Paul G.W. Jansen · Gert Roodt *Editors*

Conceptualising and Measuring Work Identity

South-African Perspectives and Findings

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Springer

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Foreword

Humans have marked the ebb and flow of time in competing for global recognition. The rise and fall of ancient civilisations is marked by cycles of light and darkness. The twentieth century is flanked on the one side by first global wars and extreme dogmas. On the other, global connectivity was engineered. Telecommunication, heavy air traffic, mega-events, exploring space and unleashing energy from an atom became commonplace. Disruptive change continues. By 2009, another threshold was crossed when emerging economies became the majority shareholders of global GDP growth. Big business leaders are jockeying for position in this rapidly evolving corporate landscape.

Of interest to South Africa is that our continent, once doomed, now counts among the next growth frontiers. Many companies in Africa initiated aggressive regional expansion strategies, repurposing the continent from being a mere natural resource. Global eagerness now frames itself with the dark risks embedded in sustainable development. Moving closer to local platinum mining, the Marikana massacre illustrates that 20 years of South African democracy have not yet dried the tears of the majority since Alan Paton wrote *Cry Beloved Country* in 1948.

On this note, Shelley's sonnet Ozymandias enters. The fate of a colossal statute of Ramses II, the Pharaoh who allegedly played a role in shaping Moses' *identity work*, is argued. Shelley evokes images of the desert wind and sand eroding Ozymandias' monumental testimony to two stupendous granite legs on a scripted pedestal. "I am Ozymandias, king of kings; look on my works, ye mighty and despair…" Nature has surpassed a world power. Cold fact is that, over time, few emperors seemed fully clothed in the eyes of the billions trying to make sense of work and being worked over. Considering these daunting conditions, one may well ask how Homo *sapiens* (Latin: "wise man") makes sense of jobs consuming immense time and self-identity?

The authors of *Work Identity* questions who we can be at work. They remind global citizens of Thoreau's wisdom. "What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lives within us". At the end of the day, we who

live on this earth will, after all, have to live with our decisions. Who we are at work, how we makes sense of what is right or wrong, what works for us and what doesn't. In this day and age, the talented do not easily opt for a persona *du jour*.

This book centres people in productive work. The authors frame human trials and errors as we get stretched between job demands and job resources, searching for ways to do our best; being inspired by those who care about our development at work. Research conducted by master's and doctoral candidates illustrates how people define, or deny, their attributes in relation to each other at and beyond work. Chapter contributions triangulate to the results generated by talented people connecting intellectually and emotionally with their organisations and work teams. The research team also provide sobering clarity on cause and intermediate effect. Dropping performance, turnover intentions and steering clear of talent finally lost can be managed.

The concluding chapter reminded me that the University of Johannesburg prepares about 50 000 students for the world of work. I could not answer to whether we actually contribute to our graduates' sense of *Work Identity*. Hypothetically, the seeds of *Work Identity* are sown during great graduates' years of study, nurtured by lecturers who cared and made learning exiting in preparing them for life ahead. I indeed hope for an expansion of the authors' rich contribution from the world of work, backwards, towards repurposing High Education – a learning system especially now subject to jockeying the tensions of global recognition and regional realities.

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Daneel van Lill

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!

Amsterdam, The Netherlands — Paul G.W. Jansen
Johannesburg, South Africa — Gert Roodt

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Chapter 1
Introduction: What This Book Is All About

Gert Roodt, Paul G.W. Jansen, and Freddie Crous

1.1 Introduction

The SA society is in a process of transition. This transition also resonates in the workplace where major changes are taking place. Part of this transformation process is to find and establish a new national work identity. Work Identity seeks to answer the question: 'Who am I (are we) at work?' Work Identity has the potential to provide stability in such a changing and often turbulent social environment.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the historical context and background of the SA society from which the current broader work context is developing. A key feature of the SA society is that it is highly polarized and deeply divided around some work-related issues. Possible reasons for these tensions/divisions will be introduced, as well as the associated challenges that these divisions may pose for broader societal change as well as more specific changes in the SA workplace. The chapter will further indicate what the implications of these challenges are for identity and work-related identity formation and research in the SA workplace. An SA case study is provided to introduce some key concepts used in work identity literature and in this book.

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Against the background of these aforementioned aspects, the main research questions of the Work Identity Project are posed as well as what will follow in the rest of the book. The next section provides a condensed overview of the broader SA society in which the workforce operates.

1.2 The SA Work Context

A major challenge exists to enhance productivity in SA workplaces, and this challenge is characterized by increasing employee diversity at all levels. As an organization becomes more diverse, it must overcome the practical problems that arise from differences in background, values, perspectives and preferences. Instead of people working together, ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dynamics often prevail, which means that harnessing workforce diversity for competitive advantage presents a major challenge to SA businesses (Human 2005).

Work identities (individuals’ identification with their job, occupation, work setting and employer) play a decisive role to ensure the individual’s successful integration into work settings and the labour market (Kirpal 2004a). Work identities contribute to greater group cohesion, which makes individual and collective productivity possible.

The post-apartheid SA work context is inseparably intertwined and linked with how the SA society developed over the last number of decades. Some social commentators often describe the SA society as highly polarized and as deeply divided. There are a number of possible reasons (in no priority order) for these divisions:

First, SA society is highly heterogeneous consisting of several different main ethnic groups (9 ethnic groups), and these groups speak different languages and dialects (SA has 11 official languages). These different ethnic groups have distinct social and cultural identities which poses critical leadership challenges and skills in terms of diversity management. It is also evident that some political leaders are irresponsibly trying to capitalize on these divisions and tensions.

Second, most of these mentioned ethnic and language groups have their own unique cultures as well as associated values and belief systems that have developed in different geographical regions over the space of many decades or even centuries. If these groups were to be compared in terms of Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions, they may, for instance, be distinctly different on dimensions such as individualism versus collectivism or power distance. These differences pose key challenges in terms of understanding their cultural (social) identities, and this may have possible consequences for their work identities.

Third, adding flavour to the mix of diversity, some regions in SA are highly industrialized and urbanized with well-developed infrastructure (that can typically be described as first world) and as a consequence more densely populated, while other regions are distinctly rural and also more sparsely populated with underdeveloped infrastructure (that could be typically described as third world).

Fourth, within these different ethnic and culture groups, there are also generational differences that further add to the complexity mix. The younger generation prefers to be urbanized and are in general better educated, as opposed to an older generation that is often more rurally located and generally lower educated.

Fifth, levels of education and societal development between and amongst these different mentioned regions as well as ethnic and culture groups vary largely, which makes cross-cultural comparisons extremely complex and difficult.

Sixth, many of these inequalities mentioned above are the result of the legacy of apartheid. Apartheid was an oppressive political system where an artificial divide was placed between so-called white and non-white groups – in essence a political, economic and legal system where societal class was determined along racial lines. The white group was mainly from European descent (also commonly referred to as Europeans), while the non-white group were mainly from African/Asian descent. During the reign of the apartheid system, the non-white groups were barred from fully participating in the main stream economy and associated privileges, forcing them to create a secondary, informal economy. Besides the harm and injury the apartheid system has caused on a personal level, this artificial divide has not only left a legacy of a deeply divided society but has also created a highly polarized workforce. The workforce is polarized along several different dimensions that will be discussed in more detail next.

1.2.1 Key Features of a Polarized SA Workplace

Historically, the SA labour market has been a distorted one, in terms of access to education, skills, managerial and professional work based on race and ethnicity (Bowmaker-Falconer et al. 1998). While statutory-based racial discrimination has systematically been abolished since 1980 and significant labour law reforms have occurred in the decade after 1980, the apartheid labour market has left the majority of the economically active population of SA inadequately trained and economically disempowered with the attendant effects of historical discrimination still evident today.

The legacy left by apartheid resulted in different sets of tensions or polarizations that are visible in society and in the workplace today. Some of these tensions are highly tacit supported either by deeply rooted ideological, value and belief systems or are still fuelled by political parties and/or union leaders for their own biased objectives and political gains. The consequences of this divided and polarized society can be best summarized in the World Competitive Report where problematic factors in doing business in South Africa were listed as (Robbins et al. 2009):

- Inadequately educated workforce
- Restrictive labour legislation and regulations
- Growing corruption as manifested by crime and theft
- An inefficient government bureaucracy

More specific challenges that SA leaders/managers and policy makers need to face to heal a divided nation are the following:

1.2.1.1 Non-unionized Versus Unionized Workers

The somewhat outdated ideological debate of labour versus capital is still raging in post-apartheid SA. This debate is fuelled most of the times with emotional rhetoric by union leaders during strikes and union campaigns.

