# Examining the Cultural, Age and Gender Differences in Attitudes Toward Employee Engagement Surveys 

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#### Abstract

In order to assess levels of engagement in a global organisation, employees often complete online anonymous surveys. However, is it possible to compare engagement results between countries?

Starting with the null hypothesis that "attitudes to employee surveys do not vary by country or gender and age within those countries" an online survey was completed by employees from one organisation in six countries, assessing their attitudes towards factors such as belief in the anonymity of surveys, honesty of response, preferred method of raising concerns and whether they believe employee surveys to be the most effective method of communicating engagement issues.

The results show that in countries with a high level of "Power Distance" such as Romania, India, China and Mexico, employee surveys were the preferred method of communicating issues, particularly with female employees. Sufficient differences in attitude towards using an online anonymous survey occurred to raise serious concerns for practitioners when asked to compare the results from employees around the world.


## Background

Employee engagement is a well-researched topic, high on the agenda of Human Resource practitioners and organisational development professionals (Robertson-Smith \& Marwick, 2009), and such research reveals empirical data linking engagement, competitive advantage (Lockwood, 2007) and employee attrition rates (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). Moreover, employee engagement significantly correlates with other human resource variables (Harter, Schmidt, \& Hayes, 2002). Shuck, Reio, \& Roccob (2011) examined, for instance, an array of employee engagement antecedent and outcome variables and found job fit, organizational affective commitment, and psychological climate, all significantly related to employee engagement.

Employee engagement also strongly links to effective internal communication (Karanges, Beatson, Johnston, \& Lings, 2014). Finally, race and ethnicity played a role in a large sample linking employee engagement with performance appraisal reactions (Volpone, Avery, \& McKay, 2012). In addition, the study found higher levels of engagement significantly related to more favourable psychological diversity climate perceptions.

While no agreement exists on a core definition of employee engagement (Saks, 2006), Gupta (2015) characterises employee engagement as "the extent to which a person is sympathetically connected to his organisation and obsessive about his [sic] job, which is actually important" (p. 45). Most scholars
agree that employee engagement represents a multidimensional concept (Kahn 1990, 2010), comprised of variables originally based upon the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), from which Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, \& Bakker (2002) posited the following three dimensions of employee engagement:

- Physical Component, or vigour (e.g. "At my work, I am bursting with energy").
- Emotional Component, or dedication (e.g. "I am enthusiastic about my job").
- Cognitive Component, or absorption (e.g. "I am immersed in my work").

Increasingly employee engagement has also been linked to the relationship the employee has with the employer's brand (King and Grace, 2012). Thus, assessing levels of engagement is often seen as important from organisational development and internal marketing viewpoints.

To assess engagement within an organisation requires effective upward communication and an active listener further up in the hierarchy. The two most frequently used methods for achieving this are the performance management system and the use of an employee engagement survey. The performance management system has undergone significant critique and continues through a transformation from the traditional rigid and measured approach that could lead to dismissal (the so called "Rank and Yank" style popularised by GE's CEO Jack Welch) to a more fluid, regular two-way communication methodology (Crush, 2015).
Employee engagement surveys are often designed and administered in house; however, increasingly organisations are using one of the many providers such as Towers Watson, Gallop, or Effectory, all of whom release regular white papers and press releases with eye catching headlines about varying degrees of employee engagement around the world.

As author of this study, I work full time as an Organisational Development Consultant and am increasingly involved in both administering employee surveys and re-engineering performance management processes, including communication that precedes implementation of those processes. The research question began to materialise when I became concerned that comparing engagement results for one employer between countries was at the very least problematic and potentially unreliable. As increasingly I am asked by global clients to compare their employee survey results across all their sites, my concern grew when reading headlines such as those highlighting Indian employees as more engaged than those of most other countries (Dale Carnegie Training, 2015), and designating Austrians as the most engaged in Europe (Penhale-Smith, 2014). The potential variances within the profiles of respondents within the various countries would appear at first glance to be significant enough to impact direct comparisons. Do employees in Eastern European countries or China, for instance, see engagement and its typical composites (such as leadership, benefits, active listening, trust, brand loyalty) in the same way as those from countries with greater degrees of "Masculinity" or less "Power Distance" (Hofstede, 2003)?

Similarly, my own interpersonal experiences while working in a variety of cultures has highlighted significant differences in comfort levels when faced with communicating issues directly to managers, particularly for female employees and different age groups. I have worked with millennials (born 19811997, according to Pew Research Center), who also appear to have a greater need for instant feedback than their older colleagues, particularly within the marketing community (Shaw, 2013). These differences also emerged while carrying out online anonymous engagement surveys for clients and raised concerns by respondents about how we can guarantee anonymity when "the news is full of
stories regarding information security breaches". Could this respondent scepticism about anonymity impact responses to "anonymous" surveys and might this scepticism vary by country?

Finally, Morrel-Samuels (2002) describes how UPS gained positive engagement survey data only to be hit later by industrial unrest following the release of the data. We assume the contrast between their survey results and subsequent employee actions, implied that respondents are sometimes less than truthful or are not forthcoming with concerns. Might this behaviour vary by country? What started as a general but significant interest in these issues escalated when the author was asked to design, communicate, and implement an employee engagement survey for a pan-European company, with sites located in the UK, France, and Belgium. Previous in-house surveys had shown differing engagement levels depending on which country site was chosen. How could one verify whether the different engagement levels were a result of internal on-site issues, or a typical reflection of intercultural differences among employees across cultures?

## Purpose

To better design surveys and interpret results, I offer the following null hypotheses regarding attitudes towards completing anonymous online employee engagement surveys.

Hypothesis 1: Attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey do not vary by country.
Hypothesis 2: Attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey do not vary by age within those countries.
Hypothesis 3: Attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey do not vary by gender within those countries.

For the purposes of this paper, "attitudes" of employees were conceptualise to include the following eight components.

- Belief that online employee engagement surveys are seen as an effective method of gathering such feedback.
- Preference for providing engagement feedback via such a survey rather than alternative methods, for instance, focus groups (with or without a manager present) or 1-1 meetings with line managers.
- Trust in the anonymity of responses.
- Level of honesty when completing an online anonymous employee engagement survey.
- Use of appraisal/performance management meetings as a forum for an engagement discussion.
- Amount of time individuals would be prepared to spend completing such a survey.
- Level of comfort in writing critical comments in such a survey.
- Preference for finding out the results of any such survey.

These attitudes were looked at separately in the survey through specific statements and the findings of this report cover the responses to those statements.

## Methodology

The research methodology consisted of five parts and the findings are shown in the related sections 1-5 within this report.

1. Secondary research. This comprised of an analysis of any existing research into the impact of cultural differences when providing upward communication about levels of engagement.
2. Interviews. This involved a set of specific questions to lead consultants from global players in the provision of employee engagement surveys.
3. Online survey. Online surveys (Appendix A) were sent to employees ( $n=286$ ) from a global organisation (employees from UK, USA, India, China, Romania and Mexico) to assess their attitudes (composed of the eight components) towards online anonymous employee engagement surveys. To differentiate this survey from the Pan European engagement survey mentioned below, this survey is referred to as the "Attitude Survey".

Responses were summarised as frequency (percentage) overall, and broken down by age, gender, country and gender within country. Comparisons between age groups, males and females, and country of employment were made using the Chi-square test or Fisher's exact test, as appropriate. Additionally, age standardised percentages were calculated using the WHO Standard World Population (Ahmad et al., 2001) to adjust for age differences between countries. When responses are presented by age group, the youngest two and eldest two groups were combined because there were only $5<35$ and $9>55$ years old, numbers which are too small to include as separate group. There were no substantial differences between estimated percentages and significance levels for tests of between-country differences when age standardisation was applied (Appendix D). Therefore, the unstandardised data (Appendix B) are referred to in the following commentary.

The Attitude Survey required respondents to select from various responses, typically, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral view, Agree and Strongly Agree. However, for some questions they were given a different range, for instance a selection of time frames or methods of communicating.

For the purposes of statistical analysis, responses were treated as categorical including those measured using a Likert response. Likert data can also be assigned a numeric value (e.g. 1=Strongly Disagree, $5=$ Strongly Agree) and summarised as a median or mean and analysed using methods for continuous data. However, such an approach is most appropriate when Likert items are summed into a scale or score resulting in a wider range of response scores than used here. For individual items as in this study, with a limited number of possible responses, the assumption that the data represents an interval scale may not be reasonable; hence they are treated as categorical statements.

Analysis was carried out using Stata 13MP, a statistical software package ${ }^{1}$.
4. Hofstede comparison. Geert Hofstede's original research methodology was compared with our methods using survey data from one global organisation to try to negate organisational culture differences. The results of the "Attitude Survey" were assessed to identify whether cultural drivers such as Power Distance and Masculinity played any part in any differences in responses.
5. Analysis of an employee engagement survey and focus group data. Data from a different pan European organisation's survey ( 363 respondents) across the UK, France, and Belgium were analysed to see whether attitudes to anonymous employee engagement surveys varied by country. This set of data was not statistically assessed but was used for broad comparisons. We sought differences that were highlighted in the online survey data and were visible in an actual employee engagement survey. To avoid confusion, these data are referred to in the Results section as from the "Pan European Survey".

## Results

## 1 - Secondary Research

A thorough review of available academic research into the topic of cultural considerations when designing and interpreting global engagement survey data, found no published research on this topic. A similar situation applied to research on differences in preferences to providing upward feedback to employers about engagement within different countries. Therefore, this topic appears to be a new field of research.

## 2 - Interviews with Main Players in the Engagement Survey Market

To date, not one of the consultants, customer service agents, or senior leaders from the four main providers contacted, (Effectory, Gallop, Towers Watson, and Korn Ferry/Hay) has been willing to share any internal research into cultural differences in responses or to answer questions related to the findings listed below. Efforts will continue to elicit such information. However, these organisation's reticence might be due to their global commercial success from relying heavily on being able to compare global engagement survey data. Therefore, it might continue to be difficult to elicit any research they have conducted on the validity of comparing employee engagement survey data between countries.

## 3 - Attitude Survey Findings

In total, 286 people responded to the survey and their characteristics are summarised in Table 1. The survey was carried out in five countries primarily within one organisation and the results were primarily from people who live (but are not necessarily from) a specific city or region within those countries. The subject company is passionate about diversity and has therefore actively encouraged recruitment from across each country to better reflect the population as a whole. That said, internal data indicates that still more than 50 percent of employees were originally from the city in which the business is located. Therefore, it is possible that any findings relate to those specific geographic areas rather than the population as a whole. Further study with comparable organisations based in different locations is required to exclude that possibility. While English is the daily business language used at all sites, responses were requested only from those with business level English skills.

The geographic breakdown was as follows:
United Kingdom - survey sent to the subject company's employees in the North East and Midlands areas of England.
China - survey sent to the subject company's employees in Wuxi, Wuhan, Beijing, and Chongqing.
India - survey sent to the subject company's employees in Pune, Daman, and Jamshedpur.
Romania - survey sent to the subject company's employees in Bucharest and Craiova.

United States of America - survey sent to the subject company's employees across multiple sites in Indiana, Tennessee, Minnesota and Georgia.

There was a significant difference in the number of responses received within each age range between countries ( $p<0.001$ ). In the USA 61 percent of respondents were under 35 and only 18 percent were 45 or older, whereas in Mexico only 26 percent were under 35 years. There was also a significant difference in the proportion of males and females in each country ( $p=0.022$ ). In China, India and Mexico over half the respondents were female, whereas in Romania, the UK and the USA, fewer than 40 percent were female.

