The State of Global Workplace Culture

in 2024

Key Findings

1. Workplace cultures are the broadly shared values, attitudes, behaviors, and norms of a company. Globally, organizations create favorable cultures through five fundamental elements:

   1. Honest and Unbiased Management
   2. Civil Behavior
   3. Meaningful Work and Opportunities
   4. Open Communication
   5. Empathy

2. Globally, a positive organizational culture generates financially beneficial outcomes by attracting and retaining talent. For instance, workers in positive organizational cultures are almost four times more likely to stay with their current employer.

   • 57% of those who rate their organizational culture poorly say they are actively or soon will be looking for another job.

3. Ratings of organizational culture vary by country. For example, employees in India, the UAE, and Egypt give more positive ratings of their organizational culture, while employees in Japan, France, and South Korea report more negative ratings.

4. In addition to inadequate pay, workers' top reasons for leaving among those in poor or terrible workplace cultures line up with attributes of an unfavorable workplace culture, including poor management, unfair treatment, insufficient regard for employee well-being, and lack of empathetic leadership.

5. Globally, workers who choose to remain in toxic work cultures tend to do so out of fear, such as fear of losing their job during a possible recession or fear of losing their benefits.

6. Executives are significantly more likely to perceive their organization's culture more favorably than individual contributors—a trend that persists across geographic areas.

7. Employee burnout affects more than a quarter of employees globally and is more prevalent in younger workers and ones who are establishing themselves within an organization (i.e., those who have worked at their company for up to five years). Burnout is a major factor in employee turnover, as half of burned-out employees are actively or soon will be searching for a new job. This is over three times greater than the number of "engaged" employees who show little sign of burnout.

The State of Global Workplace Culture

Globally, workplace cultures stand out as positive. When asked to rate their organization's culture, 56% of workers responded that their culture was good or excellent, and 26% rated it as slightly good. On the opposite end, 10% responded with a slightly poor assessment, and 8% considered their workplace culture poor or terrible.

How Would You Rate Your Organization's Culture?

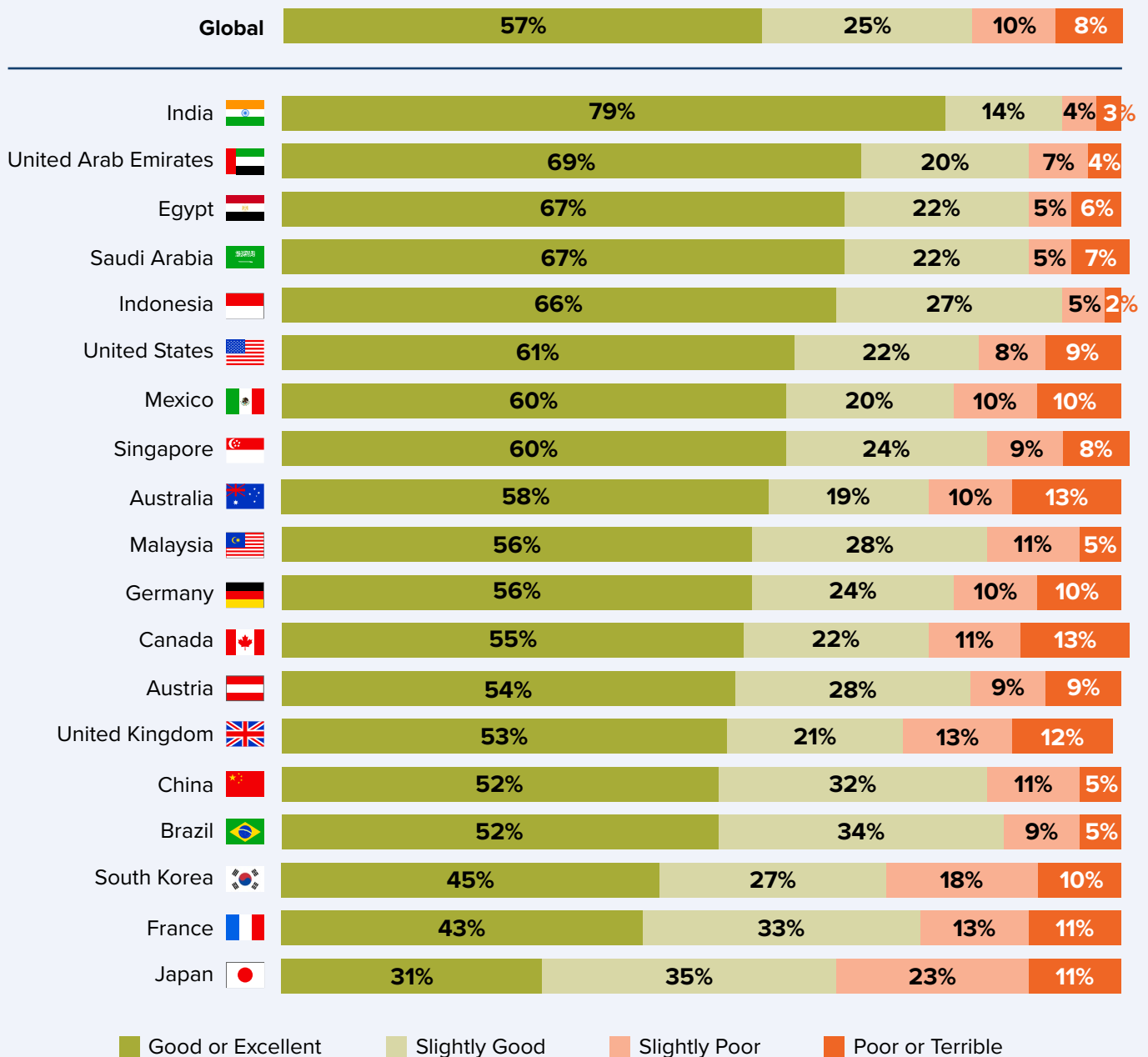|	
Good or Excellent	56%
Slightly Good	26%
Slightly Poor	10%
Poor or Terrible	8%
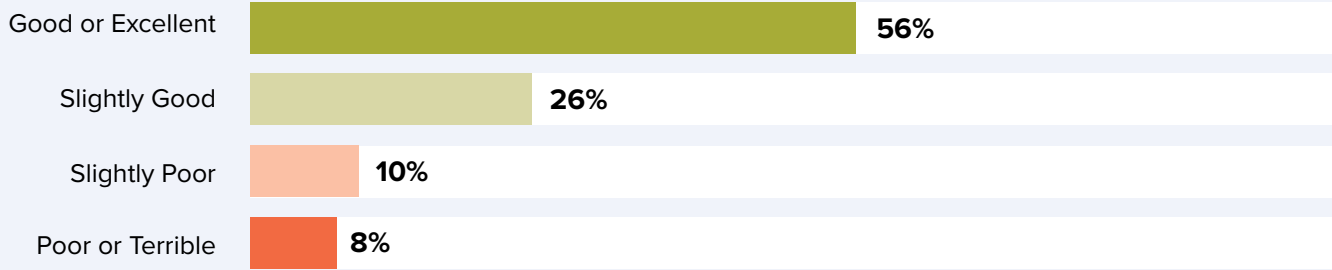
Differences by Country

Workplace culture perceptions are more positive in India, the UAE, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and less positive in Japan, France, and South Korea. These results align with trends from past SHRM Global Culture studies: India, Middle Eastern countries, the U.S., and Mexico have scored higher, and Japan, France, and South Korea have scored lower.

