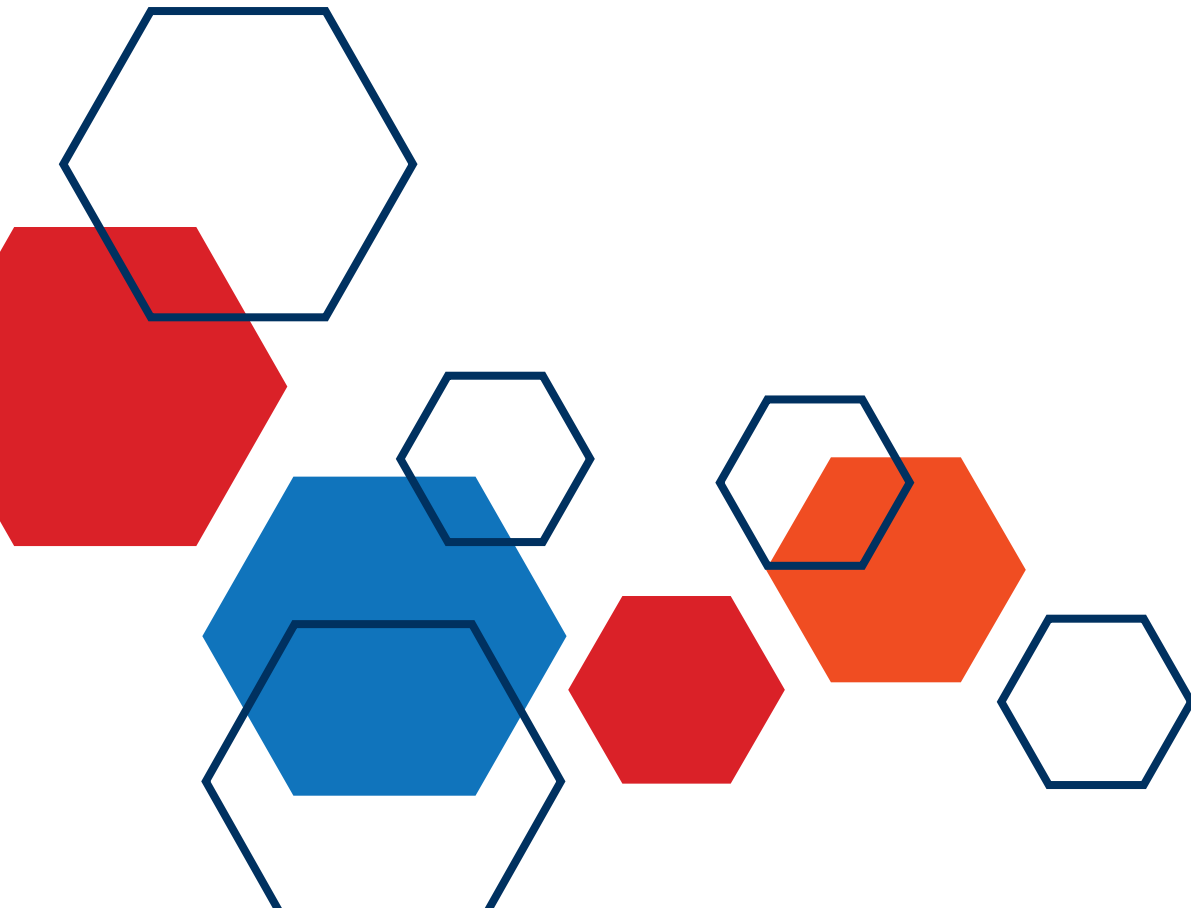


White Paper

Nordic Countries vs. World: Hogan 360 Comparison

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Executive summary

Understanding similarities and differences in leaders' multi-rater performance can help support the development of leadership talent within organisations. One interesting area of exploration is whether there are differences in the performance of leaders from countries worldwide. This white paper summarises research focusing specifically on leaders in Nordic countries and how they compare to leaders from other countries worldwide, highlighting their relative strengths and opportunities.

The key findings are:

- Leaders in Nordic countries obtained scores comparable to those of their European and global counterparts on the Hogan 360. Most of the differences reported between leaders in Nordic countries and their European and global counterparts were, for the most part, modest in size. This suggests a fair degree of similarity in the type and frequency of leadership behaviours observed for leaders in Nordic countries compared to their European and global counterparts.
- That said, moderately significant differences were identified for the competencies of Team Player, Customer, Accountability, and Innovation. This pointed towards greater expectations among raters of leaders in Nordic countries around a stronger focus on collaboration, more active approaches to seeking customer feedback, seeking more opportunities for continuous improvement, and engage in performance discussions.
- When looking at top ranked strengths and opportunities for leaders in Nordic countries, there was a lot of similarity with those found for leaders in other European countries and other countries in the world. That said, the ranked strengths indicated that leaders in Nordic countries might be seen as more inclined communicate effectively with others and to leverage inspirational messages to motivate their team.