Table 1.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents by Country Number (percent)

| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | p-value |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Total | 41 | 48 | 31 | 76 | 34 | 56 |  |
| Age |  |  |  |  |  |  | $<0.001$ |
| 16-24 years old | $1(2.4)$ | 0 | 0 | $1(1.3)$ | $3(8.8)$ | $0(0.0)$ |  |
| $25-34$ years old | $18(43.9)$ | $25(52.1)$ | $8(25.8)$ | $41(54.0)$ | $13(38.2)$ | $34(60.7)$ |  |
| 35-44 years old | $14(34.2)$ | $17(35.4)$ | $17(54.8)$ | $29(38.2)$ | $4(11.8)$ | $12(21.4)$ |  |
| 45-54 years old | $8(19.5)$ | $6(12.5)$ | $5(16.1)$ | $2(2.6)$ | $11(32.4)$ | $8(14.3)$ |  |
| 55-64 years old | 0 | 0 | $1(3.2)$ | $3(4.0)$ | $3(8.8)$ | $2(3.6)$ |  |
| Gender |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0.022 |
| Female | $24(58.5)$ | $25(52.1)$ | $18(58.1)$ | $30(39.5)$ | $12(35.3)$ | $17(30.4)$ |  |
| Male | $17(41.5)$ | $23(47.9)$ | $13(41.9)$ | $46(60.5)$ | $22(64.7)$ | $39(69.6)$ |  |

Attitude Component - Belief that online employee engagement surveys are an effective method of gathering such feedback.

Respondents were asked to rate the statement "I believe employee surveys are an effective method for organisations to understand the concerns of their employees." As with all statements mentioned from here on, respondents were asked to rate from Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral View, to Agree or Strongly Agree. The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2.

Responses by Age and Gender to the Question "I believe employee surveys are an effective method for organisations to understand the concerns of their employees."

| N (\%) | All | Under 35 years | 35-44 <br> years <br> old | 45 years or older | p- <br> value | Female | Male |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I believe employee 0.056 <br> surveys are an effective  <br> method for  <br> organisations to  <br> understand the concerns  <br> of their employees  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 3(1.1) | 2(1.4) | 1(1.1) | 0 |  | 3(1.6) | 1(0.6) |
| Disagree | 15(5.2) | 9(6.3) | 2(2.2) | 4(8.2) |  | 4(3.2) | 11(6.9) |
| Neutral View | 44(15.4) | 27(18.9) | 8(8.6) | 9(18.4) |  | 14(11.1) | 30(18.8) |
| Agree | 152(53.2) | 79(54.9) | 52(55.9) | 21(42.9) |  | 81(64.3) | 71(44.4) |
| Strongly Agree | 72(25.2) | 27(18.8) | 30(32.3) | 15(30.6) |  | 25(19.8) | 47(29.4) |

There were differences between males and females in terms of whether they felt the use of surveys was an effective means of gaining an understanding of employee's concerns ( $p=0.008$ ) (Table 2). Overall, females were more likely than males to agree or strongly agree that surveys are effective. This was particularly apparent in Romania where 93.3 percent of females (Appendix E) believed that employee surveys are an effective method of understanding employee concerns and in the USA, where 88.2 percent of females believe this to be the case.

There were differences by country in the level of agreement that employee surveys are effective (Table 3). For example, in Romania, 49 percent strongly agreed that they were effective, compared to only 6 percent in the UK. Respondents in most countries, however, showed a positive attitude by responding "agree" and very few respondents disagreed that employee surveys are an effective method. Respondents did not display any significant lack of confidence in the effectiveness of gathering feedback via a survey; however, as is shown later, their preference was for providing this feedback in a one-to-one (1-1) meeting with their line manager which might make the facilitator of such surveys doubt their effectiveness.

Table 3.

Responses by Country to the Statement "I believe employee surveys are an effective method for organisations to understand the concerns of their employees."

| p-value <0.001 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\mathbf{N}$ (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA |
| I believe employee surveys are an |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| effective method for organisations |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| to understand the concerns of their |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | $2(4.2)$ | 0 | 0 | $1(2.9)$ | 0 |
| Disagree | $5(12.2)$ | 0 | $1(3.2)$ | $4(5.3)$ | $5(14.7)$ | 0 |
| Neutral View | $6(14.6)$ | $3(6.3)$ | $3(9.7)$ | $7(9.2)$ | $8(23.5)$ | $17(30.4)$ |
| Agree | $20(48.8)$ | $34(70.8)$ | $21(67.7)$ | $28(36.8)$ | $18(52.9)$ | $31(55.4)$ |
| Strongly Agree | $10(24.4)$ | $9(18.8)$ | $6(19.4)$ | $37(48.7)$ | $2(5.9)$ | $8(14.3)$ |

## Attitude Component - Preference for providing engagement feedback via such a survey rather than alternative methods

After the initial statement asking respondents if they felt employee surveys were an effective method of gathering employee concerns, respondents were shown a list of alternative feedback methods and asked to signify a preference. These responses could be useful for practitioners, as they may indicate an alternative or supplementary method of gathering feedback.

In the Attitude Survey, respondents were asked whether they would feel comfortable raising concerns at a focus group if a manager was present, or whether they would feel more comfortable if no manager was present and the meeting was facilitated by an external consultant. There was a significant difference in how comfortable males and females felt discussing issues at a focus group when a manager was present ( $p<0.001$ ) with females more likely to disagree that they would feel comfortable (Table 4). Females in China were particularly ill at ease with a manager being present, with only 25 percent agreeing with this statement compared to 59 percent of males. The difference is also stark in India, where 32 percent of females either agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 87 percent of males. As is discussed in more detail later, females in Romania were the least likely to feel comfortable with a manager present at a focus group, with only 10 percent indicating they would be compared to 80.5 percent of males (Appendix E).

Table 4.

Responses by Age and Gender to the Questions: "I would feel comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group even if a member of the management team was present" and "I would feel more comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group, if no managers were present and it was facilitated by an external consultant."

| N (\%) | All | Under 35 years | 35-44 <br> years <br> old | 45 years or older | pvalue | Female | Male | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  | 0.305 |  |  | <0.001 |
| I would feel comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group even if a member of the management team was present |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 12(4.2) | 8(5.6) | 4(4.3) | 0 |  | 9(7.1) | 3(1.9) |  |
| Disagree | 72(25.2) | 41(28.5) | 18(19.4) | 13(26.5) |  | 56(44.4) | 16(10.0) |  |
| Neutral View | 54(18.9) | 29(20.1) | 19(20.4) | 6(12.2) |  | 25(19.8) | 29(18.1) |  |
| Agree | 125(43.7) | 55(38.2) | 46(49.5) | 24(49.0) |  | 25(19.8) | 100(62.5) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 23(8.0) | 11(7.6) | 6(6.5) | 6(12.2) |  | 11(8.7) | 12(7.5) |  |
| I would feel more comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group, if no managers were present and it was facilitated by an external consultant |  |  |  |  | 0.001 |  |  | 0.010 |
| Strongly Disagree | 1(0.4) | 0 | 1(13.1) | 0 |  | 1(0.8) | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 28(9.8) | 22(15.3) | 3(3.2) | 3(6.1) |  | 8(6.4) | 20(12.5) |  |
| Neutral View | 60(21.0) | 28(19.4) | 19(20.4) | 13(26.5) |  | 24(19.1) | 36(22.5) |  |
| Agree | 116(40.6) | 67(46.5) | 35(37.6) | 14(28.6) |  | 64(50.8) | 52(32.5) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 81(28.3) | 27(18.8) | 35(37.6) | 19(38.8) |  | 29(23.0) | 52(32.5) |  |

Similarly, there was a significant difference of opinion on whether males and females would feel more at ease if there was no manager and the group was run by an external facilitator ( $p=0.010$ ), with females more likely to agree with this statement than males (Table 4). Romanian females who had expressed a reluctance to speak up if a manager was present, appeared more confident if one was not ( 70 percent), which was a typical percentage for most countries apart from Mexico where 83.4 percent of females preferred that no manager attend, in contrast to the USA at 46.5 percent. Feeling more at ease without a manager present also differed significantly across age groups ( $p=0.001$ ), with younger respondents more likely to feel more at ease with no manager present and the use of an external facilitator.

In China, 42 percent of respondents strongly disagreed that they would feel comfortable discussing concerns at a focus group if a manager was present (Table 5). In the UK 35 percent also felt this way, while in other countries, strong disagreement was less likely (<25 percent). In all countries, apart from China, at least 50 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they would feel comfortable, while only 39 percent in China agreed.

Similarly, respondents from China were much less likely to strongly agree (12 percent) that they would feel more comfortable if there was no manager and an external facilitator was used, than respondents from any other country (where >=29 percent strongly agreed). That said, with over 51 percent of Chinese respondents agreeing (rather than strongly agreeing) they still showed a strong preference, in line with all other countries (55-81 percent agree or strongly agree) to feeling more comfortable without a manager present.

Table 5.

Responses by Country to the Statements: "I would feel comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group even if a member of the management team was present" and "I would feel more comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group, if no managers were present and it was facilitated by an external consultant."

| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | p- <br> value |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I would feel <br> comfortable/at ease <br> discussing |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0.001 |
| concerns/issues at a |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| focus group even if a |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| member of the |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| management team was |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| present |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | $3(7.3)$ | $1(2.1))$ | 0 | $5(6.6)$ | $1(2.9)$ | $2(3.6)$ |  |
| Disagree | $17(41.5)$ | $10(20.8)$ | $7(22.6)$ | $15(19.7)$ | $12(35.3)$ | $11(19.6)$ |  |
| Neutral View | $5(12.2)$ | $9(18.8)$ | $8(25.8)$ | $16(21.1)$ | $3(8.8)$ | $13(23.2)$ |  |
| Agree | $13(31.7)$ | $23(47.9)$ | $16(51.6)$ | $34(44.7)$ | $14(41.2)$ | $25(44.6)$ |  |
| Strongly Agree | $3(7.3)$ | $5(10.4)$ | 0 | $6(7.9)$ | $4(11.8)$ | $5(8.9)$ |  |


| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I would feel more |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0.001 |
| comfortable/at ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| discussing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| concerns/issues at a |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| focus group, if no |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| managers were |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| present and it was |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| facilitated by an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| external consultant |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 1(2.4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 4(9.8) | 11(22.9) | 0 | 7(9.2) | 2(5.9) | 4(7.1) |  |
| Neutral View | 10(24.4) | 6(12.5) | 5(16.1) | 27(35.5) | 5(14.7) | 7(12.5) |  |
| Agree | 21(51.2) | 15(31.3) | 17(54.8) | 21(27.6) | 17(50.0) | 25(44.6) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 5(12.2) | 16(33.3) | 9(29.0) | 21(27.6) | 10(29.4) | 20(35.7) |  |

The combination of the two questions creates an interesting observation that while many people state they feel comfortable raising issues with a manager present, they seem to be more or far more comfortable in doing so without one present. For instance, in the UK a little over 50 percent of respondents stated that they would be comfortable with a manager present, yet over 79 percent would feel more comfortable without one there. This indicates that even those who were very confident that they would feel comfortable raising issues in front of a manager, still harboured an insecurity in doing so.

Therefore, it could be inferred that were an online survey and focus group to be done in-house, even in countries where trust and honesty seem high, there would still be a reticence to raise issues in front of a manager particularly by female employees. This reticence appears to exist in all countries but with some variation by country.