What differentiates workplace cultures in better-performing countries from the cultures in worse-performing countries? Over three-fourths of workers in India and Egypt have been able to establish meaningful careers working at their organizations. This contrasts with only about one-third of workers in Germany (35%) and Japan (32%) who've been able to establish meaningful careers—an important factor in driving positive workplace culture.

How Would You Rate Your Organization's Culture?

Country	Good or Excellent	Slightly Good	Slightly Poor	Poor or Terrible
Global	57%	25%	10%	8%
India	79%	14%	4%	3%
United Arab Emirates	69%	20%	7%	4%
Egypt	67%	22%	5%	6%
Saudi Arabia	67%	22%	5%	7%
Indonesia	66%	27%	5%	2%
United States	61%	22%	8%	9%
Mexico	60%	20%	10%	10%
Singapore	60%	24%	9%	8%
Australia	58%	19%	10%	13%
Malaysia	56%	28%	11%	5%
Germany	56%	24%	10%	10%
Canada	55%	22%	11%	13%
Austria	54%	28%	9%	9%
United Kingdom	53%	21%	13%	12%
China	52%	32%	11%	5%
Brazil	52%	34%	9%	5%
South Korea	45%	27%	18%	10%
France	43%	33%	13%	11%
Japan	31%	35%	23%	11%

Legend: Good or Excellent · Slightly Good · Slightly Poor · Poor or Terrible

Global Elements of Workplace Culture

Analysis of global data from this study revealed five key drivers that are the foundation of positive workplace cultures:

1. Honest and Unbiased Management

Employees expect their organization's leaders and management to be honest, even at the risk of hurting business. Bad behavior shouldn't be tolerated at any level of the organization, and management should live by the standards it sets.

2. Civil Behavior

Disrespect and lack of recognition for accomplishments are indicators of negative workplace cultures. It's critical to avoid the toxicity that arises from inconsiderate comments made by managers and other employees, keeping in mind that this can include microaggressions such as mistaking others as more junior than their actual role in an organization.

3. Meaningful Work and Opportunities

Recognizing a future and a sense of direction within an organization enables employees to accept and support the culture. Even the most positive work culture will suffer when employees do not feel their work is meaningful or makes an impact. Therefore, when employees find their work to be meaningful and see opportunities to grow their career or life goals within the company, it intensifies their commitment.

4. Open Communication

Fostering an organization where employees can share their experiences and selves through candid and honest conversations (with one another and with managers) can play a strong role in creating a shared trust that is critical to a positive culture.

5. Empathy

A workplace that fosters empathy among its employees contributes to a positive culture. Empathy, the ability to feel or understand another person's experiences from that person's frame of reference, can help improve an employee's ability to feel valued and to know they can safely express themselves in an open and honest manner. When employees are treated with empathy at work, they are more likely to feel valued, strengthening their connections with one another.

The following factors are the core drivers of workplace culture[4]:

Honest and Unbiased Management	Civil Behavior	Meaningful Work and Opportunities	Open Communication	Empathy
■ Management is honest with employees ■ Managers address bad behavior on the team ■ Managers lead by example ■ Employees can provide feedback about management without fear of retaliation	■ All employees are treated fairly, regardless of gender, race, age, religion, or some other personal characteristic ■ Absence of negative comments about someone's identity ■ Absence of inconsiderate or insensitive treatment among co-workers ■ Absence of inconsiderate or insensitive treatment by managers ■ Employees do not mistake others for someone more junior	■ Employees understand how to advance their career within the organization ■ Employees have opportunities to grow their career ■ Employees feel their career is meaningful	■ Employees feel comfortable engaging in candid/honest conversation about work topics with colleagues ■ Candid/honest conversations with colleagues ■ Candid/honest conversation with managers	■ Empathetic managers are considered to be better supervisors ■ Empathetic employees are considered better performers

[4]Drivers were determined through Exploratory Factor Analysis.
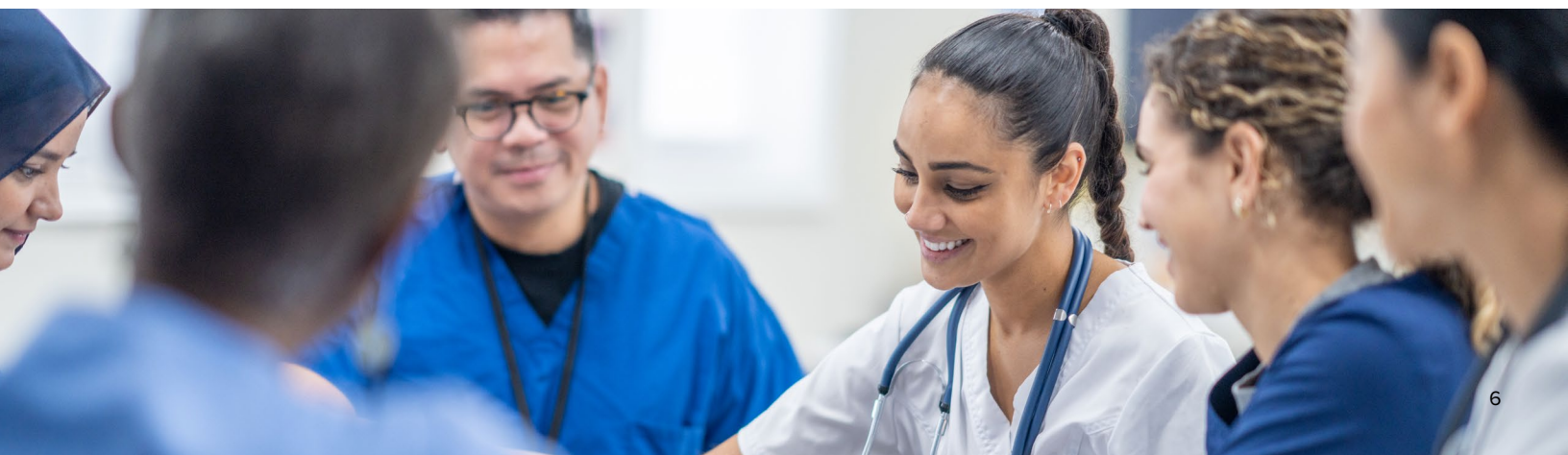
Further understanding of the five key drivers arises from the lists of countries with stronger associations with the respective factors.

