nations*

A closer examination of differing expectations of organizational roles used raw scores (see Table 6) to assess the extent to which trustworthy supervisors and colleagues differed in warmth and competence. All cultural samples indicated higher levels of competence for a trustworthy supervisor than a trustworthy colleague, with all but Iran showing statistically significant differences. The largest differences were found in India, Japan, and Taiwan. Contrary to expectations, these were not the cultures with the greatest power distance as measured by the GLOBE studies. Four countries indicated that more warmth was expected from trustworthy supervisors than colleagues (Brazil, Canada, China, and India) while respondents from the other contexts indicated greater warmth expectations from colleagues than supervisors. These differences were not large, although the expectations related to trustworthy supervisors having more warmth than trustworthy colleagues was significantly different for Canada and India, and the expectations for trustworthy colleagues to have more warmth than trustworthy supervisors was significantly different in the United States.

**Table 6***Differences in Competence and Warmth Expectations*

Country	Competence difference (supervisor–colleague)	Warmth difference (supervisor–colleague)
Brazil	0.28**	0.03
Canada	0.24*	0.19*
China	0.31**	0.05
India	0.75**	0.10*
Iran	0.14	−0.14
Israel	0.24**	−0.05
Japan	0.57**	−0.03
South Africa	0.28*	−0.16
Taiwan	0.55**	−0.06
United States	0.37**	−0.24**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

## Colleagues

Cluster analysis on stereotypical descriptions of trustworthy colleagues resulted in five clusters (see Figure 1): Brazil and Israel (C1), Canada and Japan (C2), China, Iran, and Taiwan (C3), and India and South Africa (C4). The US was an outlier and formed a cluster on its own (C5). A one-way ANOVA indicated that these clusters were significantly different on both competence,  $F(4, 5) = 11.21$ ,  $p < .05$ , and warmth,  $F(4, 5) = 14.88$ ,  $p < .01$ . Respondents from C2 placed the highest importance on competence while C1 placed the lowest. For warmth, respondents from the USA placed the highest importance and C1 the least.

Post hoc analyses using published GLOBE data for each country regarding social practices (Uncertainty Avoidance, Future Orientation, Power Distance, Institutional Collectivism, Humane Orientation, Performance Orientation, In-group Collectivism, Gender Egalitarianism, and Assertiveness) were assessed using a One-Way ANOVA. Significant differences were found in Future Orientation,  $F(4, 5) = 6.16$ ,  $p < .05$ , and In-group Collectivism,  $F(4, 5) = 6.88$ ,  $p < .05$ . For Future Orientation, respondents from C4 come from cultures with the highest, and C3 the lowest, levels. Those in C3 were also from contexts with the highest endorsement of in-group collectivism and those from C2 the lowest.

## Supervisors

India emerged as an outlier and did not cluster with any other countries—both warmth and competence ratings were very high and significantly different from other clusters (see Figure 2). Three other clusters emerged: Brazil, Iran, and Israel (S1), China, Japan, South Africa, and Taiwan (S2), and Canada and the USA (S3). One-Way ANOVA indicated that those in S1 reported significantly lower levels of competence expectations,  $F(2, 6) = 8.85$ ,  $p < .05$ , and S3 reported significantly higher expectations of warmth,  $F(2, 6) = 14.74$ ,  $p < .01$ .

A post hoc analysis to explore how clusters differed on cultural dimensions was conducted using published GLOBE data for each country regarding implicit cultural leadership prototypes (Charismatic/Value-based, Team-Oriented, Self-Protective, Participative, Humane-Oriented and Autonomous Global Leadership Dimensions). Significant differences between clusters were found for Charismatic/Value-based Global Leadership,  $F(4, 5) = 8.45$ ,  $p < .05$ , and Team-Oriented Global Leadership dimensions,  $F(4, 5) = 5.02$ ,  $p < .05$ . Respondents

from S3 came from cultural environments with the lowest endorsement of Charismatic/Value Based Leadership, and those from S2 from the highest. For Team-Oriented Leadership, respondents from India were the lowest and those in S1 from cultures with the highest level of endorsement.

## Discussion

As expected, the SCM identified clusters of descriptions of trustworthy supervisors and trustworthy colleagues in multiple cultural contexts, supporting both the *two dimensions hypothesis* and the *ambivalent stereotypes hypothesis* (Cuddy et al., 2009). The findings of the current study extend previous work that found competence an important characteristic for supervisors (Fiske et al., 2002) across multiple cultural contexts, although to varying extents. Perceptions of warmth and competence are linked with social structures (Cuddy et al., 2009), and while the “supervisor” role may have similarities in various cultural contexts, there are also some particularistic ways in which the supervisory role is enacted.