Next, preferred methods of providing engagement feedback were considered. There were significant differences in the preferred method of raising concerns across age groups ( $\mathrm{p}=0.008$ ) and between males and females ( $\mathrm{p}<0.001$ ). Overall, over 65 percent of respondents would prefer a $1: 1$ meeting with their manager, but the percentage of respondents selecting this method differed by age and gender (Table 6). Three-quarters of males and just over half of females stated their preference for was in a 1:1 meeting with their manager. $100 \%$ percent of females in the UK $(n=12)$ and in the USA $(n=17)$ indicated a 1-1 meeting as their preferred method, though it should be noted that the sample size was small. In Romania, however, where $n=30$, only 10 percent of respondents preferred a 1-1 meeting, whereas 80 percent would choose an anonymous survey, a point that is explored more later (Appendix E). The preference for a 1:1 meeting also increased with age (Table 6).

Table 6.

Responses by Age, Gender and Country to a List of Possible Preferred Methods of Providing Engagement Feedback.

| N (\%) | All | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Under } \\ & 35 \\ & \text { years } \end{aligned}$ | 35-44 <br> years <br> old | 45 years or older | pvalue | Female | Male | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Preferred method of raising concerns about your employer or job |  |  |  |  | 0.006 |  |  | <0.001 |
| 1-1 meeting with your manager | 187(65.4) | 87(60.4) | 61(65.6) | 39(79.6) |  | 68(54.0) | 119(74.4) |  |
| Speak to HR | 12(4.2) | 9(6.3) | 2(2.2) | 1(2.0) |  | 3(2.4) | 9(5.6) |  |
| Anonymous employee survey | 51(17.8) | 29(20.1) | 20(21.5) | 2(4.1) |  | 39(31.0) | 12(7.5) |  |
| Tell your union/employee representative | 4(1.4) | 0 | 3(3.2) | 1(2.0) |  | 0 | 4(2.5) |  |
| Use an anonymous phone line or email box | 5(1.8) | 2(1.4) | 3(3.2) | 0 |  | 1(0.8) | 4(2.5) |  |
| Arrange to speak to a senior manager | 19(6.6) | 13(9.0) | 2(2.2) | 4(8.2) |  | 13(10.3) | 6(3.8) |  |
| I would prefer not to raise such concerns even if they impacted me | 7(2.5) | 4(2.8) | 2(2.2) | 1(2.0) |  | 2(1.6) | 5(3.1) |  |
| Other |  | 0 | 0 | 1(2.0) |  |  |  |  |


| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | p-value |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Preferred method of raising concerns about your employer or job |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| 1-1 meeting with your manager | 23(56.1) | 32(66.7) | 22(71.0) | 35(46.1) | 31(91.2) | 44(78.6) |  |
| Speak to HR | 0 | 3(6.3) | 2(6.5) | 5(6.6) | 0 | 2(3.6) |  |
| Anonymous employee survey | 8(19.5) | 5(10.4) | 4(12.9) | 33(43.4) | 0 | 1(1.8) |  |
| Tell your union/employee representative | 0 | 0 | 1(3.2) | 0 | 1(2.9) | 2(3.6) |  |
| Use an anonymous phone line or email box | 1(2.4) | 1(2.1) | 0 | 0 | 1(2.9) | 2(3.6) |  |
| Arrange to speak to a senior manager | 6(14.6) | 7(14.6) | 2(6.5) | 3(4.0) | 1(2.9) | 0 |  |
| I would prefer not to raise such concerns even if they impacted me Other | 3(7.3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4(7.1) |  |

With the ongoing move within global organisations to more regular two-way performance communication meetings, (Deloitte, 2014) could in fact be a more effective method of gaining engagement views, assuming such conversations were handled properly? Of the options provided to respondents, speaking directly to their line manager was by far the strongest preference for raising engagement issues (compared to, for instance, an online survey).

UK respondents were particularly firm in this view, with 91 percent stating that they would prefer to raise concerns in a 1-1 meeting. Not one UK respondent selected the use of an anonymous employee survey as their preference despite 59 percent having agreed (in statement 1) that employee surveys were an effective method. Clearly while they believe surveys to be effective, surveys are not their preferred method for providing such feedback. This view was mirrored in the USA, where 78.6 percent preferred a 1-1 meeting and only a single respondent suggested an anonymous employee survey. Mexico was not far behind and, as can be seen in Table 6, to varying degrees this view was common. Younger respondents and females were more likely than males to prefer to raise concerns via an anonymous employee survey ( 31 percent of females compared to 7.5 percent of males).

As mentioned, females generally showed a lower preference for 1-1 meetings than males (Appendix E) and within some countries, a preference by females for the use of an anonymous survey was particularly noticeable (Romania, India, China). Therefore, care should be taken in concluding that surveys should not be used to gather engagement feedback, because apart from the advantage of being able to consistently gather data and analyse it, a survey appears to provide a preferred avenue for females in certain countries.

Except in Romania, China, and India, it could be stated (data analysis advantages aside) that as the preferred method of providing engagement feedback is for employees to talk to their manager, concentrating on implementing such interactions and raising the capability of managers to elicit, capture, and deal with engagement issues, would be more effective than an online survey. Possibly surveys should only be utilised in certain countries or with specific demographics, where there appears to be a preference for the anonymity of a survey.

## Attitude Component - Trust in Anonymity

Next, we examined an attitude component termed "trust in anonymity". In the UK at least, hardly a day goes by without some form of data security story hitting the headlines, and the public are becoming both more concerned and aware that private data can be accessed (Information Commissioner, 2014). Many people also now realise that data can often be identified as having come from a particular individual. As a result, general guidance that posting confidential information on the web means it could easily become public knowledge, is being instilled into web users, particularly young people through schools, media, and via parents.
In 2015, 40 percent of UK consumers polled chose trust in an organisation as the most important factor when deciding to share personal information, four times more than any other factor (Direct Marketing Association, 2015). Therefore, I was particularly interested to see whether trust in the anonymity of data in an "anonymous" online employee survey was the same in each country and by different age groups and gender within those countries. Trust in such surveys forms a significant component of attitude towards such surveys. Table 7 shows the responses related to trust in anonymity.

Table 7.

Responses by Age, Gender and Country to the Statement "When I hear that an online employee survey is anonymous, I believe completely that there is no way my comments/responses can be identified as coming from me."

|  |  | Age |  |  |  | Gender |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| N (\%) | All | Under 35 years | 35-44 <br> years old | 45 years or older | pvalue | Female | Male | pvalue |
| When I hear that |  |  |  |  | 0.348 |  |  | 0.025 |
| an online employee survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| is anonymous, I |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| believe |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| completely that |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| there is no way |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| my comments/ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| responses can be |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| identified as |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| coming from me |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly | 22(7.7) | 15(10.4) | 4(4.3) | 3(6.1) |  | 4(3.2) | 18(11.3) |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 59(20.6) | 29(20.1) | 17(18.3) | 13(26.5) |  | 21(16.7) | 38(23.8) |  |
| Neutral View | 39(13.6) | 19(13.2) | 13(14.0) | 7(14.3) |  | 21(16.7) | 18((11.3) |  |
| Agree | 118(41.3) | 60(41.7) | 44(47.3) | 14(28.6) |  | 59(46.8) | 59(36.9) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 48(16.8) | 21(14.6) | 15(16.1) | 12(24.5) |  | 21(16.7) | 27(16.9) |  |



Belief that respondents would not be identified from responses to an anonymous survey differed significantly between males and females ( $p=0.025$ ), with females more likely than males to believe that they could not be identified from responses to an anonymous survey (Table 7). Females in Romania were by far the most likely females to believe in survey anonymity, with 93.3 percent ( $n=30$ ) agreeing or strongly agreeing, compared to an average across the females in other countries of 50.42 percent ( $\mathrm{n}=$ 96). This may well explain their higher preference for using surveys to provide concerns and feedback to their managers.

In India and Mexico >70 percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they cannot be identified via an anonymous survey. Trust in the anonymity claim was lowest in the UK, where only 35 percent believed they could not be identified. The USA also showed relatively low levels of trust in anonymity with only 37.5 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing, with females being the most sceptical, in contrast to their neighbours in Mexico ( $n=32$ ), where 71 percent believe a survey would be anonymous, particularly males at 81 percent (see Appendix E).
While anonymity is assured in such a survey to encourage open and honest feedback, employee scepticism could impact the free upward flow of communication. Therefore, an inference can be made that respondents in countries such as the UK and USA might be more reluctant to complete the survey or to do so with honesty or with written feedback. As is described later, this reluctance was also observed when the Pan European Engagement Survey data were analysed, where a higher proportion of respondents from the UK stopped completing the survey once the demographic section was seen and the perceived potential for identification became "apparent".

## Attitude Components - Honesty of Response

Next, the attitude component termed "honesty of response" was examined. Having seen that in some countries many respondents were sceptical about the promise of anonymity and clearly expressed a preference for not having a manager present at focus groups, it was becoming clear that obtaining honest, candid, employee engagement feedback might be difficult, and that caution should be taken as to the honesty or at least fullness of any feedback gathered. This component was tackled directly with the next statement, "I will be 100 percent honest in my responses to an online anonymous employee survey". The responses are shown in Table 8.

Table 8.

Responses by Age, Gender and Country to the Statement "I will be 100\% honest in my responses to an online anonymous employee survey."

| N (\%) | All | Age |  |  |  | Gender |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Under 35 years | 35-44 <br> years <br> old | 45 years or older | pvalue | Female | Male | pvalue |
| I will be 100\% honest in my responses to an online anonymous employee survey Strongly |  |  |  |  | 0.156 |  |  | 0.314 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 27(9.4) | 18(12.5) | 5(5.4) | 4(8.2) |  | 12(9.5) | 15(9.4) |  |
| Neutral View | 30(10.5) | 20(13.9) | 5(5.4) | 5(10.2) |  | 18(14.3) | 12(7.5) |  |
| Agree | 120(42.0) | 56(38.9) | 45(48.4) | 19(38.8) |  | 51(40.5) | 69(43.1) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 109(38.1) | 50(34.7) | 38(40.9) | 21(42.9) |  | 45(35.7) | 64(40.0) |  |
| I will be 100\% |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| honest in my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| responses to an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| online anonymous employee survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 6(14.6) | 1(2.1) | 0 | 2(2.6) |  | 7(20.6) | 11(19.6) |  |
| Neutral View | 10(24.4) | 2(4.2) | 2(6.5) | 4(5.3) |  | 4(11.8) | 8(14.3) |  |
| Agree | 17(41.5) | 23(47.9) | 17(54.8) | 23(34.2) |  | 11(32.4) | 26(46.4) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 8(19.5) | 22(45.8) | 12(38.7) | 44(57.9) |  | 12(35.3) | 11(19.6) |  |

Honesty of responses did not differ significantly by age ( $p=0.156$ ) or by gender ( $p=0.314$ ); however, there were significant differences by country ( $p<0.001$ ) (see Table 8). When asked if they would respond 100 percent truthfully to questions in an anonymous online engagement survey, 93.5 percent of Indian respondents ( $N=48$ ) but only 61 percent of Chinese respondents ( $N=41$ ) said they would. So, is it possible to compare responses between the two countries? Mexicans, at 93.5 percent, also indicated they would be honest, with UK individuals coming in at just 67.7 percent and US respondents at 66 percent. Combined with a scepticism for anonymity, these results to raise the question as to how forthcoming respondents in the UK and USA might be and how much emphasis should be placed on raw employee survey data in those countries.