- **Honest and Unbiased Management** is strongest in Asian countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan.

- **Civil Behavior** is stronger in European and North American countries, such as Mexico, Germany, and Canada.

- Developing markets such as India, Indonesia, Egypt, and Brazil are more likely to rate **Meaningful Work and Opportunities** higher.

- **Open Communication** tends to be stronger in some European countries (Austria, France, and Germany) alongside India and Australia.

- **Empathy** tends to have stronger assessments in the same countries where management gets more positive ratings: China, Indonesia, and Malaysia (with Brazil making an appearance in the top five).

Honest and Unbiased Management	Civil Behavior	Meaningful Work and Opportunities	Open Communication	Empathy
Indonesia	Mexico	India	Austria	China
Malaysia	Germany	Indonesia	France	Brazil
Japan	Canada	Egypt	Germany	Indonesia
China	United States	Brazil	India	Malaysia
Egypt	France	Saudi Arabia	Australia	Egypt

It's noteworthy that each cultural element holds similar significance in fostering a positive culture. Therefore, a positive culture comes from addressing all aspects, balancing honest management and fostering civil behavior while not compromising the meaningful work, career, and interpersonal relationship needs of the individual.

Furthermore, countries that score highly on the dimension of Meaningful Work and Opportunities (India, Indonesia, Egypt, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia) are also countries that score highly on Hofstede's Power Distance measure. Power distance is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

Why Culture Matters

Workplace culture is a critical measure of an organization's workforce, from senior management to front-line employees.

Left unchecked, a bad workplace culture leads to lower employee productivity and greater turnover, which can ultimately eat away at an organization's bottom line. According to a 2022 SHRM study titled The Great Resignation: An Analysis of the Employee Experience, more than 1 in 5 U.S. workers (21%) quit their jobs due to workplace culture or politics.[1]

Workplaces that do not promote a positive working environment can experience tangible financial losses that could otherwise be avoided. For example, workers who say their mental health is harmed at work report a 37% increase in absenteeism, an 18% reduction in productivity, and a 60% increase in work errors.[2]

In fact, the SHRM Q3 2024 Civility Index found that U.S. workers who have personally experienced or witnessed incivility at work take an average of 1.6 days off per month to avoid incivility.[3]

A positive culture, on the other hand, leads to greater employee engagement, loyalty, and retention. Among employees rating their organization's culture as good or excellent, just 15% say they are actively (or will soon start) looking for a new job. This increases to 57% among those employees who rate their culture as poor or terrible.

> **GLOBALLY,**
> ## 25% OF EMPLOYEES ARE ACTIVELY SEARCHING FOR A NEW JOB
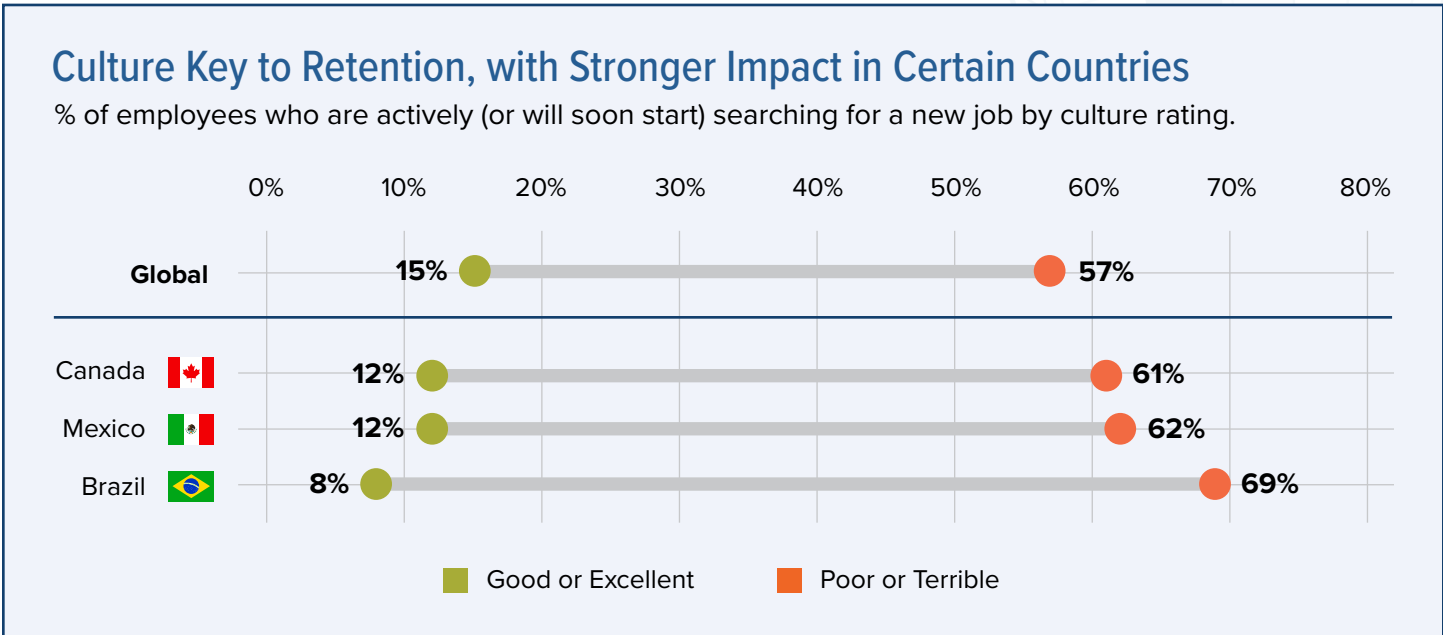> **OR WILL SOON START LOOKING FOR ONE.**

[1] The Great Resignation: An Analysis of the Employee Experience, SHRM, 2022.

[2] How Toxic Workplaces Affect Employees, Finances, and Well-Being, Straits Research, Dec. 18, 2023.
https://straitsresearch.com/statistic/impact-of-toxic-culture-on-employee-turnover-and-well-being

[3] SHRM Q3 2024 Civility Index, October 2024.

It's worth noting that globally, workplace culture is consistently related to key outcomes of job satisfaction and job loyalty, though it is particularly strong in some countries. For instance, in Brazil, only 8% of respondents in a good or excellent workplace culture are looking for a new job/opportunity, compared to 15% in all 19 countries studied. Additionally, 69% of Brazilian respondents in a poor or terrible workplace culture are looking for a new job/opportunity, compared to only 57% of total respondents in this group. This relationship between culture and intent to leave is strongest in Canada, Mexico, and Brazil.

