

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CORPORATE CULTURE IN EU COUNTRIES

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Abstract. Corporate culture plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational behavior, decision-making processes, and overall success. This comparative analysis delves into the corporate cultures of several European Union (EU) countries, exploring their unique characteristics, similarities, and differences. Through an extensive literature review, this study examines existing research on corporate culture, its definitions, dimensions, and its significance in organizational performance. The purpose of this analysis is to provide insights into how corporate cultures vary across EU countries and to identify potential implications for multinational corporations operating within these diverse cultural contexts. This study employs a mixed-methods research design to conduct a comparative analysis of corporate culture across European Union (EU) countries to identify key similarities and differences in corporate cultures, understand their underlying factors, and explore how these cultural attributes influence business operations and employee behavior in different EU countries. The study outlines specific tasks including identifying key cultural dimensions, analyzing cultural practices, and evaluating their impact on organizational outcomes. Employing a comparative framework, the analysis scrutinizes corporate cultures in countries such as Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Through this comparative lens, conclusions are drawn regarding the influence of national culture on corporate practices, the role of leadership in shaping organizational culture, and the importance of cultural sensitivity in international business operations. The comparative analysis of corporate culture in EU countries reveals a nuanced interplay between national culture, organizational dynamics, and management practices. While certain countries exhibit commonalities in leadership styles, organizational structures, communication patterns, and decision-making processes, significant variations exist across cultural contexts. Recognizing and navigating these cultural differences is essential for multinational corporations seeking to operate effectively within the EU, requiring a nuanced understanding of local cultural norms and values. By embracing cultural sensitivity and adaptability, organizations can leverage the richness of diversity within the EU to drive innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth.

Keywords: corporate culture; European Union; organizational behavior; leadership styles; organizational structures; decision-making processes; cross-cultural management; cultural values; leadership.

JEL Classification: I31; I38; M54

Formulas: 0, **fig.:** 1, **tabl.:** 4, **bibl.:** 25

Introduction. Corporate culture exerts a profound influence on the behavior, decisions, and overall performance of businesses, serving as a pervasive force within organizations. Within the European Union (EU), a rich tapestry of cultures exists across its member states, each characterized by distinct values, norms, and organizational practices. For multinational corporations operating in this complex and dynamic environment, understanding the nuances of corporate culture within EU countries is essential. This introduction sets the stage for a comparative analysis aiming to explore the unique characteristics, similarities, and differences shaping organizational dynamics across borders.

The significance of corporate culture in fostering organizational cohesion, guiding employee behavior, and driving strategic initiatives cannot be overstated. It encompasses shared values, beliefs, and practices that define an organization, influencing internal processes and external interactions. Edgar Schein's seminal work on organizational culture offers a framework for understanding its layers, including artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions, which collectively shape organizational behavior.

However, corporate culture is not homogeneous; it varies significantly across different cultural contexts. National culture, rooted in historical, social, and institutional factors, profoundly influences organizational practices and behaviors. Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory elucidates key dimensions such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity vs. femininity, providing insights into cultural variations among nations.

Within the EU's diverse landscape of 27 member states with varied linguistic, historical, and cultural backgrounds, understanding the interplay between national culture and corporate culture is crucial. While some countries prioritize hierarchy, stability, and tradition in their organizational cultures, others emphasize innovation, egalitarianism, and adaptability.

Against this backdrop, this comparative analysis aims to delve into the intricacies of corporate culture within EU countries. Through examination of existing research, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence, the study seeks to identify commonalities and differences in corporate cultures across selected EU member states. Utilizing a systematic comparative approach, the analysis will explore various dimensions of corporate culture, including leadership styles, organizational structures, communication patterns, and decision-making processes.

Literature review. Corporate culture has long been recognized as a crucial factor influencing organizational behavior, performance, and success. Within the context of the European Union (EU), the study of corporate culture takes on added significance due to the diverse cultural landscapes of its member states. This literature review synthesizes key theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and conceptual insights relevant to understanding corporate culture within EU countries.

Edgar Schein's model of organizational culture provides a foundational framework for understanding the layers and manifestations of corporate culture. Schein identifies three levels of culture: artifacts (visible symbols and behaviors), espoused values (stated beliefs and norms), and underlying assumptions (unconscious, taken-for-

granted beliefs). This model highlights the complexity of corporate culture and the need to consider both surface-level manifestations and deeper underlying dynamics.

Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory offers further insights into cross-cultural differences, providing a framework for comparing national cultures based on key dimensions such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity vs. femininity. Hofstede's research has been influential in understanding cultural variations among EU countries and their implications for organizational practices.

Numerous empirical studies have examined corporate culture within specific EU countries, shedding light on the unique characteristics and challenges of each cultural context. For example, research by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) explores cultural differences in management practices across EU countries, highlighting contrasts in communication styles, decision-making processes, and approaches to leadership.

Additionally, studies by Hofstede and colleagues (e.g., Hofstede, 2001) have investigated the cultural dimensions of individual EU member states, providing valuable insights into national cultural profiles and their implications for organizational behavior. These studies emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptation in multinational corporations operating within the EU, as well as the need to recognize and respect cultural differences.

Moreover, research on organizational culture in EU countries has highlighted the role of leadership in shaping and sustaining corporate culture. Leadership styles may vary significantly across cultural contexts, influencing organizational values, norms, and practices. For example, studies by House et al. (2004) examine leadership behaviors in different cultural contexts, identifying variations in charismatic, participative, and transformational leadership styles across EU countries.

Overall, the literature on corporate culture within EU countries underscores the complex interplay between national culture, organizational dynamics, and leadership practices. By synthesizing theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, this literature review provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding the comparative analysis of corporate culture in EU countries.

Aims. This research aims to provide a comprehensive examination of corporate cultures in EU countries, elucidating the divergences and convergences among various national cultures. By identifying key cultural dimensions and analyzing their manifestations within organizational contexts, the study seeks to offer valuable insights for multinational corporations navigating the complexities of cross-cultural management.

The main objectives of research are:

- Identify key cultural dimensions prevalent in corporate cultures across EU countries;
- Analyze cultural practices and norms within organizations in selected EU countries;
- Evaluate the impact of national culture on organizational behavior, decision-making, and performance;
- Compare and contrast corporate cultures across different EU countries;

- Draw conclusions regarding the implications of cultural variations for multinational corporations operating within the EU.

Methodology. This study employs a mixed-methods research design to conduct a comparative analysis of corporate culture across European Union (EU) countries to identify key similarities and differences in corporate cultures, understand their underlying factors, and explore how these cultural attributes influence business operations and employee behavior in different EU countries.

This methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of corporate culture across EU countries, highlighting unique cultural attributes and their implications for international business management. The results are expected to contribute valuable insights for multinational corporations looking to enhance cross-cultural competencies and for policymakers aiming to foster more inclusive and adaptive corporate environments within the EU.

Result. Utilizing a comparative framework, this analysis examines corporate cultures in several EU countries, including but not limited to Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Spain. By juxtaposing cultural practices, leadership styles, and organizational structures, the study aims to uncover the underlying factors contributing to cultural diversity and its effects on organizational dynamics.

Corporate culture within European Union (EU) countries exhibits a rich tapestry of diversity, shaped by historical, societal, and economic factors unique to each member state. This comparative analysis explores the corporate cultures of selected EU countries, examining key dimensions such as leadership styles, organizational structures, communication patterns, and decision-making processes (Figure 1).

