



Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

# Bachelor thesis

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The influence of safety-specific transformational leadership  
and multicultural competence on safety consciousness  
in multinational working teams

Completed by:

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Topic 12: Veiligheid en communicatie in multinationale organisaties

Date: 01.06.2015

**Abstract:**

Occupational safety is an important issue for all organisations, because it minimises health threats and economical losses. This study examines the influence of leadership style on the employees' safety consciousness, with a special focus on cultural differences. With a questionnaire based on previous research a survey was carried out amongst around 196 workers who operate within multinational teams, in order to give insight into the requirements for managers of multicultural teams. It was found that leadership style indeed predicted safety consciousness.

**Keywords:** safety consciousness, safety-specific transformational leadership (SSTL), multinational working teams, cultural competence, uncertainty avoidance, communication

**Introduction:**

Occupational safety is an issue that no organisation can elude. The prevention of any kind of dangerous situations as well as the unobstructed initiation of counteractions in one of them minimises health threats and economic losses. This runs through all organisational layers but is certainly most important for people in risky working environments, as for example workers involved in construction or production with heavy equipment.

Numerous studies have been conducted in the field of occupational safety. But even though over the last 30 years a not inconsiderable amount of literature coverage of this research area piled up, not much consensus on causes, content and consequences has been reached (Guldenmund, 2000). There are several terms used to describe and measure safety-related actions and attitudes. For example Cox and Cox (1991) defined the expression *safety culture* as to “reflect the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and values that employees share in relation to safety” (as cited in Guldenmund, 2000, p. 228). A similar definition is given by Lee (1996), who defines *safety culture* as “the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies, and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, and organisation's health and safety management” (as cited in Guldenmund, 2000, p. 288).

Other researchers, such as Cooper and Philips (1994) used the expression *safety climate*. “Safety climate is concerned with the shared perceptions and beliefs that workers hold

regarding safety in their work place” (as cited in Guldenmund, 2000, p. 288). Most of the definitions of *safety culture* and *safety climate* are quite implicit and merge together. A third term is the *safety performance*. This refers to the extent to which organizations can prevent or disarm dangerous situations (de Koster, Stam & Balk, 2011).

There are many other terms and expressions used in this research field but none of them are relevant or will be used in the following. This study will only focus on the term *safety consciousness* which will be explained in the paragraph below.

### *Safety consciousness*

Although there are overlapping definitions, safety consciousness may not be mistaken for or understood as a synonym for safety climate. De Koster, Stam and Balk (2011) use this term in their study in which they investigated the influence of safety consciousness on warehouse accidents. They collected and analysed data from a survey among 78 warehouse managers and 1033 warehouse employees in order to test the hypotheses that safety consciousness of employees of a warehouse is positively related to safety performance of that warehouse. Their findings suggest that safety consciousness indeed is a predictor of safety performance. In their study, the researchers used the definition that safety consciousness covers the employees’ perceptions of occupational safety that are related to themselves. It incorporates the mental awareness of safety practices at the workplace and the knowledge and skills to practically apply them.

The current study will focus on safety awareness rather than on actual safety performance and will use the definition of de Koster, Stam and Balk (2011). In the following the term safety consciousness will be used.

### *Safety-specific transformational leadership*

Different researchers have dealt with the role that managers and other leaders play in the area of occupational safety. In doing so, most of the studies that have been carried out in the past years investigate the influence of management or leadership on the actual safety performance. Christian, Bradley, Wallace and Burke (2009) found in their meta-analysis, that managers and particularly the importance they place on safety, influences the employees’ safety behaviour and that “improving management commitment to safety may meaningfully enhance safety performance” (Christian, Bradley, Wallace & Burke, 2009, p. 1123)

In line with these findings go the conclusions of Kines, Anderson, Spangenberg, Mikkelsen, Dyreborg and Zohar (2010). They carried out a pre-post intervention-control design with five

construction work gangs and found that construction site foremen who include safety in their daily verbal exchanges with workers significantly influence the level of safety in a positive way.

In contrast to the research that focused on the effects of leadership on safety performance, de Koster, Stam and Balk (2011) also investigate its effects on safety consciousness. In their study they test the hypothesis that safety-specific transformational leadership (SSTL) of a manager relates positively to safety consciousness of employees of a warehouse. SSTL refers to transformational leadership in which leaders make use of inspiration, motivation and involvement of their employees in order to create a positive safety climate. Leaders who make use of this specific style aim to show their employees that they care about safety themselves, and motivate them through inspirational communication to perform above the expectations (de Koster, Stam & Balk, 2011). They conclude that SSTL strongly predicted safety consciousness. Following this particular study, this research will investigate this correlation in a multinational context and will make use of the definition of SSTL also used in de Koster, Stam and Balk (2011).

### *Multinational working teams*

In today's globalized world national and cultural borders are hardly existent in the job market anymore. Opportunities are expanding and a large number of opportunities arise. Numerous industrial sectors are dominated by multinational organisations with employees who form a multicultural workforce. Simple workmen as well as trained professionals are heading abroad, in search of occupational success.

The ambition to make one's way in the global market is omnipresent and spread over the world. Multicultural experiences lead to new work opportunities and can function as a career boost. It is paired with other reasons which motivate people to take a job in a foreign country. These reasons could for example be an economic crisis in a person's home country, having to escape from a war or some kind of persecution, or emigration for family related reasons.