Background

Effective leadership is crucial for building and maintaining high-performing teams. Leadership impacts team engagement, which affects business outcomes like profitability, productivity, and customer satisfaction (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2021; Harter et al., 2020; Schaufeli, 2018).

Previous research examining differences in leadership across countries has found that there tend to be universal aspects of leadership and aspects that can differ from country to country. For example, the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) project examined leadership across 62 nations and found that some leadership behaviours were universally effective. In contrast, other leadership behaviours were more culturally sensitive (Dorfman et al., 2012).

Leadership in Nordic Countries

Despite what is considered an average growth rate for developed countries, the per capita GDP in the Nordic region has remained significantly higher than the European Union average, reaching US\$80,406 compared to US\$57,098 respectively (Norlén et al., 2024). However, Nordic countries face specific challenges regarding labour shortages, attributed to a university-centric educational policy, a declining working-age population, and reskilling required to meet technological advancements in industry. It is estimated that the population growth in Nordic countries is primarily due to people migrating into the region (Norlén et al., 2024), which suggests that the workforce in Nordic countries is likely to contain people from across the globe. Global leaders who intend to work in and manage Nordic teams might benefit from understanding leadership behaviours unique to the region.

The GLOBE Project's Nordic Europe cluster, comprising Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, has a unique cultural profile characterised by high levels of Institutional Collectivism (i.e., group loyalty and advocating for the collective sharing of rewards) and Uncertainty Avoidance (i.e., supporting

rules and procedures to minimise the uncertainty of future events). According to the GLOBE Project (2020), these societies emphasise group loyalty, collective actions, and strict adherence to rules to mitigate future uncertainties. They exhibit moderate yet relatively high Future Orientation (i.e., actively plan for the future) and Gender Egalitarianism (i.e., less-male dominated) compared to other geographic clusters. However, the cluster scores very low on Power Distance (i.e., emphasise an equal distribution of authority and status privileges), Assertiveness (i.e., less confrontational in personal relationships), and In-Group Collectivism (i.e., more self-reliant and have fewer family connections).

When looking specifically at what is idealised as good leadership in Nordic countries, a performance-driven mindset, vision, and high level of participation were held in high esteem. Moreover, leaders who demonstrate strong integrity and a sense of self-reliance are also seen as more effective (GLOBE Project, 2020). Relative to other countries, ideal leaders in Nordic countries are viewed to prioritise collective success over personal gain, rejecting any form of status-seeking or self-centred behaviour.

Defining Leadership Effectiveness

Two universal characteristics have been proposed to define effective leadership (Hogan & Blickle, 2013):

1. Getting Along, i.e., behaviours that foster harmony, cooperation, and positive relationships within a group.
2. Getting Ahead, i.e., behaviours that drive goal achievement and organisational success.

A leader's performance and effectiveness, particularly in Getting Along and Getting Ahead, can be assessed using the Hogan 360. This tool evaluates the leadership dimensions of Self-Management and Relationship Management, which are key to understanding Getting Along. Leaders who score highly in these areas tend to show emotional resilience and strong interpersonal skills, leading to enhanced results through better relationships (Peter Berry Consultancy, 2022). The other leadership dimensions evaluated by the Hogan 360, Working in the Business and Working on the Business, offer insights into Getting Ahead. High scores in these dimensions typically reflect the technical expertise required for effective service delivery, operational excellence, and the strategic acumen needed to navigate the broader business landscape (Peter Berry Consultancy, 2022).

Cross-Cultural Understanding of Leadership Effectiveness

As multinational organisations expand into new regions, the need for standardised methods to identify and develop effective leadership becomes more critical. Many organisations rely on assessments like the Hogan 360 to efficiently collect and compare data from diverse leaders. It is essential to ensure that these assessments accurately reflect leaders' unique challenges and expectations in different regions.

The importance placed on leadership behaviours associated with Getting Along and Getting Ahead may differ in different regions. For example, leaders in Nordic countries might more strongly emphasise Getting Along, endorsing behaviours associated with involving others in making and implementing decisions (Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2024).