Bearing in mind that no research was found indicating that the people of the UK and USA have a reputation for dishonest comments in other types of surveys, it is unclear what might be driving this finding other than the scepticism over anonymity. It could be that the UK and USA are typical of many
countries and it just so happens that the other countries selected have a stronger tendency for honesty (or saying what they feel should be the answer) when communicating to their managers.

There was no significant difference between males or females in any country, on the issue of being honest when responding to a survey. As the primary source of data for this paper is a survey, it could be that a finding about lack of honesty in a completing surveys casts doubt on the overall findings; however, as mentioned previously, no research found to date indicates that people from certain countries are more likely to lie in other types of surveys. In addition, while not conclusive, it is logical that there is a difference between the completion of a survey for which the results will be provided in some form to an employer and an academic survey sent directly to individuals, with no involvement from their employer. Therefore, while any survey data have the propensity for error, it is unlikely to be greater on the topic of honesty.

## Attitudes Component - Preference for Providing Engagement Feedback Through the Performance Management Process

The next attitude component is the preference for providing engagement feedback through the performance management process. Many respondents preferred to give feedback about engagement 1-1 rather than through a survey; thus, the annual appraisal was looked at to see whether it would be utilised for this purpose. The organisation in question has a rigourous quarterly performance review process with an annual appraisal at the end of the fourth quarter that links to pay awards, so it is handled seriously by both the manager and the employee. Until recently, a poor review was also likely to mean termination of employment, as managers adhered to the "forced ranking" or so called "rank and yank" approach championed by Jack Welch from GE (Welch, \& Byrne 2003).

As can be seen in Table 9, males and females differed significantly in how likely they were to raise concerns during an annual appraisal ( $p<0.001$ ), as did respondents in different age groups ( $p=0.016$ ). Males indicated a greater preference for raising concerns during an annual appraisal than through an anonymous survey, as did older respondents. Not one female in Romania (Appendix E) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, further emphasising earlier findings that Romanian females are particularly reluctant to raise concerns directly with a manager, much preferring the perceived anonymity of a survey.

Table 9.

Responses by Age, Gender and Country to the Statement "I am more likely to raise concerns/negative feedback about my job in my annual appraisal meeting with my manager than in an anonymous employee survey."


Respondents from Mexico were more likely to raise concerns during an appraisal than in a survey (83 percent agreed or strongly agreed), while those in Romania were least likely ( 32 percent agreed or strongly agreed). This finding reflects their similar preferences for 1-1 feedback to a manager (71 percent in Mexico and 46 percent in Romania); therefore, their responses to those two statements correlate and note should be taken that the effectiveness of a survey may also vary between those countries.

The respondents from the UK and USA also expressed a strong preference for giving feedback in a 1-1 meeting ( 91.2 percent and 78.6 percent respectively), so it seems likely that when asked whether they would prefer to raise such concerns at their appraisal, that they would also agree. However only 67.6 percent in the UK agreed or strongly agreed and in the USA, it was even lower, at 46.5 percent, which could reflect the fact that the USA has "at will" employment and that the practice of forced ranking is far more prevalent there, making an appraisal not the best time to voice negative concerns. Therefore, there is a paradox: a preference for giving feedback about concerns in a 1-1 meeting but not at one of the formal meetings that might reflect on the perceived performance.

## Attitude Component - Making Critical Comments in an Online Survey

Considering their preferences for giving feedback and their levels of honesty and comfort in making comments in front of a manager, respondents' level of candour when asked to make written comments in a survey (as opposed to simply ranking statements) was looked at (see Table 10). Such comments are very useful to those analysing a survey, as raw data cannot provide an explanation of why people feel that way or whether the response is a perception or an evidenced-based statement. Comments help to clarify both; therefore, openness and honesty in providing such comments are essential.

Table 10.

Responses by Age, Gender and Country to the Statement "I would feel very comfortable/at ease in writing comments in an anonymous online employee survey, even if they were critical of my employer."

|  |  | Age |  |  |  | Gender |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| N (\%) | All | Under 35 years | $\begin{gathered} 35-44 \\ \text { years } \\ \text { old } \end{gathered}$ | 45 <br> years or older | pvalue | Female | Male | pvalue |
| I would feel very |  |  |  |  | 0.031 |  |  | 0.661 |
| comfortable/at |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ease in writing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| comments in an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| anonymous online |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee survey, |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| even if they were |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| critical of my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employer |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 5(1.8) | 4(2.8) | 1(1.1) | 0 |  | 2(1.6) | 3(1.9) |  |
| Disagree | 51(17.8) | 27(18.9) | 13(14.0) | 11(22.5) |  | 21(16.7) | 30(18.8) |  |
| Neutral View | 73(25.5) | 46(31.9) | 20(21.5) | 7(14.3) |  | 30(23.8) | 43(46.9) |  |
| Agree | 127(44.4) | 49(34.0) | 51(54.8) | 27(55.1) |  | 56(44.4) | 71(44.4) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 30(10.5) | 18(12.5) | 8(8.6) | 4(8.2) |  | 17(13.4) | 13(8.1) |  |


| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | $\mathrm{p}-$ <br> value |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I would feel very |  |  |  |  |  |  | $<0.001$ |
| comfortable/at ease in |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| writing comments in an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| anonymous online |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee survey, even if |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| they were critical of my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employer | $2(4.9)$ | 0 | 0 | $1(1.3)$ | $2(5.9)$ | 0 |  |
| Strongly Disagree | $3(7.3)$ | $4(8.3)$ | $6(19.4)$ | $8(10.5)$ | $31(61.8)$ | $9(16.1)$ |  |
| Disagree | $11(26.8)$ | $14(29.2)$ | $12(38.7)$ | $13(17.1)$ | $6(17.7)$ | $17(30.4)$ |  |
| Neutral View | $24(58.5)$ | $28(58.3)$ | $13(41.9)$ | $32(42.1)$ | $5(14.7)$ | $25(44.6)$ |  |
| Agree | $1(2.4)$ | $2(4.2)$ | 0 | $22(29.0)$ | 0 | $5(8.9)$ |  |
| Strongly Agree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

While there was no overall significant difference between males and females (Table 10) concerning their comfort levels in providing critical comments in a survey ( $p=0.661$ ), there were significant differences between age groups ( $p=0.031$ ), with older respondents tending to be more comfortable with writing potentially critical comments in an anonymous survey.

In the UK, over two-thirds of respondents (both males and females) would not be comfortable writing critical comments in an anonymous survey (see Table 10), in contrast to all other countries, where less than 20 percent would not be comfortable. This result could again be due to the particularly strong scepticism in the UK over anonymity. Curiously, the USA respondents, who expressed similar levels of distrust, seemed far more comfortable ( 53.5 percent) with providing critical comments in a survey. Possibly, with the appraisal not seen as a viable option, a survey (even if it might not be anonymous) could be seen as the best alternative.

Romanians ( 69.1 percent) were the most comfortable in writing critical comments in a survey (particularly females $n=30$ at 96.7 percent), again reflecting their underlying preference for using a survey as a means of raising such concerns.

## Attitude Component - Length of Time to Complete Engagement Surveys

While it is well known that most surveys are more likely to elicit responses if they are short (Bogen, 2010), as shown in Table 11 there appears to be a slight difference by country ( $p=0.008$ ) and by age ( $p=0.018$ ) but not by gender ( $p=0.789$ ) for the preferred maximum amount of time they would prefer to spend on completing an online survey.

This difference has significant implications, as data from partially completed surveys are typically utilised along with that from 100 percent completed surveys, and therefore there are fewer responses to questions later in the survey. While the structure of employee surveys is not prescribed or standard, of the main players in the market, the later questions tend to revolve around trust, engagement with the brand, and questions related to issues that sum up an employee's belief that the company is a great place to work. If the maximum time preferences vary by country and demographic, there is the possibility that some countries will have more partially completed surveys. If this occurs, it will be difficult to directly compare the results, as the topics at the end of the survey will have been completed by some but not all respondents.

Table 11.
Responses by Age, Gender and Country to the Statement "The maximum time I would be happy to take completing an online employee survey is"


The millennial group (under 35) have recently been painted as having "an attention span one second shorter than a Goldfish" (Microsoft 2015), a research finding that generated news articles around the world. So, it was not surprising that this group showed the strongest preference ( 35 percent) for a survey lasting less than 5 minutes and the lowest preference ( 21.5 percent) for a survey lasting more than 15 minutes (Table 11).

Respondents from India (particularly males) were most likely to be willing to put more time into completing an online survey, with 50 percent willing to spend more than 15 minutes and a few supporting comments suggesting that they would "spend whatever time was required". The countries where time appeared to be an issue were Mexico and China, where 5-10 minutes or less was the strongest preference, whereas in the UK, Romania (particularly females), the USA, and India, there was a greater spread of potential maximums including the longer 15-20 minutes. Very few people in any country indicated they would be fine with spending more than 20 minutes to complete a survey.

## Attitude Component - Preference for Receiving Feedback on the Results of an Employee Survey

Interestingly, half of respondents from Mexico would prefer to receive detailed results either as a written summary or via a presentation by management. In other countries, the preference was more for a brief summary of results with the majority of respondents preferring a one-page written summary or a brief presentation by line management (see Table 12).

Table 12.
Responses by Age, Gender and Country to the Statement "Once the survey results have been analysed I would prefer."

| N (\%) | All | Under 35 years | 35-44 <br> years <br> old | 45 years or older | $\begin{gathered} \mathrm{p}- \\ \text { value } \end{gathered}$ | Female | Male | $\begin{gathered} \mathrm{p}- \\ \text { value } \end{gathered}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Once the survey results have been analysed I would prefer |  |  |  |  | 0.001 |  |  | 0.025 |
| No information concerning the results | 3(1.1) | 2(1.4) | 1(1.1) | 0 |  | 0 | 3(1.9) |  |
| A one-page summary | 129(45.3) | 86(60.1) | 28(30.1) | 15(30.6) |  | 67(53.2) | 62(39.0) |  |
| A brief presentation by my | 42(14.7) | 14(9.8) | 17(18.3) | 11(22.5) |  | 22(17.5) | 20(12.6) |  |
| line manager <br> A brief presentation by a senior manager | 29(10.2) | 13(9.1) | 10(10.8) | 6(12.2) |  | 9(7.1) | 20(12.6) |  |
| A detailed written summary | 32(11.2) | 9(6.3) | 17(18.3) | 6(12.2) |  | 8(6.4) | 24(15.1) |  |
| A detailed presentation by my line manager | 22(7.7) | 6(4.2) | 8(8.6) | 8(16.3) |  | 8(6.4) | 14(8.8) |  |
| A detailed presentation by a senior manager | 27(9.5) | 12(8.4) | 12(12.9) | 3(6.1) |  | 11(8.7) | 16(10.1) |  |
| Other (Please Specify) | 1(0.4) | 1(0.7) | 0 | 0 |  | 1(0.8) | 0 |  |


| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | p-value |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Once the survey results have |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| been analysed I would prefer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3(8.8) | 0 |  |
| No information concerning | 18(43.9) | 18(38.3) | 7(22.6) | 46(60.5) | 14(41.2) | 26(46.4) |  |
| the results | 11(26.8) | 3(6.4) | 6(19.4) | 12(15.8) | 4(11.8) | 6(10.7) |  |
| A one-page summary | 3(7.3) | 1(2.1) | 2(6.5) | 7(9.2) | 3(8.8) | 13(23.2) |  |
| A brief presentation by my | 4(9.8) | 11(23.4) | 7(22.6) | 6(7.9) | 3(8.8) | 1(1.8) |  |
| line manager | 2(4.9) | 1(2.1) | 7(22.6) | 1(1.3) | 4(11.8) | 7(12.5) |  |
| A brief presentation by a | 3(7.3) | 13(27.7) | 2(6.5) | 4(5.3) | 2(5.9) | 3(5.4) |  |
| senior manager | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1(2.9) | - |  |
| A detailed written summary <br> A detailed presentation by |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| my line manager |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A detailed presentation by a senior manager Other (Please Specify) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

There were also significant differences by age and gender in the preferred method of receiving a summary of the findings ( $\mathrm{p}=0.001$ and $\mathrm{p}=0.025$, respectively). More males than females, and more older respondents than younger, stated that they would like a brief or detailed presentation by either line or senior management, while females and younger respondents were more likely to prefer a one-page written summary.

