The Influence of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity on Interregional Business Collaboration

The case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion

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Preface and acknowledgements

Having been born and raised close to the Dutch-German border, I was hardly even aware that there was an actual border between the two countries. I went to school in the Netherlands and had fun with my friends and shopped in both countries. At the border there were a few men dressed in impressive uniforms, but they seldom left their offices. I studied German in the city of Nijmegen and took a Dutch course at the University of Bonn. We watched Dutch and German television and we were not even aware that these were two different languages.

But then real life caught up with me; not all of the Dutch speak German, nor do they even wish to communicate with Germans. The more I spoke with other students about this phenomenon, the more changes I began to notice: students, the younger generation, were becoming more and more oriented towards learning English. German was a strange and difficult language. This was also a reflection of their cultural awareness or should I say, their lack of cultural awareness.

I consider myself to be a nosey Parker and I wanted to know why this development was taking place and if this was only a development particular to the Netherlands, or Limburg, or were other cultures also experiencing the same. However, yearning to know the answer is one thing, but having the opportunity to study this phenomenon is another. After many years of wondering about what might account for this, I received the opportunity to fulfill my passion. My former manager gave me the permission to study for my PhD degree.

The first step was one that led me to our lector, Jimme Keizer, who was an expert in the field of acquiring PhDs. He gave me the telephone-number of his colleague, a professor in Eindhoven. On 13 October 2008 I went to the Technical University of Eindhoven (TUE) for a preliminary meeting with my supervisor, Jan Ulijn, and I felt like a first-year student again. After a very pleasant and informal meeting, I went away with some homework; I had been asked to write a short proposal to show my level of English. Besides this assignment, I received a great deal of information with an additional remark that Jan had to clean up shop, since he was moving to another office. It would not be the last time that I went home with several carrier bags filled with books and articles. Jan, who is fortunately perhaps the least technical professor at the TUE, did not only move offices within the TUE, but he later even found a new office at the Open University, and I moved with him.

I am afraid that I was never the model PhD candidate. Various distractions came my way, and I found it very difficult to avoid them. Moreover, there was another point; it is not easy as a language scholar to be supervised by another language scholar (Jan originally studied French!). Both of us appear to have the same knack in which we would like to use as many words and phrases as possible to say the simplest things. We wished to say a great deal (not always the same things, but always interesting things) and Jan really knows quite a lot about culture and never stops reading new information. Fortunately, Jimme was my co-promoter and under his guidance we managed to keep track and get down to brasstacks.

Acknowledgments

In the last few years I have learned that writing a PhD thesis is actually teamwork. In the course of the process several people made their contribution. First I would like to thank Jan Ulijn and Jimme Keizer for their guidance and for helping me to focus academically. Together they provided me with the perfect guidance. Jan gave me a heap of information and Jimme

helped with the methodology and the sorting out. When we could not come to a conclusion, Herman van Bosch was there to help and point us in the right direction.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the professors and teachers, the administration staff, and the Information Centre of the Open University, and my fellow PhD candidates at the Open University for their clear explanations, for all their helpful work, for all the research articles I received and all of their feedback.

I would also like to thank Zuyd University, my colleagues, my directors, Ans van der Klauw and Jose Mastenbroek, the members of the Executive Board, Jos Willems, Karel van Rosmalen, and Kitty Kwakman, who gave me the opportunity to write my PhD dissertation, by giving me time and financial support, but also practical help when needed.

I could never have done this without the help of my colleagues from CM/FM, PBM, and IB, from the "kenniskring", from BSP, from BO, and from the library. Without knowing it, they helped me each time by asking me how my PhD research was coming along.

Other thanks go to the members of the Roundabout Club. They have supported me with feedback and with the feeling that I am not alone, and that I am not the only one, who suffers from the insecurities that a PhD candidate does. Although everyone knows it is rather dangerous to mention names, because you always forget people or cause people to be hurt by not mentioning them, I wish to thank Jos Pieterse and Jol Stoffers, with whom I started this adventure at the MSM. They are have already obtained their PhD degrees and today I join them in the ranks.

In the final phase all the efforts were transformed into the book that you hold in your hands now. For this I received the support from Michelle Mellion, who rectified the linguistic errors, and René Borghouts, who provided the layout and cover design. I want to thank both of them, because with their excellent help I can show my masterpiece with pride.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and my friends for their understanding in realizing that I could not spend as much time with them as they deserved. Naturally, my greatest feelings of gratitude go to Lisette, Kevin and Janou for their support, help and feedback and for all the time they gave me to fulfill this challenging task.

Table of contents

List of Key Concepts, Acronyms, Tables, Figures and Appendices

Key concepts

Business Communication Skill	Necessary skills to be able to use the correct mean of communication
Culture	Customs and values of social groups that distinguish between these groups
Cultural Sensitivity	Necessary skills to adjust to other cultures
Emic	The vision of a culture from people inside the culture
Etic	The vision of a culture from people of other cultures
Interregional Business Collaboration	Doing business with a business partner in another region of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, which also means cross-border
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise: enterprises that employ fewer than 250 people (European Union, 2006)
Trust	The willingness of being open to other people and wanting to share information.

Acronyms

BCS	Business Communication Skill
BL	Belgian Limburg
CBS	Dutch Statistical Bureau (in Dutch: "Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek")
CDI	Confucian Dynamism Index
CS	Cultural Sensitivity
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
ELAt	Eindhoven Leuven Aachen triangle
ETIN consultants	Consultancy Agency (in Dutch: Economisch Technologisch Instituut Noord-Brabant)
EXPERF	Export Performance
FTP	File Transfer Protocol
GIM	Gesellschaft für Innovative Marktforschung
GRP	Gross Regional Product
IDV	Individualism
IVR	Indulgence versus Restraint
KMA	District of Aachen (in German: Kammerbezirk Aachen)
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy
KMV	Key Mediating Variables
LTO	Long-Term Orientation
MAS	Masculinity-Femininity Index
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MON	Monumentalism
OL	Other Language
PLS	Partial least square
PDI	Power Distance index
PRAG	Pragmatism
RELQUAL	Quality of the relationship
SF matrix	Success and Failure matrix
SL	Southern Limburg
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
STEP	Short-Term Export Performance
UAI	Uncertainty Avoidance Index
VAT	Value-Added Tax
VSM08	Values Survey Module 2008

List of Tables

List of Figures

Appendices

Introduction and problem statement

The Meuse-Rhine Euregion is one of 61 Euregions that have been established to fuel economic growth and support societal livability (see Appendix A). The Meuse-Rhine Euregion was established in 1976. It is a region of 10,400 km2, which is equivalent to the size of Shanghai, and almost 3.9 million inhabitants, comparable to the population of Berlin (see Figure 1.1). Every day almost 40,000 people cross the border to go to work, and many more travel across the border just to go shopping. The Euregion is host to five universities, fourteen universities of applied sciences, two airports, and numerous cross-border cultural activities. The Meuse-Rhine Euregion is home to over 130 research centers and 290 biotech companies. The Meuse-Rhine Euregion includes more than 250,000 enterprises, SMEs mainly in the field of services, but also multinationals, such as DSM, Sabic (petrochemical sector), and VDL Born (all in Southern Limburg), Arcelor Mittal (steel manufacturer) and the Martens Breweries (all in Belgian Limburg) and Voith (energy and manufacturing), Lindt (Sweets) and Heusch (machine building/construction) (all found in the District of Aachen).
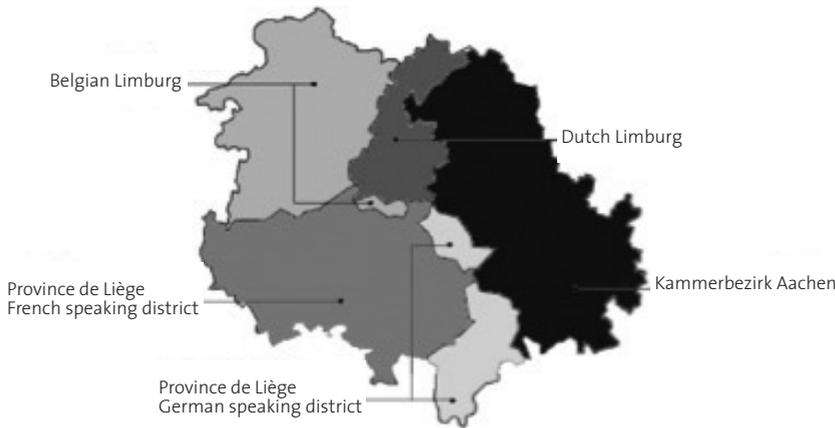
Figure 1.1   Five regions of the Meuse-Rhine Euregio

Euregions have been established because developing clusters of neighboring regions is perceived as an effective way to foster regional development. Not all euregional development efforts have been successful, such as the Avantis Business Parc on the Dutch-German border (Jacobs and Kooij, 2013). Due to national regulations practicalities, such as the mail delivery service, the gas and power suppliery, it was almost impossible for them to succeed. Some recurring barriers were taken stock of by the European Commission (2007). These barriers are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1   Aspects that can influence interregional business (European Commission, 2007)

Concept	Barrier
Culture and language	Different languages
	Different cultures
Regulations	Different regulations in other EU countries
	Different regulations in non-EU countries
Finances	Lack of capital
Knowledge and skills	Lack of knowledge of foreign markets
	Lack of management resources
Product descriptions	Enterprise's product/service is not suitable for export

Regarding the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, there is only limited cross-border business (Kasper, Hensgens and Nouwens, 2005). The following significant aspects were mentioned:
- demographic problems in Southern Limburg (Hoekveld, 2014);
- different administrative procedures (Kasper et al., 2005);
- different cultures (Kasper et al, 2005; European Commission, 2007);
- different languages (Wolf, 2005; Welters, 2014; Kasper et al, 2005; European Commission, 2007).

Wright and Dana (2003) argued that the economic environment is changing dramatically and is becoming more complex and dynamic. It is not possible to only be focused on one's own company, as SME's must collaborate with others to survive. In their study, they indicate that entrepreneurs should be aware of the fact that national borders are of no significance in this situation. Entrepreneurs must be able to compete at an international level in spite of barriers. Wright and Dana have even indicated that these barriers are perpetuated by larger firms.

The question that remains is why is it that despite many comparatively suitable opportunities, such as industry (the number of SMEs and multinationals), market (large population), knowledge centers (universities and research centers), and the central position in Western Europe, that very little cross-border business is being conducted. This study focuses on the role of culture and language on business development within the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

1.1   Objectives and relevance of the study

The objective of this study is to gain a better understanding of the role of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration. Does Interregional Business Collaboration develop better when the business partners speak the same language? How do cultural differences influence business collaboration? It would seem quite likely that cooperation decreases when the cultural and linguistic differences increase.
A second objective is to research if the results of this study can be implemented in practice (SMEs that want to be more successful in interregional business) and in education (to enhance a student's cultural and linguistic competences).

Societal relevance
Specific and well-founded recommendations could give insight into the business communication in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion and as a result they could contribute to enhancing the success of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. This study mainly focuses on the demographic shrinkage (Musterd and Nijman, 2015) and the problem of unoccupied business/commercial premises (Dijkstal and Mans, 2009). On the other hand, in Southern Limburg various campuses were founded: the Chemelot Campus, Brains Unlimited, part of the Brightlands Health Campus, and the Smart Services Campus. On these campuses, students, specialists, entrepreneurs, researchers and the government work together. The circumstances there require that SMEs continue to develop.

Scientific relevance
From this study more insight should be gained into the business development in a border region and more specifically regarding the influence of Culture and Language. Very little empirical research on business development in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion has been conducted up until now. (Beugelsdijk, 2006; Chambers of Commerce Euregio Meuse-Rhine,

2005; EIS, 2007, 2008; ETIN Consultants, 2008; Hassink, Dankbaar & Corvers, 1995; Jacobs, 2012; Kasper et al., 2005; Perkmann, 2002; Project group Euregional Information Service, 2007, 2008; Wolf, 2005). Most of these studies highlight cultural and linguistic differences, as well as differences in policy regulations, as the central causes which prevent cross-border collaboration between businesses in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

In most studies about culture, researchers describe culture and cultural similarities of people in geographical areas, such as Northwest Europe, North America, Asia, and individual countries (Hofstede, 1983; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997; Schwartz, 1994; Inglehart, 2000). Sometimes cross-border culture between two countries is studied. In these studies, the differences between cultures are described using single or multiple dimensions. Culture is less often described as a characteristic property of a specific region within a country, e.g. Ambler, Styles and Xiucun (1999), who are scholars who have studied the trade between Chinese provinces.

Numerous studies have been written about language as a means of communication in international business. They describe the importance of mastering a foreign language in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in order to be internationally successful. Some studies look at the correct use of a language within a specific setting and under certain circumstances (recently: Collins & White, 2014; Pinta & Yakubu, 2014; Asghare, 2015; Ismail, 2015; Lehmann & Weber, 2015).

Belgian Limburg and Southern Limburg share the same language, but both areas are influenced by having a different cultural background (Gerritsen, 1999). The different cultural background also influenced the language and so there is linguistic diversity between Flemish (the official language in Belgium Limburg) and Dutch (the official language in Southern Limburg), though limited. Therefore, we should consider their linguistic diversity (Greenberg, 1956) and start by studying the language and then regard the culture afterwards. Although Greenberg used a quantitative approach by measuring the chance of finding a person with a different mother tongue in a population to predict the culture where s/he comes from, in this study linguistic diversity the degree to which languages differ is because of the different cultural background. For Greenberg it was language first, since he is a linguistic anthropologist, but for us we prefer to start with the concept of culture because the proximity of the Euregion suggests more cultural commonalities and only afterwards should we consider linguistic diversity. The languages Dutch (spoken in Southern Limburg), Flemish (spoken in Belgian Limburg), and German (spoken in the District of Aachen) are related Germanic languages, with Dutch and Flemish being almost identical whereas German differs from them both.

Often people in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion have the idea that when they cross the border from Southern Limburg to the District of Aachen or from Southern Limburg to Belgian Limburg that people are culturally not so different. This might be due to the fact that they share the original common dialect or the common language. On the other hand, it seems that Southern Limburg, Belgian Limburg, and the District of Aachen, although they are on the outskirts of their countries, have more in common with each other than they do with their national culture. This means that it would be wiser to talk about cultural diversity, the degree to which cultures in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion differ, because due to personality, cultural varieties occur among people from a similar culture.

1.2   The problem statement

There is a general feeling that the Meuse-Rhine Euregion could offer more business (cross-border) than is being realized (underperformance). Different reasons were mentioned that might account for this and most likely there is a complexity of causes. It has become clear that in this case cultural and language differences are among the barriers.
In conclusion, two research questions have been formulated:
 • To what extent do cultural differences influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
 • To what extent do language differences influence Interregional Business Collaboration?

Figure 1.2 shows a preliminary conceptual model, in which these two research questions have been incorporated:
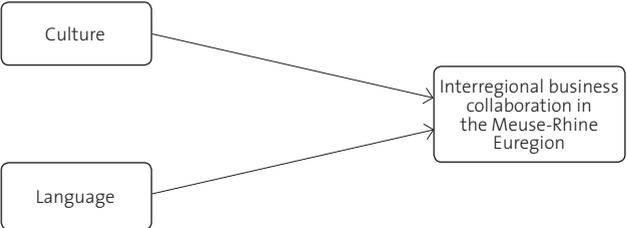
Figure 1.2   First preliminary conceptual model

1.3   Outline of the study

Table 1.2 shows the outline of this dissertation. The research is divided into two parts.
Part 1 consists of three preparatory studies to gain a better understanding of the problem statement and to learn more about the nature of this problem. Part 2 is the main research, being a literature review, the actual empirical study, and a Delphi study to valorize the outcomes of the empirical study.

Table 1.2:   Outline of the dissertation

	Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement
Part 1:	Chapter 2: Preparatory studies
Part 2: Main research	Chapter 3: Literature review
	Chapter 4: Empirical study
	Chapter 5: Delphi study
	Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

1.3.1   Part 1: Preparatory studies

In the next chapter, the influence of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration will be conceptualized. To gain a better understanding about Culture and Language in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, three preparatory studies were performed:
 • a qualitative research, consisting of interviews;
 • a quantitative research, including a survey.
 • an experiment.

1.3.2   Part 2: The empirical research

Based on the results of the preparatory studies, a preliminary conceptual model has been designed that can be taken as a departure point for the main research. The main research consists of a literature review and a survey that has been conducted among entrepreneurs about the influence of culture and language on Interregional Business Collaboration, thus culminating in a Delphi research as a practical twist. The literature review shows what other scholars have found on the variables from the preliminary conceptual model and the influence of the independent variables Culture and Language on the dependent variable Interregional Business Collaboration. The preparatory studies provided insights into moderating and mediating variables and they also referred to the body of literature concerning these variables. In the survey, the variables are measured using validated instruments from the literature review. The results from the survey form the basis of the evaluation of the preliminary conceptual model and lead to a more definitive model. To test this model in practice and to find practical results in the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, the main research has been finalized by making a Delphi study. In this Delphi study, the results of the survey are presented to those who possess practical experience to see if they can agree on these outcomes and how these outcomes can be valorized.

The preparatory studies

In Chapter 1 two research questions and a related preliminary conceptual model were introduced. With reference to these questions the aim of this study was to determine whether Culture and Language have an effect on Interregional Business Collaboration. Prior to studying what other scholars had discovered about the two independent variables (Culture and Language), and before performing the empirical research, three preparatory studies (interviews, a culture test and a language test) were conducted, to gain a better understanding of these variables.

The preparatory studies should answer the following questions provisionally:
1. *What do experts think about the effect of borders on interregional business?*
2. *What is the role of cultural differences in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion?*
3. *What is the role of entrepreneurs' foreign language skills in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion?*

In the first qualitative study experts in the field of interregional business were interviewed to gain insight into the effects of Culture and Language on interregional business that are of importance for an entrepreneur who wishes to become involved in interregional business cooperation. To learn more about the national cultures, a quantitative study was performed to find out how far the national cultures in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion differ from each other and how far they are similar. The chosen instrument demanded homogeneous groups. Because of practical feasibility and to maintain control over the homogeneity, several groups of students enrolled in an Economics study program, who might become entrepreneurs, were chosen. The students were all from the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. To explore their linguistic skills, an experiment in which the levels of these skills were measured, was performed. Earlier studies had mentioned that language was a possible barrier. Most likely, the entrepreneurs who have experience in interregional business also have an above-average level of language skills and they would probably not consider language to be a barrier. Entrepreneurs, who do not have experience in interregional business, might possess a lower level of language skills. To learn more about the linguistic level of entrepreneurs, this latter group participated in this experiment. In the following sections, the three studies and the information that was obtained will be described in detail.

2.1   Preparatory study 1: Ideas about Culture, Language, and Interregional Business

Throughout the years, ideas have been developed about the influence of Culture and Language on International Business by taking courses, attending congresses and studying literature and articles. These activities strengthen the impression that it could be very important to teach entrepreneurs how to behave when doing business with entrepreneurs from other cultures and that language courses might actually be necessary, and that as a consequence it was interesting to discover that the profession of language teacher was needed. However, in the preparation for this thesis, politicians and consultants appeared to have repeated the others' opinions. Doubts have arisen about the veracity of ideas concerning the importance of culture and language courses. Therefore, this study should show the real practical influence of Culture and Language in trade and industry.

2.1.1   Methodology
Six experts were interviewed about the topics Culture and Language in relationship to cross-border business in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion in order to obtain new and clarifying information. A mix of experienced consultants, two business professors and four

management consultants, helped to learn more about the possible influence of Culture and Language on Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. In a semi-structured interview the following main questions were asked:

1. *Do you think that the border actually hinders entrepreneurs from conducting cross-border business?*
2. *If so, which aspects might account for this?*
3. *Do you think that cultural differences might influence entrepreneurs when conducting cross-border business or not?*
4. *Do you think that there really are cultural differences, and if so, how great are these differences?*
5. *Do you think that linguistic skills have an influence on the choice entrepreneurs make when deciding whether to conduct cross-border business?*

At the end of the interview, the interviewees could provide additional information if they found something was important to mention.

2.1.2   Results from the in-depth interviews

In this section the interviewees are not quoted, but the main remarks of the experts are summarized below. All six interviewees gave a similar response to the first question as can be seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1   Responses given to the first question ('Do you think that the border actually hinders entrepreneurs from conducting cross-border business?')

Interviewee	Summary of remarks
Dutch 1	Entrepreneurs, who wish to or need to cross borders, will not be stopped by this border. However, many entrepreneurs will swim with the tide: if other businesses go to China, they will go to China, too and afterwards they will look back in retrospect at the consequences. Often entrepreneurs from SMEs do not work with predetermined business plans.
Dutch 2	Entrepreneurs from Southern Limburg will not be stopped by the border and they are willing to cross both borders (to Germany and Belgium). If they would have a choice, they would prefer to do business within the Netherlands, even though the distance may be greater.
Belgian 1	Belgians prefer to stay inside their borders and only cross them when it is necessary because the same product or service is not available in Belgium. This leads to economically disturbing situations since the region of Belgian Limburg only relies on a few larger firms. When these firms close down (as in the case of Ford Genk) this can lead to several economic problems, such as unemployment and financial difficulties for the supply companies.
Belgian 2	Entrepreneurs from Belgian Limburg are well equipped to go abroad, but would do so only if it necessary. When they do go abroad they focus mostly on the economic advantages and less on what others are doing.
German 1	The border is not a problem for entrepreneurs, but they do not see it as a real necessity: their home market is large enough and the world appreciates German products, so they would not have to make an effort.
German 2	Entrepreneurs have no problem crossing the borders, although they sometimes hesitate. When they realize the advantages, however, the hesitations disappear.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the responses above is that the border seems to pose no real barrier and that entrepreneurs appear not to experience any problems crossing it. However, crossing borders within the Meuse-Rhine Euregion is not always a first choice, although the regions of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion are neighboring and geographically nearby. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs prefer to do business within their own country, even if the distances are greater, or they prefer doing business with countries outside of Europe. The experts indicated that the Belgian and German entrepreneurs prefer to do business within their own country, and the Dutch entrepreneurs tend to cross the border more easily.

Question 2 was often already answered together with the first question. Table 2.2 summarizes the responses to Question 2.

Table 2.2 Responses to the second question ('If so, which aspects might account for this?')

Interviewee	Summary of remarks
Dutch 1	There are no real reasons for not crossing the borders. It is mainly a matter of trust. It is sometimes difficult to trust an entrepreneur who they do not know. Because of this, entrepreneurs make the decision not to do business across the border.
Dutch 2	An entrepreneur's decisions are often grounded on feelings or experiences, not on arguments.
Belgian 1	The choice not to go abroad is often made with the argument: 'Why should one go through all the trouble, when it is possible to do business without having this trouble?'
Belgian 2	Entrepreneurs make the decision based on their own ideas. These ideas are founded on the necessity for their own business, their own experiences and often, they are based on stereotypes.
German 1	Necessity and sometimes legal aspects (mainly delivery times and payment terms) are of influence. There are European laws that should cover these aspects, but most entrepreneurs do not want to take the risk and like to have a reliable business partner. It appears to be easier to trust a fellow countryman.
German 2	The mentality of Dutch entrepreneurs is often mentioned as a cause for restraint; they are not always seen as reliable. Belgian entrepreneurs are seen as being more reliable. Sometimes entrepreneurs from Southern Limburg are seen as being Dutch, but sometimes German entrepreneurs know that they are more like Germans, so they do not have real problems with them. Their own experiences and the opinions of other entrepreneurs are often of influence.

It appears that the decision to conduct cross-border business is often made on emotional grounds. The entrepreneur must be able to develop a good feeling about reliability and trust, although these are usually based on their own experiences and common stereotypes, and not on facts.

The experts again responded similarly to Question 3. Their general response was that they did not believe that there are cultural differences, but they assumed that cultural differences may be of influence when an entrepreneur needs an argument for not conducting cross-border business. Culture appears to act as a scapegoat. Table 2.3 shows the responses given to Question 3.

Table 2.3 Responses given to the third question ('Do you think that cultural differences might influence entrepreneurs when conducting cross-border business or not?')

Interviewee	Summary of remarks
Dutch 1	No, the differences are not so big. Often these are based on stereotypes, and if they are taken into account when preparing to conduct interregional business, hardly any problems occur.
Dutch 2	No, entrepreneurs are aware of the differences, but they also are aware of the similarities in the three regions.
Belgian 1	If Belgian entrepreneurs decide to cross the border, they are usually very well- prepared, particularly regarding cultural differences.
Belgian 2	Belgian entrepreneurs, when going abroad, look for support in legal and cultural matters, through the Chamber of Commerce or other authorities so as to avoid unpleasant surprises, such as in the field of culture.
German 1	If German entrepreneurs do not have any idea about how the other culture is, they look for information. German entrepreneurs are often part of a network in which they share information. The Chamber of Commerce is often functions as a source of information.
German 2	Most German entrepreneurs have a certain idea about Belgian and Dutch entrepreneurs and about the way these entrepreneurs think regarding German entrepreneurs. Although this is often based on stereotypes, which they are aware of, this makes them more cautious and therefore they like to be well prepared. However, this does not prevent the entrepreneur from conducting cross-border business.

In general, the experts do not consider cultural differences a real problem. All of them indicated that there are some minor cultural differences, but that these can be overcome by having reliable and sound information and when they are open-minded.

In most of the interviews, the fourth question was combined with the previous one. The responses concerning the real cultural differences can be found in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4   Responses to the fourth question (*'Do you think that there really are cultural differences, and if so, how great are these differences?')*

Interviewee	Summary of remarks
Dutch 1	There are minor cultural differences that should not lead to problems if entrepreneurs are well aware of the "rules" such as hierarchy, decision-making processes, and authority. However, there are more stereotypes that can cause problems, such as: the Dutch are out to make a fast buck, the Belgians are ignorant, and the Germans love the military.
Dutch 2	There are no huge differences, but still entrepreneurs have the feeling that these differences exist. To do business with entrepreneurs from different countries, a good feeling is necessary, which is called trust!
Belgian 1	Belgian entrepreneurs often have the idea that the Dutch entrepreneurs don't take them seriously. This feeling must first be overcome in order to have successful cooperation. This idea was caused by a certain group of Dutch salespeople in the past, and today's salespeople, especially those living in the border regions, still have to deal with this.
Belgian 2	There are certainly cultural differences, although they do not hinder cross-border business. It is hard to find the origin of the differences and how far one should look back into history since at several points in time all of the regions of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion belonged to the same cultural region. The three previous events that are still kept alive in the Belgian memory, are the separation from the Netherlands, and the First and Second World Wars. For other countries, these events are ancient history, however, for Belgians it is part of their national culture. These sentiments influence the business relations with Dutch and German entrepreneurs and trust has to be developed to overcome them.
German 1	Yes, but no more than between national regions. At the national level these cultural differences can normally be overcome, so at the international level this should also be the case.
German 2	Yes, there are some cultural differences. The way decisions are made and what people find important are different. For instance, a small difference is how a business meeting is set up (first business, then familiarities or the other way around). However, when you are aware of these differences, they soon disappear.

All of the experts agreed on the existence of cultural differences, and with the fact that these would never prevent an entrepreneur from doing business across the border. Cultural differences can be seen at different levels, and therefore it is not a surprise that they can be found between these regions. Yet, according to them the cultural differences concerning business are often smaller in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion than between each of the three regions and other regions in their respective countries.

The language skills in Question 5 refer to the languages used in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. The basic assumption is that there are no linguistic differences between Southern Limburg and Belgian Limburg, although the Dutch and Flemish languages are not always identical, and that there are only a few linguistic differences between Dutch and German. Table 2.5 summarizes this below.

Table 2.5   Responses to the fifth main question ('Do you think that linguistic skills have an influence on the choice entrepreneurs make when deciding whether to conduct cross-border business?')

Interviewee	Summary of remarks
Dutch 1	No, because most entrepreneurs speak German (especially the older entrepreneurs) or English.
Dutch 2	No, because when an entrepreneur doesn't speak the language of the business partner (especially the German business partner because the Belgian partner actually does speak the same language) they will be able to find a way to understand each other. However, when the business partner speaks French, the problem will be greater and probably will be an obstacle.
Belgian 1	Belgian entrepreneurs normally have no problems, because language training is very well advanced in the educational system.
Belgian 2	Belgian students have to learn at least English and French as foreign languages. Extra language courses are of a high standard and not expensive.
German 1	Dutch language courses have become very popular and German entrepreneurs believe that the Dutch and Belgian entrepreneurs generally speak their language.
German 2	Entrepreneurs consider English as a means to overcome the linguistic problems. Some sectors can use the regional dialect and when English and the dialect to not provide a solution, then there are many training opportunities (adult education centers).

In conclusion, it can be concluded that the experts did not consider language as being an obstacle. Entrepreneurs are able to overcome the differences, and if an entrepreneur needs to learn a foreign language, there are many opportunities for him or her to study the business partner's language. There are private training schools, and in Belgium and Germany, the government has created possibilities for an entrepreneur to study a foreign language. Entrepreneurs from Southern Limburg can also benefit from these facilities in Belgium and Germany.

At the end of the interviews, the interviewees could provide additional information and state their opinions. Table 2.6 summarizes their responses below.

Table 2.6   Responses to the additional question

Interviewee	Summary of remarks
Dutch 1	On the one hand, Southern Limburg will be forced to look outside their own region and even cross the borders for business, since their own region offers limited opportunities to grow because of the decreasing number of inhabitants. On the other hand, in the (near) future the number of businesses will also decrease because of the economically difficult situation as well as the fact that there are entrepreneurs who would like discontinue doing business due to their age, but they cannot find successors.
Dutch 2	Concerning the infrastructure, it is not a real problem to cross the Dutch-German border, although there is only one main road leading to Aachen. Because of the river Meuse, the border-crossings to Belgium are only via bridges. Only one main road connects Southern Limburg with Belgian Limburg. There is no railroad connection between Southern Limburg and Belgian Limburg and only one railroad connection between Southern Limburg and the District of Aachen. These limited traffic connections are not helpful when planning to conduct cross-border business.
Belgian 1	Foreign entrepreneurs sometimes have a skewed view of Belgians. They think that Belgians are easy-going and pleasant, but they are also bureaucratic and strict.
Belgian 2	Belgian Limburg is an economically vulnerable region. There are a few large enterprises on which the region relies. However, should one of these enterprises disappear, several SMEs would have huge problems. This is a well-known fact, but no actions are being taken to remedy the situation.
German 1	Some of the problems of the District of Aachen are identical to the problems in Southern Limburg, such as the matter of finding a successor. This could be an opportunity chance to cooperate, although this does not happen. The regions are still nationally oriented.
German 2	There is already a lot of cooperation taking place in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, which is an indication that entrepreneurs are able and willing to cross the border. The cooperative ventures have mainly resulted from individual initiatives. To develop a more structural cooperation, the supporting departments should pay more attention to success factors, so that other entrepreneurs can learn and benefit from their advice.

The final question gave the experts the opportunity to focus on their own expertise and experience. The experts focused their attention mainly on the entrepreneur, each from his or her expertise and experience. The fact that all of the experts highlighted the importance of the entrepreneur's role should be taken into consideration when the outcomes of the study are valorized. Most likely, the chance of practical support being successful is less when the wishes and the entrepreneurs' possibilities are not taken into account. Besides the influence of trust, the experts mentioned the financial and legal aspects, such as building regulations, service agreements, and investment financing (each five times) that obstruct entrepreneurs in doing interregional business. The fiscal aspect was mentioned less often (three times).

2.1.3   Conclusions from the in-depth interviews about regional differences

The outcome of these interviews was that the interviewees did not see language as a problem for entrepreneurs who are willing to do business internationally. Their perception was that entrepreneurs, who are not doing cross-border business, wrongly mention lack of language skills as a key barrier when conducting cross-border business. These outcomes were only gathered in order to develop ideas about culture and language in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Each day between 30,000 and 40,000 workers cross the national borders in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion to go to their work (EMR2020 Steering Committee, 2013, p. 25) and many more simply for shopping. This would not happen if language differences were a key problem to doing business across the regional borders.

In the interviews, the respondents' perceptions regarding the role of cultural differences in affecting people's readiness and their abilities to engage in cross-border business were recorded. Although all six interviewees did not find cultural differences to pose a real problem, they spontaneously and unanimously mentioned trust as a key variable. Trust is needed to deal with unknown and uncertain situations. Therefore, trust has been added as a variable to the following version of the preliminary conceptual model and it has been included in the literature review in Chapter 3, which might show whether the choice of adding trust to the conceptual model can be justified.

2.2   Preparatory study 2: Ideas about cultural differences

To develop ideas about the cultural aspects and to study differences in the cultures in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion a proper theory about the effect of cultural aspects on interregional business has to been chosen. Culture is often mentioned as one of the difficulties in cross-border business development, but it is hard to empirically capture the differences in which this manifests itself in a relatively small multicultural region such as the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Culture is a popular research theme. It is used to identify and distinguish different groups of people. A recurrent issue is that culture is being defined and measured in different ways. In the past few decades, several scholars have contributed to the conceptualization and operationalization of culture. Among them are Hofstede (1984; 1988; 2008) who found first 4, later 5 and most recently 7 dimensions), Trompenaar & Hampden-Turner (1997) (7 dimensions), Kluckhohn & Strodbeck (1961) (7 dimensions), Burell & Morgan (1979) (3 dimensions), Lessem & Neubauer (1994) (2 dimensions), Schwartz (1994) (6 dimensions), Dülfer et al. (1994) (6 dimension), and Inglehart (2000) (4 dimensions). The Hofstede approach has been chosen, because it has the most massive set of data, with very many replications throughout the years, which can be used for future entrepreneurs (students) in our Euregion of concern. Hofstede (Hofstede, Minkov & Vinken, 2008) also developed a validated instrument, with which scores on cultural dimensions can be measured.

To gain better insights into the cultural aspects and to study the cultural differences found

in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, version VSM08 of Hofstede's questionnaire was used. In Section 2.2.1 this instrument will be explained in more detail. The main condition for using this instrument is that only homogeneous groups can be compared. To meet this condition, groups of students, all studying economics and having comparable ages, were chosen. Besides having the opportunity to compare three groups of students, this instrument has made it possible to measure culture on no fewer than seven dimensions, and therefore culture could be studied in more detail and as broadly as possible. Several groups of students filled in the Hofstede's questionnaire, so subsequently the scores on seven dimensions could be measured. The scores of the different regions were compared afterwards to discover if there were significant cultural differences.

2.2.1   Methodology

Hofstede developed a system of cultural dimensions in order to distinguish the cultures of different countries. Since 1983 he has improved and enlarged his system from four to seven dimensions. In 1970 he used the dimensions Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity Index (MAS), and the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) to conduct his research at IBM. Hofstede (2011) gave a description using examples of the first five dimensions: Power Distance represents the idea that in a society some members have more power than others; the idea of followers and leaders. A lower value indicates less differences in power, e.g. a student-centered education, subordinates can be consulted, and there is an even distribution of income. A higher value indicates more differences in power, e.g. a teacher-centered education, subordinates are told what to do, and there is an uneven income distribution. Uncertainty avoidance indicates how members of a society deal with unfamiliar, unknown, and uncertain situations. A lower value indicates that members are comfortable with uncertain situations, e.g. teachers do not have to know everything, changing jobs is no problem, and there is a dislike of abiding by rules. A higher value indicates discomfort in uncertain situations, e.g. teachers are supposed to have all the answers, staying in jobs even when they are disliked, and there is a need for rules.

Individualism indicates the degree to which members of a society form a part of a group. A lower score indicates individualism, e.g. personal opinion is expected, speaking one's mind is appreciated, and the purpose of education is to learn. A higher score indicates collectivism, e.g. harmony is important, opinions and votes of the group are appreciated, and the purpose of education is to teach one how to do something.
Masculinity-Femininity indicates the degree to which members of a society are more modest and caring or assertive and competitive. A lower score indicates a more feminine attitude, e.g. balance between family and work, with many women filling political positions, and there is sympathy for the weak. A higher score indicates a more masculine attitude, e.g. work prevails over family, few women in political positions, and admiration for the strong.

Hofstede's dimensions have often been copied and sometimes complemented with extra dimensions. In one of these studies, the study from the Chinese Culture Connection (Connection CC, 1987), researchers introduced the dimension Long-term Orientation, which stands for a society, which fosters virtues, oriented towards future rewards, in particular adaptation, perseverance and thrift. The Long-term Orientation Index (LTO; Hofstede et al., 2008) is the opposite of Short Term Orientation. Short Term orientation stands for a society, which fosters virtues, related to the past and present, in particular respect for tradition, preservation of face, and fulfilling social obligations. Hofstede adopted this dimension (Hofstede & Bond, 1988) and used it as a fifth dimension in his model. The dimensions Indulgence versus Restraint Index (IVR) and Monumentalism versus Self Effacement Index

(MON) Hofstede adapted from the research of Minkov (2007), which he used for the first time in the VSM08 (Hofstede et al., 2008).

The sixth dimension, Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR), is in fact from Minkov (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011), who based it on items from the World Value Survey of Inglehart & Baker (2000). He developed this dimension by splitting Inglehart's and Baker's dimension of "survival versus self-expression" (Inglehart & Baker, 2000) into two components: a dimension that replicates Hofstede's Individualism-Collectivism and a dimension that was defined by Happiness and the Perception of Life Control and Importance of Leisure (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). The dimension is slightly correlated with Long-term Orientation but then in a negative light. Indulgence stands for a society which allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires and feelings, especially those that have to do with leisure, merrymaking with friends, spending, consumption, enjoying life, having fun, and sex. Its opposite pole, Restraint, stands for a society which controls such gratification, and where people feel less able to enjoy these desires and feelings. In other words: work to live versus live to work.

The Monumentalism versus Self-Effacement Index (MON) describes a scale from the degree in which a society rewards people who are, metaphorically speaking, like monuments: proud and unchangeable (high score), to the degree in which a society rewards humility and flexibility (low score; Hofstede et al., 2008). The dimension describes the idea of high esteem of identity vs. self-effacement. The measured items to calculate the Index are parental pride, importance of religion, and national pride. The explanation of Minkov (2008) regarding these scores was that areas with a lower score had colder climates, and because of this climate, cooperation and self-effacement were required rather than competition and self-enhancement. The same goes for region-specific practices, such as collective rice cultivation in East Asia.
The present study should show whether there is more similarity within the Euregion or whether there are significant differences between the scores on the dimensions. The expectation was that the differences between the scores on the cultural dimensions of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion would be smaller than the differences between the national scores of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands as implied by looking at the scores of the original dimensions of Hofstede.

Hofstede's approach on culture is the emic approach. Jahoda (1995) gave the following distinction: emic, based on self-reports, refers to the vision of culture from people being part of that culture, a purport, which Hofstede uses when determining the scores on the cultural dimensions, and etic, which refers to the vision of culture by those not from that culture, based on mutual perception. In the empirical study in Chapter 4, the etic approach is mainly used.

Hofstede not only provided us with a cultural system, with which differences concerning seven cultural dimensions can be investigated, but he also gave us an instrument that can be used to measure the scores for these dimensions. In this study, the version from 2008 (VSM08) will be used. This instrument consists of twenty-eight statements, so that for every dimension four in random order, and the respondent has to indicate on a five-point Likert scale the level of agreement that he or she has with this statement. In Table 2.7, the twenty-eight statements are registered with the dimension to which the statement refers, and in Appendix B the English version of the survey can be found.

Table 2.7   28 statements from VSM08 distributed over variables (Hofstede et al., 2008)

Dimension	Statement
Individualism	01. Time for your personal or home life
	04. Security of employment
	06. Interesting work
	09. Job respected by family and friends
Indulgence versus Restraint	11. Importance of keeping time free for fun
	12. Importance of moderation
	17. Being happy
	19. Not being able to do what you want
Long-term Orientation	15. What, if there is not enough money
	18. The same person at work and at home
	25. Persistent efforts are the surest way to results
	28. Honoring heroes from the past
Masculinity	03. Recognition for good performance
	05. Pleasant people to work with
	08. Live in a desirable area
	10. Chances for promotion
Monumentalism	22. Proud to be a citizen of a country
	13. Importance of being generous
	14. Importance of modesty
	21. Importance of religion
Power Distance	02. Have a respectable boss
	07. Being consulted by your boss
	23. Subordinates are afraid to contradict their boss
	26. Two bosses should be avoided at all cost
Uncertainty Avoidance	16. Feeling nervous or tense
	20. State of health
	24. Being a good manager without precise answers
	27. Rules should not be broken

Operationalization: 1 = of utmost importance, 2 = very important, 3 = of moderate importance, 4 = of little importance, 5 = of very little or no importance
The numbers represent the order in the actual questionnaire

The scores on the dimensions are calculated using the formulae of VSM08 (Table 2.8).
Hofstede suggests using a constant to obtain scores between 0 and 100. Since the means of
the scores of the different areas are meant for comparison, the constants are used to prevent
negative outcomes. Where a positive mean score occurs, the constant can be 0. However,
when a negative mean score can be seen, the constant, an integer, is chosen to make sure
that all scores are positive. Each group that is part of the comparison must obtain the same
value for this constant in order to compare them.

Table 2.8   Formulae used to calculate the dimension scores of Hofstede et al. (2008; using VSM08)

Cultural Dimension	Formula
Power Distance	$(PDI) = 35 (m07 - m02) + 25 (m23 - m26) + C(pd)$
Individualism	$(IDV) = 35 (m04-m01) + 35 (m09-m06) + C(ic)$
Masculinity	$(MAS) = 35 (m05-m03) + 35 (m08-m10) + C(mf)$
Uncertainty Avoidance	$(UAI) = 40 (m20 - m16) + 25 (m24 - m27) + C(ua)$
Long-term-Short Term Orientation	$(LTO) = 40 (m18-m15) + 25 (m28-m25) + C(ls)$
Indulgence Versus Restraint	$(IVR) = 35 (m12-m11) + 40 (m19-m17) + C(ir)$
Monumentalism	$(MON) = 35 (m14-m13) + 25 (m22-m21) + C(mc)$

m(i) is the mean score for question (i)
c(dim) is a constant (positive or negative) that depends on the nature of the samples; it can be chosen by the user to shift her/his dim(ension) scores for a better comparison

Statistics is used to calculate whether the differences found are significant or not. For a comparison of all three regions, the Kruskal-Wallis test is used, and where significant differences are found, the Mann-Whitney U test is used for a pair wise comparison. As mentioned before, to use the VSM08 correctly, groups that are to be compared should be matched groups (Hofstede et al., 2008). One main reason for this is that the constant for a certain dimension should be the same for each group. To guarantee matched groups, following Gerritsen (2002) and Gerritsen and Verckens (2006), students in economics and marketing were chosen (Table 2.9), ranging in age from nineteen through twenty-five and they all had grown up in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. In Southern Limburg, seven groups were asked, in Germany two, and in Belgium two groups were asked as well. In addition to the homogeneity with regard to the type of education, the sample was comprised of students, who originated from the Meuse-Rhine Euregion itself. All students received a paper version of VSM08 in their native language.

Table 2.9   Characteristics of the interviewees of Survey 2

School	Region of origin	Number of students	
Zuyd University of Applied Sciences	Southern Limburg	First-year students: 142	
		Third-year students: 71	213
Fachhochschule Aachen	District of Aachen	First-year students: 30	
		Third-year students: 20	50
Hasselt University of Applied Sciences	Belgian Limburg	First-year students: 41	41
Total			*304*

2.2.2   The results of VSM08

The input from a total of 304 students was collected, using VSM08 (Hofstede, 2008) and were processed using the formulae Hofstede presented together with his questionnaire (Table 2.10). To obtain only positive scores, the constant C had to be used for several scores. Table 2.11 shows the values of C that were used.

Table 2.10   Scores of Hofstedian dimensions in this study from 304 students in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion (deviant values in italic)

Dimension	District of Aachen	Belgian Limburg	Southern Limburg
Power Distance	12.3	*26.52*	13.91
Individualism	28.7	18.03	44.93
Masculinity	14	*0.21*	15.39
Uncertainty Avoidance	41.2	25.39	15.55
Long-Term Orientation	36.1	*50*	34.58
Indulgence versus Restraint	63.1	42.12	99.7
Monumentalism	54.1	33	32.9

In Table 2.11 for the dimensions Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Monumentalism the mentioned values of the constant are used, since in at least one area the score obtained was negative. Since the scores of the other dimensions were already positive for all three regions, no adaption was needed.

