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## Rethinking errors:

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2014

### **document version**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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### **citation for published version (APA)**

Dimitrova, N. G. (2014). *Rethinking errors: How error-handling strategy affects our thoughts and others thoughts about us*. [PhD-Thesis - Research and graduation internal, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam]. Wöhrmann Print Service.

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# ENGLISH SUMMARY

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The main goal of the research in this dissertation was to investigate the question: "Does error-handling strategy affect people's thoughts and subsequent outcomes?" There are two error-handling strategies: (1) error management, a strategy focusing on catching errors, learning from them, and minimizing their negative consequences and (2) error prevention, a strategy focusing solely on preventing errors. In Chapters 2 and 3 of the dissertation I looked at the interindividual effects of leaders' error-handling strategy on followers' thoughts about leaders (perceptions of leader warmth, incorporating sociability and morality, and leader competence) and satisfaction with the leaders, motivation, organizational goal-fulfillment, and trust. In Chapters 4 and 5, I investigated the effects of manipulated error-handling strategy on one's own thoughts (on-task and off-task thoughts), cognitive appraisals (challenge and threat), and subsequent individual task performance (analogical and adaptive transfer performance).

The findings of Chapter 2 show that error management leaders are perceived as warmer in terms of sociability (all studies) and equally (Chapter 2, experimental Study 1a and 1b) or more competent (Chapter 2, questionnaire Study 2) than error prevention leaders. Additionally, in Study 2 leaders' error management strategy was positively related to followers' satisfaction with the leader and follower motivation, with warmth perceptions mediating this relationship. Although both researchers and practitioners have voiced concerns regarding the perception of leaders using an error management strategy, it can be concluded that error management is not bad for leaders' image. On the contrary, error management is beneficial for perception and associated with more satisfied and motivated followers.

Chapter 3 showed that being seen as an error management leader is positively associated with trust in the leader (field Study 1). The opposite was the case for error prevention leaders. Additionally, the relationship between leaders' error-handling strategy and followers' trust was mediated by perceived morality (field Study 1 and experimental Study 2) and competence (field Study 1 only) of the leader, once again showing that the thoughts of followers about error management leaders were more positive. The conclusion that can be drawn based on these findings is that being seen as an error management leader rather than an error prevention leader is associated with being trusted more by one's followers because one is perceived as more moral and competent.

In Chapter 4 I investigated the effect of error-handling instructions on on-task and off-task thoughts (experimental Study 1), the effect of error-handling instructions on performance (experimental Study 2), and the potential mediation of on-task and off-task thoughts on the effect of error-handling on performance (experimental Study 2). The results show that

receiving error management instructions led participants to report more on-task thoughts (both studies). Additionally, Study 2 shows the expected positive effects of error management on analogical and adaptive transfer performance, which were mediated by on-task thoughts. In other words, the findings of Chapter 4 show that error management not only affects positively the thoughts of others about the person using this strategy, but also one's own thoughts, which in turn improve task performance.

The experiment reported in Chapter 5 extended the findings of Chapter 4 by investigating whether it was error management, error prevention, or both that drove the effects on thoughts and performance observed in Chapter 4. The results show that error prevention dampened positive effects and amplified negative effects on thinking and performance (i.e., fewer on-task thoughts, more negative self-related off-task thoughts, lower adaptive transfer performance), whereas error management dampened negative effects (lower threat appraisals). These findings show that error management is a more positive strategy to use because of the negative consequences associated with an error prevention strategy. Consequently, when faced with errors, it is best to approach them using an error management strategy as it more positively impacts one's cognition and performance.

Overall, the results of this dissertation show that error management is better than error prevention as it (1) more positively affects others' thoughts about you, making them perceive you in a more positive light, and (2) more positively influences your own thoughts, making you better able to focus on the task at hand. What is more, error management rather than error prevention is associated with more positive outcomes for the self (i.e., task performance), and for others (higher motivation, satisfaction, and trust). We can thus conclude that it is in our best self interest and in the interest of those around us to rethink errors as something to be managed instead of solely focusing on their prevention.