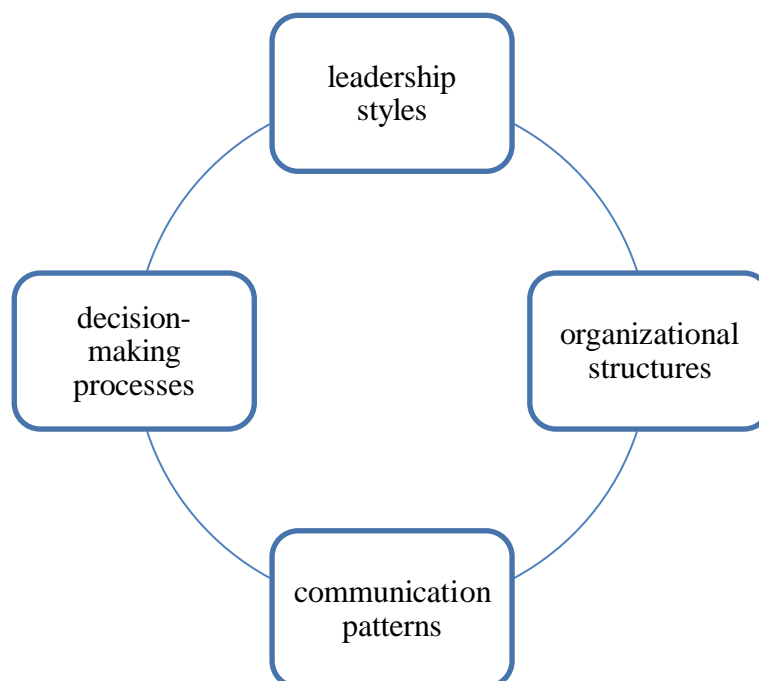


Figure 1. The main directions in which the comparative analysis of the corporate culture of the EU countries was carried out

Source: developed by author

By juxtaposing cultural practices across different national contexts, this analysis aims to uncover both similarities and differences, offering insights into the complexities of managing cross-cultural dynamics within multinational corporations operating in the EU.

Leadership Styles. Leadership styles within corporate cultures across European Union (EU) countries exhibit a diverse array of approaches, reflecting the unique cultural contexts and historical legacies of each member state. This comparative analysis delves into the predominant leadership styles observed in selected EU countries, highlighting both similarities and differences and examining their implications for organizational dynamics.

Germany. In Germany, hierarchical and authoritative leadership styles are prominent, rooted in a strong respect for authority and a preference for clear lines of command. Leaders often exhibit a directive approach, providing clear instructions and expecting strict adherence to established procedures. This leadership style reflects cultural values of orderliness, efficiency, and respect for hierarchy. Decision-making tends to be centralized, with leaders assuming a dominant role in setting goals and making strategic decisions.

France. Similarly, France demonstrates a preference for hierarchical leadership structures, characterized by a top-down approach to decision-making and a strong emphasis on respect for authority. Leaders in French corporate culture often wield significant power and influence, guiding organizational strategy and direction. However, there is also a recognition of the importance of diplomacy and relationship-building in French leadership, with leaders expected to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics within the organizational hierarchy.

Sweden. In contrast to the hierarchical leadership styles prevalent in countries like Germany and France, Sweden embraces more participative and egalitarian leadership approaches. Swedish leaders prioritize collaboration, consensus-building, and employee empowerment, fostering a culture of open communication and shared decision-making. This leadership style aligns with cultural values of equality, transparency, and inclusivity, emphasizing the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment.

United Kingdom. The United Kingdom exhibits a diverse range of leadership styles, reflecting its multicultural society and dynamic business landscape. While hierarchical structures are prevalent in traditional sectors, such as finance and law, there is also a growing emphasis on adaptive and transformational leadership styles, particularly in innovative industries like technology and creative services. British leaders often demonstrate flexibility, pragmatism, and a willingness to adapt their approach to suit the needs of the organization and its employees.

Netherlands. In the Netherlands, leadership styles are characterized by a pragmatic and consensus-oriented approach. Dutch leaders prioritize open communication, collaboration, and inclusivity, seeking to involve employees in decision-making processes and foster a sense of ownership and commitment. This leadership style reflects cultural values of tolerance, pragmatism, and egalitarianism, emphasizing the importance of building trust and consensus within the organization.

On the basis of the conducted research, we systematized common features and differences in leadership by country (table 1).

