Leadership Behavior, Personality Factors, Intercultural Considerations, and Innovation

A Cross-Cultural Research Perspective

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Abstract:

This study investigates the interplay between leadership behavior, personality factors, intercultural considerations, and innovation particularly in the context of current developments such as artificial intelligence and remote work. Drawing upon a theoretical foundation from cross-cultural research, personality psychology, new institutional economics, and resource-based consideration as well as insights from research regarding innovation, new and remote work and sustainability a comprehensive perspective is offered supported by empirical data from up to 54 countries employing five independent data sets. By this we explore contemporary innovation-related developments and derive theoretical and practical implications at the micro, meso-, and macro level. We conclude by providing practical applications of the findings, offering actionable insights for leaders, organizations, and policymakers to navigate in this complex and agile environment.

Keywords: Culture, Leadership, Personality, Innovation, Remote Work, Artificial Intelligence

Abbreviations: AI: Artificial Intelligence; RW: Remote Work; GS: Globe Study; PP: Personality Profiles of Cultures; GII: Global Innovation Index; RWI: Remote Work Index; AII: Global Artificial Intelligence Index

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1. Introduction

The general importance of innovation is discussed widely. Previous research has shown that national culture, leadership, personality disposition as well as economic, institutional, and political factors are important influencing factors throughout the individual, the organizational and the national level of analysis (Rossberger, 2014). Today innovativeness has become crucial for leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and remote work (RW) to maintain a competitive edge.

AI has already revolutionized the innovation ecosystem and there are indications that the importance of those factors will rise in the future (Cockburn et al, 2018). However, the successful integration of these technologies and developments depends on the ability to foster a supportive formal and informal institutional framework and environment. This paper explores the importance of national innovativeness in the context of AI and RW, drawing upon a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that includes cultural factors, leadership behavior, personality profiles, and considerations based on new institutional economics, transaction cost theory and the resource-based view.

Subsequently we analyze five distinct and unassociated data sources (the GLOBE Study, the Personality Profiles of Cultures Project, The Global Innovation Index, the Remote Work Index, and the Global Artificial Intelligence Index) to empirically investigate the interplay between national culture, cultural endorsed leadership, personality factors, national innovativeness, and AI and RW related factors and framework conditions.

The findings yield valuable implications and recommendations for policymakers, organizations, and individuals, offering an integrated perspective on factors influencing environments conducive to innovation. Furthermore, the paper acknowledges limitations and identifies avenues for future exploration, contributing to the ongoing discourse and advancement in this dynamic field.

2. Theory

National and organizational cultures shape values, behaviors, and effectiveness. The GLOBE Study (House 2004) and the seminal work of Edgar Schein (Schein, 2004) offer insights into this interplay. Culture helps communities find solutions to external and internal problems (Rossberger, 2015). National culture refers to this concept on the country level, organizational culture on the organizational level. Schein defines organizational culture as shared assumptions, values, and beliefs shaping members' behavior. He emphasizes leadership's role in shaping organizational culture. The GLOBE Study identifies cultural dimensions impacting leadership, categorizing cultures based on dimensions like performance orientation, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and future orientation. Understanding the interplay between national and organizational cultures is crucial for effective leadership and management (Rossberger & Krause, 2015).

Cultural diversity in global workplaces presents challenges for international leadership. Implicit leadership theory (Lord & Mahler, 1993) states that individuals hold beliefs about leadership attributes. Culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory (House, 2004) argues that these beliefs are influenced by national cultural characteristics. The GLOBE study defines participative leadership as involving others in decision-making, favored for example in Germanic and Nordic Europe. Team-oriented leadership emphasizes effective team building, preferred in Southern Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Understanding culturally endorsed leadership styles is crucial for navigating the complexities of international leadership (Rossberger, 2014).

The Five Factor Model explains human personality using five factors, each with six facets. These biologically based, universal factors are agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Nationally aggregated personality factors show substantial correlations across methods, relate to Hofstede's dimensions of culture (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004), have a meaningful geographic distribution, and correlate with country-level data like GDP and health factors (McCrae & Terracciano, 2008). Research reveals consistent cross-cultural patterns, with variations in personality traits across nations.