Culture Key to Retention, with Stronger Impact in Certain Countries

% of employees who are actively (or will soon start) searching for a new job by culture rating.

	0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%
Global		15%					57%		
Canada 🇨🇦		12%					61%		
Mexico 🇲🇽		12%					62%		
Brazil 🇧🇷	8%							69%	

■ Good or Excellent ■ Poor or Terrible

Not only are they more loyal, but employees who rate their organizational culture highly are also strong promoters of their organization to friends, family, and others looking for a new job. Over 8 in 10 employees at organizations with a positive culture say they're likely to recommend their organization to people looking for a job. Conversely, for employees at organizations with unfavorable cultures, only 4% say they are likely to recommend their organization to people looking for a job.

Employees in Good or Excellent Cultures More Likely to Recommend Their Organization

% of employees who are likely or very likely to recommend the organization to someone looking for a job by culture rating.

	0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
Global	4%								82%	

■ Good or Excellent ■ Poor or Terrible

Moreover, employees are more likely to feel engaged at work when they rate their organizational culture positively. Globally, 83% of employees in good or excellent cultures say they are deeply motivated to deliver high-quality work, compared to 45% in poor or terrible cultures.

Therefore, a strongly positive culture fosters employee retention, engagement and loyalty while serving as a key differentiator, attracting top talent seeking new opportunities.

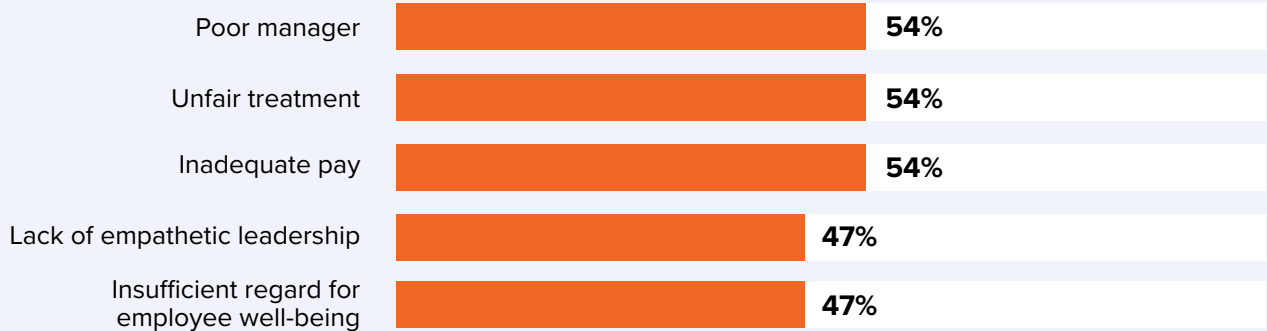# Top Reasons Employees Stay or Leave Globally: The Role of Workplace Culture

Globally, the reasons that employees give for staying with or deciding to leave their current employer align with the global elements of workplace culture. Individuals who rate their organization's culture poorly and are currently looking to leave cite poor management, unfair treatment, lack of empathetic leadership, and insufficient regard for employee well-being as top reasons to leave, in addition to inadequate pay.

For those who rate their organization's culture positively, however, the top concerns besides pay are insufficient opportunities for career growth, few opportunities for professional development, inadequate benefits, and lack of workplace flexibility.

Top Reasons for Seeking to Leave

Among Those in Poor or Terrible Culture

Reason	Percentage
Poor manager	54%
Unfair treatment	54%
Inadequate pay	54%
Lack of empathetic leadership	47%
Insufficient regard for employee well-being	47%

Among Those in Good or Excellent Culture

Reason	Percentage
Inadequate pay	38%
Not enough opportunities for career growth and upward mobility	29%
Not enough opportunities for learning and professional development	24%
Inadequate benefits (e.g., retirement, medical, dental or other)	21%
Lack of workplace flexibility	20%

Likewise, when we look at reasons employees stay with their current organization, there are significant differences between employers with unfavorable cultures and employers with positive cultures. Among employees at organizations with positive cultures, fair treatment and job security are the top reasons for emplo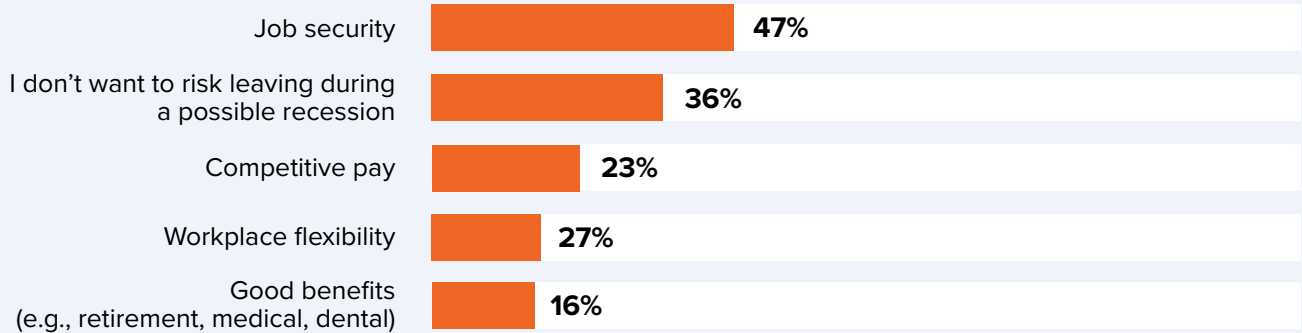yees choosing to stay. Flexibility, organizational culture, and good managers were also key to retention for employees—surpassing competitive pay!

Meanwhile, employees at organizations with unfavorable cultures cite fewer reasons for staying.

Top Reasons for Seeking to Stay

Among Those in Poor or Terrible Culture

Job security	47%
I don't want to risk leaving during a possible recession	36%
Competitive pay	23%
Workplace flexibility	27%
Good benefits (e.g., retirement, medical, dental)	16%