Table 2.11   Values of the Constant in the VSM08 formulae used to obtain only positive scores

Cultural Dimension	Value C(dim)
Power Distance	0
Individualism	0
Masculinity	14
Uncertainty Avoidance	81
Long-term-Short Term Orientation	0
Indulgence Versus Restraint	0
Monumentalism	53

Looking at the dimensions Power Distance, Masculinity, and Long-Term Orientation the scores of Southern Limburg and the District of Aachen are almost equal, whereas the scores of Belgian Limburg differ. The scores on Monumentalism show a different score for the District of Aachen. The other dimensions, Individualism, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Indulgence versus Restraint, show deviating scores for all three regions. In the following paragraph it was measured whether those differences between the scores in the study are statistically significant or not. As more than two regions are compared using ordinal (Likert) scales, the Kruskal-Wallis test is employed (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12   Statistical comparison of all dimension scores of three areas

Cultural Dimension	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Power Distance	2	0.448
Individualism	2	0.072
Masculinity	2	0.193
Uncertainty Avoidance	2	0.092
Long-term-Short Term Orientation	2	0.650
Indulgence Versus Restraint	2	0.000**
Monumentalism	2	0.117
Kruskal Wallis Test		*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

To draw conclusions about the differences between the scores of the dimensions for each region (Belgian Limburg, District of Aachen and Southern Limburg), the following assumption was introduced as a means to respond to what extent cultural differences, which may influence Interregional Business Collaboration, occur in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion: There are no significant differences between the scores on a dimension. Based on this assumption, the scores for all of the Hofstedian dimensions have been used.

The value for the significance (p) shows whether the assumption is true or false. If $p > 0.05$ the assumption is true. From these results it can be concluded that there seem to be no significant differences regarding the scores of the first five dimensions and the last one. Concerning the different scores on Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR) it can be concluded, when looking at the p-value, that there is significant difference between the areas based on the scores on this dimension. The scores on IVR of the three areas within the Euregion (Southern Limburg, Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen) will be compared in pairs (Table 2.13), using the Mann-Whitney U test, with the following outcomes:

Table 2.13   Statistical comparison of the scores of Belgium Limburg (BL), the District of Aachen (DA) and Southern Limburg (SL) on Indulgence versus Restraint

	Test Statistics BL-DA	Test Statistics BL-SL	Test Statistics DA-SL
Mann-Whitney U	639.50	1419.00	3566.00
Wilcoxon W	1200.50	1980.00	4841.00
Z	-1734	-5286	-3189
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.083	.000**	.001**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

This leads to the following conclusion about the different scores on Indulgence versus Restraint (IVR): there appears to be no significant difference between Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen, but there is a significant difference between Southern Limburg and the other areas, Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen, which means that the students, as representatives of the other inhabitants, in Southern Limburg are more indulgenced, whereas students in the other parts are more restraint. In addition, there is a tendency (0.08) that restraint is slightly stronger in Belgian Limburg than in the District of Aachen.

2.2.3 Conclusion about cultural differences
Using Hofstede's instrument VSM08, the only cultural difference that could be found was that students from Southern Limburg showed a longing for indulgence compared to the students from the other areas, who were more restraint. This means that there could be a stricter separation between working time and free time in Southern Limburg and working enables one to enjoy free time, whereas students in Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen did not embrace the idea that working enables one to enjoy free time. Regarding the six other dimensions, no significant differences can be seen. Moreover, Hofstede added the dimension Indulgence vs. Restraint because he needed an extra dimension for measuring cultural differences in Eastern Europe. The dimension was not included in the original list of dimensions, with which Hofstede measured the culture in Western Europe. Therefore, the difference that was found, although limited, could still be considered with some reserve. The statements from the interviews regarding the limited influence of culture were confirmed by the outcomes of the second preparatory study. Before deciding to remove

the variable from the preliminary conceptual model, the findings of the literature review in Chapter 3 on this subject will be considered. On the basis of the outcome of the literature review, the choice will be made whether or not culture should remain a variable in the preliminary conceptual model.

2.3   Preparatory study 3: Ideas about foreign language skills

A lack of foreign language skills might be an argument for not conducting cross-border business (Kasper et al., 2005; EU, 2007). This argument is not valid for the Dutch-Belgian border, since Flemish is nearly identical to Dutch. Although there are some differences, language is not expected to be an obstacle for Dutch-Belgian collaboration. In addition to studying the influence of language skills, the question arose whether a lack of language skills could serve as a valid argument for the Dutch-German border, because German indeed is different from Dutch. First, the level of language skills needs to be measured to examine whether the level is too low and subsequently prevents business collaboration.

2.3.1   Methodology

To investigate the relevance of the language factor in doing interregional business, a small experiment was performed. A group of 45 entrepreneurs from Belgian Limburg, Southern Limburg and the Aachen district, who were not engaged in cross-border business and who had no or only limited experience with international business, were asked to indicate their level (elementary, intermediate, advanced, proficiency, (near) native) of the German language or the Dutch, whichever one was not their native language. For this, the European Framework (Level A1-beginners level through C2-near native; Morrow, 2004) was used, which was explained to them before they took the test. In the following Table (Table 2.14), the description of the levels can be found (Goethe-Institut, 2011). A more detailed description of the levels can be found in Appendix C1.

Table 2.14   Description of language levels (Goethe Institut, 2011)

Level	Description
	Elementary use of language
A1	Can understand and use familiar, everyday expressions and very simple sentences, which relate to the satisfying of concrete needs. Can introduce him/herself and others as well as ask others about themselves – e.g. where they live, whom they know and what they own – and can respond to questions of this nature. Can communicate in a simple manner if the person they are speaking to speaks slowly and clearly and is willing to help.
A2	Can understand sentences and commonly used expressions associated with topics directly related to his/her direct circumstances (e.g. personal information or information about his/her family, shopping, work, immediate surroundings). Can make him/herself understood in simple, routine situations dealing with a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and common topics. Can describe his/her background and education, immediate surroundings and other things associated with immediate needs in a simple way.
	Independent language use
B1	Can understand the main points when clear, standard language is used and the focus is on familiar topics associated with work, school, leisure time, etc. Can deal with most situations typically encountered when travelling in the language region. Can express him/herself simply and coherently regarding familiar topics and areas of personal interest. Can report on experiences and events, describe dreams, hopes and goals as well as make short statements to justify or explain his/her own views and plans.
B2	Can understand the main contents of complex texts on concrete and abstract topics; also understands specialized discussions in his/her own primary area of specialization. Can communicate so spontaneously and fluently that a normal conversation with native speakers is easily possible without a great deal of effort on either side. Can express him/herself on a wide range of topics in a clear and detailed manner, explain his/her position on a current issue and indicate the benefits and drawbacks of various options.
	Autonomous language ability
C1	Can understand a wide range of challenging, longer texts and also grasp implicit meanings. Can express him/herself spontaneously and fluently without having to search for words frequently and noticeably. Can use the language effectively and flexibly in his/her social and professional life or in training and studies. Can make clear, structured and detailed statements on complex topics and apply various means of text association appropriately in the process.
C2	Can effortlessly understand practically everything, which he/she reads or hears. Can summarize information from various written and spoken sources, logically recounting the reasons and explanations. Can express him/herself spontaneously with high fluency and precision and also make finer nuances of meaning clear in more complex topics.

After the explanation of the levels, the entrepreneurs were asked to indicate the level of foreign linguistic skills (Dutch for Germans; German for Belgians and Dutch) they thought that they possess. This should represent their level of skills in reading, writing and understanding the language. Additionally, the native speakers of Dutch took an official language examination from the Goethe Institut (Goethe Institut, 2011) (Appendix C2) and the native speakers of German took a language examination developed by the Dutch Ministry for Social Services and Employment (Uitgeverij PAK, 2011) (See Appendix C3). In these language examinations, mainly reading and writing skills are measured, which include an understanding of the context.

This German language examination was developed by the Goethe Institut (2011). It is a mix, which includes the spelling of verbs, sentence structure, and vocabulary. The scores indicating the linguistic level were adopted from the Goethe Institut (2011) and can be found in Table 2.15:

Table 2.15   Scores of the German language examination (Goethe-Institut, 2011)

Score	Level
29 or 30 sentences correct	C2
27 or 28 sentences correct	C1
24, 25 or 26 sentences correct	B2
21, 22 or 23 sentences correct	B1
20 sentences correct or less	A2 or lower

The Dutch language examination, which was taken by the German entrepreneurs (40% of the group), consists of two parts. The examination, which is offered by Uitgeverij PAK (2011), consists of seven items: the spelling of verbs, the spelling of words, sentence structure, vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and grammar: sentence analysis and morphological analysis. Spelling of verbs and vocabulary was used to make the examinations comparable because these are the main topics that are included in the German test. The rating was taken from the original test from Uitgeverij PAK (2011).

In total, thirty-five sentences were presented and the participant had to choose the correct answer. The first part, consisting of twenty sentences, mainly reflects writing skills. It concerns the correct spelling and conjugation of verbs. The score indicates the linguistic level (Table 2.16):

Table 2.16   Scores of the Dutch language examination regarding spelling and conjugation of verbs

Score	Level
20 sentences correct	C2
18 or 19 sentences correct	C1
16 or 17 sentences correct	B2
13, 14 or 15 sentences correct	B1
12 sentences correct or less	A2 or lower

The second part of the examination, consisting of fifteen sentences, concerns the meaning of words. The participants read a sentence in which a word is printed in bold and he or she should choose the correct answer. Table 2.17 shows the scores indicating the linguistic level.

Table 2.17   Scores of the Dutch language examination regarding meaning of words

Score	Level
14 or 15 words correct	C1/C2
12 or 13 words correct	B2
10 or 11 words correct	B1
8 or 9 words correct	A2
7 sentences correct or less	A1 or lower

After performing the two examinations, the two scores were combined to form one final linguistic level.

2.3.2   Results from measuring the foreign language skills

The German language examination made by the native speakers of Dutch showed the following results: Eight Belgian and nineteen Dutch entrepreneurs filled in the German language examination. The measured levels varied from B2 through C2 (a further description of these levels can be found in Table 2.14). Only one Dutch entrepreneur made a wrong estimation by stating that his level was C1 whereas the test proved that his level was B2 (score 25) (Language Policy Division, 2000). The score C2 (indicating the highest level) was scored by an entrepreneur who was raised bilingually. This is not uncommon in the Dutch-German border region, especially in the area of Kerkrade-Herzogenrath (Ehlers, 2007; Rothe & Wagner, 2015). Seven Belgian and twelve Dutch entrepreneurs scored level C1, which they correctly indicated beforehand, one Belgian and six Dutch entrepreneurs scored level B2, which they correctly indicated beforehand.

Looking at the eighteen German entrepreneurs, who filled in the Dutch language examination, ten scored equally on the two examinations. The other eight scored one level lower on the first examination than on the second one. For these eight entrepreneurs the lower level was the final level. One entrepreneur scored level C2, 7 entrepreneurs scored level C1 and 8 scored B2, as each of them had already indicated beforehand.
Because of the fact that the sample of 45 entrepreneurs, although small, was randomly chosen, serious doubts arose about the presumed negative influence of language used in cross-border collaboration. These outcomes confirm the results from the interviews about the wrongly held assumption that a lack of language skills forms an important barrier when engaging in cross-border business. Level B2, the lowest level found, includes enough skills to facilitate cross-border collaboration. The small experiment suggests that, in most cases, people's linguistic skills are sufficient.

2.3.3   Conclusions of the language experiment

The experiment shows that entrepreneurs seem to be capable of estimating their linguistic level, and that the measured linguistic level implies that communication should not be a problem. The lowest measured level was level B2, which is more than sufficient for conducting cross-border business in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion according to the description of the Goethe Institut (2011). Even level B1 ("Can understand the main points when clear, standard language is used and the focus is on familiar topics associated with work." (Goethe-Institut, 2011)) should be sufficient. This leads to the conclusion that the influence of language on Interregional Business Collaboration could be considered to be a negligible factor. However, interaction between Culture and Language could also occur. Before further conclusions about the variable language can be drawn, the outcome of the literature review in Chapter 3 will be considered.

2.4   Conclusion of the three preparatory studies

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of culture and language on Interregional Business Collaboration. The preparatory studies should provide insights into the independent variables. Interviews combined with an experiment regarding foreign language skills left the impression that the influence of Language is rather limited. From the interviews, which were combined with a survey regarding Culture, it was concluded that the influence of Culture could also be considered as being limited. The preparatory studies raised the awareness of a much more limited role of Culture and Language than was expected beforehand. At first sight, the conclusion might be drawn that the variables

Culture and Language could be excluded from the conceptual model and that the research had been completed. Although the preparatory studies might be an indication that Culture and Language do not really matter in Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, this could be an apparent conclusion, since this conclusion has only been based on the limited data from the preparatory studies. However, the discussion about the difficulty in disentangling the overall concepts of Culture and Language (see Section 1.1) has led to the conclusion that they do influence each other at the level of Interregional Business Collaboration. Therefore, the survey will explore the possibility of using derivates of the interaction of Culture and Language, such as Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill.

A literature review is necessary to study the nature of differences and similarities of the influence of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration. Moreover, an empirical study among entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion concerning the influence of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration might provide more data for the Meuse-Rhine Euregion to be able to draw a more robust conclusion about the influence of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration. Therefore, Culture and Language will not yet be excluded from the conceptual model.

The interviews showed that all of the experts mentioned the importance of Trust. Therefore, Trust will be added to the preliminary conceptual model. In the next chapter the literature review will be described and conclusions will be drawn. The new draft of the conceptual model, with which the literature review will be addressed, can be viewed below (Figure 2.1):
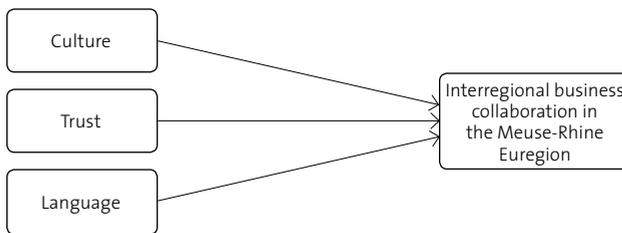
Figure 2.1:   The new preliminary conceptual model after the preparatory studies

Three research questions are represented with this model:
- To what extent do Cultural Differences influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
- To what extent do Foreign Language Differences influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
- To what extent does Trust influence Interregional Business Collaboration?

The literature review will describe what other scholars have discovered about the four variables from the preliminary conceptual model and the effect of Culture, Language, and Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration.

2.5   Summary

To gain more insight into the independent variables Culture and Language and to obtain a better understanding of these two variables three preparatory studies were performed. The first study was held among entrepreneurs and consisted of a qualitative study. This qualitative study, which included six interviews, provided a global idea about the limited influence of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration, and led to the conclusion that trust could be of importance because of the new and insecure situation that an Interregional Business Collaboration might present.

The second study was a survey among three matched groups of students, using VSM08, an instrument developed by Hofstede to measure culture in seven dimensions. This survey confirmed the idea of the interviewees that cultural differences are of limited influence in the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

The third study was an experiment to study foreign linguistic skills. The level of the linguistic skills provided preliminary insight into the influence of linguistic skills on interregional business communication.

The three exploratory studies resulted in doubts about the influence of foreign language skills and cultural differences on Interregional Business Collaboration. Furthermore, the experts who were consulted unanimously mentioned the influence of trust.

In the next chapter, the literature review, other scholars' findings will be presented concerning the influence of Culture, Language, and Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration.

Theoretical perspectives on Culture, Language, and Trust

Chapter 1 described the outline of this study. Using the context of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, Culture and Language have been studied as hypothesized obstacles to Interregional Business Collaboration. Examples of other obstacles are: managerial inadequacies, lack of knowledge of the export market, lack of skilled employees, lack of financial sources, tariff barriers, trade regulations, government policy, and currency obstacles (Kahiya & Dean, 2015).

Chapter 2 recounted how experts believed that Culture and Language did not form real barriers for performing Interregional Business Collaboration. Besides, being in alignment with their opinions, the aspect of Trust was added to the preliminary conceptual model (Figure 2.2). An experiment that might indicate the linguistic level of entrepreneurs, and a survey to measure cultural differences seem to confirm the experts' opinions that culture and language pose no real barriers.

This chapter reviews the literature with regard to the influence of Culture, Language, and Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration. Although the preparatory studies might have given the impression that Culture has no or only limited influence on Interregional Business Collaboration, the next section could give more insight into the conclusions other scholars have drawn about the influence of Interregional Business Collaboration. Depending on the outcome of the literature review, either a confirmation or a negation of the conclusion from Chapter 2, Culture could still be replaced in the conceptual model. Should the literature confirm the limited influence of Culture, the literature might provide an alternative variable, but related to Culture, which could subsequently be inserted into the conceptual model. This alternative variable might provide insights through empirical research how culture-related aspects might influence Interregional Business Collaboration, instead of Culture itself.

3.1   Culture

Scholars have studied Culture from multiple angles and most of them created their own definition. Ferraro (2002) has provided a definition, which is helpful to divide between factors that can encourage or hinder interregional business activities: 'Culture is everything that people have, think, and do as members of their society'. The emphasis is on 'membership of their society' and signifies that the differences in acting, trading, and managing businesses that SME-managers in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion perceive between themselves and potential business partners in the other parts of the Euregion, are somehow 'formatted' by ethnic, religious and social characteristics of the different nationalities people belong to. Ferraro explains that people, who consider entering into cross-border business, perceive three types of differences:
- Material objects, for example, specific product facilities operated by people
- Ideas, values, and attitudes formed in nurturing, education, and training outside and inside working lives
- Normative, or expected, patterns of behavior being expressed in items such as teamwork, business negotiations, quality and delivery requirements, and expectations.

All these aspects in which Culture expresses itself are basic elements of business development in general, even more so in cross-border business.
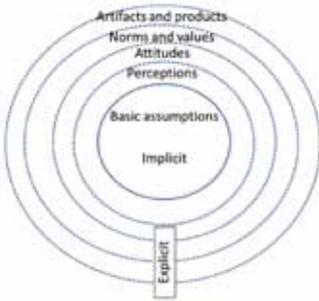
Figure 3.1   Implicit and explicit aspects of Culture.

The aspects of Culture described by Ferraro are both explicit and implicit. He claimed that much of culture is implicit (see Figure 3.1). Artifacts and other cultural products are also visible to people from other cultures. Norms, values, and (to a lesser degree) attitudes, are shared, but they are less visible aspects of Culture, whereas perception and basic assumptions are the most implicit aspects found on a more individual level. Therefore, they are the most difficult to assess. Becoming and remaining partners in business requires that people understand and respect each other's societal background. Figure 3.1 has been adapted from Blom & Meier (2004), and supplemented with perceptions (Ulijn & St. Amant, 2000).

3.1.1   The influence of culture on Interregional Business Collaboration

Radziszewska (2014) used the data from GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) to study the scores from Hofstede's first five cultural dimensions (Power distance, Uncertainty avoidance, Individualism, Masculinity, and Long-term orientation) on the level of entrepreneurship. "The GLOBE project used data collected from 18,000 managers in 62 countries to identify nine dimensions that explain cultural differences, including those identified by Hofstede: Performance orientation, Assertiveness orientation, Future orientation, Human orientation, Collectivism I: Institutional collectivism, Collectivism II: In-group collectivism, Gender egalitarianism, Power distance, and Uncertainty avoidance." (Radziszewska, 2014, p. 39). Table 3.1 shows the outcomes of this study below.

Table 3.1   Relationship between cultural dimensions and entrepreneurship (Radziszewska, 2014)

Cultural dimensions:	Influence on entrepreneurship in a culture
	Score
Long-term orientation	Positive
Short term orientation	Negative
Low power distance	Positive
High power distance	Negative – creation of new family firms
	Positive – entrepreneurship can be used to increase one's power
Individualism	Positive
Collectivism	Negative – entrepreneurship is based on individualistic orientation
	Positive – more social support is offered in collectivistic societies
Human orientation	Positive
Performance orientation	Positive
Future orientation	Positive
Low uncertainty avoidance	Positive
High uncertainty avoidance	Negative – formalization and resistance to risk is against entrepreneurship
	Positive – quality of products and services

Wach (2015, p. 22) used the data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report from 2013. The GEM is a worldwide study of entrepreneurship, which measures individual entrepreneurial behavior and attitudes, and the national context of entrepreneurship. "The GEM report analyses also the entrepreneurial intentions as well as entrepreneurial activities (Table 3.1) and entrepreneurial aspirations." He called cultural and social norms one of the entrepreneurship framework conditions using a five-point Likert scale. A lower score, which might indicate a less entrepreneurial attitude, could mean that people will not go through all the trouble to cross a border.

Holzmüller and Stöttinger (2001) argued that cultural standards could be used as a fundament for acquiring appropriate behavior. This fundament can be seen as stereotypes versus experience as described by Alteren (2007). Vivek (2015, p. 14) argued about stereotyping in saying that "making assumptions can create distrust and barriers that expose both your needs, positions and goals the other side's". Harz (1997) found through experiments that when information is available managers would use this information and make accurate decisions. Only when there is no information available, managers will make biased decisions based on stereotyping. He noticed that, since information is often available, the influence of stereotyping is very limited. Camaron and Trope (2004), however, examined the way stereotyped people gather information and found that they, other than non-stereotyped people, are more likely to look for information that is stereotype confirming. Hinton (2000) identified three important components of stereotyping:

- A group of people is identified by a specific characteristic, such as nationality, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, occupation, and hair color. Through this identification, sets of people are identified so they can be distinguished from other groups. These characteristics are usually personality characteristics, but they also include physical characteristics.
- A set of additional characteristics, usually personality characteristics, is attributed to all members of the group, such as 'the English are attached to tradition'.
- When a person is identified as a member of a group with specific characteristics, the stereotypical characteristic is attributed to him/her. Therefore, when a person is identified as being English, he/she must also be attached to tradition.

Pan, Scollon and Scollon (2002) concluded that the use of cultural stereotypes could often be attributed to the reason that international business cooperation fails. Ladegaard (2012) discovered that using stereotypes in business grew from relatively innocent beginnings into very negative attitudes. He found that employees in a global business organization referred to their colleagues in other countries as "the others", classifying them as another group, something that Hinton (2000) described as the first component of stereotyping. However, the employees themselves were not aware of the fact that they used stereotyping and they were even less aware that this stereotyping had biased their views and decisions. Group dynamics is another topic in research about stereotyping. Groups construct stereotypes together to show solidarity, to amuse, or to shock (Condor, 2006; Condor et al., 2006). Van den Berg (2003) found that these stereotypes constructed by groups, are often highly variable and contradictory. He reasoned that group members construct stereotypes that fit a certain context, usually for rhetorical ends. The third research issue regarding stereotyping is the personal view, the need to justify generalizations, and to even become attached to these stereotypes (Tusting, Crawshaw & Callen, 2002; Ladegaard 2011, 2011a; Hornsey 2008; De Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak, 1999; Wodak, 2009).

Chisik (2002, p. 423) examined the effects of stereotyping on a national level and found that stereotyping, which he calls "self-fulfilling reputations", affects a country's exports and the type of products. "An inferior country-of-origin reputation results in lower national

welfare". He distinguished between two types of products that can influence the effect of stereotyping on export: complex products whose quality is not easily verified, and standardized products whose quality is easily verified. Complex products do not depend on the reputation of a country or they might even improve the reputation. Standardized products depend on the reputation. He provides as an example a standardized product from Columbia:

one single delivery of an inferior product (50,000 suits for the American market) ruined the reputation of the Colombian garment industry, which before this incident had produced products of good quality. Since then, only international orders for inferior quality have been given to Colombian garment factories.

Looking at the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, Poortinga and Grindt (1993), Hagendoorn & Linssen (1993), and Renckstorf and Lange (1990) described the stereotyped characteristics that German, Belgian and Dutch were supposed to have, according to the German, Belgian and Dutch. These characteristics have been combined into one Table (Appendix D1). The most striking stereotypes were as follows:
The Dutch find Germans reliable (61%), materialistic (78%), with a businesslike attitude (75%), and creative (63%); Belgians consider them helpful (63%) and self-confident (59%). Germans think of themselves as proud (65%).
Germans think the Dutch are accurate (80%), ambitious (81%), materialistic (80%) and that they have a businesslike attitude (78%); Belgians think of them as helpful (63%). The Dutch view themselves as independent (63%).
Belgians are believed to be proud (75%) by the Dutch, which is confirmed by the Belgians themselves (53%).
Both Germans and Belgians find themselves proud of being members of their society. The Dutch confirm this for the Belgian, yet the Dutch do not view themselves as being proud. Hofstede includes this attitude into the dimension of monumentalism. Preparatory study 2 showed no significant differences between the scores on this dimension of the three regions, Belgian Limburg, the District of Aachen, and Southern Limburg. Using VSM08 did not provide insight into the actual score on this dimension.
Renckstorf and Lange (1990) also discussed the changing of stereotypes over time and wondered how this would affect the role of media (Appendix D2). In the years after World War II, the attitude of the Dutch towards Germans was very unfriendly. Over time, this image changed and became more positive. This positive development of stereotyping has been confirmed by Luo and Shenkar (2011, p. 7). They proposed that, "the initial stereotyping of the foreign investor on the part of the host environment is weakened over time as foreign firms gradually build reputation and citizenship" or in other words, stereotyping, because of the unknown, diminishes when one knows more and more about the other culture.
GIM (Gesellschaft für Innovative Marktforschung) (2013) performed an image study by order of the Dutch consulate, concerning the image of the Netherlands among German entrepreneurs. Although the overall image was positive, entrepreneurs, particularly those who did not know the Netherlands that well, made some negative remarks. They criticized the tomatoes and the food, and found that the Dutch prioritized their own profit. However, their main problem with the Dutch was that they found them rather invisible; they specifically objected to their absence from trade fairs where entrepreneurs from almost all over the world were present.

The conclusion from the literature review about Culture is that in the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, cultural differences seem to have no influence on Interregional Business Collaboration, but dealing with stereotyping does. Therefore, Culture as an independent variable will be replaced by a variable that includes dealing with Culture specifically when

this means dealing with an unknown culture. In the next section, literature about the influence of Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration is explored, and with the gathered information the decision will be made whether Cultural Sensitivity can replace Culture as an independent variable in the preliminary conceptual model.

3.1.2 The influence of Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration

Ferraro (2001, p. 7) stated, "One of the most common factors contributing to failure in international business assignments is the erroneous assumption that if a person is successful in the home environment, he or she will be equally successful in applying technical expertise in a different culture". This failure is the result of the "inability to understand and adapt to foreign ways of thinking and acting rather than from technical or professional incompetence". Earley and Peterson (2004) showed that because of business globalization, firms need workers that are culturally skilled, a fact that has been confirmed by Holzmüller and Stöttinger (2001) regarding marketing. Lincoln (2000) concluded that entrepreneurs are more able to trade effectively and can negotiate better when their Cultural Sensitivity is more developed.

An increasing number of studies show that it is not enough to know that there are cultural differences between nations to successfully enter into cross-border business. An entrepreneur who aims to develop business outside his or her domestic business should not only offer a good product or service, but he or she must also be competent to convince other entrepreneurs to become business partners. This competence is often identified as Cultural Sensitivity (Rice & O'Donahue, 2002).

In literature several definitions of Cultural Sensitivity can be found. Cultural Sensitivity is described as the awareness that there are differences and similarities between cultures. It includes the knowledge, skills, and desire to consider these differences and similarities in a firm's business strategy, marketing approach, and actual face-to-face business contacts. Skarameas et al. (2002, p. 763) described Cultural Sensitivity as "the awareness of differences between domestic and foreign market business practices and its endeavor to address and manage these differences".

Whereas Skarameas et al. (2002) unified several steps in their description of Cultural Sensitivity, Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) consider Cultural Sensitivity as one of the three aspects of intercultural communication competence together with cultural awareness and cultural adroitness (see Section 3.1.2). Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004) found that a good relationship of an entrepreneur with a business partner (e.g. a customer) is essential for a long-term relationship between the company and the business partner because of the interface function. To maintain the relationship and increase sales and profits, an entrepreneur needs an adequate negotiating style. This negotiating style can differ across cultures and includes having an open mind, adequate language skills, a flexible communication style, and an interest in learning. If an entrepreneur develops these aspects when negotiating, it is easier to maintain long-term relationships.

Shapiro, Ozanne and Saatcioglu (2008, pp. 83-84) defined Cultural Sensitivity as, "an ability to monitor the new environment and engage in sense-making using emic and situated knowledge structures, and these understandings are used to perform enacted procedural knowledge". Rice and O'Donahue (2002) described seven dimensions of Cultural Sensitivity, which ranged from being able to accurately identify which culture(s) a person belongs to, to being able to implement appropriate action in a culturally sensitive manner. Alteren (2007, 2009) developed a concept of Cultural Sensitivity. In this case, Cultural Sensitivity has the

following dimensions: international experience, country experience, open-mindedness, an adaptive business style, and ongoing business experience. He compared several studies of Cultural Sensitivity and found that there are two visions about Cultural Sensitivity: (1) as a concept that can be applied across various cross-border contexts and (2) Cultural Sensitivity must be adjusted for every specific context.

Grewal and Dharwadkar (2002) described Cultural Sensitivity as the capacity to be culturally effective in dealing with foreign customers. They find that trust, commitment, and satisfaction can only be developed adequately when the foreign culture is appreciated and adjustment to the foreign culture is possible. This means that one needs to be sensitive to the nuances of the foreign culture. Skarmeas and Robson (2008) hypothesized that the level of Cultural Sensitivity is positively related to the quality of the relationship.
Plum, Achen, Dræby and Jensen (2008, p. 293) described it as "the ability to make oneself understood and the ability to create a fruitful collaboration in situations where cultural differences play a role". Ang et al. (2007) developed and tested a model showing the four dimensions of Cultural Sensitivity (metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral) and three outcomes (cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaption and task performance).

To sum up, Cultural Sensitivity is the continuum of cultural awareness, which can be described as thinking about culture (a mindset and having insights), similar to the ideas of Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004); cultural intelligence, which is more related to mental programming (knowing what to do when dealing with other cultures); and cultural competence, the ability to behave as those who belong to the other culture, do. Cultural performance is behaving according to that ability. Degens et al. (2013) developed an instrument for entrepreneurs to generate Cultural Sensitivity.
One of the aspects of Cultural Sensitivity is knowing how to deal with communication. Cultural awareness is the knowledge of the barrier; people from another region speak a different language and have different means of communication. Linguistic intelligence is the knowledge and the judgment of how and when to adjust to another language and how to use the means of communication: when to speak that other language and how communication can take place. Linguistic competence and performance mean that a language is mastered on a sufficient level to communicate, and this includes the ability to use the right means of communication. In regard to the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, further elaboration will be given in Section 3.2.
The literature has shown that Cultural Sensitivity has many aspects. Several scholars have investigated the aspect of Cultural Sensitivity, and although they were able to look at many different angles and give different definitions, the main agreement that can be found is that Cultural Sensitivity is of importance for Interregional Business Collaboration. Because of this conclusion, Cultural Sensitivity will be added to the preliminary conceptual model as a replacement for Culture. Furthermore, Alteren (2007) combined Cultural Sensitivity with Trust. This is yet another indication that trust could be of importance for cross-border business collaboration. In Section 3.3, the literature on the concept of trust and of trust in international business is explored.

3.2   Language

Language is the first feature of another region an entrepreneur will experience when he or she crosses the border. In the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, language is the most obviously typical feature when crossing the Dutch-German border, although there are also

differences between Flemish and Dutch. Small differences can matter. Chapter 2 suggested that this feature is not an obstacle for an entrepreneur, which would stop him or her from crossing the border.

Welch et al. (2001, p. 193) concluded that language is often seen "as the embodiment of culture, which leads to the bundling of language within the broad term 'culture'. Where considered as a separate factor, language is often limited to cross-cultural communication issues". In this study, language is considered to be of such interest that it is treated as an independent variable in the preliminary conceptual model in addition to culture, thus following Melitz (2006, p. 21), who interpreted language in his study strictly as a tool of communication, "even though it obviously reflects many aspects of culture as well". He described that there can be "longstanding, sometimes ancestral, linguistic divisions inside national boundaries" (for example South Africa, India or Switzerland). Therefore, the impact of linguistic differences is not only present between national cultures, but it can also occur within national cultures. Although, Language can be maintained to form a separate variable, there could also be a link from Language with Culture. Because of the important Business Communication Skill Language cannot be without Culture.

In the Meuse-Rhine Euregion two official languages are spoken, Dutch and German. Moreover, two dialects are spoken, Limburgish and Ripuarish, which are both versions of the West Central German language. Ripuarish is spoken in the southern part of Southern Limburg and the Eastern part of North Rhine-Westphalia (east of the Dutch-German border, south of the so-called Benrather Line and west of the river Rhine). The Benrather Line is an isogloss that separated the sounds maken-machen/kerk-kirche/stoten-stossen). Ripuarish was already used in texts in the twelfth century and the name Ripuarish was derived from the tribe of the Ripuarian Franks (Ripuarian is analogous to 'men from the river') that settled there about 1,500 years ago. The most used and well-known version is the dialect of Cologne. Dutch is spoken in Belgian and Southern Limburg and in a small area in Belgium just south of Maastricht (Voerstreek); German is spoken in North Rhine-Westphalia and in the eastern regions of Belgium. The language border between the Germanic languages, Dutch and German on the one side, and the Romance language French on the other side, has not shifted since the Roman times. Due to this, many linguistic differences and variations can be found in this small area, which causes problems in the Interregional Business Collaboration. Arntz and Wilmots (2002) indicated that within the West Germanic languages, Dutch and

German are closely related. Around fifty percent of the words are almost identical except for one or two characters. Thirty percent of the words are very similar and with a little imagination and knowledge their meaning can be derived. Only twenty percent of the words are very different, including the so-called "false friends" (Linthout, 2007), words that appear to be similar although they have a completely different meaning. Ház (2005) argues that Dutch and German are so closely related that the use of the mother tongue should offer such a solid base that the use of a third language should be avoided, because both speakers normally do not have enough skills in that language to be able to express oneself without mistakes.

The following is an example that shows language by itself is no problem, but the use of certain phrases can be:

(Personal experience of Jan Ulijn, Duisburg, 1989): "It was a misinterpretation due to a lack of language knowledge. During a negotiation exercise, an experienced German businessman said to an experienced Dutch negotiator "ich habe den Verdacht". This is phrase which is an often used and it means: "I presume", but for a Dutchman it sounds like "I have the suspicion". The

currently enrolled German and Dutch students have come to understand how false friends can cause misunderstandings."

The example above illustrates that language is not a subset of culture, but that it deserves a place as a separate variable in the conceptual model, which will be developed for this study.

3.2.1   The influence of Language on Interregional Business Collaboration

Melitz (2006, p. 2) found that "a common language promotes international trade both through direct communication and via translation. Direct communication appears to be far more important." With good reason he wonders how language can still be considered a barrier "when translation can link up all world languages to one another." (2006, p. 7).
Janssen, Cloodt and Vanhaverbeke (2007, p. 424) concluded that translators often "deform the original text" in the process of translation.
Welch, Welch and Marschan-Piekkari, R. (2001, p. 195) saw that mastering a foreign language is important for SMEs, particularly when starting to internationalize. "There is a strong tendency for companies to stay within the same language group in their initial international forays as a way of minimizing the perceived demands and risks involved." They also described the importance of linguistic skills in direct communication and the difficulties in translation of direct communication. Translation of direct communication can be time consuming, and when the person who should provide this translation is not available, direct communication cannot take place at all.
Welch and Welch (2008) described the importance of language in international knowledge transfer using the International Knowledge Transfer Model (Figure 3.2). In this model, language is important for encoding knowledge from the side of the sender and for decoding from the side of the receiver. Sender and receiver can be individuals, groups or organizations. To demonstrate whether the knowledge has been received and understood correctly, language is also used as a means of feedback. Buckley, Carter, Clegg and Tan (2005, p. 48) discovered that knowledge transfer requires the use of language and communication.
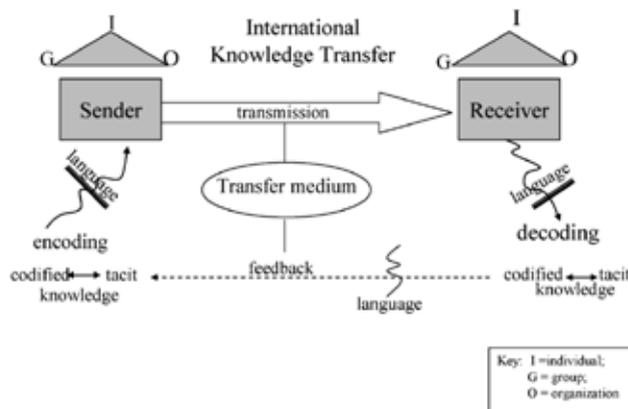
Figure 3.2   International Knowledge Transfer Model (Welch and Welch, 2008)

López-Duarte and Vidal-Suárez (2015) studied the aspects regarding the importance of choosing an entry mode (the strategy how to enter another market), such as exporting, licensing, direct investments and joint ventures. They found that languages have an impact on the costs. Language diversity influences transaction costs and investors' trust. In addition, knowledge transfer and the role of language is part of their study.
Lev-Ari and Keysar (2010) found through experiments that native speakers were trusted

more than non-native speakers with an accent. Souza and Markman (2013) repeated the experiment, but came to the conclusion that an accent did not matter at all with regard to credibility. Both experiments were performed using English –American participants, although some differences were present. It could be of interest to examine whether a similar influence of accent (between Dutch, Flemish and German) is visible in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion or not. One might assume that language in the Dutch and German speaking regions is no obstacle, since the languages are very similar. And even if an entrepreneur has little linguistic feeling, according to Hofstede (2009) entrepreneurs have invariably solved the problem of different languages by using trade languages; often a derivation of English (Pidgin English). In conclusion, the results of Chapter 2 concerning the limited influence of Language on Interregional Business Collaboration might indeed be confirmed, which then would place

Language as an independent variable in the preliminary conceptual model in question. However, communication is more than grammatical skills. Jacobs (2012) and Jacobs et al. (2013) wrote that in international communication it is important to put oneself in their listeners' shoes. This requires accurate use of a language; not the correct use of grammar, but that the communication skills are effective, as can be seen in the example in Section 3.1 where the language was understood perfectly but nevertheless misinterpreted due to false friends. In the following sections of the literature review, Business Communication Skill and its influence on Interregional Business Collaboration are explored. This should subsequently justify the appropriateness of substituting Language with Business Communication Skill in the conceptual model when studying Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

3.2.2 Business Communication Skill

Hofstede (2009) described that the more a business partner acquires linguistic skills, the more he or she adopts the cultural reference, although this can never be attained at a level that means sharing a language also means sharing a culture. It is important to be aware that there might be a difference between mastering a language and knowing that there is more to a language. An example from Pooria (2007):

A German and a French engineer were discussing a request from a customer. The French engineer suggested the use of solar cells on the roof of a vehicle in a region where there is more than enough sunshine. The German engineer agreed, but he also had several objections, such as maintenance and the use of particular oil on the roof. This would lead to extra costs and that is something the customer would not accept. In the evaluation, the French engineer wrote that the German was not very cooperative, which unpleasantly surprised the German, since he thought he had only given professional advice. Evidently, it is not the custom in France to criticize one's ideas in this way, whereas in Germany it is very unusual not to give one's professional opinion.

Business Communication Skill includes non-verbal communication as well, since about 50% of all communication is non-verbal. Claes and Gerritsen (2011) even go as far as to claim 80% of communication being non-verbal. Deardorff (2006) describes in his Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Figure 3.3) the knowledge components and the skills: listening, observing, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and relating.

Figure 3.3   Pyramid model of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006)

Chaisrakeo and Speece (2004, p. 269) reported in their studies that intercultural communication competence consists of cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness and cultural adroitness. Cultural sensitivity, which was also mentioned as a part of cultural communication competence in Section 3.1.2, indicates the mutual influence of cultural and linguistic aspects. The three features, cultural sensitivity, awareness, and adroitness, refer to skills, attitudes and traits that an entrepreneur could make use of in order to build successful business relationships across national borders. This theory was adopted from Zakaria (2000). Cultural awareness is the characteristic that one is self-aware of the effects of his/her behavior on others. Cultural Sensitivity is when one possesses open-mindedness and understands different cultures. Cultural adroitness is the ability to act appropriately when dealing with other cultures and is able to communicate more effectively. The competence, cultural adroitness, which is referred to as a Business Communication Skill, means that someone has learned to act effectively when interacting with a partner from a foreign country. This person knows what constitutes appropriate behavior and as a result, he or she can communicate more effectively with the partner.

After the description of Business Communication Skill in Section 3.2.3, it should clear that Business Communication Skill could replace Language as a variable in the conceptual model. Ulijn and Strother (1995) subdivided the verbal communication into the following skills (Table 3.2), and they indicated that understanding the subject matter could only take place, when the following conditions for effective skills are met (Herriot, 1971):
- Hierarchy of subtasks
- Integration of subtasks
- Automation of subtasks
- Feedback capacity
- Anticipation capacity.

Table 3.2   Verbal communication subdivided into skills (Ulijn & Strother, 1995)

Satisfaction with objective	Modes of communication	
	Oral (direct)	*Written (indirect)*
Receptive (interpreting)	Listening	Reading
Productive (encoding)	Speaking	Writing

The subdivision of the skills as mentioned in Table 3.2 and the matching conditions will be the starting point for dealing with Business Communication Skill in Section 3.2.3.

3.2.3 The influence of Business Communication Skill on Interregional Business Collaboration

Business Communication Skill includes not only mastering a language, but it also serves as a collective term for the skills of knowing how to use a language and the right means of communication in the appropriate cultural settings and the business context, such as in interregional collaboration. Business Communication Skill refers to the techniques a speaker has to use in a business setting so that a listener can and will understand him. These include clear pronunciation, correct tone of voice, presentation techniques, and the use of the appropriate words in specific cultural situations, for instance the appropriate politeness strategies (van der Wijst & Ulijn, 1995; Brown & Levinson, 1978) when conducting business across the border.

Guirdham (2005) described communication as the basis of cultural differences. Business Communication Skill is a combination of linguistic and cultural competence. Among others, they can be seen across gender, social class, profession, nationality, and background. She described the use of the pronoun 'you'. Although the example she gave has been used very often, the situation in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion is unknown to many Dutch entrepreneurs; the use of the formal and informal pronoun in Flemish Dutch. In Dutch, people use the informal 'jij' and the formal 'u', but in Flemish they use an informal 'u' and the more formal pronoun 'gij'. The Dutch often mistake this last pronoun as being the informal form because it sounds like a dialect. The German language has two pronouns: 'du' – the informal pronoun and 'Sie' -implying respect. This concept often causes misunderstanding among Dutch speakers. Although this language also has two pronouns for you (jij – the informal pronoun and u -implying respect) people often switch to the informal form as soon as possible, particularly in the western region of the Netherlands.

This pronoun has led to several misunderstandings: the Germans are assumed to be formal, not only when conducting business, but also in their leisure time; the Dutch are believed to be direct and the Belgians are said to be modest. This shows the difference between deference politeness (French and German) and solidarity politeness (Dutch) strategies (van der Wijst & Ulijn, 1995; Brown & Levinson, 1978).

Guirdham (2005, p. 163) wrote that "Stereotypes distorted intergroup communication because they led people to base their messages, their ways of transmitting them and their reception of them on false assumptions". This can lead to a generalization of groups, which is often less favorable, and can disregard individuality. Stereotypes can cause stereotype-confirming communication.

Business Communication Skill is the skill necessary to conduct successful business among entrepreneurs. Christensen and Rees (2002) studied the importance of 32 skills, used in business communication, cited in business communication literature (spelling, grammar, and punctuation). They asked accounting graduates to rate the selected communication skills and to indicate how well they were being prepared by universities in these skills. They identified the following skills:

- General linguistic skills: produce correctly spelled documents; use an effective business vocabulary; use correct grammar in both spoken and written communication; punctuate documents properly;
- Written skills: e.g. use jargon in appropriate situations; write persuasively; organize information into effective sentences and paragraphs;
- Oral/interpersonal skills: e.g. analyze the audience before, during, and after an oral report; listen effectively; use audiovisual aids effectively; use voice effectively for emphasis (speech, pitch, volume).

Although all the elements of language mentioned by Christensen and Rees (2002) are of

importance for cross-border business collaborations, and although an entrepreneur needs to manage these skills to be successful in Interregional Business Collaboration, Maes and Icenogle (1997) mentioned the oral/interpersonal skills as the most important in negotiating. It appears that written skills are less important, as it is more important to be able to communicate quickly and flexibly. It is often at the beginning and at the end of a negotiating event that most written communication (including e-mail) takes place, although essential communication takes place face-to-face. This is an opinion that is shared in the current study. Moreover, it is important to identify the levels of skills partners need regarding written and spoken language, as well as non-verbal communication and the use of skills when carrying out interregional business communication activities.