Innovation involves renewal, modernization, and change, often associated with uncertainty and risk. National cultural practices influence innovation at individual, group, and organizational levels. National innovation, a critical determinant of economic prosperity, is influenced by governmental policies, cultural influences, education, and international collaboration. Countries that nurture creativity, adaptability, and entrepreneurship exhibit higher innovation levels (Rossberger, 2014).

Overall, the interplay of culture, personality, and leadership significantly influences how societies deal with innovation. Nationally aggregated personality scores correlate with national culture, as societies with different personality profiles tend to promote different cultural practices (Hofstede and McCrae (2004). Personality factors influence culture, while culture shapes the manifestation of personality. Previous research identified cultural dimensions related to innovation, including future orientation, different forms of collectivism, performance orientation, and uncertainty avoidance (Rossberger & Krause, 2015). These innovation-friendly cultural practices are characterized by aspects such as low hierarchies, high individualism, achievement orientation, and a stable environment that allows for risk-taking and experimentation (Rossberger, 2014). The cultural endorsement of leadership depends on and influences national cultural values and practices. Participative leadership increases involvement in decision-making, commitment, and performance orientation (Javidan, 2004). It also influences collectivism, with high institutional collectivism and low in-group collectivism being positively related to innovation. Participative leadership is linked to innovation-supportive national cultural practices characterized by high institutional collectivism, future orientation, performance orientation, and uncertainty avoidance (Rossberger, 2014). At the core these factors largely determined how societies deal with innovation, they can be considered as predisposition for national innovativeness.

Adding the megatrends digitalization, AI and RW to this equation expands this view. New technologies and New Work reshape how we work, collaborate and how work is organized, while AI revolutionize traditional notions of innovation and other domains to a degree which cannot be fully anticipated yet. These transformative forces also influence and are influenced at the same time national innovativeness. We focus on the underlying mechanisms of this impact by employing fundamental theories from new institutional economics, particularly transaction cost theory (Coase, 1937; Williamson, 1985) and the resource-based view (Penrose, 1995; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990).

Integrating AI and RW capabilities requires navigating new institutional frameworks like data privacy regulations and virtual workplace policies. Compliance costs represent transaction costs that could offset potential AI and RW efficiencies. However, if it is possible to strategically shaping these factors may reduce long-term transaction costs while establishing competitive advantages (Williamson, 1985). For example, developing robust data governance protocols could minimize regulatory frictions and cybersecurity risks. Similarly, pioneering virtual collaboration norms could improve remote coordination.

According to the resource-based view competitive advantages is gained by developing valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate resources (Barney, 2011). AI capabilities and RW proficiency represent potential strategic assets satisfying these criteria. However, realizing their full potential also requires focusing on and investing in data infrastructure,

cybersecurity protocols, and virtual collaboration processes, quite similar to the previously discussed requirement regarding RW. Being able to cultivate these AI and RW-related resources may increase efficiencies and innovative breakthroughs. Conversely, those lacking such resources risk obsolescence as competitors leverage AI and RW to disrupt industries.

Overall, the theoretical background employed indicate that how these new developments are addressed on different societal levels ultimately influences competitive advantage on the macro-, meso- and micro level of societies and might be crucial for the future. Based on this consideration we assume that there is and relationship between these factors in such a way that the socio-cultural antecedents for national innovation (cultural practices, endorsement for participative leadership, personality factors) relate also to an innovation friendly climate which supports the framework conditions for AI and RW.

3. Method

To investigate these considerations, in a first step we triangulate data from 5 independent sources, namely the Globe Study (GS), the Personality Profiles of Cultures project (PP), the Global Innovation Index (GII), the Global Remote Work Index (RWI) and the Global AI Index (AII). By examining the relationships between national culture and personality profiles, cultural endorsed leadership, and national levels of innovation, AI and RW capabilities we approach a holistic understanding of the global landscape.

The GLOBE study investigates the influence of national culture on leadership styles. Data was gathered from 17,300 middle managers of 951 organizations across 62 societies (Triandis, 2004, p. xv). The study conceptualizes national culture and culturally endorsed leadership as convergent-emergent constructs (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000), the constructs are manifest on the aggregate level, hypothesizing that inhabitant of a country exhibit similarity in their perception of national culture and cultural endorsement for leadership (Hanges & Dickson, 2004, p. 124).

