

# **Transforming the *Us-versus-Them*: The Role of Organizational Identification in the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict**

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### **Abstract**

In this quasi-experimental longitudinal field study, we examined whether organizational identification (OID) could buffer the negative relationship between subgroup identification and intragroup conflict in organizational teams. Organizational identification, sub-group identification and inter-group conflict were measured with a questionnaire at two moments of measurement (N = 131 at T1 and N = 128 at T2). Between the measurements, an intervention workshop was given to team leaders (N = 44 for intervention teams, N = 6 for control teams) aimed at enhancing organizational identification. A secondary objective of the workshop was to enhance transformational leadership in order to equip leaders with the necessary skills to enhance organizational identification among followers, as well. Results showed positive changes over time for organizational identification, inter-group conflict, sub-group perception, intergroup bias, goal alignment, job satisfaction and intergroup efficiency. Unfortunately, these changes could not be ascribed directly to the workshop intervention, possibly due to unequal sample size. Moreover, contrary to our expectations, organizational identification decreased relationship and process conflict, whereas sub-group identification increased these two forms of intergroup conflict. Finally, regardless of transformational leadership, leaders' identification levels were strongly related to followers' identification levels. This study provides valuable practical knowledge on how to utilize organizational identification as a managerial tool.

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## Introduction

Organizations have become increasingly dynamic and complex, resulting in an increased need for collaboration between diverse and highly specialized teams (Riketta & van Dick, 2005). This is accompanied by a growing need for dialogues between great minds that do *not* think alike, which frequently evolve into conflict (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu & Homan, 2004). In the organizational context, conflict can be defined as an interactive process resulting from a perceived incompatibility of behaviors and viewpoints between organizational groups or individuals (Afzalur Rahim, 2002). As organizational conflict oftentimes remains unresolved, it will continuously impair collaboration in organizations through frustration, disharmony and undermined productivity (Van Kleef, Steinel & Homan, 2013). Indeed, previous research shows that conflict within teams has negatively been linked to group emergent states and group viability, decreasing satisfaction, trust, cohesion and commitment as well as damaging for performance and collaborative efficiency between teams (De Wit, Greer, Jehn, 2012; Moriarty, 2007; Kuypers, Guenter, Van Emmerik, & Schreurs, 2013; Greer & Jehn, 2007; Le Meunier-FitzHugh & Piercy, 2011). Moreover, considering the increasing interdependence between teams in organizations, it is reasonable to assume that conflict, and its inherent negative impact on collaboration, impairs the survivability of organizations on ever faster growing markets (De Dreu, 2008; van Knippenberg, 2003). Hence, knowing how conflict between groups can be resolved properly and in the long run is vital for every organization. For this reason, the study presented in this paper will discuss and examine a promising alternative to existing intergroup conflict resolutions – organizational identification, or in other words: “the perception of oneness with and belongingness to the organization” (Mael & Ashforth, 1992, p. 104).

A brief insight into the common and reoccurring conflict between organization’s marketing/sales and production departments illustrates why organizational identification in

particular could promising as an intergroup conflict resolution. The marketing/sales department aims to increase sales. The production department strives for high product quality, which can result in slower production rates. Disappointed, and due to stereotyping, the marketing/sales department might readily believe that the cause for these delays are due to the production's unwillingness to work hard. As a response, production stereotypes marketing/sales as too ambitious and unappreciative of production's efforts to maintain quality. In turn, the stereotypical categorization intensifies, polarizing the two departments even further and maintaining long lasting intergroup conflicts between departments and teams.

To prevent the resulting impaired collaboration, the process of intergroup conflict needs to be interrupted properly and has to sustain over time. Unfortunately, this is quite challenging. Common conflict interventions such as teambuilding or mediation might superficially reduce the conflict-enhancing *us versus them mentality* described above. However, they do not focus on solving intergroup conflict in the long term. Stereotyping will resurface eventually, as the dynamics that cause intergroup conflict are not addressed sustainably (González & Brown, 2003). That is to say that, as a cause of intergroup conflict, this *us versus them mentality* originates from an overly strong identification with the sub-groups within an organization, as well as lacking identification with the collective. (Cuijpers & Uitdewilligen & Guenther, 2016). Hence, addressing employee's lacking organizational identification could play a central and promising role in solving intergroup conflict. This is achieved through the alteration of leaders' identification levels. Once their own identification is aligned benevolently towards the organization, leaders have the ability to shift employee's identification levels through transformational leadership (Horstmeier, Boer & Homan, 2016). Strong, compelling and healthy relationships between transformational leaders and their

followers will ensure a leader's success in this endeavor (Boehm, Dwertmann, Bruch, & Shamir, 2015).

Therefore, the goal of this study is to examine the role of organizational identification in the reduction of inter-group conflict. More specifically, we will examine the impact of a specific workshop intervention designed to promote organizational identification and transformational leadership, on the experienced intergroup conflict and other organizational outcomes in a longitudinal manner. Based on the *social identity approach* we will test whether transformational leadership can serve as a tool to promote organizational identification among several organizational sub-groups.

### **Theoretical Background & Hypotheses**

In the following paragraph, first, the link between the various loci of identification, second, the role of identification strength and, finally, and their role in combination in intergroup conflict will be discussed in the context of *social identity approach*, the *common in-group identity model*, *optimal distinctiveness theory* and *resource allocation theory*.

**Sub-group identification, nested dilemmas and intergroup conflict.** Social identification is defined as the “perception of belongingness to some human aggregate” (Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008, p. 329). Individual's identification with the organization and the sub-groups of the organization, can have far reaching implications for employee's attitudes and behavior (Richter, West van Dick & Dawson, 2006). This is explained by the social identity approach and resource allocation theory. According to the social identity approach, humans define their self through two identities: personal and social (Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011). Personal identities contain personality traits, values and attitudes, whereas social identities contain information about group membership, prototypical behavior, characteristics and values. This form of categorization makes social interactions easier as it

serves as a heuristic for prototypical attitudes and behavior matching the social identity (Ashforth et al., 2008). This prototypical information exists on different levels; the personal, the group one belongs to and other groups. The group one belongs to is also called the *in-group*. It is defined as a group of individuals who share values, needs and goals with one another. Other groups or the *out-groups* can be conceptualized as groups of individuals who are perceived different in terms of values, needs and goals. Generally, the *in-group* is favored strongly over the *out-group* because the *in-group's* values, needs and goals are internalized to a degree that they eventually become a part of one's self-concept (Richter et al., 2016). People actively seek to maintain positive self-esteem at all times. This need carries over in the way that one seeks to establish a positive image of the *in-group* as well (Ashforth et al., 2008). As a consequence, people direct protective and altruistic behavior as well as strong solidarity towards the members of the *in-group* (*viz.* in-group favoritism, Richter et al., 2006). Conversely, by way of derogation and discrimination of the *out-group* one enhances the positive image of *in-group* further to "attain a positive valued distinctiveness from other groups" (*viz.* out-group derogation, Abrams & Hogg, 1988, p. 318). Moreover, people tend to develop generally negative stereotypes about the *out-group*. They emphasize weaknesses and discard information more readily as false (Cuijpers et al., 2016). For the remainder of this paper, this combination of *in-group* favoritism and *out-group* derogation is referred to as intergroup bias (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). The presence of intergroup bias, paired with limited individual resources, partly determines whether employees express either competitive or cooperative behavior in intergroup interactions (Cuhadar & Dayton 2011; Richter et al., 2006). Through the stimulation of competitive behavior, the derogation of the *out-group* and the desire to maximize the advantage over the *out-group*, intergroup bias stimulates intergroup conflict (Halevy, Bornstein, & Sagiv, 2008; Ashforth et al., 2008).

However, the degree to which one expresses intergroup bias and, thus, competitive and conflict-stimulating behavior, strongly depends on the focus of identification (Richter et al., 2005; Ashforth et al., 2008). First, in the organizational context employees rarely belong to only one group. This entails that employees can have multiple foci of identification, such as the team, the department or the organization as a whole (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996). Take for example employees from the marketing department mentioned earlier in the introduction. It is quite likely that these employees identify with their team, their marketing department, as well as with the organization they work for. Consequently, those *in-* or sub-groups as well as their norms, values and goals are, to a varying extent, embedded in their identity (Abrams & Hogg, 1988). Thus, identification with each of these sub-groups leads to a general motivation to enhance the image of each of the sub-groups in order to enhance the self-image (Haslam, Van Knippenberg, Platow & Ellemers, 2014). However, the sub-group “department” is nested within the sub-group “organization” and the interests of these two groups can be at odds with each other. Thus, the decision whether marketing/sales employees would express cooperative or competitive behavior in an intergroup interaction with employees of the production department, another subgroup within the organization, is a dilemma. More specifically, a nested social dilemma (Wit & Kerr, 2002, p.1).

In a nested social dilemma, the choice whether to benefit the subordinate sub-group or the superordinate sub-group (or: collective), in turn, greatly depends on the strength of identification with these various in-groups. In general, employees borrow the majority of their self-esteem from the group with the highest proximity in terms of overlap in values, attitudes and behavior (Halevy et al., 2008; Riketta et al., 2005; Ashforth et al., 2008). Thus, employees are more likely to identify with smaller groups, e.g. the department, than with the overlying organization (Polzer, 2004). According to *optimal distinctiveness theory*, employees want to fit in but also be seen as distinct at the same time. The theory states that people

develop the need for differentiation or distinctiveness once their need for inclusiveness has been satisfied (Hornsey & Hogg, 1999). The need for distinctiveness is easier to satisfy in smaller groups, as it is easier to stand out. Moreover, identification will be stronger in groups that have the chance for regular competition with other comparable groups, as this strengthens the feeling of inclusiveness (Riketta et al., 2005). Finally, identifying with the sub-group tends to satisfy both the need for distinctiveness and, even to some degree the need for inclusiveness. This decreases employee's desire to identify with the organization even further. As a matter of fact, a recent meta-analysis indicated that employees generally tend to identify less with the organization than with the sub-group (Riketta et al., 2005). This is augmented by *resource allocation theory*, which states that identification with a particular group strongly motivates members of that group to exert their own resources on behalf of that group (Cuijpers et al., 2016). These individual resources, for instance time, effort and mental capacity, are limited and carefully spent. The group one identifies with the strongest consequently receives the majority of the resources an individual has at their disposal. Hence, one would expect that employees will invest their resources into either their working-team or their department. A negligible amount of the remaining resources will be allocated to the organization, let alone to the sub-groups one does not identify with.

Unfortunately, employee's strong sub-group identification has profound implications for intergroup relations and intergroup conflict (Richter et al., 2006). First, sub-groups with members who identify strongly with their sub-group tend to perceive themselves as separate from other sub-groups within the organization. The greater this perceived psychological distance between those sub-groups, the higher the levels of intergroup competition and conflict (Polzer, 2004; Halevy et al., 2008). This roots in the fact that this sub-group perception spurs the competition for the commonly available resources within the organization (Wit & Kerr, 2002).

Furthermore, the strong identification with the sub-group will lead to group members' absence of resource allocation towards the collective. According to Halevy et al. (2008), this behavior will be depreciated and reciprocated by other sub-groups within the collective in order to enhance the advantages relative to the other groups. This leads to further intensification of intergroup conflict within the given collective, e.g. the organization.

Thus, the nested structure and the inherent categorization of sub-groups within organizations make it difficult for employees to allocate their available resources towards the organization instead of their sub-group or department. *Social identity approach, optimal distinctiveness theory* and *resource allocation theory* support the notion that overly strong sub-group identification and the inherent lack of organizational identification are a guarantee for intergroup conflict within organizations. Therefore, we propose that:

*H1. Sub-group identification, in absence of organizational identification, will lead to intergroup conflict.*

**Organizational identification and intergroup conflict.** Enhanced organizational identification relates to many important organizational outcome measures, such as cooperation, individual performance, motivation, turnover intentions and pro-social behavior (Riketta, 2005; Riketta & van Dick, 2005). Lipponen, Helkama, & Juslin (2003) found that strong subordinate sub-group identification (e.g. the team) increased the presence of intergroup bias among employees. Interestingly, they also found that strong organizational identification attenuated this perception of intergroup bias between sub-groups of that organization. In other words, enhancing organizational identification might effectively reduce intergroup bias and, possibly, intergroup conflict.

Unfortunately, the present research leaves us in a quandary on how to increase organizational identification properly in order to reduce intergroup conflict. Several scholars have indicated that replacing sub-group goals with shared goals as well as the reduction of the sub-group perception are viable means to raise organizational identification (Lipponen et al., 2003; Ashforth et al., 2008; Halevy et al., 2008). However, according to Hornsey & Hogg (2000), this strategy will most likely increase organizational identification at the expense of sub-group identification. For two reasons, this is a problematic way to stimulate organizational identification; especially in terms of intergroup conflict (González et al., 2003). First, simply increasing organizational identification takes away clear boundaries between sub-groups. This results in a loss of salience, status and perceived relevance among employees (Mullen, Brown & Smith, 1992). Consequently, the need for distinctiveness is not fulfilled anymore. Hence, employees feel the increased desire to differentiate themselves through increase in dissent and intergroup conflict (Richter et al., 2006; Hornsey & Hogg, 1999). Furthermore, the simple creation of a commonly shared identity often results in a top-down process, swallowing all forms of diversity in terms of opinions, preferences and priorities. Generally, only goals, values and perspectives which are classified as important by the management would be assimilated into one commonly shared identity. This might not necessarily represent the entirety of the organization, and their respective sub-groups, which could give rise to conflict (Peters, Haslam & Ryan, 2012). Thus, simply enhancing organizational identification at the expense of sub-group identities is not effective for the reduction of intergroup conflict.

Therefore, in terms of intergroup conflict, the key to increasing organizational identification might lie in keeping the existent salience of the sub-groups' identification while still creating a commonly shared identity (Hornsey et al., 2000). This particular notion is embedded into the *common in-group identity model* (Dovidio, Gaertner & Saguy (2009).

According to the model, maintaining both the identities as well as a strong identification with the collective should result in positive intergroup relations, attitudes and decreased intergroup bias (González et al., 2003; Lipponen et al., 2003; Richter et al., 2006). This healthy balance of both foci of identification is termed dual identification. In other words, a strong organizational identification is achieved while still respectfully maintaining the existence of sub-group identities. Indeed, previous research has established that dual identification can enhance job performance, customer service quality and organizational citizenship behavior (Chen, Chi, & Friedman, 2013).

As an addition to the *common in-group identity model*, *optimal distinctiveness theory* and *resource allocation theory* explain why organizational identification in the form of dual identification might be particularly beneficial for the reduction of intergroup bias and intergroup conflict. That is because in employees with dual identification, the need for distinctiveness and the need for inclusiveness are equally satisfied (van Dick, van Knippenberg, Kerschreiter, Hertel, & Wieseke, 2008; Hornsey & Hogg, 1999). First, the need for inclusiveness is sufficiently satisfied through identification with the organization (Smidts, Pruyn & van Riel, 2016). Organizational identification in the form of dual identification prevents employees from turning towards their sub-groups (teams) to satisfy the need of inclusiveness (Hornsey & Hogg, 1999). Inherently, this puts more emphasis on the more inclusive organizational identity and employees increasingly solve nested social dilemmas in the interest of the collective (Riketta, 2005). Then, due to increased resource allocation towards the organization, sub-groups (teams) collaborate and communicate with increased efforts, which result in less intergroup bias and intergroup conflict (González, & Brown, 2003). Moreover, perception of sub-groups is decreased and employees increasingly internalize goals, norms and values of the common organizational identity (Richter et al., 2006; Gaertner et al., 1993).

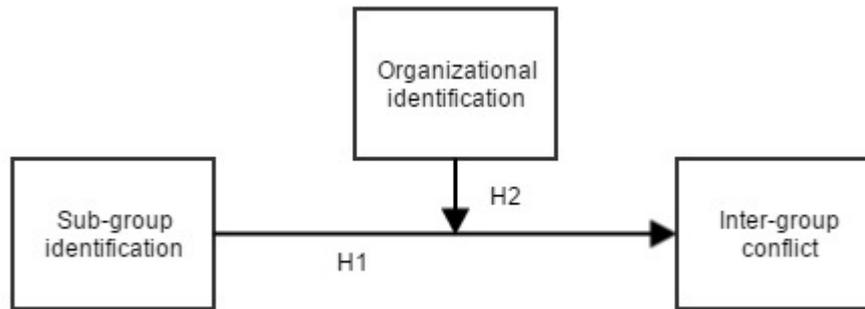
Secondly, employees maintain the possibility to achieve distinctiveness within their organization. As employees can differentiate themselves as individuals within their sub-groups, employees differentiate themselves to a lesser extent through in-group favoritism and out-group derogation of other sub-groups within the organization (Hornsey & Hogg, 1999). Thus, the reduction of differentiating behavior on the sub-group level results in less unnecessary intergroup bias and intergroup conflict (Richter et al., 2006; Dovidio et al., 2009). This is in line with the limited previous research on the effects of dual identification. One study shows that when organizational identification and sub-group identification are both high, employees experience better intergroup relations. (Richter et al., 2006). Therefore, when organizational identification is enhanced to reduce intergroup conflict, it should be most effective in the form of dual identification.

In sum and in light of the arguments so far, it is reasonable to assume that increasing organizational identification has the potential to concomitantly attenuate intergroup conflict as it buffers three factors that cause intergroup conflict together with increased levels of sub-group identification: a) intergroup bias on sub-group level, b) sub-group perception and c) lack of goal alignment (Figure 1). As these factors originate from the imbalance between sub-group and organizational identification, intergroup conflict should only be mitigated when dual identification is achieved. Therefore, we propose that:

*H2. Organizational identification will moderate the relationship between team's sub-group identification and intergroup conflict, such that increased levels of organizational identification will weaken the relationship between sub-group identification and intergroup conflict.*

Figure 1

*Hypotheses 1 and 2 - the relationship between sub-group identification and intergroup conflict is moderated by organizational identification resulting in dual identification.*



**Increasing organizational identification.** So far, little clear scientific and practical guidance has been provided to increase organizational identification, let alone dual identification. Fortunately, Haslam and colleagues have addressed this issue by developing the ASPIRe model, which stands for Actualizing Social and Personal Identity Resources (Haslam, Egghins, & Reynolds, 2003). The ASPIRe model is grounded in the social identity approach and recognizes and utilizes personal and social capital. The central goal of the ASPIRe model is to stimulate organizational identification in the form of dual identification (Haslam et al., 2003). As we have argued before, when enhancing organizational identification in order to reduce intergroup conflict it is essential not to absorb the existent sub-group identities in the process (Peters, Haslam, Ryan & Fonseca, 2012). These dynamics ensure the awareness, acceptance, respect and most importantly integration of sub-group identities within an organization without jeopardizing the identification with the departments of an organization (Haslam et al., 2003). In all four stages of the model, smaller identities are combined with higher-level more abstract ones. Thus, the ASPIRe model stimulates organizational identification while maintaining and reaping the benefits of the existent sub-groups within a given collective (Haslam et al., 2003).

