

UNDERSTANDING GENDER IDENTITY AT WORKPLACE FOR PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The paper studies the concept of gender identity at work through certain attributes in professional occupations. These attributes are rated by the respondents as characteristics for professional men, professional women and if those attributes are required to be successful in the profession. It tries to understand if men and women are rated similarly or differently on those traits and if there is some identity gap or presence of certain stereotypical attitudes in the professions. It is important to understand these through hypothesis testing as there is still some biasness and association of stereotypical behaviour which ultimately affect the diversity in the organisation. The statistical analysis reveals that not all attributes are viewed as similar for men and women. It also identifies some attributes particularly significant for professional men and women. There is no clear evidence of stereotypical behaviour in the professions under study. However, the results cannot be generalized because of some limitations.

KEYWORDS: Identity, Identity Formation, Gender Stereotyping, Social Construction.

Introduction

What it takes to be successful in a profession? Many ways have been used in order to understand the nature of a profession and beliefs attached to it. One of the means to understand it is through the process of identity formation. Identity has no particular definition and can be only understood through the presence of various contexts; identity as existence of something that displays one or more attributes or characteristics (Lane and Scott 2007) or can be used as a reference to self and also as a reference to a social category which shall add to social identity (Ravishankar and Pan, 2008: 222; Stryker and Burke, 2000). The concept of identity evolves through interaction of various individual and social dimensions. An individual follows certain steps or processes in order to complete the identity phenomenon, namely, identity formation, identity activation and the resulting behavior (Bothma, Lloyd, Khapova, 2015). At workplace too individual characteristics associated with self and the special social norms attached with the profession tends to affect the perceived attitude towards a profession. All such factors affect the behavioral and psychological attitude towards a profession. This paper tries to study such attitudes prevailing in male dominated and professional jobs.

Different theories have been developed to understand identity development phenomenon. Social identity and role identity theories are the basic and prominent theories. These theories provide two perspectives on the socially constructed self concept. Self concept is explained as a product of individual behavior and social structure that developed parallel to each other in different disciplines. Social identity theories are categorized into two, namely the Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self Categorisation Theory (SCT). SIT explains how people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories such as organisational membership, religious affiliation, gender and age cohort (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). SCT

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