While evidence is clear that trust generally varies in different societal contexts (Inglehart et al., 2014), the findings of the current project indicate that stereotypes used as heuristics in swift assessments of trustworthiness are also impacted by societal culture. Stereotypes in organizations serve multiple functions. They may be anticipatory in that they provide a script for making assumptions regarding how communication exchanges may occur, and thus provide a means to lower stress and uncertainty (Ungureanu & Bertolotti, 2020). Having stereotypes related to the extent to which another may be considered trustworthy can create a sense of predictability and can, in turn, reduce anxieties related to interacting with someone otherwise unknown.

Stereotypes of trustworthy supervisors and colleagues differed across national cultural contexts in the current study, suggesting that the heuristics embedded in culture matter in the development of swift trust (Zakaria & Yusof, 2015). In Brazil and Israel, for example, stereotypes of trustworthy supervisors and colleagues held little warmth or competence, while in India, stereotypes of both roles held high levels of both warmth and competence. In contrast, respondents from Canada and Japan had a strong emphasis on competence in describing trustworthiness in the workplace, and respondents from the United States emphasized warmth.

The findings in the current research further suggest that in some cultures, role expectations play a large role in determining trustworthiness stereotypes while in others, the role is less important. For example, respondents in Israel and Brazil indicated that their stereotypes of both trustworthy colleagues and supervisors were low in warmth and competence. Similarly, Japanese respondents indicated that the specific role in an organization makes little difference to trustworthiness stereotypes, as high competence and low warmth comprised the stereotypes of both. Role expectancies were found to have an impact on trustworthiness expectations—a strong effect in some cases (Canada, South Africa) and a weak effect in others (China, Iran, Taiwan, US). This finding is contrary to other work which suggests that expectations related to roles are more important to those in collectivistic contexts than those in individualistic contexts (Bond & Smith, 1996).

Iran was the only cultural context where there were no statistically significant differences in both warmth and competence in describing trustworthy supervisors and trustworthy colleagues. This may be due to cultural factors not captured by well-established dimensional models of culture such as the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004) and Hofstede's (1980) early work. For example, Talaei and Hashimi (2021) note that reliance on the degree to which an individual is devout is important for determining trustworthiness in Iran. Recent historical

factors that have had a large impact on the Iranian people may also provide some explanation. Possibly due to recent history of revolutions and political upheavals as well as Iran's ostracism by many global powers, levels of trust are low in Iran according to the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al., 2014) and this may also be reflected in low level expectations of warmth and competence for organizational members.

Differences in trustworthiness stereotypes for colleagues and supervisors have implications for leadership training and development for employees working across cultural divides, as well as for the development of swift trust in global, virtual teams. The GLOBE studies theory of CLT (House et al., 2004) suggests that underlying assumptions, stereotypes, and beliefs regarding what makes a good leader can differ across cultural contexts, although also acknowledging that some beliefs related to good leadership can also remain constant. These findings are in line with CLT theory and indicate that with respect to initial impressions, warmth and competence expectations related to trustworthiness are impacted by individuals' societal cultural context. The findings of the current research suggest that in many, but not all, cultural contexts there are different expectations in trustworthiness stereotypes of leaders and non-leaders.

## Trustworthy Colleagues

The strongest emphasis on competence for trustworthy colleagues came from respondents in C2 (Canada and Japan), who also reported lower emphasis on warmth. This cluster was also notably different from the other clusters in that In-Group Collectivism as a cultural characteristic was lower for these cultural contexts than for the others. In-Group Collectivism reflects the extent to which a culture emphasizes the expression of allegiance, pride, and solidarity for the groups that individuals belong to (House et al., 2004). The emphasis on competence and In-group Collectivism may, therefore, reflect a sense that to be trustworthy, another individual must also be competent and able to elevate the basis upon which one may be proud of one's group. C1 (Brazil, Israel) placed the lowest emphasis on competence. The lowest emphasis on warmth in trustworthy colleagues also came from C1 with the greatest emphasis from the USA.

Clusters also significantly differed with respect to the extent on Future Orientation emphasis—the extent to which a culture emphasizes developing and planning long term goals. C3 (China, Iran, Taiwan) cultures placed less emphasis on future orientation practices in society, while C4 (India, South Africa) placed the strongest emphasis. Stereotypes of trustworthy colleagues for C3 were mostly located at the averages of warmth and competence, and C4 stereotypes were located in the high warmth/high competence quadrant.

## Trustworthy Supervisors

Respondents from India were unique in the strong emphasis on both competence and warmth in stereotypes of trustworthy supervisors. Respondents from Canada and the USA expected relatively higher levels of warmth, although they differed in the emphasis on competence, with Canadians reporting higher expectations of competence in trustworthy supervisors than did Americans. China, Japan, South Africa and Taiwan all indicated that competence was important, and placed less emphasis on benevolence while Brazil, Iran, and Israel indicated that neither warmth nor competence was deemed important for trustworthy supervisors.