In phase one of the ASPIRe process, the lowest sub-group identity of employees in terms of organizational hierarchy (teams or project groups) is determined. This entails the discovery of norms, values and goals of those sub-groups. In the second phase of the ASPIRe process these sub-group identities are presented to colleagues within the next-level sub-group in terms of structural hierarchy. For example, the previously determined team identities, with inherent goals, norms and values, are presented to fellow members of the department. At this point, the aim is to yield recognition and acceptance of the sub-groups discussed in the first phase. Whenever possible, team-level goals, norms and values are aligned to define superordinate identities with aligned goals, norms and values (the departmental identities). Thus, superordinate identities (departmental identities) have been established through subtle integration of team-level goals, norms and values, while still maintaining the salience of the subordinate identities (teams). Then, the third phase begins. In a small group with selected representatives of the recently formed superordinate identities (the departmental identities) the next identity-level in terms of structural hierarchy is defined – the organizational identity. Whenever possible, goals, norms and values are carefully aligned. While maintaining the salience of the previously integrated subordinate identities (departmental identities) the collective identity is defined and internal differences preserved (Peters et al., 2012, p.4). At this point, dual identification should be enhanced. Finally, in the fourth phase of the ASPIRe process, the representatives strategically form new goals serving the (re)defined organizational identity and, due to the ASPIRe process, all subordinate identities simultaneously. Through this last step, employees with dual identification will perceive more overlap between goals on the organizational level, on the departmental and the team level identities.

As originally intended, the benefits of the ASPIRe process evolve through diversity in terms of identities and, therefore, also through diversity of status, background and

specialization within the organization. The ASPIRe process would not reap benefits if it were conducted only with employees of one department or hierarchical layer, for instance.

However, it is highly unfeasible to conduct the ASPIRe process with all employees of the organization and some form of selection needs to be made. For two reasons, we suggest that organizational leaders of several hierarchical layers are the most suitable candidates to participate in the ASPIRe process. First, leaders within organizations have a tremendous impact on the course of intergroup conflict and team cohesion (Zhang, Cao & Tjosvold, 2011). Second, and most importantly, they influence subordinate's foci and strength of identification (Böhm et al., 2015). Consequently, because of this far reaching impact, especially in terms of identification, leaders from different management layers and highly diverse functional backgrounds should be utilized (Ellemers, de Gilder, & Haslam, 2004).

Up to this point, the ASPIRe model has only once been tested empirically. Peters et al. (2012) have conducted the ASPIRe model in the form of a workshop with leaders of a military health services organization. The authors found that the identification with the organization as well as the sub-groups had increased relative to the baseline measurement. Interestingly, the same study showed that the ASPIRe model appeared to be effective through addressing sub-group perception, goal-alignment and increased support for the organization's strategic objectives. It seems likely that working on aligning sub-group's goals, norms and values without jeopardizing the existence of smaller, more salient, sub-groups stimulated dual identification. Yet, Peters et al. (2012) did not investigate whether enhancing organizational identification through the ASPIRe process has any positive effects on organizational outcome variables such as intergroup conflict or intergroup efficiency. Moreover, the findings of Peters et al. (2012) did not reveal whether the positive effects the ASPIRe model exhibits on organizational identification will also affect employees who did not participate in the intervention; fellow team members, for instance.

In sum, if the ASPIRe process is adapted successfully in the workshop intervention presented in this study, it can be expected that the dual identification levels will rise among the participating leaders. Therefore we propose that:

*H3. Participation in the ASPIRe module of the training will lead to dual identification (high organizational identification, high sub-group identification) of the participating leader.*

**Organizational identification and leadership.** Even though establishing a dual identification profile among leaders would be a considerable achievement, the establishment of dual identification would need to be carried over to the rest of the organization to have a meaningful impact on intergroup conflict. Fortunately, leaders have the unique capability to exemplify behavior towards their subordinates to emulate the established dual identification (Zhang et al., 2015). Indeed, previous research has established that leaders' organizational identification can influence followers' organizational identification (van Dick, Hirst, Grojean & Wieseke, 2007).

However, whether or not leaders manage to convey the effects of the ASPIRe workshop to the employees, might strongly depend on the leadership style. In particular, charismatic and transformational leadership have proven to be strongly related to employee's social identification (Horstmeier et al., 2016; Shamir, Zakay, Brainin & Popper, 2000). Transformational leadership is aimed at communicating a compelling and inspiring vision through symbolic means, expressing confidence in employee's abilities, intellectual stimulation and strong charismatic role-model behavior (Boehm et al., 2015).

It should be noted that, so far, only charismatic or transformational leadership has been linked to the alteration of followers' identification levels (Boehm et al., 2015). Therefore, in terms of empirical evidence, transformational leadership represents the only

viable leadership style that seems capable of conveying the beneficial effects of the ASPIRe process to the rest of the organization. This leadership style in particular has the potential to compel employees to follow their leader not only in terms of behavior, but also in terms of attitudes, opinions and, most importantly, foci of identification. Transformational leadership does so through positive leader-follower relationships, enhanced trust, knowledge sharing, charisma and individual attention (Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003; Creed, Miles, Kramer, & Tyler, 1996; Carmeli, Atwater, Levi, & Technol, 2011). Transformational leaders themselves become a focus of identification due to role-model processes (Carmeli et al., 2011). As followers identify with their leader, they tend to internalize their leaders' behavior, norms, values and goals. This provides great opportunities for increasing identification with the organization and aligning it with sub-group identification in terms of dual identification (Horstmeier et al., 2016; Boehm et al., 2015). In order to enhance organizational identification effectively, leaders need to be capable and comfortable with expressing transformational leadership behavior. This can only be achieved through proper training and top-down role-model behavior beginning at the hierarchical level of the CEO (Boehm et al., 2015). Consequently, the potential to balance sub-group identification and organizational identification is only realized, if both the ASPIRe process and the transformational leadership training, are equally adapted by the participants. Therefore, we propose that:

*H4. Participation in the Leadership module of the training will lead to increased transformational leadership ratings of the participating leader by the subordinates.*

And that:

*H5. Transformational leadership, as rated by followers, will strengthen the relationship between leaders' dual identification and the subordinates' dual identification.*

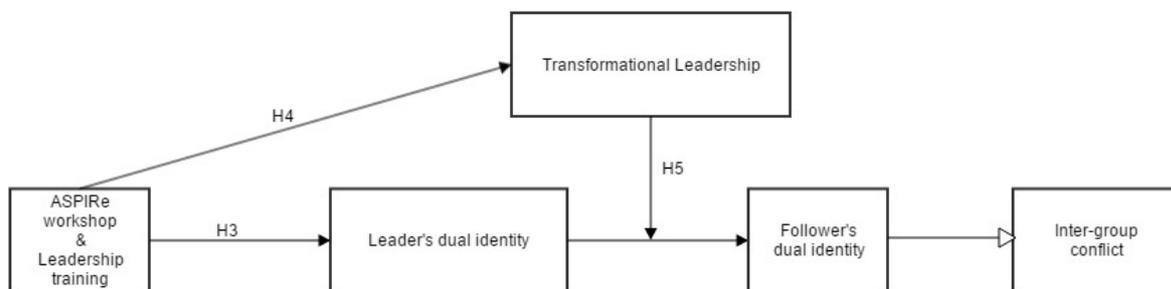
As has been argued previously, intergroup conflicts are strongly influenced by intergroup biases, sub-group perception and lacking goal alignment. We have argued that these cognitive processes originate from an overly strong sub-group identification and a lack of organizational identification. Consequently, in order to establish the necessary dual identification throughout the organization, intergroup bias, sub-group perception and the lack of goal alignment need to be addressed by the ASPIRe intervention examined in the present study. These three variables will be examined exploratory in order to determine if they were successfully changed and affected the two foci of identification or intergroup conflict. Moreover, the examination of these variables determines the effectiveness of the ASPIRe module with regards to establishing dual identification.

Furthermore, the possible reduction of intergroup conflict through organizational identification raises the question whether establishment of dual identification throughout an organization has the same impact on the different forms of conflict that exist in intergroup relations. So far, scholars have identified three different forms of conflict. Firstly, task conflict, which is defined as a difference of opinion regarding the content of the task itself and the way one interprets information. Secondly, process conflict, which refers to the dissent about the way a task at hand is planned and conducted. Think of the delegation of tasks within a project, for instance. Thirdly, relationship conflict, which describes a conflict based on the incompatibility of values, preferences and personality characteristics (Jehn, 1995; De Wit et al., 2012). These three forms of conflict will be measured throughout the entire organization. This exploratory analysis might reveal new insights into the question whether certain forms of conflict are especially prone to the impact of dual identification.

Finally, reducing organizational conflict, especially relationship conflict, has been associated with positive organizational outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction, increased commitment and increased inter-team efficiency (De Wit et al., 2012). Therefore, these variables will be included exploratory to determine the impact of the conflict intervention on the organization.

Figure 2

*Theoretical model and hypotheses – The ASPIRe intervention establishes dual identification among the participating leaders, the leadership training increases transformational leadership, transformational leadership moderates the relationship between leaders' dual identification and followers' dual identification, followers' dual identification reduces intergroup conflict.*



## Methods

The research question and hypotheses call for a longitudinal and multi-methodological pretest/posttest quasi-experimental research design with a control group. Therefore, sub-group and organizational identification levels, leaders' transformational leadership qualities, intergroup conflict levels, affective states, sub-group perception, goal alignment, intergroup bias and inter-team efficiency were measured. This allowed us to assess the effectiveness of an

alteration of organizational identification through a workshop and the impact of this alteration on several important outcome measures.

### **Sample**

The study was conducted in pharmaceutical production site in the Netherlands with approximately 250 employees. Of those 250 employees 131 responded to the first moment of measurement (T1) and 128 to the second moment of measurement (T2). The participants operated within six different departments, which were production, maintenance, quality control, safety, finance and supply chain. In total, the participants were distributed among 37 teams which work interdependently within the six departments. Some teams had to be excluded because none of the group members of those teams responded to the surveys. Hence, out of these 37 teams, 34 teams were included in this study. The majority of the participants were male (71.3%) and the average age of the employees was 44.52 years ( $SD = 10.94$ ). The majority of the employees were either educated on the HBO (41.9%) or MBO (34.7%) level. Almost 80 percent of the employees had a permanent work contract. On average the employees of this sample worked 14.77 years on the site ( $SD = 11.86$ ), and 9.83 years within their team ( $SD = 9.06$ ). For the experimental intervention (workshop), only employees with leadership responsibilities were selected. This was also an explicit practical demand stated by the senior leadership of the site. Hence, out of 250 employees, a total of 44 participants with a leadership responsibilities took part in the workshop. Thus, these 44 leaders and their respective followers represented the experimental condition of the study. Among the participating leaders, there were 6 senior managers, 13 supervisors and 25 team leaders. In total, the experimental condition consisted of 28 teams with 135 individuals (44 leaders and 91 followers). Note here, that some teams had two leaders, one supervisor and one team leader, for instance. The participants who did not engage in the workshop represented the control group of the study. The control condition is composed of 9 teams with 32

individual respondents, of which there were 6 leaders and 26 followers. Due to practical reasons and the demand of the senior leadership the entire financial department was assigned to the control group. Also, leaders who did not take part in the training due absenteeism, and also respectively their followers, were also assigned to the control condition. Thus, in total the sample contained 50 leaders distributed in a quasi-experimental manner over the control and experimental groups. The majority of these leaders were male (76.7%), on average 46.19 years ( $SD = 11.25$ ) old, and educated either on the HBO (39.5%), MBO (32.6%) or WO (18.6%) level. On average the leaders worked 18.67 years on the site ( $SD = 12.67$ ), and 10.31 years within their team ( $SD = 9.27$ ).

### **Procedure**

The research started with an initial baseline questionnaire (T1) which was sent out to the entire organization. Then workshop intervention, as described in the following paragraphs, took place. One month after the workshop intervention, we conducted the post-measurement (T2). The questionnaires were distributed via e-mail. Occasionally, the recipients were reminded via e-mail and intranet to fill out the questionnaires. Both questionnaires (T1 and T2) were structured as follows: control variables, sub-group identification, sub-group perception, goal alignment, intergroup bias, organizational identification, intergroup conflict, transformational leadership, commitment, satisfaction and intergroup efficiency. After completion of the second measurement (T2) employees received a detailed report on the outcomes of the study. For a visual and general overview of the workshop intervention with its activities see [Appendix A](#).

The conflict intervention workshop was designed in a way that it could be carried out on a single day. It was structured into two interrelated parts: a) the ASPIRe module and b) a leadership module. The entire workshop intervention had a duration of three and a half hours (1x 90 minutes and 1x120 minutes). As we had to split up the group of participating leaders, the workshop was given three times in an identical manner. First, the senior management was

separately trained with the two modules in one afternoon. Then, the following morning, the workshop was repeated with the supervisors of the company. Finally, three days later, the workshop was carried out for a third time with the team leaders of the site. All three workshop interventions were conducted by the author. A structured transcript ensured that all three workshops were performed as identical as possible.

**Part 1: The ASPIRe module.** The purpose of this module was to increase the awareness on similarities in terms of values, norms and goals among the sub-groups of the organization to stimulate organizational identification. The participating leaders gathered in a special training facility on the grounds of the company, where an introductory exercise followed in form of a hidden-profile task. The goal of this exercise was to illustrate the consequences of a lack in collaboration resonating from strong sub-group formation, intergroup bias and low identification with the collective (in this case the present experimental group). Through this hidden-profile task, participants were to become aware of their competitive stance and how intergroup biases compromise the efficient intergroup efficiency. Participants were to find out that, due to intergroup biases, information is frequently withheld and that problem-solving behavior is necessary to improve intergroup relations. To trigger these insights, first, the participants were provided with the objective of the hidden-profile task: to build the tallest free-standing tower of the room with the supplies provided (pens, paper, cups, and tape). The supplies were packaged in rations for one person each. However, it was made impossible to build a tower just with the supplies of one individual. Through this, participants were stimulated to collaborate and combine the resources at hand. The more people worked together on one tower, the better the result. Instructions were intentionally limited to "The objective is to build the highest tower in the room and you are allowed to choose freely with whom you want to work with". Participants were not told that one tall tower from the entire group of participants would be the best possible result to achieve. Participants would likely be guided by previously

existing sub-group identities, meaning that they would pair with people belonging to their sub-groups (e.g. teams or departments). Further, we expected that the formed sub-groups would try to compete with each other. After completion, the produced towers would intentionally not be compared with each other to reduce competitive behavior. Participants were then debriefed. At this point, they learned that the most efficient outcome would have been a single tall tower built by the entire group of participants. Moreover, they were informed about the intentions of the exercise, which were to illustrate a lacking collaboration resonating from competition and lacking organizational identification. Next, participants received an introductory presentation by the trainer to establish a theoretical foundation, an overview and the objective of the ASPIRe process and the importance of organizational identification. Moreover, norms, values and goals were formally defined. These three concepts are highly important throughout the entire ASPIRe process. Our formal definition of norms, values and goals was as follows: What someone/or a team finds important with regards to team collaboration (value), what he/she/they stand for or regard desirable (value), what he/she/they believe is the appropriate behavior in collaboration (norm), folkways, taboos, unwritten laws with regards to communication and collaboration (norms) and what he/she/they intend to achieve with regards to collaboration (goals) (Schein, 2010)

Every stage of the ASPIRe process builds upon the previous stage. In the first stage of the ASPIRe process (AIRing) the lowest level of sub-group identities of the participants were determined. In terms of organizational structure, the lowest sub-group identity was the team the participating leaders were responsible for. The objective was to allow for the leaders to develop an understanding of their own team's values, norms and goals. This part of the process was important as it allowed the participants to recognize and be recognized in their various identities and preferences. The participants were asked to write down five of their teams' most important

values with regards to collaboration, five of their most important norms within the sub-group and three goals their sub-group has.

In the second stage of the ASPIRe process (Sub-Casing) the discovered sub-group identities (and the values, norms and goals) of the teams were presented to members of the sub-group that comes next in terms of organizational structure – the department. As all leaders were grouped with members of their department, the values, norms and goals of the team-level sub-group identities were to be discussed deliberately. Consequently, values, norms and goals were combined and integrated to a higher level. This entailed that all participants operating within the same department had to be in accordance with each other in terms of what were the most important values, norms and goals with regards to collaboration. This complex process was supported with the synergizing tool: three specifically developed tables were printed on a DIN A3 paper. Participants had to fill in their selected values, norms and goals in three separate sessions (see [Appendix B](#)). When determining the aligned values of the departmental identity, for instance, the first leader filled in five team values he discovered in step 1 of the ASPIRe process. Consequently, the second leader was to check first whether there were any conceptual overlaps (synonyms, related construct; e.g. value commitment and value cohesion) between the two sets of five values. If there was an overlap, the second leader was to write his value next (horizontally) to the conceptually overlapping term. This strategy helped the participants to automatically synergize their values, norms and goals in a time efficient manner. To do so, in an active discussion, all leaders of the departments were asked to select one value, norm or goal that best described all the values, norms or goals written in the row of the table. This was called a synergized value. Then, a discussion was held to determine the five most important synergized values, the five most important norms and three goals of the departmental sub-group. Due to the fact that only the values, norms and goals with the strongest overlap were integrated, all existent sub-group identities were respectfully maintained. Finally, every departmental group

appointed representatives who took part in the next stage of the ASPIRe process on behalf of the departmental sub-groups. For the following stage, these departmental representatives prepared a piece of paper with five values, five norms and three goals representing the identity of the departmental sub-group.

The representatives then entered the third ASPIRe stage (Super-Casing). The remaining participants observed the following process carefully and were allowed to intervene with the process at all times. In the previous stages values, norms and goals were aligned between team and departmental identities. At this stage, the objective of the representatives was to align the values, norms and goals, which emerged in the previous stages, with the next level in terms of organizational structure – the organizational identity. For this, a vast amount of divergent subordinate sub-group identities needed to be aligned with one complex collective identity. Therefore, this stage of the ASPIRe process required the most time and effort. Consequently, participants were explicitly instructed to engage in integrative problem-solving behavior. To illustrate problem-solving behavior, we made a recap towards the opening exercise of building a tower; only if all individual participants worked together integrating all their resources and knowledge, they would have achieved the most optimal outcome. After this briefing, representatives individually presented the synergized values, norms and goals of the previous stage (departmental identity alignment) to the group and the other representatives. Then, identical to the previous stage, the representatives and the group were instructed to find similarities in the values, norms and goals and to align them. It should be noted, that in this process, participants did not simply assimilate values, norms and goals of the departmental identities. The separate existence of the departmental identities aside from the organizational identity remained. All values, norms and goals of all the various departmental identities were discussed deliberately. Only those values, norms and goals with the greatest overlap between departmental identities formed the organizational identity. The process was protocolled with

the “synergizing tool” ([see Appendix B](#)) on a whiteboard. The resulting values, norms and goals partly define the shared organizational identity and allowed participants to identify overlap between the departmental identities. The participative nature of this process (also in the previous stages) allows all participants (including the audience) to identify with the overarching norms, values and goals. All in all, this bottom-up process allowed for enhanced identification with the emerged norms, values and goals of the organizational identity.