Interestingly, Romanian females who in all other relevant questions had expressed reticence in speaking out in front of a manager, were the most keen (30 percent) to have a manager present the findings of the survey. Therefore, the results indicate that many Romanian females are not keen to verbally communicate concerns up the chain, but are more comfortable receiving such information down the chain.

## Differences Within Countries

The data analysed so far have primarily revolved around the differences by country and by age and gender. While occasional references were made to differences by gender within countries (there was little difference by age), it would be easy for these differences to appear insignificant among the findings (see Appendix E for gender within-country analysis).

Such differences within a country may have particular implications for those running a survey or deciding the best method of eliciting feedback about engagement issues. It may be too simplistic to state that all groups of respondents within a particular country have a preference or a particular attitude towards providing feedback via a survey or other means.

Breaking down response data from each country into male and female responses shows that the sample size is so small that a word of caution is necessary (apart from Romania, where the sample size was larger) and in terms of further research, the intention is to increase the sample sizes and more closely examine the apparent differences between the views of males and females.

The country where the views by gender appear to differ the most is Romania, (female $n=30$, male $n=46$ ), in particular females' preference for using a survey as a means of providing feedback or voicing concerns ( $p<0.001$ ), their stronger belief that such a survey will be anonymous, and their lack of comfort in speaking out in front of a manager either at a focus group or at an appraisal. Not one Romanian female indicated that she would be more likely to raise concerns at her appraisal, compared to a survey.

Females in China ( $\mathrm{n}=24$ ) were also less at ease in raising concerns in front of a manager (only 25 percent agreed) and they too had a far higher preference for using an anonymous survey ( 29 percent) compared to their male colleagues ( 5.9 percent). They also were much more likely to speak up at a focus group if no manager was present ( 71.3 percent). They preferred instead to write critical comments in a survey (50 percent) compared, for instance, to females in the UK, where only 8.3 percent agreed they would feel comfortable writing such comments.

Females in India ( $\mathrm{n}=25$ ) showed similar preferences with only 32 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would feel comfortable discussing concerns with a manager present (males 87 percent $\mathrm{p}<0.001$ ) and were less likely to raise concerns at their appraisal meeting ( 40 percent agree or strongly agree compared to 86.9 percent of males, $p=0.006$ ).

Females in the UK ( $\mathrm{n}=12$ ) also showed a lack of comfort in speaking at a focus group if a manager was present (only 25 percent agreed they would); however, unlike Romania, India, and China, they did appear comfortable during an appraisal meeting ( 66.7 percent agree or strongly agree). So, although the sample size in the UK was small, the results might indicate a general lack of comfort in speaking out in front of management, as opposed to directly with their manager. (See Appendix E for an analysis of gender within countries).

## 4 - Hofstede Cultural Drivers

Hofstede (2003) derived at least five 'cultural dimensions' (power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term/short-term orientation) by analysing survey responses from employees of IBM. While there has been considerable criticism of Hofstede's work, its continued popularity (and commercial success) is, perhaps, because it reduces the complexities of culture into quantifiable and comparable cultural dimensions and because it can be easily applied to various intercultural encounters (Knudsen, 2007).

Hofstede's methodology of focusing on one organisation's survey results to try to negate the potential impact of differences in organisational culture is one of the areas of criticism, particularly by McSweeny (2002), who maintains that most organisations have sub cultures. In response, Hofstede (2002) acknowledged that subcultures can exist within an organisation and went on to mount a robust defence of the methodology, citing a wide range of comparable studies that used the same methodology and found comparable dimensions by culture. So, while it is acknowledged that, like IBM, the organisation we surveyed may also have subcultures, our personal experience is that the differences among the subcultures were minimal. Therefore, the methodology of using one organisation's survey data should allow us to focus on cultural differences by country.

For this paper, data from Hoftede's 2010 cultural dimensions data was used to identify levels of Power Distance and Masculinity for the USA, UK, China, India, Romania and Mexico to see whether there was any correlation between those cultural drivers and the attitude survey results in those countries. Hofstede's data on these two cultural drivers could indicate differences in attitudes to providing critical or negative views about engagement to senior managers that survey practitioners might observe. Hofstede specifies the levels of Masculinity and of Power Distance on a scale from 0-100 (from now on shown in parenthesis).

Of the countries surveyed, Mexico (81), Romania (90), China (80), and India (77) have high levels of Power Distance, meaning that individuals are not seen as equal and tend to know their place in the hierarchy. Control is familiar, even a psychological security and attitude towards managers are formal even if one is on a first name basis. Communication is top down and directive in style and often feedback which is negative is never offered up the ladder' (Hofstede, 2010). This point was identified in the Attitude Survey, as participants from Romania, India, and China (and to a lesser extent in Mexico) indicated a stronger preference for providing negative data via an anonymous survey rather than at an appraisal meeting, a one to one meeting with a line manager, or at a focus group with a manager present. However, this view was more predominant within the female population.

Therefore, while more countries need to be studied, respondents in all the counties in this study with a high Power Distance showed a lower level of comfort in raising issues directly or indirectly to a manager, other than through an anonymous survey. Although this finding is mitigated in Mexico where that Power Distance is possibly influenced by powerful unions, the results could indicate that Power Distance is a
factor. If that is the case, despite criticism of it, the Hofstede research could potentially be used to predict in which countries this lack of comfort with direct criticism will occur and further study is required to see if there is a correlation.

The differences between the attitudes of women and men towards communicating negative feedback upward might also be explained by levels of Masculinity within a culture. While Masculinity in this context is a combination of drivers such as competitiveness, assertiveness, achievement and success, its name comes from the fact that while not exclusive to males, such personality traits tend to be more common in males (Hofstede, 2014). From the attitude survey, Mexico (69), China (66), India (56), the USA (62) and the UK (66) are regarded as Masculine societies; however, from within this group, the only significant differences in attitude from female respondents were observed in responses from China and India. Therefore, the Masculinity of a culture is probably not a factor in preferences towards providing upward feedback.

## 5 - Further Evidence from a Pan European Engagement Survey

While the research outlined above was being completed, an online anonymous employee engagement survey was run for a pan European client. The staff were based in either the UK, France, or Belgium, and there was an opportunity at the focus groups and results feedback sessions to ask many of the questions in the Attitude Survey. In particular we wanted to know if they felt that an anonymous survey would be anonymous and whether they preferred some other means of passing on critical feedback. Additionally, as an external consultant facilitating the focus groups, I was interested to know how comfortable they would have been if a manager had been present.

Twenty-five people attended the focus groups and a further 90 attended the results feedback sessions, with participants representing all three countries. Approximately 60 percent expressed scepticism about the anonymity, and virtually all expressed that they would not have felt comfortable even attending the focus groups had a manager been present. So, while this feedback was more qualitative than quantitative, it was possible to identify a specific issue from the actual survey data, which links with the anonymity findings detailed earlier.

Of those who responded ( $n=300$ ), 100 percent completed the first 5 survey questions, which were related to demographics: gender, age, length of service, etc. At question 6, the first question about engagement, the numbers of responses dropped across all three countries but particularly in the UK, where they dropped 30 percent. This drop was not from survey boredom, as the numbers of responses remained substantially stable throughout the rest of the survey; it was a specific drop at the end of the demographic questions, as illustrated in Table 13.

Table 13.

Drop Off Rate for Respondents of Pan European Employee Engagement Survey.


When asked at the focus groups/feedback sessions why this drop off occurred, the overwhelming response was that despite having been assured that the survey was anonymous, the use of demographics increased their fears that they could be identified. This scepticism of anonymity was highest in the UK, which supports the findings detailed earlier. The high drop-off rate appears to be a tangible example of what could be predicted from the Attitude Survey.

## Conclusions

Three Null hypotheses were considered in this paper.

Hypothesis 1: Attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey do not vary by country.
Hypothesis 2: Attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey do not vary by age within those countries.
Hypothesis 3: Attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey do not vary by gender within those countries.

For the purposes of this paper, "attitudes" were said to comprise the following Components.

- Belief that online employee engagement surveys are seen as an effective method of gathering such feedback.
- Preference for providing engagement feedback via such a survey rather than alternative methods, for instance, focus groups (with or without a manager present) or 1-1 meetings with line managers.
- Trust in the anonymity of responses.
- Level of honesty when completing an online anonymous employee engagement survey.
- Use of appraisal/performance management meetings as a forum for an engagement discussion.
- Amount of time individuals would be prepared to spend completing such a survey.
- Level of comfort in writing critical comments in such a survey.
- Preference for finding out the results of any such survey.

Each of the three null hypotheses was rejected based on the following results.

- The number of differences in attitude components among the countries surveyed.
- The number of differences in attitude components between age groups within the countries surveyed.
- The number of differences in attitude components between genders within the countries surveyed.

Regarding null hypothesis 1 , attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey did indeed vary by country. There were significant differences in attitude towards the effectiveness of surveys, for instance between Romania, where 49 percent strongly agreed that surveys were effective, and the UK, where only 6 percent agreed. Not one respondent from the UK would prefer to use a survey compared to other feedback methods, whereas between 10 percent and 43 percent of respondents in other countries preferred the use of a survey.

A significant difference in attitude existed between the UK/USA and other countries regarding scepticism of anonymity and the honesty of responses. These two factors alone highlight the difficulties of comparing responses to global employee engagement surveys. The comfort levels in voicing concerns directly to a manager and in turn a preference for using an online employee survey, also varied considerably by country. The preference (where such a preference existed) was backed up by evidence that the other common feedback method, the annual appraisal, was not likely to be used in some countries. The amount of time individuals were prepared to spend completing a survey also varied considerably by country.

Null hypothesis 2 , that attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey do not vary by age within those countries, was also rejected. The difference in attitude by age was particularly stark in the levels of ease in voicing concerns directly to a manager (focus groups, appraisals, and 1-1 meetings), with older respondents being more comfortable and therefore less dependent upon a survey. Younger respondents preferred using an anonymous employee survey and tended to prefer spending less than 5 minutes completing such a survey, considerably less time than older respondents.

Regarding null hypothesis 3, attitudes toward providing feedback via an anonymous online employee engagement survey were found to vary by gender. Females were more likely than males to feel that employee surveys are an effective method for gathering organisational engagement feedback. Females were considerably less comfortable in raising issues directly with a manager although that varied considerably by country. For instance, in the UK and USA almost all females preferred to speak directly to their line manager rather than use a survey. This finding contrasted with China, India, and Romania.

While there did not appear to be a significant difference between males and females regarding the honesty of responses, females were generally more sceptical that an anonymous survey was actually anonymous, which is likely to impact the effectiveness of such a survey.

The difference in attitude by gender was particularly clear when comparing attitudes of females from traditionally masculine countries or in this instance also former (or transitioning) communist countries and their Western counterparts. There was a clear preference by females in a variety of countries to use online surveys to voice concerns even if they too doubted the anonymity of the survey.