It appears that most of the work stoppages observed in 2011 can be ascribed to actions by SATAWU, Solidarity, NUMSA, CEPPWAWU, SAMWU, NEHAWU and NUM of which SATAWU and Solidarity accounted for the most strikes, mainly because these two unions operate across different industry sectors. SA lost 2,806,656 working days in 2011 compared to the 20,674,737 working days in 2010 which accounts for a dramatic decrease. However, this decrease does not represent a general trend, but rather reflects the fluctuations in these figures. For this 2011 period, workers lost a record amount of R1 billion in wages for participation in strikes owing to the no-work-no-pay principle (Republic of South Africa 2011). Clearly these kinds of losses cannot be afforded by the national economy or even by the poor who need this money the most.

1.2.1.2 Supply and Demand of Skilled Versus Unskilled Workers: The HR Paradox

A large portion of the SA population is either unskilled or lowly skilled. At the same time, SA faces a huge shortage of skilled labour (especially in technical skills areas). This oversupply of unskilled labour and the severe shortage of skilled labour is considered to be one of SA's human resource (HR) paradoxes.

Amongst others, the following categories of scarce skills are listed (with numbers in brackets): specialist managers (over 10,000); construction, distribution, production/operations managers (over 10,000); events, hospitality, service and retail managers (around 7,500); HR and training professionals (about 12,000); sales, marketing and public relations professionals (around 6,500) and engineering professionals (more than 17,000) to name but a few (Republic of South Africa 2008). It just does not make any sense to turn away thousands of meritorious applicants at university or higher learning institutions' gates each year (without providing alternative development opportunities) while the national economy is suffering from critical skills shortages across several higher skills categories. An inefficient secondary school system places an additional burden on universities that are trying to remedy the inefficiencies of the school system. SA stands to lose another generation that will just add another growing social liability to the declining tax base. Based on all the different types of social grants, SA is already on the brink of becoming a welfare state.

1.2.1.3 The Employed Versus the Unemployed

A large portion of the economically active population in SA is unemployed and lives under severe poverty conditions (Robbins et al. 2009). Some analysts estimate this unemployment figure as high as 30 % while other sources estimate it to be

around 23 %, but these variations can be mainly ascribed to finer nuances on how employment and unemployment is defined.

A joint statistical report of the BRICS countries (Statistics SA 2013) indicates the SA unemployment rate to be 25.1 %. The economically active population is estimated to be 18.1 million (which is 35.4 % of the total population) of which 13.5 million are formally employed, and this economically active portion (in terms of portion size) compares poorly with the other BRICS countries. It therefore remains a key challenge to lower unemployment rates and to increase the portion of economically active citizens (and in doing so, also broaden the tax base).

1.2.1.4 The Rich (the 'Haves') Versus the Poor (the 'Have Nots'): The Gini Index[1]

The joint BRICS report (Statistics SA 2013) notes that the gross domestic product (GDP) for SA is US$384 billion while the per capita GDP accrues to US$7,790. According to this report, 6.8 % of the GDP is spent on education and 4.0 % on health. This report also mentions that the Gini index for SA is 0.65 based on 2011 figures compared to Brazil's 0.501 and China's 0.474 2012 figures.

This Gini index suggests that the distribution of income in SA is still severely skewed and as such suggests a large gap between lower and higher income groups – that is, the rich and the poor. These large differences in income also resonate and negatively impact in other areas such as basic health care (Keeton 2010), obesity and health-related problems (Ziraba et al. 2009) and the HIV/Aids pandemic that is fuelled by gender and income differences (Shisana et al. 2010).

1.2.1.5 The Previously Disadvantaged Versus the Currently Disadvantaged

From the above discussions, it is evident that the previous apartheid system (entrenched by legislation) had an immensely negative impact on the SA society and its development. The people affected by the apartheid system are often referred to as the previously disadvantaged groups (PDGs). Different sets of legislation were created to rectify the wrongs of the past and to benefit the designated groups (PDGs). These are the Constitution of the Republic of SA (Act 108 of 1996), the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Act 4 of 2000), the Broad Based Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998), the Basic Conditions of

[1]The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income (or, in some cases, consumption expenditure) amongst individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Lorenz curve plots the cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients, starting with the poorest individual or household. The Gini index measures the area between the Lorenz curve and a hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as a percentage of the maximum area under the line. Thus, a Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality (http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/south-africa/gini-index).

Employment Act (Act 75 of 1997), the Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995), the Skills Development Act (Act 97 of 1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act (Act 9 of 1999).

However, these current sets of legislation implemented to rectify the inequalities of the past are now creating newly disenfranchised or marginalized groups sometimes referred to as the currently disadvantaged groups (CDGs) – those groups who are currently barred from the political or economic mainstream for various reasons such as political orientation, ethnic minorities, racial minorities or other reasons. This is becoming a growing threat to the newly established SA democracy. Other comments on the effect of legislative workplace changes as it may impact on work identity include:

- Poor hiring decisions to reach employment equity targets and the declining morale of white employees (Jafta 1998)
- Heightened race classification and 'reverse discrimination' leading to a decrease in employee loyalty and the lack of retention of skilled employees, primarily white males (Jafta 1998)
- Unrealistic short-term expectations of members of the designated groups that increases racial and social conflict within companies
- A culture of entitlement '…that undermines initiative, self-confidence and self-reliance' that those from designated groups, expecting secured positions, may adopt (Jafta 1998: 5)

It is obvious that 'two wrongs can never make a right'. The key challenge is to how to correct the 'wrongdoings' of the past, without creating 'new wrongs' or 'new victims' in the future.

1.2.1.6 The Pragmatists Versus the Ideologists

The tensions and polarizations described above need to be resolved in order for the SA workforce to function effectively and for it to be productive. But the challenge is to figure out how to go about in resolving these complex societal and workplace issues that are intricately interlinked. There is disagreement on how to resolve these issues, which can be mainly attributed to differences in education levels and related belief systems. One group seemingly wants to follow a pragmatic approach by developing a strategy that would address poverty and inequality. The proponents of such an approach (from within the ANC Government) have proposed a National Development Plan (NDP) (www.info.gov.za/issues/national-development-plan) based on national growth and development priorities in order to reduce poverty and to eliminate inequality. But those who are opposing this plan (unions such as NUM and Cosatu) don't present any rational argument but are trying to discredit and ridicule the NDP as 'a right-wing plot' with emotive slogans and statements.

It also becomes evident that a key imperative is to find solutions that will address the poverty and inequalities that will create equal opportunities and benefits to all

individuals at all levels and within all societies in SA. Against this background, the following strategy was developed:

The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF 2009–2014) is a statement of government intent (Statistics SA 2010). It identifies the development challenges facing SA and outlines the medium-term strategy for improving living conditions of South Africans. The MTSF base document is meant to guide planning and resource allocation across all spheres of government. National and provincial departments in particular need to develop their 5-year strategic plans and budget requirements, taking into account the medium-term imperatives. The following five development objectives were formulated:

- Halve poverty and unemployment by 2014.
- Ensure a more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth and reduce inequality.
- Improve the nation's health profile and skills base and ensure universal access to basic services.
- Build a nation free of all forms of racism, sexism, tribalism and xenophobia.
- Improve the safety of citizens by reducing incidents of crime and corruption.

1.2.2 Challenges and Implications for Societal Change

The post-apartheid SA economy, like many other modern economies, is characterized by a growingly diverse workforce. This growing workforce diversity is the result of conscious and purposive change processes to transform the relative homogeneous, pre-1980 workforce into a multicultural workforce which to some degree will reflect the cultural diversity of the whole SA society and not only selected groups.

These radical change processes will not only have major implications for all economically active individuals' social identities but more specifically also for their work identities, because these change processes manifest themselves most prominently in the workplace, the sociocultural 'melting pot' of a new SA society. The question arises whether all the members of this diverse workforce experience a full sense of belonging and identification towards their work and employing organizations. Only under these conditions may we succeed in unlocking the full potential of all workers on all levels of society. The answer may be found in understanding work-based identity.

The present Work Identity Project starts from the premise that work is central to the building of individual identity and is influenced by job and individual characteristics. It is proposed that these factors could influence work performance and accordingly impact on organizational performance. The overall objective of this Work Identity Project therefore is to investigate the impact of work identity on individual performance amongst members of a diverse work force in SA, resulting in the development of an integrated model to assist in enhancing SA companies' performance.