The Personality Profiles of Cultures project used the Revised NEO Personality Inventory to collect aggregate personality data from 51 cultures. This inventory measures 30 sub-factors and consists of 240 items, making it the most widely used measure of the Big Five (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Personality profiles of cultures characterize cultures in terms of the assessed mean personality trait level of culture members. The results showed that the same construct exists in each culture, the measuring instrument maintains construct validity, and the scales have scalar equivalence, allowing for meaningful cross-cultural comparison (McCrae & Terracciano, 2008).

The Global Innovation Index, launched in 2007, seeks to capture a comprehensive picture of innovation in society beyond traditional measures (INSEAD, 2011, p. 3). Conceptually, the index consists of two subindices: innovation-related inputs (institutions, human capital, research, infrastructure, market, and business sophistication) and outputs (knowledge, technology and creative outputs). There are now 16 editions available, the current edition reports date of 132 countries (WIPO, 2023).

The Global Remote Work Index evaluates 108 countries' potential as top RW destinations in 2023 (Nordlayer, 2023). It measures four dimensions: cyber safety (infrastructure integrity, digital threat response, cybersecurity legislation), economic safety (cost of living, healthcare, communication, free time), digital & physical infrastructure (internet quality, e-infrastructure, e-governance, tangible infrastructure), and social safety (personal rights, inclusivity, general safety).

The Global AI Index is a comprehensive ranking that evaluates nations based on their AI capabilities across three pillars: investment, innovation, and implementation (Cesareo & White, 2024). It aims to provide insights into the global AI landscape by assessing factors such as government strategies, commercial ventures, research output, talent availability, and infrastructure.

This results in a sample of N= 54 countries for GS and GII, N= 34 for PP, N=50 for RW and N=39 for AI. For N=26 countries data from all sources was analyzed. By choosing this separate and disassociate data sources, we also eliminate the danger of common method- and common source bias. Additionally operationalizing these constructs at the national level avoids ecological fallacy or reversed ecological fallacy (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). Table 1 gives an overview of the countries included in our study.

Table 1

	GS	PP	GII	RWI	AII	AII		GS	PP	GII	RWI	AII	AII
Albania	●		●	●			Japan	●	●	●	●	●	●
Argentina	●	●	●	●	●	●	Kazakhstan	●	●	●	●		
Australia	●	●	●	●	●	●	Korea	●		●	●	●	
Austria	●	●	●	●	●	●	Kuwait	●	●	●			
Bolivia	●		●	●			Malaysia	●	●	●	●	●	●
Brazil	●	●	●	●	●	●	Mexico	●	●	●	●	●	●
Canada	●	●	●	●	●	●	Moroco	●	●	●	●	●	●
China	●	●	●	●	●	●	Namibia	●	●	●	●		
Colombia	●		●	●	●		Netherlands	●		●	●	●	
Costa Rica	●		●	●			Newzealand	●		●	●	●	
Denmark	●	●	●	●	●	●	Nigeria	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ecuador	●		●	●			Philippines	●	●	●	●		
Egypt	●		●	●	●		Poland	●	●	●	●	●	●
El Salvador	●		●	●	●		Portugal	●	●	●	●	●	●
Finland	●	●	●	●	●	●	Russia	●	●	●			
France	●	●	●	●			Singapore	●	●	●	●	●	●
Georgia	●	●	●	●			Slovenia	●		●	●	●	
Germany	●		●	●	●		Southafrica	●	●	●	●	●	●
Greece	●	●	●	●	●	●	Spain	●		●	●	●	
Guatemala	●		●	●			Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	●
Hong Kong	●		●				Switzerland	●		●	●	●	
Hungary	●	●	●	●	●	●	Thailand	●	●	●	●		
India	●		●	●	●		Turkey	●	●	●	●	●	●
Indonesia	●	●	●	●	●	●	UK	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ireland	●	●	●	●	●	●	USA	●	●	●	●	●	●
Israel	●	●	●	●	●	●	Zambia	●		●			
Italy	●		●	●	●		Zimbabwe	●		●	●	●	

4. Results

First the fundamental relationship between the dimensions measured is investigated through bivariate correlation analysis. The innovation related GLOBE practice dimensions uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, future orientation, and performance orientation (Rossberger, 2014) exhibited the hypothesized relationship with all three indices employed. The GLOBE leadership dimensions participative leadership and team-oriented leadership exhibited the hypothesized relationship with GII and RWI but only participative leadership exhibits a significant relationship with AII. The national personality profiles dimensions openness to experience and agreeableness doesn't exhibit a relationship with no one of the three indices. This is an interesting result and coherent with previous research (Rossberger, 2014).