There is a wide range of causes for the current situation, with in many companies and organizations, both the management and especially the lower workforce often consist of multinational teams. These circumstances present an extensive challenge for superiors and leaders of these teams. This study focuses on a multinational team's leader's cultural competence with regard to the safety consciousness of the workers. This term is explained in the following paragraph. For this study it was decided to consider an organization or working

team multinational if at least 10% of the workforce or the group members have a nationality other than Dutch.

### *Cultural competence*

Starren, Hornikx and Luijters (2012) examine in a recent study how national culture may play a role in important antecedents of safety behaviour. They analysed occupational safety in multicultural teams and organizations and state that it deserves more attention in modern research. The scholars suggest that leaders should be specially trained in intercultural effectiveness.

Multicultural understanding and acting have become crucial skills. In this study we use the term cultural competence to summarize these skills. But what exactly does that mean? The most frequently used way of describing and characterising cultures are Hofstede's initial four cultural dimensions individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance, which have been constantly updated by himself over the past few decades (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2001). Plenty of cross-cultural research has been done over the past years using these dimensions. Culpepper and Watts (1999) tested in their study if the Dorfman and Howell scales and Robertson and Hoffman scale (as cited in Culpepper & Watts, 1999) are appropriate to measure Hofstede's dimensions at an individual level and proved their validity. Since this study is focused on cultural dimensions at an individual and not national level, the definitions of Culpepper and Watts will be used.

Leaders have to be aware of these cultural dimensions and how they affect people's attitudes and actions. They therefore have to know their employees or members of the working team they are responsible for. A leading person who adjusts his or her managerial practices to the different cultural norms and values of the workers acts with a high cultural competence and is likely to avoid communicative misunderstandings based on cultural differences.

For this study we take a closer look at the cultural dimension uncertainty avoidance. The uncertainty avoidance index of a country shows to what extent people feel comfortable in new or ambiguous situations (Hofstede, 2001). Cultures which score high on uncertainty avoidance tend to prefer detailed, written instructions over vague, oral information. The anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory developed by Gudykunst (as cited in Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001, p.55) suggests "that anxiety/uncertainty management directly influences the effectiveness of communication in interpersonal and intergroup encounters." (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001, p.55). It is therefore important for managers to keep this

particular cultural dimension in mind and how it is displayed by his or her employees, because it can be an important factor on the way to successful and effective communication.

In order to measure cultural competence, which includes the previously mentioned multicultural understanding and acting, this study will make use of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). This instrument measures dimensions linked to multicultural orientation and adaptation on a personal level (Leone, van de Zee, van Oudenhoven, Perugini & Ercolani, 2005). Leone, van de Zee, van Oudenhoven, Perugini and Ercolani examined the validity of this questionnaire and their findings support it. The content of the questionnaire will later be discussed in detail.

### *The set-up of this study*

As previous research shows, leadership style is particularly of importance for safety related communication. Furthermore, in multicultural organisations it may be the case that due to cultural differences important safety instructions or other safety related communication is misunderstood or completely missed.

This study will in some aspects be similar to the research carried out by de Koster, Stam and Balk (2011) who, as mentioned earlier, investigated the influence of SSTL on safety consciousness. This study combines this approach with the focus on cultural differences from the analysis of Starren, Hornikx and Luijters (2012), who suggest that safety research has to focus on developing tools to measure culture on the level of the individual.

The examination of the influence of SSTL on safety consciousness will therefore be expanded by a cultural aspect on an individual level. The following question arises:

### **Research question**

*In what way does leadership style predict safety consciousness in multinational teams?*

Since this question is formulated very broadly and it will be looked at two different aspects of leadership style, the research question will be divided into two subquestions.

### *Subquestions*

In order to investigate the influence of SSTL on safety consciousness, the first sub-question will be:

- 1. Does a safety-specific transformational leadership style predict safety consciousness?*

Furthermore, in order to investigate the influence of cultural competence, the second sub-question will be:

2. *Does a leader's cultural competence predict safety consciousness?*

Based on the literature review two expectations can be formulated. Based on the findings of de Koster, Stam and Balk (2011), it is expected that SSTL predicts a better safety consciousness. Based on the on the research approach of Starren, Hornikx and Luijters (2012), it is expected that a leader's cultural competence is also a predictor of safety consciousness.

## **Method:**

### *Instruments*

In this study a slightly adjusted version of a questionnaire developed on the basis of earlier research carried at the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen in cooperation with TNO, Safety and Health (see also Starren, in prep) was used. This questionnaire can be found in the appendix (1). It was designed to measure the respondents' safety consciousness (questions 1-7), the actual safety performance (8-10), the respondents' uncertainty avoidance (11-15), the respondents' power distance (16-21), the perceived SSTL (22-31) and perceived cultural competence (32-49) of the respondents' leader at their workplace and the respondents' proficiency in Dutch. Since this questionnaire was used as an instrument in a number of slightly different studies, it contains several constructs that are irrelevant for this study. The data from these constructs were not used in any statistical analyses which are discussed later on. In the following, the variables and constructs of the questionnaire that were relevant to and used in the current study are explained in detail.