Finally, participants engaged in the last phase of the ASPIRe process (ORGanizing), where the representatives individually formed a strategy on how to live by the values, norms and reach the goals of the aligned organizational identity. This allowed employees with dual identification to perceive more overlap between values, norms and goals on the organizational level, on the departmental and the team level identities. Consequently, the intention of this last phase was to develop actionable directives on how to collaborate in line with the newly reinforced dual identification. In other words, leaders discovered how they could invest their individual resources to serve the interests of the organization while still acknowledging the interests of the sub-groups. The results of this last stage of the ASPIRe process were recorded as collaboration guidelines. These served as a behavioral standard beyond the setting of this intervention. Participants were informed that the this result of the ASPIRe process illustrates how all the different sub-groups existent in the organization (teams and departments) can be aligned on a common ground – the organizational identity. They were instructed that communicating these guidelines on “acting on behalf of the shared organizational identity” to their followers was their responsibility. At the end of the ASPIRe process, participants got the chance to reflect on the module and their performance therein. The ASPIRe module was concluded with a presentation by the trainer on the collaboration guidelines the participants produced. Days after the workshop intervention, the participating leaders received a summary

of the collaboration guidelines on a specifically designed sheet via e-mail (similar to [Appendix C](#)).

All in all, participation in the ASPIRe process had the positive consequence that while identifying with the collective (the organization as a whole), all participants were still able to identify their norms, values and goals in the summarized material (the collaboration guidelines). However, in order to enhance dual identification among followers, transformational leadership is required.

**Part 2: The Leadership Module.** The goal of this module was to increase the required self-confidence and skills with regards to transformational leadership. This allowed leaders to carry over the dual identification acquired from the ASPIRe module to their followers. The knowledge and insights acquired in this module should allow leaders to further align organizational identification with sub-group identification throughout the organization. Thus, this module extended the reach of the workshop intervention. In the presentations of the ASPIRe module the trainer already stressed the importance of dual identification with the organization and the departments. At this point, the leaders should be aware of the importance of dual identification and motivated to assert their resources in favor of the organization as well as their departments. The leadership module consisted of 7 parts: (1) an introductory presentation, (2) the leadership styles role-play, (3) an in-depth presentation on transformational leadership, (4) the role-play “from role-play to role model”, (5) recap on ASPIRe process and (6) personal goal setting for transformational leadership qualities.

In the introductory presentation, the trainer introduced the topic leadership and elaborated on its importance with a presentation. Again, participating leaders were reminded of the fact that they and their leadership qualities were required to carry over the established dual identification to their followers.

The first role-play exercise was called "Leadership Styles and their Impact" was conducted (Blümmert, 2011; see [Appendix D](#)). This exercise intended to emphasize the importance of an inspirational, participative and motivating leader. Nine different roles, three different leaders and six employees, were available and assigned via lottery. The rest of the group received instructions to focus on the impact of the leader on his subordinates, and their reactions. Then, participants received general information about the organization, in which the fictional team was employed. The acting group received instructions to decide on how to spend an additional bonus budget. Next, all characters with varying personalities and agendas were presented shortly to the group. The three leaders were additionally briefed in private by the trainer with specifics about their role. The transactional leader was instructed to force compliance from his/her employees on the matter at hand. Conversely, the transformational leader was instructed to act cooperatively and to guide his employees through the decision-making process with a brainstorming session. The laissez-faire leader was told to merely instruct his employees to solve the problem without any further participation. Role-play dynamics were protocolled by the spectating remainder of the group. In total, the role play was carried out three times, managed by each leader once. Due to the participative style, respect, trust and a harmonious progression, participants were to discover in the following feedback session that the most productive process evolves from the transformational leadership round. To prevent carry-over effects, the role-play was formally ended in an exit-procedure by emphasizing that everybody was merely acting a role (see [Appendix D](#) for additional information on the roles, their agendas and the dynamics that should arise in this exercise).

This exercise was complemented with a presentation, where the drawbacks and advantages of transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles were highlighted with support of scientific findings. Then, the means and tools of a transformational leader were presented to the group, such as active listening, participative decision-making, task

delegation, motivating trust building and, especially role-modeling behavior (for an example see [Appendix E](#)). The latter, representing the main focus of this leadership module, will consequently be demonstrated by the following role-play exercise.

The second role-play exercise is called "From Role-play to Role-Model" and aimed to improve awareness of one particular transformational leadership skill: role-modeling behavior (see [Appendix F](#)). Again, a lottery distributed the various roles: two departmental managers and six employees. The two departmental managers were instructed to have a conflict based on a misunderstanding. Moreover, they were instructed to exit the conversation with clear negative affect. One of the departmental heads sat down quietly. The other manager returned to his three subordinates who were instructed to pay attention to the incident. In front of his "employees", the manager started to speak disparagingly about the other manager. In line with their role script, the employees joined in and corroboratively reported incidents similar to the enacted. The group, which has been instructed to take note of their observations, then was inquired for their opinion on what they witnessed and what they had expected to happen next. After that, the trainer summarized the observations of the group and emphasized the powerful impact of transformational leadership and its role-model component with scientific findings. At this point the participants should have realized that they themselves are the tool to implement dual identification among their followers and that they have a major impact on the way their followers act in terms of collaboration.

In the last exercise of this module the leaders were asked to develop goals with regards to their leadership behavior for the months to come. The intention of this exercise was to maintain momentum in the exhibition of transformational leadership. Through this, the intrinsic motivation to exhibit transformational leadership behavior was stimulated. In this manner, the continuous transmission of dual identification among the followers could be stimulated. Therefore, leaders were instructed to formulate goals that are related to transformational

leadership behavior in a *SMART-SUB* manner. This means that personal goals need to be *specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time related* and divided into small *sub-goals*. For instance, a participating leader decided to improve his role-modeling behavior and needed to formulate a SMART-SUB goal: “By this Friday, I want to speak as positively as possible about the Vision2020 of the company for at least five times; Sub-goals: 1. To achieve this goal I will publically express my gratitude for safety compliance at the audit presentation on Wednesday; 2. To achieve this goal I can clarify the intention of Vision2020 in the team meeting on Thursday; and so forth. This goal was specific, because it contains specific information on what would be accomplished, who would be involved, where and when it would be achieved. Secondly, it was a measurable goal as the times the behavior has been exerted could be counted until five was reached. Third, the goal was ambitious as exerting the same behavior five times in one week could represent a challenge for the goal-setter. Fourth, it was realistic as it was attainable. Fifth, it was time-related as *Friday* has been determined as a deadline. In a comparable manner, in 10 minutes time, all participants developed three goals and the corresponding sub-goals. They received the instruction to track their progress by grading their performance on these (sub-) goals, on a scale from one to ten, once every week on Friday. This aspect ensured intrinsic motivation to maintain the momentum of the intervention. Finally, the trainer emphasized that this initiative was merely installed to help them become a better leader and would not be used to evaluate their performance as a leader. Well after the last moment of measurement (T2) (approximately one month) all employees received a debriefing email. It included two parts: (1) a report with the most relevant research findings (see [Appendix G](#)) and (2) a summary of what their leaders had achieved. The summary was similar to the designed sheet the participating leaders received right after the workshop. It included the established norms, values and goals with regards to collaboration. The summary was distributed throughout

the organization in the form of posters, communicating the developed collaboration guidelines of the organizational identity (see [Appendix C](#)).

## Materials

We utilized one questionnaire with identical items, which was filled in by all employees at two moments of time (T1 and T2). All items of all questionnaires were either translated from English into Dutch by a professional translator and/or reevaluated by two independent parties. Additionally, to ensure proper comprehension of all items amongst the various educational backgrounds, a manager of the organization was consulted. Moreover, all items were measured on a point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Translated items were not yet tested on reliability and validity.

**Questionnaire Measures.** All scales described in the following were utilized in the baseline (T1) and the post-measurement (T2) questionnaire, which are identical. Dual identification (organizational identification and sub-group identification). Organizational and sub-group identification were both measured by a refined six item scale, originally developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992). To measure organizational and departmental (sub-group) identification, two versions of this scale were utilized. They differed in the focus of identification and the order of the items. The *Mael scale* entails items like “When someone criticizes my organization/team it feels like a personal insult” and “When I talk about this organization/team, I usually say “we” rather than “they” “(1, “disagree strongly; 7 “agree strongly”). The Cronbach’s alpha for the organizational identification scale was  $\alpha = .92$  for T1 and  $\alpha = .89$  for T2. For sub-group identification, the Cronbach’s alpha for T1 was  $\alpha = .85$  and for T2  $\alpha = .84$ . In numerous previous studies the *Mael scale* has shown to be highly reliable (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Riketta, 2005) and empirically distinct from related concepts, such as organizational affective commitment (Riketta, 2005). In that respect, it is also superior to

the most frequently used measure of organizational identification, the Organizational Identification Questionnaire (Riketta, 2005).

***Intergroup conflict.*** Relationship-, task- and process conflict were measured as aggregate measures between groups, as the participants experience the conflict between teams as representatives of their corresponding sub-group. The recently revalidated 14 items conflict measure by Behfar, Mannix, Peterson and Trochim (2010) was utilized. Example items are, “How much tension is there among members of your team?”, “How frequently do members of your team engage in debate about different opinions or ideas?” or “How often do members of your team disagree about who should do what?”. Answers were given on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (none/not at all) to 7 (always/totally), describing how frequent the conflict described by the item occurred. The utilized scales yielded good reliability with  $\alpha = .90$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .92$  (T2) for task conflict,  $\alpha = .93$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .86$  (T2) for relationship conflict and  $\alpha = .92$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .83$  (T2) for process conflict.

***Affective states.*** Job satisfaction of the participants were assessed with the frequently used three item scale by Hackman and Oldham (1975) from the Job Diagnostics Survey. A sample item is “Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.”(1, “disagree strongly; 7 “agree strongly”). These items have frequently been extracted from the Job Diagnostics Survey and shown to provide a reasonable indication of general job satisfaction ( $\alpha = .89$ ) (Van Dick et al., 2004). Affective commitment was measured with the Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). Out of the 15 items originally intended for the ACS, eight have been extracted and utilized to measure affective commitment. Reliability analysis for the ACS scale yielded good reliability for T1 with  $\alpha = .85$  and for T2 with  $\alpha = .78$ . The job satisfaction scale yielded excellent reliability with  $\alpha = .94$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .92$  (T2).

***Intergroup efficiency.*** This outcome measure was registered by a self-developed set of five items, of which two were reverse coded. Sample items are, “The collaboration between the teams is efficient” or “The teams of my organization do not collaborate effectively” (1, “strongly disagree”; 7 “strongly agree”). The Chronbach’s alpha was  $\alpha = .90$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .88$  (T2).

***Transformational leadership.*** The inspiring and motivating aspect of transformational leadership was assessed by six items extracted from the MLQ-5X Short questionnaire, originally developed by Avolio and Bass (1999). It is the most frequently used leadership style scale available (Felfe, 2006). Sample items for this measurement are “My leader has a clear vision about the future of this organization” or “My leader is able to motivate others for his/her plans for this organization”. Responses were recorded by a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree”, to 7, “strongly agree”. This scale yielded excellent reliability with  $\alpha = .92$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .93$  (T2).

***Sub-group perception.*** The perception or experience of sub-groups in the organization was measured by three self-developed items, of which one will be reverse coded. An example item is, “The performance of the other teams of this organization is not related to the performance of my team”. All of the items have been examined by multiple experts on clarity and discriminant validity. Reliability for these items was acceptable with  $\alpha = .75$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .76$  (T2).

***Goal alignment.*** To assess the alignment of goals, norms and values between the teams and the organization before and after the conflict intervention workshop six items were utilized, which are based on the concept of the ASPIRe process as originally intended by Haslam et al. (2003). Previously, these items have been utilized by comparable research to test the effectiveness of the ASPIRe process (Peters et al., 2012). Example item are, “Here, in

my organization, we all strive to work one subordinate goal” and “There is a big difference between what my team finds important and what the organization finds important”. Scores were recorded with a 7-point Likert scale (1, “strongly disagree”; 7, “strongly agree”). The six items had a Cronbach’s alpha of  $\alpha = .89$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .81$  (T2).

***Intergroup bias.*** Intergroup bias is yet another factor that, according to Haslam et al. (2003), is decreased by the ASPIRe process. To measure this concept, three items have been developed. A sample item is, “Even if things are against the interests of other teams, the interests of my team are priority” being recorded on a 7-point Likert scale (1, “strongly disagree”; 7, “strongly agree”). Reliability for these items was  $\alpha = .80$  (T1) and  $\alpha = .70$  (T2).

**Control variables.** Controlling for gender, age, education, experience with the current team (team tenure), team size and working hours provides insights into possible structural differences in the groups and the sample and whether they could have an impact on the data-analysis.

### **Conflict Intervention Workshop**

***ASPIRe module.*** The ASPIRe module of the conflict intervention workshop was partly based on the ASPIRe model developed by Haslam, Eggins and Reynolds (2003). In previous research it has proven to successfully align organizational and sub-group identification (Peters, Haslam, Ryan, & Fonseca, 2012). In order to comply with individual organizational requirements, an intervention model, such as the ASPIRe process, needs to be tailored to the situation at hand. In this particular case, an alteration had to be made. In the last phase participants did not discuss the organizational direction based on the synthesized values, norms and goals, but discuss how the values, norms and goals of the newly aligned organizational identity could best be served. Additionally, the ASPIRe model was extended by a route sheet, which allowed participants to summarize their own progress on the ASPIRe process and revise it outside the training environment. Finally, we extended

the ASPIRe process with the synergizing tool to simplify the alignment of values, norms and goals (see [Appendix B](#)).

*Leadership module.* The second part of the conflict intervention workshop entailed theoretical leadership foundations in the form of a lecture and role-play exercises. Theoretical foundations, with the intention to create awareness about the participant's own leadership style and to provide the required skillset to promote dual identification throughout the organization, were based on literature "Leadership in Organizations" from Yukl (2013).

The role-play exercises were based on real meeting observations of the author in the organization at hand, and tailored to fit with the theoretical foundations that were provided in the lecture. The first role-play "Leadership Styles and their Impact" is based upon a professional role-play exercise developed for seminars by Blümmert (2011). It has slightly been modified (task, amount of participants, duration, recap) and was extended by and linked to theoretical foundations on leadership and its impact on employees.

The leadership goal setting exercise was for one part based on literature "New directions in goal-setting theory" from Locke and Latham (2006) the founders of goal-setting theory and the S.M.A.R.T. system. The S.M.A.R.T. system was extended by the component of sub-goals to increase the motivation of the participants to achieve their set goals.

## Results

### Data Preparation

For both the T1 and the T2 measurement, all data was anonymized and reverse coded where necessary. Furthermore, the leaders' individual responses were added to the main data set for analyses of hypothesis 3. Consequently, the data was aggregated allowing analyses with regards to team level outcomes. On average, the teams were 8 employees strong, with team sizes ranging from 3 to 19 employees. The aggregation resulted in a total of 24 variables

for T1 and T2, 10 team leader scores for T1 and T2 from the manipulation check and some additional variables for exploratory analysis purposes (e.g. gender, age, experience, contract form, education).

**Agreement statistics.** In this study we were interested in team-level outcomes. The consequential nested structure of the data requires an assessment of the appropriateness to aggregate the individual data of the 131 (T1) and 132 (T2) responding employees to the team level. For this, the intra-class correlation coefficients ICC(1) and ICC(2) and  $r_{WG(j)}$  agreement statistics were determined for each variable at both moments of measurement. For this purpose, a calculation tool provided by Biemann, Cole & Voelpel (2012) was utilized. According to the suggested guidelines by Biemann and colleagues (2012) most  $r_{WG(j)}$  values ranged from strong agreement (.71 to .90) to very strong agreement (.91 to 1.00). Only sub-group perception (T1) intergroup bias (T1), intergroup efficiency (T1) and sub-group perception (T2) showed moderate levels of agreement with .53, .58, .69 and .66 respectively.

Table 1 contains all agreement statistics for all the variables at T1 and T2. ICC(1) values were determined with one-way ANOVAs for each variable of the analyses. From the table, it becomes clear that only the measure intergroup efficiency was significant ( $F(36,94) = 1.55, p < .05$ ). Therefore, out of all 24 variables intergroup efficiency was the only measure that showed enough between-group variance in proportion to within-group variance. The non-significance in terms of ICC(1) for all other variables of interest indicate the possibility that group membership might have little effect on the group member's responses. This inevitably leads to bigger individual variation on the scale within than between the teams. It might be the case that the respondents did not see themselves as parts of the teams that they were associated with for these data analyses. This will further be investigated in the discussion section of this paper.

Table 1 also shows that ICC(2) values did not exceed .40 and are therefore considered “poor”. However, it should be noted that no definite guidelines exist for determining acceptable values and that these should be assessed based on sample size and study design (Biemann et al, 2012). Nonetheless, the small sample size and the fact that some of the teams merely consisted of two employees responding at the given moments of measurement might add to this lack of agreement within the teams. Therefore, the variance attributed to group membership was low and the reliability of the aggregated group means has to be regarded as low for all variables measured at both moments of measurement.