Among Those in Good or Excellent Culture

Fair treatment	55%
Job security	55%
Good organizational culture	52%
A good manager	50%
Workplace flexibility	50%
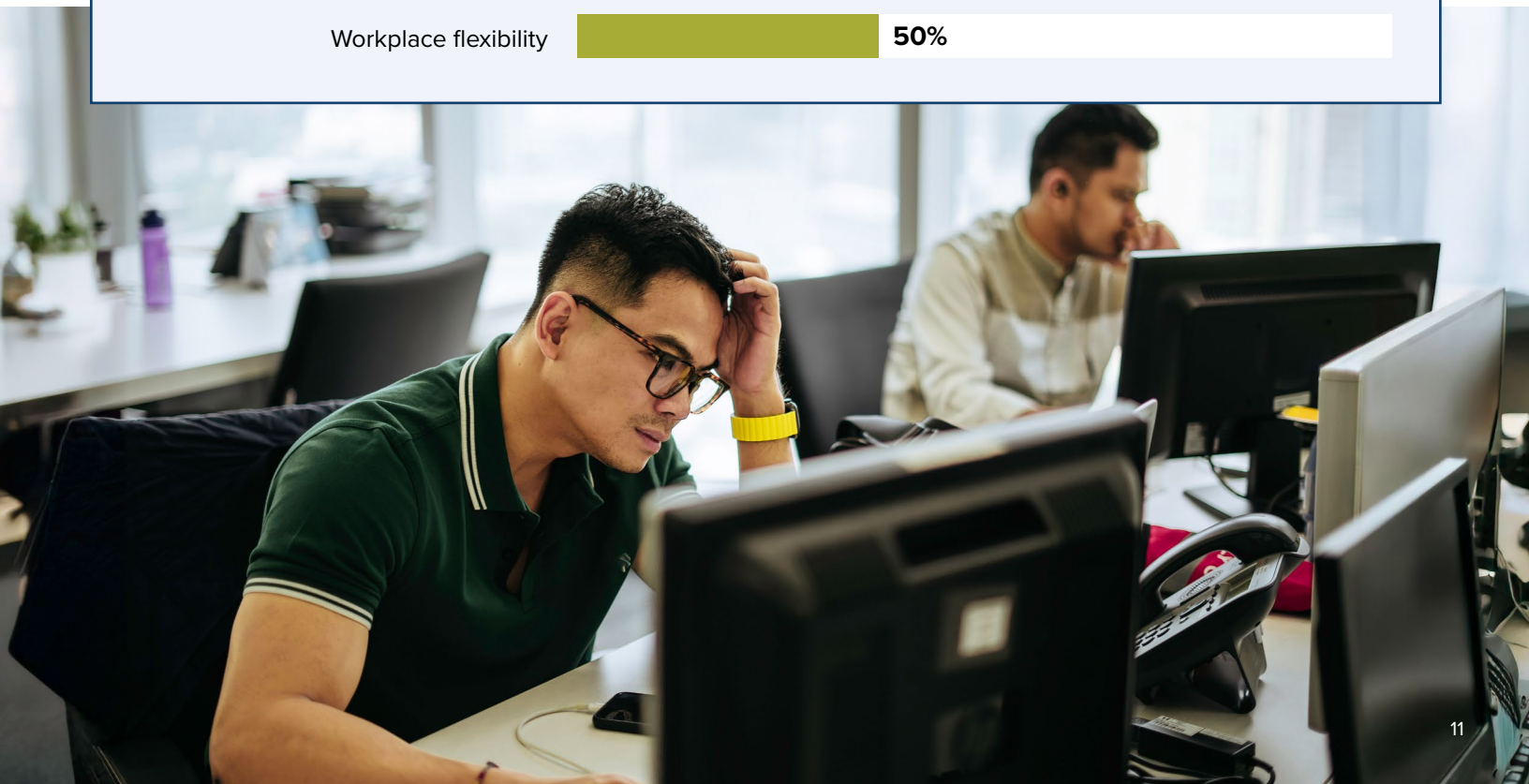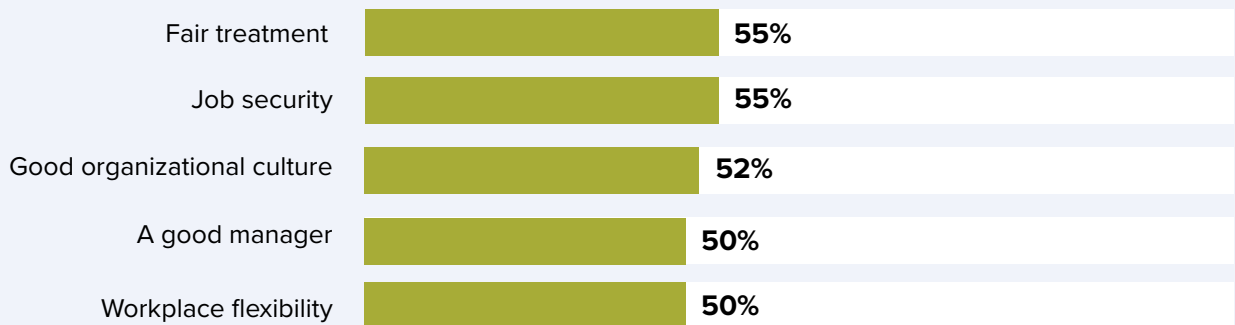
Globally, Individual Contributors and Executives View Their Organizational Cultures Differently

When we examine organizational ratings across job levels, we see significant gaps between lower-level and more senior employees. For example, executives (82%) are significantly more likely to rate their culture as good or excellent than individual contributors (47%).

Executives More Likely To Rate Their Culture as Good or Excellent

Culture rating by job level.