This white paper examines the similarities and differences in how raters in Nordic countries interpret items related to the Hogan 360 compared to those in other regions. It also investigates potential differences in the scores for various leadership competencies assessed by the Hogan 360. By understanding these nuances, organisations can craft targeted strategies to enhance leadership effectiveness in Nordic countries, ultimately raising engagement, performance, and business outcomes.

Methodology

Participants

Data was analysed for a sample of 44,212 subjects who completed the Hogan 360 between the 1st of January 2013 and the 31st of December 2023. The sample included 360 subjects from Nordic countries, 5298 subjects from Europe, and 43,852 subjects from other countries on continents worldwide, including Africa, Asia, the Middle East, North America, and South America. The sample consisted of subjects from diverse sectors and industries, including (but not limited to) banking and finance, building and construction, education, healthcare and medical, hospitality, IT and telecommunications, professional services, and sales and marketing. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the different groups used to compare Nordic countries to the rest of the world.

Table 1

Number of Subjects and Raters for Nordic Countries, Europe, and the World

Region	Number of Subjects	Number of Raters
Nordic Countries	360	4,242
Europe	5,298	68,014
Rest of the World	43,852	505,670

Measures

The Hogan 360 (Peter Berry Consultancy, 2022) is a multi-rater survey that collects leadership feedback from key stakeholder groups, including managers, peers, direct reports, and customers or external stakeholders. As illustrated in Figure 1, the tool evaluates four key domains and 14 competencies.

In its current form, the Hogan 360 includes:

- 50 scaled items rated on a 7-point scale, where 1 means 'Does not describe this person at all' and 7 means 'Describes this person exactly'. These 50 items are mapped to the four quadrants of the Hogan 360 Leadership Model and their corresponding sub-themes.
- Ranked items designed to identify the top four key strengths and top four key opportunities for improvement. Raters select the top four strengths/opportunities from 26 items, with the top selected item receiving a weight of 4, the second a weight of 3, the third a weight of 2, and the fourth a weight of 1.
- Three open-ended questions focusing on strengths, opportunities, and overused strengths.

This study focuses on data from the scaled items and ranked strengths and opportunities.

Statistical analysis

We began by ensuring that the Hogan 360 assessment consistently measured leadership qualities across different cultures, confirming that raters in Nordic countries and other regions interpreted the leadership dimensions similarly. This was achieved through multi-group confirmatory factor analyses. Once consistency in understanding the leadership dimensions within the Hogan 360 was established, we used robust t-tests to compare the average ratings of leaders in Nordic countries with those of leaders in the rest of Europe on the Hogan 360 competencies. Effect sizes were calculated to examine the size of the differences between the means reported for the two groups compared. Following this, we extended the analysis by comparing leaders from Nordic countries with leaders from the rest of the world. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 2.

Figure 1
The Hogan 360 Leadership Model



Results

Table 2

Hogan 360 Scores for Nordic Countries, Europe, and the World

	Nordic	World	Europe
OVERALL SCORE	5.50	5.63*	5.62*
GETTING ALONG	5.58	5.68*	5.67*
Self-Management	5.71	5.78*	5.78*
Integrity	5.79	5.89*	5.89*
Resilience	5.65	5.70*	5.70*
Relationship Management	5.45	5.57*	5.55*
Communication	5.44	5.55*	5.54*
People Skills	5.41	5.57*	5.54*
Team Player	5.27	5.47*	5.45*
Engaging	5.68	5.69*	5.68
GETTING AHEAD	5.48	5.62*	5.61*
Working in the Business	5.68	5.79*	5.79*
Capability	5.96	6.03*	6.03*
Efficiency	5.40	5.57*	5.55*
Results	5.77	5.84*	5.84*
Customer	5.45	5.65*	5.65*
Working on the Business	5.28	5.45*	5.43*
Accountability	5.26	5.46*	5.43*
Motivation	5.23	5.41*	5.39*
Strategy	5.26	5.39*	5.39*
Innovation	5.34	5.52*	5.48*

Note: * $p < 0.05$. Values in bold reflect areas where differences when compared to Nordic countries are practically meaningful based on effect sizes.

There were significant differences between leaders in Nordic countries compared to leaders in the rest of Europe when looking at their results on the Overall Score, Getting Along, and Getting Ahead, with leaders in Nordic countries scoring significantly lower. However, only the difference reported for Getting Ahead was moderate in strength compared to leaders globally, which implies that there may be notable and practically relevant differences in how frequently leaders in the Nordic are seen to display behaviours associated with Getting Ahead compared to leaders worldwide.