Table 1. Common features and differences in leadership across EU countries

Common Features in Leadership Across Countries		Differences in Leadership Across Countries	
Respect for Authority	Across Germany, France, and the Netherlands, there is a common feature of respecting authority within the organizational hierarchy. Leaders in these countries are often expected to demonstrate authority and guide organizational strategy	Hierarchy vs. Egalitarianism	Germany and France emphasize hierarchical leadership structures, where leaders hold significant power and authority. In contrast, Sweden and the Netherlands prioritize egalitarianism, promoting collaboration and empowerment among employees
Clear Communication	Effective communication is emphasized in leadership across all countries, albeit with variations in styles. Clear instructions and expectations are valued, whether it's through hierarchical directives (Germany and France) or participative dialogue (Sweden and the Netherlands)	Directive vs. Participative	While Germany and France lean towards directive leadership styles, providing clear instructions and expecting adherence to established procedures, Sweden and the Netherlands embrace participative approaches, prioritizing collaboration and shared decision-making
Decision-Making Roles	In all countries, leaders play a significant role in decision-making processes, though the degree of involvement varies. Whether through centralized decision-making (Germany and France) or through consensus-building (Sweden and the Netherlands), leaders influence strategic decisions	Adaptive vs. Traditional	The United Kingdom demonstrates a more adaptive and flexible leadership style, reflecting its multicultural society and dynamic business landscape. In contrast, countries like Germany and France may adhere more to traditional leadership models
Cultural Adaptation	Leaders demonstrate adaptability to cultural norms and values, adjusting their leadership styles to suit the organizational and societal context. This adaptability is particularly evident in the United Kingdom, reflecting its multicultural environment	Emphasis on Relationship-Building	French leadership places a strong emphasis on diplomacy and relationship-building, reflecting the importance of navigating complex interpersonal dynamics within the organizational hierarchy. This aspect may be less pronounced in other countries
		Consensus-Building	The Netherlands stands out for its pragmatic and consensus-oriented leadership approach, emphasizing open communication and collaboration to foster trust and ownership among employees

Source: developed by author

The comparative analysis of leadership styles in corporate cultures across EU countries highlights the rich diversity of approaches observed within this dynamic region. While hierarchical and authoritative leadership styles are prevalent in some countries like Germany and France, others, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, embrace more participative and egalitarian approaches. Understanding the nuances of leadership styles within different cultural contexts is essential for multinational corporations operating in the EU, as it enables them to navigate the complexities of cross-cultural management and leverage cultural diversity as a source of competitive advantage. By embracing cultural sensitivity and adaptability, organizations can foster

inclusive and effective leadership practices that drive organizational success in the diverse and dynamic EU market.

Organizational Structures. Organizational structures within corporate cultures across European Union (EU) countries exhibit diverse configurations, reflecting varying cultural values, historical legacies, and economic contexts. This comparative analysis explores the predominant organizational structures observed in selected EU countries, highlighting similarities and differences and examining their implications for organizational dynamics.

Germany. In Germany, organizational structures often reflect a strong emphasis on hierarchy, stability, and formalization. Many German companies adopt a traditional hierarchical model, with clear lines of authority and well-defined roles and responsibilities. Decision-making tends to be centralized, with senior management playing a prominent role in setting strategic direction and overseeing operations. This structured approach aligns with cultural values of orderliness, efficiency, and respect for authority.

Sweden. Conversely, Sweden embraces more decentralized and flexible organizational structures, reflecting cultural values of egalitarianism, innovation, and collaboration. Swedish companies often adopt flat hierarchies, with an emphasis on empowerment and employee autonomy. Decision-making is distributed across various levels of the organization, allowing for greater agility and adaptability in response to changing market conditions. This participative approach fosters a culture of openness, transparency, and trust.

France. In France, organizational structures tend to be more hierarchical and centralized, mirroring cultural values of respect for authority and adherence to established norms. Many French companies have a pyramidal structure, with power concentrated at the top and limited autonomy granted to lower-level employees. Decision-making processes can be bureaucratic and slow-moving, with a strong emphasis on formal procedures and protocol. This structured approach reflects a preference for stability and orderliness within the organizational environment.

United Kingdom. The United Kingdom exhibits a diverse range of organizational structures, reflecting its multicultural society and dynamic business landscape. While traditional hierarchical structures are prevalent in some sectors, such as finance and law, there is also a growing trend towards flatter and more agile organizational models, particularly in industries like technology and creative services. British companies often emphasize flexibility, innovation, and adaptability, seeking to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and creativity.

Netherlands. In the Netherlands, organizational structures are characterized by a pragmatic and consensus-oriented approach. Dutch companies often adopt matrix or network-based structures, emphasizing collaboration, cross-functional teams, and stakeholder engagement. Decision-making processes are often decentralized, with a focus on consensus-building and participative leadership. This flexible approach aligns with cultural values of tolerance, pragmatism, and inclusivity, promoting a culture of openness and cooperation.

On the basis of the conducted research, we systematized common features and differences of organizational structures in corporate cultures by country (table 2).