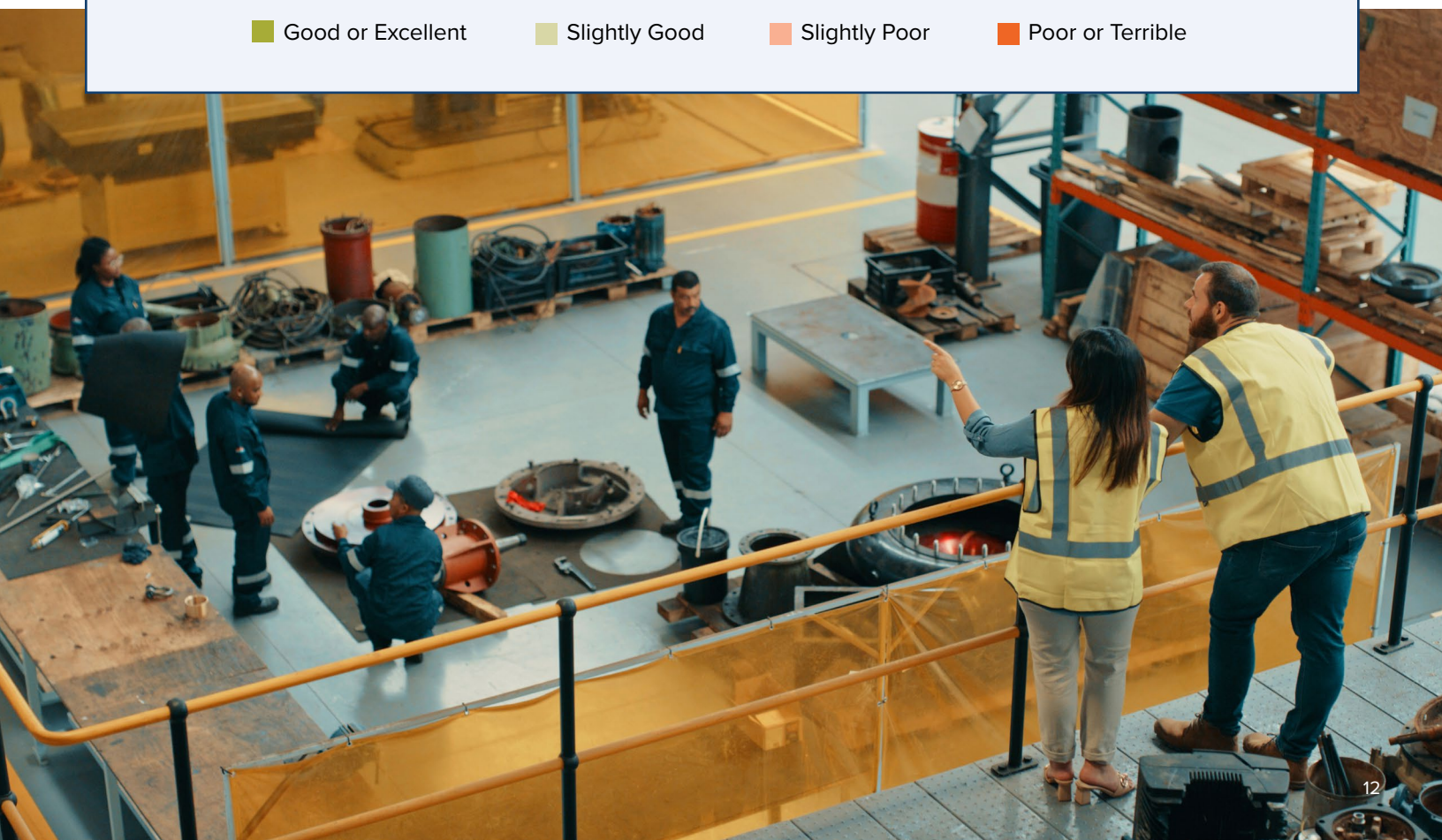| Job Level	Good or Excellent	Slightly Good	Slightly Poor	Poor or Terrible
CEO or president	86%	6%	7%	1%
C-suite officer (including CHRO and COO)	77%	14%	6%	2%
VP (including senior and assistant/associate VPs)	73%	20%	5%	2%
Senior/managing/executive director	68%	22%	6%	3%
Director (including assistant/associate directors)	62%	23%	10%	5%
Manager or supervisor	59%	24%	10%	7%
Individual contributor (not a manager or supervisor)	47%	30%	12%	11%

- Good or Excellent
- Slightly Good
- Slightly Poor
- Poor or Terrible

This gap is greatest in China and Egypt while lowest in India and the UAE.
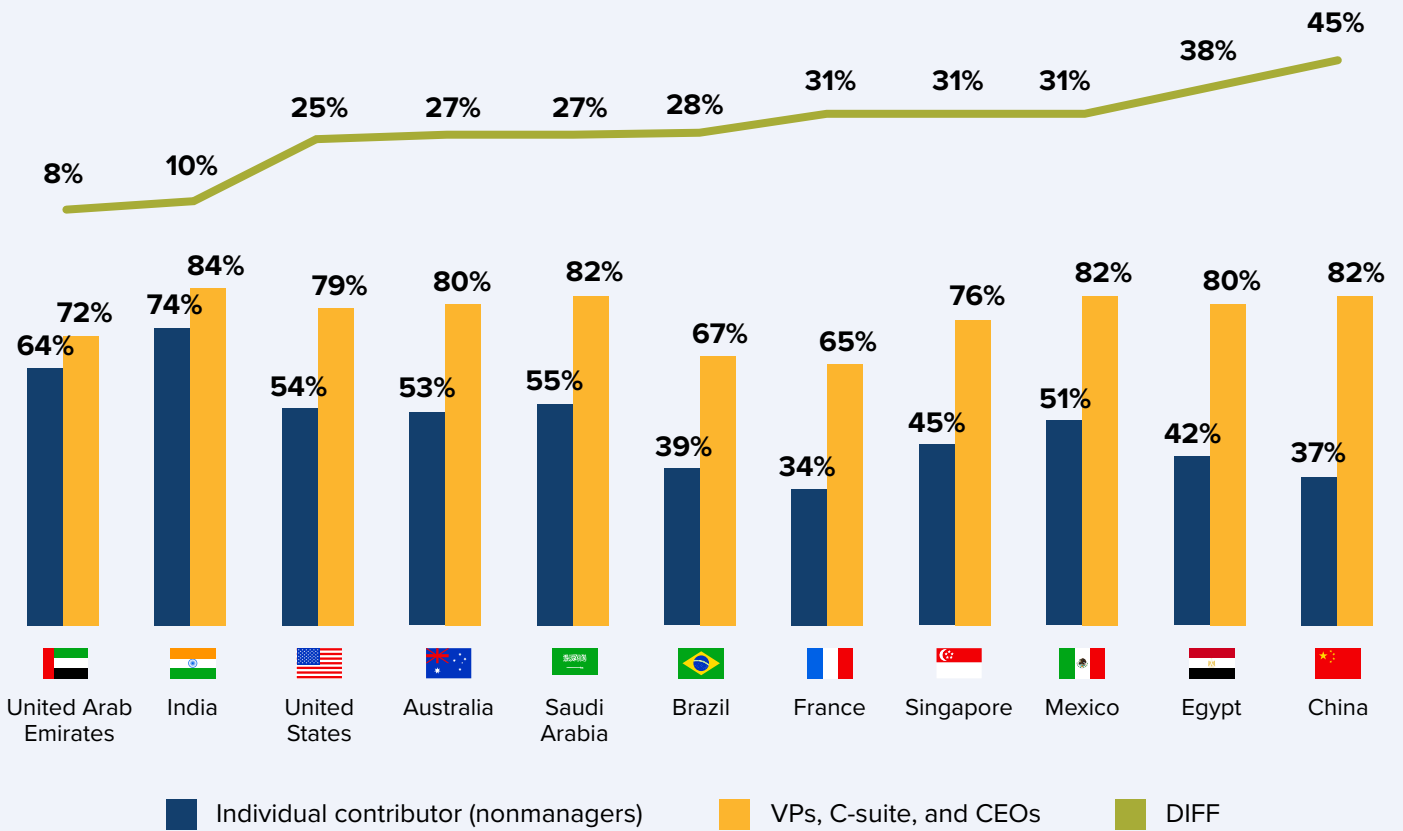
Job Level Culture Perception Gaps Vary Across Countries

% of employees who rate their organizational culture as good or excellent by job level across countries.