Table 1

*r<sub>WG(J)</sub>'s uniform and measure specific in the form of ICC(1) and ICC(2) agreement statistics for T1 and T2.*

| Measures T1      | $r_{WG(J)}$<br>uniform |           | Shape       | S <sup>2</sup> E | $r_{WG(J)}$<br>measure-specific |           |      |        |        |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|------|--------|--------|
|                  | <i>M</i>               | <i>SD</i> |             |                  | <i>M</i>                        | <i>SD</i> | F    | ICC(1) | ICC(2) |
| OID              | .76                    | 0.28      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.27                            | 0.37      | 0.84 | -.00   | -.02   |
| SID              | .84                    | 0.23      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.73                            | 0.33      | 1.21 | .05    | .17    |
| Sub-gr. perc.    | .53                    | 0.32      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.06                            | 0.19      | 0.92 | -.02   | -.09   |
| Goal alignment   | .72                    | 0.33      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.59                            | 0.38      | 0.82 | -.05   | -.22   |
| Intergroup bias  | .58                    | 0.36      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.45                            | 0.40      | 1.47 | .11    | .32    |
| Task conflict    | .85                    | 0.23      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.79                            | 0.25      | 0.90 | -.03   | -.11   |
| Rel. conflict    | .91                    | 0.17      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.86                            | 0.19      | 1.44 | .10    | .31    |
| Process conflict | .88                    | 0.20      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.81                            | 0.26      | 1.22 | .03    | .11    |
| TFL              | .76                    | 0.30      | Heavy skew  | 1.39             | 0.23                            | 0.35      | 1.07 | .02    | .06    |
| Job satisfaction | .74                    | 0.31      | Mod. skew   | 2.14             | 0.58                            | 0.39      | 1.01 | .00    | .01    |
| Commitment       | .82                    | 0.22      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.63                            | 0.36      | 0.75 | -.07   | -.33   |
| Intergroup eff.  | .69                    | 0.34      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.53                            | 0.40      | 0.84 | -.04   | -.20   |

| Measures T2      | $\Gamma_{WG(J)}$ .<br>uniform |           | Shape       | S <sup>2</sup> E | $\Gamma_{WG(J)}$ .<br>measure-specific |           |        |        |        |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|--|-----------|--------|--------|--------|
|                  | <i>M</i>                      | <i>SD</i> |             |                  | <i>M</i>                               | <i>SD</i> | F      | ICC(1) | ICC(2) |
| OID              | .83                           | 0.28      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.76                                   | 0.31      | 0.74   | -.05   | -.31   |
| SID              | .89                           | 0.18      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.81                                   | 0.24      | 0.95   | -.01   | -.04   |
| Sub-gr. perc.    | .67                           | 0.31      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.54                                   | 0.35      | 1.40   | .08    | .29    |
| Goal alignment   | .88                           | 0.18      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.81                                   | 0.24      | 1.11   | .03    | .10    |
| Intergroup bias  | .73                           | 0.29      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.61                                   | 0.36      | 1.10   | .02    | .11    |
| Task conflict    | .87                           | 0.15      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.78                                   | 0.28      | 1.40   | .08    | .28    |
| Rel. conflict    | .94                           | 0.06      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.90                                   | 0.15      | 1.54   | .11    | .35    |
| Process conflict | .94                           | 0.08      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.91                                   | 0.17      | 1.54   | .11    | .35    |
| TFL              | .70                           | 0.36      | Heavy skew  | 1.39             | 0.31                                   | 0.42      | 1.14   | .03    | .12    |
| Job satisfaction | .81                           | 0.28      | Mod. skew   | 2.14             | 0.67                                   | 0.38      | 1.09   | .02    | .08    |
| Commitment       | .81                           | 0.24      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.67                                   | 0.34      | 1.09   | .02    | .08    |
| Inter-gr. eff.   | .83                           | 0.18      | Slight skew | 2.90             | 0.70                                   | 0.33      | 1.55** | .11    | .36    |

Note. OID = organizational identification, SID = sub-group identification, sub-gr. perc = sub-group perception, TFL = transformational leadership, inter-gr. eff. = intergroup efficiency.

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*  $p < .05$

**Normality.** Normality was examined with a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Job satisfaction (T1; [ $D(32) = 0.17$ ,  $p < .05$ ]), intergroup efficiency (T1; [ $D(32) = 0.17$ ,  $p < .05$ ]), job satisfaction (T2; [ $D(32) = 0.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ]) and leader sub-group identification (T1; [ $D(32) = 0.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ]) yielded significant results hence were not normally distributed. However, in context of the small sample size further testing was required. Calculating z-scores for skewness and kurtosis yielded different results. Organizational identification (T1), goal alignment (T1) and relationship conflict (T1), process conflict (T1), affective commitment (T2) and job satisfaction (T2) were exceeding the second standard deviation z-score cut-off of  $\pm 1.92$  (Kim, 2013). Therefore, these measures of these variables could not be regarded as (approximately) normally distributed. Analyzing skewness and kurtosis values yielded that, except for team leaders' sub-group identification (T1) (skewness  $-2.25$  [ $SE = 0.4$ ]) and

kurtosis 8.37 [SE = 0.79]), parameters did not exceed 2 for skewness and 7 for kurtosis, indicating that no extreme measures in terms of skewness and kurtosis were detected (Kim, 2013). Therefore, the deviation from normality should not represent a problem for further analysis.

**Outlier analysis.** Next, in order to detect outliers the IQR multiplier approach was used. Any observation more than 2.2 interquartile ranges above the third quartile and below the first quartile were considered outliers. Due to the absence of extreme skewness in any of the variables, this technique does not necessarily require normal distribution (Hoaglin, Iglewicz, & Tukey, 1986). Teams 18 and 36 exceeded the calculated lower and upper bounds for relationship conflict (T1, team 36), process conflict (T1, team 36), organizational identification (T1, team 18), goal alignment (T1, team 36) and commitment (T2, team 18). Therefore, both teams were excluded from all further analyses.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Tables 2 and 3 show all the correlations between the variables utilized in hypotheses testing and exploratory analyses at T1 and T2. These will partly be discussed in context of the exploratory analyses. Table 4 presents means and standard deviations for both moments of measurement as well as results of paired sample t-tests indicating whether changes over time were significant. It is noteworthy that organizational identification, goal alignment, intergroup efficiency and job satisfaction increased over the course of time. As intended by the ASPIRe approach, sub-group identification was unchanged. In turn, relationship, process conflict, sub-group perception and intergroup bias were significantly lower at the second measurement. Unexpectedly, transformational leadership and task conflict were unchanged.

Table 2

*Correlation matrix of variables measured at T1.*

| Variable                       | 1      | 2       | 3       | 4       | 5       | 6       | 7       | 8       | 9      | 10    | 11   | 12 |
|--------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|-------|------|----|
| 1. SID (T1)                    | 1      |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |        |       |      |    |
| 2. OID (T1)                    | .512** | 1       |         |         |         |         |         |         |        |       |      |    |
| 3. Sub-group perception (T1)   | -.024  | -.440** | 1       |         |         |         |         |         |        |       |      |    |
| 4. Goal alignment (T1)         | -.086  | .519**  | -.496** | 1       |         |         |         |         |        |       |      |    |
| 5. Intergroup bias (T1)        | .040   | -.490** | .512**  | .612**  | 1       |         |         |         |        |       |      |    |
| 6. Task conflict (T1)          | .136   | -.271   | .081    | -.277   | .393*   | 1       |         |         |        |       |      |    |
| 7. Rel. conflict (T1)          | .173   | -.400*  | .457**  | -.679** | .432**  | .536**  | 1       |         |        |       |      |    |
| 8. Proc. conflict (T1)         | .094   | -.402*  | .243    | -.680** | .376*   | .470**  | .818**  | 1       |        |       |      |    |
| 9. TFL (T1)                    | .419*  | .277    | -.279   | .262    | -.278   | .185    | -.061   | -.076   | 1      |       |      |    |
| 10. Commitment (T1)            | .410*  | .120    | -.266   | -.086   | .144    | .370*   | .135    | .350*   | .230   | 1     |      |    |
| 11. Satisfaction (T1)          | .295*  | .068    | -.155   | .052    | -.027   | .361*   | -.061   | -.066   | .685** | .323* | 1    |    |
| 12. Intergroup efficiency (T1) | -.070  | .361*   | -.270   | .511**  | -.426** | -.449** | -.594** | -.749** | -.087  | -.088 | .055 | 1  |

Note. SID = sub-group identification, OID = organizational identification, TFL = transformational leadership.

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*  $p < .05$

Table 3

*Correlation matrix of variables measured at T2.*

| Variable                       | 1      | 2      | 3       | 4       | 5       | 6      | 7      | 8       | 9      | 10     | 11   | 12 |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|------|----|
| 1. SID (T2)                    | 1      |        |         |         |         |        |        |         |        |        |      |    |
| 2. OID (T2)                    | .772** | 1      |         |         |         |        |        |         |        |        |      |    |
| 3. Sub-group perception (T2)   | -.320* | -.249  | 1       |         |         |        |        |         |        |        |      |    |
| 4. Goal alignment (T2)         | .333*  | .218   | -.423** | 1       |         |        |        |         |        |        |      |    |
| 5. Intergroup bias (T2)        | -.211  | -.157  | .511**  | -.321*  | 1       |        |        |         |        |        |      |    |
| 6. Task conflict (T2)          | .441** | .437** | -.653** | .126    | -.273*  | 1      |        |         |        |        |      |    |
| 7. Rel. conflict (T2)          | -.187  | -.175  | .249    | -.436** | .070    | -.011  | 1      |         |        |        |      |    |
| 8. Proc. conflict (T2)         | -.207  | -.167  | .342*   | -.393*  | -.088   | -.190  | .707** | 1       |        |        |      |    |
| 9. TFL (T2)                    | .382*  | .163   | -.555** | .331*   | -.491** | .302*  | -.234  | -.176   | 1      |        |      |    |
| 10. Commitment (T2)            | .563** | .578** | -.432*  | .245    | -.168   | .469** | -.389* | .310*   | .449** | 1      |      |    |
| 11. Satisfaction (T2)          | .648** | .491** | -.222   | -.053   | -.114   | .383*  | -.288  | -.349*  | .323*  | .652** | 1    |    |
| 12. Intergroup efficiency (T2) | .045   | -.026  | -.291*  | .220    | .060    | .138   | -.289  | -.466** | .219   | .270   | .286 | 1  |

Note. SID = sub-group identification, OID = organizational identification, TFL = transformational leadership.

\*\* p < .01

\* p < .05.

Table 4

*Means and standard deviations for all variables measured at T1 and T2. Results from paired sample t-tests between T1 and T2 are presented with significance levels.*

| Measure                    | Time 1 |      | Measure                    | Time 2 |      |
|----------------------------|--------|------|----------------------------|--------|------|
|                            | M      | SD   |                            | Mean   | SD   |
| OID (T1)                   | 4.37   | 0.58 | OID (T2)                   | 5.01** | 0.52 |
| SID (T1)                   | 5.22   | 0.82 | SID (T2)                   | 5.42+  | 0.50 |
| Sub-group perception (T1)  | 3.68   | 0.75 | Sub-group perception (T2)  | 3.26*  | 0.79 |
| Goal alignment (T1)        | 4.88   | 0.73 | Goal alignment (T2)        | 5.37** | 0.51 |
| Intergroup bias (T1)       | 3.19   | 0.90 | Intergroup bias (T2)       | 2.65** | 0.56 |
| Task conflict (T1)         | 3.43   | 0.67 | Task conflict (T2)         | 3.43   | 0.75 |
| Relationship conflict (T1) | 2.92   | 0.77 | Relationship conflict (T2) | 2.68*  | 0.45 |
| Process conflict (T1)      | 3.06   | 0.78 | Process conflict (T2)      | 2.68*  | 0.46 |
| Transf. leadership (T1)    | 4.94   | 0.85 | Transf. leadership (T2)    | 5.08   | 0.73 |
| Job satisfaction (T1)      | 5.49   | 0.76 | Job satisfaction (T2)      | 5.82*  | 0.55 |
| Affective commitment (T1)  | 4.42   | 0.55 | Affective commitment (T2)  | 4.59+  | 0.64 |
| Intergroup efficiency (T1) | 3.94   | 0.77 | Intergroup efficiency (T2) | 4.35*  | 0.75 |

Note. \*\*  $p < .001$  significantly different from T1. \*  $p < .05$  significantly different from T1. +  $p < .10$  marginally significant from T1.

## Hypothesis Testing

**Hypothesis 1 and 2.** Hypothesis 1 states that, in absence of organizational identification, sub-group identification predicts intergroup conflict. We intended to examine if there were differences in this relationship depending on the type of intergroup conflict. Therefore, we tested this hypothesis for task, relationship and process conflict separately. According to hypothesis 2 organizational identification moderates this relationship between sub-group identification and all three types of intergroup conflict. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested together in three separate multiple linear regression analyses. This is grounded in the fact that sub-group identification and organizational identification correlated strongly with each other. Examining them together in the regression models as two main effects and as an interaction allowed us to control for shared explained variance in intergroup conflict. In order

to prevent multicollinearity for the regression analyses all variables of interest were centered through mean subtraction from group average scores. To examine the interaction effect, a new variable has been created through multiplication between sub-group identification (T1) and organizational identification (T1). T1 variables were used here as they were measured in a state of unaltered organizational dynamics. For all three analyses, T1 mean values of the covariates organizational identification, age, gender, team size, team tenure, working hours and average education level were controlled for and entered in step 1 of the regression model. In step 2 of the regression model sub-group identification (T1) was entered as predictor variable. To test hypothesis 2, the interaction between organizational identification and sub-group identification was entered as a predictor variable in step 3. Task conflict (T1), relationship conflict (T1) and process conflict (T1) were utilized as dependent variables of the three separate regression models.

*Task conflict.* The multiple regression was not significant for any of the three steps (Step 1:  $F(7,27) = 2.01, p > .05$ ; Step 2:  $F(8,26) = 1.93, p > .05$ ; Step 3:  $F(9,25) = 1.77, p > .05$ ). Results of the regression are displayed in Table 6. With regards to the covariates, only team size predicted task conflict negatively ( $\beta = -.42, t(33) = -2.50, p < .05$ ), meaning that bigger teams experienced less task conflict. Contrary to the expectations of hypothesis 1, when controlling for the above mentioned covariates, sub-group identification did not predict task conflict (T1) ( $\beta = .19, t(33) = 1.01, p > .05$ ). In fact, for step 2, none of the entered predictors significantly predicted task conflict. Finally, the interaction term between organizational identification and sub-group identification entered in step 3 was also not significant ( $\beta = .15, t(33) = 0.80, p > .05$ ), leaving hypothesis 2 unsupported as well in terms of task conflict.

*Relationship conflict.* Also for relationship conflict, the overall multiple regression model was significant (Step 1:  $F(7,27) = 3.63, p < .05$ ; Step 2:  $F(8,26) = 5.15, p < .05$ ; Step 3:

$F(9,25) = 4.41, p < .05$ ). Table 5 demonstrates the results of the multiple regression carried out. Of the covariates entered in step 1, gender and organizational identification predicted relationship conflict significantly. Higher levels of organizational identification were associated with lower levels of relationship conflict ( $\beta = -.35, t(33) = -2.17, p < .05$ ) and higher amounts of female team members were related to higher levels of relationship conflict ( $\beta = .59, t(33) = 3.37, p < .05$ ). When controlling for organizational identification, age, gender, team size, team tenure, working hours and education, sub-group identification positively predicted relationship conflict at significant levels ( $\beta = .45, t(33) = 2.93, p < .05$ ). Higher levels of sub-group identification were associated with higher levels of relationship conflict. This is in line with hypothesis 1. It should be mentioned that the main effects of organizational identification ( $\beta = -.62, t(33) = -3.66, p < .05$ ) and gender ( $\beta = .59, t(33) = 3.81, p < .05$ ) on relationship conflict were both still significant in step 2. Finally, the interaction between organizational and sub-group identification was not significant ( $\beta = .03, t(33) = 0.20, p > .05$ ). There was no moderation effect of organizational identification on the relationship between sub-group identification and relationship conflict. Similar to the findings on task conflict, this is not in line with the expectations of hypothesis 2.

*Process conflict.* Finally, for process conflict, the regression model was significant as well (Step 1:  $F(7,27) = 4.64, p < .05$ ; Step 2:  $F(8,26) = 5.49, p < .001$ ; Step 3:  $F(9,25) = 4.95, p < .05$ ). As Table 5 demonstrates, of the factors controlled for in this regression model, gender and organizational identification were significant predictors of process conflict. Similar to the findings on relationship conflict, organizational identification predicted process conflict negatively ( $\beta = -.38, t(33) = -2.49, p < .05$ ), whereas gender predicted it positively ( $\beta = .70, t(33) = 4.24, p < .001$ ). The second step of the regression yields that sub-group identification also predict process conflict positively ( $\beta = .36, t(33) = 2.39, p < .05$ ). In line with hypothesis 1, higher levels of sub-group identification were associated with higher levels

of process conflict. It is interesting to note that also in this regression organizational identification still negatively predicted process conflict significantly ( $\beta = -.60$ ,  $t(33) = -3.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hence, higher levels of organizational identification were associated with lower levels of process conflict. Finally, the interaction between organizational and sub-group identification, entered in step 3 of the regression model, was not significant ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $t(33) = 0.93$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Thus, organizational identification did not moderate the relationship between sub-group identification and process conflict.

In sum, hypothesis 1 is only partly supported. In the present sample, teams reporting higher levels of sub-group identification did not appear to report higher levels of task conflict. However, teams with higher levels of sub-group identification did report higher levels of relationship and process conflict. Hypothesis 2 is unsupported as well for any type of intergroup conflict. In the present sample, higher levels organizational identification did not attenuate the negative effects of sub-group identification on any of the three types of intergroup conflict. However, relationship and process conflict were negatively predicted by organizational identification and positively predicted by sub-group identification. This means that regardless of the level of sub-group identification, higher levels of organizational identification were always associated with lower levels of relationship and process conflict. On the contrary, higher levels of sub-group identification were associated with higher levels of relationship and process conflict. These two main effects and the absence of the expected interaction effect will be examined in the exploratory section of this paper.