1.2.3 Implications for Identity and Work Identity

Work identity (or also known as people's identification with their work) and identity work (the process of developing a work identity) are important constructs in understanding people's involvement in and attachment to work. SA researchers need to establish the relational context of the complex negotiation processes of SA individuals' work-based identities. The explanation and understanding of these negotiation processes involve theories from the field of social psychology and psychoanalysis, as well as an understanding of the structural conditions of the SA workplace. Individuals' particular life spheres and life roles in which they function affect the construction of their work-based identities.

The present study starts from the premise that work is central to the building of individual identity and is influenced by job and individual characteristics. It is proposed that these factors will have impact on work performance through developing a strong WI, as illustrated in Fig. 1.1.

Although work identity has not been clearly conceptualized at this point in time, it is proposed in Fig. 1.1 that work identities are developed at the interface between individual characteristics (biographic and demographic variables such as age, gender, race, language, job level, geographic region, etc.) on the one hand and job characteristics (job demands, job resources) on the other hand (Kirpal 2004b). Job demands refer to 'the things that need to be done' and typically include aspects such as work overload, work-home conflict, emotional job demands and role problems. Job resources may play either an intrinsic motivational role (by fostering employee growth, learning and development) or they may play an extrinsic role (by being instrumental in achieving work goals) (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004).

The next section presents an exemplary SA work identity case study that will also introduce key concepts related to work-based identity encountered in the rest of the book. This case would provide the reader with a clearer 'picture' of what (work-based) identity and its associated concepts are all about.

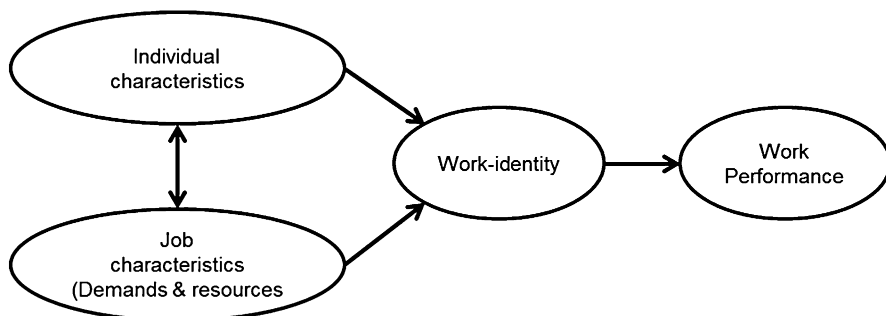

Fig. 1.1 The Work Identity Project's abbreviated research model

1.3 An SA Case Study

> Every person is born into life as a blank page – and every person leaves life as full book of experiences. Our lives are our stories, and our story is our lives. Story is the narrative thread of our experience – not what literally happens, but what we make out of what happens, what we tell each other and what we remember. This narrative determines much of what we do with the time given to us between the opening of the blank page the day we are born and the closing of the book the day we die. (Baldwin 2005: ix)

In the following case study, Freddie Crous shares a chapter of his own book of life about his personal journey. This personal account contains some concepts and/or events that are used in explaining and appreciating identity and identity work.

'It was past visiting hours. My family and friends had left the hospital ward. I had ample time for reflection.

'Why was I elated and not scared?' I asked myself. I had every reason to be anxious. The previous day Dr. Margolius, a nephrologist (a physician with a super specialization in the treatment of kidney-related diseases), had informed me that my kidneys had stopped functioning and that I was in urgent need of haemodialysis, a procedure whereby my blood would be pumped through a machine that would remove waste and excess fluid and return cleansed blood to my body. 'Without dialysis you will certainly die', he said. Moreover, I had to be treated three times a week, 4 h per treatment, until a transplant could be performed on me.

As the doctor spoke, I realized my life as an able-bodied person had come to an end. What appeared in my mind was a picture of a big boulder rolling towards me. It was so big that it would certainly crush me. Then Frankl's (1984) case for 'tragic optimism', i.e. that meaning made available through unavoidable suffering, came to me. This conviction gave me the courage to dodge the rock – I accepted my fate and suddenly felt strong.

I recalled the doctor's last words before leaving the ward: 'Do you have any siblings?' From my frown he gathered that I did not understand the reason behind his question. 'One of them may have to donate you a kidney'. An image of my two brothers appeared in my mind's eye. (Dialysis patients without the possibility of receiving a kidney from a living donor tend to remain on a kidney waiting-list for years.)

The next morning I had to be fitted with a catheter, just below my right collarbone, by which I would be connected to a dialysis machine. In a small room I was strapped to a narrow operating table and tilted upside down in order to increase the flow of blood to the upper extremities of my body. After being given a local anaesthetic, an incision was made through which a thick needle was inserted into a large vein and then a wire was inserted through the tube of the needle. After the needle was removed, a tube was inserted via the wire and positioned close to my heart.

The procedure was physically agonizing, but what preceded it proved to be particularly disconcerting. Although aware that Johannesburg General Hospital (now Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital) was a training facility for the medical faculty of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), I did not expect the

procedure to be performed by an intern from Mozambique, at the time rated by agencies as the poorest country on earth, meaning that the young doctor must have had limited exposure to medical technology. Another doctor, who was more or less my age, introduced the intern to me and explained that he would instruct her how to perform the procedure – her very first attempt at it. What had me particularly worried was that both of them had a limited command of English. The doctor's accent gave away the fact that he was from Eastern Europe, while the intern's mother tongue was Portuguese.

I wanted to get up and stop them, to demand that a specialist from the medical faculty take over from them. I was not prepared to be a guinea pig. After all, the very reason anyone has a medical aid is to benefit from the best medical services available out there. I, however, lay strapped to the operating table, and when I looked into the eyes of the intern, I could not open my mouth. Someone had to be her guinea pig. 'Why *not* me?' I asked myself. Moreover, sensing the severity of my predicament, I realized that should I oppose the doctors I would most probably have become upset and distressed, igniting even more negative emotions which I might not have been able to control and which would spiral me down into a pit of negativity (cf. Fredickson 2003).

The operating room was extremely cold, and by the time I was connected to the dialysis machine, my body was in shock. I was shaking uncontrollably. What calmed me down was when Heilie Uys, then head of our university's nursing department, stepped into the room, took my hand and clasped it in hers. I became emotional, shed a tear, but soon recovered. Since I had accepted my fate the previous day, in that brief moment I experienced a sensation of passing through all the other phases of loss, as identified by Kübler-Ross (1969): denial, anger, bargaining and depression.

That night it was easy to fall asleep. I was very tired, but, paradoxically, given the gravity of my situation, I felt calm and collected – even elated (as I indicated earlier). I discovered in myself a level of strength which I had not been aware of before: I was able to stare death in the face without fear. This was in stark contrast to how I had viewed myself on my admittance to hospital. My self-image was pitiful. For 3 years before that, I had seen myself as a depressed man, mourning for a woman who had rejected his marriage proposal. That negative self-image had been replaced by a positive one.

Some days later, I was discharged and began my dialysis routine on an outpatient basis. As I left the hospital that morning, I had another profound experience. In a later text, I wrote (Crous 2007a: 11):

> As I passed through the main doors of the hospital building, I stepped into the warm rays of the Highveld sun. Then I stopped. I instinctively raised and turned my head to experience the sun's warm comfort on my skin. It filled me with a deep sense of appreciation. When I realised that I was able to experience an authentic, positive emotion triggered by something as simple as the warmth of the sun – in spite of what would for many be an extremely bleak situation – an intense feeling of gratitude welled up in me. The intensity of the experience was so strong that I felt elevated – it could even be described as transpersonal. For Emmons (2004) such a moment of overwhelming gratitude is similar to Maslow's (1964) idea of a peak experience during which one characteristically feels extremely lucky, fortunate or

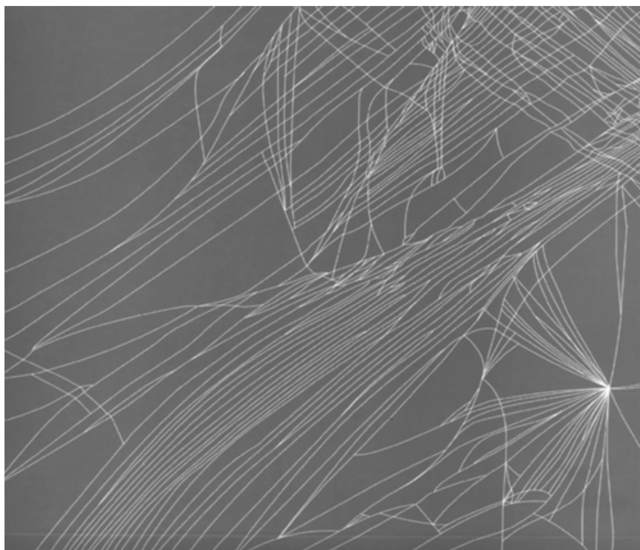

Fig. 1.2 'Faultlines for Marcel Duchamp' by Stephanus Rademeyer (Used with the permission of the owner)

graced. As I walked away, I felt strangely cheerful. This emotion would transform into a mood and then become almost trait-like. A warm feeling settled in my chest, nurturing me throughout my dialysis treatment.