Table 2

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.Institutional Collectivism	-											
2.In-group Collectivism	-.37**	-										
3.Future Orientation	.50**	-.54**	-									
4.Performance Orientation	-.48**	-.34*	.63***	-								
5.Uncertainity Avoidance	.49**	-.67**	-.76***	.64***	-							
6.Participative leadership	-.12	-.48**	.25	.10	.24	-						
7.Teamoriented leadership	-.33	.26	-.24	-.27*	-.35*	-.16	-					
8.Openness to experience	.15	-.68	-.02	-.03	.09	.10	-.22	-				
9.Agreeableness	-.01	-.20*	-.14	.03	.21	-.10	.15	-.31	-			
10.GII	.45***	-.57***	.58**	.45***	-.61***	.34*	-.37**	.11	.20	-		
11.RWI	.40**	-.50**	.41**	.29*	-.53***	.34*	-.37**	.28	.16	.86***	-	
12.AII	-.40*	-.43**	.46**	.45**	-.46*	.32*	-.15	.18	.03	.89***	-.66***	-

Notes. Pearson correlations. Two-tailed significance. Sample Size is *N*=54 (GS, GII), *N*= 34 (PP), *N*= 45 (RWI) and *N*= 39 (AII). * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The following scatterplots (Figure 1 and Figure 2) show the relationship between the general national innovation level (measured by GII) and the general RW conditions (measured by RWI) and AI capabilities (measured by AII). The strong connection between GII, RWI and AII is evident however having a closer look at the graphs exhibit some interesting results.

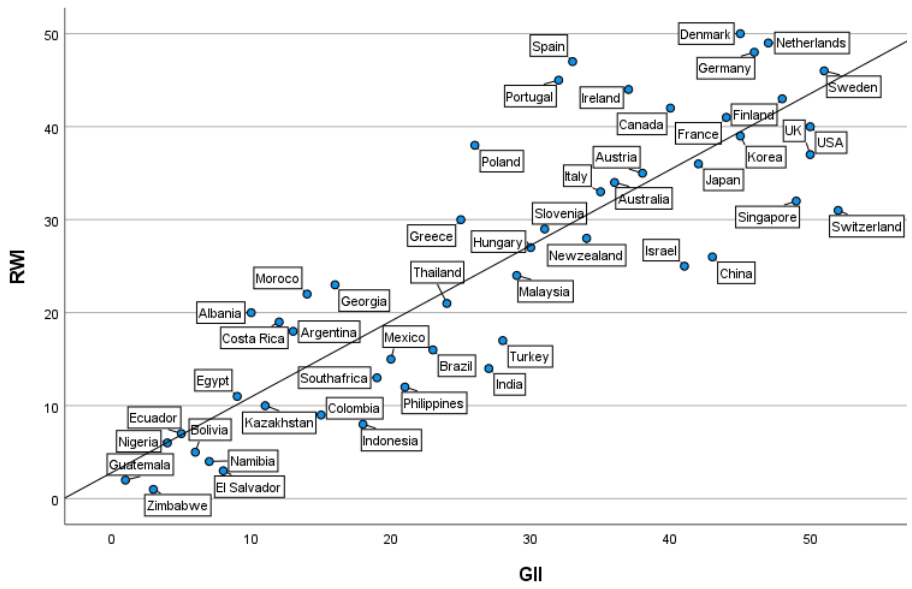

Figure 1

RWI > GII

- Netherlands
- Germany
- Finland

RWI < GII

- China
- India
- Indonesia

Statistical analysis of the relationships and deviations between the three indices shows that China and India show the strongest deviation between the three indices, whereas Australia and France show the weakest. Spain and Portugal show the highest values on RWI relative to their general level of Innovation whereas Switzerland and China show the lowest values. India and China show the highest values on AII relative to GII whereas Sweden and New Zealand exhibit the lowest. Both RWI and AII are relatively high in relation to GII in Germany and Canada whereas they are relatively low in Switzerland and Sweden. The greatest differences (high RWI and low AII) are found in Spain and Portugal whereas the strongest differences (high AII and low RWI) are found in India and China.