Table 5

*Unstandardized and standardized beta coefficients of sub-group identification and organizational identification and their product on task conflict..*

| Measure       | Task conflict |      |         | Relationship conflict |      |                   | Process conflict |      |                   |
|---------------|---------------|------|---------|-----------------------|------|-------------------|------------------|------|-------------------|
|               | B             | SE B | $\beta$ | B                     | SE B | $\beta$           | B                | SE B | $\beta$           |
| <b>Step 1</b> |               |      |         |                       |      |                   |                  |      |                   |
| Constant      | 1.31          | 2.37 |         | -3.39                 | 2.13 |                   | -4.42            | 1.95 |                   |
| OID           | -0.11         | 0.19 | .10     | -0.37                 | 0.17 | -.35*             | -0.39            | 0.16 | -.38*             |
| Gender        | 0.43          | 0.39 | .22     | 1.19                  | 0.35 | .59*              | 1.36             | 0.32 | .70*              |
| Age           | 0.01          | 0.02 | .05     | 0.18                  | 0.02 | .16               | 0.02             | 0.02 | .17               |
| Education     | -0.00         | 0.07 | -.00    | 0.04                  | 0.07 | .09               | 0.04             | 0.06 | .08               |
| Team size     | -0.08         | 0.03 | -.42*   | -0.05                 | 0.03 | -.26 <sup>+</sup> | -0.05            | 0.03 | -.25 <sup>+</sup> |
| Team tenure   | -0.03         | 0.03 | -.23    | 0.02                  | 0.03 | .11               | 0.04             | 0.03 | .27               |
| Work hours    | -0.03         | 0.04 | -.15    | 0.03                  | 0.04 | .16               | 0.05             | 0.03 | .23               |
| <b>Step 2</b> |               |      |         |                       |      |                   |                  |      |                   |
| Constant      | 1.00          | 2.39 |         | -4.11                 | 2.0  |                   | -4.98            | 1.81 |                   |
| Gender        | 0.43          | 0.39 | .22     | 1.19                  | 0.31 | .59*              | 1.36             | 0.29 | .70**             |
| SID           | 0.22          | 0.22 | .20     | 0.51                  | 0.17 | .45*              | 0.40             | 0.17 | .36*              |
| OID           | -0.23         | 0.23 | -.22    | -0.66                 | 0.18 | -.62*             | -0.61            | 0.17 | -.60*             |
| <b>Step 3</b> |               |      |         |                       |      |                   |                  |      |                   |
| Constant      |               |      |         |                       |      |                   |                  |      |                   |
| SID * OID     | 0.25          | 0.31 | .15     | 0.05                  | 0.25 | .03               | 0.22             | 0.23 | .13               |

Notes. *TC*: For step 1,  $R^2 = .35$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .18$ ,  $p > .05$ .; For step 2,  $R^2 = .37$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .18$ ,  $p > .05$ ; For step 3,  $R^2 = .39$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .17$ ,  $p > .05$ ; *RC*: For step 1,  $R^2 = .49$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .35$ ,  $p < .05$ ; For step 2,  $R^2 = .61$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .49$ ,  $p < .05$ ; For step 3,  $R^2 = .61$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .47$ ,  $p > .05$ ; *PC*: For step 1,  $R^2 = .55$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .43$ ,  $p < .05$ .; For step 2,  $R^2 = .63$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .51$ ,  $p < .05$ ; For step 3,  $R^2 = .64$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .51$ ,  $p > .05$ .

+  $p < .10$

\*  $p < .05$ \*\*

\*\* $p < .001$

**Hypothesis 3.** To test whether participation in the ASPIRe training led to an increase in organizational identification and the maintenance of the elevated levels of sub-group identification of the leaders, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was carried out. Time was used as within-subjects factor and condition (experimental vs control) as between-subject factor. In previous analyses of this research we utilized average team scores. However, only leaders, not the entire teams participated in the ASPIRe module. Therefore, for the analyses of hypothesis 3, instead of average team scores, leaders' individual scores on organizational identification (T1: [ $M = 4.71, SD = 1.09$ ]; T2 [ $M = 5.41, SD = 0.71$ ]) and sub-group identification (T1: [ $M = 5.61, SD = 0.82$ ]; T2: [ $M = 5.77, SD = 0.58$ ]) were utilized. Prior to aggregation all individuals of the dataset were marked with a dummy variable (1 = leader, 0 = no leader). For teams with two leaders, individual values were aggregated. In total we utilized 48 leader scores, distributed upon 32 teams, for the analyses. Of those 48 leaders, 42 were in the experimental condition and 6 in the control condition. For these analyses, two ANOVAs had to be calculated and an alpha correction from .05 to .025 had to be made. The covariates age, gender, team tenure, education, team size and work hours did not alter the results of the following analyses and were excluded from the analyses in order to maintain adequate power levels. The results for the omnibus test containing organizational and sub-group identification show no significant difference between the participating leaders and the control group without consideration of the moment of measurement ( $F(2, 29) = 1.85, p > .025$ ; Wilk's  $\Lambda = 0.89$ , partial  $\eta_p^2 = .11$ ). Thus, there was no main effect for condition. The interaction of time and condition on organizational and sub-group identification was also not significant ( $F(2, 29) = 0.51, p > .025$ ; Wilk's  $\Lambda = 0.97$ , partial  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ ), indicating that there were no significant differences between the leaders in the experimental condition and the leaders in the control condition in terms of changes in organizational identification and sub-group identification from T1 to T2. However, there was a significant main effect for time. Regardless of condition,

there was a significant change from T1 to T2 with regards to organizational identification and sub-group identification taken together ( $F(2, 29) = 8.93, p < .025$ ; Wilk's  $\Lambda = 0.62$ , partial  $\eta_p^2 = .38$ ). Further univariate examination of this main effect yielded a significant increase in organizational identification among all leaders ( $F(1, 30) = 29.93, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta_p^2 = .36$ ) over the course of time. This, was not the case for sub-group identification, as reports showed no significant main effect ( $F(2, 30) = 0.60, p > .05$ , partial  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ ). The interaction effect between time and condition does not vary for organizational and sub-group identification and remains non-significant for both measures (OID:  $F(1, 30) = 0.06, p > .05$ , partial  $\eta_p^2 = .00$ ; SID:  $F(1, 30) = 0.95, p > .05$ , partial  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ ). Despite the finding of a significant increase of organizational identification in all leaders, regardless of participation in the ASPIRe training, we must conclude that the results do not support hypothesis 3.

**Hypothesis 4.** Hypothesis 4 predicted that participation in the workshop leads to increased ratings of transformational leadership over time. In contrast to the analyses of hypothesis 3, data containing the team aggregated values was used again in order to determine transformational leadership levels experienced by the followers of the teams. T1 and T2 measures of transformational leadership were utilized as the within-subject factor and condition (experimental vs control) as the between-subject factor. Again, covariate's effects were non-significant and, therefore, excluded from the analyses in order to maintain adequate power levels. Results show that there was no main effect for time, indicating that transformational leadership ratings did not change over time ( $F(1, 32) = 0.01, p > .05, \eta_p^2 = .00$ ). Second, the main effect for condition was not significant ( $F(1, 32) = 2.64, p > .05, \eta_p^2 = .07$ ). Finally, the interaction between time and condition was not significant either ( $F(1, 32) = 0.30, p > .05$ , partial  $\eta_p^2 = .01$ ). This finding implies that the transformational leadership ratings did not improve, regardless of whether the leaders participated in the ASPIRe training.

Apparently, the developed leadership module of the workshop intervention was ineffective. Therefore, hypothesis 4 has not been supported.

**Hypothesis 5.** To measure whether the transfer of dual identification (high organizational identification and high sub-group identification) from leaders to their followers was successful and moderated by transformational leadership, a multiple regression was calculated. As these measurements are addressing the state after the ASPIRe intervention, T2 measures were utilized. For purposes of this hypothesis measures from both data sets, the team aggregated values and the individual leaders' scores, were needed. In both cases, dual identification was conceptualized in individuals where organizational and sub-group identification levels exceeded the median of both identification measures at T2. Hence, two dichotomous variables were created: leaders' dual identification (T2) and followers' dual identification (T2). To explore the moderation effect of transformational leadership an interaction product between leaders' dual identification and transformational leadership (centered T2) was computed. A preliminary analysis yielded that the covariates did not impact the results and, hence, were not included in the analysis regarding hypothesis 5 in order to prevent impact on the statistical power levels. A regression analysis with leaders' dual identification levels and transformational leadership (step 1) as well as the interaction (step 2) as predictors and followers' dual identification as dependent variable showed that only the first model (Step 1:  $F(2,31) = 3.54, p < .05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .13$ , without the interaction (Step 2:  $F(3,30) = 2.28, p > .05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .10$ ), was significant. Table 6 reports the results of the regression analysis in detail. Regarding step 1, leaders' dual identification significantly predicted followers' dual identification level ( $\beta = .40, t(31) = 2.49, p < .05$ ). Transformational leadership was no significant predictor of followers' dual identification ( $\beta = .17, t(31) = 1.02, p > .05$ ). Adding the interaction product between leaders' dual identification and transformational leadership, did not appear to explain any additional variance in the outcome

variable. Transformational leadership did not moderate the relationship between leaders' dual identification and followers' dual identification ( $\beta = .09, t(31) = 0.70, p > .05$ ) In sum, even though followers' dual identification levels are positively predicted by leaders' dual identification levels, due to the lack of the moderating impact of transformational leadership, hypothesis 5 is not supported by these results.

Table 6

*Unstandardized and standardized beta coefficients of leaders' dual identification (T2) and transformational leadership (T2) and their product on followers' dual identification (T2).*

| Measure  | B     | SE B | $\beta$ |
|--|-------|------|---------|
| <b>Step 1</b>  |       |      |         |
| Constant   | -0.31 | 0.59 |         |
| Leaders' dual identification                               | 0.41  | 0.17 | .40*    |
| Transformational leadership                                | 0.12  | 0.11 | .17     |
| <b>Step 2</b>  |       |      |         |
| Constant   | -0.27 | 0.81 |         |
| Leaders' dual identification * Transformational leadership | 0.02  | 0.23 | .09     |

Notes. B = unstandardized beta coefficient; SE B = standard error unstandardized beta coefficient;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficient.  $R^2 = .19$  for step 1,  $\Delta R^2 = .13, p < .05$ .;  $R^2 = .19$  for step 2,  $\Delta R^2 = .10, p > .05$ .

+  $p < .10$

\*  $p < .05^{**}$

\*\* $p < .001$

### Exploratory analyses

**Mean differences between T1 and T2.** Table 1 shows the results of paired sample t-tests measuring the significance of the mean differences between T1 and T2 measurements. As intended by the manipulation, on a team level, organizational identification did indeed improve, whereas sub-group identification levels remained unchanged. This finding adds to the results of hypothesis 3. It indicates that aside from the team leaders' organizational

identification, also followers' organizational identification levels improved. Moreover, sub-group perception was significantly reduced at T2. Goal alignment has positively improved from T1 to T2. Intergroup bias has been significantly reduced. Whereas task conflict remained the same, relationship conflict and process conflict were reduced at T2. Transformational leadership remained unchanged, however, the three organizational outcome variables job satisfaction, commitment and intergroup efficiency improved significantly. Thus, in terms of organizational outcomes and experienced intergroup conflict, values have improved substantially from T1 to T2. Unfortunately, as the lack of interaction effects between time and condition found in the analyses of hypothesis 3 and 5 show, this effect can likely not be ascribed directly to the intervention of the present study.

It is also important to note that, as expected, sub-group identification levels were indeed higher than organizational identification in the baseline measure (T1:  $t(34) = 7.40, p < .001$ ). Even though the difference was much smaller, this was still the case at the second measurement (T2:  $t(33) = 6.28, p < .001$ ).

**The interplay between sub-group and organizational identification.** We learned that sub-group identification was associated with high levels of relationship and process conflict. In the present sample, these damaging effects were not attenuated by organizational identification. Therefore, we examined whether the lack of an interaction between the two foci of identification holds for other outcome measures as well. In fact, examination of the correlation matrix provides reason to assume that sub-group identification might not be as damaging in terms of organizational outcomes as we initially hypothesized. At both moments of measurement, sub-group identification is positively associated with commitment, job satisfaction and transformational leadership. A regression analysis showed that sub-group identification did indeed predict transformational leadership significantly and positively at T1 and T2 ( $\beta = .42, t(33) = 7.02, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .38, t(33) = 2.34, p < .05$ ). Thus, at first glance, sub-

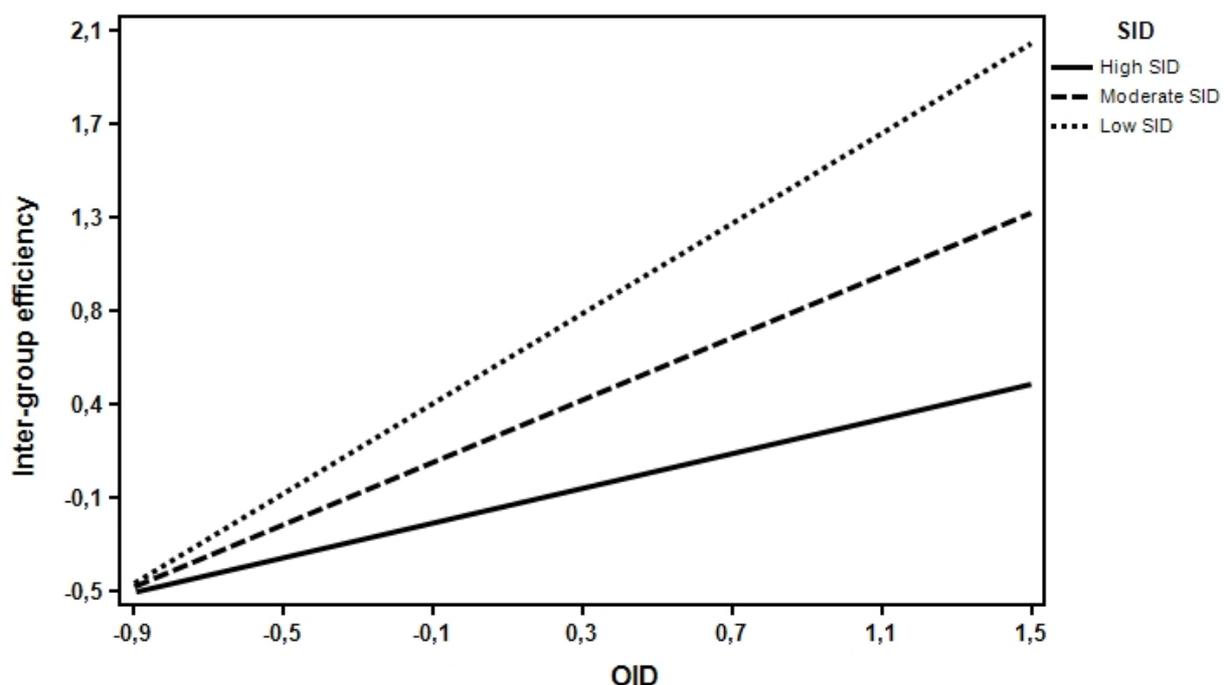
group identification is not universally negatively associated with organizational outcomes and might possibly even be beneficial in terms of some outcome measures. However, the positive relationship between sub-group identification (T1) and transformational leadership (T1) diminished as organizational identification was added to the regression as a second predictor ( $\beta = .37, t(31) = 1.93, p > .05$ ). Surprisingly, similar to intergroup conflict, the interaction between sub-group and organizational identification was also not significant ( $\beta = -.15, t(33) = -0.90, p > .05$ ). Hence, entering both foci of identification as predictors can render the significant positive prediction of transformational leadership by sub-group identification non-significant. Yet, just like for intergroup conflict, there is no significant interaction.

*Dual identification and intergroup efficiency.* Sub-group identification was originally not correlated with intergroup efficiency at either moment of measurement. To examine how this relationship changes with the addition of organizational identification, a regression analysis was conducted with intergroup efficiency (T1) as a dependent variable and sub-group identification (T1) (step 1), organizational identification (T1) (step 2) and their interaction product (step 3) as independent variables. Results showed that, in isolation, sub-group identification did not predict intergroup efficiency at significant levels ( $\beta = -.07, t(31) = -0.40, p > .05$ ). Indeed, adding organizational identification (step 2) to the regression renders the main effect of sub-group identification on intergroup efficiency significant ( $\beta = -.35, t(31) = -2.00, p < .05$ ). Organizational identification was also a strong positive predictor for intergroup efficiency ( $\beta = .53, t(31) = 2.96, p < .05$ ). Addition of the interaction explains 25% additional variance in intergroup efficiency ( $F(3,31) = 4.74, p < .05$ ). The negative relationship between sub-group identification and intergroup efficiency changed with the levels of organizational identification ( $\beta = .37, t(31) = 1.93, p > .05$ ). A simple slopes analysis was conducted to investigate the interaction effect. Figure 6 visualizes the simple slopes. Organizational identification positively predicts intergroup efficiency at high ( $B = .42, t(31) = 2.04, p < .05$ ),

moderate ( $B = .75$ ,  $t(31) = 2.98$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and low ( $B = 1.09$ ,  $t(31) = 3.05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) levels of sub-group identification. However, this positive effect is much less pronounced for individuals reporting higher levels of sub-group identification. Thus, sub-group identification appears to weaken the relationship between organizational identification and intergroup efficiency; the latter is stronger when SI is low rather than when it is high.

Figure 6

*The interaction effect between sub-group identification and organizational identification on intergroup efficiency.*



**Inferring causality between increase in organizational identification and decrease in relationship and process conflict.** The discovery that organizational identification negatively predicts relationship and process conflict at moderate to high levels of sub-group identification can be extended by examining how the difference scores between the two variables are associated in terms of causality. This reveals whether the increase of organizational identification was associated with the decrease of relationship and process

conflict. For this, we used the change score method (Allison, 1990). We calculated the difference scores for both conflict types through a subtraction between T2 mean values and T1 mean values. Two regressions with the difference score between T1 and T2 of organizational identification as predictor and the difference score between T1 and T2 of relationship and process conflict as outcome measures showed that organizational identification predicted the difference scores of relationship and process conflict significantly (RC:  $\beta = .36$ ,  $t(31) = -2.21$ ,  $p < .05$ ; PC:  $\beta = .46$ ,  $t(31) = -2.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Thus, the stronger the increase in organizational identification the more reduction in relationship and process conflict was experienced. Therefore, results indicate that the increase of organizational identification lead to a decrease in relationship and process conflict. These causality inferences should be interpreted with caution as the method utilized is prone to regression to the mean and would need to be replicated in a setting where confounding factors are controlled for properly (For a review see Allison, 1990).

**Lack of organizational identification: sub-group perception, lack of goal alignment and intergroup bias.** The ASPIRe module of the training addressed three variables that were suspected to be associated with *decreased* levels of *organizational identification*: sub-group perception, goal alignment and intergroup bias. Therefore, we addressed whether these three factors improved over the course of time, whether they were associated with organizational and/or sub-group identification and, if they were associated with task, relationship and process conflict. Indeed, as can be seen in Table 4, a paired sample t-test showed that all three variables have significantly improved over the course of time. Sub-group perception has been reduced, goal alignment increased and intergroup bias was reduced at T1. Organizational identification was negatively correlated with sub-group perception, positively correlated with goal alignment and negatively with intergroup bias at T1. Examination of Table 3 showed that there is a positive relationship between intergroup bias

and all three types of intergroup conflict at T1. Moreover, strong negative relationships were found between goal alignment and relationship conflict and process conflict, indicating that higher levels of goal alignment were associated with lower levels of relationship and process conflict. Sub-group perception was positively associated with relationship conflict at T1. Intergroup bias was positively correlated with all types of intergroup conflict. Contrary to theoretical expectations, sub-group identification was not correlated with sub-group perception, goal alignment and intergroup biases at T1. In sum, this means that as employees experience increased levels of sub-group perception, decreased levels of goal alignment and increased levels of intergroup bias, they were also *lacking* organizational identification and experiencing *increased* levels of intergroup conflict. We hypothesized in the introduction, these three factors appear to be related to intergroup conflict. However, it appears that this is not due to overly strong sub-group identification, but rather due to a lack of organizational identification.