Back at work, one of my colleagues called me aside and advised me to accept my condition – that of being disabled – almost suggesting that I should not expect to be productive again. Although he meant well, his words clearly highlighted the fact that my work identity, or rather my multiple work identities as a teacher, researcher and consultant (Dutton et al. 2011), was under threat.

When Marcel Duchamp's pivotal work, 'The large glass', broke while in transit, he stated that he would embrace this intervention as part of the aesthetic process. This story was the inspiration for the acclaimed artist, Stephanus Rademeyer's 'Faultlines for Duchamp' (2006), which I bought precisely because it reminded me that I had to embrace my broken body as part of the process of identity work (Fig. 1.2).

For 8 months I tried to work during those times when I was not on dialysis. It was not easy, though, because the dialysis machine was not nearly as effective as its human counterparts, the kidneys. My energy levels were depleted; sometimes I was dead tired, had to deal with infections and was even subjected to an operation. Despite this, the warm feeling in my chest and a general sense of emotional well-being never let go of me. My mood was elevated.

Finally my brother, Dawie, who had offered me one of his kidneys, unconditionally, was declared fit to donate. For this unselfish act, which gave me a new lease on life, I will be forever grateful to him. As I regained consciousness after the trans-

plant, I immediately knew the operation had been a success, because I could sense that I was healthy again in spite of some post-operative pain. My newly acquired kidney was doing an exceptional job and has been doing so ever since.

I was kept in hospital under observation for 10 days. I was still in good spirits, especially because South Africa won the Rugby World Cup during the time I was recuperating. But that warm feeling in my chest, which had sustained me for 8 months while I was on dialysis, had disappeared.

The day I left the hospital, Professor Meyers, head of Nephrology at Wits, assured me that I could expect to live a long life, perhaps even to outlive my brother, on condition that I strictly comply with my prescribed regimen of medicines and check-ups. Despite being family, Dawie's tissue is only 50 % compatible with mine. In order not to reject my new kidney, I have to take immunosuppressives every day for the rest of my life. Professor Meyers mentioned that because my immune system has to be suppressed, I probably would die not from a kidney-related disease, but from cancer, most likely 30 years or so into the future.

So, when 3 years later a gastroenterologist informed me that I had developed a malignant stomach ulcer (a side effect of the immunosuppressives). I was understandably shocked. What I found quite surprising, though, was that as was the case when I was diagnosed with renal failure, I did not react with anxiety – that same warm feeling returned to settle in my chest. A possible explanation for this occurrence may be Fredrickson's (2004) finding that gratitude – like other positive emotions – functions as an antidote to the effects of negative emotions; maybe I had accumulated sufficient amounts of positive psychological capital (Luthans et al. 2007) for me to tap into, to sustain me as once again I faced up to a life-threatening disease. I discovered, however, while receiving chemotherapy and radiation, that high levels of positivity could not act as antidotes to extreme levels of pain. Adding chemo to the strong immunosuppressives further compromised my immune system. But my body did not give up on me and neither did the extraordinary woman I married in 1998.

Back at work, still treasuring my experiences of post-traumatic growth (Seligman 2011), I increasingly questioned and became uncomfortable with the problem centeredness of the specific domains of industrial psychology I was involved with: For *organization development (OD) and change*, a single model was basically adhered to: No action should be taken without a problem diagnosis. *Organizational wellness* addressed topics which were mostly problem related, such as absenteeism, alcohol and drug abuse, alienation and bullying in the workplace. Even in *consumer psychology*, the subject I taught at undergraduate level, the decision-making models which were prominent at the time had problem solving as their basis.

Just before falling ill the first time, I was introduced to Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) work on optimal experience. What attracted me to his writing was his ability to introduce a positive construct within the field of formal psychology. Yet, it differed from pop psychology in that it was original, elegant and scholarly. With a colleague, Professor Johann Schepers, and a number of postgraduate students, we (Anderson et al 1996; Loubris et al. 1995; Percival et al. 2003, Taylor et al. 2006) were able to contextualize psychological flow for the world of work – something I found to be an invaluable field of study as I grappled with ill health.

It was in 2000, however, while attending a workshop led by Ken Gergen, a prominent scholar in the field of social constructionism, at the 27th International Congress of Psychology held in Stockholm, Sweden, that I was introduced to appreciative inquiry (AI), a positive action research approach to OD and change (Cooperrider et al. 2003; Crous 2007b) that rejuvenated my career. I subsequently attended a training course presented by David Cooperrider, the originator of AI, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, where I came to realize that AI offered me an authentic way of being both an academic and a practitioner. As an academic I began to apply AI as a research method (Reed 2007) and to present some of my modules from an appreciative stance. As a practitioner I implemented, apart from OD and change, the AI method in career development, new product development, leadership development, ethics development, team building, strategic planning and coaching. I even had an opportunity to use AI for community development: In the sleepy village of Stanford, in the Overberg district of the Western Cape, a murder was committed. This brutal act gave rise to racial tension in the community, as both the victim and the perpetrator hailed from the same village, but belonged to different cultural groups. A number of concerned women contacted me, asking for advice on how to restore their fractured sense of community. Respectful of the fact that a life had been taken, my co-facilitator and I nevertheless wanted to reframe the situation and connect the participants through an AI structured around an affirmative choice of topic: *A life worth living in Stanford.* The workshop proved to be of great help in easing tensions in the community and fostering a sense of connectedness.

By now, my lived experience of positivity was branded in me as a visceral sense of elevation. What I needed, though, was an identity for this particular 'brand' of positive state, in the form of a logo/metaphor that would inspire me to optimally live my life and drive my work. The intense emotions of gratitude and appreciation that *spiralled me up* when I felt the warmth of the sun on my skin after that first dialysis session also manifested in a resistance to lie down while being dialysed. Rather, I chose to sit in an *upright position* while connected to the machine, and all of this helped me to conclude that verticality, i.e. 'up', is inextricably linked to positivity. Apart from my subjective experiences, the reasoning of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), seminal scholars of the emerging science of embodied cognition (Shapiro 2011), indeed holds that the basic/root metaphor we live by positively/optimally/happily is 'up'. Moreover, empirical evidence shows that we humans are spatially oriented to position, in subtle yet pervasive ways, in our minds that which is positive as 'up' and that which is negative as 'down' (Beukes et al. 2011; Kolsch et al. 2011; Meier and Robinson 2004). This suggests that there may be a physical basis for positivity (Meier and Robinson 2004). After many trials, I finally opted for a metaphor-logo consisting of the word 'up', written in a fluid, amoeba-like typeface, with a figure which I personally designed, superimposed onto it (Fig. 1.3).

The 'up' logo-metaphor proved to be a highly effective projective technique for positivity (Meiring and Crous 2011): Workshop participants have been able to associate almost 200 positive words with it. Prompted by this development, I coined the term *origin psychology* (Latin: oriri = to rise, towards the upright

Fig. 1.3 A metaphor-logo of the word 'up' (Used with the permission of the author)

position) with its claim that the upright position of the body is psychologically internalized as representing strength, health/wellness and that which is good, i.e. the upright position is conflated with positivity. Since this is a relatively unknown domain, the aim of origin psychology is to facilitate processes leading to the development of a sense of origination (operationalized as a sense of elevation, groundedness and resourcefulness) that a person may express in a specific domain/situation/context. An originator may instil a sense of origination in others. Origination begets origination.'

The case above illustrates that establishing a work identity is a negotiated process which involves conscious decisions and/or actions (personal agency) on the part of the individual as regards who he/she ideally would like to be, in order to develop and maintain a particular work identity – this, despite challenges and setbacks in life. In other words, work identities do not 'just happen', but can be consciously and purposefully developed by an individual.

1.4 Research Questions of the Work Identity Research Project

Since *Work Identity* is at this point in time a fairly 'new' concept, there is no clear conceptualization of what this concept precisely entails. A further aim of this research project is to bring some degree of conceptual clarity to the employee engagement/commitment/involvement field that suffers from concept redundancy and contamination (Morrow 1983). Research in this first area will be based mostly on theoretical (non-empirical) and qualitative research.