Table 2. Common features and differences of organizational structures in corporate cultures across EU countries

Common Features		Differences	
Clear Roles and Responsibilities	Across all countries, organizational structures emphasize clarity in roles and responsibilities, ensuring that employees understand their positions within the hierarchy	Hierarchy vs. Flat Hierarchies	Germany and France favor hierarchical structures, emphasizing clear lines of authority and centralized decision-making. In contrast, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands adopt flatter hierarchies, promoting empowerment, autonomy, and decentralization
Decision-Making Processes	While the degree of centralization varies, decision-making processes are integral to organizational structures in each country. Whether centralized (Germany and France) or decentralized (Sweden, United Kingdom, and Netherlands), decisions are made to align with organizational goals and cultural values	Centralized vs. Decentralized Decision-Making	While Germany, France, and to some extent the United Kingdom lean towards centralized decision-making, Sweden and the Netherlands prioritize decentralization and participative leadership. This difference influences the speed of decision-making and responsiveness to market changes
		Formalization vs. Flexibility	Organizational structures in Germany and France tend to be more formalized, with strict adherence to established procedures and protocols. Conversely, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands embrace flexibility, allowing for greater agility and adaptability to changing environments
Alignment with Cultural Values	Organizational structures in each country reflect underlying cultural values. Whether it's respect for authority (Germany and France), egalitarianism (Sweden), adaptability (United Kingdom), or inclusivity (Netherlands), structures are designed to resonate with cultural norms	Emphasis on Collaboration	The Netherlands stands out for its emphasis on collaboration and stakeholder engagement, reflected in matrix or network-based structures. This collaborative approach fosters cross-functional teams and consensus-building, promoting openness and cooperation within the organization
		Innovation and Creativity	The United Kingdom places a strong emphasis on innovation and creativity in its organizational structures, particularly in industries like technology and creative services. This focus on agility and entrepreneurship drives the adoption of more agile and adaptive models

Source: developed by author

The comparative analysis of organizational structures in corporate cultures across EU countries underscores the diversity of approaches observed within this dynamic region. While some countries, like Germany and France, exhibit more centralized and hierarchical structures, others, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, embrace more decentralized and flexible models. Understanding the nuances of organizational structures within different cultural contexts is essential for multinational corporations operating in the EU, as it enables them to adapt their organizational practices to suit local preferences and leverage cultural diversity as a source of competitive advantage. By embracing cultural sensitivity and flexibility, organizations can build more

inclusive and effective organizational structures that foster innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth in the diverse and dynamic EU market.

Communication Patterns. Communication patterns within corporate cultures across European Union (EU) countries exhibit a diverse range of approaches, influenced by cultural values, historical contexts, and societal norms. This comparative analysis explores the predominant communication patterns observed in selected EU countries, highlighting both similarities and differences and examining their implications for organizational dynamics.

Germany. In Germany, communication patterns often reflect a preference for directness, clarity, and professionalism. German corporate culture values precision and efficiency in communication, with an emphasis on clear objectives, structured discussions, and well-defined roles. Communication tends to be task-oriented, focusing on achieving specific goals and objectives. While formalities are respected, there is also an expectation of transparency and honesty in communication exchanges.

Sweden. Conversely, in Sweden, communication patterns are characterized by a more egalitarian and inclusive approach. Swedish corporate culture values open dialogue, active listening, and consensus-building. Communication tends to be participative, with an emphasis on collaboration and mutual respect. Swedish companies often prioritize informal communication channels, such as team meetings and open forums, to encourage sharing of ideas and perspectives. Additionally, Swedes place a high value on work-life balance, leading to a more relaxed and informal communication style in the workplace.

France. In France, communication patterns are influenced by a strong emphasis on hierarchy, formality, and diplomacy. French corporate culture values politeness, etiquette, and respect for authority in communication exchanges. Language is often formal and indirect, with an emphasis on maintaining harmony and avoiding confrontation. Decision-making processes may involve extensive discussions and consensus-building among stakeholders, reflecting a preference for inclusivity and collaboration.

United Kingdom. The United Kingdom exhibits a diverse range of communication patterns, reflecting its multicultural society and dynamic business landscape. While British corporate culture values clarity, professionalism, and efficiency in communication, there is also an appreciation for humor, informality, and adaptability. British companies often prioritize open and transparent communication channels, such as regular team meetings and informal discussions, to facilitate collaboration and innovation.