**Mediation of goal alignment in the relationship between organizational identification and intergroup conflict.** To examine this further, we tested whether sub-group perception, goal alignment or intergroup bias mediated the relationship between organizational identification and intergroup conflict. For the mediation analysis, we again used the PROCESS macro provided by Hayes (2011). In several regression analyses, we entered either sub-group perception, goal alignment or intergroup bias as mediator variable, organizational identification as independent variable, sub-group identification as covariate and process and relationship conflict as dependent variables. Through the use of three PROCESS mediation analyses (95% CI, 1000 simulations), we discovered that only goal alignment mediated the relationship between organizational identification and these two forms of intergroup conflict. While controlling for sub-group identification, the regression analyses showed that organizational identification positively predicted goal alignment ( $\beta =$

.76,  $t(31) = 4.94, p < .001$ ). When controlling for sub-group identification, organizational identification also negatively predicted relationship and process conflict (RC:  $\beta = -.70, t(31) = -4.00, p < .05$ ; PC:  $\beta = -.62, t(31) = -3.50, p < .05$ ). When controlling for organizational identification and sub-group identification, goal alignment predicted relationship and process conflict significantly (RC:  $\beta = -.54, t(31) = -3.01, p < .001$ ; PC:  $\beta = -.60, t(31) = -3.37, p < .05$ ). There was a significant indirect effect of organizational identification on relationship and process conflict through goal alignment (RC:  $\beta = -.41, \text{BCa CI} [-0.84, -0.16]$ ; PC:  $\beta = -.46, \text{BCa CI} [-0.87 \text{ to } -0.16]$ ). The results represent a moderate effect for both types of conflict (RC:  $K^2 = -.34, \text{BCa CI} [-0.63, -0.13]$ ; PC:  $K^2 = -.38, \text{BCa CI} [-0.63, -0.16]$ ). Indicating a full mediation effect, the direct relationships between organizational identification and relationship/process conflict became non-significant (RC:  $\beta = -.28, \text{CI} = -.70 \text{ to } .14$ ; PC:  $\beta = -.17, \text{CI} = -.59 \text{ to } .25$ ). Only through goal alignment did organizational identification negatively predict relationship and process conflict. A schematic overview of the results of the mediations for relationship and process conflict are depicted in Figures 7 and 8.

Figure 7

*Mediation effect of goal alignment on the relationship between organizational identification on relationship conflict.*

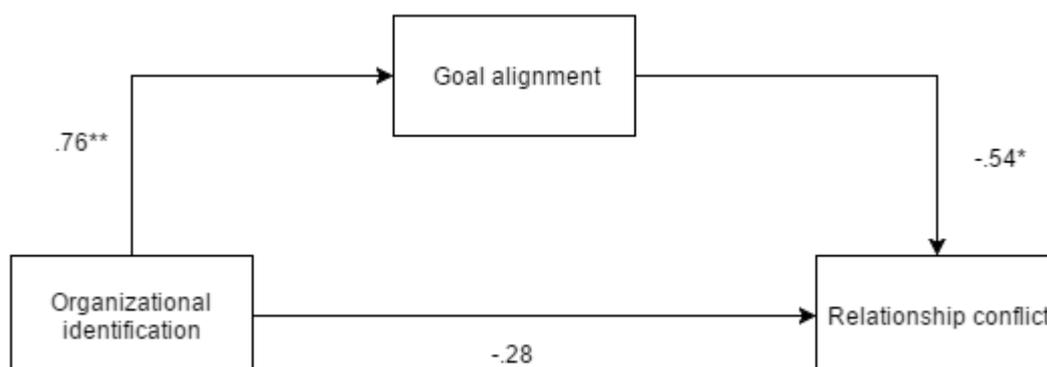
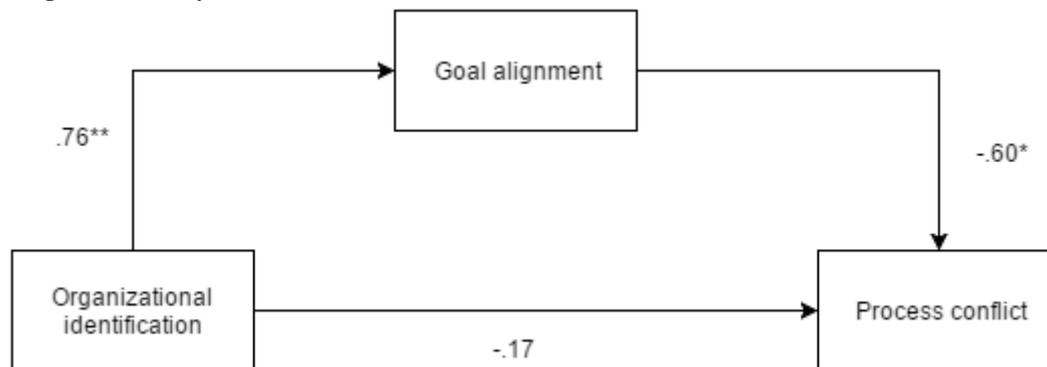


Figure 8

*Mediation effect of goal alignment on the relationship between organizational identification on process conflict.*



### Discussion

Intergroup conflict emerges inevitably in organizations, especially given nowadays increased demand for collaboration within and between teams. Hence, knowing how conflict between organizational teams can be resolved properly and in a sustainable manner is vital for every organization's efficiency. The goal of this study was to examine the promising role of organizational identification in the long-term reduction of inter-group conflict through a workshop intervention for leaders. We examined whether, without lowering levels of sub-group identification, organizational identification (dual identification) could be enhanced and if this affected conflict between teams positively. As the workshop intervention was solely given to leaders, we also determined whether transformational leadership played a role in the improvement of dual identification among followers. In this endeavor, this study produced five key contributions which contribute to the intergroup conflict management, social identity approach and transformational leadership literature. In the remainder of this section, we first will discuss these findings and alternative explanations in further detail. Second, we will focus

on the limitations and suggestions for further research. The paper will be concluded with its theoretical and practical contributions.

The first key finding originates from the fact that after the administration of the ASPIRe workshop intervention (Peters et al., 2012), there were profound positive changes in the intended directions over the course of time for organizational identification, relationship and process conflict, sub-group perception, intergroup bias, goal alignment, job satisfaction and intergroup efficiency. Unfortunately, these changes could not be directly attributed to the ASPIRe workshop intervention per se as there was no difference between the experimental and control group. At least for the present study, it is impossible to pinpoint the evident improvement in organizational identification to the ASPIRe process.

A likely explanation might be that unequal group sizes could have influenced this result in a determining manner. The difference in terms of group size between experimental and control condition were profound. Moreover, the use of a control group in an organizational setting comes with problems of its own that might explain the lacking difference between the two groups. The control group was not blind to the ongoing intervention. Between the pre and post measurement, the experimental and control group interacted with each other due to inter-team collaboration. Information about the workshop might have been exchanged, resulting in a contamination effect. The teams in the control group might have either learned from the experimental group or might have gained knowledge on the focus of the intervention. Consequently, they might have adjusted their self-report measures accordingly.

Finally, it should be noted that identification levels are usually stable with little fluctuation over time (Haslam, et al., 2003). At the time in which the present research was conducted, to our knowledge, no events or efforts took place that could have altered organizational identification levels in such a profound manner as was observed between T1

and T2. Therefore, despite the fact that the results do not show this directly, it is not unlikely that participation in the workshop intervention did contribute to some extent to the increase of organizational identification between the baseline and post-intervention measurement.

Another finding supporting this argument is that, just like organizational identification, sub-group perception, intergroup bias and goal alignment were all improved at the post-measurement. In essence, these three concepts are addressed by participation in the ASPIRe process (Peters et al., 2012). Nonetheless, with this study we have contributed to the small pool of research addressing and testing the ASPIRe model. Furthermore, we support the ASPIRe process, and the notion that its underlying mechanisms addressing sub-group perception, goal alignment and intergroup bias, are indeed related to organizational identification and not to sub-group identification. Previous studies have illustrated that organizational justice, prestige and organizational distinctiveness, sub-group perception and clarity are all positive antecedents of organizational identification (Olkkonen, & Lipponen, 2006; Dukerich, Golden, & Shortell, 2002; Mael, & Ashforth, 1992). With this study, we illustrated that goal alignment between sub-groups and intergroup biases might be important additions to the list of antecedents of organizational identification. Yet, instead of being antecedents, they might also be outcomes of organizational identification, or both in the way that it is a dynamic process. This remains to be determined in further research.

Secondly, this study contributes to the understanding of the influence of organizational identification and sub-group identification in three ways; (1) organizational identification in isolation is beneficial for intergroup conflict; (2) sub-group identification is always detrimental for intergroup conflict and; (3) dual identification is not a suitable combination for improving intergroup conflict and intergroup efficiency. These findings support the idea that group members can have multiple overlapping foci of identification and that these foci affect intergroup behavior in different ways (Reichers, 1985; Horstmeier et al., 2016). However,

against all expectations and previous research organizational identification did not moderate the relationship between sub-group perception and intergroup conflict, as we originally thought (van Dick et al., 2008; Richter et al., 2006; Cuijpers et al., 2013). Therefore, the concept of dual identification is not beneficial for the reduction of intergroup conflict. Instead, our findings suggest that organizational identification should be enhanced, whereas subgroup identification is best at moderate levels (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). For a different outcome measure, intergroup efficiency, we did find an interaction between two foci of identification. Sub-group identification weakens the positive relationship between organizational identification and intergroup efficiency. Hence, also for this outcome measure the combination of high sub-group identification and high organizational identification is not beneficial. Dual identification might then very well be a feasible approach for practitioners to improve job performance, customer service quality or organizational citizenship behavior (Chen et al., 2013). However, we established that dual identification is not always the golden standard – at least not for the purpose of improving intergroup conflict or intergroup efficiency.

All this raises the question whether subgroup identification is actually necessary and whether complete re-categorization of sub-groups into one common in-group identity (organizational identity) would be sufficient to the organizational outcomes one might desire (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Crisp, Stone, & Hall, 2006). The answer to this question is not clear-cut; after all, sub-group identification was positively associated with affective commitment and job satisfaction. Even though sub-group identification might not be necessary in terms of intergroup conflict or intergroup efficiency, this finding emphasizes the importance of elevated levels of sub-group identification for other vital outcome measures; satisfying the need for differentiation possibly relates positively to these two very important individual outcome measures but possibly not to intergroup relations (Van Dick et al., 2008).

Another explanation might be that maintaining the salience of the sub-group is sufficient to satisfy the need for differentiation and that strong subgroup identification might be too much of a good thing (Crisp et al., 2006). We originally thought that strong sub-group identification was necessary in order to maintain sub-group salience to satisfy the need for differentiation. In hindsight, we conclude that keeping sub-group identification at a minimum, while maintaining the salience of the sub-group is sufficient to satisfy the need for differentiation and to prevent intergroup conflict. Inherently, this means that our findings do support *optimal distinctiveness theory*, which states that employees need dual identification to satisfy the need for differentiation and the need for inclusiveness (Brewer, 1991). At least for the improvement of intergroup conflict and intergroup efficiency, it appears that maintaining sub-group salience to some small extent, paired with strong organizational identification is the key for improvement, as both the need for differentiation and inclusiveness are satisfied (Crisp et al., 2006). This might serve as a guideline for further research, examining the interplay between sub-group identification and organizational identification, together with salience levels of those two foci in terms of intergroup relations.

The third key finding addresses the research question of the present study: Organizational identification is promising and appropriate as a means to reduce intergroup conflict, and it does so through improved goal alignment between teams. Previously, organizational identification has been linked to several positive organizational outcomes, among which increased job satisfaction, OCB, affective commitment, motivation and lowered turn-over intentions (Riketta & Van Dick, 2005; Riketta, 2005). We were able to support the idea that reduced intergroup conflict can be added to this list of positive organizational outcomes (Richter et al., 2006). Moreover, we identified one of the reasons as to why organizational identification might be a promising tool for practitioners to influence intergroup conflict levels: improved goal alignment. Both organizational identification and

relationship as well as process conflict were correlated with sub-group perception, intergroup bias and goal alignment. The finding that these three factors influence conflict negatively, whereas organizational identification influences these three factors positively, is in line with previous studies and our theoretical reasoning (Huang, 2012; Cairns, Kenworthy, Campbell, & Hewstone, 2006; Zhu, 2016). Only through goal alignment did organizational identification influence relationship and process conflict positively. Higher levels of organizational identification lead to increased salience of that identity. Only when such identity salience is given, will group goals be internalized and integrated in attitudes and behavior (Haslam et al., 2003). As a consequence, feelings of pride and the increased perception of a common purpose are realized which possibly influences individual conflict management approaches in favor of more integrative and cooperative behavior (Zhang, & Chiu, 2012). The consequence of increased cooperation is less intergroup conflict (Somech, Desivilya, Lidogoster, 2009).

On a different note, this process might also explain why organizational identification did not relate to task conflict. Whereas goal alignment is about integrating existing goals, task conflict is about defining new ideas, tasks or goals through dissent. Having more alignment and clarity on existing goals might lead to less process and relationship conflict. The question on the matter of *who does what* is clarified and relationship conflict might evolve less frequently (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Goal alignment comes with the feeling of having a common purpose and increases cohesion. However, in the case of task conflict this does not prevent dissent and discussion on new goals and ideas (Jehn et al., 2008; Stephen & Coote, 2007). This is particularly not the case for intergroup task conflict. Diversity of professions, backgrounds and ethnicity is increased. So, even if two groups feel more aligned in terms of goals, they will likely continue to experience task conflict, however, this might less quickly evolve into relationship conflict (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Simons & Peterson, 2000).

As a fourth key finding we report that one module of the workshop intervention, the transformational leadership module, appeared to be ineffective. Leaders who participated in the workshop were not reported as more transformational by their followers. An unexpected finding, which might be explained by the fact that baseline measurement transformational leadership levels were already very high. This could be an indication that employees rated their leaders as favorable as possible – in other words the presence of social-desirability bias. Even though participants were repeatedly informed that their responses would be treated anonymously, in their feedback employees indeed confirmed the presence of social-desirability bias. Several employees indicated that they rated their leaders favorably out of fear that individual employee's responses could be traced back by their leaders. Possibly, due to small team sizes, the anonymity we promised in the informed consent did not reassure them sufficiently. This understates the importance of preventing the social-desirability bias in survey measures through repeated reassurance of anonymity on several channels of communication.

Aside from the fact that transformational leadership was not increased, we established that transformational leadership did not play a part in the increase of dual identification among followers throughout the organization. This is in conflict with previous research directed towards leadership and the social identity approach. Leaders are the entrepreneurs of identity (Ellemers et al., 2004). They can motivate their followers to make personal sacrifices for the benefit of the collective. However, these efforts are meaningless, as long as goals of the sub-group (team) are not compatible with those of the organization. If there is no goal alignment, followers will not follow a leader's transformational behavior as it is not prototypical of the sub-group identity (Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). They will only follow a leader exemplary behavior if that matches the prototype embodying the values and goals of the sub-group (team) (van Knippenberg, 2011). In other words, followers do not

identify with that transformational leader who is not serving the team but only the organization. Transformational leadership behavior will consequentially lose its effect on conveying leaders' identification levels to their followers (Horstmeier et al., 2016).

Alternatively, it is likely, instead through transformational leadership, leaders were able to positively change their followers' perception through transactional leadership (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). The behavior of a transactional leaders is of a very corrective and controlling nature. They constantly clarify tasks, responsibilities, values, norms and goals of the team they lead (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). After participating in the workshop, leaders preferring the transactional leadership approach would be able influence followers' identification levels through clarification of expectations and rewards. They would reward behavior that is in line with the expectations that emerged from the workshop intervention: acting more in favor of the organization. Transactional leaders clarify this and consequential punishment and rewards might stimulate behavioral and attitudinal changes that embrace de common organizational identity (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). This could explain why leaders' dual identification levels were, regardless of transformational leadership, strongly related to followers' dual identification levels.

Based on these arguments and the fact that previous research has successfully linked transformational leadership to increased organizational identification (Carmeli et al., 2011; Liu, Zhu, & Yang, 2010) it is reasonable to assume that there are far more factors involved in the interplay between transformational leadership and followers' identification than have been included in the present study. In this context one could, for instance, name goal alignment between the sub-group and the organization, perceived positive affect and relational identification with the leader as possible covariates. Indeed, Carmeli et al. (2011) illustrated that identification with the leader promoted organizational identification. This might be (one of) the missing links that could explain why transformational leadership did not exert its

positive effects on the transfer of leaders' identification levels on followers' identification levels.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

The present study knows some limitations. The first limitation relates to the fact that agreement statistics did not justify the aggregation of the data to the group level. Even though  $r_{WG(J)}$  measures were appropriate for aggregation, according to general guidelines ICC(1) and ICC(2) values could be considered poor (Bieman et al., 2011). With the present study's small group sizes, criterions of .70 and higher are impossible to achieve. As ICC(2) values act as a function of ICC(1) values and group size Biemann et al., (2011) have suggested, cut-off criterions should be developed ad-hoc depending on sample and team sizes (Carpenter & Weikel, 2011). Aside from the small group sample sizes, the lacking agreement statistics might originate from the way self-report measures were formulated. Formulations such as "My leader has a clear vision about the future of this organization" are rated differently than "Our leader has a clear vision about the future of this organization". When formulated in a more inclusive or collective manner, employees might give a response that rather relates to the collective opinion of the team. A second plausible explanation for the poor agreement statistics might lie in the fact that some of the teams of this sample did not operate in clearly defined groups. Within the departments of the sample of this study, employees actually frequently operated in changing team compositions, either due to shift-work with due to project-based working. Naturally, this could affect the agreement within the groups we examined in the present research gravely. Nonetheless, team composition changes constantly – in some organizations even on a weekly or daily basis. In that case, as the present study suggests, justifying aggregation analyses is virtually impossible, but necessary to examine group based outcomes. To overcome this hurdle, for further research, one has two options. First, in the calculation of the ICC values team composition could be included as a covariate

to control for. Secondly, one could bring the analysis to the next hierarchical level, for instance, comparing departments with each other. However, as for the present study the sample size was already quite low after the aggregation on the team level, sample sizes would be even smaller, and statistically unfeasible, with aggregations on the departmental level. A bigger organization, possibly with at least two branches, of which one could be used as a control group, would constitute the ideal context for future studies.

A second shortcoming is that we are unable to infer causality for the majority of our analyses due to the fact that the intervention did not work. However, we do see increases between T1 and T2 measures. This enriches our understanding beyond mere correlation analyses. However, the majority of our analyses were tested at T1. Therefore, the possibility remains that the relationships that there exists reverse causality or circulation through dynamic processes. Nonetheless, for the most important relationship among the many we examined, we have delivered preliminary evidence for a causal relationship between the increase of organizational identification and the reduction in process and relationship conflict.