The questionnaire started with a short introductory text, informing the respondents about the purpose of the survey without giving away too much information about the actual research question. It was stated that this research project focuses on multilingualism at the workplace and the risks that are related to that. The respondents were not informed about the fact that the main focus lies on the influence of leadership-style on safety consciousness. Furthermore the introduction clarified that every participant will be treated absolutely anonymous and that the given answers will only be used for research purposes. Lastly, the respondents were informed that filling in the questionnaire will take about 15 minutes and that

they can ask questions at any time. The questionnaire was available in Dutch, English, German and Polish, since it was expected that most respondents are native speakers of these languages. These versions were directly translated from the Dutch version.

The dependent variable that was looked at was safety consciousness. As defined earlier, safety consciousness covers the employees' perceptions of occupational safety that are related to themselves (de Koster, Stam & Balk, 2011). In order to determine the safety consciousness of the respondents, the items measuring safety consciousness from de Koster, Stam and Balk (2011) were used (Appendix 4). The heading question was 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements, based on your own work environment?', followed by seven statements, measured by 7-point Likert scales which were anchored with '1=I absolutely disagree' – '7= I absolutely agree'. The statements were for example 'I know what to do when a dangerous situation occurs.' or 'I know where to report safety risks (such as loose screws)'. The rest of the statements can be found in the final questionnaire that was used (Appendix 5). In order to measure the reliability of the variable Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was calculated. The reliability for the items measuring safety consciousness was good ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

The first independent variable measured by the questionnaire was safety-specific transformational leadership. Using the definition from the introduction section, SSTL refers to transformational leadership in which leaders make use of inspiration, motivation and involvement of their employees in order to create a positive safety climate (de Koster, Stam & Balk, 2011). In this study the respondents are employees of a multinational organization or work in a multinational team. Therefore, what was investigated was the perceived degree of SSTL of their line managers. It was hoped that this would give a relatively objective insight in the actual leadership style. In order to measure these perceptions it was made use of the items measuring safety-specific transformational leadership from de Koster, Stam and Balk (2011), (Appendix 4). The heading statement was 'Following questions regard the way your manager performs on safety issues within the company.', followed by ten statements, measured by 7-point Likert scales which were anchored with '1=I absolutely disagree' – '7= I absolutely agree'. The statements were for example 'My manager is determined to preserve a safe work environment.' or 'My manager expresses his/her opinion about the importance of safety on the work floor.'. All statements can be found in the appendix (5). The reliability for the items measuring safety-specific transformational leadership was good ( $\alpha = .89$ ).



The second independent variable that was investigated was the cultural competence of managers or leading persons. Cultural competence describes the earlier mentioned multicultural understanding and acting. As explained in the introduction, this study will make use of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). This instrument measures dimensions linked to multicultural orientation and adaptation on a personal level (Leone, van de Zee, van Oudenhoven, Perugini & Ercolani, 2005). The definitions and sample items for the five MPQ dimensions can be found in the appendix (2). For this study the items had to be rewritten from a first-person narrative to a third-person narrative, since the perceived cultural competence of the respondents' line managers was examined. The perceived cultural competence was expected to be more relevant than the managers' own evaluation about their cultural competence. The heading question was 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements, based on your own manager?', followed by 18 statements, measured by 7-point Likert scales which were anchored with '1=I absolutely disagree' – '7= I absolutely agree'. The items for the MPQ questions can be divided into five the dimensions 'flexibility', 'open-mindedness', 'social initiative', 'cultural empathy' and 'emotional stability'. For this study it is not necessary to look at each of these dimensions separately. Cultural competence will therefore be used as the umbrella term. The statements were for example 'My manager is open for changes.', 'My manager gets involved in other cultures.' or 'My manager easily approaches other people.'. The whole construct can be found in the final questionnaire (appendix 5). The reliability for the items measuring cultural competence was good ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

Besides the dependent and the two independent variables that were measured in order to answer the research question and the related sub-questions, the questionnaire also determines the cultural value uncertainty avoidance of the participants in order to additionally examine how national culture may play a role in important antecedents of safety behaviour (as in Starren, Hornikx & Luijters, 2012). As explained earlier, Hofstede (2011) defines that cultures which score high on uncertainty avoidance tend to prefer detailed, written instructions over vague, oral information. Since this study is focused on cultural dimensions at an individual and not national level, the Dorfman and Howell scales and Robertson and Hoffman scale (as cited in Culpepper & Watts, 1999) were used. Culpepper and Watts (1999) tested in their study if the Dorfman and Howell scales are appropriate to measure Hofstede's dimensions at an individual level and proved their validity, as mentioned in the introduction. The Dorfman and Howell (1988) scales measuring Cultural Dimensions at the individual level (as cited in Culpepper & Watts, 1999) can be found in the appendix (3).

The heading question was ‘To what extent do you agree with the following statements, based on your own work environment?’, followed by five statements, measured by 7-point Likert scales which were anchored with ‘1=I absolutely disagree’ – ‘7= I absolutely agree’. The statements were for example ‘It is important to have detailed functional descriptions and instructions so that I know what is expected from me at all times.’ or ‘Regulations that I encounter on a daily basis help me doing my work.’. The rest of the statements can be found in the final questionnaire that was used (Appendix 5). In order to measure the reliability of the variable Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was calculated. The reliability for the items measuring uncertainty avoidance was good ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

After encircling their answers on the Likert scales, the respondents were asked to fill in some biographical data, including their gender, age, educational level, nationality and the name of the company they work for. All participants were thanked for their cooperation.

