

# Preface

Scholars, researchers and practitioners are often confronted with the question why people are actively involved in work activities, remain engaged in and attached to these work activities and also remain committed to their employing organisations. These questions have not been fully resolved yet despite numerous research efforts, various research design angles as well as different theoretical perspectives on this intriguing topic. This book shares the results of an Identity Work Research Project conducted mainly in South African organisations.

*Work identity* is a relatively “new” concept in this domain and proposes a relatively different approach towards understanding engaging behaviours at work. The work identity construct is grounded in two different Identity Theory streams, namely, Social and Role Identity Theory. Identity Theory affords researchers the opportunity to take a fundamental relook at conceptualizing engaging work behaviours such as in work identity and identity work specifically. A qualitative research approach offered the opportunity to gain a better understanding of what identity work entailed in a practice setting. But in this case, only with the qualification that work identity and identity work are explained from an Identity Theory perspective.

This book not only shares the conceptualization of a work identity measure but also divulges research findings on how the measure was applied as a criterion, in a predictive mode and finally also in a structural equation model context. Scholars, researchers and practitioners will find this book informative and of practical use in their respective application settings. Hopefully, this book will also serve as a trigger for initiating research that may address the many unresolved research issues relating to work identity and identity work. Bon voyage!

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