



CRM and Culturally Specific Behaviours





Why do we need to understand behaviour based on culture?



Captain: 'We are crashing'

First Officer: 'Right, yeah we are crashing, right'

Spoken by the crew of KQA507 on 5th May 2007, 12-13 seconds before impact with the ground

The need to understand culture



- In numerous occurrences, aviation accidents are influenced by inter-relationships between the flight crew
- Accident reports don't clearly identify the latent cultural factors that have contributed to the flight crew's decision making & actions
- Trend is to focus on technical aspects & failures within the organization specific to oversight & training

The need to understand culture



- Social separation post-flight, based upon rank or cultural group may make it difficult to establish team spirit or group identity
- Cultural differences may inhibit open communication and team fellowship needed for safe flight
- Culture can be a problem only if it is left unmanaged
- Cross cultural skills are needed to develop effective performance

Culture and CRM



- The ultimate responsibilities & final decisions for a flight rests with the Captain
- CRM supports the concept of shared responsibilities & effective teamwork with the need for authority to be challenged
- Does CRM take culture into account?
- Many CRM teachings simply state that the FO must be more assertive
- Is this a realistic objective across all cultures?
- How do current CRM models fit into various African cultures?

Types of culture



- National culture (what is it?)
 - Set of norms, behaviours, beliefs & customs that exist within the population of a sovereign nation
 - Individuals whose present nationality & nationality at birth match that of the place in which they are presently living & working are typically carrying the respective national culture
 - Flight crews who are culturally homogeneous may still suffer from cultural conflict
 - Flight crews may not fit the typical cultural models for their nationality

Culture definitions



Cultural Dimensions

- Individualism
- Power distance
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Masculinity
- Long term orientation
- Indulgence

Individualism/Collectivism



Majority of the world's population are group orientated (collectivist) which is the norm & 'individualism the exception'

Cultural theories & management practices, including CRM, are developed by researchers from individualistic, typically Anglo-Saxon, backgrounds which do not transfer well into collective societies