The results reveal interesting patterns in the relationship between the three indices. European countries, such as the Netherlands, Germany, and Finland score high in RWI compared to their GII level. In contrast, some Asian countries, including China, India, the Philippines, and Indonesia score higher in GII compared to RWI with all of them falling below the line in the scatterplot. Notably, no European country is situated below the line, no Asian country is positioned above the line.

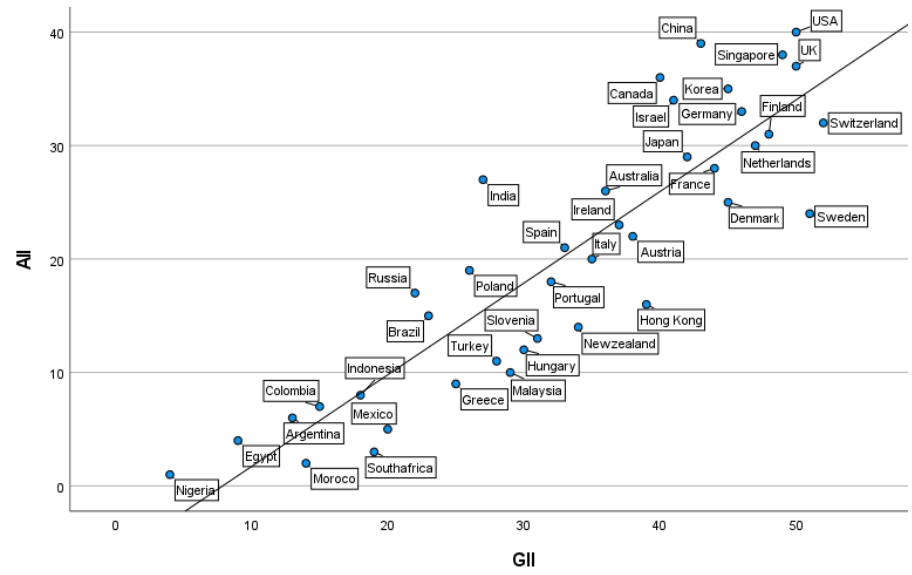

Figure 2

AII > GII

- China
- India
- USA

AII< GII

- Switzerland
- Sweden
- Netherlands

As Figure 2 shows there is no such pattern noticeable for the relationship between GII and AII. The following table (Table 3) sums up the main results of the analysis.

Table 3

GS Culture Practices (all indices)	Uncertainty Avoidance (+), Institutional Collectivism (+), In-group Collectivism (-), Future Orientation (+), Performance Orientation (+)
GS Leadership	Participative Leadership (+ with all indices) Team-oriented Leadership (- with GI and RW, no AI)
PP (all indices)	Openness to experience (no) Agreeableness (no)
High dispersion between indices	China, India, Israel, Portugal, Spain
Low dispersion between indices	Australia, France, Finland, Japan, Italy
AII & RWI above GII	Germany, Canada, Australian, Spain, Poland
AII & RWI below GII	Switzerland, Sweden, South Africa, Turkey, Indonesia
RWI high, AII low	Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Greece, Sweeden
AII high, RWI low	China, India, Israel, Singapore, Switzerland

5. Discussion

We investigated the interaction between culture, personality, leadership, and innovation, RW and AI at the national level. We showed the relationships between these dimensions and the indices employed (Table above). European countries score relatively high in RW compared to GI, potentially related to the combination of freedom, stability, institutional collectivism, and participative leadership. In contrast, some large Asian countries show higher GI than RW, potentially related to strong in-group collectivism and team-oriented leadership. These insights highlight the cultural nuances that shape a nation's GI and RW landscape, something we don't find for AI.

The findings of this study have important practical implications. AI and RW capabilities present opportunities and challenges for environmental sustainability (Islam, 2024; Uwaoma et al., 2024) nowadays one of the most important topics and probably also in the future. Optimization employing AI could enhance energy efficiency. Additionally, RW reduces commuting and physical infrastructure needs, lowering carbon footprints (Maipas et al., 2021).