Country	Individual contributor (nonmanagers)	VPs, C-suite, and CEOs	DIFF
United Arab Emirates	64%	72%	8%
India	74%	84%	10%
United States	54%	79%	25%
Australia	53%	80%	27%
Saudi Arabia	55%	82%	27%
Brazil	39%	67%	28%
France	34%	65%	31%
Singapore	45%	76%	31%
Mexico	51%	82%	31%
Egypt	42%	80%	38%
China	37%	82%	45%

- ■ Individual contributor (nonmanagers)
- ■ VPs, C-suite, and CEOs
- ■ DIFF

Spotlight on Burnout and Engagement: A Global Perspective

As labor demand remains high and employees are asked to accomplish more in their roles, a rising issue is employee burnout. Collectively, more than a quarter of workers (30%) say they are burned out. This group says they leave work feeling exhausted (61%), sacrifice their personal life for work demands (52%), and feel the amount of work their employer expects is unreasonable (44%). Workers who are burned out suffer from low trust of their managers and organizational leadership: Just 28% of burned-out employees (compared with 60% of engaged employees) always trust their manager, and 44% (14% of engaged employees) believe their leadership would lie to employees. Furthermore, over one-third (36%) say they do not have opportunities for career growth, which is three times the rate for engaged employees (12%).[5]

30% Burned Out	→	This group leaves work feeling exhausted, has sacrificed personal life for work demands, and finds their organization expects them to complete an unreasonable amount of work. They have low satisfaction, and one-half think about leaving their current organization.	→	50% are actively searching for a new job/opportunity or will soon start looking for one.
36% Disengaged	→	This group expresses fewer complaints about their workload and personal sacrifices for their current organization. However, a minority are satisfied at work, and they find their employer to show low consideration of employee needs.	→	33% are actively searching for a new job/opportunity or will soon start looking for one.
36% Highly Engaged	→	This group is highly satisfied and finds their organizations to be supportive of a strong culture and the needs of their employees.	→	15% are actively searching for a new job/opportunity or will soon start looking for one.

[5]The three levels of employee burnout/engagement were determined through latent class analysis, which clusters respondents based on similar responses to a set of questions posed regarding burnout and work/life integration.

Workers who are disengaged don't report levels of dread going to work, feeling exhausted by work, or feeling irritable at home that are as high as burned-out workers, but they are also not feeling as satisfied as highly engaged workers, which puts them at risk of burnout. Only 35% of disengaged workers say their organization encourages employees to set healthy boundaries between work and life, compared to 75% of highly engaged workers.

What's more, engaged employees have an exceptionally positive view of their organization's culture—87% rate their culture as good or excellent—while just 34% of burned-out employees view their culture in a similar manner.

Engagement has a strong relationship with age and experience. Engagement is lowest among younger generations and higher among older generations. Additionally, burnout grows during an employee's first five years with their organization and declines thereafter.
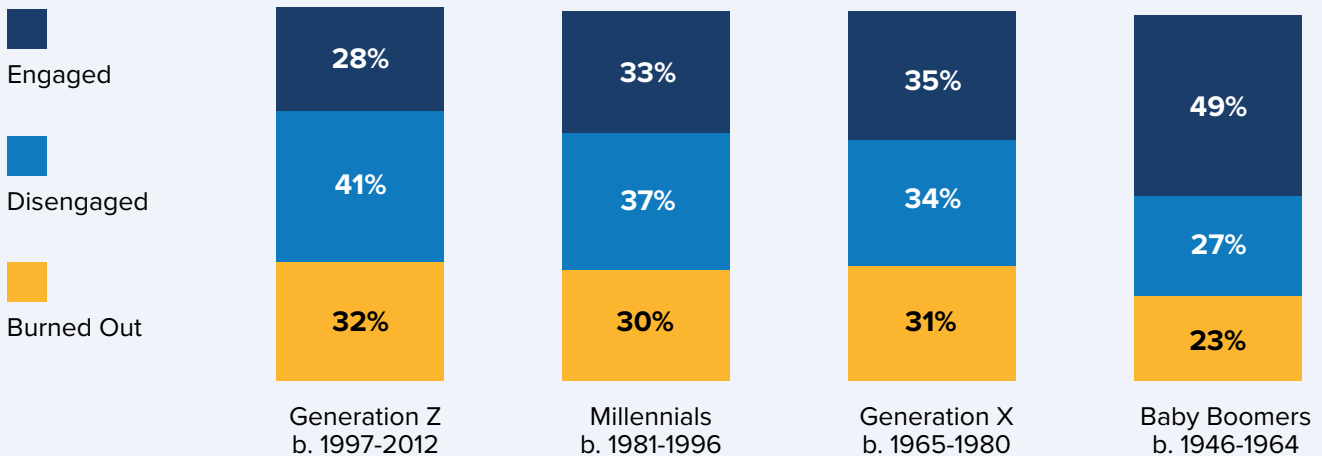
Engaged Employees Have an Exceptionally Positive View of Their Workplace Culture

% of employees who rate their organizational culture as good or excellent by engagement level.

Engaged	Disengaged	Burned Out
87%	50%	34%
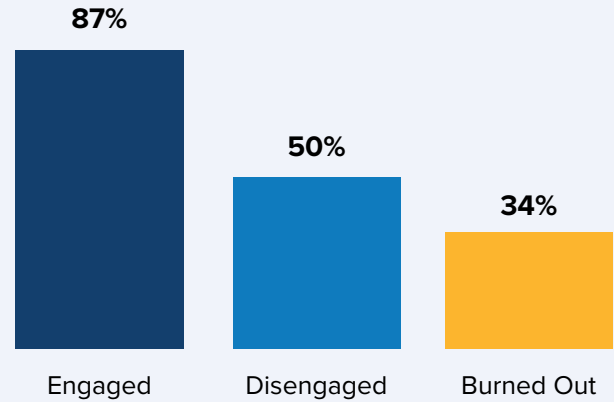
Older Generations Are More Engaged

% of employees who are burned out, disengaged, and engaged by generation.

	Engaged	Disengaged	Burned Out
Generation Z b. 1997-2012	28%	41%	32%
Millennials b. 1981-1996	33%	37%	30%
Generation X b. 1965-1980	35%	34%	31%
Baby Boomers b. 1946-1964	49%	27%	23%

Spotlight on Demographic Differences: A Global Perspective

Differences Across Generations

Across Baby Boomers, Millennials, and Generation Z, perceptions of organizational culture are fairly similar (around 58%), though Generation X (born 1965-1980) tends to rate its organizational culture slightly lower, at 51%.

However, examining the reasons for generations to remain at their organization reveals additional differences. As the newest members of the job force, Gen Z employees focus more on managers and management, citing fair treatment (50%), a good manager (50%), and job security (48%) as top reasons to stay with their employer.