A third limitation of the present research lies in the small sample size, in particular regarding the control group. In form of type I errors, this could result in power problems for some of the statistical analyses in which we found an effect. However, generally, whenever we found an effect, effect sizes were acceptable, resulting in adequate power levels. Therefore, even with such small sample size, the inferences made in the present research do matter. In defense of the presented research design, it should be noted that utilizing a control group in the field setting can represent a challenge as it might be unethical, impractical, perceived as unfair or simply not desired by management. Despite its shortcomings, the quasi-experimental approach of this study is oftentimes the only adequate option available in the field.

Concluding this section, we suggest that further research could examine if the effects of increased organizational identification and intergroup conflict would hold for prolonged periods of time, preferably in random controlled time series design with more than two moments of measurement and adequate group and sample sizes. With a quasi-experimental design, one might examine the constructs presented in the present study on two branches of a single organization, where hierarchical and organizational structure are identical and employees share one organizational identity. A research design of this kind could add to our preliminary work by focusing on inferring causality. Moreover, this study design could clarify interdependencies between foci of identification and their salience for various individual and team-level outcome measures. Future research, especially aimed at supporting the ASPIRe model, could also consider including the level of departmental identification to examine the interaction of this level with sub-group and organizational identification. Additionally, it remains to be seen if using identification as a means for an intervention can be a double-edged sword. High levels of identification with the collective might affect employee health negatively in return. They might assert their resources on behalf of that group, possibly even up to an unhealthy extent. As a consequence, studies addressing the impact of organizational identification on intergroup conflict should investigate employee well-being as well. Finally, the role of identification salience requires clarification. Scholars have argued that salience of an identity is necessary to activate the positive effects of strong identification with a certain group or the collective (Haslam et al., 2003). Therefore, identification salience should be controlled for.

### **Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications**

We add to the literature of *optimal distinctiveness theory*, *common in-group identity model* and the *social identity approach* in the way that dual identification does not work for all outcome measures in the same efficient way. Moreover, we illustrated that strong sub-

group identification is not necessary to satisfy the need for distinctiveness. As long as the salience of the sub-group is maintained this need will be satisfied and intergroup conflict is less likely to emerge (Richter et al., 2006; Hornsey & Hogg, 1999). In line with this, we reasoned that sub-group salience appears to be achievable with lower levels of sub-group identification as well (Crisp et al., 2006). Therefore, intergroup conflict is best addressed by enhancing organizational identification while avoiding high levels of sub-group identification. Through this finding, we contribute to the theoretical quandary living in the social identity literature for centuries: Is it really desirable and feasible to enhance organizational identification at the expense of sub-group identification (Richter et al., 2005; Haslam et al., 2003)? That depends – if the aim is to improve intergroup conflict and intergroup efficiency, the answer is yes. However, this conclusion does require a word of caution: theories of self-concept consistency argue that greater discrepancies between foci of identification would lead to increased self-concept tension and consequent negative outcomes in terms of employee well-being (van Dick et al., 2008).

Furthermore, this study adds to leadership literature by illustrating that the link between transformational leadership and conveying organizational identification to followers might be more complex than originally thought. Only if followers identify with their leader, transformational leaders are able to influence followers' organizational identification (Carmeli et al., 2011; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Hence, factors such as a positive relationship with the leader, cohesion or identification with the leader could play an important role determining the effectiveness of transformational leadership on transferring leaders' identification levels to their followers (van Knippenberg, 2011; Horstmeier et al., 2016).

For identification to be a feasible tool for practitioners, the above-mentioned dependencies based on the different outcome measure in question (e.g. conflict, efficiency, commitment, employee well-being), certainly need to be examined in subsequent studies.

Knowing whether which outcome measure relates in what way to which combination of foci of identification would help organizational practitioners to individually fine-tune their approach of influencing outcome measures that matter most in their organization. For practitioners, aside from the ASPIRe model, concrete guidelines for enhancing organizational identification are scarce (Peters et al., 2012). With the present study, we attempted to illustrate the feasibility of the ASPIRe model and its underlying processes in this regard. Indeed, we illustrated that organizational identification is strongly related to goal alignment, intergroup bias and sub-group perception. For practitioners, affecting these variables appears to be a step in the right direction to impact organizational identification levels in an organizational setting. And as we illustrated, enhancing organizational identification helps resolve relationship and process conflict in the long term. Hence, addressing sub-group perception, intergroup bias goal alignment in ways comparable to the ASPIRe workshop intervention affects organizational identification levels in a positive way (Peters et al., 2012). Based on this study's results we suggest that practitioners focus on the perception of goal alignment. In the ASPIRe intervention norms, values and goals are synergized in a bottom-up process from the lowest entities of an organization towards the highest in terms of hierarchy. Clarifying and aligning existing goals, norms and values could result in increased knowledge sharing and the readiness to collaborate (Stephen & Coote, 2007). Additionally, practitioners should rely upon leaders who identify strongly with the organization and feel strong ties with their sub-group(s) as well, to further aligns goals, norms and values, and consequently, organizational identification among their followers. Frequent meaningful intergroup contact with clear objectives, focused communication on similarities in terms of goals, norms and values and mini-ASPIRe sessions conducted in smaller sub-group entities – these all are cumulative means that might aid practitioners in their endeavor to enhance organizational identification in order to reduce intergroup conflict in the long run.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Research on organizational identification and intergroup conflict is only beginning to accumulate. Even with the outcomes of the present study we know very little about the trade-offs between intensity of the various identification foci and diverse secondary outcome measures. Aside from illustrating the need for further research on these complex interactions, in the present study, we were able to highlight the importance of organizational identification in the endeavor to reduce relationship and process conflict. Moreover, the enhancement of organizational identification is related to an effective reduction in those two types of conflict. The discovery that goal alignment plays a meaningful role in this relationship adds practical and value to this research. Despite the fact that we are unable to link changes over time directly to the ASPIRe approach, it might be a feasible practical guideline for the improvement of organizational identification. The insights provided by this study hopefully help practitioners to develop novel and innovative conflict interventions that focus less on combating the symptoms of organizational conflict (teambuilding, mediation), and more on tackling one of the causes of it – the lack of organizational identification.

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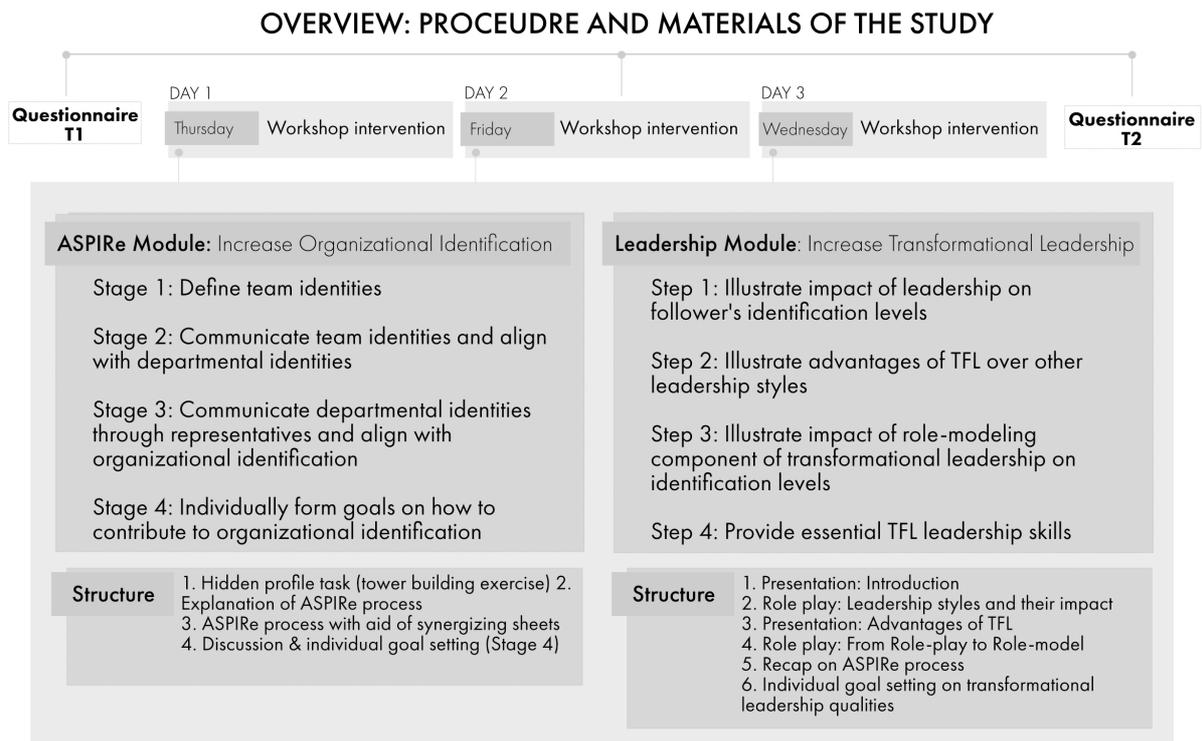
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Appendices

Appendix A

Figure A1: An overview of the procedure and materials.



## Appendix B

Table B1: *An example of the synergizing tool with values of a team identities synergized towards the departmental identity.*

|                           | <b>Value</b>  | <b>Value</b>   | <b>Value</b> | <b>Synergized value</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Overlap in values?</b> | Commitment    | Effort         | Dedication   | Commitment              |
| <b>Overlap in values?</b> | Respect       | Recognition    | Respect      | Respect                 |
| <b>Overlap in values?</b> | Purposiveness | Responsibility | Proficiency  | Responsibility          |
| <b>Overlap in values?</b> | Trust         | Empathy        |              | Empathy                 |

Appendix C

Figure C1: Result of the ASPIRe process and developed collaboration guidelines defining the organizational identity.



## PROJECT SAMENWERKEN

[Redacted] hebben de opdracht gekregen te bepalen wat de medewerkers op de [Redacted] bij het samenwerken belangrijk vinden. Dit zijn de resultaten.

**WAARDEN: DIT BETEKENT SAMENWERKEN OP DE [Redacted]**

Hoe werken wij hier op de [Redacted] samen? Op basis van wat er in de teams en op de afdelingen van onze Front Line Leaders speelt zijn de volgende 5 waarden bij het samenwerken ontstaan. Dit is wat de medewerkers op de [Redacted] bij het samenwerken belangrijk vinden en wat dit precies inhoudt.



**DUIDELIJKHEID**

- ✓ Verwachtingen duidelijk uitspreken
- ✓ Eisen duidelijk aangeven
- ✓ De materie begrijpelijk maken
- ✓ Vaak in overleg gaan
- ✓ Tijdslijnen duidelijk aangeven



**EERLIJKHEID**

- ✓ Zelfstandigheid door rolverdeling
- ✓ Eerlijke verdeling van taken
- ✓ Niet de les lezen bij het uitvoeren van taken & maken van fouten
- ✓ Met elkaar i.p.v. over elkaar praten



**VERANTWOORDELIJKHEID**

- ✓ Gezamenlijk aansprakelijk zijn
- ✓ Inzetten voor een gezamenlijk doel
- ✓ Samen komen tot een oplossing
- ✓ Realiseren van je eigen doelen
- ✓ Serieus met werk omgaan



**BEGRIJ**

- ✓ Elkaar uit laten praten
- ✓ Belangstelling & meelevens
- ✓ Respect voor keuzes van collegas
- ✓ Aan elkaar vragen of je kan helpen met werkzaamheden
- ✓ Op sterke kanten letten



**PLEZIER**

- ✓ Open en positief opstellen
- ✓ Enthousiast zijn
- ✓ Met elkaar lachen

**HOE IS DIT TOT STAND GEKOMEN?**

Verdeeld over drie dagen [Redacted] aan een opdracht gewerkt om de samenwerking op de [Redacted] te definiëren. In het begin zijn de [Redacted] Leaders individueel aan de slag gegaan. Denkend aan het team waar zij leiding aan geven hebben zij opgeschreven waar hun team waarde aan hecht bij het samenwerken. Vervolgens gingen zij op zoek naar geschreven en ongeschreven regels bij het samenwerken en waar volgens hun nog meer aandacht aan besteed moet worden. In een tweede stap hebben de leidinggevenden met [Redacted] Leaders van hun afdeling samengezeten. Hierbij werd bepaald welke van de individueel ontwikkelde definities van samenwerken het meest representatief is voor hun afdeling. In een laatste stap werden de definities per afdeling somengevoegd in een geheel dat de hele [Redacted] representeert.

**DOELEN: DIT WILLEN WIJ BEREIKEN**



**SAMENHORIGHEID**

- ✓ Behulpzaamheid vergroten
- ✓ Begrip voor elkaar vergroten
- ✓ Gezamenlijke doelen nastreven



**DUIDELIJKE COMMUNICATIE**

- ✓ Op tijd communiceren
- ✓ Verwachtingen duidelijk aangeven
- ✓ Rollen & verplichtingen verhelderen

**HEB JE NOG VRAGEN?**

Neem dan contact op met [marvin.stichling@](mailto:marvin.stichling@[Redacted]) [Redacted]



**[Redacted] AFDELING**  
LEADER PROGRAMMA

## Appendix D

## Leadership Styles Role-play

### Inleiding

We gaan ontdekken welke leiderschapsstyle ons nu het meeste verder helpt. Leiders willen vaak hun medewerkers betrekken bij het maken van beslissingen maar weten niet hoe ze dat precies moeten doen.

### Doel

Vandaar dat we de drie leiderschapsstijlen gaan ontdekken en de invloed daarvan op de medewerkers.

Vandaar dat we gaan demonstreren hoe je participatief een beslissing maakt en je coöperatief bezig bent.

### Tijd

60 minuten

### Materiaal

Situatieomschrijving

Papiertjes met rollen erop

Naambordjes voor acteurs

Flipchart

Maken beslissing

Drie PowerPoint slides voor leiderschapsstijlen

### Doorvoering

Trainer leest de situatieomschrijving voor

Trainer verlost de rollen

Trainer vraagt medewerkers om op stoelen te zitten

Trainer geeft instructies aan 3x Visser

Drie keer doorvoeren van rollenspel.

Reflectie wat zou ik morgen kunnen doen om coöperatief leiding te geven?

### Situatieomschrijving

”Jullie zijn een team van dienstverleners binnen een productiebedrijf. Jullie rapporteren aan meneer Visser. Hij heeft goed nieuws voor jullie. Jullie afdeling heeft een bonus budget van 3000€ gekregen. Dit dient in jullie opleiding geïnvesteerd te worden. Visser heeft een meeting georganiseerd om te beslissen hoe en aan wie dit geld precies besteed dient te worden.

### De rollen

- Meneer/mevrouw Vriendelijk is een goed mens. Hij/zij behoudt de harmonie in het team. Haar prestaties zijn niet heel goed, maar haar sociale vaardigheden en interesse houden het team bij elkaar. Hij/zij zet zich in voor een team-coaching om de communicatie tussen de teamleden te verbeteren.

- Meneer/mevrouw Zuinig is zeer zorgvuldig maar zijn prestaties zijn nooit bovengemiddeld. Hij/zij zet zich voor een weekendtraining "Excel voor gevorderden" in.
- Meneer/mevrouw Perfect is bijzonder effectief in het uitstekend afsluiten van projecten. Op hem/haar kun je altijd rekenen. Hij/zij heeft al lang een probleem met de slechte expertise met Word van de andere leden van het team. Hij/zij wil graag dat het hele team aan een Word training deelneemt.
- Meneer/mevrouw Boos is een zwartkijker. Zijn/haar prestaties variëren heel erg. Soms presteert hij/zij bijzonder goed en soms bijzonder slecht. Hij/zij is vaak ontevreden en zeurt om deze reden zeer vaak. Hij/zij is van mening dat de manager Visser al lang geen opleiding meer heeft gehad en een training over het motiveren en delegeren van zijn medewerkers moet bezoeken.
- Meneer/mevrouw Rechtvaardig presteert gemiddeld en soms bovengemiddeld goed. Hij/zij is terughoudend maar zorgt bij problemen wel voor harmonie binnen het team. Hij/zij vindt dat de bonus evenredig over alle leden van het team verspreid moet worden.
- Meneer/mevrouw Uitstekend heeft de beste prestatiebeoordeling van het hele team. Zijn/haar kennis en expertise is zeer uitgebreid en dat maakt hem/haar zeer flexibel inzetbaar. Meneer/mevrouw Uitstekend wil al lang een training "tijdmanagement" bij een gerenommeerde trainer volgen om nog efficiënter te werk te kunnen gaan.

### Instructies na loting

- Vraag wie welke rol heeft.
- Verdeel de naambordjes aan de acteurs.
- Vraag de medewerkers om voor de groep te staan, de instructies door te leten en hun argumentatie te bedenken.
- Bereid de toeschouwers erop voor om te beoordelen welke leiderschapsstijl welke invloed heeft.
- Verlaat kort de kamer met de leidinggevenden om hun in de rol te helpen.
  - Visser 1: Moet met overtuiging vertellen dat hij/zij er goed over nagedacht heeft en dat Uitstekend een tijdmanagementtraining gaat volgen. Daarna moet hij/zij zonder met de reacties van de medewerkers iets te doen, direct naar de volgende punt op de agenda overgaan: gewoon aankondigen, dan stopt het rollenspel.
  - Visser 2: Moet zijn medewerkers vragen alleen een beslissing te maken en zich dan terug trekken zonder weg te lopen. Begin op je mobiel iets op te zoeken. Als je medewerkers je vragen om te helpen, dan zeg je dat je zeker weet dat zij een beslissing zullen vinden.
  - Visser 3: Moet consequent de beslissingsvinding begeleiden, zonder een te oordelen.
    - Hij/zij vraagt een persoon te notuleren op de flipchart
    - Hij/zij vraagt alle medewerkers naar hun suggesties en mening
    - Hij/zij vat alle suggesties heel kort samen (dus jij wil...)
    - Hij/zij laat deze samenvatting opschrijven
    - Altijd als mensen proberen te oordelen moet hij/zij dit onderbreken en zeggen dat daar nog een evaluatiemoment voor zal komen.