#### *Procedure and respondents*

In order to answer the research question and the related sub-questions, and to test the above mentioned hypotheses, a relatively small-scale survey was conducted in multinational organisations or nationally operating organizations with multinational teams. This was carried out by a group of third year bachelor students of the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. It was aspired to find 300 respondents, who are currently working for an organization that fits the requirements. Its total workforce must therefore, as earlier mentioned, consist of at least 10% of workers whose nationality is not Dutch. All organizations were informed about that, but however, this amount was not precisely calculated for the organizations that participated. In most cases the respondents were directly handed the questionnaires and filled it in under the supervision of the group. In the remaining cases the questionnaires were personally delivered to the companies and collected a few days later.

Eventually, respondents were 196 employees of nine different organizations with a multinational workforce. The companies did not want to be named in this research paper. The percentage of women was 27 (total 53) and 71,9 % were male (total 141). The gender of two respondents was missing. The age ranged from 20 to 65 with a mean of 38. The different educational levels of the respondents were ‘primary school’ with a total of 26, ‘high school’ with a total of 78, ‘vocational education’ with a total of 61 and ‘higher education/university’ with a total of 24. The educational level of 7 respondents was missing. There was a relatively

high variance in nationality: Dutch 54,6% (total 107), German 2% (total 4), Romanian 2% (total 4), Polish 33,2% (total 65), Turkish 2% (total 4) and Thai 1% (total 2). There was respectively one respondent from Aruba, Cambodia, Slovakia, Vietnam and South-Africa (resp. 0.5%). The nationality of 4 respondents was missing.

### *Statistical treatment*

Our study deals with the previously operationalised three variables. Two independent variables, which are the degree of SSTL and the cultural competence of the manager or leading person, and one dependent variable, which is the safety consciousness of the respondents.

In order to test the linear relationship between the possible predictor variables (degree of SSTL and cultural competence) and the dependent variable it was made use of two simple regression analyses. Additionally, it was made use of a simple regression analysis to test the relationship between the respondents' score in uncertainty avoidance and their safety consciousness.

### **Results:**

In order to being able to answer the research question of this study and the related subquestions, and to establish whether the hypothesis can be confirmed or rejected, several statistical tests were carried out. In the following the results for the tests including the two independent variables SSTL and cultural competence are presented in detail. Additionally, the results of the analysis concerning the relation between the respondents' uncertainty avoidance and safety consciousness are shown.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of the dependent and independent variables (unless stated otherwise, each mean is based on n = 196) (1 = very low, 7 = very high)

variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
safety consciousness	6.21	0.85
SSTL*	5.45	1.09
cultural competence**	4.48	0.96
uncertainty avoidance*	5.97	1.08

\*n=195, \*\*n=193

It appeared that on average the safety consciousness ( $M = 6.21$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) and the uncertainty avoidance ( $M = 5.97$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) of the respondents were relatively high, while the perceived SSTL ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) and perceived cultural competence ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) were a bit lower, but still clearly located on the higher half of the Likert scales.

#### *Safety-specific transformational leadership*

A simple regression analysis showed that the variable entered explained 6% of the variance in safety consciousness ( $F(1, 193) = 12.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Perceived SSTL was shown to be a significant predictor of safety awareness ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 2. Regression analysis for the variable that predicts safety consciousness (N = 196)

variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
SSTL	0.20	.06	.25*
$R^2$	.06		
$F$	12.67*		

\* $p < .001$

#### *Cultural competence*

A simple regression analysis showed that the variable entered explained 1% of the variance in safety consciousness ( $F(1, 191) = .004$ ,  $p = .951$ ). Cultural competence was not shown to be a significant predictor of safety awareness ( $\beta = -.004$ ,  $p = .951$ ).

Table 3. Regression analysis for the variable that predicts safety consciousness (N = 196)

variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
cultural competence	-.004	.06	.004**
$R^2$	.01		
$F$	.004*		

\* $p = .951$

#### *Uncertainty avoidance*

A simple regression analysis showed that the variable entered explained 10% of the variance in safety consciousness ( $F(1, 193) = 21.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (x values will be added later, no access

to spss). Uncertainty avoidance was shown to be a significant predictor of safety awareness ( $\beta = .32, p < .001$ ).

Table 4. Regression analysis for the variable that predicts safety consciousness (N = 196)

variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
uncertainty avoidance	0.25	.05	.32*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.10		
<i>F</i>	25,74*		

\* $p < .001$

### Conclusion and discussion:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of safety-specific transformational leadership and multicultural competence on safety consciousness in multinational working teams. Additionally, it was hoped to give further insight about how national culture may play a role in important antecedents of safety behaviour by examining the relation between uncertainty avoidance and safety consciousness. It will be presented below whether or not the research questions were answered by the results and whether the expectations were confirmed or dismissed.