Claes and Gerritsen (2011) divided non-verbal communication into four subcategories: illustrators (e.g. intonation, gestures, and facial expression), adaptors (e.g. yawning, blowing your nose, scratching, and coughing), symbols (e.g. smiling, bowing, and waving) and regulators (e.g. showing that you almost finished the conversation by your intonation, gestures, and facial expression). These subcategories are also influenced by culture. They included context and situation as aspects that should be taken into account, such as the use of first and last names and the use of the correct form of address, including the informal and formal pronoun.

Arasaratnam (2011) presented an adapted anxiety/uncertainty management model to improve communication effectiveness (Figure 3.4). In this model the way in which one reacts and interacts with strangers is important. She described the following aspects as important for the development of an intercultural communication competence:
- Exposure to and engaging with different worldviews
- Practicing role-taking behavior
- Practicing active listening
- Seeking regular feedback.
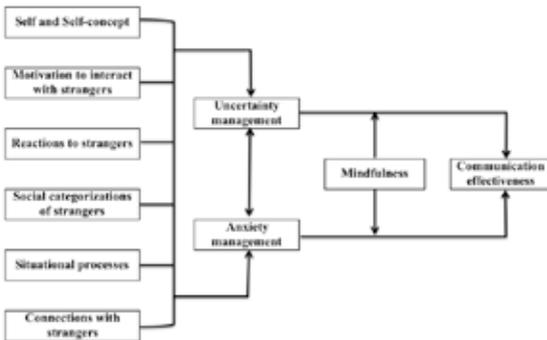
Figure 3.4   Model of the anxiety/uncertainty management model (Adapted by Arasaratnam, 2011)

Gibson (2005) provided the following aspects that are of importance in intercultural business communication:
- Quality of negotiations (relationship building, agreeing procedure, exchanging information, questioning, options, bidding, bargaining, settling and concluding)
- Presentations
- Marketing (content, language, visuals, colors)

By examining the literature it can be concluded that it is necessary for an entrepreneur who is active in cross-border business to master Business Communication Skill. Since the different languages are no real obstacles, Business Communication Skill will replace the variable

Language in the preliminary conceptual model. This does not mean that within the context of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion it is less important to develop linguistic skills, or that the initiatives to improve linguistic education are less important. Mastering the linguistic skills would make Interregional Business Collaboration easier, but the lack of these skills would not make Interregional Business Collaboration an insurmountable problem.

3.3   The interaction of Culture and Language

In Section 1.1 cultural and language diversity were introduced to demonstrate the differences between Culture and Language in the different parts of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Greenberg (1956) examined language diversity first, since this is an obvious aspect of another population and only afterwards culture, which is less obvious. However, we start with Culture because the proximity of the Euregion suggests that there are more cultural commonalities and we only investigate linguistic diversity afterwards. Based on the preparatory studies and the literature review, Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill were introduced as having been derived from Culture and Language. Jan Ulijn's personal experience in Duisburg in 1989, as described in Section 3.2, demonstrates the interaction of Culture and Language. Even the aspect of Trust may have played a role. Moreover, the general use of the concept Cultural Sensitivity, which in this study has been used more when dealing with Culture, indicates this interaction. One perspective on Culture and Language is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis or "Linguistic Relativity" (Whorf, 1956). This hypothesis deals with how Culture and Language mutually influence one another. The most common example can be found in the varieties of color names in one language and the lack of variety in another. This does not mean that those who spoke the language and who possessed a limited number of designations for color names, could not see those colors, but they simply lacked the experience of being able to distinguish these colors.

In their experiment, Ulijn and Verweij (2000) disentangled Culture and Language, which subsequently ensured that this interaction could be measured. They had the impression that in Dutch–Spanish business encounters the two nationalities employed different ways of dealing with uncertainty. In an experiment consisting of eight negotiation simulations, they compared the negotiating activities by having them ask specific questions: three Dutch subjects negotiated with three other Dutch subjects, two Spanish subjects negotiated with two Spanish subjects (all five conversations were cast in a monocultural setting) and three other Dutch subjects with three Spanish subjects in an intercultural setting. They found out that the negotiators used a different typology of questions in their native language (L1: Dutch or Spanish) than in a neutral language (L2). The Spanish negotiators seemed to reflect more empathy in their use of questions, such as employing the word 'verdad' at the end of questions. This was different from the Dutch subjects when asking their questions, as they were more straightforward without showing too much consideration of the other party. In their explanation, they used the explicit/implicit distinctions pertaining to the 'iceberg' and 'onion' metaphors for culture in general (national, corporate, professional), which they found relevant to effective technical and business communication. The Spanish appeared to be more concerned with the feelings of empathy in the implicit way, whereas the Dutch dealt more in a direct explicit way with the issues of the negotiation being above the surface. The basic concepts of Culture and Language also demonstrate that there is a great deal of overlap since in the history of humankind culture usually succeeds language, since language is its vehicle. The sequential order in which language comes first and then culture is apparently inverted here and both show an overlap, as they are intertwined and are difficult to disentangle, as Gerritsen (2014) demonstrated in her study.

She found that seven out of eleven cultural differences between the Dutch and the Flemish caused communication problems: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity (Gerritsen describes this as "live to work versus work to live"), and particularism versus uniformalism (individual interpretation of regulations versus observing regulations), diffusity (The Dutch find it unnecessary to hold informal meetings for the purpose of getting acquainted), polychronic versus monochronic (having a preference for improvising versus a preference for arranging matters beforehand) and preferring to have a greater personal space (the Flemish do not like to be visited in their homes). The Flemish score higher on all seven cultural differences. No significant differences were found in the following cultural dimensions: human nature, neutral versus emotional, and attitude towards past, present and future.

In the Preparatory Study 2, which was carried out among the students (see Section 2.2), if we consider the three Hofstedian dimensions, the conclusion regarding masculinity was in fact similar, although Hofstede uses Minkov's dimension, Indulgence versus Restraint, to describe the distinction, "live to work versus work to live". Yet the preparatory study showed no statistical significant differences regarding power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Personal experience showed that in regard to the other four differences mentioned by Gerritsen (2014), the inhabitants of Southern Limburg share many similarities to the Flemish, yet polychromic versus monochromic showed personal diversities as well. Ulijn (2009) described monochronic as a Western perception that is assumed to be linear; taking one step at a time. He stated that a manager is often in a hurry, and that if one wastes time, one loses money (Time IS money). Tschetschonig (2010) stated that polychronic cultures experience time as being fluid and although an appointment may be fixed, it seems not to be a problem if one is late. In Germany, it is not acceptable that one arrives late for an appointment, as this is a feature inherent to the Power Distance dimension. Although Preparatory Study 2 did not show a statistical significant difference in regard to this dimension, the score obtained for the Belgian students was higher than the score obtained for the Dutch and German students. This seems to indicate a reverse conclusion and that Belgian students might be more punctual when keeping appointments than the Dutch and German students.

Tschetschonig (2010) also indicated that polychronic cultures rely less on verbal communication and more on the context of nonverbal actions, such as voice tone, facial expressions, gestures and eye movements. Hence, this Business Communication Skill appears to be more important in the more polychronic culture of Flanders than in the more monochronic culture of the Netherlands, according to Gerritsen (2014a). On the other hand, van Everdingen and Waarts (2003) did not find statistical significant differences on monochronic/polychronic between Belgian, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Gerritsen (2014a) distinguishes four situations, in which the communication between different cultures and different languages are described as follows:
• Native speaker with culture and language A communicating with native speaker with culture and language B using language A (in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion this could be a German entrepreneur communicating with an entrepreneur from Southern Limburg or Belgian Limburg, using either German or Dutch);
• Native speaker with culture and language B communicating with native speaker with culture and language C using language D (in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion this could be a German entrepreneur communicating with an entrepreneur from Southern Limburg or Belgian Limburg, using English or another lingua franca);
• Native speaker with culture and language E communicating with native speaker with culture F and language E using language E (in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion this could be an

entrepreneur from Belgian Limburg communicating with an entrepreneur from Southern
Limburg, using Dutch);
• Native speaker with culture and language G communicating with native speaker
with culture and language H each using his or her own language (in the Meuse-Rhine
Euregion this could be a German entrepreneur, using German communicating with an
entrepreneur from Southern Limburg or Belgian Limburg, using Dutch).

Most of the examples Gerritsen described related to cultures that are rather different, such
as in the communication between a Dutchman and an Englishman, where either using
or leaving out words such as "possibly" can lead to denying a request. Another example
was the meeting between the Dutch prime minister and the Japanese president, in which
communication took place in English. In this situation, the non-verbal communication
(the Dutch prime minister displayed a friendly demeanor towards the Japanese president,
whereas the Japanese president politely avoided looking at the Dutch prime minister)
between the two led to a strange situation. The differences between entrepreneurs from
Southern Limburg and Belgian Limburg, who use the same native language, are described
above. Cooperation between a German and a Dutchman, when solving a puzzle through a
chat session, showed that communication in English did not lead to the desired result, since
English implies that they both have a handicap, because they miss the finer nuances of the
language. When one of them was allowed to use his native language, he was able to help
find descriptions for the items in the puzzle. Gooskens, van Bezooijen, and van Heuven (2015)
found that the Dutch understand the German language better than Germans understand
the Dutch language. This indicates that communication between an entrepreneur from the
District of Aachen and from Southern Limburg should take place as described in situation 1,
using German as the language of communication.

That the connection between culture and language for non-native speakers can lead to
major problems is shown in an example describing Situation 2 (Gerritsen, 2014a). In 1977, two
planes collided in Tenerife because of a misinterpretation of a message given by the Dutch
pilot, who had made an error when using a Dutch grammatical construction in the air-traffic
control in English. He wanted to say that the plane was already busy taking off, but the tower
interpreted the message as the plane was ready for take off.
This indicates how Culture and Language are intertwined as these separate factors attempt
to disentangle the different aspects of Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication
Skill with an interaction between the two (Figure 3.5). This is substantiated by the concepts
of Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill. Both result from an interaction,
not denying that Cultural Sensitivity is more culture-related and Business Communication
Skill is more language-oriented. The effective interplay between the two in the mind of
the entrepreneur and which is reflected in his or her behavior, determines the success of
Interregional Business Collaboration, for instance in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.
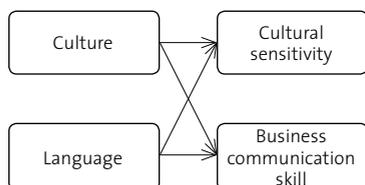
Figure 3.5:   The interaction between culture, language, Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication
Skill

This interaction is also visible in the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (Whorf, 1956) and in the study of Ulijn and Verweij (2000), who were able to measure this interaction. Prins & Ulijn (1998, p. 143) stated that the Sapir-Whorf Hypotheses "suggests that the structure of a language strongly influences or even fully determines the way its native speakers perceive the world". This could indicate that the German speakers could have a more structured perception of the world than the Dutch and the Belgian. Hofstede uses the dimension Uncertainty Avoidance as an indicator to show how to uncertainty is dealt with. A low score obtained for this dimension indicates that one is comfortable with ambiguity and chaos; a high score shows that a person has a need for clarity and structure (Hofstede, 2011).

Hence, the interaction of culture and language is too detailed to deal with in great depth in the current overall explorative studies of this research thesis, but given the examples above, it certainly deserves much more attention in future studies. It appears that the interaction between Culture and Language does play an important role.

3.4   Trust and its influence on Interregional Business Collaboration

To grow or to even survive in the field of international cooperation, innovation is important. Either one way or another, one needs to distinguish oneself from all the others in order to be more interesting to customers and business partners. One of the goals for many SMEs is to improve customer relations, and in fact to see them as partners. One of the hypotheses of Alteren (2007, p. 69) is that: "Cultural dissimilarity between the export firm and the foreign buyer leads to a low level of trust between the business partners". Shapiro et al. (2008) described that Trust interacts with Cultural Sensitivity, however, Ferraro (2001, p. 73) stated, "No theory of trust provides the conceptual framework for understanding the interplay between Trust, Cultural Sensitivity, and the development of successful cross-cultural business relationships".

Twardy (2013) concluded that Trust is indeed important for the success of business alliances, though not in the phase of the partner selection, but in the phase of actually doing business. She argues, "that building trust requires time to develop" (2013, p. 128). Krishnan et al. (2006) concluded that the positive relationship between Trust and performance is stronger under high behavioral uncertainty and weaker under high environmental uncertainty. Hassannezhad, M., Cantamessa, M., & Montagna, F. (2015, p. 4) describe behavioral uncertainty as the way that individuals behave: confusion (indeterminacy), belief, decision confidence, and behavioral variability (ignorance, indolence, intervention). Milliken (1987, P. 36) provided the still accepted definition of environmental uncertainty: "the individual's perceived inability to predict something accurately." In internationalization a high behavioral uncertainty definitely exists and Trust plays an eminent role. Similarly, this corresponds with the findings obtained from the interviews in the first preparatory study.

The influence of Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration
Bennett et al. (2011, p. 88) noticed a growing interest in "building long-term relationships with customers and suppliers". They found that trust increased commitment and that commitment increased loyalty, but that this had hardly ever been studied before. In addition, Ahmed et al. (2015) found that only limited research had been carried out concerning the international seller-buyer relationship. Koh et al. (2012) indicated that trust is important when conducting national business, however, the importance increases when, similar to international business, the geographical distance increases.

In contrast, Bloemer, Pluymaekers and Odekerken (2013) found no direct effect of Trust on the Interregional Business Collaboration in their study on cross-border business activities in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. As Kibbeling, Gelderman, Ulijn and Van Weele (2009), Caniëls, Gelderman and Ulijn (2010) and Uhlaner, Ulijn, Jenniskens and Groen (2011), Bloemer et al. (2013) found, that on a national level there also has to be trust between partners, e.g. the supplier and the buyer. Danek (2014, p. 55) described trust as "a basic coordination mechanism in interfirm relations while lack of trust is perceived as a cooperation barrier. However, building trust across cultural or national borders can be difficult because of cultural differences between partners".

On the other hand, Michel (2012) made a distinction between trust in a more national setting and trust in a more international setting. Because of the economically unstable situation due to civil wars, terrorism, ethnic violence, environmental degradation, human right abuses, resource scarcity, and natural disasters, trust on an international level is difficult to achieve. Consequently, it should be easier to develop trust in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, where the unstable situations mentioned above are unlikely to occur.

From literature review above it can be concluded that trust might be important in doing business, although perhaps not only in Interregional Business Collaboration, but also at the national or regional level, which means that it is doubtful whether trust can be added as an independent variable in the preliminary conceptual model of Interregional Business Collaboration. But the orienting interviews revealed that Trust is of high importance in Interregional Business Collaboration because of the insecure and unfamiliar situation. Therefore, we can conclude that the independent variable of Trust deserves a place in the conceptual model.

3.5   Interregional Business Collaboration: the dependent variable

Dana, Etemad, and Wright (2001) described the importance for SME's to develop international alliances. They described that before, only larger enterprises were active on international markets, but because of specializations these larger enterprises sought alliances with SME's. In this way, international networks of SME's were developed and these provided opportunities for SME's. Although networks with larger MNC's and SME's offer many opportunities for these SME's (Etemad, Wright & Dana, 2001), this study focuses on the collaboration of SME's with one another. Dana, Etemad, and Wright (2008) described the development of three forms of collaboration: Bazaar economy, Firm-type economy, and New economy. This development is summarized below in Table 3.3. The description of the New economy collaboration is similar to the idea of collaboration, which is studied here. The most distinctive feature is that there is focus on personal relationships.

Table 3.3 Comparison of the three types of collaboration (Dana et al. 2008)

Bazaar economy	Firm-type economy	New economy
Focus on personal relations, alliances and networks	Focus on impersonal transactions	Focus on relationship marketing, alliances and networks
Geographical clustering facilitates information search	Exclusivity clause replaces clustering, complicates comparative shopping	Web allows for easy information search
Flexible prices are negotiated and preferential pricing is based on status and relationships	Prices are indicated by the vendor and buyers are treated as equals	Flexible prices are negotiated and preferential pricing is based on status and relationships
Would-be competitors cooperate, re-enforcing relationship networks	Competition takes place between sellers	Former competitors cooperate for mutual gain, thus re-enforcing relationship networks
Brand loyalty is influenced by preferential treatment; brand loyalty – based on relationships – exists even for commodities	Brand loyalty is a function of product differentiation; therefore, not applicable to commodities	Brand loyalty is influenced by preferential treatment; brand loyalty – based on relationships – exists even for commodities
Effective unit is the network	Effective unit is the individual firm	Effective unit is the network
Decisions influenced by relationships with members of network; power and control thus de-centralized in multi-polar networks	Strategic decisions centralized at Head Office; power and control centralized in uni-polar fashion, with Head Office central to strategic decision-making	Decisions influenced by relationships with members of network; power and control thus de-centralized in multi-polar networks
Internationalization takes place along networks of relationships, resulting in a multi-polar, decentralized, distribution of power	Internationalization takes place under the directives of a centralized Head Office, enabling hierarchic decision-making	Networks facilitate internationalization, resulting in a multi-polar, decentralized distribution of power

To be able to study the influence of Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity, and Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration, it is essential to determine how Interregional Business Collaboration can be measured. Studies about the outcomes of business activities (such as: Lages & Lages, 2004; Zou, Taylor and Osland, 1998; Diamantopoulos & Kakkos, 2007; Lages, Lages & Lages, 2005; Zou & Stan, 1998) call this variable performance. There are several kinds of indicators to measure this performance, e.g. proceeds (in percentages or amount), sales growth, market share, acquisition of new customers, export venture profitability, and return on investment (ROI). Rutihinda (2008) summarized them as follows: the ability to fund business growth from profits, profitability, return on investment, gross profit, net profit from operations, cash flow, level of sales, and sales growth rate. Murphy, Trailer and Hill (1996) scrutinized 51 articles, written between 1987 and 1992, and examined the dimensions of business performance including the frequencies of the dimensions. Table 3.4 shows their findings.

Table 3.4 Dimensions of performance and their frequencies in 51 articles (Murphy et al., 1996

Dimension	Frequency
Efficiency	30
Growth	29
Profit	26
Size	15
Liquidity	9
Success/Failure	7
Market Share	5
Leverage	3

Most factors for successful business collaboration deal with the comparison of expected outcomes and realized outcomes. In addition, the level of expectation depends to a large extent on several aspects such as experience, size, and economic climate. For instance, an expectation can also be a calculated loss due to investments. In this case, a smaller loss might be regarded as a success.

Several theories and models were previously developed to measure the outcomes using perceptions and expectations. In Table 3.5 these theories and their conceptualization are summarized.

Table 3.5   Theories of measuring export performance

Theory	Developers	Conceptualization	
STEP Scale	Lages & Lages, 2004	3 Dimensions	Short-term trade collaboration
			Short-term export intensity improvement
			Expected short-term collaboration improvement
EXPERF Scale	Zou, Taylor & Osland, 1998	3 Dimensions	Financial cross-border collaboration
			Strategic cross-border collaboration
			Satisfaction with export venture
GOAL model	Diamantopoulos & Kakkos, 2007	SF-matrix	Objective importance
			Satisfaction with objective
RELQUAL Scale	Lages et al., 2005		Amount of information sharing
			Communication quality
			Long-term orientation
			Satisfaction with the relationship

Lages and Lages (2004) developed a three-dimensional scale (the STEP Scale) to measure short-term trade collaboration, which was defined as a period of one year. The measures are as follows: satisfaction with short-term collaboration improvement, short-term export intensity improvement and expected short-term collaboration improvement. The satisfaction with short-term collaboration improvement was measured by determining the effectiveness of a marketing program, comparing sales, profitability, market share, and overall collaboration, as these reflected how well an organization was meeting its exporting goals according to the manager's view. The short-term exporting intensity improvement was measured in terms of sales and profitability, and the expected short-term collaboration improvement was determined by the anticipated improvement, often using other organizations as a reference.

The EXPERF Scale (Zou et al., 1998) used three dimensions to measure long-term cross-border collaboration. These dimensions are financial cross-border collaboration, strategic cross-border collaboration, and satisfaction with export venture. Financial export collaboration, being a part of the marketing program, can be measured by export sales, export sales growth, export profits, and export intensity (export/sales ratio). Strategic cross-border collaboration is measured in terms of improved competitiveness, increased market share, strengthened strategic position, and strategic presence in the export market. Just as in the STEP Scale, this scale's main focus is not on financial outcomes, but on how satisfied the manager is with these outcomes.

Diamantopoulos and Kakkos (2007) used the goal model because they also believed that decision makers have certain export objectives in mind when they make their decisions. At a given moment, a cross-border collaboration was compared with the objectives, and if the

outcome was satisfactory it was classified as successful and if not, it was seen as a failure. Besides the description of success or failure, the researchers also included the importance of the activities. The activities are considered as being either important or not as important for the organization. The reason for making this distinction is that, if the activities are more important, the motivation of an entrepreneur will be higher and the classification of success or failure will be stricter. This is described in a success/failure (SF) matrix (Table 3.6) in which success and failure are described by the relative importance of different export objectives and by the managers' satisfaction with the objectives.

Table 3.6   The SF Matrix: Export Sales Objectives (Diamantopoulos & Kakkos, 2007)

Satisfaction with objective	Objective Importance	
	Important	*Not important*
Satisfaction	Success	Apparent success
Dissatisfaction	Failure	Apparent failure

The Relqual scale (Lages et al., 2005) assessed relationship quality in an exporting context since international competitiveness had been increasing and exporting firms had to invest in relationships with their partners. The quality of a relationship was measured by the (increasing) amount of information sharing, communication quality, long-term orientation, and satisfaction with the relationship. They defined the amount of information sharing as "the extent to which the exporter openly shares information that may be useful to the relationship" (Lages et al., 2005, p. 1041). This definition includes three aspects: the frequency of discussion, the sharing of confidential information, and the frequency of conversation about business strategy. Long-term relationships are important because they are likely to evolve into cooperation, goal sharing, and risk sharing. Satisfaction is defined as "a positive emotional state resulting from the assessment of the exporter's working relationship with the importer" (Lages et al., 2005, p. 1042). Here the assumption is made that "a satisfied exporter considers the association with the importer to be successful" (Lages et al., 2005, p. 1042).

Additionally, the satisfaction with the importer and the degree in which the objectives are achieved play an important role. Zou and Stan (1998) reviewed 50 studies about the determinants of cross-border collaboration. They encountered a problem, which indicated that there was a multiplicity of factors and variables. By using a classification system, they derived 33 independent variables and seven factors for cross-border collaboration. The classification they used as a starting point was external and internal factors. The seven factors are: sales, profit, growth, perceived success, satisfaction, goal achievement, and composite scales. One main appraisal from literature on international business development is the following: cultural antecedents and consequences of cooperation, the cooperative norms, and the impact of past collaboration must be considered; contextual moderators should be included in the investigation of cooperation between exporters and importers (Obadia, 2008).

The actual export figures do not seem to be of much interest in this study, since it might be difficult to compare these facts and figures between the SMEs. It might be difficult to gather these figures from the current SMEs due to their competition and privacy needs. When performing the experiment in the preparatory study (see Chapter 2), the opportunity was taken to ask the entrepreneurs for their opinions regarding measuring performance. Some entrepreneurs indicated that they would not be able to produce hard figures when filling in a questionnaire. Others indicated that they would refuse to give this kind of information. Three entrepreneurs answered that, although they would share these figures, extra information

would be essential to understand them, such as information about investments.

Based on the information obtained from the literature review and the extra input from the entrepreneurs from the experiment described in Chapter 2, the focus of this study has been on the manager's satisfaction with the outcomes of short-term cross-border business collaboration and regarding three one-year periods, namely 2009-2010-2011. This was to allow monitoring a development, particularly when the cross-border business collaboration is in an early phase, where initial costs might influence the financial outcome.

For the perception of an outcome it is essential to know whether an entrepreneur believes that Interregional Business Collaboration is important or not. If there is no real importance, the outcome will not matter and an entrepreneur will not make an effort. This also means that there is no real ambition to improve or innovate. However, if an entrepreneur finds Interregional Business Collaboration to be of great importance, he or she will probably do everything in their power to make it successful. If success is not achieved, the entrepreneur will further develop his or her skills, or at least he or she will have the ambition to develop these skills.

Literature showed that the dependent variable Interregional Business Collaboration can be measured using actual figures, such as proceeds (in percentages or amount), sales growth, market share, acquisition of new customers, export venture profitability, and return on investment (ROI). However, it was also evident that most factors for successful business collaboration deal with the comparison of expected outcomes and realized outcomes (Murphy et al., 1996).

Conversations with entrepreneurs during the preparatory studies showed that it is not easy to receive actual figures. Because of the fact that success, based on these figures, is determined by expectations, the decision was made to use the SF Matrix (Table 3.5): export sales objectives from Diamantopoulos & Kakkos (2007).

3.6   Moderating variables

Four moderating variables were selected for this study: nationality, gender, age, and sector. Each of these variables is described in the following sections.

3.6.1 Nationality

The first moderating variable, nationality, was selected to be able to make pronouncements about the different areas. Section 3.2 established that national culture is not of influence on Interregional Business Collaboration. Nevertheless, it was studied whether the independent variables that were found had a different effect in the three chosen regions. The moderating variable nationality will serve as the foundation for the study regarding regional differences.

3.6.2 Age

The second moderating variable, age, has been chosen to examine the development of certain aspects, such as stereotyping. Do older entrepreneurs think differently about the influence of Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity, and Trust than younger entrepreneurs do? Through personal experience, the differences between the current situation and the situation in the past have become apparent. One of these differences was the use of German in Southern Limburg. In the past, most people watched German television, as there were only two Dutch channels, and most were able to understand the

language. In this regard, there was more understanding for and knowledge about Germany. Nowadays, there are many Dutch TV channels with an overflow of English spoken programs, which could have an effect on the attitudes of the younger entrepreneurs towards Germany.

3.6.3 Sector

The third moderating variable, sector, was chosen to investigate whether certain sectors are more likely to perform Interregional Business Collaboration than other sectors. Pavitt (1984) and van Houtum (1998) previously studied and identified the influence of different sectors on innovation and export, and several recent studies by Manceaux (2012) and the Kamer van Koophandel, VNO-NCW, MKB Nederland, Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) and het Economisch Instituut voor de Bouwnijverheid (EIB) (2011) showed how sectors in Belgian and Dutch Limburg performed differently in regard to exports. Sectors with a "lingua franca" such as the chemical industry and ICT, which often use English, or sectors that are very local and approachable such as the building construction sector where dialect is spoken more often, and the service and retail sectors that have direct contact with customers, are more successful and open to Interregional Business Collaboration than sectors that are more accustomed to working within a local environment, such as agriculture, healthcare and marketing.

3.6.4 Gender

Several studies have shown that Gender has an influence on language learning (Williams & Burden 1999; Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002; Williams, Burden, Poulet & Maun, 2004; Fèvre, 2009; Gonzalez, 2011). Daunfeldt and Rudholm (2012) and Alsos, G.A., Hytti, U., & Ljunggren, E. (2013) found how Gender has influenced a decision that was made to follow an strategy innovation. Eriksson et al. (2012) found that girls have more linguistic skills than boys and this difference, although small, increases when they become older. Do female entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion have a lower level or a higher level of Business Communication Skill or of Cultural Sensitivity than male entrepreneurs?

3.7 Conclusion from the literature review

The literature review confirmed the outcomes of the preparatory studies, but it also showed that it is not Culture that seems to be of influence, but how Culture is dealt with, which is referred to as Cultural Sensitivity. The literature review also indicated that it is not the language knowledge that influences Interregional Business Collaboration, but the Business Communication Skill. In regard to Trust, the literature review did not provide an unambiguous answer concerning its influence on Interregional Business Collaboration. The variable Trust will be studied in the empirical research, since it cannot be determined whether Trust is of influence or not.
However, Culture and Language interact with each other and even if culture and language skills would reach satisfactory levels, it is the interaction in the entrepreneur's mind that results in an effective Communication Skill and Intercultural Sensitivity to perform successful interregional business. Together, this leads to the following research questions, considering the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion:

1   *To what extent does Cultural Sensitivity influence Interregional Business Collaboration?*
2   *To what extent does Business Communication Skill influence Interregional Business Collaboration?*
3   *To what extent does Trust influence Interregional Business Collaboration?*

4   To what extent does Trust have an interaction effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?

5   To what extent does Trust have an interaction effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?

6a   To what extent does Age have an interaction effect with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?

6b   To what extent does Sector have an interaction effect with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?

6c   To what extent does Nationality have an interaction effect with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?

6d   To what extent does Gender have an interaction effect with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?

Figure 3.6 shows the altered version of the preliminary conceptual model (Figure 2.1).
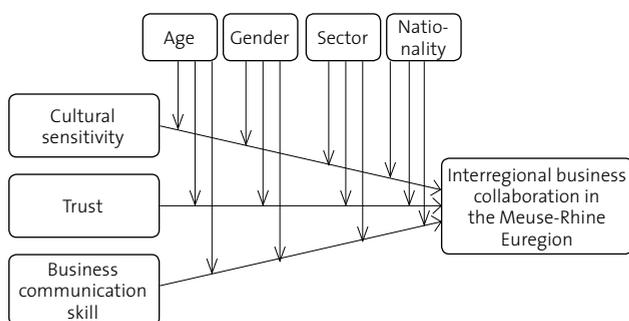
Figure 3.6   Conceptual model

3.8   **Summary**

This chapter described the literature about the cultural and linguistic variables that play a role in Interregional Business Collaboration. Based on this review, a new preliminary conceptual model has been constructed as a base for empirical research in order to study the role of Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity, and Trust in the case of the Meuse-Rhine. At first, the basic conceptual model included the independent variables Culture and Language. However, literature strongly suggested that the barrier regarding linguistic skills is only limited, but that instead of studying language, the influence of Business Communication Skill on Interregional Business Collaboration needs to be studied. Culture in Interregional Business Collaboration appeared to be more than knowledge about the different cultural features in the different parts of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, but it includes more importantly the knowledge about how to deal with these differences. Because of this, the variable has changed from culture into Cultural Sensitivity. It is not only the knowledge of culture (cultural awareness) that is important, but also cultural intelligence and cultural competence, all three of which are embedded in Cultural Sensitivity.

After completing the preparatory studies and the literature review, the influence of Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration appears to not be quite clear, and therefore this variable has been retained in the empirical study.

The influence of Cultural Sensitivity, Business Communication Skill, and Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration

The influence of
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on Interregional
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Chapter 2 comprised three exploratory studies and resulted in a preliminary conceptual model featuring the influence of Culture, Language, and Trust on the dependent variable Interregional Business Collaboration (Figure 2.2). In Chapter 3 literature was explored to discover what other scholars had written about the relationship between these variables. The conclusion was that in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion the focus should be on the influence of Cultural Sensitivity, Business Communication Skill, and Trust. Chapter 3 resulted in a revised conceptual model (Figure 3.5) together with six research questions (Section 3.7). The study related to the first five research questions will be discussed in Section 4.4, the research related to Research Questions 6a, 6b, and 6d will be discussed in Section 4.5, and the research related to Research Question 6c will be discussed in Section 4.7. In Chapter 6 answers to the research questions will be given.

With regard to the distinction of Pike (1967) between the etic and emic aspect of culture, Sections 4.2 - 4.5 used the etic approach, by viewing the cultures of the three regions (Belgian Limburg, Southern Limburg, and the District of Aachen) as one general culture of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion) with one general model, whereas Section 4.7 evaluates the conceptual model by constructing different models per region viewing them as cultural specific, which is the emic view.
 To measure Culture, Language, Trust, and Interregional Business Collaboration, statements will be presented to the entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. The first step in this chapter is to validate the statements: do they indeed measure Cultural Sensitivity, Business Communication Skill, and Trust? To test the model from Chapter 3, an empirical test was performed in which the validated items were used and an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to test the validity of the intended scales and to reduce the number of independent variables (Section 4.3).

In Section 4.4 an analysis has been made to determine whether the measured constructs fit in the preliminary conceptual model using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Next, the influence of the moderating variables nationality, age, gender, and sector (Section 4.5) is tested. After these tests were completed, an impression could be rendered concerning the differences between the preliminary conceptual model that emerged from the EFA (Figure 3.5) and the original model that was derived from the literature to see what the nature of these differences might be (Section 4.6). In Section 4.7 the model and the data are used to compare the three regions and to answer the research questions from Chapter 3. Appendix E shows the statistical tests that were used in more detail.

4.1   Design of the survey

Studies in Chapter 3 revealed a number of items that are be used to measure Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity and Trust. Johnson, Cullen, Sakano and Takenouchi (1996) presented 18 items to measure Trust and Cultural Sensitivity, in addition to strategic integration, similarity and complementary. Furthermore, Mirels and Garrett (1971) used 19 items to measure personality, such as emotional sensitivity and humanistic values. Alteren (2007) used items to measure Trust between exchange partners, exchange of information, adaptive business style, and customer-oriented culture. Maes and Icenogle (1997) studied the influence of 13 types of communication skills found in management decisions. Harich and Labahn (1998) conducted several interviews in order to measure desired relationship qualities, relationship experiences, Cultural Sensitivity (Indirect) and cultural differences (Direct) so they could measure how a salesperson interacts with customers. From these above-mentioned studies all of the items that were gathered were related to Business

Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity and Trust. To validate the 85 items, the following steps needed to be taken (Appendix F):

* *Step 1:* Double items were removed. 11 statements were evaluated as being double.
* *Step 2:* The remaining items (74) were presented in alphabetical order to a group of 25 managers with the following questions for each of the items:
  - Do you understand the what the statement means? Vague items were restated until the majority had agreed on the meaning of the item.
  - Is the item related to Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity, Trust or to none of these?
  - Do you see duplications?

  Duplications and items that were not related to one of the independent variables, according to the majority of the group, were removed. If 15 or more managers found a statement related to a variable, this statement was not removed. Then the statements were sorted according to statement. After that, the managers were asked to judge if two or more statements related to a variable had a similar meaning. In this way, 17 statements were removed.
* *Step 3:* The list with the remaining 57 statements was discussed with an expert, who was responsible for surveys from the Chamber of Commerce in Aachen, by also using the same three questions (clear meaning, relation to a variable, and possible duplication). Mainly on account of the duplications, another fourteen statements were removed. This led to a list of 43 statements, with each of the items being related to one of the independent variables. These relations have been registered in Table 4.1.

The relation with the variables was a result of the discussion held with the managers, but it was also copied from the studies employed. Therefore, it can be expected that the exploratory factor analysis will show factors with related items. The last four items from Business Communication Skill were added as they resulted from the interviews, which were conducted in the exploratory studies.

Referring to Interregional Business Collaboration, it was not expected that the actual business figures, such as profit and turn-over, would be of much interest since it would be difficult to compare these facts and figures between the SMEs. Besides that, probably not all of the SMEs would be willing to share their business figures. The entrepreneurs that had participated in the exploratory studies were asked for their opinions about measuring performance. Some of the entrepreneurs indicated that they would not be able to produce hard figures when filling in a questionnaire. Others indicated that they would refuse to give this kind of information. Three entrepreneurs answered that, although they would share these figures, extra information would be essential to understand them, such as information about investments.

Diamantopoulos and Kakkos (2007) described that the perceived outcome of Interregional Business Collaboration depends on the value that entrepreneurs attribute to business collaboration. If there is no real importance, the outcome will not really matter and an entrepreneur will make no real effort. This also means that there is no real ambition to improve or innovate. However, if an entrepreneur believes that Interregional Business Collaboration is extremely important, he or she will probably do everything in his or her power to ensure that it is successful. If it is unsuccessful, the entrepreneur will probably develop the necessary skills to be successful in the future or at least, he or she will have the ambition to develop his or her skills further.

If the outcomes of the short-term cross-border business collaboration matched the manager's expectations, then this was employed as a dependent variable, as described in Section 3.5. A one -year period was taken, but to be able to monitor a development, especially

when the Interregional Business Collaboration was in an initial phase, in which the initial costs might influence the financial outcome, three periods, 2009-2010-2011, were compared. This version of the questionnaire, with 43 items that are related to the independent variables and four to the dependent variable was discussed with a group of seven people, who were experienced in the making of surveys. This led to the final version of the survey with statements that are more clearly defined: 43 items related to the independent variable, 4 items related to the dependent variables and then the sequential order of the questions was set. A five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree-disagree-neutral-agree-strongly agree) has been used to indicate to what extent the respondents agree with the statement. The survey can be found in Appendix G.

Table 4.1   Statements used in the survey for acting entrepreneurs to measure Cultural Sensitivity, Business Communication Skill, Trust and Interregional Business Collaboration

Variable	Statement		Lit. source
Cultural Sensitivity	1	Not being able to do what you want	Johnson et al., 1996
	2	Difficult effort to become familiar with the foreign legal and economic environment	
	3	Show willingness to adapt to the another way of doing things	
	4	Know and understand the foreign partner's decision process	
	5	Appreciate the foreign partner's decision process	
	6	Managers speak or learn the language of the foreign partner	
	7	Foreign culture and way of doing business is unknown	
	8	Awareness of different norms for business communication	
	9	Knowledge not to press foreign partner	
	10	Sensitivity to the time it takes foreign partner to decide	
	11	Uneasiness when there is little work to do	Mirels & Garrett, 1971
	12	Hard work offers little guarantee of success	
	13	Hard work makes a good life	
	14	More leisure time is important	
	15	Money acquired easily is usual spent unwisely	
	16	Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusement.	
	17	People should have more leisure time to spend relaxing.	

Business communication skills	1	Flexibility with regard to business style	Alteren, 2007
	2	Being able to use a wide range of different ways of doing business.	
	3	Ability to switch to another style of negotiation	
	4	Testing out different ways of approaching new customers	
	5	Understanding how one customer differs from another	
	6	Using appropriate body language in oral communication	Maes and Icenogle, 1997
	7	Using appropriate tone of voice	
	8	Having a clear, understandable pronunciation	
	9	Responding as soon as possible to the customer's requests	Harich & Labahn, 1998
	10	Taking immediate steps when a customer has a complaint	
	11	Knowledge of how customers judge quality and service	
	12	Regular evaluation of customer's satisfaction	
	13	What language do you speak at home	Interviews
	14	What other languages do you speak	
	15	What business language/languages do you use	
	16	Level of mastery of the Dutch or German (elementary, intermediate, advanced, proficiency, (near) native)	
Trust	1	Foreign partner cares what happens to you	Johnson et al., 1996
	2	Foreign partner does his/her part in your alliance	
	3	Foreign partner is on your side	
	4	Foreign partner is capable and competent	
	5	Foreign partner looks out for your interests	
	6	Foreign partner is always frank and truthful	
	7	Foreign partner knows all about your alliance	
	8	Exchange of information happens frequently and informally	Chaisrakeo, 2004
	9	Communication of mutual expectations	
	10	Mutual information about relevant events or changes	
Interregional Business Collaboration	1	The cross-border trade is important	Diamantopoulos & Kakkos, 2007
	2	Cross-border trade of 2009 matched expectations	
	3	Cross-border trade of 2010 matched expectations	
	4	Cross-border trade of 2011 matched expectations	

In the discussion with these seven people, it was also discussed to which variable every statement referred to. The global outcome of this discussion can be found in Table 4.2 with the number of statements with every variable. Statistical analysis should show if this classification was correct.

Table 4.2   Number of statements with each variable

Variable	Number of statements
Cultural Sensitivity	17
Business Communication Skill	16
Trust	10
Interregional Business Collaboration	4
Total	47

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The influence of
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Sensitivity,
Business
Communication
Skill, and Trust
on Interregional
Business
Collaboration

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Two thousand entrepreneurs from Dutch Limburg (mainly from a database from Zuyd Hogeschool with numerous business partners and former students, who went into business), 1,600 from Belgian Limburg and 1,600 from the District of Aachen (mainly from databases from the Chambers of Commerce) were invited to participate in an online survey (Appendix H). The Internet was used to introduce the survey (by e-mail) and to gather the responses (by online survey), which showed the advantages and disadvantages (Lefever, Dal & Matthiasdóttir, 2007). Advantages could include: no time or location problem, the respondent can participate at his or her own convenience, and it is easy to send the answers. Disadvantages might include: respondents may not answer truthfully, the respondents could pose as someone else, and technical problems. The use of internet in research will be elaborated further in Chapter 5, where the process of e-Delphi is described, in which the internet and e-mail is also used to gather answers from respondents.

The personalized e-mail to introduce the survey was addressed to the firm and the manager (See Appendix I). One hundred and twenty-eight Dutch (Response rate: 6.4%), 153 Belgian (Response rate: 9.6%) and 125 German (Response rate: 7.8%) entrepreneurs responded. The overall response rate was 8.1%. This low percentage could indicate a selective non-response and that mostly entrepreneurs, who are successful in interregional collaboration, had answered. Looking at the bar charts of the four dependent variables including the values of Skewness, this impression of a non-selective response, seems to be supported (Figure 4.1).
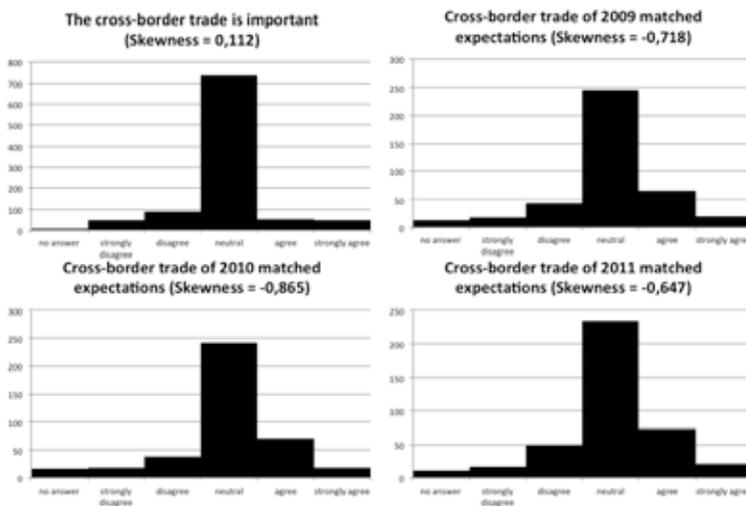
Figure 4.1   Distribution of the responses on the dependent variables and the value of skewness

Table 4.3 shows the most important features pertaining to the group of respondents. Numerical codes were added to be able to process these features in SPSS.
The difference between region and nationality was caused by several entrepreneurs, who had the Dutch nationality, but who lived and worked in Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen. On the other hand, there are not many entrepreneurs who possess the Belgian and German nationality who live and work in the Netherlands. SPSS 21.0 was used to compare the scores of the different regions. To calculate the contribution of each item to the independent and dependent variables the programs, AMOS was used and SmartPLS to execute Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Table 4.3: Features of the group of respondents (entrepreneurs) of the survey (percentages in italic)

	Code		Frequency	Percent
Region	1	Belgian Limburg	153	*37.7*
	2	District of Aachen	125	*30.8*
	3	Southern Limburg	128	*31.5*
		Total	*406*	*100.0*
Nationality	1	Belgian	123	*30.3*
	2	German	113	*27.8*
	3	Dutch	170	*41.9*
		Total	*406*	*100.0*
Gender	1	Male	321	*79.1*
	2	Female	82	*20.2*
	0	No response	3	*0.7*
		Total	*406*	*100*
Sector	1	Agriculture	4	*1*
	2	Chemical industry	7	*1.7*
	3	Construction	74	*18.2*
	4	Healthcare	13	*3.2*
	5	ICT	39	*9.6*
	6	Industry	37	*9.1*
	7	Marketing	20	*4.9*
	8	Retail	54	*13.3*
	9	Service	143	*35.2*
	0	No response	15	*3.7*
		Total	*406*	*100.0*
Age (on 1 June 2012)		<=25	18	*4,4*
		26<=35	37	*9,1*
		36<=45	76	*18,7*
		46<=55	98	*24,1*
		56<=65	45	*11,1*
		>65	2	*0,5*
		Missing	130	*32*
			406	*100*

4.2 Statistical test of the conceptual model

Statistical techniques have been used to discover whether evidence for all cause-effect relations can be found in the preliminary conceptual model. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed in SPSS to reduce the number of variables and to determine if the items were related to the independent variables. The factors discovered have been further examined by using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to find the significant correlations. For this purpose, SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende & Will 2005) is used. The following tests were performed with the data obtained to improve the conceptual model:

- The quality of the measurement model: Partial Least Square Regression (PLS-regression) using Structural Equation Modeling. PLS regression is used here to study how a set of independent variables predicts a set of dependent variables.
- The quality of the structural model: looking at the t-values (loadings) produced with SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) to study which factors have a significant influence on the dependent variables and which factors do not.
- The quality of each structural regression: using the convergent validity of each factor by looking if the variance-extracted value exceeds 0.1 (Band, Shah & Naidu, 2013).
- The Goodness-of-Fit: using the average communality of the independent variables and the R-square value of the dependent variable to see how well the model observed fits with the model expected and described.
- Normalized Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) are also used as a final check to determine how well the observed model meets the three constructed models (Figure 3.5, Figure 4.2 (after making an Exploratory Factor Analysis) and Figure 4.4 (after quality checks)).