Against this background, the search for answers to SA employees' question *Who am I at work?* therefore seems to be an appropriate departure point to empirically identify meaning parameters for a work-based identity concept. The following broad aims for the Work Identity Project were formulated:

1.4.1 First Objective

The first broad aim of this project therefore focuses on how this concept can be conceptualized and what kind of behaviours are associated with establishing and enhancing work identity, as well as on tactics and strategies that will maintain or develop a work identity.

The search for answers to this question (*Who am I at work?*) has led to the systematic generation of four different research questions (with a qualitative research focus) and a fifth question which partly has a conceptual/theoretical foundation as well as an operational component (the chapters in which these questions are respectively addressed appear in parentheses):

- Which life spheres, life roles and work facets are important for SA employees in establishing their work-based identities? (Chap. 2)
- Which personal and societal tensions and demands are salient when these individuals negotiate their own work identities? (Chap. 3)
- Which are important strategies and tactics that individuals use for promoting their own work identities? (Chap. 3)
- What leads to the formation of work identity? (Chaps. 2 and 3)
- How can a work-based identity concept be conceptualized and operationalized? (respectively Chaps. 2 and 6)

The first four research questions are respectively addressed in the chapters indicated in parentheses. The fifth and last research question is addressed in the two mentioned chapters.

1.4.2 Second Objective

Given the scarcity of empirical research on the relationship between any antecedents and work identity, the following research aim is formulated: The second broad aim of this research project is to systematically investigate the relationship between objective and subjective antecedents of work-based identity. Objective variables are grouped into biographical and demographical variables, and their relation to work identity will be established. Subjective variables refer to a broad range of concepts or constructs that a person can subjectively rate and to establish how these are related to work identity. Generally, these variables may be categorized as individual-, group-/team- and organizational-based variables (refer to Table 1.1).

Against the back-drop of the Job Demands-Resources model, how are selected job demands and job resources related to work-based identity? (Chaps. 4, 6, 7 and 8)

More specifically, this phase of the research project will focus on how the WI construct is measured and how it relates to antecedents in the traditional job

Table 1.1 Possible antecedents and consequences of work identity

Antecedents		Work identity	Consequences	
Objective	Subjective	Construct formulation	Subjective	Objective
Biographic	*Individual*			
Gender	Type of job	Theoretical approaches	Work engagement	Performance
Race	Task variety	Identity theory (IT)	Org. commitment	Performance rating
Age	Task specialization	Social identity theory (SIT)	Org citizenship behaviours (OCBs)	Productivity
Language	Personal demands	Self-categorization theory (SCT)	Job involvement	Absenteeism
Ethnicity	Job demands	Identity prototype/standard	Self-efficacy	Days leave
Religion	Job resources	Identity work	Resilience	Leave frequency
Education	Personal resources (PsyCap elements)	Tactics	Burnout	Sick leave
Generation	Job satisfaction	Strategies	Alienation	Sick leave frequency
Marital status	Need salience	Construct dimensions/facets	Turnover intention	Medical cost
Demographic	*Team/organization*	Conceptualization issues	Job performance (self-rating)	Actual turnover
Job level	Organic/mechanistic			
Job tenure	Mgt/leadership style			
Org. tenure	Management practices			
Line/staff	Org culture/climate			
Technical/professional	HR policies, procedures and practices (HR styles)			
	Reward systems			
	Dominant value discipline			

demands-resources (JD-R) model as well as other selected job resources and demands. Furthermore, it will also be investigated how the relationship between the job demands and resources with WI is moderated by biographic and demographic variables.

1.4.3 Third Objective

Work identity also has specific outcomes or consequences, and in this case, there is also a void in the literature on these relationships. The third broad research aim of the project therefore sets out to systematically investigate the subjective as well as the objective consequences of work identity. Subjective consequences are a group of outcomes that refer to personal or subjective work experiences that may be related to work identity (either positively or negatively) (i.e. work engagement, Organizational Citizenship Behaviours (OCBs), burnout, alienation, turnover intentions and others). Objective work consequences refer to those outcomes on an individual, team or organizational level that manifest themselves in an objective observable way (e.g. job performance, absenteeism, days leave, production figures and others).

What are some of the important subjective and objective consequences of work-based identity? (Chaps. 5, 6, 7 and 8)

This phase of the research project will focus on the relationship between WI and two specific consequences, namely, turnover intention (as a proxy for actual turnover) and task performance. It will be tested whether these two relationships are mediated by subjective consequences (i.e. work engagement, OCBs, burnout and alienation) and whether these mediated models on their turn are moderated by biographic and demographic variables.

The three different broad research aims can be diagrammatically displayed in the bow-tie model depicted in Fig. 1.4.

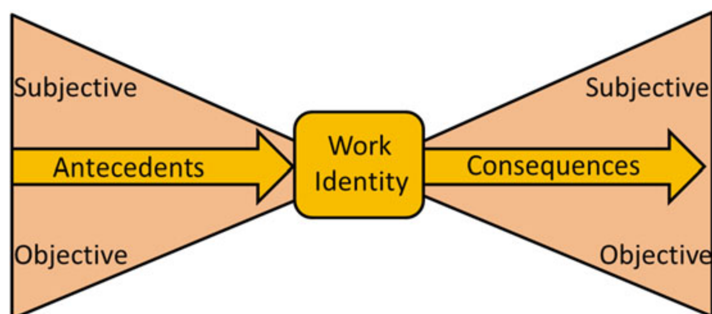

Fig. 1.4 Antecedents and consequences of work identity

Figure 1.4 illustrates that work identity has potentially different objective and subjective antecedents (potential causes of work identity). Work identity may also have objective and subjective outcomes (potential consequences). In the middle, work identity as a construct is explained. A more comprehensive list of these potential antecedents and consequences is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 details a list of potential subjective and objective antecedents and consequences of work identity. Only a limited selection of these variables was empirically investigated in the current Work Identity Project. By providing this list, it is also suggested that the list is not complete – more antecedents and consequences can and should be added to the list and their relationships could be empirically investigated in future studies.

1.5 Structure and Layout of the Rest of the Book

Excluding the current chapter, the book consists of four parts. Part I covers four chapters. The first chapter (Chap. 2) explains the theoretical foundations of work identity and how the construct is conceptualized. Chapter 3 explains the negotiation processes of identity work and the use of different tactics and strategies in the development of a work identity. Chapter 4 provides a review of the literature on the antecedents of work identity, while Chap. 5 provides an overview of the literature in respect of the consequences of work identity.

Part II consists of one chapter (Chap. 6) that introduces a range of exploratory analyses in terms of how the work-based identity construct was conceptualized and operationalized. Furthermore, the chapter also provides exploratory results in terms of different job resources and demands as possible causes of work-based identity as well as exploratory results on the consequences of work-based identity.

Part III also consists of one chapter (Chap. 7) that reports on the results of a study where work-based identity was modelled within the context of a structural equation model that included both some antecedents and consequences.

Part IV consists of two chapters. Chapter 8 provides conclusions on the empirical results reported earlier in the previous two chapters. Chapter 9 highlights some implications and provides some recommendations and suggestions for future research.

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Part I
Concept and Theory

This part of the book consists of four chapters. Chapter 2 reports on the conceptualisation of the work-based identity (WI) construct within the framework of existing identity theory streams. Chapter 3 reports on work-based identity formation and how a work identity is negotiated. Different tactics and strategies used by individuals to develop their WIs are also covered in this chapter. Chapters 4 and 5 provide an overview of the literature in respect of possible causes and consequences of WI, respectively. More specifically, Chap. 4 provide a review on the job demands and job resources as possible antecedents of WI and also how JR and JDs interactions may affect WI. Chapter 5 again provides a review of subjective and objective consequences of WI and also how the WI – objective outcome relationships – may be mediated by the subjective outcomes.

Chapter 2
Work Identity: Clarifying the Concept

F. Chris Bothma, Sandra Lloyd, and Svetlana Khapova

2.1 Introduction

The introductory chapter provided the context for the Work Identity Research Project. Research objectives of the project were also stated. Central to these research objectives is the concept *identity*. The focus of this chapter is therefore to introduce the concept identity and to explain the process of identity formation which finally results in an identity prototype.

The first section of the chapter introduces the reader to the identity phenomenon with the focus on the role-players and the distinct process involved in identity formation.

The second part of the chapter introduces literature on the two prominent theoretical streams, namely, social identity theories (SIT) and role identity theories (RIT), which aim to explain the identity formation, activation and outcome process.