#### *Main findings*

Starting with the first subquestion, ‘Does a safety-specific transformational leadership style predict safety consciousness?’, the current findings suggest that this is indeed the case. The independent variable perceived SSTL was found to be a significant predictor for the dependent variable safety consciousness. Respondents who scored higher on safety consciousness also evaluated their line manager’s leadership style as being safety-specific transformational. The managers’ SSTL was a predictor of the respondents’ safety consciousness. This finding is in line with the findings of de Koster, Stam and Balk (2011) and therefore meets the first expectation that was formulated after determining the research question.

The second subquestion, ‘Does a leader’s cultural competence predict safety consciousness?’ could not be confirmed. The perceived cultural competence was not shown to be a significant predictor of safety awareness. Respondents who evaluated their line manager as being more cultural competent were not found to be more safety conscious compared to

respondents who evaluated their manager as less cultural competent. The leaders' cultural competence does not seem to be a predictor for the respondents' safety consciousness. This conclusion dismisses the second of the earlier drawn hypotheses.

After looking at the answers for both subquestions, the overall research question, 'In what way does leadership style predict safety consciousness in multinational teams?', can be answered: A multinational working team's manager's cultural competence does not predict the team members' safety consciousness, but his or her use of a safety-specific transformational leadership style does predict safety consciousness.

Additionally, it was found that the employees uncertainty avoidance was a significant predictor of safety awareness. Respondents who scored higher on uncertainty avoidance were more safety conscious than respondents who scored lower on this cultural value. The respondents' own uncertainty avoidance therefore operates as a predictor of their safety consciousness. This finding supports the point of view of Starren, Hornikx and Luijters (2012) examined in how national culture may play a role in important antecedents of safety behaviour. They state that it deserves more attention in modern research and suggest that leaders should be specially trained in intercultural effectiveness. The current findings show that a cultural value can indeed predict safety consciousness and leader should be more aware of that.

#### *Limitations and further research*

As in most other studies the current study has some limitations. First of all, it has to be said that the possibilities to generalize the results are limited. It was not possible to find the aspired 300 respondents in the given period of time, which makes it a relatively small-scale study. Additionally, the respondents were unequally distributed over the nine organizations that took part in this research project. The exact characteristics of the working teams were therefore unknown or not further considered. These characteristics are for example the amount of workers in one team, the sector the organization is operating in, the frequency of contact between the line manager and the working team and the amount of foreign workers in each team. Since it is expected that some or all of these characteristics play a role in the relation between leadership style and safety consciousness, a follow-up study could focus on one single multinational organization. When all respondents are found at the same place it eliminates the influence that for example different industries could have on the results.

Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that this study dealt with the *perceived* cultural competence and SSTL of the respondents' line managers. It can only be assumed that this fits

the reality and the managers' actual cultural competence and SSTL. A suggestion for further research is to include the leading persons in the data collection. That could possibly be done by assembling questionnaires especially for leaders or by analyzing their actual behaviour. Afterwards the results from these data could be compared with the questionnaires that were filled in by the employees. This would add more credibility to the findings and make this particular study a more in-depth study.

A point that has to be taken into account is that respondents may have chosen socially desirable answers when they filled in the questionnaires. Although they should theoretically not have been concerned about the idea that any of their answers would be shown to their line managers (because anonymity was granted in the beginning of the questionnaire), they may have rated their leaders better than they would do it only in front of their colleagues.

In addition to that, further research could include more than one of Hofstede's cultural values. In order to keep the current study simple, it was chosen only for the value uncertainty avoidance since it was expected that this variable would be the most relevant. But in fact, the value power distance could also be important for future finding. The power distance index of a country indicates the attitude of the population towards inequalities in the society. Members of a culture with a high power distance, which are less powerful, accept that power is not distributed equally (Hofstede, 2001). This dimension is particularly important for this topic, because it directly influences the general leadership style of a country or respectively a culture.

Finally it has to be said that although there were significant relations found between the perceived SSTL of the line managers and the respondents' safety consciousness, the explanatory power is relatively low. The variable SSTL explained only 6% of the variance in safety consciousness. The same goes for uncertainty avoidance, which explained 10% of the variance. There are certainly numerous other factors which play a role in the process of building up safety consciousness in multinational working teams, but still it can be said that the purpose of this study, which was to examine the influence that safety-specific transformational leadership and cultural competence have on it, was fulfilled.

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## Appendix:

### 1. Questionnaire developed at the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (Starren, in prep)

Beste meneer/mevrouw,

Deze vragenlijst is een onderdeel van onderzoek naar meertaligheid op de werkvloer en de daarbij behorende risico's. Lees de vragen goed door voordat u deze beantwoordt. De vragenlijst is volledig anoniem en de antwoorden worden alleen gebruikt voor dit onderzoek. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 15 minuten. Heeft u vragen of heeft u liever een vragenlijst in het Engels of Duits dan kunt u dat aangeven.

**Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

1.	Ik weet wat ik moet doen in het geval van een gevaarlijke situatie.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	Ik weet waar ik veiligheidsrisico's (zoals losse schroefjes) moet melden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Ik weet wat ik moet doen als ik tijdens mijn werk gewond raak.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Ik weet welke veiligheidskleding en/of uitrusting is vereist om mijn werk uit te mogen voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Ik ben op de hoogte van de veiligheidsrisico's die samengaan gaan met mijn baan.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	Ik weet waar de brandblussers zijn in mijn werkomgeving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Ik weet welke benodigdheden/apparatuur ik nodig heb om specifieke taken veilig uit te voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Geef bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan hoe vaak de omschreven situatie bij u is voorgekomen (1 = nooit, 7 = heel vaak). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

8.	Bent u in de afgelopen 12 maanden tijdens het werk betrokken geweest bij een ongeval of voorval waardoor u ten minste één dag niet kon werken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	Bent u in de afgelopen 12 maanden tijdens het werk betrokken geweest bij een ongeval of voorval waarvoor u medisch behandeld bent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Bent u in de afgelopen 12 maanden tijdens het werk betrokken geweest bij een bijna-ongeval.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	Bent u in de afgelopen 12 maanden terwijl u aan het werk was in contact gekomen met gevaarlijke vloeistoffen, gassen of elektrische spanning die onbedoeld vrijkwamen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Heeft u in de afgelopen 12 maanden moeten werken met slecht functionerende installaties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

13.	Het is belangrijk om functiebeschrijvingen en instructies tot in het detail beschreven te hebben zodat ik te allen tijde weet wat er van mij verwacht wordt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	Mijn leidinggevende verwacht van mij dat ik de werkinstructies zeer nauwlettend opvolg.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	Regels en voorschriften zijn belangrijk omdat deze aangeven wat de organisatie van mij verwacht.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	Voorschriften waar ik dagelijks mee te maken hebt, helpen mij in mijn werk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Werkinstructies zijn belangrijk voor mij tijdens mijn werk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

18.	Mijn leidinggevende zou het merendeel van zijn beslissingen zonder inspraak van zijn teamleden moeten maken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	Het is noodzakelijk dat mijn leidinggevende regelmatig gebruik maakt van autoriteit en macht tijdens het omgaan met zijn teamleden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Mijn leidinggevende zou zelden naar mijn mening of die van een teamlid moeten vragen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	Mijn leidinggevende zou sociaal contact buiten het werk om, met mij of een van mijn teamleden, moeten vermijden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	Ik zou het eens moeten zijn met de beslissingen vanuit het management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	Mijn leidinggevende zou belangrijke taken zelf uit moeten voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

24.	Mijn leidinggevende doet veel moeite om een veilige werkomgeving te behouden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	Mijn leidinggevende laat zien dat hij of zij betrokken is bij een veilige werkomgeving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	Mijn leidinggevende uit zijn/haar mening over het belang van veiligheid op de werkvloer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	Mijn leidinggevende is een goed voorbeeld wat betreft het volgen van veiligheidsmaatregelen en veilig werken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.	Mijn leidinggevende motiveert ons om het werk veilig uit te voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29.	Mijn leidinggevende komt met ideeën om het werk nog veiliger uit te voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30.	Mijn leidinggevende stelt het op prijs wanneer ik met ideeën kom om het werk veiliger uit te voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

31.	Mijn leidinggevende neemt tijd om te laten zien hoe ik mijn werk het veiligst kan uitvoeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32.	Mijn leidinggevende luistert naar mijn klachten en/of vragen over veiligheid als ik die heb.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33.	Mijn leidinggevende beloont ons wanneer wij ons werk volgens de veiligheidsnormen hebben uitgevoerd.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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**Geef u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

34.	Mijn leidinggevende geeft duidelijk aan wie verantwoordelijk is voor het behalen van doelen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35.	Mijn leidinggevende toont mij zijn tevredenheid wanneer aan de verwachtingen wordt voldaan.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36.	Mijn leidinggevende besteedt zijn volledige aandacht aan het oplossen van fouten en klachten.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37.	Mijn leidinggevende richt zijn aandacht op fouten om direct in te kunnen grijpen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Geef u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

38.	Ik sta open voor veranderingen	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39.	Ik heb veel verschillende interesses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40.	In groepsverband neem ik graag het initiatief.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41.	Ik begrijp andermans gevoelens.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42.	Ik blijf kalm in onverwachte situaties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

43. Wat is uw geslacht?                       man                       vrouw

44. Wat is uw leeftijd?                      \_\_\_\_\_ jaar

45. Wat is uw opleidingsniveau?                       Lagere school  
 Middelbare school  
 Beroepsonderwijs  
 Hoger onderwijs/ Universiteit

46. Wat is uw nationaliteit?

Nederlands

Engels

Bulgaars

Duits

Pools

Roemeens

Hongaars

Anders, namelijk \_\_\_\_\_

47. In vergelijking met bedrijven in het land waarin ik geboren ben is dit bedrijf:

*Veel onveiliger*

*Veel veiliger*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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48. Bent u in Nederland geboren?