When looking more closely at the four underlying leadership dimensions, significant differences were found for Self-Management, Relationship Management, Working in the Business, and Working on the Business, with leaders

in Nordic countries consistently scoring lower than their European and global counterparts. For Working on the Business, these differences were moderate in strength compared to leaders in the rest of the globe, implying that there may be meaningful differences in how frequently leaders in Nordic countries display behaviours associated with the dimension. The results imply that there may be noticeable differences in leaders in Nordic countries engaging in innovation and strategic planning, and building motivated, accountable teams.

However, for Self-Management, Relationship Management, and Working in the Business, the differences were statistically modest and less likely to have notable practical implications. In other words, there are only likely to be slight

differences between leaders in Nordic countries and their European and global counterparts in how they manage themselves and when it comes to activities focused on areas such as building trust with others and the daily operations of the business.

When comparing differences based on the underlying competencies, leaders in Nordic countries obtained significantly lower ratings for most of the competencies examined except for Engaging, where there was no significant difference. Compared to leaders in the rest of the world, the competencies with a significant difference

of moderate strength included Team Player, Accountability, and Innovation. These results imply that there may be noticeable differences in how leaders in Nordic countries foster innovation, actively build team cohesion, and manage performance by providing consistent and constructive feedback. A significant difference of moderate strength was also reported for Customer when comparing leaders in Nordic countries to leaders in the rest of Europe and the world. This result implies that there may be a noticeable difference in the extent leaders in Nordic countries driven by internal and external customer needs to drive improvement.

Top strengths and opportunities to improve results

Table 3

Strength Item Rankings for leaders in Nordic Countries, Europe, and the World

	Nordic	Europe	World
Is action-oriented and gets things done	1	5	4
Has a professional approach	2	2	5
Works hard with a strong work ethic	3	3	2
Has a positive and enthusiastic attitude	4	6	6
Has solid technical ability, experience and knowledge	5	1	1
Is calm under pressure	6	4	3
Strong communication skills	7	13	14
Is customer focused and good with clients	8	8	9
Is driven, competitive and determined around results	9	10	11
Is well organised	10	9	12
Builds effective relationships	11	8	7
Good at planning and thinking ahead	12	20	19
Shows passion; motivates and inspires others	13	12	18
Sets clear goals and objectives	14	15	17
Is understanding, friendly and empathetic	15	16	15
Has strong leadership skills	16	11	10
Is strategic and visionary	17	22	22
Is good at solving problems and fixing issues	18	14	13
Suggests new and innovative ideas	19	21	21
Has high ethical standards and integrity	20	18	8
Is a positive role model	21	17	20
Has strong people skills	22	19	16
Shows loyalty	23	23	23
Good sense of humour	24	25	24
Challenges poor performance	25	24	25
Makes the tough decisions	26	26	26

There were several similarities in the top five rated strengths when comparing leaders in Nordic countries to leaders in the rest of Europe and the world. These were:

- Is action-oriented and gets things done
- Has a professional approach
- Works hard with a strong work ethic
- Has solid technical ability, experience and knowledge

Strengths that were more pronounced for leaders in Nordic countries compared to the rest of Europe and the world included:

- Strong communication skills
- Good at planning and thinking ahead
- Is strategic and visionary

Other strengths that were higher for leaders in Nordic countries compared to the rest of the world included:

- Shows passion; motivates and inspires others

On the other hand, leaders in the rest of Europe and the world were more likely to be rated higher on the following strengths relative to leaders in Nordic countries:

- Has strong leadership skills

Leaders in the rest of the world were also more likely to be rated higher on the following strengths relative to leaders in Nordic countries:

- Is good at solving problems and fixing issues
- Has high ethical standards and integrity
- Has strong people skills

Table 4

Opportunity Item Rankings for leaders in Nordic Countries, Europe, and the World

	Nordic	Europe	World
Stop taking on too much and spreading yourself too thin	1	2	1
Delegate more	2	1	2
Challenge poor performance	3	3	3
Share knowledge and resources	4	5	5
Show leadership on issues	5	6	7
Set clear goals and expectations	6	4	4
Be more strategic and visionary	7	7	8
Provide more feedback and development opportunities	8	13	12
Listen more and let others have their say	9	9	11
Be more available and visible in the workplace	10	10	10
Motivate others and improve morale	11	8	6
Communicate better	12	11	13
Build stronger relationships	13	14	14
Improve your time management and organisational skills	14	15	15
Improve your people and interpersonal skills	15	19	16
Be more action-oriented and make it happen	16	18	18
Be more assertive and confident	17	12	9
Acquire better job and/or industry knowledge/skills	18	17	17
More customer and/or client focus	19	22	21
Be more open to change	20	20	19
Be more of a team player	21	21	22
Be more understanding, supportive and empathetic	22	16	20
Be less emotional and frustrated	23	24	25
Be more positive	24	23	23
Be less aggressive	25	25	24
Treat people fairly and without favouritism	26	26	26