For Millennials, job security is slightly more important (51%). As Millennials are at the stage where many are raising children or planning to grow their families, it is unsurprising that workplace flexibility is also a leading reason to stay with their organization (45%). The importance of finding meaningful jobs and opportunities is high for both Millennials and Gen Zers, with 44% selecting opportunities for career growth or learning and professional development.

Gen Xers, sandwiched between Baby Boomers and Millennials, are poised to take the reins of leadership as Baby Boomers retire. It goes to follow that over half (54%) place job security as the top reason they are staying with their employer, and almost one-fourth (23%) selected the risk of leaving during a possible recession as a reason to stay.

The oldest generation in our study, Baby Boomers, is on the cusp of retirement, if not there already. Forty-four percent cite the ability to do meaningful work as a reason to remain with their employer. And 36% say they are staying with their employer due to the reasonable work expectations offered.
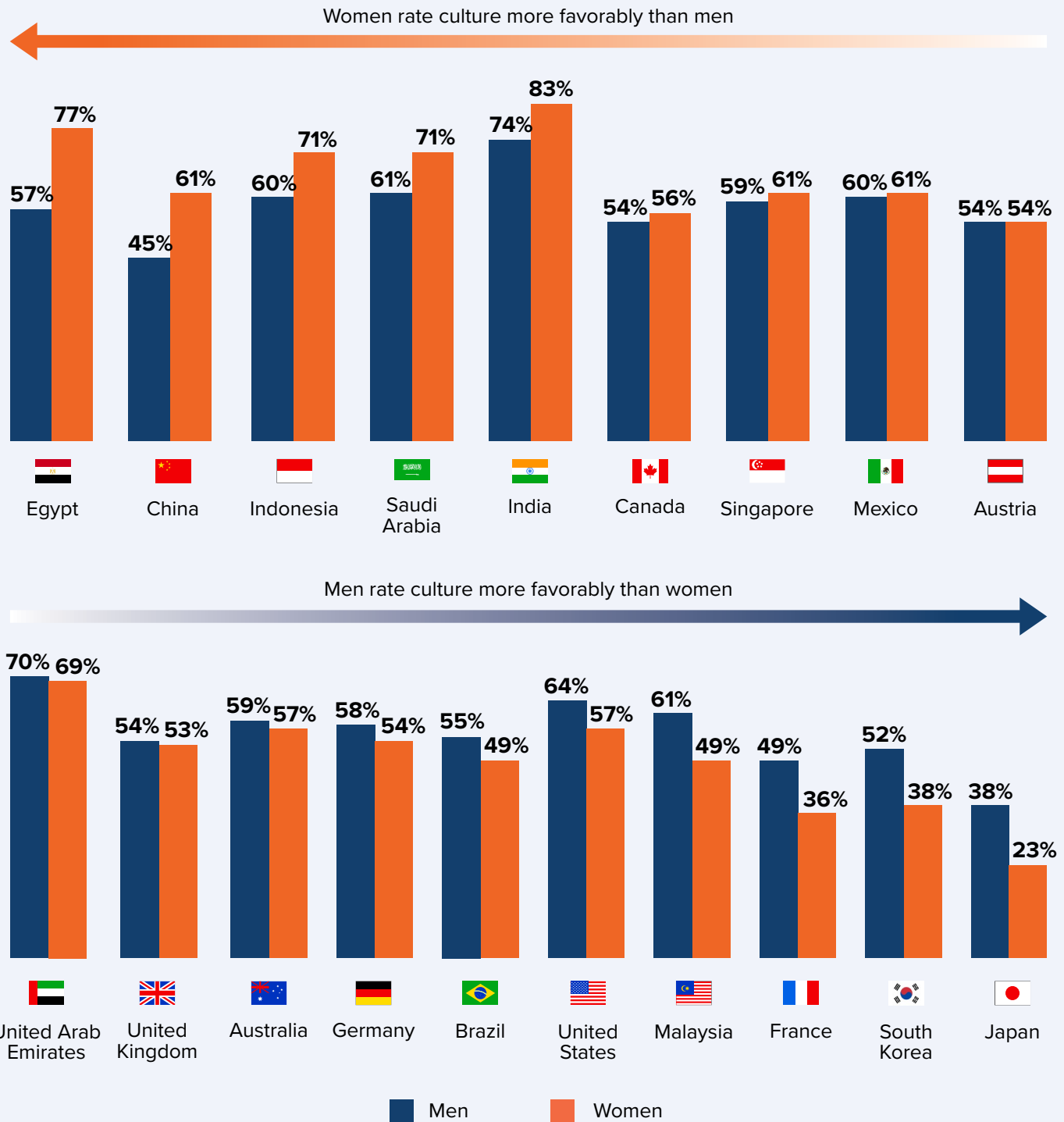
Differences Between Women and Men

Globally, men and women share a similar impression of their workplace culture, though some organizational cultures appear more welcoming to men or to women depending on the country.

Women rate their organizational culture significantly higher in Egypt, China, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and India. Men rate their organizational culture significantly higher in Japan, South Korea, France, Malaysia, and the U.S.

Workplace Culture Ratings Vary by Gender Across Countries

% of employees who rate their organizational culture as good or excellent by country and gender.

Women rate culture more favorably than men

Country	Men	Women
Egypt	57%	77%
China	45%	61%
Indonesia	60%	71%
Saudi Arabia	61%	71%
India	74%	83%
Canada	54%	56%
Singapore	59%	61%
Mexico	60%	61%
Austria	54%	54%

Men rate culture more favorably than women

Country	Men	Women
United Arab Emirates	70%	69%
United Kingdom	54%	53%
Australia	59%	57%
Germany	58%	54%
Brazil	55%	49%
United States	64%	57%
Malaysia	61%	49%
France	49%	36%
South Korea	52%	38%
Japan	38%	23%

■ Men ■ Women

17

Methodology

A total sample of 17,234 employed adults from 19 countries was recruited using a third-party online panel between February and March 2024. The sample was balanced for age and gender in each of the countries. Additionally, a weight was applied to equalize the representation of each country in the total results. Respondents in some countries are more likely to give answers that cast themselves in a positive light (called social desirability). A social desirability measure was included and used to adjust participants' responses to a global average. Respondents in some countries are more likely to acquiesce (i.e., always agree with survey statements no matter what). Again, a weight was applied to minimize this effect by measuring this tendency and using it to adjust respondents' responses to a global average.

About SHRM

SHRM is a member-driven catalyst for creating better workplaces where people and businesses thrive together. As the trusted authority on all things work, SHRM is the foremost expert, researcher, advocate, and thought leader on issues and innovations impacting today's evolving workplaces. With nearly 340,000 members in 180 countries, SHRM touches the lives of more than 362 million workers and their families globally. Discover more at SHRM.org.