Ja

Nee, ik ben geboren in \_\_\_\_\_

49. Wat is de naam van het bedrijf waarvoor u werkzaam bent?

\_\_\_\_\_

50. Wat is uw functie binnen de organisatie waarvoor u werkzaam bent?

Magazijnmedewerker, specificeer functietitel: \_\_\_\_\_

Teamleider, specificeer functietitel: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager, specificeer functietitel: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bedankt voor uw medewerking!**

**Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen**



## **2. Definitions and Sample Items for the Five MPQ Dimensions (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2001)**

Cultural Empathy (14 items)

The ability to empathize with the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of individuals from a different cultural background versus an inability to do so

Notices when someone is in trouble (+)

Understands other people's feelings (+)

Takes other people's habits into consideration (+)

Has problems assessing relationships (+)

Openmindedness (14 items)

An open and unprejudiced attitude toward different groups and toward different cultural norms and values

Gets involved in other cultures (+)

Finds other religions interesting (+)

Seeks contact with people from a different background (+)

Has a broad range of interests (+)

Emotional Stability (20 items)

The tendency to remain calm in stressful situations versus a tendency to show strong emotional reactions under stressful circumstances

Can put setbacks in perspective (+)

Keeps calm at ill-luck (+)

Is afraid to fail (-)

Takes it for granted that things will turn out right (+)

Social Initiative (17 items)

A tendency to approach social situations in an active way and to take initiatives

Is inclined to speak out (+)

Is often the driving force behind things (+)

Takes the lead (+)

Easily approaches other people (+)

Flexibility (13 items)

A tendency to regard new and unknown situations as a challenge and to adjust one's behavior to the demands of new and unknown situations

Avoids from adventure (-)

Works mostly according to a strict scheme (-)

Feels uncomfortable in a different culture (-)

Starts a new life easily (+)

**3. Dorfman and Howell (1988) Scales and Robertson and Hoffman (1999) Scale Measuring Cultural Dimensions At the Individual Level (as cited in Culpepper & Watts, 1999)**

Individualism/Collectivism

1. Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.
2. Group success is more important than individual success.
3. Being accepted by the members of your work group is very important.
4. Employees should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group.
5. Managers should encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer.
6. Individuals may be expected to give up their goals in order to benefit group success.

Uncertainty Avoidance

7. It is important to have job requirements and instructions spelled out in detail so that employees always know what a they are expected to do.
8. Managers expect employees to closely follow instructions.
9. Rules and regulations are important because they inform employees what the organization expects of them.
10. Standard operating procedures are helpful to employees on the job.
11. Instructions for operations are important for employees on the job.

Masculinity

12. Meetings are usually run more effectively when they are chaired by a man.
13. It is more important for men to have a professional career than it is for a woman to have a professional career.
14. Men usually solve problems with logical analysis; women usually solve problems with intuition.
15. Solving organizational problems usually requires an active forcible approach which is typical ofmen.
16. It is preferable to have a man in a high level position rather than a woman.

## Power Distance

17. Managers should make most decisions without consulting subordinates.
18. It is frequently necessary for a manager to use authority and power when dealing with subordinates.
19. Managers should seldom ask for the opinions of employees.
20. Managers should avoid off-the-job social contacts with employees.

## **4. Items measuring safety-specific transformational leadership and safety consciousness (De Koster, Stam & Balk, 2011)**

### Safety-specific transformational leadership

#### *Idealized influence*

1. My manager shows determination to maintain a safe work environment
2. My manager behaves in a way that displays commitment to a safe workplace

#### *Inspirational motivation*

3. My manager talks about his/her values and beliefs of the importance of Safety
4. My manager provides continuous encouragement to do our jobs safely

#### *Intellectual stimulation*

5. My manager suggests new ways of doing our jobs more safely
6. My manager encourages me to express my ideas and opinions about safety at work

#### *Individualized consideration*

7. My manager spends time showing me the safest way to do things at work
8. My manager listens to my concerns about safety on the job

#### *Contingent reward*

9. My manager makes sure that we receive appropriate rewards for achieving safety targets on the job
10. My manager expresses satisfaction when I and my colleagues perform our job safely

### Safety consciousness

1. I know what protective equipment and/or clothing is required for my job



2. I am well aware of the safety risks involved in my job
3. I know where the fire extinguishers are located in my workplace
4. I know what equipment is safe to use for my particular job(s)
5. I know how to inform management about any potential hazards I notice on the job
6. I know what procedures to follow if injured on my shift
7. I would know what to do if an emergency occurred on my shift (e.g. fire)

## 5. Final questionnaire used in this study (also available in English, German and Polish):

Beste meneer/mevrouw,

Deze vragenlijst is een onderdeel van onderzoek naar meertaligheid op de werkvloer en de daarbij behorende risico's. Lees de vragen goed door voordat u deze beantwoordt. De vragenlijst is volledig anoniem en de antwoorden worden alleen gebruikt voor dit onderzoek. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 15 minuten. Heeft u vragen of heeft u liever een vragenlijst in het Engels, Duits of een andere taal, dan kunt u dat aangeven.

***Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.***

1.	Ik weet wat ik moet doen in het geval van een gevaarlijke situatie.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	Ik weet waar ik veiligheidsrisico's (zoals losse schroefjes) moet melden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Ik weet wat ik moet doen als ik tijdens mijn werk gewond raak.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	Ik weet welke veiligheidskleding en/of uitrusting is vereist om mijn werk uit te mogen voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Ik ben op de hoogte van de veiligheidsrisico's die samengaan gaan met mijn baan.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	Ik weet waar de brandblussers zijn in mijn werkomgeving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Ik weet welke benodigdheden/apparatuur ik nodig heb om specifieke taken veilig uit te voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*Geef bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan hoe vaak de omschreven situatie bij u is voorgekomen (1 = nooit, 7 = heel vaak). Omcirkel uw keuze.*