After completing these tests the conceptual model was adjusted accordingly. This new conceptual model is compared with the original model from Chapter 3 (Figure 3.5) and conclusions were drawn about the influence of differences of Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity and Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration between the entrepreneurs acting in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

Section 4.7 describes the differences between the entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion by creating separate conceptual models for entrepreneurs in each area. The differences between the three models of Southern Limburg, Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen should indicate which factors are important for each area and which factors should be considered, when doing interregional business in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. In fact, the origin of the entrepreneur determines his or her profile, which is a combination of significant factors per region. The scores on these factors could predict the level of satisfaction on the outcome of Interregional Business Collaboration. Changing the scores, e.g. by including language courses or offering business support, could lead to a higher level of satisfaction. Chapter 5 will describe a practical outcome for the context of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

4.3   Analysis of the constructs

After completing the testing with the basic questionnaire, 47 items about Business Communication Skill and Cultural Sensitivity, supplemented with Trust were used to examine their influence on Interregional Business Collaboration. To discover the structure of these variables, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is performed, where varimax is used to perform rotation and discovered factors with Eigenvalues over 1. When items load on more than one factor, these items are excluded and crossed off in Table 4.4. Each factor received a label based on the items that were included. The outcome of the Exploratory Factor Analysis EFA shows 13 factors (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Summary of EFA results

Construct	KMO*	Factors	Cumulative variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor details	Cronbach's Alpha
Cultural Sensitivity (CS)	0.77	9	74.5%	0.68	CS1: Euregional focus (4 items)	0.948
					CS2: Foreign partner (2 items)	0.579
					CS3: Focus outside (2 items)	0.380
					CS4: Leisure time (3 items)	0.403
					CS5: Quality and service (2 items)	-0.312
					CS6: Investment (2 item)	0.469
					CS7: Hard work (1 item)	-
					CS8: Language partner (1 item)	-
					CS9: Business environment (2 items)	-0.079
Business Communication Skill (BCS)	0.83	3	60.8%	0.84	BCS1: Consumer orientation (6 items)	0.842
					BCS2: Negotiating style (4 items)	0.776
					BCS3: Personal skills (3 items)	0.708
Trust	0.91	1	54.5%	0.88	Trust1: Trust (8 items)	0.878

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy

As of now, the concepts Business Communication Skill and Cultural Sensitivity will be replaced by the factors found.

Appendix J1 and Appendix J2 show the factors, including the items, the factor loadings, the Path coefficients, and the outer weights. The outcome of the factor analysis shows that the items about the different subjects (Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity and Trust) are indeed clustered. The only exception is that items Trust 9 and Trust 10 appeared to be related to Business Communication Skill. Factor 1 (Trust) contains the statements that measure the extent to which an entrepreneur is convinced that the business partner is focused on the interests of both parties, and not only in his own interests. This is not a definition of trust, but a summary of the items that remained after EFA. Appendix K shows the correlation matrix as a final check, which confirms the outcome of the EFA.

Although a model with the factors discovered looks promising, the Cronbach's alpha for six factors was less than .7 (CS2 Foreign partner , CS3 Focus outside, CS4 Leisure time, CS5 Quality and service, CS6 Investment, and CS9 Business environment). This is one of the main problems with the Cronbach's alpha because the outcome does not only reflect the internal consistency, but it also depends strongly on the number of items (Sijtsma, 2009). The factors with the lower Cronbach's alpha have only two or three items. Factors CS7 Hard work and CS8 Language partner consist of only one item and therefore no value for Cronbach's alpha can be calculated. The quality of the model is checked to see which factor is significant for the model.

When the factors found are used in combination with Figure 3.5, the following model can be constructed (Figure 4.2):
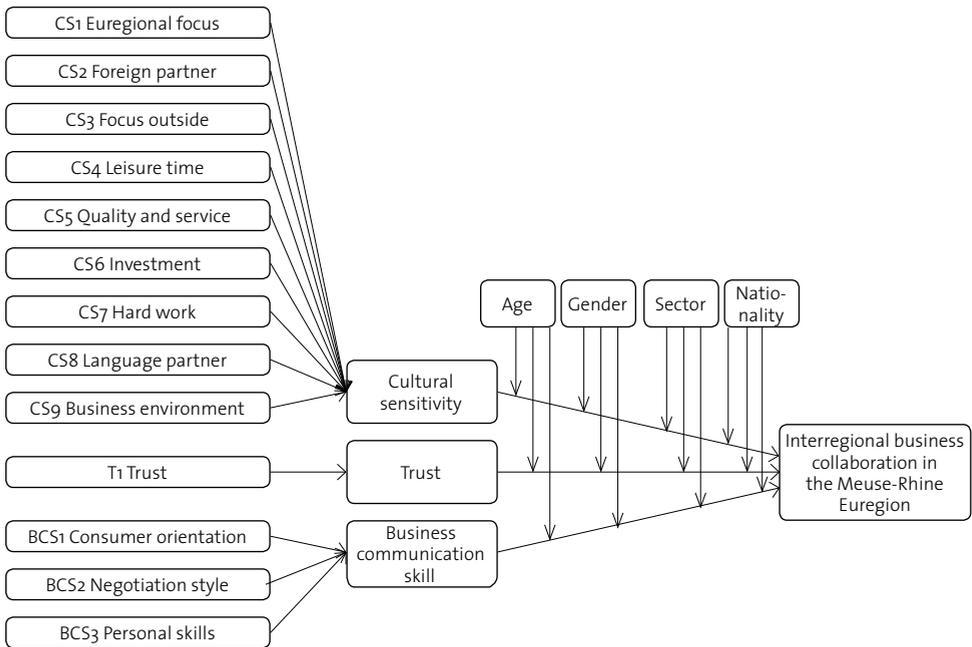
Figure 4.2 Preliminary conceptual model including the factors found

In Section 4.4 the model is checked with the included items. Factors BCS1 Consumer orientation, BCS2 Negotiating style and BCS3 Personal skills relate to and consist mainly of statements about Business Communication Skill. Factor BCS1 Consumer orientation looks at the way an entrepreneur deals with his customers, whether he or she is open to receiving remarks and willing to respond adequately. Factor BCS2 Negotiating style measures investigates whether an entrepreneur can use different and appropriate communication skills, such as the right tone of voice, pronunciation and body language. Factor BCS3 Personal skills deals with the ability of an entrepreneur to use different business and communication skills, as circumstances may require.

The items measuring the Factor BCS2 Negotiating style could be considered as the sub- skills of the Business Communication Skill as described as skilled behavior in the Performance theory (Herriot, 1971).

Factors CS1 Euregional focus, CS2 Foreign partner, CS3 Focus outside, CS4 Leisure time, CS5 Quality and service, CS6 Investment, CS7 Hard work, CS8 Language partner, and CS9 Business environment relate to and consist of statements about Cultural Sensitivity. In Factor CS1 Euregional focus, the international orientation within the context chosen is measured for the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Factor CS2 Foreign partner examines whether an entrepreneur is aware of the fact that the process of decision-making can differ with a foreign business partner, and whether or not he takes this into account. Factor CS3 Focus external looks at the international orientation outside the context chosen, namely the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Factor CS4 Leisure time is used to see if leisure time is important for an entrepreneur in relation to working time. CS5 Quality and service examines rewards as motivators for doing

The influence of
Cultural
Sensitivity,
Business
Communication
Skill, and Trust
on Interregional
Business
Collaboration

business, as these are mainly related to interregional business. Factor CS6 Investment looks at work ethics and diligence. Factor CS7 Hard work consists of the statement that hard work leads to success. Factor CS8 Language partner has only one statement as well. This statement is used to measure if the organization has an open mind regarding linguistic adaption to the foreign business partner. The underlying question was meant as a question regarding Cultural Sensitivity, but it could also be well understood as an aspect regarding Business Communication Skill. The final factor CS9 Business environment examines if the organization is willing and able to take the foreign cultural environment into account.

Factors CS4 Leisure time, CS6 Investment, and CS7 Hard work, are related to Hofstede's dimension of Indulgence versus Restraint. Both look at the relationship between leisure time and working time. Although the items used are different: Hofstede used the four statements, whereas the empirical research used the items from the literature review. Again, the sample used was different: students versus entrepreneurs. Because of the different way of research, a comparison cannot be made, but there is an indication that entrepreneurs and students have a similar attitude towards leisure time and working time.

4.4   Partial Least Square regression: empirical analysis of the model

The model that was constructed in Section 4.3 (Figure 4.2) is checked to determine whether it provides a valid representation of the data. It is also checked to see if the items regarding Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity and Trust are representative independent variables with items about Interregional Business Collaboration as a dependent variable. Partial Least Square regression is used to "obtain determinate values of the latent variables" (Chin,1998, p. 301). Hulland (1999) and White, Varadarajan, and Dacin (2003) suggest that the PLS model is analyzed and interpreted in two stages:
- the measurement or outer model is evaluated in terms of reliability and validity;
- the structural or inner model is assessed.
- Tenenhaus, Esposito Vinzi, Chatelin and Lauro (2005) suggest even three sets of criteria to validate a model:
- The quality of the measurement model;
- The quality of the structural model;
- The quality of each structural regression.

These three sets of criteria will be used with SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) to determine to what extent the preliminary conceptual model properly describes the influence of Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity, and Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. In this section, the data gathered regarding all of the entrepreneurs are used, which led to a general model of the significant influence of Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity, and Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Section 4.7 describes the adapted models for each of the three regions within the Meuse-Rhine Euregion separately.

The methodology of Band et al. (2013) is followed to arrive at a validation of the model from Figure 4.2. When testing the validation of the model, the focus is on the model with the independent and dependent variables only and not the intermediate variables, which will be studied in Section 4.5. These tests, on which the conclusions are constructed, can be found in Appendix E. After looking at all of the aspects regarding the quality of the model, it can be concluded that all of the criteria mentioned (quality of the measurement model: path coefficients should be over 0.1 and cross loadings should be over 0.4, the quality of the

structural model: t-values should be over 1.65 and the quality of each structural regression: the variance extracted value of the items of the independent variables should exceed 0.1) for having a good quality of the model are met, but they also led to the exclusion of certain factors.

Furthermore, the extra check with the Goodness-of-Fit test confirms that the newly constructed model might have a better fit regarding the gathered data than the original model that was constructed using the theory (Table 4.5). The calculated value for the Goodness of fit (0.345606) indicates that the model has an average acceptable predicative relevance (Wetzels, Odekerken-Schröder & Van Oppen, 2009). This new model includes only the statistical significant factors from the variables Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill. Significant factors from Cultural Sensitivity, which have an influence on the outcome of the dependent variable, can be found in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5   Measurement Model Results

Constructs/Factors	Loadings	t-value*
Cultural Sensitivity (CS)		
CS2: Focus outside	0.57	4.18
CS8: Language partner	0.67	9.28
CS9: Business environment	0.76	18.50
Business Communication Skill (BCS)		
BCS1: Consumer orientation	0.89	26.58
BCS2: Negotiating style	0.65	7.44
BCS3: Personal skill	0.65	5.93

Model fit indices: GOF=0.35; CFI=0.87; NFI=0.82; RMSEA=0.08
*All t-values are significant at p < 0.001

The quality checks indicate that the other, excluded factors could have no significant influence on the outcome of the dependent variable for the population representing the entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion; i.e. the excluded factors do not have a significant influence on the outcome of Interregional Business Collaboration.

4.5   Empirical analysis of the interaction effects

In the second step in which the conceptual model is checked to determine the impact of the moderating variables on the relations between the independent variables Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill and the dependent variable Interregional Business Collaboration is investigated These moderating variables are: nationality, gender, age, and sector. First, the initial path model PLS algorithm was constructed on the influence of Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill on Interregional Business Collaboration. The four moderating variables and the interaction effect were included. The outcome (Figure 4.3) shows several path coefficients that are lower than 0.1 (Lohmöller, 1989) or have a t-value less than 1.65. These moderating variables will be removed from the model and they have been excluded in Figure 4.3.

The influence of
Cultural
Sensitivity,
Business
Communication
Skill, and Trust
on Interregional
Business
Collaboration
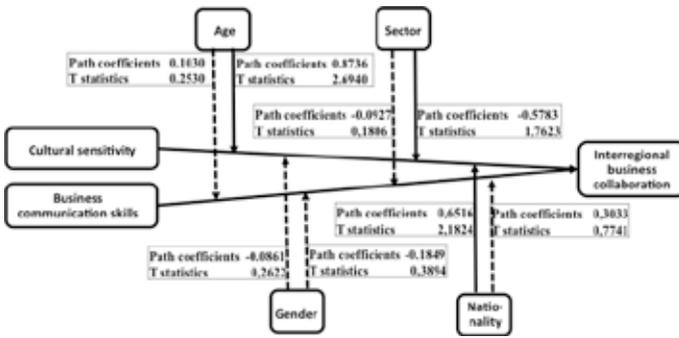
Figure 4.3 Initial Path Model including moderating variables (dotted lines indicate excluded variables)

Figure 4.3 shows that none of the moderating variables has a significant interaction effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration. The moderating variables of age, sector, and nationality were shown to have a significant effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. The interaction effect of nationality will be further elaborated on in Section 4.7, in which the three regions are compared. Apparently, gender has no significant effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, since both values of the T-statistics less than1.65 and one path coefficient less than 0.1.
 In the sectors, chemical industry and ICT, cultures are considered as being less different in the three regions of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion and therefore adjustment is considered as less necessary for being successful in Interregional Business Collaboration. In the sectors agriculture, construction, healthcare, marketing, retail and service, the differences are considered to be more present, since the sectors are considered to be more regional or nationally-oriented (sometimes due to regulations) and adjustment might be necessary in order to be more successful in Interregional Business Collaboration.
The moderating variable Age, the higher the influence of Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration. also has a significant influence on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. The higher the Age, Research shows that the age of entrepreneurs is increasing. In Australia and the United Kingdom almost one out of three entrepreneurs is older than 50 (Curran & Blackburn, 2001; Weber & Schaper, 2004). Between 2000 and 2006, one out of seven new enterprises in Finland was founded by entrepreneurs over 50 (Kautonen, 2008). Sala and Yalcin (2012) showed in their study the influence of experience based on the CEO's historical career as a motivator for internationalization. The model that can be constructed after the steps described differs from the original model (Figure 2.2) that was constructed after the literature review.

4.6 Constructing a new conceptual model

From the review of studies on Culture, Language and Interregional Collaboration in Chapter 3, a model was constructed (Figure 3.5). This model was tested during my empirical study with the entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) show that the conceptual model (Figure 4.2) contains several non-significant variables and relations. A new model has been constructed, in which the only significant items (BCS1 Consumer orientation, BCS2 Negotiating style, BCS3 Personal skills, CS2 Foreign partner, CS8 Language partner, CS9 Business environment-see Table 4.3), according to the quality check of the model using the found data, have been included (Figure 4.4).
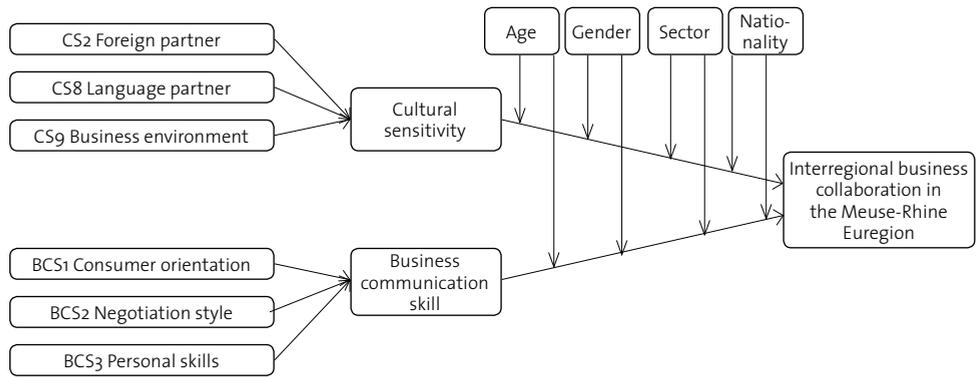
Figure 4.4 Adjusted conceptual model after Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Partial Least Square Regression (PLSR)

The most striking conclusion is the disappearance of the variable Trust, mentioned by all six experts in Section 2.1, because Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) showed that it has no significance in the results of Interregional Business Collaboration. Further research could help in finding more information, since differences were found between the qualitative research, in which Trust was mentioned to be of importance in Interregional Business Collaboration, and the literature review and the quantitative, empirical research, which showed no significant influence of Trust. In the following sections, an examination has been made to determine whether there are regional differences regarding the scores on the different significant factors including Trust.

In Chapter 3 (Figure 3.4) a conceptual model that had Trust as a mediator was also presented to examine whether Trust has an influence on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration and on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. Using the Process application from Hayes (2012) in SPSS, it showed that there was a significant indirect effect of Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration through Trust, b = 0.012, BCa CI [.0007, .0383]. This represents a relatively small effect $k2$ = .033, 95% BCa CI [.0032, .1053]. In conclusion, Trust appears to have a small positive effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. There was no significant indirect effect of Business Communication Skill on Interregional Business Collaboration through Trust, b = .005, BCa CI [-.0019, .0166].

Age, nationality and sector play a role in the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. Entrepreneurs, who are more satisfied with their interregional business performance and who are older, show a higher score regarding Cultural Sensitivity. This means that older entrepreneurs consider another culture as being different from their own culture. Younger entrepreneurs consider another culture as less different and therefore less adjustment is necessary to be more successful in Interregional Business Collaboration. The sectors chemical industry and ICT are more globally-oriented and their cultures are considered as being less different in the three regions of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. The sectors agriculture, construction, healthcare, marketing, retail, and service are more local and nationally-oriented (sometimes due to regulations) and therefore their cultures are considered to be more different in the three regions of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. The influence of nationality is a subject that is discussed in Section 4.7.

4.7 A comparison of entrepreneurs in the different areas of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion

Research Question 6C refers to the interaction effect of nationality. Nationality was chosen as variable and not regionality, since entrepreneurs with a certain nationality live in a region from another country. Therefore, nationality is chosen as indication, where an entrepreneur is raised. After the preliminary studies and the literature review, it remained unclear whether there are significant regional differences between entrepreneurs regarding Business Communication Skill, Cultural Sensitivity, and Trust. Although Sections 4.3 and 4.4 indicated that Trust does not play a significant role in the conceptual model for the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, it will be studied if this is also true for all the three areas separately. Therefore, it was decided to repeat the analysis including all of the items, including Trust.

4.7.1 Exploratory factor analysis

When Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on all of the data, 13 factors emerged (Table 4.3). Using the same techniques on entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, and by dividing them into three groups, with nationality as the distinguishing item, a number of factors were constructed for Belgian Limburg (BL), Southern Limburg (SL) and the District of Aachen (DA). Appendix L1 shows a complete overview showing which items have been included in the factors. The items mentioned correspond with the items in Table 3.5 and the questions found in the questionnaire in Appendix G. The complete data (ALL) were already used for the new conceptual model from Section 4.3 (Figure 4.2). Some factors from the complete data (all) have been divided into two factors for a specific region (Factors 4, 6, 8, and 13). The complete table with the factor loadings (path coefficients, outer weights, and t-statistics) can be found in Appendix L2.

Although Appendix L1 shows some differences between the items that construct the variable Trust, in general this variable is similar for all regions. It is clear that there are no real differences in the way an entrepreneur is aware of the customer's needs (Factor 3: BCS1 Consumer orientation). Factor BCS2 Negotiating style (Factor 4), referring to the use of communication skills with regard to business style, appears to be similar for entrepreneurs in all three areas. Factor 7: BCS3 Personal skills, which concerns communication skills, shows more differences. In the region of Southern Limburg, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) does not produce a factor with a factor loading >.35 and in the region District of Aachen, an additional item had to be included to construct this factor. It appears that only in the region Belgian Limburg the proper body language is used, the right pronunciation and the exact tone of voice have factor loadings >.35 for the outcome of Interregional Business Collaboration. In the following section the significance of these techniques will be shown. Within Cultural Sensitivity there are factors that are similar across the three regions (Factor CS1 Euregional focus, CS3 Focus outside, and CS4 Leisure time) and factors that are very different over the three regions (Factor CS2 Foreign partner, CS5 Quality and service, CS6 Investment, CS7 Hard work, CS8 Language partner, and CS9 Business environment). The Factor T1 Trust is also similar over the three regions. After having examined the outer loadings, the path coefficients and the t-statistics of the factors in the regional models conclusions can be drawn about the differences between the regions.

4.7.2 Creating better fitting models for the three regions

From Section 4.7.1, in which the results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for the three regions were compared, it can be concluded that the Factors BCS 1 Consumer orientation

The influence of
Cultural
Sensitivity,
Business
Communication
Skill, and Trust
on Interregional
Business
Collaboration

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The influence of
Cultural
Sensitivity,
Business
Communication
Skill, and Trust
on Interregional
Business
Collaboration

and BCS 2 Negotiating style are very similar for the three regions, but that BCS 3 is different. For Cultural Sensitivity, the Factors CS 1 Euregional focus, CS 3 Focus outside and to a lesser extent CS4 Leisure time are similar, but the rest of these factors show alternative input of items for the regions. Trust is once again similar for the three regions. The constructed factors that were adjusted have been used through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) from Section 4.3 so as to make a clear comparison between the regions. Appendix L2 shows the initial path models for each of the three regions.

To compare the regions several statistical techniques are used. The output of ANOVA and the independent sample t-test can be found in Appendix M. As a result of the outer loadings, the path coefficients and the t-statistics of the variables Trust and Business Communication Skill will be removed from the model for Belgian Limburg. From the variable Cultural Sensitivity, the items CS1 Euregional focus, CS3A and CS3B Focus outside will also be removed. This leaves us with the items CS4A and CS4B (Leisure time), CS6 (Investment), CS8 (Language partner) and 9A and 9B (Business environment) that are items that have significant influence for entrepreneurs in Belgian Limburg on the outcomes of Interregional Business Collaboration. For the District of Aachen, Trust will be removed from the model as a result of the outer loadings, the path coefficients and the t-statistics. The items CS1 Euregional focus, CS3A, CS3B and CS3C Focus outside, CS4A Leisure time, CS5 Quality and service, and BCS3 Personal skills will also be removed. This leaves us with the items CS2 Foreign partner, CS4B Leisure time-hard work pays off, CS8 (Language partner) and CS9 (Business environment) and the items BCS1 Consumer orientation, BCS2A and BCS2B Negotiating style.

For Southern Limburg Trust, CS1 Euregional focus, CS2 Foreign partner, CS3A, and CS3B Focus outside will be removed from the model because of the outer loadings, the path coefficients and the t-statistics. The items CS4 Leisure time, CS6 Investment, and CS7 Hard work, BCS1 Consumer orientation, BCS2A and BCS2B Negotiating style and BCS3 Personal skills will not be removed. Figure 4.5 shows the three models with the factors for each area. The non-significant factors have been shaded.

Belgian Limburg
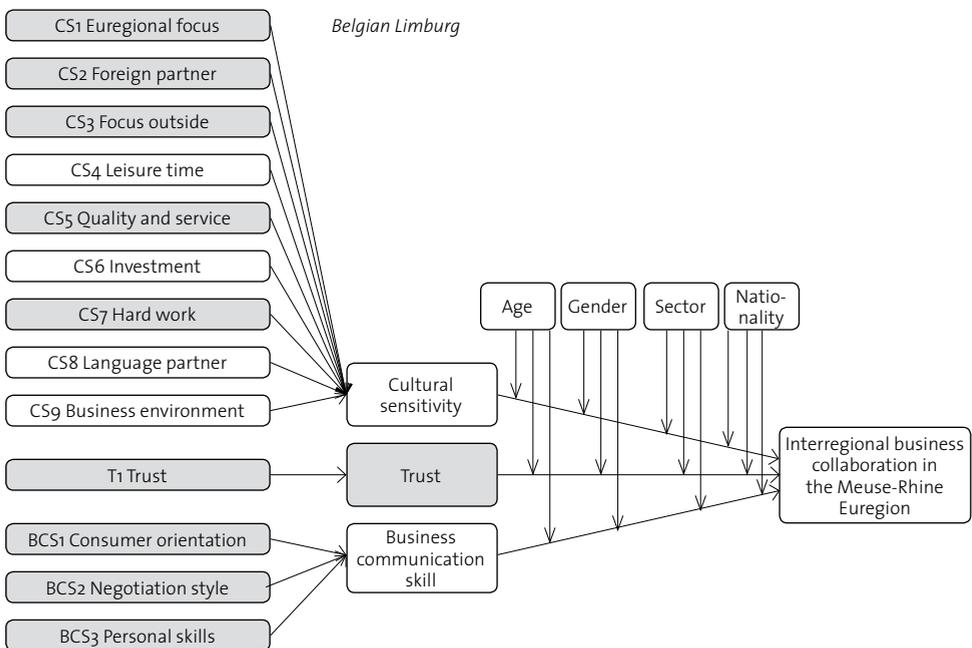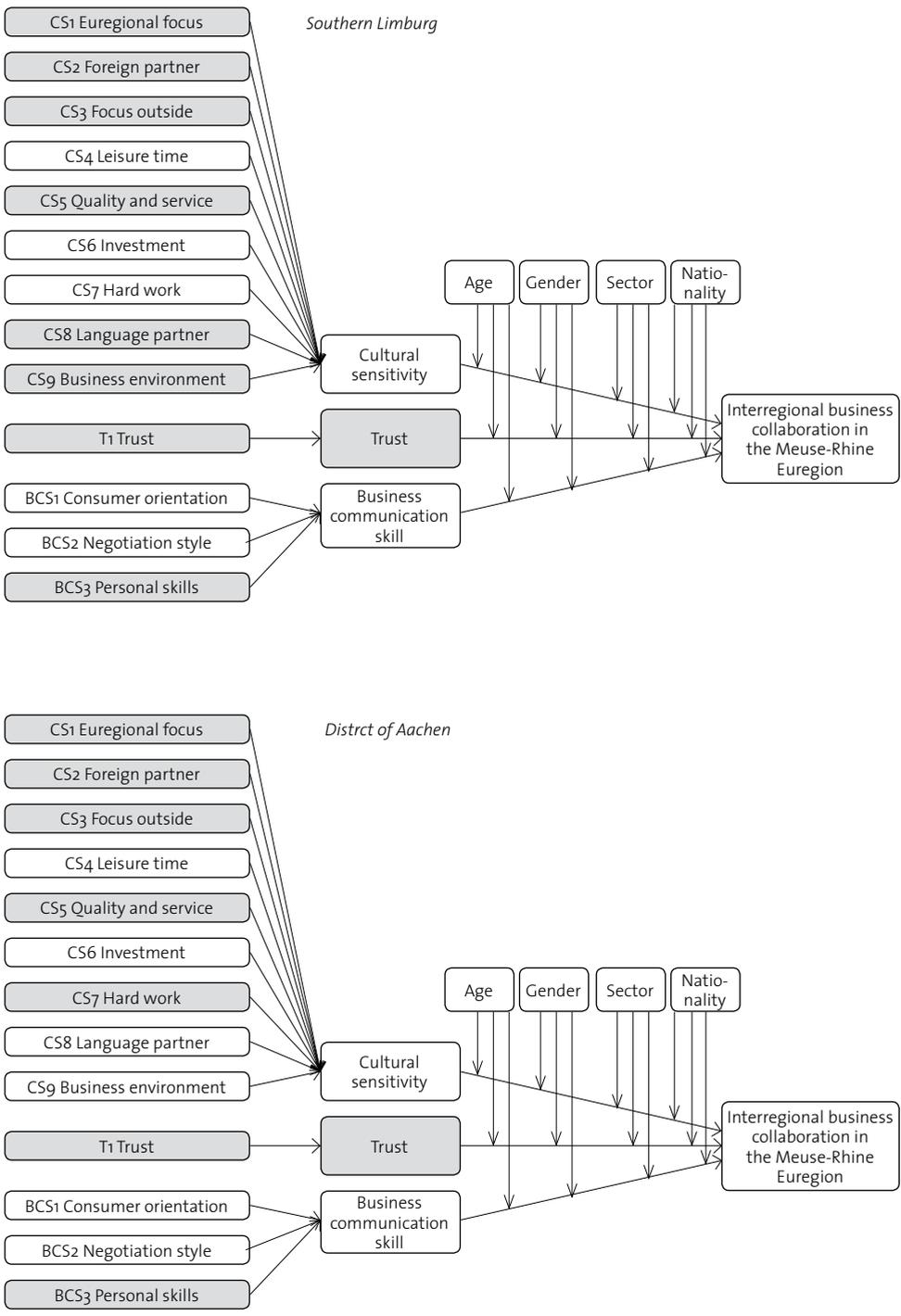
Figure 4.5 The factors for each area in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion (those factors and variables which have not been included have been shaded)

To sum up, it appears that Trust does not significantly influence whether business collaboration between regions is successful as had already been discussed in Sections 4.3 and 4.4. What is even more striking is the fact that for the region Belgian Limburg, the factors for Business Communication Skill have been excluded from the model. In all three regions, a combination of the Factors CS4 leisure time and CS6 investment is visible. These factors can be compared to the dimension, Indulgence versus Restraint, from Hofstede, the only dimension that showed a significant difference between the three regions. Since the factors CS4 and CS6 are constructed differently for each region (Appendix L1), a real comparison about the nature of the factors might be difficult to make. To be able to make a valid comparison further research would be necessary. Using the data for the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, a pairwise executed Mann-Whitney U test shows the following outcome:

Table 4.6: Statistical comparison of the scores of Belgium Limburg (BL), the District of Aachen (DA) and Southern Limburg (SL) on Indulgence versus Restraint:

	Test Statistics BL-DA		Test Statistics BL-SL		Test Statistics DA-SL	
	CS4	CS6	CS4	CS6	CS4	CS6
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000**	0.18	.001**	.442	.121	.068

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Table 4.6 indicates that there appear to be no significant differences between Southern Limburg and the District of Aachen concerning both factors and between Southern Limburg and Belgian Limburg in regard to Factor CS6. Therefore, it appears that entrepreneurs show a different attitude towards leisure time than students do (Section 2.2). When this is compared to the outcome that Gerritsen (2014) found regarding live to work versus work to live, which was combined with the dimension of masculinity, the entrepreneurs of Southern Limburg and Belgian Limburg appeared to respond only somewhat differently than the Dutch and the Flemish. This was also in keeping with how the students from Preparatory Study 2 responded (see Section 2.2). Although the view regarding leisure time is different (entrepreneurs from Southern Limburg prefer not to work in their free time), the view regarding investment is not significantly different (entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion are willing to give up their free time if this is essential for business).

Gerritsen (2014) found seven out of eleven cultural differences that are of influence on the collaboration between Belgian and Dutch entrepreneurs (see Section 3.3): power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, particularism, diffusity, polychromic, and preferring to have more personal space, in keeping with the field of proxemics. These seven cultural differences seemed to disturb communication between the Flemish and the Dutch.

Since the empirical study did not show many cultural differences (see Figure 4.5), no real communication problems might be expected, particularly since Belgian Limburg showed no difficulties regarding Business Communication Skill.

4.8 Summary and conclusions

The literature study provided insight into learning which variables might be important for Interregional Business Collaboration. Nine research questions (Section 3.7) were constructed. The exploratory study and literature provided us with three independent variables and the necessary statements to measure them. After gathering data in a geographically-limited area, the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, where the validity of the conceptual model was tested, statements were transformed into thirteen factors using Exploratory Factor Analysis. Three factors referred to Business Communication Skill, nine referred to Cultural Sensitivity and

one to Trust. With the addition of the moderating variables of age, gender, nationality and sector, SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) was used to develop an adjusted conceptual model.

In response to Research Question 1 ('to what extent does Cultural Sensitivity influence Interregional Business Collaboration?') it was found that the following factors regarding Cultural Sensitivity are experienced to have a positive influence on Interregional Business Collaboration:

- CS2 Foreign partner: knowing how a foreign partner responds and makes decisions, and what a foreign business partner intentions are
- CS8 Language partner: ability to speak foreign languages or willingness to learn
- CS 9 Business environment: knowing about the business environment regarding legal, business and cultural aspects.

In response to Research Question 2 ('to what extent does Business Communication Skill influence Interregional Business Collaboration?') it was found that the following factors regarding Business Communication Skill have an influence on Interregional Business Collaboration:

- BCS1 Consumer orientation: knowing what the customer needs and responding adequately
- BCS2 Negotiating style: flexibility using the appropriate communication skills and style
- BCS3 Personal skills: using appropriate communication skills, such as body language and pronunciation

In response to Research Question 3 ('to what extent does Trust influence Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is no significant influence of Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research Question 4 ('to what extent does Trust have an interaction effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is a relatively small positive effect. If Trust exists there is a small extra significant statistical positive influence of Business Communication Skill on Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research Question 5 ('to what extent does Trust have an interaction effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is no significant effect.

In response to Research Question 6a ('To what extent does age have an interaction effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration or on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is a statistical significant positive effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration and there is no statistical significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research Question 6b ('To what extent does sector have an interaction effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration or on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is a negative effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. To be able to draw conclusions about sectors, sectors were coded as follows (See Table 4.3: 1 Agriculture, 2 Chemical industry, 3 Construction, 4 Healthcare, 5 ICT, 6 Industry, 7 Marketing, 8 Retail, 9 Service). With sectors with a lower code Cultural Sensitivity seem to have a more positive effect on Interregional

The influence of
Cultural
Sensitivity,
Business
Communication
Skill, and Trust
on Interregional
Business
Collaboration

Business Collaboration that sectors with a higher code. Except for Agriculture, sectors with a lower code are more interregional oriented. There appears to be no statistical significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research Question 6c ('To what extent does nationality have an interaction effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration or on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is a positive effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. Nationality was coded: 1 Belgian, 2 German, and 3 Dutch. A higher code indicates a small extra significant statistical positive influence of Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration. There appears to be no statistical significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research Question 6d ('To what extent does gender have an interaction effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration or on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is no statistical significant effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration and that there is no statistical significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration.

This leads to the following conceptual model (Figure 4.6):
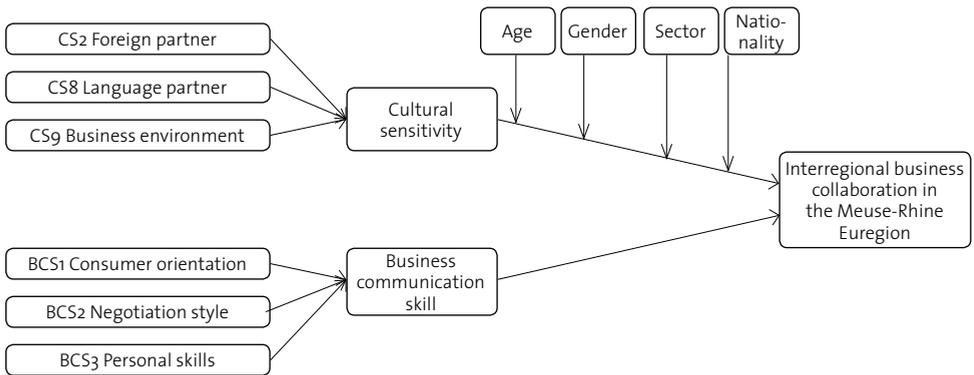
Figure 4.6　Conceptual model representing the influence of Business Communication Skill and Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration

It should also be determined whether there are differences between the District of Aachen, Belgian Limburg and Southern Limburg. For this purpose, the basic model was used (Figure 2.2) and the data was sorted according to the variable nationality.
Nationalities that were considered are: Belgian as representatives of Belgian Limburg (BL), Dutch as representatives of Southern Limburg (SL), and German as representatives of the District of Aachen (DA). The data shows that there are indeed different factors for each of the nationalities. This means that an entrepreneur from one area should bear in mind that these differences exist and that he or she needs to be prepared when he or she wishes to do interregional business with entrepreneurs from another specific area.

The following factors are included in the model for the particular region mentioned:
- CS2 Foreign partner: District of Aachen
- CS4 Leisure time: District of Aachen + Belgian Limburg + Southern Limburg
- CS6 Investments: Belgian Limburg + Southern Limburg
- CS7 Hard work: Southern Limburg
- CS8 Language partner: Belgian Limburg + District of Aachen
- CS9 Business environment: Belgian Limburg + District of Aachen

Factor CS4 Leisure time is a common factor for all regions. Using one-way ANOVA it can be concluded that there are statistical significant differences between the mean outcomes of factor CS4 of the three regions and that the outcomes of Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen are comparable. The outcome of Southern Limburg, however, shows a statistical significant lower value. It can be concluded that entrepreneurs in Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen value leisure time more and have a stricter separation between leisure time and working time than entrepreneurs in Southern Limburg.
CS6 Investments is a factor included in the models for both Belgian Limburg and Southern Limburg. An independent sample t-test shows that there is no reason to expect differences in the attitude towards receiving rewards.

Both CS8 Language partner and CS9 Business environment are included in the models for Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen. An independent sample t-test shows that there are no differences in the ideas attitudes regarding speaking foreign languages or the willingness to learn a foreign language. The mean and the standard deviation indicate that language is of limited importance for all respondents. However, the test shows that for CS9 Business environment there are no differences between entrepreneurs from Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen. The entrepreneur from Belgian Limburg values CS9 Business environment as a factor of influence on the success of Interregional Business Collaboration more than the entrepreneur from the District of Aachen, however, with a mean of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 1.0, the impression was given that, according to the entrepreneurs, this awareness is easy to achieve.

When the models including the factors that the two regions have in common are compared, the Factors BCS1 Consumer orientation and BCS2 Negotiating style can contribute towards the outcome of Interregional Business Collaboration. It appears that the independent sample t-test shows that there are no differences between District of Aachen and SL regarding BCS1 Consumer orientation, but there are differences in the BCS2 Negotiating style. The outcome of Southern Limburg is higher, meaning that flexibility is more important for entrepreneurs in Southern Limburg. An entrepreneur in the District of Aachen is not as flexible, and it can be expected that he does not appreciate too much flexibility from his business relation.

An interaction effect of sector on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration can be observed (Research Question 6b). For some sectors it is easier to communicate than for other sectors. It is the common language that is of importance. In the sectors chemical industries and ICT English is a lingua franca and in the sector Construction, dialect is used more. However, linguistic difficulties in the sectors healthcare, marketing, retail, service and agriculture can be found. Age has an interaction effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. When gender is taken into account, no moderating effect appears to occur.

The influence of
Cultural
Sensitivity,
Business
Communication
Skill, and Trust
on Interregional
Business
Collaboration

Discussion on
implications for policy

Chapter 4 elucidated how the factors CS2 Foreign partner, CS8 Language partner, CS9 Business environment, BCS1 Consumer orientation, BCS2 Negotiating style, and BCS3 Personal skills have a significant influence on Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse Rhine Euregion. The answers to the Research Questions 1 and 2 ('to what extent do Business Communication Skill and Cultural Sensitivity influence Interregional Business Collaboration?') could contribute to the policy development involving the various stakeholders.

In order to generate valuable policy advice for those entrepreneurs and managers who are involved in business, education and policy within the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, one of the Delphi methods was adopted. For this purpose, an initial questionnaire had to be developed in order to start the process before approaching the experts.

5.1   Methodology

Three types of Delphi methods can be distinguished (Linstone & Turoff, 1975): classical Delphi, decision-making Delphi, and policy Delphi. A common definition for the policy Delphi method outlines three important components: (a) taking a sample of topic-specific experts, (b) polling the expert opinions through the administration of sequential questionnaires, and (c) summarizing and reporting feedback and comments by the panel data from each questionnaire (Delbecq, Van de Ven & Gustafson, 1975). A sample of topic-specific experts was chosen, which means that the managers who occupied strategic positions in business , education and policy have been included, because it is important to know their opinion, but also their help is important to develop Interregional Business Collaboration.

Sometimes ICT is included in the Delphi research: Mamaqi, Miguel and Olave (2010) performed e-Delphi in a two-round iteration. Cole, Donohoe and Stellefson (2013) also used the Internet for their version of Delphi research. They indicated that this e-Delphi research is novel and has not yet been well, however, they provided techniques to avoid pitfalls. Luxemburg, Ulijn and Amare (2002) compared the cultural and communicative effects of face-to-face communication, including telephoning, with computer-mediated communication, such as video conferencing, document sharing, e-mail messages, news groups, and net casting. The contributions that were made by the ICT staff in their case in co-makership with clients Cole et al. (2013) revealed that:
- it is easy to share information
- it is easy to interact
- no problems regarding distance exist
- communication can be faster and less time-consuming.

They also found that there were opportunities for improvement, and as a consequence most of the initial problems experienced earlier when using e-Delphi have been solved over the years, such as the improved Internet standards and better communication tools such as video conferencing. The aspect of trust and directness of feedback still remains a major point for improvement. Figure 5.1 shows the media richness of the different means of communication. The means with a higher richness are better for improving trust and directness of feedback than the means with a lower richness.
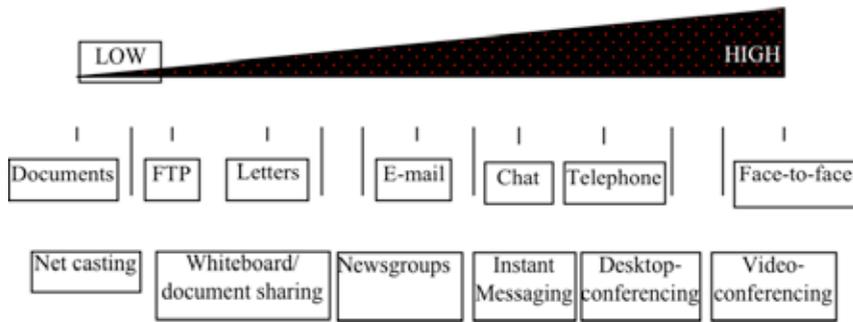
Figure 5.1   Media richness on a qualitative scale (Luxemburg et al., 2002)

Donohoe, Stellefson and Tennant (2012) analyzed the advantages and limitations of the e-Delphi technique in comparison to the traditional Delphi technique. Table 5.1 shows the e-Delphi limitations and the mitigation measures. They indicated that it could not be expected for all entrepreneurs to have access to the Internet, or to work with a browser program that can open a questionnaire as it was constructed. When working with e-Delphi, one loses control due to the respondent working independently. He or she cannot be guided, instructed, or helped.

Table 5.1   e-Delphi limitations and mitigation measures (Donohoe et al., 2012)

Limitations	Mitigation Measures
Internet Access and Technology	Make traditional pen-and-paper surveys available to those without access or to those who are experiencing difficulties
	Maintain copies of all documents, data, and reports in case of hardware failure
	Offer financial assistance to those without access or without reliable access (cost to use Internet service at library, café or other)
	Select an established Internet-based survey provider (consult the literature for guidance) with help features for survey designers and respondents
	Download guides and use 'real-time chat' to be effective
	Provide clear instructions to participants and consider developing a 'frequently asked questions' or 'how-to guide'
	Provide technical support through a variety of media (e.g., email, phone, Skype) for the duration of the exercise
	Pilot test all communications and surveys to avoid interpretation and technological difficulties, then test again
Experimental Control	Identify known or possible distractions and time administration threats accordingly. E.g. avoid vacation periods, major conferences, or 'high-season' times
	Invest in strategies to avoid misrepresentation
	Create a screening tool to capture and winnow out the most appropriate experts for the study
	Corroborate self-identified experts through membership organizations, academic or professional institutions, publications, etc.
	Ensure secure survey access (unique passwords and hyperlinks)

Table 5.2 shows the limitations of the traditional Delphi technique and the possible solutions that e-Delphi could offer. The questionnaire and the accompanying information had to be designed very carefully because once the questionnaire was sent, control would be lost and assistance to the respondent could not be offered should anything be unclear (design sensitivity and recruitment). Therefore, entrepreneurs were chosen and were offered the opportunity to contact me should anything be unclear. The questionnaire was sent in February, when no special events were expected to happen, and entrepreneurs had a week to respond (time commitment). The major concern was that they were people who had only limited time to spare. Therefore, information had to be obtained in a manner that did not consume too much of their time. Furthermore, there had to be a guarantee that the Delphi research would be anonymous (Mckenna, 1994). This was in keeping with the way Gordon and Pease (2006) and Cole et al. (2013) had performed their Delphi research, by sending everyone an individual e-mail message, and so this condition was met.