Individualism/Collectivism

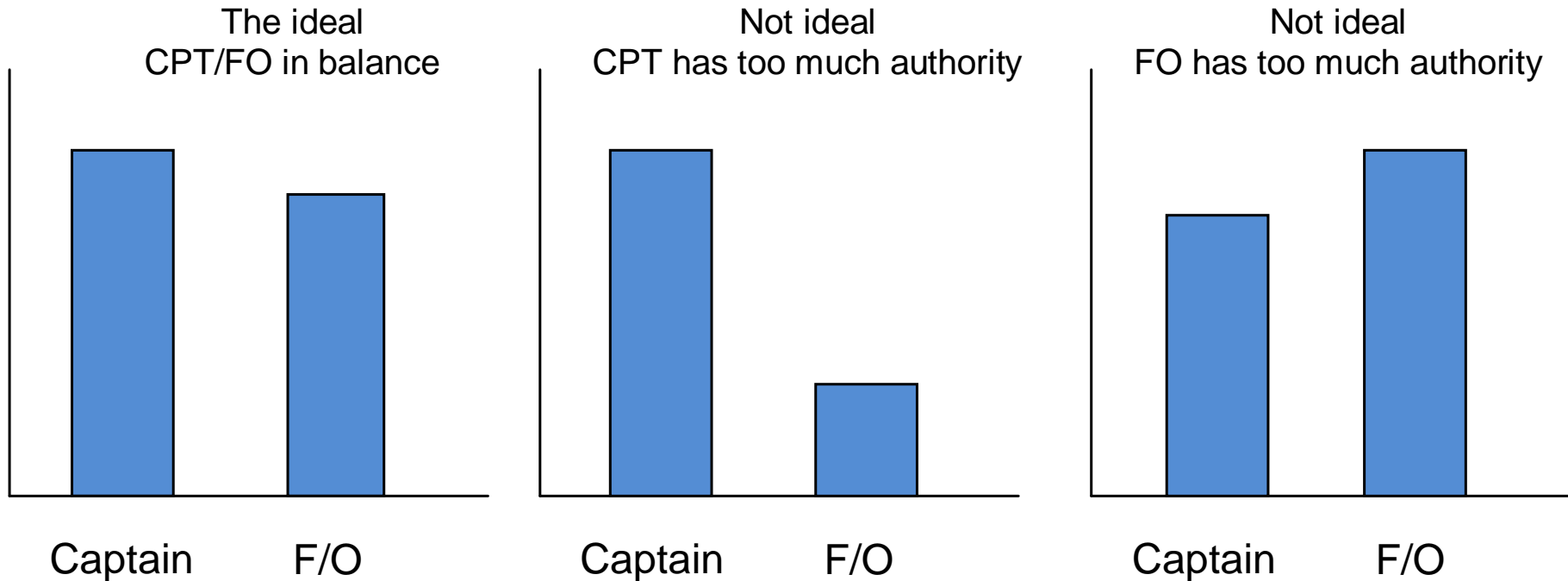


Individualism	Collectivism
Consider the respect for one's self above all others where they expect to be treated with respect	It is considered rude to directly confront another person
Perceive that the use of 'yes' means that you agree or have a positive view of the request being communicated	In a hi-context, often collective, culture, 'yes' simply means I have heard what you have said
Confrontation is expected	Aim for harmony which may actually be considered a greater objective
Endeavour to conform to rules rigidly	Support members of an in-group who are important to them regardless of what is 'right and good'
Guilt an individual trait	Shame can be considered a collective trait

Power distance



Trans-Cockpit Authority Gradient



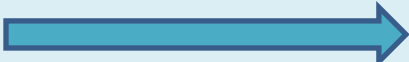

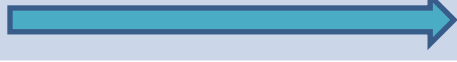

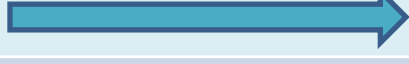
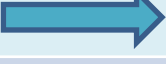
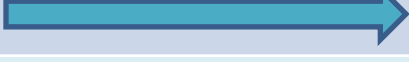
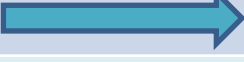




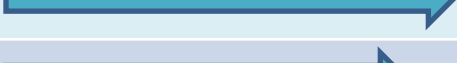
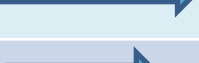



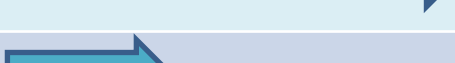
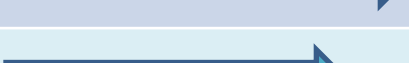
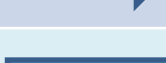








Power distance



- The ‘ideal’ TAG is where the Captain has authority but decision making & cockpit management is influenced by inputs from the First Officer
 - Reality may be different to the ideal with the Captain exerting excessive influence & command over the First Officer
- Accident analysis identifies:
 - Words such as ‘timid’, ‘sensitive’, ‘subordinate’, ‘subdued’ & ‘shy’ are used to describe the First Officers
 - Words such as ‘over confident’, ‘arrogant’, domineering’ and ‘boastful’ are used to describe the Captains

	Power Distance	Individualism
Burkina Faso	 70	 15
Ethiopia	 70	 20
Ghana	 80	 15
Kenya	 70	 25
Malawi	 70	 30
Mozambique	 85	 15
Namibia	 65	 30
Nigeria	 80	 30
Senegal	 70	 25
South Africa	 49	 65
Tanzania	 70	 25
Zambia	 60	 35
U.K.	 35	 89