The third part of the chapter unpacks the work-identity prototype or standard that consists of a structural, social as well as an individual-psychological dimension. This prototype provided the basis for conceptualising and operationalising the work-based identity (WI) construct.

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2.2 The Identity Phenomenon

Identity as a root construct in social science forms part of different terms that describe and explain individual and group behaviour. As a key independent variable, identity is widely used in social and behavioural research (Albert et al. 2000; Hogg et al. 1995). Although identity has been receiving a lot of research interest that includes a vast array of conceptualisations (especially since 1990), there is no consensus on the meaning of the term identity (Abdelal et al. 2001). The term identity is used in different contexts:

Firstly, the term identity refers to the existence of something that displays one or more attributes (characteristics). For example, organisational identity is a reference to all the attributes an organisation may possess where attributes can include the values, goals, actions or descriptions of the organisation or its members (Lane and Scott 2007). Secondly, identity is used as a reference to the self, the answer to the question "Who am I?" Thirdly, identity is used with reference to a social category that contributes to social identity, the answer to the question "Who are we?" (Ravishankar and Pan 2008: 222; Stryker and Burke 2000).

Understanding the identity phenomenon is not straightforward, as it involves many different complex concepts, processes and role-players. Established theories suggest that an identity develops through the interaction (complex cognitive identity formation process) between an individual (with a distinctive self, self-concept and personal identity) and specific social foci or life spheres (e.g. the social and/or work-related environment). It also leads to a set of behavioural and cognitive outcomes. Figure 2.1 depicts these preceding and evolving from the identity formation processes (Bothma 2011).

2.3 Different Life Spheres

The key role-players in the identity formation process are individuals, each with their own unique characteristics and capabilities. The literature suggests that working individuals operate in three core contexts, namely, life spheres, life roles and

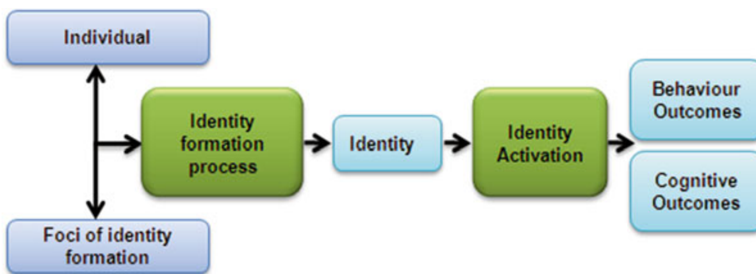

Fig. 2.1 The role-players and three distinct processes in the identity phenomenon, namely, identity formation, identity activation and resulting behaviour

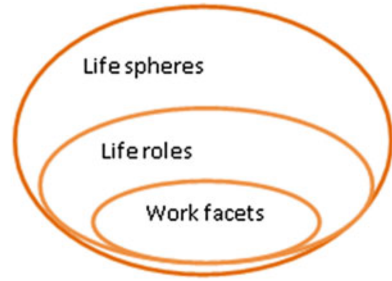

Fig. 2.2 The three-layered onion model (Adapted from Lloyd et al. 2011, Art #894, page 2 of 15. © The Authors 2011, Licensee: AOSIS Open Journals)

work contexts. Based on the impact assessment wheel of Duke and Greenblat (1979), a three-layered onion model (see Fig. 2.2) was constructed which proposes an outward-in dynamic.

It is evident from Fig. 2.2 that this model proposes that outer layers have an impact on inner layers and eventually influence the construction of a WI depending on the importance and salience of specific life spheres, roles or work facets. These layers will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.3.1 Life Spheres

According to Lloyd et al. (2011), life spheres refer to the prominent contexts in which individuals function (be they cultural, political, religious, financial or economical spheres). It is from these life spheres (life interests) that individuals draw significant discourses and discussions in their struggle to maintain a balance between their personal and a number of their social identities. Social identities in this context refer to *categorisations of the self* into more inclusive social units to which they may belong (Tajfel and Turner 1985). Researchers conceptualise the self as a multifaceted cognitive core structure within which social identities that are hierarchically organised as distinct entities that are constructed, transformed and maintained (Amiot et al. 2007; Brook et al. 2008; Van Knippenberg et al. 2004). One part of the self is the self-concept, a description of how individuals define and view the self (Pescitelli 1996; Stets and Burke 2003; Van Staden 2005). The *individualised self* or personal identity is defined by Hewitt (1989: 179) as "…a sense of continuity, integration, identification and differentiation constructed by the person not in relation to a community and its culture but in relation to the self and its projects". According to Van Staden (2005: 74), the term personal identity "…defines the characteristics that set one apart from another as a unique being".

Work can be viewed by individuals as central to their being. Therefore, work as a central life interest is defined by Kahn (1990: 692) as the extent to which it is viewed by individuals as a main part of their life. Lloyd et al. (2011) cited various researchers to illustrate the importance of work to individuals. Amongst those aspects of importance cited are work as a central life interest, work's psychological meaningfulness, conditions for employees to engage in their work,

psychological safety and the psychological availability of work. The most important and salient life spheres reported by SA participants in the Lloyd et al. (2011) study are the political, cultural and family spheres. As a legacy of apartheid, the political life sphere is, for instance, characterised by oversensitivity about *race* resulting in the workplace frequently being politicised along racial lines. This politicisation also carries over to social memberships and categories in the cultural sphere.

2.3.2 Life Roles

The second layer of the onion model is life roles. Super (1990) argues that individuals occupy various roles over the course of their life, including career, work, home and family, community, study and leisure roles. Accepting a (work) role implies taking on an identity that will assist the individual to integrate into a (work) community where one group can be distinguished from the next. The identification with a role consequently results in the identification with the associated social group.

A work role may be a central role compared to the other life roles of an individual. Work-role centrality and work identity therefore become key constructs in explaining job involvement and consequently also work performance.

The life roles that were identified as most important and salient according to the Lloyd et al. (2011) study in SA are religion, breadwinner and political/change agent roles. Religion is central to a person's value and belief system and assists in preserving the "me-ness" in the workplace. Breadwinner or provider roles are also central to supporting the salient family sphere. The political/change agent roles links with the political life sphere in the outer layer – which explains political activist behaviours in the workplace.

2.3.3 Work Facets

The third layer of the onion model refers to specific work facets or social foci. These facets describe specific aspects of the work context that individuals choose to identify with. Social foci (e.g. own career, work group, organisation, profession) are used by individuals to derive parts of their identities through identity formation processes (e.g. social-categorisation or identification) as explained by the different theories. The two primary foci used in identity formation are social groups and the work environment (called workplace). Individuals are born into different structured societies which results in unique sets of social categories, e.g. cultures, race groups and social groups. Social groups are formed by individuals who hold similar social identifications, e.g. organisations or work groups (May et al. 2004; Stets and Burke 2000; Van Dick et al. 2004).

The workplace is a location where employees in the employment of different organisations are busy with work-related activities. Each work environment is unique with its own characteristics. Individuals are employed in different roles by organisations, making labour one of the organisation's key resources (Ballout 2007; Simpson 2008). Through the identity formation process, certain meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values are derived from specific social foci (e.g. careers, professions, organisations, work groups and job characteristics), which are cognitively and hierarchically stored in the self, in order of importance, ready to serve as behaviour guides (Kirpal 2004b). In response to perceptions received about a specific social situation, the most appropriate identity (behaviour guide) is selected and activated to guide behaviour (Hitlin 2003; Hogg and Ridgeway 2003; Hogg and Terry 2000; Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Stryker and Burke 2000; Stryker and Serpe 1982; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1985).

WIs are central in this proposed onion model. The importance and salience of spheres on one level impact on the importance and salience of roles on the next level and eventually on the work-based identity facets that individuals choose to identify with. This leads to uniquely constructed WIs for different individuals. The Lloyd et al. (2011) study identified the following work facets, namely, job identification, professional identification, workplace role and team roles as being salient in the SA workplace. While the job and profession provides the link to professional and/or occupational identification, the workplace and team roles provide the anchors for attachment to the workplace. The behaviour guides determine cognitive or behaviour that is displayed in reaction to a specific social event and its content. Over the years, the different research streams develop theories with the purpose of explaining and predicting identity phenomena.

2.4 The Identity Formation Processes

There are three distinct processes in the identity phenomenon, namely, identity formation, which includes the formation of an identity prototype, identity activation and resulting behaviour as reflected in Fig. 2.3. Social identity and role identity theories are the two prominent theoretical streams, which aim to explain the identity process.

