

PhD Vlog Catch-up Verena Stigl in South Korea

**SPEAKERS**

**Verena Stigl**

<b>TIME IN</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>SPEECH</b>
<b>00:00:00</b>		
<b>00:00:07</b>	<b>Verena Stigl</b>	Hi again to an update from our PhD Live. It's been a full month since my last video blog and a couple of things have happened since then, so I wrote two conference papers which both got accepted, so yay! But the most important thing that happened is that I travelled to other side of the globe for my external research study. So I've been here in Korea a month
<b>00:00:30</b>	<b>Verena Stigl</b>	at the Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, the KAIST in Seoul, and I'm here to conduct a study misunderstandings in risk management in intercultural teams. So, "How could I communicate about risks? What could go wrong there?" And if you think about it, you can't get more different in terms of communication than Korea and Northern Europe; so think of hierarchy, think of the politeness norm, and also think of the highly contextual communication that is done here in Korea.
<b>00:01:00</b>	<b>Verena Stigl</b>	So what I'm going to do here is that I'm conducting interviews with practitioners to understand the typical misunderstandings, and more importantly, what we can actually do to resolve them to make. risk communication in intercultural teams more efficient and with less misunderstandings. So, well I've been here now for a month and you might think that Korea is pretty exotic, but what actually I found out that is the exotic specimen here. So
<b>00:01:30</b>	<b>Verena Stigl</b>	why is that? Well for once I am doing qualitative work, I'm doing interviews and this is strangely odd to Koreans who still prefer robust signs to be quantitative, especially to the older academics here, I always have to defend why I'm doing extra qualitative work. Secondly, as a PhD for Denmark I take a lot of responsibility for the design and the execution of my research which is quite different from many of my
<b>00:02:00</b>	<b>Verena Stigl</b>	PhD colleagues here from Korea who are more in the hierarchy and take more of the task central research projects from the professor, so here I'm taking more freedom than they would. And thirdly, I just don't follow the crazy work hours, so you might have heard the clichés of the Korean staying in the office until ten, eleven, midnight... They do that, I don't. But to put things into perspective, all my Korean, especially student colleagues; it's not so much of a big
<b>00:02:30</b>	<b>Verena Stigl</b>	deal to play a couple of hours of an online game during work hours, to take a nap in your office chair, or to go out for very long lunch breaks. So that puts the whole crazy things in perspective I think. But well, that's not the only thing where Denmark and Korea is quite different; I mean I came quite culturally prepared, as it's part of my research topic. So I'm aware of many of the things although I'm sure I violate these
<b>00:03:00</b>	<b>Verena Stigl</b>	Korean politeness norms and other societal norms like how many times a day. At least I am somewhat aware of them; and so this preparation helped me in some way that those from the Danish perspective,

		sometimes weird interactions are more academically interesting to me than irritating. And when I heard from other foreign researchers, these encounters actually can become very irritating over times. So those are things that you
00:03:30	Verena Stigl	should think about when you come to Korea that might seem alien, especially when you're coming from a Northern country? Well the first thing is hierarchy; so again this is not a cliché but it's a matter of fact and you'd better play by the rules to make things work and not to irritate people. And actually I also heard stories that Koreans amongst themselves can get highly confused when the hierarchy is not clear cut. And that can create a lot of problems, so following the hierarchy
00:04:00	Verena Stigl	is just the thing that makes things work, and if you don't know how the hierarchy is set, that actually creates confusion and problems. Another thing that was quite surprising, especially in the scientific environment here, is that open discussions and even questions are considered impolite which I feel makes scientific discussion a little bit hard. But then again, the Korean workaround is that you take those kind of discussions, these kind of questions, to the face-to-face level; so if you are in a group
00:04:30	Verena Stigl	people don't oppose, it doesn't mean anything. So the German "[German speech] it just doesn't apply to Korea. So what I've learned here is just saying nothing doesn't mean anything at all. A third thing that was quite interesting to me is that excelling and competing is of extremely high importance, and I was actually surprised by some encounters, some quite informal encounters where I felt, well actually they are just looking for
00:05:00	Verena Stigl	the competitive edge that they could get out of it. Again not everyone but it's something that just regularly comes up and I'm sure that this mindset is somewhat responsible for this rocketing economic success that Korea had over the past decades. That, it sometimes also leads to an unwillingness to really cooperate, and even to some sort of secrecy regarding one's own work or research, again something that's kind of weird in science, but yeah that's the Korean way of doing things. So if you think of going
00:05:30	Verena Stigl	to Korea for research or even doing a full programme, just bear in mind that things are done very, very, very differently here and that you have to learn to cope with them, especially if you are coming, for instance, from a Northern European country which is very different in the way how things are organised. Yet the country is seriously amazing; it has overwhelming and mind-blowing cities full of colour and things to do, and amazing amounts
00:06:00	Verena Stigl	of traffic that still work which is very surprising for me. Outside the cities, it has beautiful landscapes great for hiking, also the mountains. The food, as you might expect, is sometimes weird but really tasty and nice. And people are overall really friendly and helpful, so I feel very welcomed and also extremely safe here, which I expected because I read it before but still I think it's a safest place I've ever been to. So anyway, for me it has been a very
00:06:30	Verena Stigl	exciting experience; I really love digging into this culture which is, in so many regards, completely alien from my prior experiences. But I love also to see the cracks that especially the younger people express when it comes to questioning the old ways, so I think Korea is a country where culture-wise a lot will happen over the next decades. Well anyway, so

		much for little update; I'll speak to you again in Summer - then from
<b>00:07:00</b>	<b>Verena Stigl</b>	the other side of the world again. So take care and see you in a couple of months, bye-bye.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**