- De persoon die spreekt mag alleen maar argumenten voor de eigen positie benoemen, maar niet op andere suggesties ingaan.
  - Visser kan afsluitend met het team democratisch een beslissing maken
- Bij Visser 1 (auto):
  - Onderbreek nadat medewerkers reageren op de beslissing. Vraag hoe iedereen zich voelt.
  - Daarna vraag je de toeschouwers hoe zich het hele scenario in de toekomst zal ontwikkelen, hoe de medewerkers zich zullen voelen en gedragen.
    - Demotivatie
    - Zeuren over baas
    - Tijd verspillen
    - Nog lang ontevreden zijn
    - Roddelen
    - Tijdbesparing gaat verloren door consequenties
  - Hoe kan het beter?
    - Tenminste transparant zijn (hoezo!)
- Bij Visser 2 (laissez):
  - Onderbreek uiterlijk na 5 minuten
  - Rondvraag na toekomst en effectiviteit
  - Wat doet het met respect?
  - Is het efficiënt?
  - Hoe voelt de leider zich?
  - Communiqueert onverschilligheid?
- Bij Visser 3 (coop):
  - Onderbreek mogelijk al voor besluitvorming, benadruk dat je daarvoor een strategie nodig hebt
  - Veilig
  - Hoe voelde Boos zich?
  - Veel mensen willen dit wel, maar weten niet hoe het precies moet

## De rollen

*Meneer/mevrouw Vriendelijk: Jij denkt dat de omgang in het team onprettig is. Boos en Uitstekend zijn in het bijzonder verantwoordelijk hiervoor omdat zij regelmatig kritiek uiten over de andere teamleden. Niemand zegt er ooit iets van, ook Visser niet. Daarom zet jij je in voor een "team-coaching". Jij hebt al een gerenommeerde coach uitgezocht. Het coaching kost 2.700€.*

---

*Meneer/mevrouw Zuinig: Jij denkt dat de meeste trainingen veel te duur zijn. En u denkt dat de gratis-cursussen van de Volksuniversiteiten absoluut voldoende zijn. Omdat jij weet dat niemand uit je team echt expertise heeft op het gebied van Excel zet jij je ervoor in dat het hele team een "weekendtraining Excel voor gevorderden" bezoekt. Na deze training zou dan eindelijk iedereen in staat kunnen zijn zelf een aantal berekeningen door te voeren. De kosten voor het weekendtraining zijn 65€ per persoon.*

---

*Meneer/mevrouw Perfect: Het is een ramp hoe slecht de kennis van je collega's op het gebied van Word na 20 jaar tekstverwerking nog steeds is. In het bijzonder Uitstekend en Boos formateren hun teksten verschrikkelijk. Jij moet altijd de andere medewerkers helpen met hun teksten, brieven*

*en archivering. Om deze reden wil jij dat een hele goede trainer een 5-daagse in-house training doorvoert, die specifiek op je team toegespitst is. Jij kent er eentje die er 2.500€ voor vraagt.*

---

*Meneer/mevrouw Boos: Je bent al heel lang ontevreden over de leiderschapskwaliteiten van Visser. Je bent daarom zeer sterk van mening dat Visser een Leiderschapstraining moet volgen. De prijs voor zo een training ken jij niet.*

---

*Meneer/mevrouw Rechtvaardig: Jij bent al voordat het meeting begint boos omdat je vermoed dat Uitstekend sowieso weer de bonus voor zichzelf gaat claimen om een een of ander psycho-training te volgen. Jij wil daarentegen dat het budget eerlijk opgedeeld wordt en iedereen zelf mag kiezen welke training hij/zij daarmee gaat bezoeken.*

---

*Meneer/mevrouw Uitstekend: Jij wil al lang een training "tijdmanagement" bei een bekende trainer volgen om nog efficiënter je werk te kunnen doen. Jij bent van mening dat je zo veel werkt als Vriendelijk, Zuinig en Boos bij elkaar. Maar jij wil nog meer kunnen! Het training dat jij uitgekozen hebt duurt 3 dagen en kun je voor een speciale prijs van 2850€ bezoeken.*

---

*Meneer/mevrouw Visser 1 (autocratisch): Vertel op een korte en duidelijke manier aan je medewerkers dat Uitstekend een training "tijdmanagement" gaat bezoeken en zijn opgedane kennis en expertise daarna aan het team overgedragen zal worden.*

---

*Meneer/mevrouw Visser 2 (laissez-faire): Vertel op een korte en duidelijke manier aan je medewerkers dat zij er alleen over moeten beslissen hoe het bonus budget besteed dient te worden. Trek je daarna uit de discussie terug.*

---

*Meneer/mevrouw Visser 3 (coöperatief): Vertel op een korte en duidelijke manier aan je medewerkers dat jullie met z'n allen gezamenlijk erover zullen beslissen hoe het bonus budget besteed zal worden. Jij begeleidt de discussie en de besluitvinding.*

- 1. Vraag elke persoon naar zijn/haar ideeën en mening (op flipchart/whiteboard schrijven zonder discussie).*
- 2. Laat alle opgeschreven ideeën en suggesties beoordelen door de medewerkers (zelf beoordeel jij*

*niet!)*

*3. Laat het team beslissen welke keuze uiteindelijk gemaakt zal worden (beslis niet zelf)*

---

*Toeschouwer: Probeer erop te letten hoe het gedrag van Visser de medewerkers beïnvloed. Hoe voelen zij zich? Wat zijn hun reacties? In welke situaties ontstaat verwarring/chaos? Waar escaleren dingen en wat zorgt ervoor dat de situatie weer gekalmeerd wordt? Wat kun jij aan de lichaamstaal van de betrokkenen zien?*

---

## Appendix E

Figure E1: *Leadership Skill training on role-modeling behavior.*

# VOORBEELDGEDRAG VERTONEN



## Walk the Talk

- Integriteit is alles bij het geven van leiding. Het vertrouwen van je medewerkers is gebaseerd op integriteit.
- Integriteit betekent dat je doet wat je zegt. Als jouw bedrijf aan het bezuinigen is, dan is het niet slim om met je nieuwe auto voor te rijden
- Je medewerkers moeten de indruk krijgen dat jij net zo veel inzet toont als zij. En dat jij bereid bent jezelf op te offeren voor de doelen van het team of de organisatie
- Als je medewerkers de indruk krijgen dat jij vrijwel alles doet wat jij zegt en beloofd zal hun vertrouwen stijgen en zullen ze eerder jou voorbeeldgedrag volgen, meer respect voor jou hebben en opener en frequenter met jou communiceren.
- Je krijgt meer autoriteit door vertrouwen, respect i.p.v. dominantie

## Normen uitdagen

- Een leidinggevende kan zeer krachtig zijn in het uitdagen van normen. Jij bepaalt wat er op de werkvloer wel of niet gebeurt en hoe mensen zich moeten gedragen
  - Als bijvoorbeeld de norm is op parkeerdek A te parkeren omdat het dichterbij het kantoor is, maar deze steeds vol is, parkeer dan op parkeerdek B en loop de twee minuten naar kantoor. Je daagt op deze manier een bestaande norm uit.
- Je moet wel opletten maar **kleine stappen te zetten** die niet te ver van de "anker" van de medewerkers weg ligt, anders leidt je integriteit eronder
- **Daag jezelf uit** en probeer een norm te veranderen puur door jouw gedrag
- **Hiervoor moet je wel een plan hebben over wat beter kan!**

## Visie vertellen & vertalen

- Leiders moeten in elke vezel van hun lichaam het **gedrag** leven en uitdragen dat zij van hun medewerkers en collega's **verwachten**. Jij **bepaalt de norm** en het gedrag dat je medewerkers vertonen.
- Jij als leider bent er dus voor verantwoordelijk een visie (een punt waar je mensen naar toewerken) aantrekkelijk te vertalen
- Ga hiervoor eens intensief zitten en verplaats je in je medewerkers. Probeer de uitdrukkingen te vertalen in hun taal en op een manier die hun kan inspireren. Bouw het eindproduct in zo veel mogelijk verhalen in. Maar maak het niet te Hollywood-achtig.
- Verhalen vertellen (storytelling) is hier een krachtig middel
- Je hebt hiervoor veel contactmomenten nodig met je medewerkers
- Dus ongeacht wat je wil veranderen, maak duidelijk welk gedrag je wil veranderen en pas je eigen gedrag als eerste aan

## Doelen stellen

- Door doelen te stellen kan een abstract construct zoals voorbeeldgedrag veel **levendiger** en efficiënter omgezet worden in gedrag
- Dus stel jezelf doelen voor het vertonen van voorbeeldgedrag, anders blijft het een abstract begrip waar je weinig mee zal doen.
- Wees concreet in het stellen van deze doelen
- Zorg dat je je doelen opsplijt in kleine subdoelen die je binnen een of twee dagen kan bereiken

## Positiviteit, Optimisme & Respect

- Breng elke dag de beste versie van jezelf naar het werk
- Wees **ten alle tijden positief** over de andere afdelingen en teams,
- Er is niets **schadelijker** voor je organisatie en de samenwerking dan het negatief spreken over andere teams, medewerkers of afdelingen
- Moet je toch een keer iets kwijt zoek daarvoor dan **één** persoon waar je je problemen mee kan delen

## Hardop denken

- Vertel **verhalen** en je ideeën die uitdagend zijn aan je medewerkers
- Vraag om **feedback** en laat zien dat je er iets mee doet. Dan zal je medewerker op een later moment ook om feedback vragen en jouw suggesties omzetten (**wederkerigheid**)

## Appendix F

**Role-play: From Role-play to Role-model**

**Doel: Bewustzijn creëren over eigen voorbeeldgedrag.**

**Bedrijf**

Productie bekende Nederlandse onderneming die koffie, thee andere levensmiddelen verwerkt en verhandelt

**Karakteromschrijving**

Marvin is manager van de afdeling Logistiek. Hij is ervoor verantwoordelijk dat de producten op tijd geleverd worden bij klanten door het hele land.

Andries is supervisor van de productietak koffie. Hij is verantwoordelijk voor het op tijd produceren van een eindproduct met zeer hoge kwaliteitseisen.

Zij rapporteren allebei aan Stanley Thompson.

Andries vindt het persoonlijk zeer belangrijk dat de koffie die zijn medewerkers malen en produceren aan de hoogste kwaliteitseisen voldoet. Daar is hij trots op. Om de kwaliteit te waarborgen mag de klant wat hem betreft er dan ook wel een tijd op de levering wachten. Dat gaat hem bovendien sowieso niets aan, het is immers niet zijn afdeling. Hij zorgt voor een product met uitstekende kwaliteit en wat de rest doet is niets waar hij wat aan kan doen.

Dit is in strijd met de belangen van Marvin en zijn afdeling. Marvin is zeer klantgericht en wil dat de producten op tijd de deur uit komen. Hij is van mening dat de kwaliteit bij het bedrijf sowieso erg goed is en er best een revalidatieprocedure overgeslagen mag worden als een product op tijd de deur uit moet. Net als hij moet productie leveren en dat op tijd! Hij voelt zich erg rot als er weer een klant is die niet op tijd zijn product heeft gekregen.

**Opdracht publiek**

Let voornamelijk op het aspect voorbeeldgedrag. Probeer je empathisch vermogen te gebruiken om te anticiperen hoe het gedrag van Andries zijn medewerkers op de korte en lange termijn beïnvloed. Het gaat niet per se daarom hoe deze conflict opgelost kan worden, maar als je een idee hebt willen wij dat best horen.

**Scenario**

In het huidige scenario heeft Marvin een probleem. Een van de belangrijkste klanten, een groot restaurantketen, heeft nu voor de tweede keer een levering maar voor een deel ontvangen. Afdeling logistiek was niet in staat om voldoende koffie te leveren omdat er simpelweg niet voldoende op voorraad was. De klant dreigt in zijn reactie te wisselen van koffiemark als dat nog een keer gebeurt. Marvin schrijft vervolgens een email aan zijn baas om hem op de hoogte te stellen van de problemen. Als hij daarna naar de koffieautomaat loopt ziet hij Andries staan. Hij spreekt hem onmiddellijk op het probleem aan en maakt een verwijt dat het de schuld van productie is als het bedrijf een van hun grootste klanten zal verliezen. Andries reageert boos. Hij is zich van geen schuld bewust en zegt dat Marvin minder naar een klant met minder leveringsprioriteit had moeten leveren. De kwaliteit van hun koffie is immers het allerbelangrijkste en dat productie niet sneller zal draaien omdat Marvin fouten maakt. Marvin is van mening dat er simpelweg niet genoeg geproduceerd wordt en dat hij zijn baas hierover al ingelicht heeft.

Andries loopt boos weg naar zijn afdeling en de medewerkers die bij het koffieautomaat staat. Hij voelt zich niet serieus genomen en heeft niet het gevoel dat omzet boven kwaliteit gesteld wordt. Dat is niet hoe hij het zich had voorgesteld toen hij deze baan aannam.

### **CUT1 + vraag**

Aangekomen bij zijn medewerkers gaat hij helemaal los. Hij praat erg negatief over Marvin en de hele afdeling logistiek (krijgen niets voor elkaar, maken ons ALTIJD verantwoordelijk voor hun fouten, willen ALTIJD dat wij nog harder werden, hebben nooit respect, en zo voort – nadruk ligt hier voornamelijk op generalisatie). Hij houdt geen rekening met zijn functie als leidinggevende en vergeet even dat hij het goede voorbeeld moet geven om in toekomst nog effectief met de afdeling logistiek samen te kunnen werken.

### **CUT2 + vraag**

De medewerkers stemmen met het geroddel in, zij gaan negatieve verhalen vertellen uit het verleden over de aspecten. Zij krijgen de volgende instructies:

1. Ga mee in het negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek. Zeg bijvoorbeeld dat je ook al eerder zoiets hebt beleefd en dat logistiek nooit rekening houdt met productie, altijd maar vragen maar nooit op tijd aangeven wat ze nodig hebben. Je mag improviseren.
2. Ga mee in het negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek. Zeg bijvoorbeeld dat logistiek altijd te druk plant, onbekwaam zijn, slecht communiceren. Je mag improviseren.
3. Ga mee in het negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek. Zeg bijvoorbeeld dat de mensen bij logistiek sowieso allemaal de hele dag niks doen. Je mag improviseren.
4. Ga mee in het negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek. Zeg bijvoorbeeld dat “die van logistiek” altijd direct naar de baas rennen en ons afzeiken. Je mag improviseren.

### **Vragen bij CUT**

1. CUT1 bij weglopen. Wat denken jullie gaat Andries nu doen als hij terugkomt bij zijn afdeling? Hoe zouden jullie hiermee omgaan? Wat zou jij hiervan vertellen?
  - a. Hij gaat negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek.
2. CUT2 na uitlaten over andere afdeling. Wat denken jullie gaan zijn medewerkers nu doen? Hoe voelen ze zich?
  - a. Zij gaan instemmen met het in stand houden van het negatief beeld en de stereotype.
    - i. Medewerkers stemmen in en laten hun negatieve verhalen horen
    - ii. In-group/out-group bias wordt versterkt.
    - iii. Bepaalde negatieve gedragsverwachtingen worden versterkt.
3. CUT EINDE na instemming medewerkers. Wat verwachten jullie dat er in de toekomst gaat gebeuren? Heeft het gedrag van Andries invloed op de samenwerking tussen de afdelingen?
  - a. In ieder geval afkoelen voordat hij er met iemand over praat. Als hij er met iemand over moet praten, dan met 1 vertrouwd persoon.
  - b. Voorkomen dat hij het negatieve beeld over de afdeling logistiek in stand houdt.
  - c. Als hij heel goed bezig wil zijn, teruggaan naar Marvin en een probleem-oplossend gesprek voeren. Hierbij zich kritisch afvragen of kwaliteit van de koffie niet ook in de kwaliteit van de levering aan de klant gemeten wordt. Verantwoordelijkheid nemen voor het feit dat een goed product niets meer waard is als het niemand meer koopt

omdat het nooit op tijd geleverd wordt. Hierna ook handelen en bereidheid tonen een compromis te sluiten.

***Jouw rol:***

***Ga mee in het negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek. Zeg bijvoorbeeld dat je ook al eerder zoiets hebt beleefd en dat logistiek nooit rekening houdt met productie, altijd maar vragen maar nooit op tijd aangeven wat ze nodig hebben. Je mag improviseren over een eerdere ervaring met logistiek mensen.***

---

***Jouw rol:***

***Ga mee in het negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek. Zeg bijvoorbeeld dat logistiek altijd te druk plant, onbekwaam zijn, slecht communiceren. Je mag improviseren over een eerdere ervaring met logistiek mensen.***

---

***Jouw rol:***

***Ga mee in het negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek. Zeg bijvoorbeeld dat de mensen bij logistiek sowieso allemaal de hele dag lang niks doen. Je mag improviseren over een eerdere ervaring met logistiek mensen.***

---

***Jouw rol:***

***Ga mee in het negatief praten over de afdeling logistiek. Zeg bijvoorbeeld dat "die van logistiek" altijd direct naar de baas rennen en ons afzeiken. Je mag improviseren over een eerdere ervaring met logistiek mensen.***

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Appendix G

Figure D1: Small part of the report sent to all employees after completion of the study.

# RESULTATEN

ONDERZOEK OVER DE SAMENWERKING OP DE SITE WEESP

IN DE VOLGENDE STATISTIEKEN ZIEN WIJ HOE DE 131 RESPONDENTEN DE SAMENWERKING OP DE SITE WEESP ERVAREN.

## INLEIDING

Na aanleiding van observaties en interviews werden een aantal factoren gemeten die volgens de wetenschappelijke literatuur de samenwerking in organisaties beïnvloeden.

Deze factoren worden gemeten aan de hand van een aantal vragen per factor op een schaal van 1 tot en met 7.

In de statistische analyses werden de antwoorden van alle medewerkers bij elkaar genomen en de gemiddelden van alle vragen per factor berekend.

De gemiddelde ervaring van de 131 medewerkers wordt in dit rapport weergegeven.

Aan het eind van dit rapport vindt u een overzicht van alle factoren die de samenwerking beïnvloeden in een schema.

---

## OVERLAP VAN AFDELINGSDOELEN

1

De samenwerking op de site wordt bepaald door veel verschillende factoren. Een daarvan is in hoeverre medewerkers de indruk hebben dat de doelen van de afdelingen enigszins overlappen en met elkaar te maken hebben.

Hebben medewerkers de indruk dat doelen tussen afdelingen met elkaar te maken hebben zullen zij eerder gemotiveerd zijn met andere afdelingen te coöpereren. Dit werkt nog beter als men de indruk heeft dat de doelen van hun team of afdeling bijdragen aan een gemeenschappelijk doel.

### 10,7%

Zijn het er niet mee eens, helemaal niet mee eens of eerder niet mee eens dat de doelen van de afdelingen overlappen.

| Overlapping Level      | Value 1              | Value 2 | Value 3 | Value 4 |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Weinig ervaren overlap | 0                    | 6,9     | 3,8     | 21,4    |
|                        | //                   |         |         |         |
|                        | Veel ervaren overlap |         |         |         |
|                        | 26                   | 35,9    | 6,1     |         |

Uit de gegevens blijkt echter verder dat medewerkers die de doelen als overlappend ervaren ook de samenwerking op de site positiever ervaren.

DAAROM IS DIT OOK EEN FACTOR DIE AANDACHT KRIJGT IN HET PROJECT SAMENWERKEN TIJDENS HET FRONT LINE LEADER PROGRAMMA.