8.	Bent u in de afgelopen 12 maanden tijdens het werk betrokken geweest bij een ongeval of voorval waardoor u ten minste één dag niet kon werken?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	Bent u in de afgelopen 12 maanden tijdens het werk betrokken geweest bij een ongeval of voorval waarvoor u medisch behandeld bent?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	Bent u in de afgelopen 12 maanden tijdens het werk betrokken geweest bij een bijna-ongeval?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.*

11.	Het is belangrijk om functiebeschrijvingen en instructies tot in het detail beschreven te hebben zodat ik te allen tijde weet wat er van mij verwacht wordt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	Mijn manager verwacht van mij dat ik de werkinstructies zeer nauwlettend opvolg.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	Regels en voorschriften zijn belangrijk omdat deze aangeven wat de organisatie van mij verwacht.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	Voorschriften waar ik dagelijks mee te maken hebt, helpen mij in mijn werk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	Werkinstructies zijn belangrijk voor mij tijdens mijn werk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent (1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.*

16.	Mijn manager zou het merendeel van zijn beslissingen zonder inspraak van zijn teamleden moeten maken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Het is noodzakelijk dat mijn manager regelmatig gebruik maakt van autoriteit en macht tijdens het omgaan met zijn teamleden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	Mijn manager zou zelden naar mijn mening of die van een teamlid moeten vragen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

19.	Mijn manager zou sociaal contact buiten het werk om, met mij of een van mijn teamleden, moeten vermijden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Ik zou het eens moeten zijn met de beslissingen vanuit het management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	Mijn manager zou belangrijke taken zelf uit moeten voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent**

**(1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

22.	Mijn manager doet veel moeite om een veilige werkomgeving te behouden.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	Mijn manager laat zien dat hij of zij betrokken is bij een veilige werkomgeving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	Mijn manager uit zijn/haar mening over het belang van veiligheid op de werkvloer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	Mijn manager is een goed voorbeeld wat betreft het volgen van veiligheidsmaatregelen en veilig werken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	Mijn manager motiveert ons om het werk veilig uit te voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	Mijn manager komt met ideeën om het werk nog veiliger uit te voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.	Mijn manager stelt het op prijs wanneer ik met ideeën kom om het werk veiliger uit te voeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29.	Mijn manager neemt tijd om te laten zien hoe ik mijn werk het veiligst kan uitvoeren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30.	Mijn manager luistert naar mijn klachten en/of vragen over veiligheid als ik die heb.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31.	Mijn manager beloont ons wanneer wij ons werk volgens de veiligheidsnormen hebben uitgevoerd.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Geeft u bij onderstaande stellingen steeds aan in hoeverre u het met de stelling eens bent**

**(1 = helemaal mee oneens, 7 = helemaal mee eens). Omcirkel uw keuze.**

32.	Mijn manager staat open voor veranderingen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33.	Mijn manager vermijdt avontuur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

34.	Mijn manager werkt zoveel mogelijk volgens een strikt schema.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35.	Mijn manager voelt zich oncomfortabel in een andere cultuur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36.	Mijn manager heeft veel verschillende interesses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37.	Mijn manager raakt betrokken bij andere culturen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38.	Mijn manager zoekt contact met personen met een andere achtergrond.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39.	In groepsverband neemt mijn manager graag het initiatief.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40.	Mijn manager is geneigd zich uit te spreken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41.	Mijn manager is vaak de drijvende kracht achter zaken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42.	Mijn manager benadert andere personen makkelijk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43.	Mijn manager begrijpt andermans gevoelens.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44.	Mijn manager merkt het op als anderen in de problemen zitten.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45.	Mijn manager heeft problemen met het plaatsen van relaties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46.	Mijn manager houdt rekening met andermans gebruiken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47.	Mijn manager blijft kalm in onverwachte situaties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48.	Mijn manager kan tegenslagen in perspectief brengen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49.	Mijn manager gaat er standaard vanuit dat zaken vanzelf goed zullen komen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

50. Wat is uw geslacht?

man

vrouw

51. Wat is uw leeftijd?

\_\_\_\_\_ jaar

52. Wat is uw opleidingsniveau?

Lagere school

Middelbare school

Beroepsonderwijs

Hoger onderwijs/ Universiteit

53. Wat is uw nationaliteit?

Nederlands

Engels

Bulgaars

Duits

Pools

Roemeens

Hongaars

Anders, namelijk \_\_\_\_\_

54.	Ik ben in staat veiligheidsvoorschriften in het Nederlands te lezen	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55.	Ik ben in staat naar veiligheidsvoorschriften in het Nederlands te luisteren en in het Nederlands antwoord te geven	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56.	Ik ben in staat veiligheidsvoorschriften in het Nederlands te luisteren en te begrijpen	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

57. Bent u in Nederland geboren?  Ja. *Ga door naar vraag 59.*

Nee, ik ben geboren in \_\_\_\_\_

58. In vergelijking met bedrijven in het land waarin ik geboren ben is dit bedrijf:

*Veel onveiliger*

*Veel veiliger*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

59. Wat is de naam van het bedrijf waarvoor u werkzaam bent?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Bedankt voor uw medewerking!**

**Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen**



**Verklaring eigen werk, geen plagiaat**