## Implications for Survey Practitioners

The implications of the attitude survey are that survey data cannot necessarily be compared directly across all countries. This finding applies even to similar countries such as the UK and USA, as there are varying degrees of reluctance to respond or respond honestly with critical comments. Survey data in some countries but particularly in the UK are influenced by a high degree of scepticism about anonymity, and every effort should be made in advance of the survey and in its construction to and allay such fears. Even so, some caution should be taken when considering whether all views were expressed candidly.

Levels of honesty in responding also varied across countries, which has two implications: the first is to express caution in taking employee survey data as a 'source of truth' and the second is that comparing responses from various countries will be problematic. The UK and USA respondents in particular stated they might not tell the truth in a survey, which when combined with their scepticism over anonymity means that considerable pre-survey work should be done to create an environment where people feel comfortable about responding and responding truthfully.

Surveys in countries with a high Power Distance score such as India, China, and Romania, are particularly noteworthy, as not only did levels of truthfulness vary considerably, but females were far more likely to use the survey rather than other media, to communicate views. Similarly, there appears to be a strong preference across all countries for focus groups to not include a manager; therefore, organisations should utilise an external consultant, particularly in countries such as Romania, India, China, and the UK.

While there is a strong preference for communicating concerns via a one to one meeting (100 percent in the UK), considerable variation exists in whether people actually share concerns at their annual appraisal. Therefore, encouraging and training managers to have more regular and meaningful discussions about engagement issues might well be a more effective method of eliciting and dealing with engagement issues. However, doing so does not easily allow data to be quantified and the consistency of the feedback will vary. Feedback from female respondents in some countries such as India, China, and Romania, might still best be gathered by use of a survey, even if this management training is provided.

As could probably have been predicted, while the amount of time people are prepared to spend on a survey varied by country and gender, employee surveys should take less than 10 minutes, in order to reduce the amount of partial survey data.

## Next Steps

The Attitude Survey needs to be run in other global organisations in order to verify that these differences are cultural by country and not by organisation. In addition, the number of responses to the existing Attitude Survey needs to increase, so that the male/female p-values can be identified more clearly. Efforts will continue to elicit any research or at least anecdotal comments from consultants at the main players in the survey field.

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## Notes

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## Appendix A "Attitude Survey" Statements

I believe employee surveys are an effective method for organisations to understand the concerns of their employees.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral View
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I would feel comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group even if a member of the management team was present.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral View
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I would feel more comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group if no managers were present and it was facilitated by an external consultant.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral View
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Please indicate your preferred method of raising concerns about your employer/ job

- 1-1 meeting with your manager
- Speak to HR
- Anonymous employee survey
- Tell your union/employee representative
- Use an anonymous phone line or email box
- Arrange to speak to a senior manager
- I would prefer not to raise such concerns even if they impact me
- Other (please specify)

When I hear that an online employee survey is anonymous, I believe completely that there is no way my comments/responses can be identified as coming from me.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral View
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I will be 100 percent honest in my responses to an online anonymous employee survey.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral View
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I am more likely to raise concerns/negative feedback about my job in my annual appraisal meeting with my manager than in a anonymous employee survey.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral View
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I would feel very comfortable/at ease in writing comments in an anonymous employee survey, even if they were critical of my employer.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral View
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The maximum amount of time I would be happy to take completing an online employee survey is

- Less than 5 mins
- 5-10 mins
- 11-20 mins
- 21-30 mins
- Other (please specify)

Once the survey results have been analysed I would prefer

- No information concerning the results
- A one-page summary
- A brief presentation by my line manager
- A brief presentation by a senior manager
- A detailed written summary
- A detailed presentation by my line manager
- A detailed presentation by a senior manager
- Other (please specify)

Please state what you would expect to be covered/included in any communication to you regarding the results of an employee survey.

Appendix B: Responses by Age and Gender



| N (\%) | All | Under 35 <br> years | $35-44$ <br> years <br> old | 45 years <br> or older | p- <br> value | Female | Male |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | | p- |
| :---: |
| value |


| N (\%) | All | Under 35 years | $\begin{gathered} 35-44 \\ \text { years } \\ \text { old } \end{gathered}$ | 45 years or older | pvalue | Female | Male | $p$-value |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I will be |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 100\% honest |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| in my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| responses to |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| an online |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| anonymous |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| survey. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 27(9.4) | 18(12.5) | 5(5.4) | 4(8.2) |  | 12(9.5) | 15(9.4) |  |
| Neutral | 30(10.5) | 20(13.9) | 5(5.4) | 5(10.2) |  | 18(14.3) | 12(7.5) |  |
| View |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Agree | 120(42.0) | 56(38.9) | 45(48.4) | 19(38.8) |  | 51(40.5) | 69(43.1) |  |
| Strongly | 109(38.1) | 50(34.7) | 38(40.9) | 21(42.9) |  | 45(35.7) | 64(40.0) |  |
| Agree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am more |  |  |  |  | 0.016 |  |  | <0.001 |
| likely to raise |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| concerns/ne |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| feedback |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| in my annual appraisal meeting with |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| my manager |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| than in an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly | 18(6.3) | 11(7.6) | 7(7.5) | 0 |  | 17(13.5) | 1(0.6) |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 57(19.9) | 34(23.6) | 13(14.0) | 10(20.4) |  | 25(19.8) | 32(20.0) |  |
| Neutral | 64(22.4) | 40(27.8) | 15(16.1) | 9(18.4) |  | 34(27.0) | 30(18.8) |  |
| View |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Agree | 119(41.6) | 45(31.3) | 49(52.7) | 25(51.0) |  | 42(33.3) | 77(48.1) |  |
| Strongly | 28(9.8) | 14(9.7) | 9(9.7) | 5(10.2) |  | 8(6.4) | 20(12.5) |  |
| Agree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |



| N (\%) | All | Under 35 years | 35-44 <br> years <br> old | 45 years or older | $p$-value | Female | Male | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Once the survey results have been analysed I would prefer |  |  |  |  | 0.001 |  |  | 0.025 |
| No information concerning the results | 3(1.1) | 2(1.4) | 1(1.1) | 0 |  | 0 | 3(1.9) |  |
| A one-page summary | 129(45.3) | 86(60.1) | 28(30.1) | 15(30.6) |  | 67(53.2) | 62(39.0) |  |
| A brief presentation by my line manager | 42(14.7) | 14(9.8) | 17(18.3) | 11(22.5) |  | 22(17.5) | 20(12.6) |  |
| A brief presentation by a senior manager | 29(10.2) | 13(9.1) | 10(10.8) | 6(12.2) |  | 9(7.1) | 20(12.6) |  |
| A detailed written summary | 32(11.2) | 9(6.3) | 17(18.3) | 6(12.2) |  | 8(6.4) | 24(15.1) |  |
| A detailed presentation by my line manager | 22(7.7) | 6(4.2) | 8(8.6) | 8(16.3) |  | 8(6.4) | 14(8.8) |  |
| A detailed presentation by a senior manager | 27(9.5) | 12(8.4) | 12(12.9) | 3(6.1) |  | 11(8.7) | 16(10.1) |  |
| Other <br> (Please <br> Specify) | 1(0.4) | 1(0.7) | 0 | 0 |  | 1(0.8) | 0 |  |

Appendix C: Responses by Country of Employment


| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | p- |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Preferred method of raising concerns about your employer or job |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| 1-1 meeting with your manager | 23(56.1) | 32(66.7) | 22(71.0) | 35(46.1) | 31(91.2) | 44(78.6) |  |
| Speak to HR | 0 | 3(6.3) | 2(6.5) | 5(6.6) | 0 | 2(3.6) |  |
| Anonymous employee survey | 8(19.5) | 5(10.4) | 4(12.9) | 33(43.4) | 0 | 1(1.8) |  |
| Tell your union/employee representative | 0 | 0 | 1(3.2) | 0 | 1(2.9) | 2(3.6) |  |
| Use an anonymous phone line or email box | 1(2.4) | 1(2.1) | 0 | 0 | 1(2.9) | 2(3.6) |  |
| Arrange to speak to a senior manager | 6(14.6) | 7(14.6) | 2(6.5) | 3(4.0) | 1(2.9) | 0 |  |
| I would prefer not to raise such concerns even if they impacted me Other | 3(7.3) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4(7.1) |  |
| When I hear that an online employee survey is anonymous, I believe completely that there is no way my comments/ responses can be identified as coming from me |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly | 1(2.4) | 0 | 3(9.7) | 5(6.6) | 2(5.9) | 11(19.6) |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 9(22.0) | 7(14.6) | 5(16.1) | 10(13.2) | 13(38.2) | 15(26.8) |  |
| Neutral View | 9(22.0) | 5(10.4) | 1(3.2) | 8(10.5) | 7(20.6) | 9(16.1) |  |
| Agree | 15(36.6) | 24(50.0) | 20(64.5) | 37(48.7) | 8(23.5) | 14(25.0) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 7(17.1) | 12(25.0) | 2(6.5) | 16(21.1) | 4(11.8) | 7(12.5) |  |


| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| If a question refers to "My |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Manager" or "Senior |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Managers" I am totally clear on any difference and who is being referred to |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1(1.3) | 2(5.9) | 3(5.4) |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 7(17.1) | 1(2.1) | 1(3.2) | 0 | 6(17.7) | 7(12.5) |  |
| Neutral View | 9(22.0) | 4(8.3) | 1(3.2) | 14(18.4) | 1(2.9) | 0 |  |
| Agree | 11(26.8) | 28(58.3) | 26(83.9) | 32(42.1) | 22(64.7) | 35(62.5) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 14(34.2) | 15(31.3) | 3(9.7) | 29(39.2) | 3(8.8) | 11(19.6) |  |
| I will be 100\% |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| honest in my responses to an online anonymous employee survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 6(14.6) | 1(2.1) | 0 | 2(2.6) | 7(20.6) | 11(19.6) |  |
| Neutral View | 10(24.4) | 2(4.2) | 2(6.5) | 4(5.3) | 4(11.8) | 8(14.3) |  |
| Agree | 17(41.5) | 23(47.9) | 17(54.8) | 23(34.2) | 11(32.4) | 26(46.4) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 8(19.5) | 22(45.8) | 12(38.7) | 44(57.9) | 12(35.3) | 11(19.6) |  |
| I am more likely to raise concerns/ negative feedback about my job in my annual appraisal meeting with my manager than in an anonymous employee survey |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly | 6(14.6) | 4(8.3) | 0 | 7(9.2) | 1(2.9) | 0 |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 5(12.2) | 2(4.2) | 2(6.5) | 26(34.2) | 2(5.9) | 20(35.7) |  |
| Neutral View | 12(29.3) | 12(25.0) | 3(9.7) | 19(25.0) | 8(23.8) | 10(17.9) |  |
| Agree | 16(39.0) | 23(47.9) | 21(67.7) | 18(23.7) | 18(52.9) | 23(41.1) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 2(4.9) | 7(14.6) | 5(16.1) | 6(7.9) | 4(14.7) | 3(5.4) |  |


| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I would feel |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| very |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| comfortable/at |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ease in writing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| comments in an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| anonymous |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| online |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| survey, even if |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| they were |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| critical of my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employer |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly | 2(4.9) | 0 | 0 | 1(1.3) | 2(5.9) | 0 |  |
| Disagree |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Disagree | 3(7.3) | 4(8.3) | 6(19.4) | 8(10.5) | 31(61.8) | 9(16.1) |  |
| Neutral View | 11(26.8) | 14(29.2) | 12(38.7) | 13(17.1) | 6(17.7) | 17(30.4) |  |
| Agree | 24(58.5) | 28(58.3) | 13(41.9) | 32(42.1) | 5(14.7) | 25(44.6) |  |
| Strongly Agree | 1(2.4) | 2(4.2) | 0 | 22(29.0) | 0 | 5(8.9) |  |
| The maximum |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0.008 |
| time I would be happy to take |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| completing an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| online |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| survey is |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than 5 | 8(19.5) | 1(2.1) | 4(12.9) | 19(25.0) | 10(29.4) | 13(23.2) |  |
| mins |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5-10 mins | 24(58.5) | 23(47.9) | 22(71.0) | 32(42.1) | 14(41.2) | 24(42.9) |  |
| 11-20 mins | 7(17.1) | 22(45.8) | 4(12.9) | 24(31.6) | 10(29.4) | 19(33.9) |  |
| 21-30 mins | 2(4.9) | 2(4.2) | 1(3.2) | 1(1.3) | 0 | 0 |  |


| N (\%) | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | $\begin{gathered} \text { p- } \\ \text { value } \end{gathered}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Once the survey results have been analysed I would prefer |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| No information concerning the results | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3(8.8) | 0 |  |
| A one-page summary | 18(43.9) | 18(38.3) | 7(22.6) | 46(60.5) | 14(41.2) | 26(46.4) |  |
| A brief presentation by my line manager | 11(26.8) | 3(6.4) | 6(19.4) | 12(15.8) | 4(11.8) | 6(10.7) |  |
| A brief presentation by a senior manager | 3(7.3) | 1(2.1) | 2(6.5) | 7(9.2) | 3(8.8) | 13(23.2) |  |
| A detailed written summary | 4(9.8) | 11(23.4) | 7(22.6) | 6(7.9) | 3(8.8) | 1(1.8) |  |
| A detailed presentation by my line manager | 2(4.9) | 1(2.1) | 7(22.6) | 1(1.3) | 4(11.8) | 7(12.5) |  |
| A detailed presentation by a senior manager | 3(7.3) | 13(27.7) | 2(6.5) | 4(5.3) | 2(5.9) | 3(5.4) |  |
| Other (Please Specify) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1(2.9) | 0 |  |

Appendix D: Age-Standardised Responses by Country

| $\%$ | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | p- <br> value |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- |
| I believe employee surveys are an <br> effective method for organisations <br> to understand the concerns of |  |  |  |  |  |  | $<0.001$ |
| their employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |


| \% | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I would feel comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group even if a member of the management team was present |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly Disagree | $9 . .8$ | 2.7 | 0 | 6.7 | 5.0 | 2.6 |  |
| Disagree | 44.3 | 21.0 | 15.1 | 21.7 | 27.4 | 19.5 |  |
| Neutral View | 11.6 | 15.3 | 30.9 | 21.3 | 14.8 | 23.2 |  |
| Agree | 29.7 | 49.7 | 54.0 | 43.0 | 42.3 | 47.3 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 7.5 | 11.3 | 0 | 7.4 | 10.5 | 7.5 |  |
| I would feel more comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group, if no managers were present and it was facilitated by an external consultant |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 11.6 | 27.6 | 0 | 9.0 | 9.8 | 8.5 |  |
| Neutral View | 18.3 | 12.9 | 18.0 | 36.6 | 6.8 | 10.9 |  |
| Agree | 56.0 | 32.7 | 53.9 | 28.1 | 52.7 | 47.1 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 12.2 | 26.9 | 28.1 | 26.4 | 30.7 | 33.5 |  |
| Preferred method of raising concerns about your employer or job |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| 1-1 meeting with your manager | 56.3 | 63.1 | 72.3 | 42.8 | 87.9 | 78.9 |  |
| Speak to HR | 0 | 7.9 | 5.5 | 8.2 | 0 | 3.2 |  |
| Anonymous employee survey | 21.5 | 11.3 | 11.6 | 44.3 | 0 | 1.6 |  |
| Tell your union/employee representative | 0 | 0 | 3.7 | 0 | 2.1 | 3.2 |  |
| Use an anonymous phone line or email box | 3.3 | 2.0 | 0 | 0 | 5.0 | 3.2 |  |
| Arrange to speak to a senior manager | 13.9 | 15.8 | 6.9 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 0 |  |
| I would prefer not to raise such concerns even if they impacted me | 5.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8.9 |  |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.9 |  |
| When I hear that an online employee survey is anonymous, I believe completely that there is no way my comments/responses can be identified as coming from me |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly Disagree | 3.3 | 0 | 1.6 | 7.8 | 10.0 | 22.6 |  |
| Disagree | 26.7 | 12.6 | 16.4 | 14.4 | 30.9 | 26.6 |  |
| Neutral View | 16.1 | 11.1 | 2.9 | 9.8 | 23.4 | 17.4 |  |
| Agree | 41.1 | 48.7 | 71.9 | 48.3 | 21.6 | 25.6 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 3.3 | 0 | 1.6 | 7.8 | 10.0 | 22.6 |  |


| \% | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USA | p- <br> value |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| If a question refers to "My |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Manager" or "Senior Managers" I am totally clear on any difference and who is being referred to |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.6 | 4.2 | 4.9 |  |
| Disagree | 23.2 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 0 | 26.7 | 15.2 |  |
| Neutral View | 20.8 | 6.2 | 5.0 | 20.5 | 0.7 | 0 |  |
| Agree | 23.9 | 60.6 | 82.7 | 39.2 | 56.3 | 61.0 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 32.4 | 30.6 | 9.4 | 38.7 | 12.1 | 18.9 |  |
| I will be $\mathbf{1 0 0 \%}$ honest in my responses to an online anonymous employee survey |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 18.6 | 1.5 | 0 | 3.3 | 16.9 | 20.3 |  |
| Neutral View | 26.1 | 4.1 | 5.0 | 6.4 | 13.8 | 16.4 |  |
| Agree | 41.4 | 49.8 | 50.7 | 32.6 | 31.2 | 46.1 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 13.9 | 44.6 | 44.2 | 57.8 | 38.2 | 17.1 |  |
| I am more likely to raise concerns/negative feedback about my job in my annual appraisal meeting with my manager than in an anonymous employee survey |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly Disagree | 15.8 | 10.2 | 0 | 8.5 | 5.0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 16.7 | 2.7 | 3.6 | 35.7 | 4.2 | 35.9 |  |
| Neutral View | 26.6 | 24.7 | 10.8 | 25.1 | 21.0 | 21.4 |  |
| Agree | 35.0 | 47.6 | 66.3 | 23.2 | 52.7 | 38.7 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 5.9 | 14.9 | 19.3 | 7.5 | 17.1 | 3.9 |  |
| I would feel very comfortable/at ease in writing comments in an anonymous online employee survey, even if they were critical of my employer |  |  |  |  |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly Disagree | 6.6 | 0 | 0 | 1.2 | 10.0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 8.8 | 7.3 | 23.3 | 11.3 | 59.9 | 16.1 |  |
| Neutral View | 26.3 | 34.7 | 46.1 | 17.6 | 16.7 | 35.4 |  |
| Agree | 55.8 | 55.8 | 30.6 | 40.7 | 13.4 | 39.8 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 2.5 | 2.3 | 0 | 29.3 | 0 | 8.8 |  |
| The maximum time I would be happy to take completing an online employee survey is |  |  |  |  |  |  | 0.004 |
| Less than 5 mins | 26.5 | 1.5 | 17.7 | 25.0 | 25.6 | 21.1 |  |
| 5-10 mins | 59.2 | 44.8 | 70.5 | 43.9 | 50.1 | 50.4 |  |
| $15-20 \mathrm{mins}$ | 13.8 | 49.9 | 8.8 | 30.0 | 24.3 | 28.5 |  |
| 20-30 mins | 0.5 | 3.8 | 2.9 | 1.2 | 0 | 0 |  |


| \% | China | India | Mexico | Romania | UK | USAp- <br> value |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Once the survey results have been <br> analysed I would prefer <br> No information concerning the | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13.6 | 0 |  |
| results |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A one-page summary <br> A brief presentation by my line <br> manager | 25.1 | 5.8 | 13.0 | 13.2 | 9.3 | 10.6 |  |

## Appendix E: Responses by Gender Within Countries

|  | China |  |  | India |  |  | Mexico |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \% | Female $N=24$ | Male $\mathrm{N}=17$ | pvalue | Female $N=25$ | Male $N=23$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=18$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Male } \\ & \mathrm{N}=13 \end{aligned}$ | pvalue |
| I believe employee |  |  | 0.033 |  |  | 0.009 |  |  | 0.001 |
| surveys are an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| effective method for |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| organisations to |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| understand the |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| concerns of their |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |  | 4.0 | 4.4 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 12.5 | 11.8 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 7.7 |  |
| Neutral View | 16.7 | 11.8 |  | 12.0 | 0 |  | 11.1 | 7.8 |  |
| Agree | 62.5 | 29.4 |  | 80.0 | 60.9 |  | 88.9 | 38.5 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 8.3 | 47.1 |  | 4.0 | 34.8 |  | 0 | 46.2 |  |
| I would feel |  |  | 0.032 |  |  | <0.001 |  |  | 0.033 |
| comfortable/at ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| discussing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| concerns/issues at a |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| focus group even if a |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| member of the |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| management team |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| was present |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 12.5 | 0 |  | 0 | 4.4 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 54.2 | 23.5 |  | 36.0 | 4.4 |  | 38.9 | 0 |  |
| Neutral View | 8.3 | 17.7 |  | 32.0 | 4.4 |  | 16.7 | 38.5 |  |
| Agree | 25.0 | 41.2 |  | 16.0 | 82.6 |  | 44.4 | 61.5 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 0 | 17.8 |  | 16.0 | 4.4 |  | 0 | 0 |  |


|  | China |  |  | India |  |  | Mexico |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \% | Female $\mathrm{N}=\mathbf{2 4}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Male } \\ & \mathrm{N}=17 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=\mathbf{2 5}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Male } \\ & \mathrm{N}=23 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{gathered} \mathbf{p -} \\ \text { value } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Female } \\ \mathrm{N}=18 \\ \hline \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Male } \\ & \mathrm{N}=13 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | pvalue |
| I would feel more |  |  | 0.279 |  |  | 0.001 |  |  | 0.246 |
| comfortable/at ease discussing concerns/issues at a focus group, if no managers were present and it was facilitated by an external consultant |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 4.2 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 4.2 | 17.7 |  | 1.0 | 43.5 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Neutral View | 20.8 | 29.4 |  | 20.0 | 4.4 |  | 16.7 | 15.4 |  |
| Agree | 62.5 | 35.3 |  | 48.0 | 13.0 |  | 66.7 | 38.5 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 8.3 | 17.7 |  | 28.0 | 39.1 |  | 16.7 | 16.2 |  |
| Preferred method of raising concerns about your employer or job |  |  | 0.291 |  |  | 0.109 |  |  | 0.150 |
| 1-1 meeting with your manager | 45.8 | 70.6 |  | 56.0 | 78.3 |  | 61.1 | 84.6 |  |
| Speak to HR | 0 | 0 |  | 4.0 | 8.7 |  | 11.1 | 0 |  |
| Anonymous employee survey | 29.2 | 5.9 |  | 16.0 | 4.4 |  | 22.2 | 0 |  |
| Tell your union/employee representative | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 7.7 |  |
| Use an anonymous phone line or email box | 4.2 | 0 |  | 0 | 4.4 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Arrange to speak to a senior manager | 12.5 | 17.7 |  | 24.0 | 4.4 |  | 5.6 | 7.7 |  |
| I would prefer not to raise such concerns even if they impacted me | 8.3 | 5.9 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Other | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |


| \% | Female $N=24$ | China <br> Male $\mathrm{N}=17$ | $\mathrm{p}-$ value | Female $N=25$ | India Male $\mathrm{N}=23$ | p- value | Female $\mathrm{N}=18$ | Mexico Male $\mathrm{N}=13$ | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| When I hear that an |  |  | 0.999 |  |  | 0.082 |  |  | 0.258 |
| online employee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| survey is anonymous, |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I believe completely |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| that there is no way |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| comments/responses |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| can be identified as |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| coming from me |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 4.2 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 16.7 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 20.8 | 23.5 |  | 20.0 | 8.7 |  | 16.7 | 15.4 |  |
| Neutral View | 20.8 | 23.5 |  | 0 | 21.7 |  | 5.6 | 0 |  |
| Agree | 37.5 | 35.3 |  | 52.0 | 47.8 |  | 61.1 | 69.2 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 16.7 | 17.7 |  | 28.0 | 21.7 |  | 0 | 15.4 |  |
| If a question refers |  |  | 0.132 |  |  | 0.001 |  |  | 0.522 |
| to "My Manager" or |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| "Senior Managers" I |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| am totally clear on |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| any difference and |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| who is being |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| referred to |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 20.8 | 11.8 |  | 0 | 4.4 |  | 5.6 | 0 |  |
| Neutral View | 16.7 | 29.4 |  | 16.0 | 0 |  | 0 | 7.7 |  |
| Agree | 16.7 | 41.2 |  | 36.0 | 82.6 |  | 88.9 | 76.9 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 45.8 | 17.7 |  | 48.0 | 13.0 |  | 5.5 | 15.4 |  |
| I will be 100\% honest |  |  | 0.004 |  |  | 0.155 |  |  | 0.005 |
| in my responses to an online |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| anonymous |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 16.7 | 11.8 |  | 4.0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Neutral View | 41.7 | 0 |  | 8.0 | 0 |  | 5.5 | 7.7 |  |
| Agree | 33.3 | 52.9 |  | 36.0 | 60.9 |  | 77.8 | 23.1 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 8.3 | 35.3 |  | 52.0 | 39.1 |  | 16.7 | 69.2 |  |


| \% | Female $N=24$ | China <br> Male $\mathrm{N}=17$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=\mathbf{2 5}$ | India <br> Male $N=23$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=18$ | Mexico Male $\mathrm{N}=13$ | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I am more likely to |  |  | 0.060 |  |  | 0.006 |  |  | 0.159 |
| raise |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| concerns/negative |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| feedback about my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| job in my annual |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| appraisal meeting |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| with my manager |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| than in an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| anonymous |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 25.0 | 0 |  | 16.0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 12.5 | 11.8 |  | 4.0 | 4.4 |  | 11.1 | 0 |  |
| Neutral View | 20.8 | 41.2 |  | 40.0 | 8.7 |  | 0 | 23.1 |  |
| Agree | 41.7 | 35.3 |  | 32.0 | 65.2 |  | 72.2 | 61.5 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 0 | 11.8 |  | 8.0 | 21.7 |  | 16.7 | 15.4 |  |
| I would feel very |  |  | 0.120 |  |  | 0.442 |  |  | 0.119 |
| comfortable/at ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| in writing comments |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| in an anonymous |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| online employee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| survey, even if they |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| were critical of my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employer |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 8.3 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 4.2 | 11.8 |  | 12.0 | 4.4 |  | 27.8 | 7.7 |  |
| Neutral View | 37.5 | 11.8 |  | 32.0 | 26.1 |  | 22.2 | 61.5 |  |
| Agree | 50.0 | 70.6 |  | 56.0 | 60.9 |  | 50.0 | 30.8 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 0 | 5.9 |  | 0 | 8.7 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| The maximum time I |  |  | 0.700 |  |  | 0.070 |  |  | 0.913 |
| would be happy to |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| take completing an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| online employee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| survey is |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than 5 mins | 25.0 | 11.8 |  | 4.0 | 0 |  | 11.1 | 15.4 |  |
| 5-10 mins | 58.3 | 58.8 |  | 60.0 | 34.8 |  | 66.7 | 76.9 |  |
| 15-20 mins | 12.5 | 23.5 |  | 36.0 | 56.5 |  | 16.7 | 7.7 |  |
| 20-30 mins | 4.2 | 5.9 |  | 0 | 8.7 |  | 5.6 | 0 |  |


| \% | China |  |  | India |  |  | Mexico |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Female $\mathrm{N}=24$ | Male $N=17$ | pvalue | Female $N=25$ | Male $\mathrm{N}=23$ | p- value | Female $N=18$ | Male $N=13$ | pvalue |
| Once the survey results have been analysed I would prefer |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| No information concerning the results | 0 | 0 | 0.422 | 0 | 0 | 0.118 | 0 | 0 | 0.026 |
| A one-page summary | 50.0 | 35.3 |  | 44.0 | 31.8 |  | 33.3 | 7.7 |  |
| A brief presentation by my line manager | 16.7 | 41.2 |  | 12.0 | 0 |  | 22.2 | 15.4 |  |
| A brief presentation by a senior manager | 8.3 | 5.9 |  | 4.0 | 0 |  | 11.1 | 0 |  |
| A detailed written summary | 12.5 | 5.9 |  | 12.0 | 36.4 |  | 5.6 | 46.2 |  |
| A detailed presentation by my | 8.3 | 0 |  | 0 | 4.6 |  | 27.8 | 15.4 |  |
| line manager |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A detailed presentation by a senior manager | 4.2 | 11.8 |  | 28.0 | 27.3 |  | 0 | 15.4 |  |
| Other (Please Specify) | 0 | 0 |  |  |  |  | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Romania |  |  | UK |  |  | USA |  |  |
| N (\%) | Female $\mathrm{N}=30$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Male } \\ & \mathrm{N}=46 \end{aligned}$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=12$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Male } \\ & \mathrm{N}=22 \end{aligned}$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=17$ | Male $\mathrm{N}=39$ | pvalue |
| I believe employee surveys are an effective method for organisations to understand the concerns of their employees |  |  | 0.016 |  |  | 0.270 |  |  | 0.003 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0 |  | 8.3 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 0 | 8.7 |  | 8.3 | 18.2 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Neutral View | 6.7 | 10.9 |  | 8.3 | 31.8 |  | 11.8 | 38.5 |  |
| Agree | 23.3 | 45.7 |  | 66.7 | 45.5 |  | 88.2 | 41.0 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 70.0 | 34.8 |  | 8.3 | 4.6 |  | 0 | 20.5 |  |



| Roman ia |  |  |  | UK |  |  | USA |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| N (\%) | $\begin{gathered} \text { Femal } \\ \text { e } \\ N=30 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \hline \text { Male } \\ & \mathrm{N}=46 \end{aligned}$ | $p$-value | $\begin{gathered} \text { Fema } \\ \text { le } \\ \mathrm{N}=12 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Mal } \\ e \\ \mathrm{~N}=2 \\ 2 \end{gathered}$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=17$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Male } \\ & \mathrm{N}=39 \end{aligned}$ | pvalue |
| Preferred method of raising concerns about your employer or job |  |  | <0.001 |  |  | 0.999 |  |  | 0.546 |
| 1-1 meeting with your manager | 10.0 | 69.6 |  | 100 | 86.4 |  | 100 | 69.1 |  |
| Speak to HR | 0 | 10.9 |  | 0 | 4.6 |  | 0 | 5.1 |  |
| Anonymous employee survey | 80.0 | 19.6 |  | 0 | 4.6 |  | 0 | 2.6 |  |
| Tell your union/employee representative | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 4.6 |  | 0 | 5.1 |  |
| Use an anonymous phone line or email box | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 5.1 |  |
| Arrange to speak to a senior manager | 10.0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| I would prefer not to raise such concerns even if they impacted me | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 10.3 |  |
| Other | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 2.6 |  |
| When I hear that an online employee survey is anonymous, I believe completely that there is no way my comments/responses can be identified as coming from me |  |  | 0.008 |  |  | 0.218 |  |  | <0.001 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 10.9 |  | 0 | 9.1 |  | 0 | 28.2 |  |
| Disagree | 3.3 | 19.6 |  | 25.0 | 45.5 |  | 23.5 | 28.2 |  |
| Neutral View | 3.3 | 15.2 |  | 41.7 | 9.1 |  | 52.9 | 0 |  |
| Agree | 63.3 | 39.1 |  | 25.0 | 22.7 |  | 23.5 | 25.6 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 30.0 | 15.2 |  | 8.3 | 13.6 |  | 0 | 17.8 |  |



| N (\%) | Female N=30 | Male $\mathrm{N}=46$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=12$ | Male $N=22$ | pvalue | Female $\mathrm{N}=17$ | Male $\mathrm{N}=39$ | pvalue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| I would feel very |  |  | <0.001 |  |  | 0.696 |  |  | 0.301 |
| comfortable/at |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ase in writing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| comments in an |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| anonymous online |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employee survey, |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| even if they were |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| critical of my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| employer |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 2.2 |  | 0 | 9.1 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Disagree | 0 | 17.4 |  | 75.0 | 54.5 |  | 17.7 | 15.4 |  |
| Neutral View | 3.3 | 26.1 |  | 16.7 | 18.2 |  | 35.3 | 28.2 |  |
| Agree | 50.0 | 37.0 |  | 8.3 | 18.2 |  | 29.4 | 51.3 |  |
| Strongly Agree | 46.7 | 17.4 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 17.7 | 5.1 |  |
| The maximum time |  |  | 0.007 |  |  | 0.816 |  |  | 0.869 |
| I would be happy |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| to take completing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| an online employee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| survey is |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than 5 mins | 20.0 | 28.3 |  | 33.3 | 27.3 |  | 17.7 | 25.6 |  |
| 5-10 mins | 26.7 | 52.2 |  | 33.3 | 45.5 |  | 47.1 | 41.0 |  |
| 15-20 mins | 53.3 | 17.4 |  | 33.3 | 27.3 |  | 32.3 | 33.3 |  |
| 20-30 mins | 0 | 2.2 |  | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Once the survey |  |  | 0.012 |  |  | 0.322 |  |  | 0.095 |
| results have been |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| analysed I would |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| prefer |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| No information |  |  |  | 0 | 13.6 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| concerning the |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| results |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A one-page | 70.0 | 0 |  | 58.3 | 31.8 |  | 58.8 | 41.0 |  |
| summary |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A brief | 26.7 | 8.7 |  | 16.7 | 9.1 |  | 5.9 | 12.8 |  |
| presentation by my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| line manager |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A brief | 3.3 | 13.0 |  | 0 | 13.6 |  | 17.7 | 25.6 |  |
| presentation by a |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| senior manager |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A detailed written | 0 | 13.0 |  | 0 | 13.6 |  | 5.9 | 0 |  |
| summary |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A detailed | 0 | 2.2 |  | 8.3 | 13.6 |  | 0 | 17.8 |  |
| presentation by my |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| line manager |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A detailed | 0 | 8.7 |  | 8.3 | 4.6 |  | 11.8 | 2.6 |  |
| presentation by a |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| senior manager |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other (Please | 0 | 0 |  | 8.3 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| Specify) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