Netherlands. In the Netherlands, communication patterns are characterized by a pragmatic and direct approach. Dutch corporate culture values honesty, transparency, and efficiency in communication exchanges. Language is often straightforward and to the point, with an emphasis on clarity and precision. Dutch companies prioritize open dialogue and constructive feedback, fostering a culture of openness and trust in communication exchanges.

On the basis of the conducted research, we systematized common features and differences of communication patterns in corporations by country (table 3).

Table 3. Common features and differences of communication patterns in corporations across EU countries

Common Features		Differences	
Professionalism	Across all countries, there is an emphasis on professionalism in communication exchanges. Whether it's directness (Germany), inclusivity (Sweden), formality (France), clarity (United Kingdom), or honesty (Netherlands), professionalism is valued in conveying messages effectively	Directness vs. Indirectness	There's a spectrum of directness in communication across countries. Germany and the Netherlands tend to favor direct communication, while France prefers indirectness to maintain harmony and avoid confrontation. Sweden and the United Kingdom fall somewhere in between, balancing directness with inclusivity and adaptability
Respect	Respect for others is a common feature in communication patterns across countries. Whether it's respecting hierarchical structures (Germany and France), valuing collaboration (Sweden), appreciating diversity (United Kingdom), or fostering trust (Netherlands), respect forms the foundation of effective communication	Formality vs. Informality	The level of formality in communication varies across countries. France values formal language and etiquette, reflecting respect for authority and hierarchy. In contrast, the United Kingdom embraces informality and humor to facilitate open dialogue and innovation. Sweden and the Netherlands adopt a more balanced approach, combining professionalism with informality to promote collaboration and transparency
Efficiency	Efficiency is another common feature, with a focus on achieving communication objectives in a timely manner. Whether it's through structured discussions (Germany), informal channels (Sweden), consensus-building (France), open dialogue (United Kingdom), or straightforward language (Netherlands), efficiency is valued in optimizing communication processes	Emphasis on Collaboration	Collaboration is emphasized in communication patterns, particularly in Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. While Sweden prioritizes inclusivity and consensus-building, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands emphasize open dialogue and constructive feedback to foster trust and cooperation within the organization
		Cultural Adaptation	Communication patterns are adapted to cultural norms and values in each country. Whether it's precision and efficiency (Germany), egalitarianism and work-life balance (Sweden), hierarchy and diplomacy (France), diversity and adaptability (United Kingdom), or honesty and trust (Netherlands), communication reflects cultural preferences and priorities

Source: developed by author

The comparative analysis of communication patterns in corporate cultures across EU countries highlights the diversity of approaches observed within this dynamic region. While some countries, like Germany and France, exhibit more formal and structured communication patterns, others, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, embrace more informal and participative approaches. Understanding the nuances of communication patterns within different cultural contexts is essential for multinational corporations operating in the EU, as it enables them to navigate cross-cultural interactions effectively and leverage cultural diversity as a source of competitive advantage. By embracing cultural sensitivity and adaptability, organizations can build more inclusive and effective communication strategies that foster collaboration, innovation, and sustainable growth in the diverse and dynamic EU market.

Decision-Making Processes. Decision-making processes within corporate cultures across European Union countries exhibit diverse approaches, influenced by cultural values, organizational structures, and historical contexts. This comparative analysis explores the predominant decision-making processes observed in selected EU countries, highlighting similarities and differences and examining their implications for organizational dynamics.

Germany. In Germany, decision-making processes often follow a methodical and consensus-oriented approach. German corporate culture values thorough analysis, careful consideration of alternatives, and risk mitigation in decision-making. Decisions are typically made through a hierarchical process, with input from various stakeholders and a focus on achieving consensus among key decision-makers. While this approach may result in slower decision-making, it also promotes buy-in and commitment from all involved parties.

Sweden. Conversely, in Sweden, decision-making processes are characterized by a more decentralized and participative approach. Swedish corporate culture values inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration in decision-making. Decisions are often made through a consultative process, involving input from employees at all levels of the organization. Swedish companies prioritize consensus-building and empowerment, allowing employees to contribute their perspectives and ideas to the decision-making process. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among employees.

France. In France, decision-making processes are influenced by a strong emphasis on hierarchy and formalization. French corporate culture values authority, expertise, and adherence to established norms in decision-making. Decisions are typically made by senior management or a designated authority, with limited input from lower-level employees. While this centralized approach may facilitate efficiency and clarity, it can also result in a lack of flexibility and innovation in decision-making.