Significant differences were found in the GLOBE leadership dimensions of Charismatic/Value-based and Team-Oriented leadership prototypes, but not in the other four leadership dimensions. Charismatic/Value-based leadership reflects leadership that inspires and motivates based on shared values. Team-oriented leadership,



on the other hand, focuses on developing a shared purpose and motivating through a focus on shared goals (House et al., 2004). Although India was unique in descriptions of stereotypic trustworthy supervisors, it was not uniquely different from any culture with respect to either the Charismatic/Value-based or the Team-Oriented leadership dimension endorsement.

Interestingly, S1 (Brazil, Iran, Israel) reported both the strongest endorsement of team-oriented leadership while also reporting significantly lower expectations of competence in trustworthy supervisors. Similarly, S3 (Canada, USA) reported both the highest expectation of warmth in supervisors while simultaneously having the cultural contexts with the lowest endorsement of charismatic/value-based leadership.

## Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings from this research strongly indicate that societal culture matters in expectations of trustworthiness in supervisory and collegial roles in organizations. These stereotypical expectations are important in understanding the development of swift trust across cultural boundaries, yet do not address all possible bases for assessment of trustworthiness. While the literature suggests that trustworthiness assessments are based on perceptions of another's ability (competence), benevolence (warmth) and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995), the value in using the SCM for assessing trustworthiness stereotypes is that competence and warmth have been shown to be universal dimensions of a variety of social stereotypes (Cuddy et al., 2009). Although integrity is the third determinant of trustworthiness assessments according to Mayer et al.'s (1995) model, it may be more elusive and difficult to measure as many definitions and operationalizations of integrity exist (Monga, 2016) and different cultural contexts may emphasize different conceptualizations of what integrity means.

While in line with previous work examining stereotypes and trustworthiness (Kong, 2017), using the SCM in this research precluded an examination of the role that integrity plays in assessing the trustworthiness of supervisors and colleagues. Perceptions of integrity may be an integral component of assessments regarding trustworthiness (Zlatev, 2019) and may be a contributing factor to understanding some of the results. It is possible that the samples that indicated low levels of competence and low levels of warmth may place a higher premium on perceptions of integrity in determining trustworthiness than either of these two factors. For example, in Brazil, the common cultural practice of *jeitinho* reflects an accepted method of flouting conventions (Porto & Pilati, 2021). If flouting societal rules is common, the perception that an individual has integrity may be the determining factor in assessing trustworthiness. Thus, it is possible that a focus on warmth and competence alone may not pick up salient factors related to trustworthiness. It is important to note that, especially with a focus on roles in the workplace, the perceptions of stereotypes are all relative, depending on interpersonal evaluations of warmth and competence relative to differences in competition and status (Russell & Fiske, 2008).

The use of student samples has been criticized with concerns regarding the generalizability of the findings (e.g., Foot & Sanford, 2004). In the current study, however, student samples were considered appropriate as this provided a means to standardize the experiences of respondents across cultures. With the focus on cultural impacts on workplace stereotypes, student samples may be ideal as stereotype descriptions are more likely to be influenced by societal culture than by specific workplace interactions. Results may generalize, as student samples may respond similarly to crowd sourcing platforms (see Briones & Benham, 2017).

While culture matters with respect to understanding what is important in assessing trustworthiness, other contextual factors may matter as well. As the current research was focused on the relationship of societal culture with trustworthiness expectations, the impact of organizational culture was not assessed. Organizational cultures and team membership may play a role in the development of trust (Loh, Smith, & Restubog, 2010) as may other contextual factors. For example, swift trust may be even more critical in a virtual environment (Germain & McGuire, 2014) especially when employees know little about each other and may have interactions over a limited period of time. Future work is yet needed to understand how stereotypes related to swift trust may impact the development of working relationships in non-virtual space as well as over time. Bringing more attention to the context of understanding trust (Li, 2012) is a critical part of understanding the role trust plays in workplace relationships, and to enhance the possibility of reaping the rewards trusting relationships can bring.

## Conclusion

As organizations and supply chains are increasingly global, and employees are more frequently working across societal cultures, the importance of perceptions of trustworthiness as key to effective interactions is clear. Knowledge sharing is a particular challenge across cultures and can be facilitated by the development of swift trust (Gammelgaard & Ritter, 2008), which in turn is dependent on expectations and assessments of another's trustworthiness. The results of this research highlight the fact that occupying a leadership, or supervisory, role in an organization automatically engenders an individual as trustworthy. Rather, expectations of trustworthiness are embedded in societal culture expectations, at least as an initial heuristic. Organizations should provide training for employees working across societal cultures to assist them in understanding stereotypic expectations that may impact their perceived trustworthiness. This initial heuristic can then be used to thoughtfully implement ways to develop longer term trusting relationships. A workplace climate of trust is related to a sense of inclusion (Downey, van der Werff, Thomas, & Plaut, 2015), which in turn can enhance employee engagement and satisfaction.

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