

***Participating in Voluntary Safety Initiatives, how you look at it and what you get from it***  
***Linking Perceived Management Commitment to Safety and Safety Knowledge and Motivation through Safety Citizenship Role Definitions and Discretionary Safety Activities***

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**CONFERENCE TOPIC: Learning from research for practice**

**KEYWORDS:** Perceived Management Commitment to Safety, Safety Citizenship Role Definition, Safety Performance, Motivation and Knowledge.

**Background**

Chmiel and Hansez (2013) proposed a predictive relationship between the perspective employees took on voluntary safety activities and their on the job violation behaviour: If employees considered voluntary activities to be more a part of their job they were less likely to violate safety rules and procedures. Chmiel & Hansez argued this was because adopting such a perspective led employees to take part in more voluntary safety activities such as volunteering for the safety committee and trying to improve safety by suggesting new procedures, and these activities in turn would serve to raise awareness of the importance of adhering to safety rules and regulations, and provide knowledge of how to do so, leading to safer working. This view is consistent with the study by Hofmann, Morgeson and Gerras (2003) reporting that employees' definition of discretionary safety behaviors as part of their job, safety citizenship role definitions (SCRDs), was linked positively to corresponding safety citizenship behaviors.

Chmiel and Hansez (2013) also reported that employees' perceptions of management's commitment to safety predicted their perspective on discretionary safety activities or SCRDS: the more employees considered their management was committed to safety the more they considered voluntary safety activities as part of their job. Since Neal, Griffin and Hart (2000) have argued that perceptions of management's attitude and approach to safety predicts compliance with safety rules and procedures through employees' safety knowledge and motivation, a position endorsed recently by Christian et al (2009), we test the hypothesis that the predictive relationship between PMCS and Safety Knowledge and Motivation is mediated by employees' perspectives on discretionary safety activities (their SCRDS), and their participation in said safety activities.

**Aim**

On the basis of the proposal made by Chmiel and Hansez (2013), we test their hypothesis: if employees perceive their management values safety, they will respond by considering safety-related discretionary behaviors as more part of their job, that will lead to more safety motivation and safety knowledge through participation in safety-related discretionary activities.

**Method.**

**Sample:** Participants were 305 employees in a Belgian chemical industry. Concerning hierarchical responsibilities, 46.56% (n=142) of the sample were workers without subordinates, 26.23% (n=80) had between 1 and 5 subordinates, 8.52% (n=26) between 6 and 10 subordinates and 16.39% (n=50) had more than 11 subordinates (7 unspecified).

Concerning the age of participants, 3.28% (n=10) were less than 25 years old, 24.26% (n=74) between 25 and 35, 34.10% (n=104) between 36 and 45, 25.57% (n=78) between 46 and 55, 10.49% (n=32) were more than 55 years old (7 unspecified).

**Measures:** *Perceived Management Commitment to Safety* was measured with eight items used by Hansez and Chmiel (2010). *Safety Citizenship Role Definition* was measured with 4 items from Hofmann, Morgeson and Gerras (2003) and used by Chmiel and Hansez (2013). *Safety Motivation*, *Safety Knowledge* and *Safety Participation* were measured with items used by Griffin and Neal (2000).

**Data analysis:** Structural Equation modeling analyses (SEM) were performed using LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). First, the measurement model was assessed with a series of confirmatory analyses to test the independence of the constructs examined in our study. Second, we assessed the hypothesized structural relationships among latent variables we compared with alternative models. Bootstrap analyses were performed using SPSS to examine indirect links between variables.

## **Results**

Results show two significant double mediations in our model, in which low SCRD and participation are mediators. Indeed, PMCS significantly predicts low SCRD which leads to both Safety Knowledge and Safety Motivation, through Safety Participation.

Thus, perceiving management as committed to safety (PMCS) significantly leads workers to define discretionary safety behaviors as part of the job (low SCRD,  $Y = -.26, p < .001$ ) which is linked to corresponding discretionary behaviors ( $\beta = -.34, p < .001$ ). Participating in such discretionary activities, in turn, leads to (1) a greater knowledge of safety rules and procedures ( $\beta = .57, p < .001$ ), and (2) a greater motivation adhering such issues ( $\beta = .40, p < .001$ ).

## **Conclusion - Implications**

These results support the importance of considering PMCS and SCRD when we focus on safety performance issues. Taking part in discretionary safety behaviors facilitates workers' knowledge and motivation to respect safety rules and procedures.

Future research should add safety violation behaviors as outcomes of this model and, in this way, incorporate contextual and task-related performance in the same framework.

A practical implication is that organizations should consider the critical role of management, as well as the importance and consequences of their commitment to safety concerns. Indeed, HR practice and social processes should be oriented towards workers stimulation of defining security as an integral part of their role, through managers' awareness. For example, organizations need to ensure that during management training, safety is shown as a high priority of the organization.