There were some similarities between the top five rated opportunities to improve when comparing leaders in Nordic countries to leaders in the rest of Europe and the world. These were:

- Stop taking on too much and spreading yourself too thin
- Delegate more
- Challenge poor performance
- Share knowledge and resources

Leaders in the rest of Europe and the world were more likely to be rated higher on the following opportunities to improve relative to leaders in Nordic countries:

- Be more assertive and confident

Leaders in the rest of Europe were more likely to be rated higher on the following opportunities to improve relative to leaders in Nordic countries:

- Provide more feedback and development opportunities
- Be more understanding, supportive and empathetic

Leaders in the rest of the world were more likely to be rated higher on the following opportunities to improve relative to leaders in Nordic countries:

- Motivate others and improve morale

Implications

While leaders in Nordic countries were generally rated lower on leadership dimensions, as measured by the Hogan 360, most of the differences reported between leaders in Nordic countries and the rest of Europe were statistically modest. The differences reported between leaders in Nordic countries and the rest of the world were, for the most part, also modest. This suggests a fair degree of similarity in the type and frequency of leadership behaviours observed for leaders in Nordic countries compared to their European and global counterparts. Engagement statistics reported for Nordic countries trail our expectations, given what was observed for leadership effectiveness. The current global number of employees reported to be engaged is 23 per cent. Nordic countries appear to closely align with the worldwide percentage reported, with Iceland standing at 26 per cent, Sweden at 23 per cent, Denmark at 21 per cent, Norway at 21 per cent, and Finland at 15 per cent. However, a few specific opportunities are identified for leaders in Nordic countries.

A moderate size and significant difference between leaders in Nordic countries and the rest of the world was reported at a quadrant level for Working on the Business. A breakdown of the quadrant at a subtheme level suggests that Accountability might be an opportunity for leaders in Nordic countries compared to their global counterparts. This corresponds with one of the top five ranked opportunities for leaders in Nordic countries: to “challenge poor performance”. This might stem from a cultural sensitivity, where idealised leadership profiles are perceived to be less confrontational. Consequently, lower-scoring leaders in Nordic countries might sometimes avoid difficult performance discussions.

Innovation may also be an opportunity for leader in Nordic countries compared to their global counterparts. Leaders in

Nordic countries may benefit from taking more opportunities to foster innovation to differentiate products and services, and remain competitive in a dynamic global environment. Leaders high in innovation are often more effective in adapting strategies in response to external shifts, making them adept at navigating economic, technological, or industry changes.

Leaders in Nordic countries scored noticeably lower on Team Player than their global counterparts. This could be due to the emphasis on team-oriented leadership in Nordic cultures (GLOBE Project, 2020), which might set high expectations and result in lower average ratings. Another possibility is that Nordic leaders have fewer opportunities to collaborate or empower others, possibly due to a cultural emphasis on self-reliance. This may lead to less delegation or sharing of knowledge and resources, as highlighted in the opportunities table.

Finally, leaders in Nordic countries were noted to have lower customer orientation than their European and global counterparts. The strong purchasing power in Nordic markets makes them attractive and heightens customer expectations, leading to higher customer churn rates in a competitive environment (Saleh & Saha, 2023). As a result, leaders in these regions might face more critical evaluations or be held to higher performance standards.

In summary, leaders in Nordic countries receive similar ratings on specific dimensions of the Hogan 360, with a few areas suggested for tailored leadership development strategies. Organisations can foster a more effective leadership team by focusing on Nordic leaders’ specific needs and strengths, ultimately maintaining or improving business outcomes.

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Peter Berry Consultancy (PBC) is a global leadership advisory firm grounded in the science of personality and organisational psychology. We combine rigorous psychometrics with expert consulting to deliver deeper insight into human behaviour at work.

Through evidence-based diagnostics, research, consulting and coaching, we help organisations make better decisions about talent; strengthening leadership, improving team performance, succession planning and enabling sustainable organisational success.

PBC is the developer of proprietary diagnostic tools, including the Hogan 360 Suite, and is an authorised distributor of Hogan Assessments.

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