Professional Culture



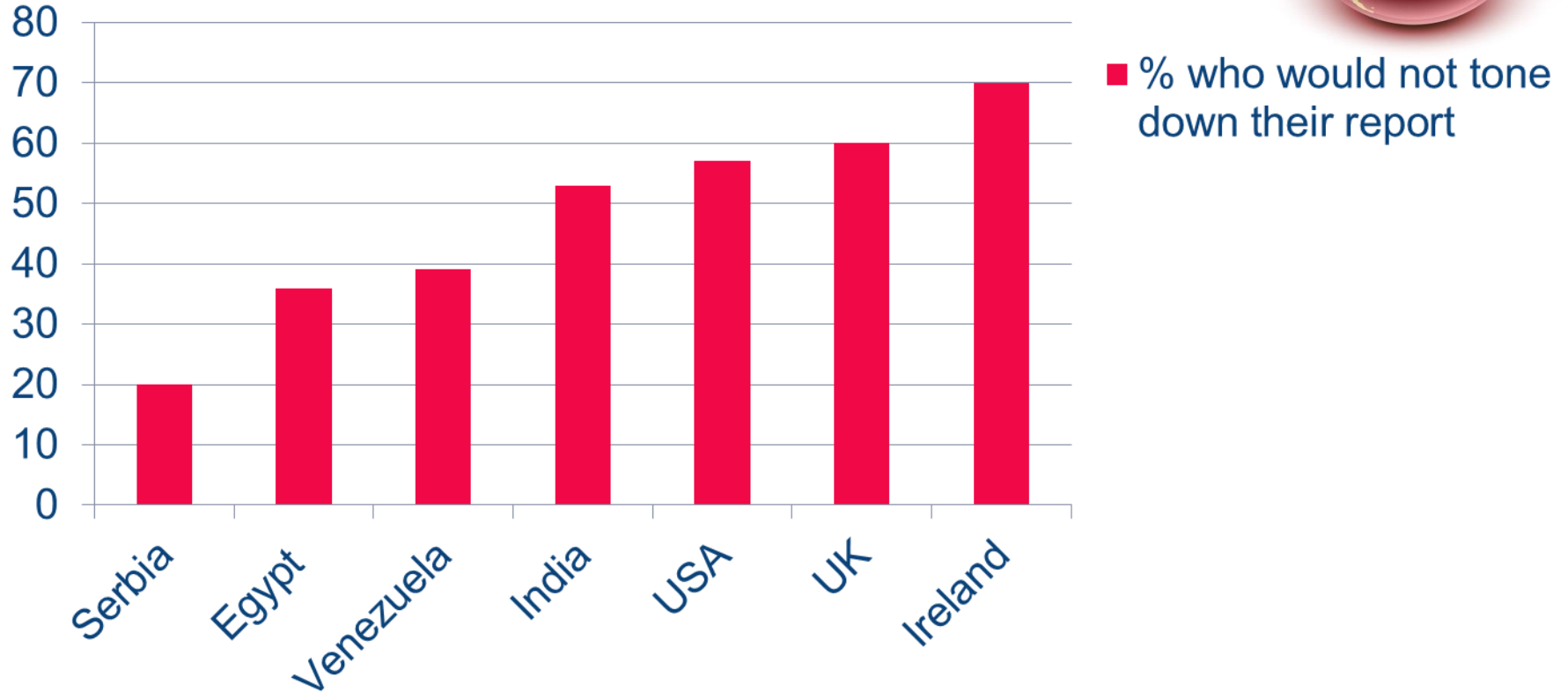
- Reflects attitudes & values associated with the respective profession
 - Pilots in most cases do like their job because they love flying
 - High performance standards & high personal investments are the result of their pride in the profession
 - Personal weaknesses such as fatigue, stress, or levels of high workload are often denied
- Professional culture is not concrete with various cultural factors simultaneously working in unison to affect a pilot's decisions
- In emergencies & times of stress or fatigue the flight crew may have a tendency to 'revert to deeply-rooted behaviors'

Culture in practice



- You are a doctor for an insurance company. You examine a close friend who needs more insurance. You find he is in pretty good shape, but you are doubtful on one or two minor points which are difficult to diagnose.
- What right does your friend have to expect you to tone down your doubts in his favour?

Culture in practice



How do these results correspond with your beliefs?

Your own cultural bias



Let us look at instructors and assessors as a cultural conflict example:

- An individualistic instructor/assessor may decide that the objectives of the organization are key in a will to 'get the job done' to the detriment of the reality
 - This act may please the organization who perceive their crews & assessors as having adequate, or indeed higher than average, skills
 - It also makes less work for the assessor who may hold a self serving individualistic trait

Your own cultural bias



- A collective instructor/assessor may aim for harmony with their co-workers & does not want the person being assessed to lose face
 - The collectivist will commit to the needs of the individual & not necessarily the organization



In closing

- Culture is not a bad thing and is to be recognized
- We may have differing beliefs and values
- We can adapt to our environment
- We may not conform to our stereotypical models
- Is expecting an FO to be more assertive enough?
- Your Captains and Instructors have a responsibility also

Consider this in your CRM teachings



Questions