As shown in Fig. 2.3, the different identity theories conceptualise different identity formation processes. Depending on the theory used, the identity formation process outcome is referred to as a prototype, a role identity or an identity standard (Burke 1991; Burke and Stets 2009; Hogg 2001; Johnston and Swanson 2007; Stets and Burke 2000, 2003; Stets and Harrod 2004; Stryker and Burke 2000). Prototypes or identity standards are activated through categorisation in reaction to a particular event to guide perceptions, self-conception and behaviour. In reaction to the social event and its content, new prototypes are formed, and existing ones are modified (Hogg 2001).

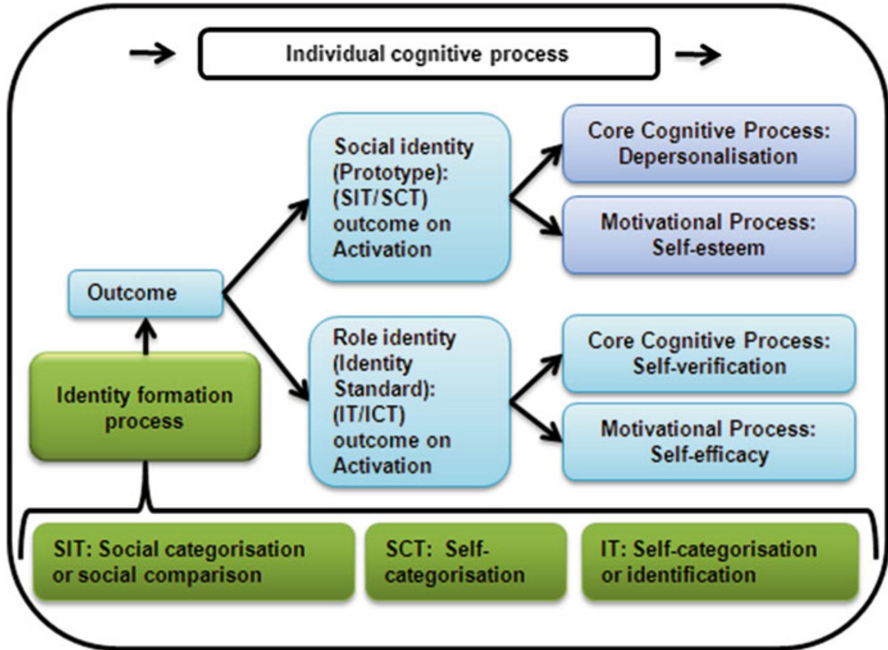

Fig. 2.3 The identity theories, formation, activation and outcomes

2.4.1 Identity Theories

Kerlinger (1986: 9) defines a theory as "…a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomenon by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting phenomena". Identity was introduced and developed within the social sciences by two research streams focusing on identity, namely, the psychoanalyst tradition and the social psychology tradition (Kirpal 2004b). Different theories were developed and deployed by these disciplinary roots that aim to understand and explain the structure of the self-associated with the identity phenomenon. The theories "… use similar words and similar language – but often with quite different meanings for example, identity, identity salience, commitment" (Hogg et al. 1995: 255).

Social identity (SIT) and role identity theories (RIT) are the two prominent theoretical streams, which aim to explain the identity formation. The first stream includes social identity (SIT) (Hitlin 2003; Hogg and Ridgeway 2003; Hogg and Terry 2000; Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1985) and self-categorisation theories (SCT), which is an extension of SIT (Turner 1987). The second stream includes identity (IT) (Stryker and Burke 2000; Stryker and Serpe 1982) and identity control theories (ICT) (Burke 1991). Social identity and role identity theories are two perspectives on the socially constructed self-concept – a product of individual behaviour and social structure that developed parallel to

each other in the different disciplinary roots of psychology and sociology or social psychology. The two theoretical streams deal mainly with components of a structured social environment (Hogg et al. 1995; Stets and Burke 2000, 2003) and give similar perspectives "…on the dynamic mediation of the socially constructed self between individual behaviour and social structure" (Hogg et al. 1995: 255).

2.4.1.1 Social Identity Theories

The two categories of social identity theories (SIT) are the following:

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

The SIT, which focuses on the categories, collective self, groups and intergroup processes, has evolved across the entire social and behavioural science disciplines with an array of manifestations (Brewer 2001; Hogg and Ridgeway 2003; Hogg et al. 1995; Korte 2007; Stets and Burke 2000; Stryker and Serpe 1982). The theory assumes "…that social identity is derived primarily from group membership" (Brown 2000: 746).

For SIT, the basis of identity is vested in the categories, collective self, group and intergroup processes. The group is regarded by SIT as a collective of similar people (Hogg and Ridgeway 2003; Hogg et al. 1995; Stets and Burke 2000). Having a social identity refers to the individual being a member of a specific group where the members of that group see things from the same perspective and holds similar views. The individual will behave like others in the group. Possessing a social identity is an indication that an individual belongs to a specific social category or group (Korte 2007; Stets and Burke 2000). Social identity also gives the individual a sense of belonging somewhere (May et al. 2004).

Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT)

Closely related to the social identity theory is the self-categorisation theory. The categorisation-based differentiation (stereotyping and discrimination) between individuals, as explained by the social identity theory, is expanded by the self-categorisation theory to include the self. The self-categorisation theory aims to explain the phenomenon where a person based on perceived criteria tends to place himself or other people cognitively in some grouping (Turner 1987). The self-categorisation theory "…specified precisely how social categorisation caused people to perceive, think, feel and behave as group members" (Abrams and Hogg 2004: 102).

Individuals adopt the norms, beliefs and behaviours of the in-group through depersonalisation and self-stereotyping processes, while they distance themselves from the norms, beliefs and behaviours of out-groups. These perceived groups can be perceived in a hierarchy form of abstraction where social groups are perceived to

be from a lower or higher level. Individuals strive to become members of higher social groups while behaving in a discriminating and even hostile manner towards perceived lower groups.

2.4.1.2 Role Identity Theory (RIT)

The two categories under role identity theory are identity theory and identity control theory:

Identity Theory

The IT has developed into two closely related research directions (Stets 2005). The first focuses on how social structures influence identity and how identity, in turn, influences social behaviours (Stryker 1980; Stryker and Burke 2000; Stryker and Serpe 1982). The second direction focuses on the internal dynamics of the self that impact on social behaviour (Burke 1991; Stets 2005; Stets and Burke 2003; Stets and Harrod 2004; Stets and Tsushima 2001).

The basis of identity in IT is vested in individual role-related behaviours (roles). Possessing a particular role identity means, firstly, acting out role expectations; secondly, controlling the resources the role is responsible for; and, thirdly, managing the relationship and interaction between role partners (Hogg and Ridgeway 2003; Hogg et al. 1995; Stets and Burke 2003). From an IT point of view, the group is defined "…as a set of interrelated individuals, each of whom performs unique but interrelated activities, sees things from their own perspective and negotiates the terms of interaction" (Stets and Burke 2000: 228).

The difference between the two theories is that SIT focuses "…more on the meanings associated with being a member of a social category", while RIT "…focuses more on the meanings associated with performing a role" (Burke and Stets 2009: 4). These two theories provide the link, through identities, between social group structures, processes and the psychology of the individual, referred to as the self (Brewer 2001; Hitlin 2003). People are tied organically through social identities (SIT) to their groups and mechanically within their groups through their role identities (RIT). An identity study must include both the mechanical (role) and organic (group) identity forms (Stets and Burke 2000).

Identity Control Theory (ICT)

The outcome of the identity formation process is an identity (Stryker and Burke 2000). The ICT stems from the second research direction of RIT that focuses on the internal dynamics of the self and its impact on social behaviour (Stets 2005). Burke's (1991) version of IT, referred to as the ICT, conceptualises the identity process as a control system. The identity process is continuously self-adjusting. According to

the ICT, a feedback loop is established when an identity is activated in a situation (Burke 1991; Stets and Harrod 2004).

The identity processes as a control system continuously adjust behaviour to keep the appraisals reflected from the social situation congruent with the identity prototype. Any process or event that impedes an individual's ability to perceive reflected appraisals or to display behaviour aimed at influencing reflected appraisals to match their identity prototype causes an identity process interruption (Burke 1991). The disruption of the adjustment process results in stress (Burke 1991) or even an identity crisis (Scholes 2008). If job resources exceed job demands, it may turn into job stressors that over time may lead to burnout (Demerouti et al. 2001, 2009). Kirpal (2004b) found evidence that conflicting work demands created a major crisis in the occupational identity of nurses. It resulted in lack of motivation and burnout that impacted on their work performances, personal life and turnover.