Apart from the fact that e-Delphi guarantees anonymity, another main advantage is that a larger number of experts can be reached without geographical limitations. In the study performed by Jobst, Kirchberger, Cieza, Stucki and Stucki (2013), 76 experts participated from 44 countries. Donohoe et al. (2012) described the advantages and the limitations of the e-Delphi technique. The advantages included the following: convenience (it is easy for the researcher and the participants to gain access to the research setting), time and cost saving (it is easy and inexpensive to communicate through e-mail; there are no geographic limitations), and data management (it is easy to store the data since it is presented electronically). The disadvantages mainly concentrate on access, which is decreasing in importance since the Internet is becoming more and more common (de Kunder, 2013), and in control (false representation, lack of verbal interaction, and participant distractions; Donohoe et al., 2012, p. 42). Because the experts were asked to reflect not only on their own sphere of action, but also on the sphere of action of the other experts, anonymity was essential.

Table 5.2   Traditional Delphi Limitations and e-Delphi Recommendations (Donohoe et al., 2012)

Limitations	Recommendations
Design Sensitivity	Critically assess the advantages and limitations of Internet-based tools before making design decisions
	Consult Delphi and Internet-based research literature for guidance
Recruitment	Make use of Internet-based databases and communications to identify and recruit potential participants
	Establish firm timelines and make them clear to potential participants
	Establish a research portal to share information in order to legitimize the Delphi study
Time Commitment	Use an Internet-based survey platform to reduce the time required for postal surveys and communications
	Set firm deadlines, provide deadline reminders and adhere to them
	Consider investing in Internet-based survey platform upgrades to enable advanced information sharing
	Make use of Internet-based survey platform data processing tools such as response tracking and statistical reporting
Attrition	Select participants with a great interest in the research problem and/or results
	Inform participants of the process and goals at the outset
	Invest in transparency – share information and results on research web portal
	Maintain communication with the participants throughout by assigning exercises and providing regular timeline reminders
	Monitor attrition through an Internet-based survey platform
Consensus	Different rules of thumb are considered equally valid – consult the literature for guidance (standard deviation is commonly used to access consensus)
	Construct Internet-based survey tool to include a consensus monitoring function
	Lack of consensus must be considered a valuable finding

As a conclusion, there were several advantages to opting for the e-Delphi technique, although there was also a major disadvantage. If the e-Delphi technique is used, then there is no opportunity to ask for feedback concerning the outcome. Despite this disadvantage, the e-Delphi technique has been chosen in order to perform the Delphi research. An overview of the stages chosen with the combination of Delphi and e-Delphi research is presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3   Four stages of the combined e-Delphi and Delphi technique

Stage	Technique	Outcome	Target group
1: Choosing most important aspects	e-Delphi	The factors an entrepreneur should develop first	Acting entrepreneurs
2: Choosing most important aspects	e-Delphi	The managers of business, education and policy that can help	Acting entrepreneurs
3: Developing support	Delphi + e-Delphi	The assistance that other managers of business, education and policy could offer	Managers of business, education and policy
4: Asking for agreement	Delphi + e-Delphi	The assistance that managers of business, education and policy could offer themselves	Managers of business, education and policy

In the survey in Chapter 4, entrepreneurs were invited to share their e-mail addresses, if they had decided that they would like to participate in a subsequent study. One hundred and thirty-nine Entrepreneurs filled in their e-mail addresses and in the first stage of the e-Delphi

research these entrepreneurs received an e-mail message, in which they were asked to respond to the significant factors found in Section 4.4. The entrepreneurs were asked which three factors in the empirical study they found to be the most important in Interregional Business Collaboration.

No regional distinction was made when sending the e-mail and thirty-eight entrepreneurs (27%) shared their opinions. After sorting out which three factors were considered to be the most urgent, the thirty-eight entrepreneurs were asked to indicate, which one of the following people or organizations was best equipped to help an entrepreneur improve this aspect:

- An entrepreneur him/herself or an organization itself
- Business managers (e.g. Chamber of Commerce)
- Education
- Policy

In Stage 2, the three most urgent aspects for development emerged, and these were used as the starting point for the third stage. All results can be found in Section 5.3.

In the third stage of the Delphi research, another group of experts was involved. This group consisted of managers from business, education, and policy, because these institutions are necessary in order to help an entrepreneur to become more successful in Interregional Business Collaboration. All of the managers received the three statements that had been chosen in Stage 2, and they were asked to indicate how business, education, and policy could offer support to help entrepreneurs to develop these aspects. In Stage 4, the results from Stage 3 were presented and the managers were asked if they agreed with the outcome and how they thought that support should be operationalized.

Tables 5.4 and 5.5 show the experts who have participated in Delphi research. The experts from Section 2.1 and the entrepreneurs from Section 2.3 are not included in this Delphi research. The Delphi research was build up in four process stages with two separate groups of experts (see Table 5.4). In the empirical study, the entrepreneurs were asked for their e-mail addresses if they should decided to participate in further research. Table 5.5 provides a more detailed overview of the managers in Stages 3 and 4.

Table 5.4   Experts in the four stages of the process of the Delphi research

Stage	Experts	
1	139 entrepreneurs from the empirical study (Chapter 4)	
2	38 entrepreneurs from stage 1	
3	32 managers of business, policy and education:	9 managers of business as the most important category of interregional business
		13 managers in education as the trainers of future business managers in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion
		10 managers of policy as the facilitators of effective interregional business
4	32 managers of business, education, and policy (from stage 3)	

In Stages 1 and 2, the experts are entrepreneurs from the empirical study who indicated that they wished to participate in sequential research. Only 38 of the original 139 entrepreneurs in Stage 1 were willing to participate in Stage 2. The reasons that were mentioned were lack of time (45) and changing their positions inside or outside the original firm (25). Seventeen entrepreneurs simply did not respond in the second stage.

Table 5.5   Segmentation of the business, education, and policy managers of Stage 3 and 4

	Function	Netherlands	Belgium	Germany	Total
Business	Manager Chamber of Commerce	2	3	2	7
	Director Chamber of Commerce	-	-	1	1
	Manager of Employers' Union	1	-	-	1
Subtotal		3 *(23%)*	3 *(33%)*	3 *(30%)*	9 *(28%)*
Education	Manager of Junior Vocational Education	2	-	-	2
	Manager Higher Vocational Education	2	2	1	5
	Manager University	-	2	2	4
	Rector University	1	-	1	2
Subtotal		5 *(38.5%)*	4 *(44%)*	4 *(40%)*	13 *(41%)*
Policy	Councilmen and councilwomen of Maastricht and Heerlen	2	-	-	2
	Representatives of Provincial Policy	2	2	3	7
	Minister of Social Services and Employment	-	-	1	1
Subtotal		5 *(38.5%)*	2 *(22%)*	3 *(30%)*	10 *(31%)*
Total		13 *(100%)*	9 *(100%)*	10 *(100%)*	32 *(100%)*

The intention was to choose three managers from each sector of business, education, and policy from the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. As a result, 27 managers' opinions would be received. The Chamber of Commerce in Germany (Aachen), in the Netherlands (Venlo) and in Belgium (Hasselt), the universities in Aachen, Hasselt and Maastricht, the universities of applied sciences in Aachen, Hasselt, Heerlen and Eindhoven, the local government in Aachen, Hasselt, Genk (Belgium), Heerlen (the Netherlands) and Maastricht, and the provincial government in Hasselt, Maastricht and Düsseldorf (Germany) were contacted. Unfortunately, the request posed to the Belgian government was the only request that did not result in the desired minimum of three managers.

In Stage 1, entrepreneurs were confronted with the outcomes of the empirical study (See Appendix N). The factors offered were meant to:
- Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region (an aspect of Cultural Sensitivity).
- Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions regionally (an aspect of Cultural Sensitivity).
- Speak the foreign language or being willing to learn (an aspect of Cultural Sensitivity).
- Take the wishes of the customer into account (an aspect of Business Communication Skill).
- Be flexible about the way the organization communicates with the foreign business partner (an aspect of Business Communication Skill).
- Develop communication skills (such as body language and presentation techniques; an aspect of Business Communication Skill).

They were asked to indicate which factors are more important for Interregional Business Collaboration. In Stage 2, the entrepreneurs were asked to indicate which sector of business, education, and policy they believed to be best suited for helping the entrepreneurs to develop the factors chosen.

In Stage 3, the managers were asked to indicate how the managers in the other sectors could help entrepreneurs in the field of the factors chosen. In Stage 4, the managers from all three sectors of business, education, and policy were confronted with the views of the other two sectors, and they were asked if they could indicate whether they agreed with these ideas.

In Stages 1 and 2 multiple-choice questions were used; in Stages 3 and 4, which were introduced with a letter in which the recipients were invited to send their responses (Appendix N), open questions were used.

Chapter 4 identified six factors that have a significant influence on the outcome of regional business performance. To be able to validate and valorize the outcome, the factors were presented to experts in the field of entrepreneurship by using the Delphi technique, in a combination of traditional Delphi and e-Delphi.

5.2 The results of the Delphi research

Entrepreneurs were asked to indicate which three aspects, as mentioned in Section 5.2, should be developed first, since it would be difficult for an entrepreneur to develop all of them at once. They chose as follows (Table 5.6):

Table 5.6 Percentage of choices for the aspects that should be developed to be successful in interregional business

Aspect	Percentage of choices
1 Create affinity with the cultural situation	64.1
2 Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions	53.8
3 Speak the foreign language or being willing to learn	51.3
4 Take the wishes of the customer into account	41.0
5 Be flexible regarding the way the organization communicates	23.1
6 Develop communication skills	20.5

As a result of the choices made regarding the three most important factors from Survey 1, Aspect 1 (Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region; an aspect of Cultural Sensitivity), Aspect 2 (Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions; an aspect of Cultural Sensitivity) and Aspect 3 (Speaking the foreign language or being willing to learn; an aspect of both Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill) appear to be the main aspects an entrepreneur needs to develop in the order given. No differences in opinions were observed between the entrepreneurs of the various sectors.

Afterwards, an entrepreneur was asked to indicate which person or organization was best suited to perform assistance in developing the three factors. The entrepreneur could choose between an entrepreneur himself/organization itself, and other entrepreneurs or supporting organizations (e.g. Chamber of Commerce), such as education, and policy. Table 5.7 shows the number of entrepreneurs that indicated which person or organization would be best suited to support an entrepreneur in developing this factor. Thirty-five entrepreneurs answered this question out of the thirty-eight that were asked (90%).

Table 5.7   Number of entrepreneurs who chose a person or organization to be best suited to support an entrepreneur in developing Aspects 1, 2 and 3 in order to be best equipped to perform Interregional Business Collaboration. (Highest scores in bold, percentages in italic)

	Aspect 1: Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region	Aspect 2: Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions	Aspect 3: Speaking the foreign language or being willing to learn
An entrepreneur himself/organization itself	5 *14.3*	9 *25.7*	7 *20.0*
Other entrepreneurs or business supporting organizations	**15** *42.9*	**22** *62.9*	1 *2.9*
Education	0	1 *2.9*	**26** *74.3*
Policy	**15** *42.9*	3 *8.6*	1 *2.9*

Table 5.7 shows that for Aspect 1 (Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region), both other entrepreneurs or supporting organizations and policy have the same number of votes (15). This indicates that entrepreneurs appear to be of the opinion that both other entrepreneurs, and supporting organizations and policy, are the best source of support to create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region. For Aspect 2 (Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions), other entrepreneurs and supporting organizations received the most votes (22 out of 35), which could indicate that they are the best source of support, according to entrepreneurs. Regarding Aspect 3 (Speak the foreign language or be willing to learn), the number of votes (26 out of 35) shows that education might be best equipped to help an entrepreneur to develop linguistic skills.

Aspect 1 (create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region) and Aspect 3 (speak the foreign language or be willing to learn) contradict the outcome of the preparatory studies in Chapter 2 and the outcome of the literature review, that Culture and Language are no real barriers. Although the experts mention culture and language courses, it might be that they were actually referring to courses in Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill, since they were asked for measurements to improve Interregional Business Collaboration.

The three factors chosen were submitted to a panel of managers from the business, education, and policy (see Table 5.5) sectors. To obtain a broad view that was not dominated by a single view, a fair representation of the three groups was needed and the managers needed to be equally distributed across the three regions to see whether there are regional differences between the managers of business, education, and policy in the three areas. Only the number of managers for the Belgian government was fewer than was hoped for. The panel of managers of business, education, and policy, as they were also managers from three areas in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion (Southern Limburg, Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen), gave responses that overlapped quite a great deal. Tables 5.8a-c summarize the responses in order of the number of times a response was mentioned. No differences could be found between the nationalities.

Table 5.8a Responses obtained from the business world managers concerning managers of the practical support for entrepreneurs

Aspect	Business / consultants (n=9)
1. Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region	Develop a website with database with necessary information
	Facilitate contacts to foreign business partners
	Create an euregional expertise center
2. Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions	Organize workshops
	Organize network meetings
3. Speaking the foreign language or being willing to learn	Create a website with a glossary of the most important and used phrases

The main response appeared to be information sharing, either through personal contact (workshops, network meetings, expertise center) or through a website. They also indicated that entrepreneurs could not do this without having received input from the other sectors in business, education, and policy.

Table 5.8b Responses obtained from the managers of education about practical support for entrepreneurs

Aspect	Managers of education (n=13)
1. Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region	Develop a website with database with necessary information
	Create an euregional expertise center
	Research euregional themes
	Organize a series of talks on a theme
	Exchange students: motivate students to study abroad (within the Euregion)
	Exchange professors
	Exchange students on internships
2. Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions	Create an euregional lectureship
	Create an euregional expertise center
	Organize a series of talks on a theme
	Exchange students on internships
3. Speaking the foreign language or being willing to learn	Exchange students on internships
	Organize cultural cross-border activities (series of talks, cinema, music)
	Learn the language of your neighbor (project "Buurtaalonderwijs")

The responses of the managers in education and those of the business managers were all about how to support acting entrepreneurs: workshops (including language courses), an expertise center and a website. However, the managers in education also expressed their responsibility towards the students and the combination of students and entrepreneurs. They found it important to develop the students in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion interregional awareness, and this should start with increasing the interregional awareness of the professors and lecturers.

Table 5.8c   Responses obtained from the managers of policy about practical support for entrepreneurs

Aspect	Managers of policy (n=10)
1. Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region	Facilitate contacts with foreign business partners
	Organize network meetings
	Develop a website including a database with necessary information
2. Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions	Develop a website including a database with necessary information
	Create information brochures
3. Speak the foreign language or be willing to learn	Give financial support for language courses
	Give financial support for carrying out cultural cross-border activities

In addition to the previously mentioned website, policy has mainly had a supporting role, by offering facilitation and providing financial support.

In the field of education much work can be done, both for acting entrepreneurs and for potential entrepreneurs. For the current entrepreneur, the main task of education is to provide information. For the potential entrepreneur, this information should also be provided, as well as the awareness that there is a work field across the border. Students should be motivated to cross the border to study and to work, to participate in either in an internship or to work after graduating. The main task of policy and the field of business lies in the field of facilitating; helping entrepreneurs to meet each other and to obtain information. Policy can provide information, but it can also grant financial aid.

The one idea that was mentioned the most often was the idea to develop a Euregional Center of Expertise, even though there already is a Euregional Chamber of Commerce. This Center of Expertise should provide the same information and services as the Euregional Chamber of Commerce, in addition to facilitating network meetings and workshops. The website, a product and the responsibility of all the managers from the business, education, and policy sectors, should also provide this information, together with statistical information that can now be retrieved from the three national Statistical Bureaus and the European Bureau of Statistics (and therefore it is hard to retrieve for an entrepreneur), and a glossary of the most important and used phrases. Through this activity, the three institutions could act as one unity and in this way they could be more visible and more supportive to the entrepreneur. The idea of using a network to develop interregional collaboration is similar to the idea of the new economy (Dana et al., 2008) as described in Section 3.5.

The conceptual model, which was created in Chapter 4 (Figure 4.6) showed significant variables that influence Interregional Business Collaboration. These ideas, if put into practice, might help the entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion to develop more Interregional Business Collaboration and to thus create a Euregion with more interregional business activities. The outcome of the Delphi research showed that the experts recognize the significant variables. The different groups of managers from business, education, and policy came to similar conclusions and made similar choices regarding the practical implications.

5.3   Summary

The Delphi method was used to find the factors that were the most urgent according to entrepreneurs and to seek the best solution according to the managers from the business, education, and policy sectors. In the first step, the entrepreneurs could indicate which factors they found to be the most important themselves and that they thought were needed to be developed most urgently in order to be better equipped for Interregional Business Collaboration. The factors that they mentioned were needed the most were to:

- Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region.
- Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions.
- Create knowledge about the foreign language.

The next step was to ask the managers from the business, education, and policy sectors about their responsibilities and the actions they could take to help entrepreneurs to develop further. The idea that was mentioned the most was that by developing a website this could provide entrepreneurs with information about the cultural situation of the foreign region and about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions. This website could also help in solving acute problems concerning linguistic difficulties. Another idea, which was mentioned quite often, was the creation of a Euregional Center of Expertise, where entrepreneurs could receive their information, and which could help entrepreneurs to meet and to share information. Both the website and the Euregional Center of Expertise should be a mutual responsibility shared by managers from the business, education, and policy sectors and each should play their own part. Policy and field of business should provide information and should facilitate network meetings and workshops (Policy should also grant financial support) and the field of education should provide information and ensure its relevance. Education also has a key position in the development of acting entrepreneurs, by providing information that is up to date and relevant. Furthermore, education also plays an important role in developing the potential entrepreneurs' cross-border views, by stimulating them to go abroad during their studies.

Conclusions, recommendations, future research and limitations

To elucidate the influence of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration, the focus was placed on the regions Belgian Limburg, Southern Limburg, and the District of Aachen, three areas in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. After completing the preparatory studies and the literature review, the conclusion has been drawn that cultural dimensions, such as those measured by Hofstede and Gerritsen, are not relevant for the Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. A similar conclusion was drawn in regard to the language skills. The literature review replaced Culture and Language with Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill, which seems to be more relevant for Interregional Business Collaboration. Although, we are aware of the fact that Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill are related to Culture and Language, this relationship was left outside the scope of this study.

In this chapter the empirical data from Chapter 4 and the information found in Chapter 5 about the valorization are used to answer the nine research questions and to generate well-founded conclusions. When arriving at these answers and conclusion, it soon became clear that by making certain choices during the research process not all of the questions could be answered exhaustively. In Section 6.4.1 these limitations are discussed, together with several ideas as to how these limitations could be solved when pursuing future research. Furthermore, several interesting issues were discovered that deserve to be studied in future studies.

6.1   The development of the conceptual model

The study started with a preliminary conceptual model, with Culture and Language as independent variables and Interregional Business Collaboration as a dependent variable. The corresponding research questions were:

- To what extent do cultural differences influence Interregional Business Collaboration in the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion?
- To what extent do language differences influence Interregional Business Collaboration in the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion?

Figure 6.1 shows the first conceptual model, in which these two research questions are incorporated:
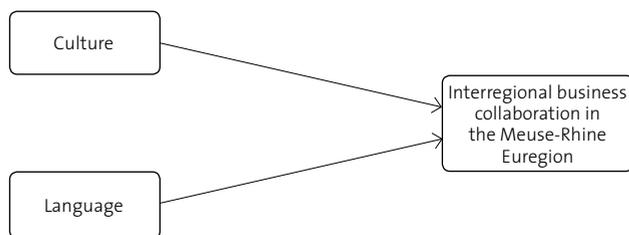
Figure 6.1   First conceptual model

Three preparatory studies were performed to validate this model: A qualitative study consisting of six interviews with experts, a quantitative study to test cultural differences, and an experiment with entrepreneurs about their level of language skills. These preparatory studies demonstrated that Culture and Language are no real obstacles for Interregional Business Collaboration. On the other hand, the experts indicated that the aspect of Trust should be added to the model. This advice was followed.

Replacing the variables Culture and Language had been postponed, awaiting the conclusions of the literature study. Figure 6.2 shows the adapted conceptual model. The revised research questions have been aligned with this model:
- To what extent do cultural differences influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
- To what extent do language differences influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
- To what extent does Trust influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
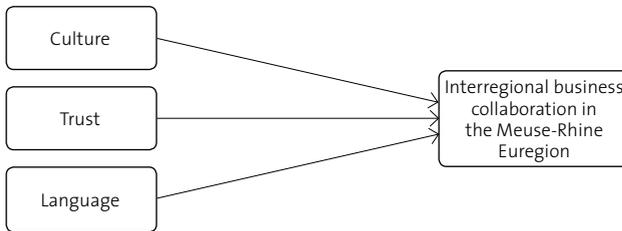
Figure 6.2   The new preliminary conceptual model after the preparatory studies

Based on this model and the corresponding research questions, the literature review was performed. The literature review was also helpful in developing instruments to measure the variables. The literature confirmed that, within the context of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, Culture and Language create no barriers. Instead of Culture and Language, the appropriate use of linguistic skills, referred to as Business Communication Skill, and making the adjustment to another Culture, referred to as Cultural Sensitivity, are more important. The literature did not present an unambiguous answer about the influence of Trust, and therefore Trust was maintained in the model. On the other hand, it was not clear whether Trust still remained an independent variable or should be considered to be a mediator. In the third version of the conceptual model, Trust serves as both an independent and a mediating variable, awaiting the results of subsequent empirical research. The research questions were adapted according to the findings of the literature review, and four moderating variables were also added: Nationality, Gender, Age, and Sector.

All this resulted in the following research questions, concerning the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion:
1   To what extent does *Cultural Sensitivity* influence I*nterregional Business Collaboration*?
2   To what extent does *Business Communication Skill* influence *Interregional Business Collaboration*?
3   To what extent does *Trust* influence *Interregional Business Collaboration*?
4   To what extent does *Trust* have an interaction effect on the relationship between *Cultural Sensitivity* and *Interregional Business Collaboration*?
5   To what extent does *Trust* have an interaction effect on the relationship between B*usiness Communication Skill* and *Interregional Business Collaboration*?
6a To what extent does *Age* have an interaction effect with the relationship between *Cultural Sensitivity* and *Interregional Business Collaboration*, or with the relationship between *Business Communication Skill* and *Interregional Business Collaboration*?
6b To what extent does *Sector* have an interaction effect with the relationship between *Cultural Sensitivity* and I*nterregional Business Collaboration*, or with the relationship between *Business Communication Skill* and *Interregional Business Collaboration*?
6c To what extent does *Nationality* have an interaction effect with the relationship between *Cultural Sensitivity* and I*nterregional Business Collaboration*, or with the relationship between *Business Communication Skill* and *Interregional Business Collaboration*?

6d To what extent does *Gender* have an interaction effect with the relationship between *Cultural Sensitivity* and *Interregional Business Collaboration*, or with the relationship between *Business Communication Skill* and *Interregional Business Collaboration*?

Figure 6.3 shows the altered version of the preliminary conceptual model.
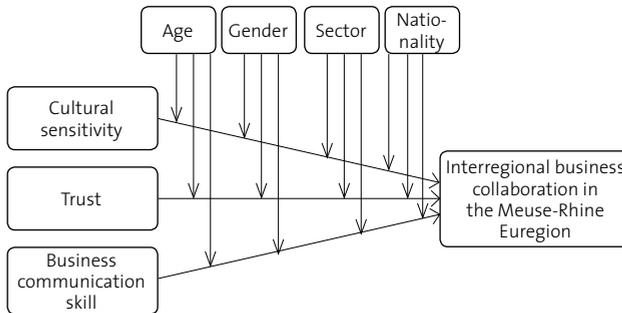
Figure 6.3 Third version of the preliminary conceptual model after the literature review

Bearing the research questions in mind, the conceptual model was adjusted and empirically tested. The empirical test was a quantitative survey taken among entrepreneurs from Southern Limburg, Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen. The data gathered were analyzed and reduced using an Exploratory Factor Analysis. This resulted in 13 factors: one concerning Trust, three concerning Business Communication Skill and nine concerning Cultural Sensitivity. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) showed that only six variables were influenced the interregional business communication (Table 6.1):

Table 6.1 Factors that influence Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion

Factors	Label
Business Communication Skill 1	Consumer orientation
Business Communication Skill 2	Negotiating style
Cultural Sensitivity 2	Foreign partner
Business Communication Skill 3	Personal skills
Cultural Sensitivity 8	Language partner
Cultural Sensitivity 9	Business environment

Regarding the moderating variables, Age, Nationality and Sector appear to influence Cultural Sensitivity. Entrepreneurs, who are older, score higher in these skill areas. Moreover, in certain sectors Cultural Sensitivity has a more positive influence on Interregional Business Collaboration. The Dutch score significantly better on these skills than the Germans and Belgians do.

Trust, which was a variable that was often mentioned during the interviews conducted in the preparatory study, appeared to be of no significance in the results of Interregional Business Collaboration, whereas Trust shows a small moderating effect on the influence of Cultural Sensitivity in regard to interregional collaboration. These findings resulted in having to make an adjustment to the model. The previous conceptual model appeared to contain several non-significant variables and relations. A new model was constructed in which only significant items were included (Figure 6.4).
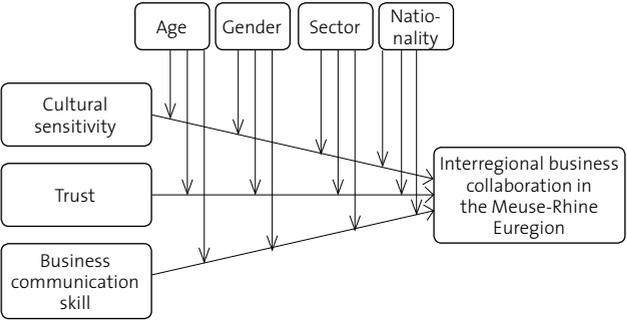
Figure 6.4   Conceptual model after Exploratory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling

To answer Research Question 6c and to study the existence of regional differences regarding Cultural Sensitivity, Business Communication Skill, and Trust, the Exploratory Factor Analysis was repeated and the Structural Equation Modeling data were used for each region separately. This led to three conceptual models, for each of the regions (Figure 6.5a, b, and c).
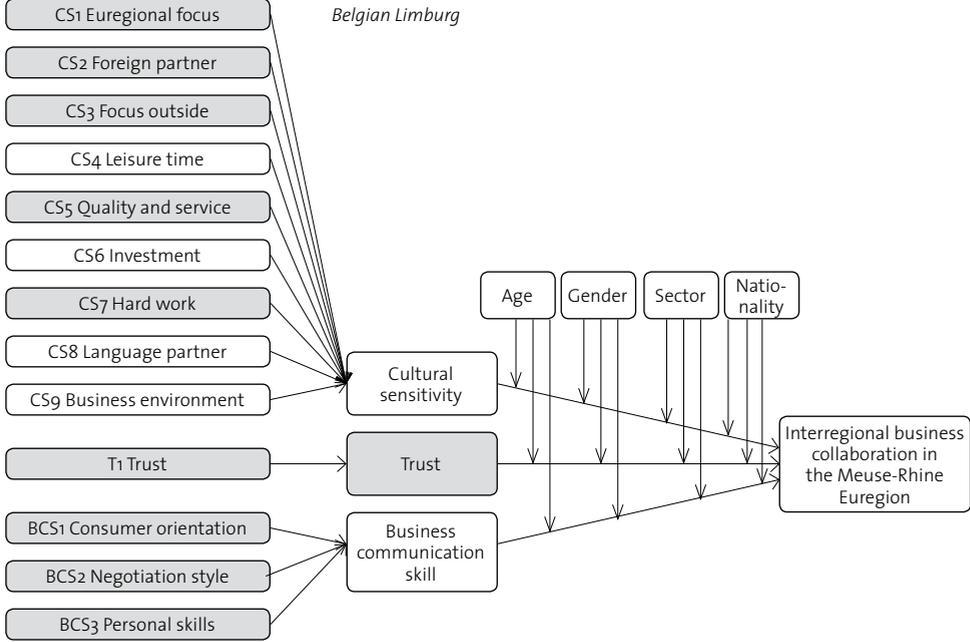
Figure 6.5a   Conceptual model for the region of Belgian Limburg
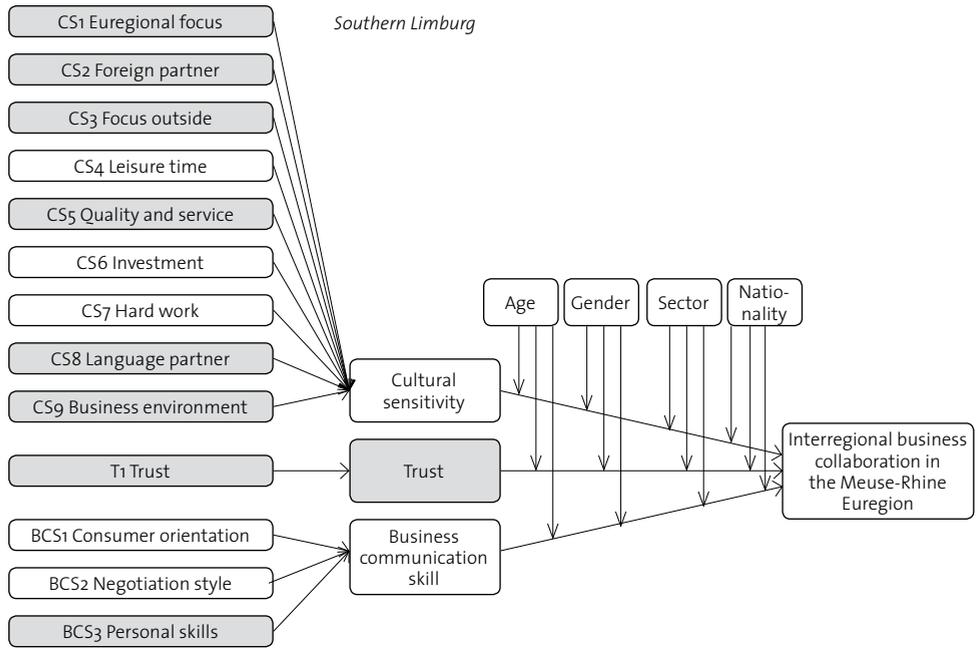
Figure 6.5b Conceptual model for the region of Southern Limburg
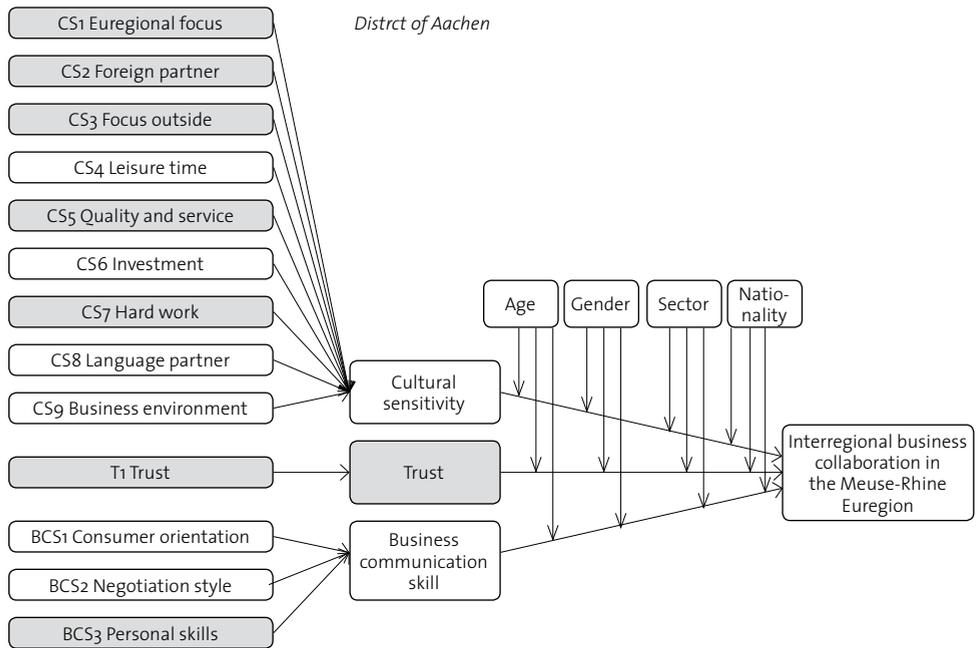
Figure 6.5c Conceptual model for the District of Aachen

The following factors occur in the three conceptual models:
- CS2 Foreign partner: District of Aachen
- CS4 Leisure time: District of Aachen + Belgian Limburg + Southern Limburg
- CS6 Investments: Belgian Limburg + Southern Limburg
- CS7 Hard work: Southern Limburg
- CS8 Language partner: Belgian Limburg + District of Aachen
- CS9 Business environment: Belgian Limburg + District of Aachen

Figure 6.5a shows a striking aspect: Business Communication Skill has no significant influence on Interregional Business Collaboration for Belgian Limburg. It was discovered that entrepreneurs in Belgian Limburg have good communication skills, and the interviews in the preparatory studies (see Section 2.1.2) showed that language teaching is well developed in Belgium. From this it can be concluded that also entrepreneurs in Belgian Limburg, who scored less on Interregional Business Collaboration, have good communication skills.

In each conceptual model, attention has been paid to Factor CS4, leisure time, although Southern Limburg shows that it pays less attention to leisure time than Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen. It can be concluded that entrepreneurs in Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen value leisure time more, and make a stricter division between leisure time and working time than entrepreneurs in Southern Limburg do. It appears that it is of greater importance in Southern Limburg to invest in development and work. This outcome that was obtained from the entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion differs from the outcome of the preparatory study 2, regarding Hofstede's dimension, Indulgence versus Restraints. The students from the three regions show no significant differences in regard to this dimension, compared to the Factor CS4, leisure time.

Paying attention to the customers' wishes is an important aspect for entrepreneurs in Southern Limburg, as well as for the entrepreneurs in the District of Aachen. Regarding communication skills, the entrepreneurs of Southern Limburg are considered to be the most flexible, which means that these entrepreneurs are more able and willing to speak the customer's language.
From the conceptual model of the District of Aachen, in comparison with the conceptual models of Belgian Limburg and Southern Limburg, it could be concluded that there are more similarities between Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen than between Southern Limburg and the District of Aachen. Southern Limburg serves a bridging function to both Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen and it could benefit from this by subsequently improving its position when adjusting to the similarities that Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen share. Both CS8 Language partner and CS9 Business environment have been included in the models for Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen. There is no reason to expect differences in the ideas regarding speaking foreign languages or the willingness to learn a foreign language. Furthermore, with CS9 Business environment there is reason to expect large differences between the entrepreneurs from Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen. An entrepreneur from Belgian Limburg places a higher value on the CS9 Business environment as a factor of influence on the success of Interregional Business Collaboration than an entrepreneur from the District of Aachen.

6.2 Answers to the research questions

In the description of the conceptual model, nine research questions were described, which were derived from the original research questions about the influence of Culture and

Language on Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

In response to Research Question 1 ('To what extent does Cultural Sensitivity influence Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that the following factors of Cultural Sensitivity have a positive influence on Interregional Business Collaboration:

- CS2 Foreign partner: knowledge of how a foreign partner reacts and makes decisions, and what a foreign business partner wishes;
- CS8 Language partner: ability to speak foreign languages or willingness to learn;
- CS 9 Business environment: knowledge about the business environment regarding legal, business and cultural aspects.

Only three out of nine factors appeared to be significant for interregional business in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. The following factors were found to not be significant: CS1: Euregional focus, CS3: Focus outside, CS4: Leisure time, CD5: Quality and service, CS6: Investment, and CS7: Hard work. Further research could indicate if this conclusion is also valid for other Interregional Business Collaborations, or if other combinations can be found within different contexts. The factors that form the variable of Cultural Sensitivity indicate that it might be important for successful Interregional Business Collaboration to put oneself in the situation of the business partner. One needs to know more about the situation the business partner is experiencing so that one can observe an effect, such as regulations and the economic situation, but also about his or her individual aspects: how does he or she response in certain situations? What might be important is whether one shows that he or she is actually willing to empathize by trying to speak the language of the other business partner. This factor CS8 does not refer to the linguistic skills in itself, but the underlying items indicate that entrepreneurs show an interest in the business partner by adapting and trying to speak his or her language.

In response to Research Question 2 ('To what extent does Business Communication Skill influence Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that the following factors regarding Business Communication Skill have a positive influence on Interregional Business Collaboration:

- BCS1 Consumer orientation: knowing what the customer needs and responding accordingly
- BCS2 Negotiating style: displaying flexibility by using appropriate communication skills and style
- BCS3 Personal skills: using appropriate communication skills, such as body language and pronunciation.

This means that all three factors regarding Business Communication Skill that were found after the Exploratory Factor Analysis had been made are significant for interregional business in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Although some items were crossed out using the Exploratory Factor Analysis, the major factors were constructed from the remaining items. Further research should indicate if this conclusion is also valid for other Interregional Business Collaborations in other (Eu)regions. One of the conclusions that came from the Exploratory Factor Analysis made it clear that no factor regarding Business Communication Skill had been excluded. The factors indicated that it is important that an entrepreneur, when preparing him- or herself for the actual communication with the business partner(s), to make an effort to find out which way of communicating fits the communication partner's needs.

The Research Questions 3, 4, and 5 all refer to the influence of Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration. Research Question 3 ('to what extent does Trust influence Interregional

Business Collaboration?'), examines Trust as an independent variable, whereas Research Question 4 ('to what extent does Trust have an interaction effect with the Relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), and Research Question 5 ('to what extent does Trust have an interaction effect with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), deal with Trust as a moderating variable. From the data of the empirical study discussed in Chapter 5, it was found that there seems to be no significant influence of Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration. The literature review in Chapter 3 showed different views regarding Trust in Interregional Business Collaboration: some studies showed no differences between regional and interregional collaboration, whereas other studies concluded that there are differences. For this study no real conclusion could be drawn about the different influence of Trust on regional and interregional business.

Regarding the moderating effect, it can be concluded that there appears to be no significant moderating effect from Trust on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration and only a relatively small positive effect from Trust on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. Trust appears to improve the influence of Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration, but only marginally.

In response to Research Question 6a ('to what extent does age have an interaction effect with the Relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration, or on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is a positive effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. In contrast, no significant effect of age on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration was found.

In response to Research Question 6b ('to what extent does sector have an interaction effect with the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is a moderating effect of sector on the Relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. It appears that the sectors that are more nationally-oriented (healthcare, marketing, retail, and service) have a higher negative effect on the influence of Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration than the more internationally-oriented sectors, such as the chemical industry, construction, ICT, and industry. However, no significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration was detected. Although some sectors are more international oriented, it appears that they do not perform better because of better Business Communication Skill.

In response to Research Question 6c ('To what extent does nationality have an interaction effect with the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is an effect of nationality on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. No significant effect of nationality on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration was observed. If this is compared to the results found in Section 4.7, then the conclusion that there is an effect of nationality on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration is imitable. The outcome that there seems to be no significant effect of nationality on the

relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration appears to be a contradiction. From this ostensible contradiction it could be concluded that the Business Communication Skill in Belgian Limburg, although not of significant influence after the Exploratory Factor Analysis in Section 4.7.2, does not deviate from the Business Communication Skill in Southern Limburg and in the District of Aachen. This seems to confirm that the Business Communication Skill of entrepreneurs in Belgian Limburg is equal for all entrepreneurs, regardless if they perform interregional business or not.

In response to Research Question 6d ('to what extent does gender have an interaction effect with the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?'), it was found that there is no significant effect of gender on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. A significant effect on the Relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration was not found either.

6.3 What do the findings and observations imply for the economic importance of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion and other regions?

On the basis of Preparatory Study 2 and the literature review, we decided not to study the influence cultural diversity. Overall, it can be concluded that the differences regarding Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill, appeared to not be significant in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. This has both scientific and policy implications. Whether this conclusion also applies to other comparable Euregions, such as SaarLorLux and Rhone, is hard to predict. It would be interesting to replicate this study in those areas, particularly if Hofstede's dimensions were to be used, and then even more so if the two new dimensions of Hofstede-Minkov: Indulgence and Monumentalism were used.

The role of business, education, and policy
To be able to valorize the found and significant factors (CS2: Foreign partner, CS8: Language partner, CS9: Business environment, BCS1: Consumer orientation, BCS2: Negotiating style, and BCS3: Personal skills), an e-Delphi study was conducted. Experts from the business, education, and policy sectors were asked during four rounds to translate these factors into practical activities that could help an entrepreneur to improve Interregional Business Collaboration. The following aspects were found by each group of experts:

Business
Much has been mentioned previously concerning the cultural opportunities for entrepreneurs and SMEs, and that there are no significant barriers in a statistical sense. Using the metaphor of the iceberg (Ulijn & St. Amant, 2000) regarding Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill: there is more to it than what is visible of the top rising above the surface.

To be well equipped for interregional business development, an entrepreneur needs to develop more or less certain skills, depending on the profile. Since an entrepreneur only has limited resources in respect to time and money, choices have to be made and support has to be found. This study showed that the primary choices for development are to:

- Create affinity with the cultural situation
- Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions
- Speak the foreign language or being willing to learn.

Business can help the development of aspects one and two, by developing and maintaining a website with a database that contains necessary information, by facilitating contact with foreign business partners, and by creating a Euregional expertise center.

Education
With regard to the choices mentioned above, education can mainly assist in developing choice three, by developing language courses. However, education can also assist in the development of the other choices.

What does this imply for the training of potential entrepreneurs who are looking for an opportunity to do business across the border? The institutions of higher education from which future employees graduate have a special responsibility and role to play in this regard. Therefore, several possibilities will be discussed for increasing the ecological validity of our findings regarding education.

Future entrepreneurs should have a need to transform their entrepreneurial intention fed by motivation into the reality of Interregional Business Collaboration. Future Euregional entrepreneurs should have the appropriate cultural and linguistic skills that will result in Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill. To develop these skills, training (courses) in interregional entrepreneurship could include those skills as well.

In formal teaching one must be aware that countries have different teaching styles. Which of these methods would be best is beyond the scope of this study, but an awareness of these differences is important for any training with regard to culture and language.

At the faculty Commercial and Financial Management of Zuyd Hogeschool a week of Euregional Internationalization was introduced. All of the first-year students are offered a week, which includes assignments, and invited speakers who lecture on trade in the Euregion. The aspect of culture is an eminent issue during this week. Although foreign language courses are not part of the curriculum, except for English, the management is currently discussing the possibility of offering German and French language courses.

In addition, the faculty is involved in the process of improving the research skills of students as well as lecturers. In the near future, a group of students and lecturers will be performing practical Euregional research projects together, which ought to lead to practical solutions as well as several articles.

Policy
Chapter 1 listed a few EU activities to foster the idea of more Interregional Business Collaboration within Euregions. In cooperation with the national, regional, and local policy levels, efforts have been made to resolve some infrastructural and regulation problems; such as poor connections of buses and trains, poor and expensive cell phone connections, different VAT tariffs, etc. SMEs barely make use of their geographic positions. Within their countries, many of the sub-regions are rather far away from the political center, and economic and demographic development has appeared to decrease in these regions. This also holds true for the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, which has been subjected to an additional analysis by presenting the findings of the overall study regarding business, education, and policy, making use of an e-Delphi survey.

With regard to linguistic proximity, even though the role of English as a vernacular is growing, the language of the customer remains important. Smaller nations are economically dependent on their neighbors and their native languages. Moreover, foreign language knowledge is the gateway to other cultures. Therefore, researchers such as Welters (2014) have proposed that German and French be made compulsory at several levels of education in the Dutch border regions; the earlier this education starts, the better. Pupils will grow up in a multilingual and multicultural context.

In line with needs for future culture research, not only etic (group-oriented), but also emic (person-oriented), the following sources may be valuable for teachers and learners in such intercultural contexts as the one of a Euregion.

To facilitate Interregional Business Collaboration, the mastery of languages might be an advantage. Apart from entrepreneurship, education and (embedded) the learning of foreign languages in the Euregion, such as German, Dutch and French, should be at least optional at the institutions of higher education, with English courses being compulsory. Such embedding can be found in the subject matters of Business Communication Skill and Cultural Sensitivity and their interaction. These are two important variables found in the overall model that would deal with the nature of cultural and linguistic barriers. These variables are also crucial elements ineffectively preparing potential student entrepreneurs to grasp the attractive business opportunities just across the borders between the different parts of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

In the current study, issues emerged that could also be answered using the empirical data. These issues, along with personal views, are discussed in the following paragraphs.

