

more likely to use it under all circumstances. We have suggested (e.g., Helmreich & Merritt, 1998) that the computer may be anthropomorphized in some cultures as a high status, electronic crewmember not to be questioned, a strategy which is clearly inappropriate in many situations. Figure 6 shows ordered means on a composite measure of preference for and reliance on automation.

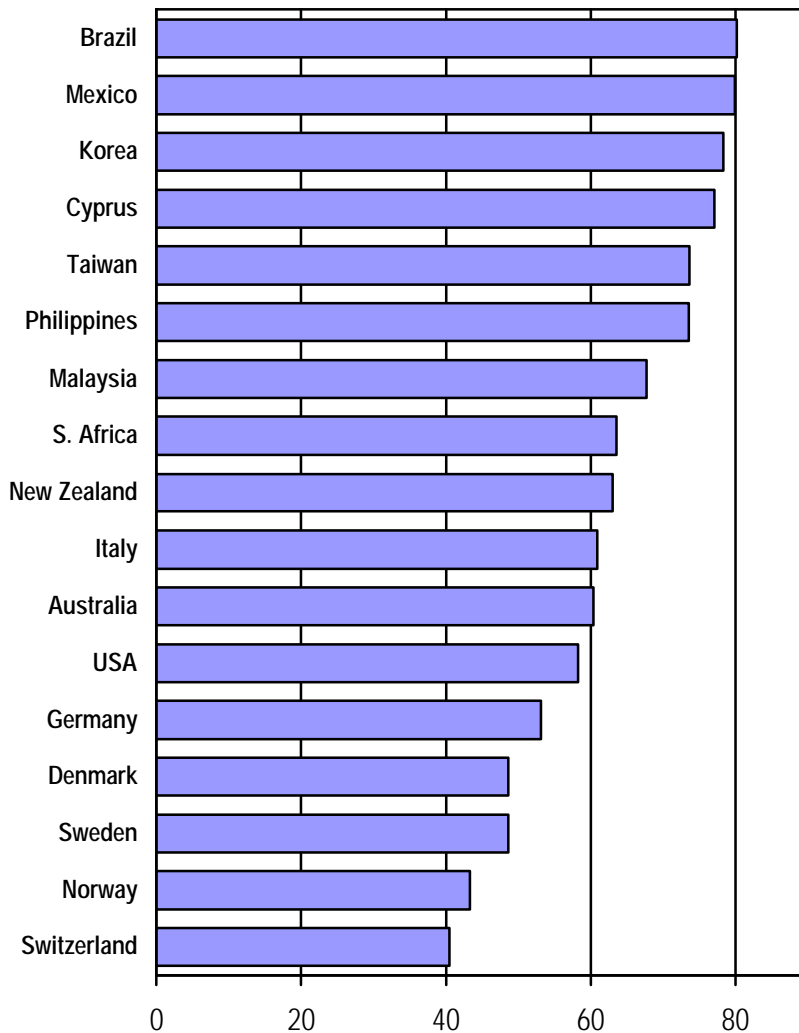


Figure 6. Mean scores of pilots from 18 countries on the FMAO Automation Preference and Reliance Scale (Range 0 – 100)

There are not ‘good’ and ‘bad’ national cultures with regard to the prevalence of human error and the universal goal of safety. Each culture has elements with both positive and negative implications for effective group function as it affects these universal goals. However, there are organizational cultures that actively discourage safety initiatives and eschew efforts to build a safety culture. Ron Westrum (1992) has referred to such cultures as ‘pathological’ in their rejection of information that might avert catastrophe. In such organizations, the primary defenses are the positive aspects of the professional and national cultures and the diligence of regulatory agencies.