However, AI training's computational intensity and RW's residential energy demands pose countervailing sustainability risks. One must strategically invest in green AI practices and residential energy management to maximize sustainability benefits. Furthermore, AI and RW enable sustainable further innovations like predictive maintenance and virtual delivery. Ultimately, aligning AI and RW strategies with environmental, social, and governance principles may be crucial for achieving long-term sustainable ecologic, social, and economic prosperity.

AI and RW are catalyzing the rise of decentralized, globally distributed network organizations and decentralized autonomous organizations (Montes & Goertzel, 2019). AI automation enables lean, flexible operations with minimal bureaucracy, while RW facilitates tapping into global talent pools. Network organizations leverage these capabilities to form dynamic project-based teams and ecosystems. Decentral autonomous organizations further extend these decentralized models using blockchain governance for automated decision-making and incentive mechanisms. However, realizing these new organizational forms' full potential again requires developing robust cybersecurity, digital collaboration processes, and mechanism design skills. Those strategically cultivating these AI and RW capabilities and competencies may achieve innovative structural advantages.

AI drives digitalization by enhancing automation, decision-making, and efficiency. AI-powered algorithms and machine learning enable businesses to improve operations, personalize user experiences, and optimize resource utilization. As AI evolves, its influence on digital transformation is expected to deepen, shaping the future of technology-driven economies and societies. AI also reshapes work by revolutionizing how tasks are performed, AI technologies enable enhanced productivity, personalized learning experiences, and efficient communication in modern work environments. By automating routine tasks and providing data-driven insights, AI empowers employees to focus on creative and strategic endeavors, fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability within organizations embracing new work principles.

Based on the considerations and results of this investigation we also can derive some policy recommendation. Since national cultural practices are more malleable compared to cultural values or national personality factors, there is an opportunity for intervention at the societal level (Rossberger & Krause, 2015). National cultural practices appear to be a crucial lever concerning the the general approach and the utilization of AI and RW and can be effectively influenced through national policies and regulations. To navigate the challenges posed by the interplay of all the factors investigated a multi-level approach is necessary. At the societal level a focus on meaningful and favorable regulatory and statutory framework conditions seems to be elementary. Additional generally fostering an open, non-judgmental, and free-thinking mindset, along with positive, performance-oriented attitudes and supportive, non-restrictive informal rules and frameworks, seems to be promising (Rossberger, 2014).

At the organizational level, leaders must provide clear direction and the right amount of guidance to highly skilled employees who are essential for innovation. Leadership becomes more critical and challenging as AI and RW reshape the work environments. As AI and RW proliferate, leadership styles, organizational cultures, corporate education strategies, and personnel selection criteria must evolve. Cultivating psychological safety, upskilling for human-AI collaboration, and hiring for adaptability will become paramount. Organizations adept at these areas will also gain competitive advantages in attracting talent and fostering innovation.

At the individual level, embracing a learning mindset, and adopting to the new and agile environment are important basic competences. Individuals must embrace lifelong learning, cognitive flexibility, curiosity, and questioning norms. Those open to continually developing new skills, adapting mindsets, and challenging assumptions will thrive. The importance of cultivating a growth mindset oriented towards constant evolution will rise for personal and professional success. By harnessing the synergies of these factors while addressing their limitations, societies, organizations, and individuals can navigate the challenges and opportunities presented in this study.

From the methodological and statistical perspective, this study represents an initial consideration. Further statistical analyses are necessary to gain further insights and validate the findings. Structural equation modeling can be employed to analyze the relationships between subfactors of the GI. Cluster analysis of countries based on data from the indices used can provide further insights. Examining the interplay of culture, personality, and leadership at the individual, organizational, and societal levels using longitudinal data would enhance understanding of how these factors shape innovation and the adoption of technologies over time. Exploring the potential synergies and limitations of this factors in driving organizational innovation and effectiveness is another promising avenue for future research.

Additional the study has a limited country selection, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the culture and personality data used may not reflect the most current state, as these constructs can evolve over time. Future research should aim to address these limitations by expanding the country sample and using, if available, more recent measures and indicators.

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