6.4   Limitation and further research

This study is subject to a number of limitations that require further research. In addition to these limitations some aspects have emerged that were interesting enough to study further, but which were not directly linked to this study. In Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2, these limitations and interesting aspects are presented.

6.4.1 Limitations of the study

This study focused on the influence of Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill in regard to Interregional Business Collaboration. However, there are more aspects that influence the success or failure of business in general, and interregional business in particular, and the variables, which have been chosen, Business Communication Skill and Cultural Sensitivity, subsequently providing a limited view. Research regarding legal regulations, which was not the scope of this study, could be combined to obtain more insight into Interregional Business Collaboration.

The survey that was held amongst the entrepreneurs in fact self-reporting and it measures opinions and not real behavior. Besides this fact, the response was limited and the entrepreneurs, who did answer, were rather positive about their returns.
Another limitation is that Hofstede's measurement of national identity was limited to students, and it was not applied to entrepreneurs. In a future study, the instrument VSM08, with all seven dimensions, could be used to test acting entrepreneurs. Junco and Bras-dos-Santos (2009) used Hofstede's VSM94 to study the nature of the five original cultural dimensions (PDI, IDV, MASC, UAI, LTO) with entrepreneurs in Germany, Italy and Spain. They

found that the scores from entrepreneurs showed ratios that differed from Hofstede's original scores. In addition, they found that entrepreneurs in the three countries share similar values that could boost international entrepreneurship. This, coupled with the fact that they did not use the two new dimensions, makes it even more interesting to repeat the current study with entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

Hofstede used seven dimensions in the VSM08, but in his new VSM13 the dimension Monumentalism was removed, because of the assumed overlap with Long-term Orientation. Does my study prove Hofstede right in making this decision, or was he wrong in assuming an overlap and leaving out the dimension? The dimension Monumentalism was not removed in Preparatory Study 2 so as to study culture in as much detail as possible. Furthermore, Monumentalism and Long-term Orientation are two different concepts (see Section 2.2.1) with a different face and content validity. The fact that Preparatory Study 2 did not show significant differences in regard to both dimensions between the students in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion does not indicate whether or not there is overlap between the two dimensions.

The Belgian province of Liege that is part of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion was excluded in this study. The next step would be to include this region in a future study, to examine how this region differs from the other parts of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Moreover, it would be interesting to study how this French-speaking region can be beneficial to the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, and how in turn it could benefit from the Euregion.
Another limitation is the fact that the responses to the statements of the empirical study in different situations could not be asked. Ulijn, Lincke and Wynstra (2004) found differences between the Dutch and German managers in an operation management context, but they found other differences in the context of innovation management. In the operation management context, the Dutch managers had problems with cooperation and in creating empathy, whereas the German managers experienced these issues within the innovation management context.

6.4.2 Possible future studies
This study is limited to the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Which topics might be relevant for a research agenda concerning Euregions? To answer this question, the cultural, linguistic, and virtual proximity aspects will be discussed, which in my opinion are essential for the economic development of Euregions.

To measure cultural, linguistic and virtual proximity more precisely the following is recommended:

1.   As noted previously, the Hofstede study examines universals (etic), which requires an emic/psychological and anthropological approach. Therefore, it is essential that more emic culture studies be conducted that start from the person, e.g. Poortinga (2011), Schwartz (1994, 1999), and make a clear distinction between what relates to the person, what relates to the issue, and what relates to the cultural context, as Byron's study (2016) does. The discussion of my study is an invitation for further replication through reliable and valid scoring.

2.   Within the Meuse-Rhine Euregion this study needs to be succeeded by measuring the same seven Hofstedian dimensions with acting entrepreneurs from the three parts: Are Hofstede's two new dimensions regarding the work to live ethic and the need to have a cultural identity still significant? Such a study might be coupled with a study among

students and entrepreneurs across the three countries, to determine to what extent the Euregion has developed its own culture, so that cultural barriers are minimized. A mutual perception approach would be recommended in order to obtain a better impression. Is the large nation of Germany still more oriented to the 'live to work' ethic, and does it retain the great need to have a cultural identity?

3.   In Section 1.1 cultural and language diversity were first introduced to demonstrate the differences between the culture and language in the different parts of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. Based on these preparatory studies and the literature review, Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill were introduced as derivatives from Culture and Language. Jan Ulijn's personal experience in Duisburg in 1989, as described in Section 3.2, demonstrates the interaction of culture and language, but it went beyond the scope of this study to study to which extent each statement that was used in the survey of the empirical study is influenced by Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill. However, this would be an excellent subject for further research.

Summary | Samenvatting

Summary

The aim of this doctoral thesis was to elucidate the influence of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration by studying SMEs within the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. The research was in fact divided into two parts. Part 1 consisted of three preparatory studies that were conducted in order to gain a better understanding of the problem statement from Chapter 1, and to learn more about the nature of this problem. Part 2 consists of the main research, which includes a literature review, the empirical study, and a Delphi study to valorize the outcomes of the empirical study.

Table 7.1   Outline of the dissertation

	Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement
Part 1:	Chapter 2: Preparatory studies
Part 2: Main research	Chapter 3: Literature review
	Chapter 4: Empirical study
	Chapter 5: Delphi study
	Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

Table 7.1 shows the outline of this dissertation. In the first chapter, the phenomenon of Interregional Business Collaboration in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion is introduced as a dependent variable and Culture and Language as independent variables. This chapter provides a preliminary conceptual model that served as a starting point for my main research. To gain more insight into the independent variables Culture and Language, and to acquire a better understanding of them, three preparatory studies were performed. In Chapter 2, a description of these preparatory studies is given along with a discussion of the outcomes. The first study was held among consultants from the sectors of business, education, and policy and consisted of a qualitative study. This qualitative study, which included six interviews, presented a global view of the limited influence of Culture and Language on Interregional Business Collaboration. Moreover, this study led to the conclusion that Trust is of importance because of the new and insecure situation that Interregional Business Collaboration might find itself.

Since it was of importance to obtain an impression about the aspect of Culture in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion before performing the empirical study, it was necessary that the research be carried out practically and at a fast pace. Therefore, the second study was a survey among three matched groups of students, using the VSM08, an instrument developed by Hofstede et al. (2008) to measure Culture in seven dimensions. It was easier to reach and motivate the students to participate than it would have been to ask the entrepreneurs to participate with their busy schedules. As mentioned earlier (Section 2.2.1), the sample would then also be more homogeneous with regard to the type of educational program the students were enrolled in. Our sample comprised students, who were originally from the Meuse-Rhine Euregion itself. This survey confirmed the interviewees' idea that cultural differences are of limited influence in the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. The third preparatory study was an experiment to study linguistic skills to provide a first insight into the influence of linguistic skills on interregional business communication. Entrepreneurs were tested on their language skills, since their language skills were a point of interest. Entrepreneurs showed sufficient linguistic skills to perform Interregional Business Collaboration, which led to

the conclusion that language appears not to be a real barrier for performing Interregional Business Collaboration.

The three exploratory studies led to the conclusion that the influence of language skills and cultural differences regarding the level of satisfaction in Interregional Business Collaboration is doubtful. The experts, on the other hand, believed the influence of Trust was important. As a result, Trust was added to the preliminary conceptual model.

The main study is described in Chapter 3, and begins with an overview of the literature about the different aspects of the problem, in which the different independent and dependent variables are introduced and the preliminary conceptual model is improved. This chapter discussed the findings of other scholars on the topics of Culture, Language, and Trust, and the influence of these variables on Interregional Business Collaboration. The conclusion drawn was that Culture and Language do not have significant influence on Interregional Business Collaboration but Cultural Sensitivity and Business Communication Skill do.

Nine research questions were formulated and the conceptual model was adjusted by replacing the independent variable Culture with Cultural Sensitivity and the independent variable language with Business Communication Skill. The position of Trust as an independent variable appeared to be negligible. However, as the interviewees in the first preparatory study had a very pronounced view about the influence of Trust, this variable was not removed from the model. The dependent variable in the empirical study was Interregional Business Collaboration, which was measured by using the SF Matrix developed by Diamantopoulos and Kakkos (2007).

The nine research questions were as follows:
1. To what extent does Cultural Sensitivity influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
2. To what extent does Business Communication Skill influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
3. To what extent does Trust influence Interregional Business Collaboration?
4. To what extent does Trust have an interaction effect on the Relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration?
5. To what extent does Trust have an interaction effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?
6.a. To what extent does age have an interaction effect with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the Relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?
6.b. To what extent does sector have an interaction effect with the Relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the Relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?
6.c. To what extent does nationality have an interaction effect with the Relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the Relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?
6.d. To what extent does gender have an interaction effect with the Relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration, or with the Relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration?

Chapter 4 provided an account of the quantitative study and showed how the data from this study was used to evaluate the preliminary conceptual model. In addition, the possible interaction effects of the moderating variables age, gender, sector, and nationality have been studied. As a conclusion to this chapter a more robust model, which was particularly related to the case of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, was constructed.

After gathering the data in the geographically limited area of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, the validity of the conceptual model was tested. The statements from the empirical study were transformed into thirteen factors using Exploratory Factor Analysis. Three factors referred to Business Communication Skill, nine referred to Cultural Sensitivity and one to Trust. Once the moderating variables age, gender, nationality, and sector had been added, SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) could be used to develop an adjusted conceptual model.

This led to the following conceptual model (Figure 7.1):
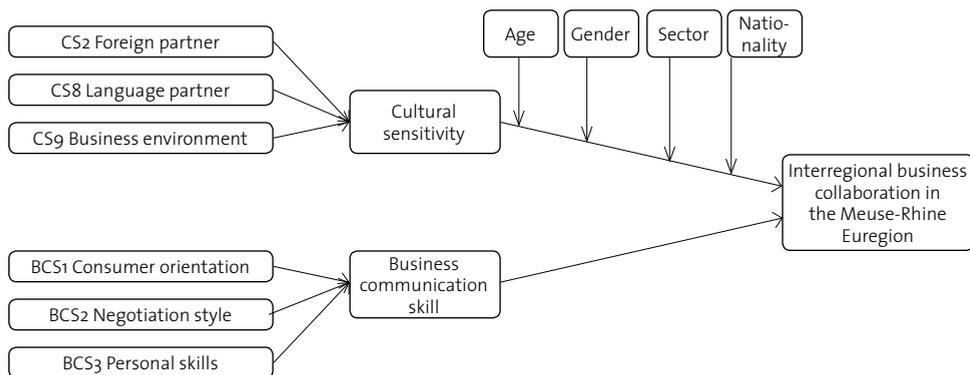
Figure 7.1 Conceptual model representing the influence of Business Communication Skill and Cultural Sensitivity on Interregional Business Collaboration

It was also determined whether there are differences between the District of Aachen, Belgian Limburg and Southern Limburg. For this purpose, all of the data was sorted according to the variable, nationality.

The nationalities that were considered are: Belgian as representatives of Belgian Limburg (BL), Dutch as representatives of Southern Limburg (SL), and German as representatives of the District of Aachen (DA). The data shows that there are indeed different factors for each of the nationalities. This means that an entrepreneur from one area has to consider these differences, and that he or she needs to be prepared when doing interregional business with entrepreneurs from another specific area.

The following factors have been included in the model for each of the regions:
- CS2 Foreign partner: District of Aachen
- CS4 Leisure time: District of Aachen + Belgian Limburg + Southern Limburg
- CS6 Investments: Belgian Limburg + Southern Limburg
- CS7 Hard work: Southern Limburg
- CS8 Language partner: Belgian Limburg + District of Aachen
- CS9 Business environment: Belgian Limburg + District of Aachen

Factor CS4 Leisure time is a common factor for all regions. Using the one-way ANOVA it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the mean outcomes of factor CS4 of the three regions, and that the outcomes of Belgian Limburg and the District of Aachen are comparable. The outcome of Southern Limburg however shows a significantly

lower value. It can be concluded that entrepreneurs in Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen value leisure time more and make a stricter division between leisure and working time than entrepreneurs in Southern Limburg do.

CS6 Investments is a factor included in the models for both Belgian Limburg and Southern Limburg. An independent sample t-test shows that there is no reason to expect differences in the attitude towards receiving rewards when making an effort.
Both CS8 Language partner and CS9 Business environment have been included in the models for Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen. An independent sample t-test shows that there is no reason to expect differences between Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen regarding the view on speaking foreign languages or the willingness to learn a foreign language. Regarding the mean and the standard deviation, language is of limited importance. However, regarding CS9 Business environment there is reason to expect differences between entrepreneurs from Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen. The entrepreneur from Belgian Limburg values the CS9 Business environment as a factor of influence on the success of Interregional Business Collaboration higher than an entrepreneur from the District of Aachen. However, it seems that this awareness is easy to achieve by stressing the importance of Interregional Business Collaboration.

From the data that was obtained from entrepreneurs in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, it could be concluded that there are no differences between entrepreneurs from Southern Limburg and entrepreneurs from the District of Aachen in the factors BCS1 Consumer orientation and BCS2 Negotiating style. However, there appears to be a gap between these entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurs from Belgian Limburg. These differences can be described as follows:
- BCS1 Consumer orientation: District of Aachen + Southern Limburg
- BCS2 Negotiating style: District of Aachen + Southern Limburg

If the factors that two regions share in common are compared, it appears that the factors BCS1 Consumer orientation and BCS2 Negotiating style can contribute towards the outcome of Interregional Business Collaboration. When using the independent sample t-test, it can be observed that there is no reason to presume that there are differences between the District of Aachen and Southern Limburg regarding BCS1 Consumer orientation, although there is reason to expect differences in regard to the BCS2 Negotiating style. The outcome of Southern Limburg is higher, which implies that flexibility is more important for entrepreneurs in Southern Limburg. An entrepreneur in the District of Aachen is not as flexible, and it can therefore be expected that he does not appreciate too much flexibility from his business relations.

An interaction effect of sector with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration can be observed. For some sectors it is easier to do business with each other than for other sectors. It is the mutual way of looking at interregional collaboration, due to an interregional mindset that is of importance. In the sectors that include chemical industries and ICT, English is a lingua franca. In the construction sector the use of dialect, due to a more interregionally-oriented attitude, was noticed. However, there seemed to be linguistic difficulties in the sectors of healthcare, marketing, retail, service, and agriculture, which all have a more regionally-oriented attitude. Age has an interaction effect with the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration. In contrast, no moderating effect of gender occurs.

Chapter 5 describes the Delphi study, which used the outcomes of Chapter 4 to study whether valorization is possible when analyzing the data obtained from entrepreneurs in the

Euregion as a whole. The Delphi method was used to find the most urgent factors according to entrepreneurs, and the best solutions, according to managers working in the fields of business, education, and policy.

The research questions

In response to Research Question 1, it was found that the following factors of Cultural Sensitivity have a positive influence on Interregional Business Collaboration:

- CS2 Foreign partner: knowing how a foreign partner responds and makes decisions, and what a foreign business partner's needs are
- CS8 Language partner: ability to speak foreign languages or displaying a willingness to learn
- CS 9 Business environment: knowing about the business environment regarding legal, business and cultural aspects.

Only three out of nine factors appeared to be significant for interregional business in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

In response to Research Question 2, it was found that the following factors of Business Communication Skill have a positive influence on Interregional Business Collaboration:

- BCS1 Consumer orientation: knowing what the customer needs are and responding accordingly
- BCS2 Negotiating style: flexibility using appropriate communication skills and style
- BCS3 Personal skills: using appropriate communication skills, such as body language and pronunciation.

This means that all three factors regarding Business Communication Skill, which were found after the Exploratory Factor Analysis had been made, are significant for interregional business in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

In response to Research question 3, it was found that there is no significant influence of Trust on Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research question 4, it was found that there is no significant effect.

In response to Research question 5, it was found that there is a relative small positive effect.

In response to Research question 6a, it was found that there is a positive effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration and no significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research question 6b, it was found that there is a negative effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration and no significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research question 6c, it was found that there is a positive effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration and no significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration.

In response to Research question 6d, it was found that there is no significant effect on the relationship between Cultural Sensitivity and Interregional Business Collaboration and no significant effect on the relationship between Business Communication Skill and Interregional Business Collaboration.

Results of the Delphi research

In the first step, the entrepreneurs could indicate which factors they found to be the most important and which needed to be developed more urgently in order to be better equipped for Interregional Business Collaboration. The factors they mentioned most were that they should:

- Create affinity with the cultural situation of the foreign region.
- Create knowledge about the way a foreign business partner makes his decisions.
- Create knowledge about the foreign language, particularly in acquiring the competency skill in using it.

The next step was to ask managers from the sectors of business, education, and policy about their responsibilities and which actions they would undertake to help entrepreneurs in their professional development. The point which was mentioned the most referred to developing a website that could provide entrepreneurs with information about the cultural situation of the foreign region, and about the way a foreign business partner makes his or her decisions. This website could also help in solving acute problems concerning linguistic difficulties.

Another point, which was frequently mentioned, was to create a Euregional Center of Expertise, where entrepreneurs could obtain information, and where entrepreneurs could meet and share information. Both the website and the Euregional Center of Expertise should be a shared responsibility for those working in the fields of business, education, and policy, and each sector should assume their role in this project. The business and policy sectors should provide information and they should facilitate network meetings and workshops (policy should also provide financial support) and those from the educational sector should provide information and should ensure that the information is relevant, and they should assume a key position in the professional training of acting entrepreneurs, by providing information that is up-to-date and relevant. Furthermore, education plays an important role in the developing a cross-border view held by potential entrepreneurs in stimulating them to go abroad during their studies.

Samenvatting

Het doel van dit proefschrift is het bestuderen van de invloed van cultuur en taal op interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking in de context van de Euregio Maas-Rijn. De Europese Unie ontwikkelde een aantal grensgebieden, waar delen van verschillende landen worden ondersteund in samenwerking. Uit eerdere studies over Euregio's in het Nederlands-Belgische en de Nederlands-Duitse grensgebied is al gebleken dat het aspect van samenwerking vrij beperkt is en de rol van de Euregio organisaties gericht is op projectbeheer: het begeleiden van initiatieven van voornamelijk bedrijven die grensoverschrijdend bezig zijn en soms de financiële ondersteuning van zulke projecten. Het onderzoek is verdeeld in twee delen. Deel 1 bestaat uit drie voorbereidende studies om een beter begrip te krijgen van de probleemstelling en meer informatie over de aard van dit probleem. Deel 2 is het hoofdonderzoek, dat bestaat uit een verkenning van de literatuur, het empirische onderzoek en een Delphi onderzoek om de resultaten van het empirisch onderzoek te valoriseren.

Tabel 8.1   Overzicht van het proefschrift

	Hoofdstuk 1: Inleiding en probleemstelling
Deel 1:	Hoofdstuk 2: Voorbereidende studies
Deel 2: Hoofdonderzoek	Hoofdstuk 3: Literatuur studie gericht op het hoofdonderzoek
	Hoofdstuk 4: Empirische studie
	Hoofdstuk 5: Delphi-studie
	Hoofdstuk 6: Samenvattingen (in het Engels en Nederlands) gevolgd door een bibliografie

Tabel 8.1 toont de indeling van de dissertatie. In het eerste hoofdstuk wordt het fenomeen van interregionale zakelijke samenwerking in de Euregio Maas-Rijn geïntroduceerd als een afhankelijke variabele en cultuur en taal als onafhankelijke variabelen. Dit hoofdstuk bevat een voorlopig conceptueel model dat als een startpunt voor het hoofdonderzoek dient. Om meer inzichten te krijgen en een beter begrip van de onafhankelijke variabelen taal en cultuur te ontwikkelen zijn drie voorbereidende studies uitgevoerd. In hoofdstuk twee worden de voorbereidende studies beschreven en worden de resultaten weergegeven. De eerste studie werd gehouden onder bedrijfsadviseurs uit het bedrijfsleven, onderwijs en overheid en bestond uit een kwalitatieve studie. Deze kwalitatieve studie, zes interviews, gaf een globaal idee over de beperkte invloed van taal en cultuur op interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking, maar leidde ook tot de conclusie dat vertrouwen vanwege de nieuwe en onzekere situatie interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking van belang is.

Omdat het belangrijk was een beeld te krijgen van het aspect cultuur en taal in de Euregio Maas-Rijn was een onderzoek nodig dat praktisch en snel uitgevoerd kon worden. Daarom werd de tweede studie als een enquête onder drie overeenkomende groepen van studenten uitgevoerd met behulp van VSM08, een instrument ontwikkeld door Hofstede voor het meten van cultuur in zeven dimensies. Deze enquête bevestigt het idee van de geïnterviewden dat culturele verschillen van beperkte invloed zijn in de Euregio Maas-Rijn.

De derde oriënterende studie was een experiment om de taalvaardigheden te bestuderen. Het niveau van de taalvaardigheden gaf een eerste indruk over de invloed van taalvaardigheid bij ondernemers op interregionale zakelijke communicatie. Ondernemers werden op hun niveau van taalvaardigheid getest, waarbij de ondernemers een voldoende

niveau van taalvaardigheid lieten zien om interregionale handel te kunnen bedrijven, wat tot de conclusie leidde dat taal geen echte barrière lijkt te zijn om interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking uit te voeren.

De drie verkennende studies leidden tot de conclusies dat invloed van culturele verschillen op het niveau van tevredenheid over de interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking en invloed van het niveau van taalvaardigheid twijfelachtig is. De deskundigen vonden aan de andere kant dat de invloed van vertrouwen belangrijk zou zijn. Dientengevolge werd vertrouwen toegevoegd aan het conceptuele model.

Het hoofdonderzoek begint in hoofdstuk drie met een overzicht van de literatuur over de verschillende aspecten van het probleem, waar de verschillende onafhankelijke en afhankelijke variabelen worden voorgesteld en het voorlopige conceptuele model wordt verbeterd. Dit hoofdstuk, de verkenning van de literatuur, toont wat andere onderzoekers vinden over taal, cultuur, en vertrouwen en de invloed van deze variabelen op interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking. Dit zou moeten leiden tot een bevestiging van de standpunten over de taal, cultuur, en vertrouwen of het zou een idee moeten geven of andere aspecten in verband met taal, cultuur en vertrouwen van grotere invloed op de mate van tevredenheid met interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking zijn. Uit de literatuur kan worden geconcludeerd welke variabelen en objecten misschien wel belangrijk zijn voor interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking. Hieruit bleek dat het niet zozeer cultuur en taal zijn die van invloed zijn bij interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking, maar het gebruik van cultuur en taal, omschreven als cultuurgevoeligheid en zakelijke communicatievaardigheden.

Negen onderzoeksvragen werden ontwikkeld en het conceptuele model werd aangepast, waarbij de onafhankelijke variabele cultuur werd vervangen door cultuurgevoeligheid en de onafhankelijke variabele taal door zakelijke communicatievaardigheden. Na de voorbereidende studies en de literatuur verkenning leek het onwaarschijnlijk dat vertrouwen een onafhankelijke variabele is, maar aangezien de geïnterviewden in de eerste voorbereidende studie stellig waren over de invloed van vertrouwen werd deze variabele in de empirische studie niet uitgesloten.
Interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking is de afhankelijke variabele, gemeten met de SF-Matrix van Diamantopoulos en Kakkos (2007).

De negen onderzoeksvragen waren:
1. In welke mate beïnvloedt cultuurgevoeligheid interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?
2. In welke mate beïnvloeden zakelijke communicatievaardigheden interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?
3. In welke mate beïnvloedt vertrouwen interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?
4. In welke mate heeft vertrouwen een interactie-effect op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?
5. In welke mate heeft vertrouwen een interactie-effect op de relatie tussen zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?
6.a. In welke mate heeft leeftijd een interactie-effect op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking of op de relatie tussen zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?
6.b. In welke mate heeft sector een interactie-effect op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking of op de relatie tussen zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?
6.c. In welke mate heeft nationaliteit een interactie-effect op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking of op de relatie tussen

zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?
6.d.   In welke mate heeft geslacht een interactie-effect op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking of op de relatie tussen zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking?

Hoofdstuk vier beschrijft de kwantitatieve studie en gebruikt de gegevens van deze studie om het voorlopige conceptueel model te evalueren. Ook worden mogelijke interactie-effecten van de interactie variabelen leeftijd, geslacht, sector en nationaliteit bestudeerd. Als conclusie van dit hoofdstuk is een meer robuuste model, in relatie tot de Euregio Maas-Rijn geconstrueerd.

Na het verzamelen van gegevens in een geografisch beperkte gebied, de Euregio Maas-Rijn, waarin de validiteit van het conceptuele model werd getest, werden statements (zie bijlage F) omgevormd tot dertien factoren met behulp van verkennende factoranalyse. Drie factoren hebben betrekking op zakelijke communicatievaardigheden, negen op cultuurgevoeligheid en een op vertrouwen. De interactie variabelen leeftijd, geslacht, nationaliteit en sector, werden toegevoegd en met SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) werd een aangepast conceptuele model ontwikkeld.
Dit leidde tot het volgende conceptueel model (figuur 8.1):
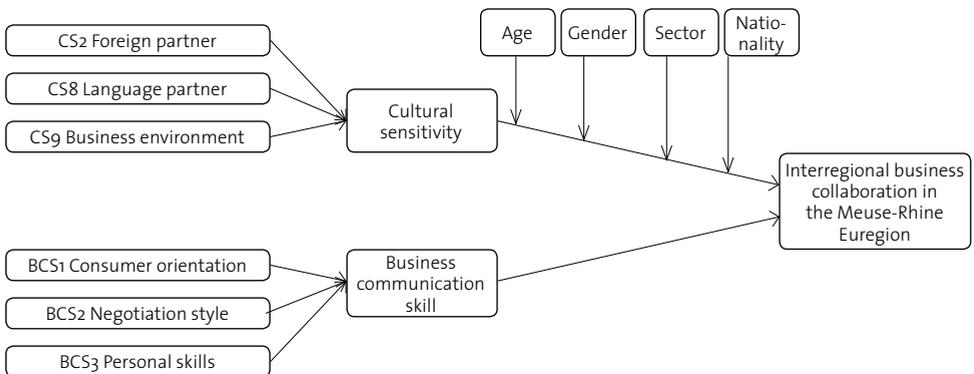
Figuur 8.1   Conceptueel model over de invloed van zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en cultuurgevoeligheid op interregionale zakelijke samenwerking

Er werd ook onderzocht of er verschillen te zien zijn tussen de Regio Aken, Belgisch Limburg en Zuid-Limburg. Voor dit doel zijn alle gegevens gesorteerd op basis van de variabele nationaliteit.

De geregistreerde nationaliteiten zijn de: Belgische als vertegenwoordigers van Belgisch Limburg, Nederlandse als vertegenwoordigers van Zuid Limburg en Duitse als vertegenwoordigers van de Regio Aken. Uit de gegevens blijkt dat er inderdaad factoren zijn die voor elk van de nationaliteiten verschillen. Dit betekent dat een ondernemer uit de ene regio ermee rekening moet houden dat deze verschillen bestaan, en dat hij of zij voorbereid moet zijn wanneer hij of zij interregionale zaken wil doen met ondernemers vanuit een ander specifiek gebied.

De volgende factoren zijn opgenomen in het model voor de genoemde regio:
- CS2 Buitenlandse partner: Regio Aken
- CS4 Vrije tijd: Regio Aken, Belgisch Limburg + Zuid-Limburg
- CS6 Investeringen: Belgisch Limburg + Zuid-Limburg
- CS7 Hard werken: Zuid-Limburg
- CS8 Taal partner: Belgisch Limburg + Regio Aken
- CS9 Zakelijke omgeving: Belgisch Limburg + Regio Aken

Factor CS4 Vrije tijd is een gemeenschappelijke factor voor alle regio's. Met one-way ANOVA kan worden geconcludeerd dat er aanzienlijke verschillen bestaan tussen de gemiddelde resultaten van factor CS4 van de drie regio's dat de resultaten van Belgisch Limburg en Regio Aken vergelijkbaar zijn. Het resultaat van Zuid-Limburg blijkt echter aanzienlijk lager. Hieruit kan worden geconcludeerd dat ondernemers in Belgisch Limburg en Regio Aken vrije tijd meer waarde toekennen en dat zij een striktere scheiding hebben tussen vrije tijd en de tijd om te werken dan ondernemers in Zuid-Limburg.

CS6 Investeringen is een factor die is opgenomen in de modellen voor zowel Belgische Limburg alsook Zuid-Limburg. Een onafhankelijke t-test toont aan dat er geen reden is om te verwachten dat er verschillen bestaan in de houding ten aanzien van beloning.
Zowel CS8 Taal partner en CS9 Zakelijke omgeving zijn opgenomen in de modellen van Belgisch Limburg en Regio Aken. Een onafhankelijke t-test toont aan dat er geen reden is om te verwachten dat er verschillen bestaan in de ideeën over het belang van het spreken van vreemde talen of de bereidheid om een vreemde taal te leren spreken. Met betrekking tot het gemiddelde en de standaardafwijking is de taal van beperkt belang. Met betrekking tot CS9 Zakelijke omgeving is er echter reden om te verwachten dat er verschillen bestaan tussen ondernemers uit Belgisch Limburg en Regio Aken. De ondernemer uit Belgisch Limburg waardeert CS9 Zakelijke omgeving als een factor van invloed op het succes van interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking hoger dan de ondernemer uit de Regio Aken, echter, zou deze waardering gemakkelijk vergroot kunnen worden door het belang van interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking te benadrukken.

Uit de gegevens van ondernemers in de Euregio Maas-Rijn kan worden geconcludeerd dat er geen verschillen lijken te bestaan tussen ondernemers van Zuid-Limburg en van de Regio Aken met betrekking tot de factoren BCS1 Consument oriëntatie en BCS2 Onderhandelingsstijl, maar er lijkt wel een verschil te bestaan tussen de ondernemers uit deze twee regio's en de ondernemers van Belgisch Limburg. In detail kunnen deze verschillen als volgt worden beschreven:
- BCS1 Consument oriëntatie: Regio Aken + Zuid-Limburg
- BCS2 Onderhandelingsstijl: Regio Aken + Zuid-Limburg

Wanneer de factoren die de twee regio's met elkaar gemeen hebben worden vergeleken, blijkt dat de factoren BCS1 Consument oriëntatie en stijl BCS2 Onderhandelingsstijl significant bijdragen aan het resultaat van interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking. De onafhankelijke t-test toont aan dat er is geen reden om te veronderstellen dat er verschillen zijn tussen Regio Aken en Zuid-Limburg met betrekking tot BCS1 Consument oriëntatie, maar de onafhankelijke t-test toont wel aan dat er verschillen tussen Regio Aken en Zuid-Limburg met betrekking tot BCS2 Onderhandelingsstijl. Het score van Zuid-Limburg op deze twee factoren is hoger, wat betekent dat flexibiliteit belangrijker is voor ondernemers in Zuid-Limburg. Een ondernemer in de Regio Aken is niet zo flexibel en er kan worden verwacht dat hij of zij niet teveel flexibiliteit van zijn zakelijke relatie waarderen.

Er blijkt een interactie-effect van sector op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking te bestaan. Voor sommige sectoren is het gemakkelijker om met elkaar om te gaan dan voor andere sectoren. Het is de gemeenschappelijke manier om tegen interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking aan te kijken, vanwege een interregionale mind-setting, die van belang is. In de sectoren chemie en ICT is Engels een Lingua Franca en in de sector bouw wordt dialect gebruikt. Er zijn echter taalproblemen vastgesteld in de sectoren gezondheidszorg, marketing, retail, service en landbouw vanwege een neer intern gerichte houding.

Leeftijd heeft een interactie-effect op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking. Met betrekking tot geslacht treedt er geen interactie effect op. Hoofdstuk vijf beschrijft de Delphi-studie over de uitkomsten van hoofdstuk vier om te onderzoeken of valorisatie mogelijk is bij het analyseren van de gegevens van de ondernemers in de Euregio als een geheel. De Delphi-methode is gebruikt om de meest urgente factoren volgens ondernemers te vinden en de beste oplossing volgens vertegenwoordigers van het bedrijfsleven, overheid en onderwijs. In de eerste stap kunnen de ondernemers zelf aangeven welke factoren zij de belangrijkste vinden en urgent zijn om te ontwikkelen zodat ze beter toegerust zijn voor interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking. De volgende stap was om de vertegenwoordigers van het bedrijfsleven (ondernemers en bedrijfsadviseurs), onderwijs en overheid, te vragen over hun verantwoordelijkheden en de acties die ze kunnen ondernemen om ondernemers in hun ontwikkeling te helpen.

De onderzoeksvragen

Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 1 bleek dat de volgende factoren van zakelijke communicatievaardigheden een positieve invloed hebben op de score van interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking:
- BCS1 Consument oriëntatie: weten wat de klant wil en adequaat reageren
- BCS2 Onderhandelingsstijl: flexibiliteit met behulp van passende communicatievaardigheden en stijl
- BCS3 Persoonlijke vaardigheden: met behulp van passende communicatievaardigheden, zoals lichaamstaal en uitspraak

Dit betekent dat alle drie factoren met betrekking tot zakelijke communicatievaardigheden die werden gevonden na de verkennende factoranalyse belangrijk zijn voor de interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking in de Euregio Maas-Rijn.

Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 2 bleek dat de volgende factoren van cultuurgevoeligheid een positieve invloed hebben op de score van interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking:
- CS2 Buitenlandse partner: weten hoe een buitenlandse partner reageert en beslissingen maakt en weten wat een buitenlandse zakenpartner wil;
- CS8 Taal partner: vermogen om vreemde talen te spreken of bereidheid om deze te leren;
- CS 9 Zakelijke omgeving: kennis ontwikkelen over het ondernemingsklimaat met betrekking tot juridische, zakelijke en culturele aspecten.

Slechts drie van de negen factoren bleken belangrijk te zijn voor de interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking in de Euregio Maas-Rijn.
Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 3 bleek dat er geen significante invloed is van vertrouwen op de score van interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking.
Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 4 bleek dat er geen significant effect is.
Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 5 bleek dat er een relatief klein positief effect is.

Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 6a bleek dat er een positief effect is op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking en geen significant effect op de relatie tussen zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking. Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 6b bleek dat er een negatief effect is op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking en er geen significant effect is op de relatie tussen zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking.

Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 6c bleek dat er een positief effect is op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking en dat er geen significant effect is op de relatie tussen zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking.
Als antwoord op onderzoeksvraag 6d bleek dat er geen significant effect is op de relatie tussen cultuurgevoeligheid en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking en dat er geen significant effect is op de relatie tussen zakelijke communicatievaardigheden en interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking.

Uitkomsten van het Delphi onderzoek

In de eerste stap konden de ondernemers de belangrijkste en meest urgente factoren benoemen voor interregionale bedrijfssamenwerking De meest genoemde factoren waren:
- Affiniteit met de culturele situatie van de buitenlandse regio ontwikkelen.
- Kennis ontwikkelen over de manier waarop een buitenlandse zakenpartner zijn beslissingen neemt.
- Kennis ontwikkelen over de vreemde taal en vooral vaardigheid in het gebruik daarvan.

Daarna konden vertegenwoordigers van het bedrijfsleven (ondernemers en bedrijfsadviseurs), onderwijs en overheid, hun verantwoordelijkheden aangeven en de acties die ze kunnen ondernemen om ondernemers in hun ontwikkeling te helpen. Het meest genoemde idee was de ontwikkeling van een website die ondernemers van informatie over de culturele situatie van de buitenlandse regio kan voorzien en over de manier waarop een buitenlandse zakenpartner zijn of haar besluiten neemt. Deze website kan ook helpen bij het oplossen van de acute taalproblemen. Een ander vaak geciteerd idee was de oprichting van een Euregionaal expertisecentrum, waar ondernemers hun informatie kunnen krijgen en dat kan helpen dat ondernemers elkaar kunnen ontmoeten en informatie kunnen delen. Zowel de website als het Euregionale expertisecentrum moeten een wederzijdse verantwoordelijkheid van zowel bedrijfsleven, onderwijs als ook overheid en elke partij moet zijn rol spelen. De overheid en het bedrijfsleven moeten informatie verstrekken en hulp bieden bij netwerk vergaderingen en workshops over interregionale samenwerking (de overheid ook financiële). Het Onderwijs moet informatie verstrekken, moet zorgen voor de relevantie van de informatie en heeft ook een sleutelpositie in de ontwikkeling van ondernemers, door het verstrekken van informatie die up to date en relevant is. Hierbij hoort ook een belangrijke taak in de ontwikkeling van een grensoverschrijdende visie bij potentiële toekomstige ondernemers door hen te stimuleren om tijdens hun opleiding naar het buitenland te gaan.

Appendices

a

	Euregions and interregional incentive programs	Participating countries	Founded
Programs	Archipelago (Islands) committee	Finland, Sweden	1978
	Barents Euro-Arctic Council	Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden	1993
	BENEGO (Belgisch-Nederlands Grensoverleg = Belgian-Dutch border consultation)	Belgium, Netherlands	1980
	Central North committee	Finland, Norway, Sweden	1977
	International Lake Constance conference	Austria, Germany, Switzerland	1972
	Kvarken council	Finland, Norway, Sweden	1972
	North Calotte Council	Finland, Norway, Sweden	1971
	Tornio River Valley Council	Finland, Sweden	1987
Euregions	Adriatic Euroregion	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia	2006
	Alps-Mediterranean Euroregion	France, Italy	2007
	ARKO (Arvika/Kongsvinger) Euroregion	Norway, Sweden	1978
	Bavarian forest - Bohemian Forest / Šumava Euroregion	Austria, Czech Republic, Germany	1994
	Belasica Euroregion	Bulgaria, Greece, Republic of Macedonia	2003
	Benelux-Middengebied Euroregion	Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands	1984
	Beskydy Mountains Euroregion	Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia	2000
	Białowieża Forest Euroregion	Belarus, Poland	2002
	Biharia Euroregion	Romania, Hungary	2007?
	Black Sea Euroregion	Bulgaria, Romania	2008
	Bornholm and Southwestern Skåne Euroregion	Denmark, Sweden	1980
	Bug Euroregion	Belarus, Poland, Ukraine	1995
	Carpathian Euroregion	Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine	1993
	Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion	Czech Republic, Poland	1998
	Cross-channel Euroregion	Belgium, France, United Kingdom	1991
	Danube 21 Euroregion	Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia	1992
	Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisza Euroregion	Romania, Hungary, Serbia	1997
	Dnepr Euroregion	Ukraine, Russia, Belarus	2003
	Dobrava Euroregion	Czech Republic, Poland	2001
	Donbas Euroregion	Ukraine, Russia	2010
	Drina-Sava-Majevica Euroregion	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia	2003
	East Sussex/Seine-Maritime/Somme Euroregion (part of the Arc Manche regional network and assembly)	France, United Kingdom	1993
	Egrensis Euroregion	Czech Republic, Germany	1993
	Elbe/Labe Euroregion	Czech Republic, Germany	1992
	Ems Dollart Region	Germany, The Netherlands	1977
	EUREGIO	Germany, The Netherlands	1958
	Euregio Karelia	Finland, Russia	2000
	EUROACE Euroregion	Spain, Portugal	2009
	Eurobalkans	Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia, Serbia	2002
	Euroregion Baltic	Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden	1998
	Galicia-North Portugal Euroregion	Spain, Portugal	2008

Glacensis Euroregion	Czech Republic, Poland	1996
Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio	Estonia, Finland	1999
Inn-Salzach Euroregion	Austria, Germany	1994
Inntal Euroregion	Austria, Germany	1998
Insubria Euroregion	Italy, Switzerland	1995
Ister-Granum Euroregion	Hungary, Slovakia	2003
Mesta-Nestos Euroregion	Bulgaria, Greece	1997
Meuse-Rhine Euroregion	Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands	1976
Neisse Euroregion	Czech Republic, Germany, Poland	1991
Neman Euroregion	Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Russia	1997
Ore Mountains Euroregion	Czech Republic, Germany	1992
Østfold-Bohuslän/Dalsland Euroregion	Norway, Sweden	1980
Pomerania Euroregion	Denmark (suggested), Germany, Poland, Sweden	1995
Pomoraví - Záhorie - Weinviertel Euroregion	Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia	1999
Praděd Euroregion	Czech Republic, Poland	1998
Pro Europa Viadrina Euroregion	Germany, Poland	1993
Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion	France, Spain	2004
Raetia Nova Euroregion	Austria, Switzerland	?
Region Southern Jutland-Schleswig	Denmark, Germany	1997
Rhine-Meuse-North Euroregion	Germany, The Netherlands	1978
Rhine-Waal Euroregion	Germany, The Netherlands	1973
Saar-Lorraine-Luxembourg-Rhin Euroregion	Germany, France, Luxembourg, Belgium	1995
Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein Euroregion	Austria, Germany	1993
Scheldemond Euroregion	Belgium, The Netherlands	1989
Sea Alps Euroregion	France, Italy	1990
Silesia Euroregion	Czech Republic, Poland	1998
Silva Nortica Euroregion	Austria, Czech Republic	2002
Siret - Prut - Nistru Euroregion	Romania, Republic of Moldova	2000
Spree-Neisse-Bober Euroregion	Germany, Poland	1992
Stara Planina Euroregion	Serbia, Bulgaria	2006
Superior Prut and Lower Danube Euroregion	Romania, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine	1998
Tatras Euroregion	Poland, Slovakia	1994
TriRhena Euroregion	Germany, France, Switzerland	1995
Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino	Austria, Italy	1998
Via Salina Euroregion	Austria, Germany	1997
West/West Pannonia Euroregion	Austria, Hungary	1998
White Carpathians Euroregion	Czech Republic, Slovakia	2000
Zugspitze-Wetterstein-Karwendel Euroregion	Austria, Germany	1998

INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE (VSM 08)

Please think of an ideal job, disregarding your present job, if you have one. In choosing an ideal job, how important would it be for you to ...
(please circle one answer in each line across):
1 =   of utmost importance
2 =   very important
3 =   of moderate importance
4 =   of little importance
5 =   of very little or no importance

01.	have sufficient time for your personal or home life	1	2	3	4	5
02.	have a boss (direct superior) you can respect	1	2	3	4	5
03.	get recognition for good performance	1	2	3	4	5
04.	have security of employment	1	2	3	4	5
05.	have pleasant people to work with	1	2	3	4	5
06.	do work that is interesting	1	2	3	4	5
07.	be consulted by your boss in decisions involving your work	1	2	3	4	5
08.	live in a desirable area	1	2	3	4	5
09.	have a job respected by your family and friends	1	2	3	4	5
10.	have chances for promotion	1	2	3	4	5

In your private life, how important is each of the following to you:
(please circle one answer in each line across):

11.	keeping time free for fun	1	2	3	4	5
12.	moderation: having few desires	1	2	3	4	5
13.	being generous to other people	1	2	3	4	5
14.	modesty: looking small, not big	1	2	3	4	5

15.   If there is something expensive you really want to buy but you do not have enough money, what do you do?
1   always save before buying
2   usually save first
3   sometimes save, sometimes borrow to buy
4   usually borrow and pay off later
5   always buy now, pay off later

16.   How often do you feel nervous or tense?
1   always
2   usually
3   sometimes
4   seldom
5   never

17.   Are you a happy person?
1   always
2   usually
3   sometimes
4   seldom
5   never

18.   Are you the same person at work (or at school if you're a student) and at home?
1   quite the same
2   mostly the same
3   do not know
4   mostly different
5   quite different

19.   Do other people or circumstances ever prevent you from doing what you really want to?
1   yes, always
2   yes, usually
3   sometimes
4   no, seldom
5   no, never

20.   All in all, how would you describe your state of health these days?
1   very good
2   good
3   fair
4   poor
5   very poor

21. How important is religion in your life?
1   of utmost importance
2   very important
3   of moderate importance
4   of little importance
5   of no importance

22. How proud are you to be a citizen of your country?
1   not proud at all
2   not very proud
3   somewhat proud
4   fairly proud
5   very proud

23. How often, in your experience, are subordinates afraid to contradict their boss (or students their teacher?)
1   never
2   seldom
3   sometimes
4   usually
5   always

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
(Please circle one answer in each line across):
1 =   strongly agree
2 =   agree
3 =   undecided
4 =   disagree
5 =   strongly disagree

24. One can be a good manager without having a precise answer
to every question that a subordinate may raise about his or her work   1   2   3   4   5

25. Persistent efforts are the surest way to results   1   2   3   4   5

26. An organizational structure in which certain subordinates
have two bosses should be avoided at all cost   1   2   3   4   5

27. A company's or organization's rules should not be broken - not even
when the employee thinks breaking the rule would be in
the organization's best interest   1   2   3   4   5

28. We should honor our heroes from the past   1   2   3   4   5

Some information about yourself (for statistical purposes):
29. Are you:
  1.   male
  2.   female

30. How old are you?

31. What is your nationality?

32. What was your nationality at birth (if different)?

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

(Language Policy Division, Strasbourg, 2009)

OVERALL LISTENING COMPREHENSION

C2	Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast native speed.
C1	Can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar. Can recognize a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts. Can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly.
	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand.
B2	Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers.
	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives.
	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.
A2	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.
A1	Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.

OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION

C2	Can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings. Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.
C1	Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of specialty, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
B2	Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.
B1	Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.
	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language
A2	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
A1	Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

OVERALL SPOKEN INTERACTION

C2	Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.
C1	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.

Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.

B2	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.

Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field. Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music etc.

B1	Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation of familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).

Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.

A2	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.
A1	Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

OVERALL ORAL PRODUCTION

C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.

B2	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.
B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.
A1	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.

OVERALL WRITTEN INTERACTION

C2	As C1
C1	Can express him/herself with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively.
B2	Can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others.
B1	Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision.

Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point he/she feels to be important.

A2	Can write short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need.
A1	Can ask for or pass on personal details in written form.

Here you can test how „gut" your German is: Are you just starting out, pretty good or really great?

The results tell you how well you understand written German texts, how good your grammar is and whether your German vocabulary consists of many words or just a few. This test will serve as your first orientation.

1.   Ich habe keine ----, bei dieser Hitze durch die Stadt zu laufen. Bleiben wir doch hier!
a   Auskunft
b   Sachen
c   Liebe
d   Lust
e   ???

2.   Heute kann ich nicht kommen, weil ----.
a   ich habe viel zu tun
b   ich habe zu tun viel
c   ich viel zu tun habe
d   viel ich zu tun habe
e   ???

3.   Hans hat bald Geburtstag. Haben Sie auch ---- Einladung bekommen?
a   ein
b   eine
c   einen
d   einer
e   ???

4.   Hast Du jetzt ein ---- Auto? Das kenne ich ja noch nicht.
a   ander
b   andere
c   anderer
d   anderes
e   ???

5.   Viele Wohnungen auf dem Land sind nicht so ---- wie man denkt.
a   billig
b   billige
c   billiger
d   billigere
e   ???

Tipps für Berufsanfänger

Was Berufsanfänger wissen sollten:
Holen Sie sich so viele Informationen (6) *auf/bei/über/??* Ihre neue Firma wie möglich.
Ziehen Sie sich am (7) *erste/ersten/erster/??* Tag schick an.
Der erste Eindruck, (8) *das/den/der/??* die anderen von Ihnen haben, ist wichtig.
Kommen Sie nicht zu spät.
(9) *Stell/Stelle/Stellen/??* Sie Ihren Wecker so, dass Sie nicht nur pünktlich in der Firma sind, (10) *ausserdem / besonders / sondern /??* auch genügend Zeit haben, Ihr zukünftiges Büro zu finden.
Wie lange kann man Informationen behalten?
Was hat (11) *Dir/Ihnen/Sie/??* Ihre Zahnärztin über Ihre Zähne erzählt?
Sie wissen (12) *er/es/sie/??* nicht mehr ganz genau? Das ist ganz normal, aber nur dann,
wenn das Gespräch (13) *mit/über/von/??* Ihrer Ärztin schon länger als 24 Stunden zurückliegt.
Denn die Hälfte aller Informationen, (14) *das/der/die/??* wir hören, werden nach einem Tag vergessen.
Und nach 48 Stunden haben wir nur (15) *noch/über/weniger/??* ein Viertel des Gesprächs im Kopf.

16.   Du willst in Berlin arbeiten? Hast Du dich denn schon ---- eine Stelle bemüht?
a   an
b   für
c   so
d   um
e   ???

17.   Leider waren die Ferien schon zu Ende, sonst ---- ich mit den Kindern länger geblieben.
a   hätte
b   ware
c   werde
d   würde
e   ???

18. ---- nach Qualität kosten die Jacken Euro 100.- bis Euro 210.-.
a   Entlang
b   Je
c   Jede
d   Mal
e   ???

19. Trotz ---- Bemühungen des technischen Personals mussten die Fluggäste stundenlang warten.
a   viel
b   viele
c   vieles
d   vieler
e   ???

20. Die Universitätsgebäude sind zwar hässlich, ---- ist aber das Studienangebot sehr vielfältig.
a   dafür
b   damit
c   dazu
d   hierfür
e   ???

Aufgaben 21 - 22
Was ist richtig? / What is correct?

21. Bei dem neuen Autotyp ist technisch viel verbessert ----- .
a   geworden
b   werden
c   worden
d   wurde
e   ???

22. Der kleine Junge hatte lange Haare, ---- ihn viele für ein Mädchen hielten.
a   darum
b   deshalb
c   denn
d   weshalbe
e   ???

Aufgaben 23 - 27
Welches Wort ist richtig? / Choose the correct word.

Internationale Ledermesse in Offenbach
Die Internationale Ledermesse in Offenbach verzeichnete am Wochenende einen (23) *befriedigenden/befriedigten/ befriedigter/??* Anfang.
Schon am Samstag (24) *habe/hat/hatte/??* es einen regen Besucherandrang gegeben, teilte die Messeleitung mit. Bei einigen Artikeln, wie etwa (25) *dem/den/der/??* Saisonwaren Koffer und Reisegepäck, sei der Besucherandrang sogar sehr hoch gewesen.
Insgesamt zeigen 403 Aussteller, (26) *darunter/dazwischen/unter uns/??* über 100 Hersteller aus dem Ausland, ihre neuesten Kollektionen an Lederwaren.
Bei den ausländischen Ausstellern stellt Indien mit 24 Firmen das stärkste Kontingent, (27) *folgend/folgende/gefolgt/??* von Holland, Argentinien und Italien.

Aufgaben 28 - 30
Was ist richtig? / What is correct?

28. Auch Männer haben heute andere Erwartungen ---- die Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf.
a   an
b   für
c   um
d   zu
e   ???

29. Der Herausforderung der modernen Technik muss man sich in jedem Beruf ----.
a   begegnen
b   entgegnen
c   stellen
d   überwinden
e   ???

30. Lange Arbeitszeiten bedürfen ----.
a   geplante Pause
b   geplanten Pausen
c   geplanter Pausen
d   geplantere Pause
e   ???

1   In dit bedrijf wor_ je gestimuleerd cursussen te volgen. (d/dt)
2   Tijdens de uitzending worden de prijzen verdeel_, zodra de jury de uitslagen bekend heeft gemaakt. (d/t)
3   Het is te hopen dat de verdachte schuld beken_. (d/t)
4   Jij ziet meestal wel, wat er in je omgeving gebeur_. (d/t)
5   Een journalist die mijn woorden verdraai_, hoef ik niet meer te spreken. (d/t)
6   Toen de prijzen werden verlaag_, nam de omzet toe. (d/t)
7   Toen wij ons gisteren bij de receptie mel_en, kregen wij een drankje aangeboden. (d/dd)
8   Vorige keer rus_en wij uit op een bank in de stationshal. (t/tt)
9   Hij heeft het gedaan, omdat hij het al eerder had beloof_.(d/t)
10   Dankzij de op tijd berei_e maaltijd konden wij op tijd vertrekken. (d/dd)
11   Omdat de portretten slecht zichtbaar waren, moesten wij de foto's vergro_en. (t/ott)
12   Verwach_e hij al dat hij die baan zou kunnen krijgen? (te/tte)
13   De te verrich_ werkzaamheden werden vanmorgen vroeg verdeeld. (te/tte/ten/tten)
14   Vroeger beste_en ze in het onderwijs veel meer tijd aan het leren van feiten. (d/edd)
15   Of mijn vader dat vervelend von_, weet ik niet.
16   "Ik vraag me af of er op tijd betaal_ gaat worden", zei de penningmeester. (d/t/dt)
17   Het is belangrijk dat hij direct bevestig_ heeft die nieuwe functie te accepteren. (d/t/dt)
18   Wor_ je vandaag aangeboden een paar uur eerder vrij te nemen? (d/dt)
19   Die discussie over asielzoekers heb ik steeds gevolg_.(d/t/dt)
20   Hij verwacht dat de parkeertarieven verander_ worden. (d/t/dt)

1.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Iets tussen de regels door lezen.
      Antwoord:
      de verkeerde conclusie trekken
      iets constateren wat niet duidelijk vermeld staat
      langzaam in slaap vallen

2.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Een Babylonische spraakverwarring.
      Antwoord:
      een slechte samenwerking hebben
      iets groots ondernemen wat niet af te maken is
      een rijke fantasie hebben

3.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
De kleren van de keizer.
      Antwoord:
      iets wordt mooi voorgespiegeld, maar stelt niets voor
      het betreft een luxeprobleem
      het betreft een hachelijke zaak

4.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Laat de linkerhand niet weten, wat de rechterhand doet.
      Antwoord:
      denk niet overal te veel over na
      laat niet te duidelijk merken, dat je een goede daad doet
      toon altijd volledige inzet

5.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Na de overname van die firma vonden we een lijk in de kast.
      Antwoord:
      een pot met geld
      een heel oude auto
      een verborgen tegenvaller

6.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Zij staat op de zwarte lijst.
      Antwoord:
      lijst met mensen met een donkere huidskleur
      lijst met ongewenste personen (of bedrijven)
      lijst met op te pakken criminelen

7.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Iemand muilkorven.
      Antwoord:
      iemand de keel dichtknijpen
      iemand op zijn gezicht slaan
      iemand beletten iets te zeggen

8.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Dat is geen wet van Meden en Perzen.
      Antwoord:
      je mag van die regel afwijken
      niemand weet wie die regels bedacht heeft
      daar heb je echt niets aan

9.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Die man is een wolf in schaapskleren.
      Antwoord:
      iemand die zich vriendelijk voordoet, maar wel gevaarlijk is
      moeilijk te doorgronden
      iemand die goed leiding kan geven

10.   Wat betekent de volgende uitdrukking?
Zij kan de zon niet in het water zien schijnen.
      Antwoord:
      zij is straatarm
      zij is jaloers
      zij is pessimistisch

11.   Vul de volgende uitdrukking aan.
Hij is een roepende in de ..... (niemand wil naar hem luisteren)
      Antwoord:
      woestijn
      kerk
      straat

12.   Vul de volgende uitdrukking aan.
Graag aan Bacchus ..... (te veel drinken)
      Antwoord:
      denken
      offeren
      vragen

13.   Vul de volgende uitdrukking aan.
Pootaan ...... (hard doorwerken om iets op tijd klaar te hebben)
      Antwoord:
      gaan
      zoeken
      spelen

14.   Vul de volgende uitdrukking aan.
De knuppel in het hoenderhok ..... (verwarring veroorzaken)
      Antwoord:
      gooien
      laten
      steken

15.   Vul de volgende uitdrukking aan.
Altijd op hetzelfde aambeeld ..... (steeds op dezelfde kwestie terugkomen)
      Antwoord:
      hakken
      slaan
      wijzen

Appendix D1   Stereotype characteristics
(Poortinga & Grindt, 1993; Hagendoorn & Linssen, 1993; Renckstorf & Lange, 1990)

	Opinion about D		Opinion about NL		Opinion about B	
	Opinion from		Opinion from		Opinion from	
accurate	NL	53%	D	80%		
ambitious	NL	60%	D	81%		
arrogant	NL	45%	D	60%		
businesslike at	NL	75%	D	78%		
creative	NL	63%	D	46%		
dominating	NL	43%	D	69%	NL	58%
efficient			D	65%		
hedonistic					NL	51%
helpful	B	63%	B	63%		
honest			NL	48%		
independent			NL	63%		
intelligent					NL	49%
materialistic	NL	78%	D	80%		
proud	D	65%			NL	75%
proud					B	53%
reliable	NL	61%	D	65%		
self-confident	B	59%			NL	68%
selfish	B	47%			NL	65%
sensible	NL	82%	D	56%		
sympathetic					NL	54%

Appendix D2   The development of the Dutch attitude towards Germans
(Renckstorf & Lange, 1990)
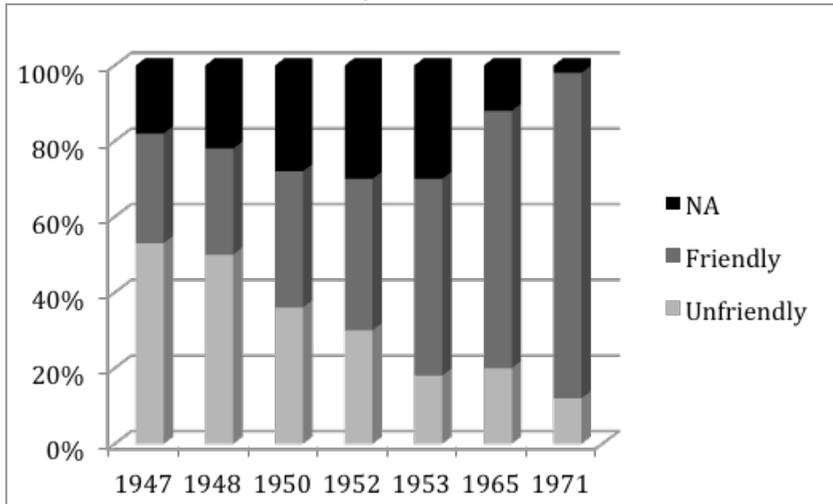
The quality of the measurement model
The first test on quality starts by calculating the PLS algorithm using the technique of Structural Equation Modeling. SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) produces a path model including Total effects and R2 (Figure E1, Table E.1).
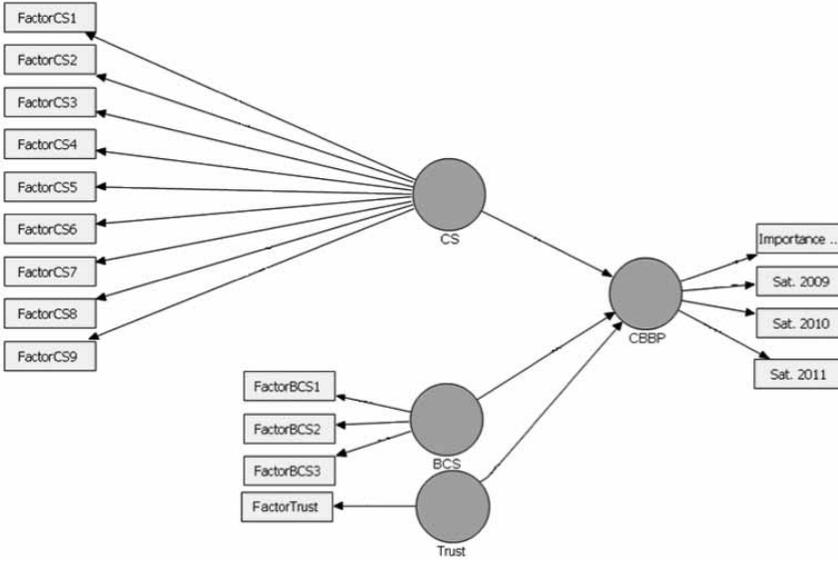
Figure E.1   Initial Path Model PLS algorithm

Table E.1: Path coefficients and cross loadings of the initial Path Model PLS algorithm
(Bold is not meeting the recommended value)

	Cross loadings			
	BCS	**CBBP**	**CS**	**Trust**
Factor BCS1	0,89			
Factor BCS2	0,65			
Factor BCS3	0,65			
Factor CS1			**0,05**	
Factor CS2			0,57	
Factor CS3			*0,21*	
Factor CS4			**0,26**	
Factor CS5			**0,34**	
Factor CS6			**0,21**	
Factor CS7			**0,39**	
Factor CS8			0,67	
Factor CS9			0,76	
FactorTrust				1,00
Importance of CBB		0,68		
Sat. 2009		0,91		
Sat. 2010		0,90		
Sat. 2011		0,90		

	Path coefficients			
	BCS	**CBBP**	**CS**	**Trust**
BCS		0,23		
CBBP		0,00		
CS		0,30		
Trust		0,0165		

Lohmöller (1989) describes that path coefficients greater than 0.1 are acceptable, which means that in the model of Figure E.1 the path coefficients for CS (0,304) and BCS (0.231) can be accepted, but the path coefficient for Trust (0,016) is not acceptable. Therefore, the independent variable Trust was removed from the model. Hence, although it was expected differently after the interviews had been conducted at the start of this study, Trust does not play an eminent role in Cross-border business collaboration as Bloemer et al. (2013) previously found in their research.

Weiber and Mühlhaus (2010) wrote that cross loadings should be over 0.4. Not all the outer loadings meet this criterion. Factor CS1, Factor CS3, Factor CS4, Factor CS5, and Factor CS6 do not meet this criterion and will be eliminated from the model. These factors are composed from questions about language, linguistic skills and religion. Obviously, in this study language seems to have no significant influence on the outcome of satisfaction regarding the expectation about the results of cross-border business collaboration. A conclusion that could be drawn here is that the problems with different languages serve merely as an alibi for not becoming involved with cross-border business collaboration, and thus not wishing to deal with the unknown.
In the Meuse-Rhine Euregion religious differences have no significant influence on cross-border business collaboration. In the comparisons of the different regions it was studied whether these differences actually exist or whether their influence is significant.

If the connection between CS and BCS had also been taken into account, then a change in the initial path model algorithm would have been visible (Figure E.2). Through this connection, the difference in path coefficients between CS and BP and BCS and BP diminishes. It can subsequently be concluded that by increasing Cultural Sensitivity, Business Communication Skill becomes more important.
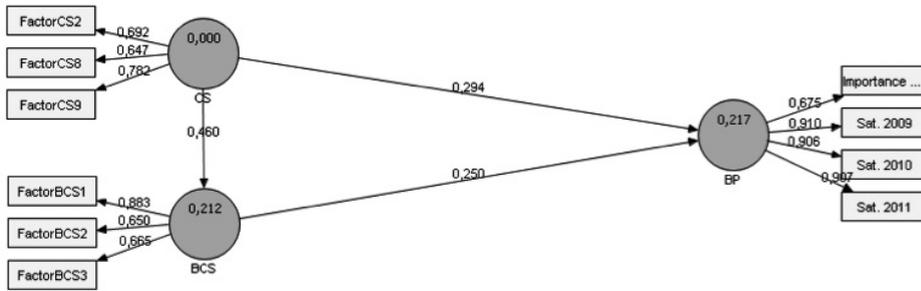
Figure E.2   The Initial Path Model PLS algorithm including the connection between CS and BCS

When repeating the Factor Analysis with the items provided, the first output is the values of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Table E.2).

Table E.2   KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		,84
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2434,39
	df	153
	Sig.	,00

As described before, the pattern of correlation can be described as great and the outcome of the Factor Analysis is significant and thus can be used for further research. The final point of measurement is the score on R-square. According to Cohen (1988), the outcome of the R-square that was found, which is 0.230, should be interpreted as Moderate. In conclusion, it can be stated that the adjusted conceptual model is valid considering the quality of the measurement model.

The quality of the structural model

The second test regarding quality starts by calculating the Bootstrapping. SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2005) produces a path model including the t-values (Outer weights). The t-value at 10% level of significance equals 1.65. Not all the t-values in the model are higher than 1.65. Tenenhaus (2005) indicates that paths with t-values lower than 1,65 should be rejected, thus these items were eliminated and only the factors that significantly influence the corresponding variable are used (Table E.3). Therefore, it can also be observed that the independent variable Trust has no significant influence on the dependent variable. Although Factor CS7 has a t-value higher than 1,65, this factor was removed from the model when the quality of the measurement model was determined. Hence, again this criterion has been met with this model, which means that the factors that are included into the model are significant.

Table E.3:   Outer weights of the initial Path Model Bootstrapping (Bold is not meeting the recommended value)

Outer weights	
Factor BCS1 <- BCS	0,69
Factor BCS2 <- BCS	0,32
Factor BCS3 <- BCS	0,27
Factor CS1 <- CS	**0,01**
Factor CS2 <- CS	0,25
Factor CS3 <- CS	**0,10**
Factor CS4 <- CS	**0,06**
Factor CS5 <- CS	**0,12**
Factor CS6 <- CS	**0,11**
Factor CS7 <- CS	*0,21*

Factor CS8 <- CS	0,38	
Factor CS9 <- CS	0,55	
Factor Trust <- Trust	1.00	
Importance of CBB <- CBBP	0,28	
Sat. 2009 <- CBBP	0,30	
Sat. 2010 <- CBBP	0,28	
Sat. 2011 <- CBBP	0,32	

The quality of each structural regression

To indicate the quality of each structural regression the Convergent Validity of each item was taken. This is established when the variance extracted in the value of the items of the independent variables exceeds 0,1 (Band et al., 2013), as can be seen in the following Table E.4 with the extracted values and the t-value that should be greater than 1.65.

Table E.4   Items of the Path Model with Variance extracted value and the t-value

		Variance extracted value	t-value
Business Communication Skill	Factor BCS1	0,89	26,58
	Factor BCS2	0,65	7,44
	Factor BCS3	0,65	5,93
Cultural Sensitivity	Factor CS2	0,59	4,18
	Factor CS8	0,69	9,28
	Factor CS9	0,82	18,50

In Table E.4, it can be seen that all the Variance extracted values exceed considerably over 0.1 and the t-values exceed 1.65. To complete the validation of the quality of each structural regression, the Convergent Validity of the dependent variable was taken. This can be met using three approaches (Band et al., 2013, p. 620):
"Factor loadings: Composite reliability should be 0.7 or higher to indicate adequate convergence or internal consistency (Gefen & Straub, 2000);
Variance extracted: AVE should exceed 0.5 to suggest adequate convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988);
Reliability: Cronbachs alpha values should be 0.7 or higher to indicate adequate convergence or internal consistency (Nunnally, 2010)."
In Table E.5 these values have been recorded for the dependent variable Business Performance. It is obvious that all three conditions have been met.

Table E.5   Values of dependent variable to test quality of structural regression

	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbachs Alpha
Business Performance	0,73	0,92	0,87

Conclusion of Check on the quality of the model

Upon examining all of the three aspects pertaining to the quality of the model, it appears that all of the criteria mentioned (quality of the measurement model, quality of the structural model and quality of each structural regression) for having a good quality of the model have been met. As a final aspect, the Goodness-of-Fit (Wetzels et al., 2009) was taken with the average communality of the independent variables and the R-square value of the dependent variable. In Table E.6 these values have been recorded.

Table E.6   Calculation of Goodness of fit

	Communality
Business Communication Skill	0,54
Cultural Sensitivity	0,50
Average	**0,52**

	R Square
Business Performance	**0,23**

GOF= square root (Average Communality * R-square)	**0,34**

The calculated value for the Goodness-of-Fit means that the model has an average acceptable predicative relevance (Wetzels et al., 2009). Therefore, the conceptual model, as presented in Chapter 2 has been changed into a new model that has a better predictive relevance, leaving out Trust. The final check is to see if this adjusted conceptual model has a better fit than the original conceptual model when comparing the values of CFI, NFI and RSMEA (Albright & Park, 2009) (Table E.7).

Table E.7   values of CFI, NFI and RSMEA of the three conceptual models

Fit indices	Original conceptual model (Fig. 2.11)	Adjusted conceptual model after EFA (Fig. 4.4)	Newly constructed conceptual model after quality check (Fig. 4.5)
Normalized fit index (NFI)	0.48	0.80	0.82
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.53	0.86	0.87
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.10	0.07	0.08

The values in Table E.7 prove that this new model has a better fit than the model constructed on the basis of the literature. When the outcomes of the newly constructed conceptual model were compared with the values as described by Lai & Li (2005), it appears that they did not meet the desired criterion. Although the values should be higher to obtain a good fit with the model, no techniques to improve these outcomes (Hooper et al., 2008) were used, since the model had already met the criteria of Tenenhaus et al. (2005) and the Goodness-of-Fit (Wetzels et al., 2009).

Appendix F Development statements online survey

Statements from literature review	Statements included after Step			Variable	Definitive formulation after Step 3
	1	**2**	**3**		
Ability to switch to another style of negotiation	X	X	X	BCS	Ability to switch to another style of negotiation
You ask appropriate questions when talking with customers	X				
You ask appropriate questions when talking with supervisors					
You can easily change to another negotiation style, if you perceive that the style you are using does not work.					
Appreciate the foreign partner's decision process	X	X	X	CS	Appreciate the foreign partner's decision process
Awareness of different norms for business communication	X	X	X	CS	Awareness of different norms for business communication
You edit and revise documents conscientiously	X				
You can apply a wide range of different ways of negotiating.	X	X	X	BCS	Being able to use a wide range of different ways of doing business.
In your business relationship you communicate your expectations to each other.	X	X	X	TRUST	Communication of mutual expectations
Difficult effort to become familiar with the foreign legal and economic environment	X	X	X	CS	Difficult effort to become familiar with the foreign legal and economic environment
Exchange of information your partner and you takes place frequently and informally.	X	X	X	TRUST	Exchange of information happens frequently and informally
In your business relationship, each of you informs the other part about events or changes that are of significance to the other part.	X				
The negotiations between your partner and you are characterized by openness.	X				
It is important to you to always behave properly; to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	X				
You are very flexible with regard to which negotiation style you apply.	X	X	X	BCS	Flexibility with regard to business style
Foreign culture and way of doing business is unknown	X	X	X	CS	Foreign culture and way of doing business is unknown
Foreign partner cares what happens to you	X	X	X	TRUST	Foreign partner cares what happens to you
Foreign partner does his/her part in your alliance	X	X	X	TRUST	Foreign partner does his/her part in your alliance
You can rely on your partner that he keeps to the engagements.					
Foreign partner is always frank and truthful	X	X	X	TRUST	Foreign partner is always frank and truthful
Overall, trust between your partner and you is characterized by a high degree of trust.	X	X			
You are generally skeptical to the exchange of information between your partner and you.	X				
Your partner is open about problems that emerge, such as delayed deliveries and price changes.	X				
Foreign partner is capable and competent	X	X	X	TRUST	Foreign partner is capable and competent
Foreign partner is on your side	X	X	X	TRUST	Foreign partner is on your side

Foreign partner knows all about your alliance	X	X	X	TRUST	Foreign partner knows all about your alliance
Foreign partner looks out for your interests	X	X	X	TRUST	Foreign partner looks out for your interests
Your business relationship is characterized by two-way communication.	X				
Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas	X				
If one works hard enough he is likely to make a good life for himself.	X	X	X	CS	Hard work makes a good life
Any man who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.					
Hard work doesn't generally bring success—it's more a matter of luck and connections					
Hard work offers little guarantee of success.	X	X	X	CS	Hard work offers little guarantee of success
Persistent efforts are the surest way to results					
Having a clear, understandable pronunciation	X	X	X	BCS	Having a clear, understandable pronunciation
Know and understand the foreign partner's decision process	X	X	X	CS	Know and understand the foreign partner's decision process
Knowledge not to press foreign partner	X	X	X	CS	Knowledge not to press foreign partner
Your firm has a very good understanding of how the customers judge the quality of products and the customer service.	X	X	X	BCS	Knowledge of how customers judge quality and service
Indicate the level of mastery of the other languages (basic, average, intermediate, advanced)	X	X	X	BCS	Level of mastery of the Dutch or German (elementary, intermediate, advanced, proficiency, (near) native)
Managers speak or learn the language of the foreign partner	X	X	X	CS	Managers speak or learn the language of the foreign partner
Money acquired easily (e.g. through gambling and speculation) is usual spent unwisely	X	X	X	CS	Money acquired easily is usual spent unwisely
People can only get rich at the expense of others					
Less importance placed on work in your lives					
Life would be more meaningful if we had more leisure time.	X	X	X	CS	More leisure time is important
More emphasis on family life					
Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusement.	X	X	X	CS	Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusement.
In your business relationship, information that is of any use to the other part is given.	X				
Mutual information about relevant events or changes	X	X	X	TRUST	Mutual information about relevant events or changes
Do other people or circumstances ever prevent you from doing what you really want to?	X	X	X	CS	Not being able to do what you want
In your private life, it is important to you to keep time free for fun					
It is important to you to have a good time; to "spoil" oneself.					
People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation.	X	X	X	CS	People should have more leisure time to spend relaxing.
Your firm regularly evaluates the satisfaction of the customers with regard to quality of the product and the customer service.	X	X	X	BCS	Regular evaluation of customer's satisfaction
In your firm it is the practice to respond as soon as possible to the customers' requests.	X	X	X	BCS	Responding as soon as possible to the customer's requests

Sensitivity to the time it takes foreign partner to decide	X	X	X	CS	Sensitivity to the time it takes foreign partner to decide
It is important to you to think up new ideas and be creative; to do things your own way.	X				
Show willingness to adapt to the another way of doing things	X	X	X	CS	Show willingness to adapt to the another way of doing things
In your firm it is the practice to take steps immediately when a customer has a complaint.	X	X	X	BCS	Taking immediate steps when a customer has a complaint
You like testing out different ways of approaching new customers.	X	X	X	BCS	Testing out different ways of approaching new customers
You try to understand how one customer differs from another.	X	X	X	BCS	Understanding how one customer differs from another
You feel uneasy when there is little work for you to do.	X	X	X	CS	Uneasiness when there is little work to do
You analyze the audience before, during, and after an oral report	X	X	X	BCS	Using appropriate body language in oral communication
You establish rapport with the audience	X	X			
You listen effectively	X	X			
You maintain eye contact	X	X			
You objectively present information in oral reports	X	X			
You organize presentations effectively	X	X			
You produce correctly spelled documents	X	X			
You use an effective business vocabulary	X	X			
You use effective techniques in writing reports	X	X			
You use jargon in appropriate situations	X	X			
You use proper placement and format for letters and reports	X	X			
You use appropriate body actions in interpersonal oral communication	X	X			
You use audiovisual aids effectively	X	X			
You use correct grammar in both spoken and written communication	X				
You use the telephone and intercom effectively	X				
You write naturally and on the reader's level	X				
You write routine letters – order acknowledgement, inquiry, etc.	X				
You write well – clearly, concisely, correctly, completely	X				
You writes persuasively	X				
You use appropriate tone of voice – conversational or formal	X	X	X	BCS	Using appropriate tone of voice
You use voice effectively for emphasis (speech, pitch, volume)	X	X			
What language do you mainly use, when negotiating with your business partner?	X	X	X	BCS	What business language/languages do you use
What language do you normally speak at home? (Code one answer!)	X	X	X	BCS	What language do you speak at home
What other languages do you speak?	X	X	X	BCS	What other languages do you speak

General questions

Name	
E-mail address	
Gender	
Date of birth	
Nationality	
Sector	
Company	

Questions about the use of languages and linguistic skills

1   What language do you normally speak at home? (select only one answer)

Dutch

German

English

Dialect

2   What other languages do you speak? (You can code one or more answers)

Dutch

German

English

French

Dialect

Other

3   What language/languages do you mainly use, when doing business with your business partner?

Dutch

German

English

French

Dialect

Other

4   Indicate the level of mastery of the following languages
(elementary, intermediate, advanced, proficiency, (near) native).

	Speaking	*Listening*	*Writing*	*Reading*
Dutch				
German				
English				
French				
Dialect				

	Statements: *strongly disagree* *disagree* *neutral* *agree* *strongly agree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neutral*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
5	You are very flexible with regard to which business style you adopt.					
6	You can use a wide range of different ways of doing business.					
7	You can easily change to another negotiation style, if you perceive that the style you are using does not work.					
8	You like testing out different ways of approaching new customers.					
9	You try to understand how one customer differs from another.					
10	You use appropriate body actions in interpersonal oral communication.					
11	You use appropriate tone of voice –conversational or formal.					
12	You have a clear, understandable pronunciation.					
13	In your firm it is the practice to respond as soon as possible to the customers' requests.					
14	In your firm it is the practice to take steps immediately when a customer has a complaint.					
15	Your firm has a very good understanding of how the customers judge the quality of products and the customer service.					
16	Your firm regularly evaluates the satisfaction of the customers with regard to quality of the product and the customer service.					
17	Other people or circumstances sometimes prevent you from doing what you really want to.					
18	In your firm, you have worked very hard to familiarize yourselves with the foreign legal and economic environment.					
19	In a business relation, you always try to show your willingness to adapt to the other way of doing things.					
20	You are fully aware and understand that, compared to us, the foreign partner needs to have much more lengthy and detailed discussions before they are comfortable committing to a course of action.					
21	You appreciate the nature of the decision-making and management techniques of the foreign partner.					
22	A number of your representatives and managers speaks the language of your foreign partner or is spending time learning it.					
23	No one in your firm seems to know anything about the foreign culture and way of doing business.					
24	Your managers and representatives are aware that the norms for business communication are different in other countries.					
25	Your managers and representatives know not to press foreign managers for immediate decisions.					
26	Your managers are sensitive to the amount of time it takes foreign managers to decide on an action.					
27	You feel uneasy when there is little work for you to do.					
28	Hard work offers little guarantee of success.					
29	If one works hard enough he is likely to make a good life for himself.					
30	Life would be more meaningful if we had more leisure time.					
31	Money acquired easily (e.g. through gambling and speculation) is usual spent unwisely.					
32	Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusement.					
33	People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation.					
34	In this relation, you feel like your foreign partner cares what happens to you.					
35	You can always rely on your foreign partner to do his/hers part in your alliance.					

36	You feel like your foreign partner is on your side.					
37	You know that your foreign partner is capable and competent.					
38	Your foreign partner always looks out for your interests in this alliance.					
39	Your foreign partner is always frank and truthful in its dealings with you.					
40	Your foreign partner is very knowledgeable about everything relevant to your alliance.					
41	The exchange of information between your partner and you takes place frequently and informally.					
42	In your business relation you communicate your expectations to each other.					
43	In your business relation, each of you informs the other part about events or changes that are of significance to the other part.					
44	The cross-border trade is an important part of your overall trade.					
45	The returns of the cross-border trade of 2009 matched your expectations.					
46	The returns of the cross-border trade of 2010 matched your expectations.					
47	The returns of the cross-border trade of 2011 matched your expectations.					

General questions

Name	
E-mail address	
Gender	
Date of birth	
Nationality	
Sector	
Company	

Questions about the use of languages and linguistic skills

1	Which language do you normally speak at home?	Language 1
2	Which other languages do you speak?	Language 2
3	Which language/languages do you mainly use, when doing business with your business partner?	Language 3
4	Indicate the level of mastery of the following languages (elementary, intermediate, advanced, proficiency, (near) native).	Language 4 (OL)
	Speaking Listening Writing Reading	

Statements (strongly disagree-disagree-neutral-agree-strongly agree)

5	You are very flexible with regard to which business style you adopt.	Buss. Comm. Skill 1
6	You can use a wide range of different ways of doing business.	Buss. Comm. Skill 2
7	You can easily change to another negotiation style, if you perceive that the style you are using does not work.	Buss. Comm. Skill 3
8	You like testing out different ways of approaching new customers.	Buss. Comm. Skill 4
9	You try to understand how one customer differs from another.	Buss. Comm. Skill 5
10	You use appropriate body actions in interpersonal oral communication.	Buss. Comm. Skill 6
11	You use appropriate tone of voice –conversational or formal.	Buss. Comm. Skill 7
12	You have a clear, understandable pronunciation.	Buss. Comm. Skill 8
13	In your firm it is the practice to respond as soon as possible to the customers' requests.	Buss. Comm. Skill 9
14	In your firm it is the practice to take steps immediately when a customer has a complaint.	Buss. Comm. Skill 10
15	Your firm has a very good understanding of how the customers judge the quality of products and the customer service.	Buss. Comm. Skill 11
16	Your firm regularly evaluates the satisfaction of the customers with regard to quality of the product and the customer service.	Buss. Comm. Skill 12
17	Other people or circumstances sometimes prevent you from doing what you really want to.	Cult. Sens. 1
18	In your firm, you have worked very hard to familiarize yourselves with the foreign legal and economic environment.	Cult. Sens. 2
19	In a business relation, you always try to show your willingness to adapt to the other way of doing things.	Cult. Sens. 3
20	You are fully aware and understand that, compared to us, the foreign partner needs to have much more lengthy and detailed discussions before they are comfortable committing to a course of action.	Cult. Sens. 4
21	You appreciate the nature of the decision-making and management techniques of the foreign partner.	Cult. Sens. 5

22	A number of your representatives and managers speaks the language of your foreign partner or is spending time learning it.	Cult. Sens. 6
23	No one in your firm seems to know anything about the foreign culture and way of doing business.	Cult. Sens. 7
24	Your managers and representatives are aware that the norms for business communication are different in other countries.	Cult. Sens. 8
25	Your managers and representatives know not to press foreign managers for immediate decisions.	Cult. Sens. 9
26	Your managers are sensitive to the amount of time it takes foreign managers to decide on an action.	Cult. Sens. 10
27	You feel uneasy when there is little work for you to do.	Cult. Sens. 11
28	Hard work offers little guarantee of success.	Cult. Sens. 12
29	If one works hard enough he is likely to make a good life for himself.	Cult. Sens. 13
30	Life would be more meaningful if we had more leisure time.	Cult. Sens. 14
31	Money acquired easily (e.g. through gambling and speculation) is usual spent unwisely.	Cult. Sens. 15
32	Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusement.	Cult. Sens. 16
33	People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation.	Cult. Sens. 17
34	In this relation, you feel like your foreign partner cares what happens to you.	Trust 1
35	You can always rely on your foreign partner to do his/hers part in your alliance.	Trust 2
36	You feel like your foreign partner is on your side.	Trust 3
37	You know that your foreign partner is capable and competent.	Trust 4
38	Your foreign partner always looks out for your interests in this alliance.	Trust 5
39	Your foreign partner is always frank and truthful in its dealings with you.	Trust 6
40	Your foreign partner is very knowledgeable about everything relevant to your alliance.	Trust 7
41	The exchange of information between your partner and you takes place frequently and informally.	Trust 8
42	In your business relation you communicate your expectations to each other.	Trust 9
43	In your business relation, each of you informs the other part about events or changes that are of significance to the other part.	Trust 10
44	The cross-border trade is an important part of your overall trade.	Business perf. 1
45	The returns of the cross-border trade of 2009 matched your expectations.	Business perf. 2
46	The returns of the cross-border trade of 2010 matched your expectations.	Business perf. 3
47	The returns of the cross-border trade of 2011 matched your expectations.	Business perf. 4

Appendix I   Introduction mails to the online survey

Introduction mail to entrepreneurs in Belgian Limburg and District of Aachen (last one in German):

Geachte heer/mevrouw,

Mijn naam is Wiel Hotterbeekx en ik ben bezig met een onderzoek over de handelsmogelijkheden binnen de Euregio. Dit onderzoek vindt plaats in samenwerking met de Hogeschool Zuyd, Heerlen-Sittard, en de Open Universiteit, Heerlen. Mijn onderzoek gaat erover welke kenmerken/ideeën er bij de bedrijven aanwezig zijn die zich wel bezighouden met zaken doen over de grenzen en bij de bedrijven die zich hier niet mee bezig houden en alleen maar binnen de grenzen van het eigen land blijven. Het gaat hierbij om vragen ten aanzien van taal en van cultuur.

Mag ik u daarom vriendelijk vragen om mijn vragenlijst helemaal in te vullen, ook wanneer u geen zaken over de grens doet. U zou me daarmee zeer helpen. Ik heb uw bedrijf gekozen vanwege het feit dat u in Belgisch Limburg gevestigd bent en binnen een bepaalde branche werkzaam bent. Ik hoop dat dit geen probleem is. Het is voor mijn onderzoek heel belangrijk dat er voldoende bedrijven zijn die de vragenlijst willen invullen, dus ik hoop op uw medewerking.
De vragenlijst kunt u vinden onder www.hotterbeekx.com. U krijgt dan een keuzemogelijkheid in welke taal u de enquête wilt invullen. De eerste keuze is Nederlands/Vlaams, maar u kunt ook kiezen voor Engels of Duits.

Mag ik u alvast hartelijk danken voor uw moeite.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Drs. Wiel Hotterbeekx
Hogeschool Zuyd
Faculteit Commercieel en Financieel Management
Havikstraat 5

Introduction mail to entrepreneurs in Southern Limburg:

Geachte relatie van Hogeschool Zuyd

Ook u weet ongetwijfeld, dat klanten voor een bedrijf zeer belangrijk zijn. Wij wonen in een regio waar men klanten niet alleen in eigen land heeft, maar ook in de landen om ons heen vinden kan, wellicht zelfs moet zoeken. De Hogeschool Zuyd voert in samenwerking met de Open Universiteit een onderzoek uit naar de exportmogelijkheden binnen de Euregio Maas-Rijn. Om te kijken war er mogelijkheden zijn wordt dit onderzoek uitgevoerd onder ondernemers binnen de Euregio, ongeacht of zij al internationaal bezig zijn of (nog) niet. Om ondernemers en toekomstige ondernemers te kunnen helpen om ook in een vergrijzende regio voldoende klanten te vinden is het belangrijk zoveel mogelijke input te krijgen over de kenmerken van bedrijven en de invloed van deze kenmerken op het internationaal zaken doen. De resultaten zullen ook besproken worden met de diverse Kamers van Koophandel in de Euregio, met diverse opleidingsinstituten, Euregionale politici en andere belanghebbenden. Daarom is het belangrijk dat de uitkomsten zo betrouwbaar mogelijk zijn en daarbij is uw hulp van het grootste belang! Vandaar dat ik u dan ook verzoek de vragenlijst in te vullen. Zonder uw hulp zullen de resultaten minder betrouwbaar zijn.
Het zal ongeveer 15 minuten van uw kostbare tijd in beslag nemen. U vindt de vragenlijst onder
www.hotterbeekx.com

U kunt kiezen in welke taal u de enquête wilt invullen. Op het einde bestaat de mogelijkheid om uw opmerkingen te plaatsen. Het staat u vrij om uw naam en uw e-mailadres in te vullen. Vanzelfsprekend zullen alle gegevens vertrouwelijk behandeld worden. Wanneer u uw e-mailadres invult zult u op de hoogte gehouden worden van de uitkomsten van dit onderzoek. Wanneer u nog vragen of opmerkingen heeft kunt u die sturen naar: wiel.hotterbeekx@zuyd.nl of naar wiel.hotterbeekx@ou.nl of naar survey@hotterbeekx.com

Bij voorbaat dank voor uw medewerking.
Met vriendelijke groet,

Drs. Wiel Hotterbeekx
Hogeschool Zuyd, faculteit Commercieel Management/ Open Universiteit

Item	Communalities	Cronbachs Alpha if Item Deleted
number of mastered languages	.96	.86
number of used languages	.46	.87
OL 1	.70	.87
OL 2	.91	.86
OL 3	.92	.86
OL 4	.89	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 11	.47	.87
Cultural Sensitivity 1	.63	.87
Cultural Sensitivity 2	.70	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 3	.51	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 4	.61	.86
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 1	.67	.86
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 2	.75	.86
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 3	.71	.86
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 4	.67	.86
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 5	.57	.86
Business Communication Skill 6	.65	.86
Business Communication Skill 7	.67	.86
Business Communication Skill 8	.61	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 12	.57	.87
Cultural Sensitivity 13	.65	.87
Cultural Sensitivity 14	.63	.87
Cultural Sensitivity 15	.63	.87
Cultural Sensitivity 16	.57	.87
Cultural Sensitivity 17	.48	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 5	.54	.86
Trust 1	.53	.86
Trust 2	.64	.86
Trust 3	.63	.86
Trust 4	.73	.86
Trust 5	.61	.86
Trust 6	.64	.86
Trust 7	.58	.86
Exchange of information: Trust 8	.52	.86
Exchange of information: Trust 9	.68	.86
Exchange of information: Trust 10	.66	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 6	.52	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 7	.63	.87
Cultural Sensitivity 8	.63	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 9	.66	.86
Cultural Sensitivity 10	.66	.86
Customer-oriented culture: Business Communication Skill 9	.69	.86
Customer-oriented culture: Business Communication Skill 10	.69	.86
Customer-oriented culture: Business Communication Skill 11	.66	.86
Customer-oriented culture: Business Communication Skill 12	.49	.86
Masters German	.71	.87
Masters Dutch	.73	.86
Masters English	.60	.87
Masters French	.68	.87
Masters Dialect	.54	.87

Appendix J2: Rotated Component Matrix of the Exploratory Factor Analysis from the Online Survey

Rotated Component Matrix*

	Component													Factor
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Trust 6	,78													Trust
Trust 4	,76													
Trust 3	,75													
Trust 2	,74													
Trust 5	,74													
Trust 7	,69													
Exchange of information: Trust 8	,64													
Trust 1	,59													
Cultural Sensitivity 5*	,48				,38									
OL 3		,95												CS1 Euregional focus
OL 2		,95												
OL 4		,94												
OL 1		,81												
masters Dutch*		,65							,38					
number of used languages*		,509				,41								
Customer-oriented culture: Business Communication Skill 9			,77											BCS1 Customer orientation
Customer-oriented culture: Business Communication Skill 10			,77											
Customer-oriented culture: Business Communication Skill 11			,73											
Exchange of information: Trust 9			,68											
Exchange of information: Trust 10			,65											
Customer-oriented culture: Business Communication Skill 12			,60											
Cultural Sensitivity 8*			,53		,47									
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 5*			,41				,36							
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 2				,81										BCS2 Negotiating style
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 3				,78										
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 1				,75										
Adaptive business style: Business Communication Skill 4				,61										

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Factor
Cultural Sensitivity 4			,70									CS2 Foreign partner
Cultural Sensitivity 10			,67									
Cultural Sensitivity 9*		,38	,63									
number of mastered languages*	,52			,82								CS3 Focus outside
masters French				,78								
masters English				,61								
masters Dialect*				,45						-,41		
Business Communication Skill 8					,76							BCS3 Personal skills
Business Communication Skill 7					,75							
Business Communication Skill 6					,65							
Culture Sensitivity 14						,76						CS4 Free time
Culture Sensitivity 12						,59						
Culture Sensitivity 17						,44						
masters German							-,65					CS5 Quality/Service
Culture Sensitivity 11							,58					
Cultural Sensitivity3*			,37				,45					
Culture Sensitivity 15								,75				CS6 Investment
Culture Sensitivity 16								,68				
Cultural Sensitivity 1*						,38		,44				
Culture Sensitivity 13									,78			CS7 Hard work
Cultural Sensitivity 6										,51		CS8 SLanguage partner
Cultural Sensitivity 2											,68	CS9 Business environment
Cultural Sensitivity 7											-,53	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 17 iterations.