United Kingdom. The United Kingdom exhibits a diverse range of decision-making processes, reflecting its multicultural society and dynamic business landscape. While traditional hierarchical structures are prevalent in some sectors, such as finance and law, there is also a growing trend towards more agile and adaptive decision-making models, particularly in innovative industries like technology and creative services. British companies often prioritize flexibility, innovation, and adaptability, seeking to empower employees and foster a culture of entrepreneurship and creativity.

Netherlands. In the Netherlands, decision-making processes are characterized by a pragmatic and consensus-oriented approach. Dutch corporate culture values inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration in decision-making. Decisions are often made through a consultative process, involving input from stakeholders across the organization. Dutch companies prioritize open dialogue and constructive debate, seeking to reach consensus and align on the best course of action. This approach fosters a culture of trust and cooperation within the organization.

On the basis of the conducted research, we systematized common features and differences on Decision-making processes in corporations by country (table 4).

Table 4. Common features and differences on decision-making processes in corporations across EU countries

Common Features		Differences	
Inclusivity	Decision-making processes in all countries prioritize inclusivity to some extent. Whether through hierarchical structures (Germany and France) or participative approaches (Sweden, United Kingdom, and Netherlands), stakeholders at various levels are involved in the decision-making process	Hierarchy vs. Decentralization	There's a spectrum of centralization in decision-making processes across countries. Germany and France lean towards hierarchical and centralized decision-making, with senior management or designated authorities making decisions. In contrast, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands adopt more decentralized and participative approaches, involving stakeholders at various levels in the decision-making process
Transparency	Transparency is another common feature, with decision-making processes aiming to be transparent and open. Whether it's through clear communication (Germany and Netherlands) or consultative processes (Sweden, United Kingdom, and Netherlands), transparency fosters trust and accountability within the organization	Emphasis on Formalization	Decision-making processes in France tend to be more formalized, with adherence to established norms and procedures. This formalization may facilitate efficiency and clarity but can also limit flexibility and innovation. In contrast, countries like Sweden and the Netherlands prioritize pragmatism and adaptability in decision-making, seeking to foster a culture of trust and cooperation
Consensus-Building	Consensus-building plays a significant role in decision-making processes across countries. Whether it's through thorough analysis (Germany), collaborative efforts (Sweden and Netherlands), or adaptive models (United Kingdom), reaching consensus helps align stakeholders and promote commitment to decisions	Agility and Innovation	The United Kingdom stands out for its emphasis on agility and innovation in decision-making processes, particularly in innovative industries. British companies prioritize flexibility and adaptability, empowering employees to contribute their ideas and drive entrepreneurship and creativity
		Consensus vs. Efficiency	While consensus-building is valued across countries, the balance between consensus and efficiency varies. In countries like Germany and France, consensus is sought through hierarchical processes, which may result in slower decision-making. In contrast, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands prioritize efficiency alongside consensus-building, seeking to balance inclusivity with agility and responsiveness to market changes

Source: developed by author

The comparative analysis of decision-making processes in corporate cultures across EU countries highlights the diversity of approaches observed within this dynamic region. While some countries, like Germany and France, exhibit more centralized and hierarchical decision-making processes, others, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, embrace more decentralized and participative approaches. Understanding the nuances of decision-making processes within different cultural contexts is essential for multinational corporations operating in the EU, as it enables them to adapt their decision-making strategies to suit local preferences and leverage cultural diversity as a source of competitive advantage. By embracing cultural

sensitivity and adaptability, organizations can build more inclusive and effective decision-making processes that foster innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth in the diverse and dynamic EU market.

Conclusions. The comparative analysis of corporate culture in EU countries reveals a nuanced interplay between national culture, organizational dynamics, and management practices. While certain countries exhibit commonalities in leadership styles, organizational structures, communication patterns, and decision-making processes, significant variations exist across cultural contexts. Recognizing and navigating these cultural differences is essential for multinational corporations seeking to operate effectively within the EU, requiring a nuanced understanding of local cultural norms and values. By embracing cultural sensitivity and adaptability, organizations can leverage the richness of diversity within the EU to drive innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth.

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