* not included in factor, since item loads on more factors

Appendix K   Correlation matrix (Kendall's tau_b):

	ML	UL	OL1	OL2	OL3	OL4	CS11	CS1	CS2	CS3	CS4	BCS1	BCS2	BCS3	BCS4	BCS5	BCS6	BCS7	BCS8	CS12	CS13	CS14	CS15	CS16	CS17
ML	1	.411**	.437**	.445**	.453**	.425**	0.053	0.006	0.015	.099*	-0.04	0.034	0.024	0.077	0.059	-0.02	0.073	-0.01	-0	-0.06	-0.04	0.016	0.02	-0.05	0.073
UL	.411**	1	.373**	.384**	.386**	.371**	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05	0.008	-0.04	0.023	-0.01	0.02	0.033	0.017	0.055	-0.01	-0.04	-0.06	0.005	0	0.014	-0.04	-0.05
OL1	.437**	.373**	1	.690**	.703**	.619**	0.021	0.027	-0.037	0.022	-0.056	.110**	0.047	0.059	0.033	0.031	.119**	0.017	0.055	-.139**	-0.032	-0.067	-0.012	-0.085*	0.017
OL2	.445**	.384**	.690**	1	.859**	.870**	-0.001	0.027	-0.02	-0	-0.04	.100*	0.045	0.071	0.018	.105**	.114**	0.062	0.047	-.090*	-0.03	-0.034	0.017	-0.04	0.027
OL3	.453**	.386**	.703**	.859**	1	.858**	-0.009	0.022	-0.03	0.003	-0.06	0.057	0.025	0.043	0.008	0.073	.094**	0.023	0.046	-.099*	-0.01	-0	0.004	-0.06	0.035
OL4	.425**	.371**	.619**	.870**	.858**	1	-0.01	0.021	-0.02	0.007	-0.04	0.071	0.024	0.042	0.007	.100*	.099*	0.054	0.052	-0.06	-0.03	-0	0.015	-0.03	0.02
CS11	0.053	-0.017	0.021	-0.001	-0.01	-0.01	1	.092*	.083*	.161**	0.039	.113**	.132**	.110**	.337**	0.028	.157**	.078	.207**	-.100*	-0.004	-0.017	0.029	-0.041	0.053
CS1	0.006	-0.02	0.027	0.027	0.022	0.021	.092*	1	.152**	0.062	.121**	0.026	0.062	-0.01	0.033	-0.019	-0.034	-0.039	0.03	.104**	-0.04	.181**	.160**	.095*	0.006
CS2	0.015	-0.05	-0.04	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	.083*	.152**	1	.191**	0.059	.084*	.140**	.152**	0.034	0.004	0.071	0.024	0.056	.104**	0.077	0.071	0.025	0.05	0.015
CS3	.099*	0.008	0.022	-0	0.003	0.007	.161**	0.062	.191**	1	.139**	.115**	0.051	0.046	0.034	.112**	0.022	0.065	0.023	-0.07	.133**	0.077	-0	-0.05	.099*
CS4	-0.04	-0.04	-0.056	-0.04	-0.06	-0.04	0.039	.121**	0.059	.139**	1	.226**	.118**	.116**	-0	.088*	.115**	0.07	0.021	0.071	0.007	0.071	0.021	-0.04	-0.04
BCS1	0.034	0.023	.110**	.100*	0.057	0.071	.113**	0.026	.084*	.115**	.226**	1	.471**	.402**	.192**	.248**	.319**	.243**	.259**	-0.051	0.054	-0.005	0.077	0.023	0.034
BCS2	0.024	-0.006	0.047	0.045	0.025	0.024	.132**	0.062	.140**	0.051	.118**	.471**	1	.602**	.247**	.253**	.226**	.193**	.240**	-.086*	0.05	-0.052	0.031	0.043	0.024
BCS3	0.077	0.02	0.059	0.071	0.043	0.042	.110**	0.062	.152**	0.046	.116**	.402**	.602**	1	.248**	.240**	.249**	.211**	.201**	-.126**	-0.003	-0.073	0.018	0.059	0.077
BCS4	0.059	0.033	0.033	0.018	0.008	0.007	.337**	0.033	0.034	0.034	-0	.192**	.247**	.248**	1	.120**	.191**	0.006	0.038	0.001	0.008	-0	0.033	0.033	0.059
BCS5	-0.02	0.017	0.031	.105**	0.073	.100*	0.028	-0.019	0.004	.112**	.088*	.248**	.253**	.240**	.120**	1	.351**	.424**	.310**	-0.055	-0.013	-0.052	0.044	0.026	-0.016
BCS6	0.073	0.055	.119**	.114**	.094**	.099*	.157**	-0.034	0.071	0.022	.115**	.319**	.226**	.249**	.191**	.351**	1	.403**	.440**	-.135**	0.065	-0.079	0.004	-0.034	0.073
BCS7	-0.01	-0.006	0.017	0.062	0.023	0.054	.078	-0.039	0.024	0.065	0.07	.243**	.193**	.211**	0.006	.424**	.403**	1	.436**	-0.042	0.058	-0.02	0.02	-0.006	-0.009
BCS8	-0	-0.037	0.055	0.047	0.046	0.052	.207**	0.03	0.056	0.023	0.021	.259**	.240**	.201**	0.038	.310**	.440**	.436**	1	-.124**	0.014	-0.066	0.017	-0.037	-0.002
CS12	-0.06	-0.06	-.139**	-.090*	-.099*	-0.06	-.100*	.104**	.104**	-0.07	0.071	-0.051	-.086*	-.126**	0.001	-0.055	-.135**	-0.042	-.124**	1	0.074	.197**	0.055	-0.014	-0.06
CS13	-0.04	0.005	-0.032	-0.03	-0.01	-0.03	-0.004	-0.04	0.077	.133**	0.007	0.054	0.05	-0.003	0.008	-0.013	0.065	0.058	0.014	0.074	1	0.074	.109**	0.005	-0.04
CS14	0.016	0	-0.067	-0.034	-0	0.015	-0.017	.181**	0.071	0.077	0.021	-0.005	-0.052	-0.073	-0	-0.052	-0.079	-0.02	-0.066	.197**	0.074	1	0.057	0	0.016
CS15	0.02	0.014	-0.01	0.017	0.004	0.015	0.029	.160**	0.025	-0	0.021	0.077	0.031	0.018	0.033	0.044	0.004	0.02	0.017	0.055	.109**	0.057	1	.307**	0.02
CS16	-0.05	-0.04	-0.085*	-0.04	-0.06	-0.03	-0.041	.095*	0.05	-0.05	-0.04	0.023	0.043	0.059	0.033	0.026	-0.034	0.062	0.017	-0.014	0.005	0	.307**	1	-0.05

The following is a correlation matrix (values read in display order, left to right, for each row).

Variable	Values
CS17	0.073, 0.04, 0.017, 0.027, 0.035, 0.02, .090*, .117**, .094*, .130**, 0.072, 0.077, 0.076, 0.013, .130**, 0.103*, .107**, -.01, 0.06, -.01, .015, .243**, 0.065, .122**, 0.022, 0.068, 0.055, 1
CS5	0.04, 0.049, 0.009, 0.009, 0.015, 0.017, 0.03, -.045, .098*, .164**, 0.072, 0.078, .105*, 0.049, .084**, .183**, 0.07, .099*, 0.04, -.135*, .087*, -.009, .122**, -.03, -.03, 0.022, .174**
Trust1	0.042, -.01, -.08, -.02, -.02, -.02, .243**, -.01, .087*, .210**, 0.057, 0.052, .112**, .105*, .137**, .164**, .096*, .099*, 0.079, -.083*, 0.04, 0.03, -.01, -.03, -.03, .115**
Trust2	0.005, -.02, -.02, 0.016, 0.008, 0.018, 0.072, -.078*, 0.067, .127**, 0.033, 0.073, 0.064, -.04, .116**, .101*, .131**, .120**, 0.044, -.089*, 0.037, 0.009, 0.025, .069
Trust3	0.04, 0.028, 0.013, 0.02, 0.013, 0.012, .100*, -.038, .137**, .167**, 0.059, 0.056, 0.072, .191**, 0.08, .099*, .099**, 0.018, -.064, -.025, .115**
Trust4	0.019, 0.028, 0.044, 0.048, 0.034, 0.046, .109**, -.021, .139**, .099*, .138**, .159**, .185**, .129**, 0.008, .147**, .144**, .084*, .186**, -.135*, 0.076, -.069, 0.03, -.048, 0.078
Trust5	0.076, 0.068, -.03, 0.072, 0.045, 0.059, 0.072, -.03, 0.059, 0.053, 0.012, 0.028, 0.034, 0.043, .085*, .085*, .106**, .093*, 0.047, -.04, 0.043, 0.01, -.04, 0.036, 0.049
Trust6	0.042, 0.052, -.036, 0.026, 0.012, 0.053, 0.057, -.096*, 0.035, .119**, -.002, 0.023, -.012, -.001, -.006, -.015, -.002, 0.061, 0.027, -.043, .085*, -.007, -.034, 0.01, 0.06
Trust7	.136**, .081*, -.083*, .086*, .088*, .091*, .115**, -.054, -.083*, .137**, 0.029, 0.065, .097*, 0.065, .124**, .107**, 0.042, 0.065, 0.055, -.103**, 0.028, 0.058, -.004, -.056, .178**, .151**
Trust8	0.053, .086*, 0.029, 0.044, 0.024, 0.05, .125**, 0.001, .084*, .148**, .113**, .086*, .204**, .097*, .128**, .182**, .155**, 0.075, .117**, -.056, 0.022, 0.033, -.04, 0.018, .151**
Trust9	0.038, 0.032, 0.047, 0.051, 0.048, 0.051, .126**, 0.069, .119**, .191**, .177**, .170**, .227**, .235**, .145**, .166**, .190**, 0.023, .147**, -.044, -.003, -.074, -.006, -.027, .182**
Trust10	0.041, 0.07, 0.063, 0.066, 0.074, 0.055, .158**, 0.063, 0.078, .174**, .330**, .146**, .199**, .225**, .169**, .206**, .174**, 0.048, .132**, -.120**, 0.026, -.077, 0.031, -.067, .139**
CS6	.160**, .109**, .099*, 0.073, .083*, 0.058, .110**, .093*, .158**, .141**, 0.037, .116**, .087*, .149**, .152**, 0.067, .144**, -.090*, .107**, -.124**, 0.055, -.046, 0.022, -.026, .109**
CS7	-.027, -.013, -.043, -.0007, -.011, -.012, -.051, 0.036, -.065, -.022, -.014, -.151**, -.225**, -.195**, -.116**, -.073, -.122**, -.084*, .158**, 0.056, -.096*, 0.018, 0.046, -.037
CS8	-.0056, -.061, 0.015, , -.0003, 0.022, -.01, 0.025, 0.065, .101*, .145**, .229**, .176**, .149**, -.013, -.349**, .143**, -.303**, .191**, 0.02, 0.073, -.042, 0.074, 0.055, -.012
CS9	-.02, -.06, -.0, -.02, -.03, -.02, -.01, 0.011, 0.075, 0.03, .234**, 0.028, 0.023, 0.038, 0.062, 0.04, .091*, 0.069, .110**, -.078*, 0.074, .096*, 0.006, 0.053
CS10	-.01, -.028, -.117**, -.098*, -.080*, -.067, -.017, -.019, .094*, 0.073, .231**, -.007, -.061, -.028, 0.051, 0.044, -.041, 0.075, 0.004, .162**, 0.055, .139**, .132**, 0.062, 0.037
BCS9	-.01, -.05, -.089*, -.07, -.06, -.07, 0.035, 0.002, .141**, .097*, .110**, -.02, .110*, .175**, 0.021, .152**, 0.022, 0.075, .106**, -.06, 0.057, .097*, .089*, 0.008
BCS10	-.02, -.07, -.07, 0.02, , 0.007, 0.051, -.02, .088*, 0.076, .096*, 0.038, 0.046, .120**, 0.005, .248**, .093*, .268**, .185**, -.0, .152**, -.03, .119**, .090*, 0.008
BCS11	0.016, -.0056, -.066, -.013, -.041, -.033, -.047, .139**, 0.05, .140**, 0.068, .128**, 0.054, .130**, .131**, .115**, 0.034, .129**, 0.082, .118**, -.082*, .106**, 0.007, 0.06, 0.02, .170**
BCS12	0.046, 0.02, 0.045, 0.017, 0.021, 0.014, 0.062, -.074, .180**, .103**, 0.067, .117**, .168**, .187**, .117**, .131**, .199**, 0.079, .142**, -.066, 0.03, -.117**, 0.002, -.047, 0.027, .140**
MD	.552**, .326**, .528**, .505**, .541**, .494**, .178**, 0.059, -.023, .101*, -.005, 0.024, 0.08, .089*, .111*, -.047, 0.084, -.06, -.004, -.192**, 0.071, 0.003, 0.022, -.075, .140**
MG	.365**, -.295**, .254**, .319**, -.300**, .320**, -.177**, -.017, 0.014, -.077, 0.028, 0.032, 0.065, -.062, .126**, .090*, 0.082, 0.024, .088*, -.07, -.07, 0.062, 0.014, -.068
MF	.565**, .216**, .166**, 0.06, 0.079, 0.033, .110*, 0.038, 0.076, -.078, -.021, 0.009, 0.024, 0.022, -.140**, -.042, -.082, -.052, -.002, -.032, 0.07, 0.015, -.05, 0.053
ME	.459**, .301**, .263**, .278**, .242**, .255**, -.005, -.02, 0.059, 0.058, -.01, 0.003, -.01, 0.083, 0.05, 0.076, 0.03, 0.019, -.02, 0.011, -.087*, 0.018, 0.011, -.01
MDI	.600**, .228**, .229**, .292**, .283**, .291**, 0.01, -.03, 0.012, .102*, 0.012, 0.001, -.02, 0, 0.045, 0.008, 0, -.05, 0.02, -.03, 0.049

	CS5	Trust1	Trust2	Trust3	Trust4	Trust5	Trust6	Trust7	Trust8	Trust9	Trust10	CS6	CS7	CS8	CS9	CS10	BCS9	BCS10	BCS11	BCS12	MD	MG	MF	ME	MDI
ML	0.04	0.042	0.005	0.04	0.019	0.076	0.042	.136**	0.053	0.038	0.041	.160**	-0.03	-0.06	-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	0.016	0.046	.552**	.365**	.565**	.459**	.228**	.600**
UL	0.049	-0.01	-0.02	0.028	0.028	0.068	0.052	.081*	.086*	0.032	0.07	.109**	-0.01	-0.06	-0.03	-0.05	-0.07	-0.07	0.02	.326**	.295**	.216**	.263**	.301**	.229**
OL1	0.009	-0.078	-0.018	0.013	0.044	-0.026	-0.036	.083*	0.029	0.047	0.063	.099*	-0.043	0.015	-0.004	-0.117**	-0.089*	-0.069	-0.013	.528**	.254**	.166**	.263**	.229**	.292**
OL2	0.009	-0.02	0.016	0.02	0.048	0.072	0.026	.086*	0.044	0.051	0.066	0.073	-0.01	-0.02	-0.07	-0.04	0.017	0.02	0.007	.505**	.319**	0.06	.278**	.292**	.291**
OL3	0.015	-0.02	0.008	0.013	0.034	0.045	0.012	.088*	0.024	0.048	0.074	.083*	-0.01	-0	-0.03	-0.06	0	0.021	-0.03	.541**	.300**	.242**	.283**	.291**	.291**
OL4	0.017	-0.02	0.018	0.012	0.046	0.059	0.053	.091*	0.05	0.051	0.055	0.058	-0.01	0.022	-0.02	-0.07	-0.07	0.007	0.014	.494**	.320**	.255**	.291**	.292**	.291**
CS11	0.03	.243**	0.072	.100*	.109**	0.072	0.057	.115**	.125**	.126**	.158**	.110**	-0.051	-0.01	-0.001	-0.017	0.035	0.051	.139**	0.062	-0.07	-0.02	0.014	0.031	-0.02
CS1	-0.05	-0.01	-.078*	-0.04	-0.02	-0.03	-.096*	-0.05	0.001	0.069	0.063	.093*	0.036	0.025	0.011	-0.02	0.002	-0.02	0.05	-0.07	-0.059	-0.02	0.031	-0.02	-0.03
CS2	.098*	.087*	0.067	.137**	.139**	0.059	0.035	.083*	.084*	.119**	0.078	.158**	-0.07	0.065	0.075	.094*	.141**	.088*	.140**	.180**	-0.02	0.014	0.038	0.059	.102*
CS3	.164**	.210**	0.061	.167**	.099*	0.053	.119**	.137**	.148**	.191**	.174**	.141**	-0.02	.101*	0.03	0.073	.097*	0.076	0.068	.103**	.101*	-0.08	0.076	0.058	.102*
CS4	0.072	0.057	.127**	0.059	.138**	0.012	0	0.029	.113**	.177**	.130**	0.037	-0.01	.145**	.234**	.231**	.110**	.096*	.128**	0.067	-0.05	0.028	-0.01	0.012	0.025
BCS1	0.078	0.052	0.033	.092*	.159**	0.028	0.023	0.065	.086*	.170**	.146**	.116**	-.151**	.229**	0.028	-0.007	-0.02	0.038	0.054	.117**	0.024	0.087	-0.021	-0.003	0.001
BCS2	.105*	.112**	0.073	.159**	.185**	0.034	-0.012	.097*	.204**	.227**	.199**	0.087	-.225**	.176**	-0.002	-0.061	.110**	0.046	0.032	.130**	.168**	0.08	0.032	0.009	-0.014
BCS3	0.049	.105**	0.064	0.057	.129**	0.043	-0.001	0.065	.097*	.235**	.225**	.149**	-.195**	.149**	0.023	-0.028	.175**	.120**	.131**	.187**	.089*	0.065	0.024	0.083	0
BCS4	.084*	.137**	-0.04	0.056	0.008	.085*	-0.01	.124**	.128**	.145**	.169**	.152**	-0.02	-0.01	0.038	0.051	0.021	0.005	.115**	.117**	.111*	-0.06	0.022	0.05	0.025
BCS5	.183**	.164**	.116**	0.072	.147**	.085*	-0.015	.107**	.182**	.166**	.206**	0.067	-.116**	.349**	0.062	0.044	.152**	.248**	0.034	.131**	-0.047	.126**	-.140**	0.076	0
BCS6	0.07	.096*	.101*	.191**	.144**	.106**	-0.002	0.042	.155**	.190**	.174**	.144**	-.073	.143**	0.04	-0.041	0.022	.093*	.129**	.199**	0.084	.090*	-0.042	0.03	0.045
BCS7	.099*	.099*	.131**	0.08	.084*	.093*	0.061	0.065	0.075	0.023	.174**	.144**	-.122**	.303**	.091*	0.075	.160**	.268**	0.082	.142**	-0.004	.118**	-0.052	0.019	0.008
BCS8	0.04	.099*	.120**	.099*	.186**	0.047	0.027	0.055	.117**	.147**	.132**	.107**	-.084*	.191**	0.069	0.004	0.064	.185**	.118**	.142**	-0.004	0.024	-0.052	-0.001	-0.002
CS12	-.135**	-.083*	-.089*	-.110**	-.135**	-0.039	-0.043	-.103**	-0.056	-0.044	-.120**	-.124**	.158**	0.02	.110**	.162**	0.008	-0.003	-.082*	-.192**	.088*	-0.002	-0.024	-0.05	-0.05
CS13	.087*	0.04	0.044	.099*	0.076	0.043	.085*	0.028	0.022	0	0.026	0.055	0.056	0.073	.078*	0.055	.106**	.152**	.106**	0.03	0.071	-0.07	-0.03	0.011	-0.06
CS14	-0.009	0.03	0.037	0.018	-0.069	0.01	-0.007	0.058	0.033	-0.074	-0.077	-0.046	.096*	-0.042	0.074	.139**	-0.059	-0.034	0.007	-.117**	0.003	-0.07	0.07	-.087*	0.02
CS15	.122**	-0.01	0.009	-0.06	0.03	-0.04	-0.03	0	-0.04	-0.01	0.031	0.022	0.018	0.074	.096*	.132**	0.057	.119**	0.06	0.0002	0.022	0.062	0.015	0.018	0.004
CS16	0.022	-0.03	0.025	-0.03	-0.05	0.036	0.01	-0.06	0.018	-0.03	-0.07	-0.03	0.046	0.055	0.006	0.062	0.006	.097*	.090*	0.02	-0.05	-0.08	0.014	-0.05	0.049
CS17	0.068	.174**	0.069	.115**	0.078	0.049	0.06	.178**	.151**	.182**	.139**	.109**	-0.04	-0.01	0.053	0.037	.089*	0.008	.170**	0.027	.140**	-0.07	0.053	-0.01	0.049

Correlation matrix (variables along both axes; matrix is symmetric).

	CS5	Trust1	Trust2	Trust3	Trust4	Trust5	Trust6	Trust7	Trust8	Trust9	Trust10	CS6	CS7	CS8	CS9	CS10	BCS9	BCS10	BCS11	BCS12	MD	MG	MF	ME	MDI
CS5	1	.277**	.198**	.146**	.324**	.230**	.229**	.094*	.207**	.082*	.094*	.218**	-.105**	.145**	.154**	0.078	0.077	.106*	0.048	0.06	0.04	.114*	-0.034	.091*	0.028
Trust1	.277**	1	.311**	.332**	.263**	.302**	.273**	.287**	.291**	.222**	.190**	.130**	-.03	.091*	0.068	.081*	.124**	.127**	.110**	.119*	0.049	-0.062	0.042	0.013	0.06
Trust2	.198**	.311**	1	.385**	.474**	.320**	.345**	.344**	.311**	.154**	.201**	.147**	-.100*	.134**	.169**	0.028	0.052	.117**	.169**	.120**	0.032	-0.002	-0.001	-0.005	0.032
Trust3	.146**	.332**	.385**	1	.437**	.366**	.338**	.359**	.334**	.267**	.264**	.145**	-.132*	.104*	0.02	0.029	.091*	-0.009	.084*	.152**	0.07	-0.011	0.039	0.048	0.042
Trust4	.324**	.263**	.474**	.437**	1	.437**	.364**	.339**	.323**	.349**	.170**	.202**	-.237**	.107*	0.007	0.067	-.135**	.122**	.152**	0.039	0.039	.099*	-0.025	0.043	-0.02
Trust5	.230**	.302**	.320**	.366**	.437**	1	.523**	.277**	.320**	.154**	.160**	.107*	-.03	0.033	.091*	.091*	0.038	0.076	0.016	0.076	0.048	0.044	0.037	0.04	0.069
Trust6	.229**	.273**	.345**	.338**	.364**	.523**	1	.416**	.219**	.116**	.122**	.108*	-.003	0.063	.113*	.108*	-0.017	0.022	-.118**	0.006	0.042	0.021	-0.012	0.032	0.084
Trust7	.094*	.287**	.344**	.359**	.339**	.277**	.416**	1	.374**	.171**	.298**	.107*	-.123**	.103*	0.036	.080*	.080*	0.007	.122**	.128**	.163**	-0.015	.091*	0.05	.121**
Trust8	.207**	.291**	.311**	.334**	.323**	.320**	.219**	.374**	1	.315**	.303**	.116**	-.118**	.142**	0.053	-0.021	0.073	0.077	.17**	.198**	.081*	0.051	0.001	0.081	0.026
Trust9	.082*	.222**	.154**	.267**	.349**	.154**	.116**	.171**	.315**	1	.593**	.210**	-.147**	.260**	0.075	-0.023	.118**	.103*	.207**	.27**	0.066	0.041	-0.015	.095*	0.027
Trust10	.094*	.190**	.201**	.264**	.170**	.160**	.122**	.298**	.303**	.593**	1	.271**	-.238**	.205**	0.078	-0.039	.103*	0.028	.238**	.215**	.112*	-0.014	-0.024	0.059	0.037
CS6	.218**	.130**	.147**	.145**	.202**	.107*	.108*	.107*	.116**	.210**	.271**	1	-.128**	.141**	0.06	0.043	-0.037	-0.029	.135**	.133**	.154**	-0.021	.131**	-0.01	0.043
CS7	-.105**	-.03	-.100*	-.132*	-.237**	-.03	-.003	-.123**	-.118**	-.147**	-.238**	-.128**	1	-.238**	0.004	.096*	0.013	0.008	0.006	-.094*	-0.021	-.088*	0.009	-0.012	0.017
CS8	.145**	.091*	.134**	.104*	.107*	0.033	0.063	.103*	.142**	.260**	.205**	.141**	-.238**	1	.230**	0.066	.093*	.234**	0.051	.111**	-.099*	0.085	-.108**	0.069	-0.02
CS9	.154**	0.068	.169**	0.02	0.007	.091*	.113*	0.036	0.053	0.075	0.078	0.06	0.004	.230**	1	.483**	0.051	.143**	.102*	0.038	-0.02	0.011	-.101*	0.029	0.06
CS10	0.078	.081*	0.028	0.029	0.067	.091*	.108*	.080*	-0.021	-0.023	-0.039	0.043	.096*	0.066	.483**	1	.090*	.105*	0.016	-0.013	-.100*	0.045	-0.023	0.014	0.048
BCS9	0.077	.124**	0.052	.091*	-.135**	0.038	-0.02	.080*	0.073	.118**	.103*	-0.037	0.013	.093*	0.051	.090*	1	.580**	.355**	.165**	-0.07	0.05	0.025	0.064	-0.03
BCS10	.106*	.127**	.117**	-0.009	.122**	0.076	0.022	0.007	0.077	.103*	0.028	-0.029	0.008	.234**	.143**	.105*	.580**	1	.277**	.130**	-0.05	0.041	0.001	0.064	-0.05
BCS11	0.048	.110**	.169**	.084*	.152**	0.016	-.118**	.122**	.17**	.207**	.238**	.135**	0.006	0.051	.102*	0.016	.355**	.277**	1	.290**	0.033	-0.052	.094*	0.043	-0.049
BCS12	0.06	.119*	.120**	.152**	0.039	0.076	0.006	.128**	.198**	.27**	.215**	.133**	-.094*	.111**	0.038	-0.013	.165**	.130**	.290**	1	0.072	-0.023	.110*	0.012	0.012
MD	0.04	0.049	0.032	0.07	0.039	0.048	0.042	.163**	.081*	0.066	.112*	.154**	-0.021	-.099*	-0.02	-.100*	-0.07	-0.05	0.033	0.072	1	-0.023	.248**	.307**	.291**
MG	.114*	-0.062	-0.002	-0.011	.099*	0.044	0.021	-0.015	0.051	0.041	-0.014	-0.021	-.088*	0.085	0.011	0.045	0.05	0.041	-0.052	-0.023	-0.023	1	0.007	.353**	.122*
MF	-0.034	0.042	-0.001	0.039	-0.025	0.037	-0.012	.091*	0.001	-0.015	-0.024	.131**	0.009	-.108**	-.101*	-0.023	0.025	0.001	.094*	.110*	.248**	0.007	1	.264**	.129**
ME	.091*	0.013	-0.005	0.048	0.043	0.04	0.032	0.05	0.081*	.095*	0.059	-0.01	-0.012	0.069	0.029	0.014	0.064	0.064	0.043	0.012	.307**	.353**	.264**	1	.180**
MDI	0.028	0.06	0.032	0.042	-0.02	0.069	0.084	.121**	0.026	0.027	0.037	0.043	0.017	-0.02	0.06	0.048	-0.03	-0.05	-0.049	0.012	.291**	.122*	.129**	.180**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix L1   The items with factor loadings >.35 after EFA for each area in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion *(All=the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, BL=Belgian Limburg, SL=Southern Limburg, DA=District of Aachen)*

Factor / item	Region			

Factor 1: T1 Trust

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Cultural Sensitivity 5		X	X	
Trust1	X	X	X	
Trust2	X	X	X	X
Trust3	X	X	X	X
Trust4	X	X	X	X
Trust5	X	X	X	
Trust6	X	X	X	X
Trust7	X		X	X
Trust8	X		X	X

Factor 2: CS1 Euregional focus

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Masters Dutch		X	X	
Masters German		X		
OL1	X	X	X	
OL2	X	X	X	X
OL3	X	X	X	X
OL4	X	X	X	X

Factor 3: BCS1 Consumer orientation

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Cultural Sensitivity 8		X	X	
Cultural Sensitivity 9		X		
Business Communication Skill 9	X	X	X	X
Business Communication Skill 10	X	X	X	X
Business Communication Skill 11	X			
Business Communication Skill 12	X	X	X	
Trust 10	X	X		
Trust 9	X	X	X	

Factor 4: BCS2 Negotiating style

Items	All	SL1	SL2	DA1	DA2	BL
Business Communication Skill 1	X			X		X
Business Communication Skill 2	X	X		X		X
Business Communication Skill 3	X	X		X		X

Business Communication Skill 4	X		X	X
Business Communication Skill 6		X		
Business Communication Skill 7		X		

Factor 5: CS2 Foreign partner

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Cultural Sensitivity 4	X	X		
Cultural Sensitivity 10	X		X	

Factor 6: CS3 Focus outside

Items	All	SL1	SL2	DA1	DA2	DA3	BL1	BL2
Masters French	X	X			X		X	
Masters English	X			X			X	
Masters Dialect			X			X		X

Factor 7: BCS3 Personal skills

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Business Communication Skill 6	X			X
Business Communication Skill 7	X			X
Business Communication Skill 8	X		X	X
Cultural Sensitivity 11				X
Cultural Sensitivity 7			X	

Factor 8: CS4 Leisure time

Items	All	SL	DA1	DA2	BL1	BL2
Cultural Sensitivity 11	X			X	X	
Cultural Sensitivity 14	X	X			X	
Cultural Sensitivity 17	X		X			
Cultural Sensitivity 1		X				X

Factor 9: CS5 Quality and service

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Master German	X			
Cultural Sensitivity 11	X		X	
Cultural Sensitivity 16			X	

Factor 10: CS6 Investment

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Cultural Sensitivity 15	X	X		X
Cultural Sensitivity 16	X	X		
Cultural Sensitivity 13				X

Factor 11: CS7 Hard work

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Cultural Sensitivity 13	X	X		

Factor 12: CS8 Language partner

Items	All	SL	DA	BL
Cultural Sensitivity 6	X		X	X
Cultural Sensitivity 8				X

Factor 13: CS9 Business environment

Items	All	SL	DA	BL1	BL2
Cultural Sensitivity 2	X		X	X	
Business Communication Skill 12				X	
Business Communication Skill 7			X		
Cultural Sensitivity 7	X				X

	BL		KA		SL

Path coefficients (>0,1; Lohmöller, 1989)

	BL		KA		SL
BCS	0,11	BCS	0,27	BCS	0,53
CS	0,35	CS	0,23	CS	-0,02
TRUST	0,08	TRUST	0,05	TRUST	-0,01

Outer weights (>0,4; Weiber and Mühlhaus, 2010)

	BL		KA		SL
Factor BCS1	0,89	Factor BCS1	0,91	Factor BCS1	0,95
Factor BCS2	0,75	Factor BCS2a	0,49	Factor BCS2	0,61
		Factor BCS2b	0,42		
		Factor BCS3a	0,13		
		Factor BCS3b	0,01		
Factor CS1	-0,19	Factor CS1	0,30	Factor CS1	0,20
Factor CS2	0,75			Factor CS2	0,26
Factor CS3	0,06	Factor CS3	0,43	Factor CS3	0,50
Factor CS4	0,08	Factor CS4	0,53	Factor CS4	0,37
		Factor CS5	0,16	Factor CS5	0,61
				Factor CS6	0,51
		Factor CS7	0,26		
		Factor CS8	0,83		
Factor CS9a	0,76				
Factor CS9b	0,23				
Factor Trust	1,00	Factor Trust	1,0	Factor Trust	1,00
Importance	0,70	Importance	0,71	Importance	0,64
Sat.2009	0,91	Sat.2009	0,91	Sat.2009	0,91
Sat.2010	0,91	Sat.2010	0,87	Sat.2010	0,92
Sat.2011	0,89	Sat.2011	0,92	Sat.2011	0,92

T-Statistics (>1,65; Tenenhaus, 2005)

	BL		KA		SL
Factor BCS1	14,00	Factor BCS1	183,12	Factor BCS1	602,47
Factor BCS2	59,23	Factor BCS2a	35,87	Factor BCS2	92,21
		Factor BCS2b	25,74		
		Factor BCS3a	0,973		
		Factor BCS3b	0,095		
Factor CS1	10,10	Factor CS1	26,49	Factor CS1 <- CS	0,59
Factor CS2	55,12			Factor CS2 <- CS	0,77
Factor CS3	0,385	Factor CS3	45,36	Factor CS3 <- CS	10,59
Factor CS4	0,54	Factor CS4	39,13	Factor CS4 <- CS	0,99
		Factor CS5	10,13	Factor CS5 <- CS	11,50
				Factor CS6 <- CS	10,64
		Factor CS7	15,64		
		Factor CS8	161,03		
Factor CS9a	67,77				
Factor CS9b	11,00				
Factor Trust	0	Factor Trust	0	Factor Trust	0
Importance	184,90	Importance	246,37	Importance	152,23
Sat.2009	459,30	Sat.2009	656,22	Sat.2009	707,29
Sat.2010	513,45	Sat.2010	314,60	Sat.2010	686,39
Sat.2011	440,98	Sat.2011	710,16	Sat.2011	665,13

Appendix M Anova and Independent Sample t-test on the Regional Models

ANOVA

Factor CS4

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33,163	2	16,582	5,595	,004
Within Groups	1194,324	403	2,964		
Total	1227,488	405			

T-TEST

Group Statistics

	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Factor CS4	Belgian	123	9,7297	1,87952	,16947
	German	113	9,9299	1,61922	,15232

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Factor CS4	Equal variances assumed	,635	,426	-,873	234	,384	-,20020	,22931	-,65197	,25157
	Equal variances not assumed			-,879	233,057	,381	-,20020	,22787	-,64914	,24874

Group Statistics

	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Factor CS4	Belgian	123	9,7297	1,87952	,16947
	Dutch	170	9,2673	1,66712	,12786

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Factor CS4	Equal variances assumed	,114	,736	2,221	291	,027	,46246	,20825		,05258	,87233
	Equal variances not assumed			2,178	243,473	,030	,46246	,21229		,04429	,88063

Group Statistics

	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Factor CS4	German	113	9,9299	1,61922	,15232
	Dutch	170	9,2673	1,66712	,12786

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Factor CS4	Equal variances assumed	,363	,548	3,312	281	,001	,66266	,20005		,26887	1,05644
	Equal variances not assumed			3,332	244,870	,001	,66266	,19887		,27093	1,05438

Group Statistics

	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Factor CS6	Belgian	123	4,9145	,92323	,08325
	Dutch	170	5,0576	,85350	,06546

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
Factor CS6	Equal variances assumed	3,382	,067	-1,368	291	,172	-,14302	,10457		-,34884	,06279
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,351	250,409	,178	-,14302	,10590		-,35159	,06555

Group Statistics

	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Factor CS8	Belgian	123	4,9654	1,23409	,11127
	German	113	4,9157	1,17657	,11068
Factor CS9	Belgian	123	3,3746	1,03208	,09306
	German	113	3,0297	1,02869	,09677

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
									Lower	Upper	
Factor CS8	Equal variances assumed	,031	,861	,316	234	,753	,04965	,15727	-,26019	,35949	
	Equal variances not assumed			,316	233,672	,752	,04965	,15695	-,25957	,35886	
Factor CS9	Equal variances assumed	,001	,975	2,568	234	,011	,34486	,13427	,08031	,60940	
	Equal variances not assumed			2,569	232,441	,011	,34486	,13426	,08034	,60937	

Group Statistics

	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Factor BCS1	German	113	23,5682	3,38590	,31852
	Dutch	170	23,5076	3,91897	,30057
Factor BCS2	German	113	14,2259	2,40534	,22628
	Dutch	170	14,8011	2,23811	,17166

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
									Lower	Upper	
Factor BCS1	Equal variances assumed	,189	,664	,134	281	,893	,06061	,45099	-,82714	,94836	
	Equal variances not assumed			,138	262,391	,890	,06061	,43795	-,80173	,92295	
Factor BCS2	Equal variances assumed	,332	,565	-2,055	281	,041	-,57520	,27992	-1,12621	-,02420	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,025	227,968	,044	-,57520	,28402	-1,13484	-,01557	

Questionnaire Delphi research Phase 1

Hieronder volgen zeven eigenschappen/kenmerken die van belang zijn bij grensoverschrijdend zaken doen. Geef door middel van aanvinken/aangaven door middel van kleur of door verwijderen van de eigenschappen die u niet of minder belangrijk vindt aan welke drie eigenschappen/kenmerken volgens u de belangrijkste zijn.

Om succesvol te zijn bij grensoverschrijdend zaken doen is het van belang dat de organisatie:
Vink max. 3 mogelijkheden aan!

1	Kennis ontwikkelt over de economische en juridische situatie van de buitenlandse regio
2	Kennis ontwikkelt over de manier hoe een buitenlandse ondernemer beslissingen neemt
3	Kennis ontwikkelt over de taal van de buitenlandse regio
4	Rekening houdt met de wensen van de buitenlandse klant
5	Flexibel is met betrekking tot de manier waarop de organisatie communiceert met de buitenlandse zakenpartner
6	Communicatieve vaardigheden ontwikkelt (zoals lichaamstaal, presentatietechnieken en stemgebruik)
7	Nog meer rekening houdt met het onderlinge vertrouwen met de buitenlandse zakenpartner

Geef door middel van de nummers van de drie gekozen eigenschappen/kenmerken aan in welke volgorde men deze eigenschappen/kenmerken zou moeten ontwikkelen oftewel welke eigenschap het belangrijkste is:
De belangrijkste eigenschap:
De op een na belangrijkste eigenschap:
De op twee na belangrijkste eigenschap:

Questionairre Delphi research Phase 2

Hieronder volgen eigenschappen/kenmerken die van belang zijn bij grensoverschrijdend zaken doen. Geef door middel van aanvinken aan, welke organisatie/instantie de onderneming het beste kan helpen bij de ontwikkeling hiervan. Vink telkens één optie aan:

Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de economische en juridische situatie van de buitenlandse regio	De ondernemer/ onderneming zelf
	Andere ondernemers of belangenvertegenwoordigers
	Overheidsinstanties
	Onderwijsinstellingen
Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de manier hoe een buitenlandse ondernemer beslissingen neemt	De ondernemer/ onderneming zelf
	Andere ondernemers of belangenvertegenwoordigers
	Overheidsinstanties
	Onderwijsinstellingen
Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de taal van de buitenlandse regio	De ondernemer/ onderneming zelf
	Andere ondernemers of belangenvertegenwoordigers
	Overheidsinstanties
	Onderwijsinstellingen

Information letter Delphi research Phase 3

Geachte,

Sinds de officiële start van de Euregio Maas-Rijn in 1991 zijn er talloze initiatieven geweest om de handel tussen de verschillende regio's te versterken. Ondanks het feit dat onze Euregio het ten opzichte van de meeste andere Euregio's redelijk doet, is er zeker voor het MKB nog genoeg winst te behalen. Verschillende factoren hebben invloed op het succes van de grensoverschrijdende handel.

In het kader van mijn promotieonderzoek aan de Open Universiteit heb ik onderzocht of de factoren communicatie en cultuur een invloed hebben op deze grensoverschrijdende handel en indien dit zo is, hoe deze invloed eruit ziet en hoe de overheid, het onderwijs en ondersteunde diensten het MKB hierbij kunnen ondersteunen.

Hierbij is ruim 5000 bedrijven in de Euregio gevraagd naar de invloed van de factoren communicatie en cultuur op het resultaat van grensoverschrijdende samenwerking. Uit dit onderzoek zijn uiteindelijk drie factoren naar voren gekomen waarvan de bedrijven hebben aangegeven dat ze het meest urgent zijn om aan te pakken.

Om praktisch advies aan de MKB-ers te kunnen bieden, wil ik u verzoeken om uw medewerking. In twee ronden zal uw input gevraagd worden om zo uiteindelijk tot oplossingen te komen, die bovendien door de praktijk gesteund worden.

In deze eerste ronde wil ik vragen in enkele zinnen aan te geven hoe, volgens u, onderwijs en overheid het MKB praktisch kunnen helpen bij de ontwikkeling van genoemde factoren. In verband met de tijdige verwerking van de informatie wil ik u verzoeken mij uw antwoorden binnen 7 dagen te doen toekomen. U kunt uw antwoorden mailen aan: wiel.hotterbeekx@zuyd.nl, faxen naar *31 46 420 70 79 of sturen naar Zuyd Hogeschool, t.a.v. W. Hotterbeekx, Postbus 5268, NL-6130 PG Sittard.

Bij voorbaat hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking.

Hoogachtend,
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Nederland

Bijlage: vragenlijst

Vraag: Hoe kan de praktische ondersteuning eruit zien bij de ontwikkeling van de genoemde factor door het MKB

		Ondersteunende diensten
1	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de economische en juridische situatie van de buitenlandse regio	
2	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de manier hoe een buitenlandse ondernemer beslissingen neemt	
3	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de taal van de buitenlandse regio	
		Onderwijs
1	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de economische en juridische situatie van de buitenlandse regio	
2	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de manier hoe een buitenlandse ondernemer beslissingen neemt	
3	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de taal van de buitenlandse regio	
		Overheid
1	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de economische en juridische situatie van de buitenlandse regio	
2	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de manier hoe een buitenlandse ondernemer beslissingen neemt	
3	Het ontwikkelen van kennis over de taal van de buitenlandse regio	

Naam:

Functie:

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About the author

Wiel Hotterbeekx was born on 22 September 1960 in Echt in the Netherlands. After finishing high school in 1978 at the Bisschoppelijke College in Echt, he studied German Language and Literature in Nijmegen in the Netherlands. During his study he went several times to Germany to visit the universities of Bonn, Hamburg, and Duisburg. While studying there and afterwards having been in the southern, eastern and the far northern parts of the former German Federal Republic, he experienced the different types of culture in Germany first-hand.

In 1985 he graduated with a Major in Old German Literature and Linguistics having written his thesis on the legend how the monastery Waldsassen from the 10th century was founded and on the fairy tales written by the brothers Grimm.

In 1986, after having served in the military, he was employed as a German teacher for the junior vocational educational system in Venlo. In 1987 he started as a part-time student in ICT and Management at the University of Applied Sciences affiliated with the Zuyd University in Sittard. As of 1991, upon graduation, he combined his job as a teacher at the intermediate school for vocational education with the job of lecturing at the University of Applied Sciences. As of 1998, he transferred his teaching duties completely to the University of Applied Sciences, where besides working as a lecturer in German and ICT, he was also responsible for students' internships in Germany and students' transition from the University of Applied Sciences to an academic university. He was involved as well in curriculum development and served on the Board of Examiners.

In 2008, he first started his PhD at the Eindhoven University of Technology, and then later at the Open University Heerlen, between 2009 and 2011 in combination with a study programme taken at the Maastricht School of Management.

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