2.4.2 Identity Formation

According to Kroger (1997), men and women use similar psychological structures and development processes in identity formation. However, contextual or situational factors (variables) in the social structure affect the identity formation process which results in differences between the genders (Kroger 1997; Solomontos-Kountouri and Hurry 2008). In the SIT, the identity formation processes are referred to as social categorisation or social comparison and the outcome is referred to as a *social identity*.

The two most important social identity formation processes are social categorisation (also referred to as social comparison) and self-categorisation, best described by the SCT (Brewer 2001; Hogg 2001; Stryker and Burke 2000).

2.4.2.1 SIT Identity Formation Processes

The different steps of the SIT identity formation process are explained below:

SIT Identity Formation

In the social environment, people tend to classify others and themselves into different social categories. These include gender and age groupings, group memberships (e.g. members of an organisation, religious affiliation), social roles and abstract classes (e.g. ethnicity and social status). Social categorisation plays an important role in the identity phenomenon. Firstly, it segments and orders the social environment providing a methodical means for defining others, and secondly, it helps individuals to find their place and define themselves in the social environment (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Burke and Stets 2009).

The categorisation-based differentiation (stereotyping and discrimination) between individuals as explained by the social identity theory was expanded by the self-categorisation theory to include the self. The SCT as an extension of SIT describes the self-categorisation process best (Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Stets and Burke 2000). The theory "…specified precisely how social categorization caused people to perceive, think, feel and behave as group members" (Abrams and Hogg 2004: 102). Burke and Stets (2009: 9) define self-categorisation as "…cognitive groupings of oneself and an aggregate of stimuli as identical, in contrast to another group of stimuli". People that are perceived to differ from the self are classified as members of the out-group and those similar to the self as members of the in-group (Burke and Stets 2009).

SIT Prototypes

Through the identity formation process, certain meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values are derived from specific social foci. These are cognitively stored in the self as prototypes, hierarchically in order of importance ready to serve as behaviour guides. Hogg et al. (1995) define a prototype as "…a subjective representation of the defining attributes (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, behaviours) of a social category, which is actively constructed from relevant social information in the immediate or more enduring interactive context" (p. 262).

In SIT, the prototype is conceptualised as a cognitive abstraction of the central characteristics of the category membership that individuals use as the category standard to compare themselves with (Burke and Stets 2009). According to Hogg (2001), "…the process of social categorisation perceptually segments the social world into in-groups and out-groups that are cognitively represented as prototypes. These prototypes are context specific, multidimensional fuzzy sets of attributes that define and prescribe attitudes, feelings, and behaviours that characterise one group and distinguish it from other groups" (p. 187).

Identity Defined in Terms of SIT

Tajfel (1981: 251) defines social identity as "…that part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership".

SIT Activation

Through the identity formation process, certain meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values are derived from the specific social foci (e.g. careers, professions, organisations, work groups and job characteristics), which are cognitively and hierarchically stored in the self, in order of importance, ready to serve as behaviour guides (Kirpal 2004b).

Prototypes or identity standards are activated through categorisation in reaction to a particular event to guide perceptions, self-conception and behaviour. In reaction to the social event and its content, new prototypes are formed, and existing ones are modified (Hogg 2001). There is a consequential difference between SIT and IT with regard to the activation of an identity. SIT uses the concept salience to describe the activation of an identity in a situation. IT separates the concepts salience and activation and defines salience as the probability that an identity may be activated in a situation (Burke and Stets 2009). The identities are organised into a salience hierarchy, determined by the probability that an identity will be invoked in a specific situation. The higher the salience of an identity, the more time and effort will be invested (Cassidy and Trew 2001). Identities linked to positive outcomes tend to be located higher in the salience hierarchy (Stets 2005). Identity activation outcomes are depicted in Fig. 2.3.

SIT Resulting Behaviours

According to Burke and Stets (2009), SIT focuses more on cognitive outcomes, while IT focuses more on behavioural outcomes. When activating an identity, there are certain cognitive outcomes that become active. For SIT, the core cognitive process is depersonalisation and the motivational process is self-esteem (Stets and Burke 2000). For IT, the core cognitive process is self-verification and the motivational process is self-efficacy (Stets and Burke 2000).

In SIT, the outcome of the social and self-categorisation processes, in terms of a group or social category, is a social identity. Once a social identity is activated, the core cognitive process of depersonalisation and the motivational process of self-esteem become active (Stets and Burke 2000). Depersonalisation means the self is not viewed as a unique individual but as a personification of the in-group prototype (collective view). In this context, the term depersonalisation refers to the change in the basis of perception with no negative connotation to its meaning. In-group members have a collective interest; they think, feel and behave in the same way, share group interests and concerns and share a collective social identity (Abrams and Hogg 2004; Ashforth and Humphrey 1993; Edwards 2005; Hogg 2001; Hogg and Terry 2000; Stryker and Burke 2000; Van Knippenberg et al. 2004).

The consequence of self-categorisation (also referred to as social categorisation of the self) is not only the depersonalisation of self-perceptions but also the transformation of self-conception into that of the in-group prototype (attitude, feelings and behaviours) which results in a change in what individuals feel, think and do (Hogg 2001; Van Knippenberg et al. 2004).

Group membership is an important source of self-esteem (Burke and Stets 2009). Self-esteem is defined as the "…extent to which workers believe themselves to be valued and competent as organisational members" (Bowling 2007: 3). Individuals experience work as meaningful when it enhances their self-esteem (Scroggins 2008). Positive self-evaluation and receiving good appraisals from others about role performance will enhance an individual self-esteem, making the individual feel good (Burke and Stets 2009).

2.4.2.2 RIT Identity Formation Processes

In RIT, the IT and ICT refer to the identity formation process as self-categorisation or identification and the outcome is referred to as a *role identity* (Hogg and Terry 2000). The following steps are followed in identity formation according to role identity theory (RIT):

RIT Identity Formation

In terms of the social structure, individuals are involved in a process of "…recognising one another as occupants of positions (roles)" (Stets and Burke 2000: 225) that they act out. In identity theory, the identity formation process, called self-categorisation (also referred to as identification), is conceptualised "…as the categorisation of the self as an occupant of a role and the incorporation, into the self, of the meanings and expectations associated with that role and its performance" (Stets and Burke 2000: 227). This implies that a role identity is the outcome of self-categorisation (Burke and Stets 2009).

Researchers use the term identification to describe both a cognitive state and a process (Rousseau 1998; Steers and Porter 1991). As a cognitive state, identification means that part of a person's social identity is derived from a social group or categorisation identity (Kreiner et al. 2006). As a process, identification means the acceptance of "…influence in order to engage in a satisfying role-relationship with another person or group" (Steers and Porter 1991: 214).

RIT Prototype

The building blocks of the structured society are roles and the requirements attached to them. Role identities are conceptualised as socially constructed definitions of self-in-role (referring to the role occupant) that consist of core and peripheral features. The core features are the important and necessary characteristics of the specific identity, for example, self-reliance and objectivity. Peripheral features refer to intelligence and charisma (Ashforth et al. 2000). According to Stets and Burke (2000), "…having a particular role identity means acting to fulfil the expectations of the role, coordinating and negotiating interaction with the role partners and manipulating the environment to control the resources for which the role has a responsibility" (p. 226).

Identity Control Theory Prototype

Burke (1991) later used the term identity standard. A role identity is tied to a cognitive social structure called the identity standard, which functions as a behaviour guide. The identity standard contains (stores) the meanings, norms, expectations,

beliefs and core values associated with a specific social role (identity) (Burke and Stets 2009; Johnston and Swanson 2007; Stets and Burke 2000; 2003; Stets and Harrod 2004; Stryker and Burke 2000). According to Stets and Tsushima (2001), the identity standard defines "…what it means to be who one is in a situation" (p. 283). Individuals have an identity standard for each role they occupy (Stets and Burke 2003).

Identity Defined in Terms of RIT

Burke and Tully (1977: 883) define a role identity as "…the meanings a person attributes to the self as an object in a social situation or social role". This role defines what it means to be who one is. Burke and Stets (2009) in their unified theory of social identity theory and identity theory define an identity as:

> A self-categorization in terms of a social category referring to a class, group, or role as represented in the prototype or identity standard (p. 20).

A specific identity is shared between members of a specific social group who display different levels of commitment towards that identity referred to as identity commitment.

Identity Commitment

The concept identity commitment has quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The quantitative dimension refers to the number of persons tied to each other through a specific identity. The qualitative dimension refers to the strength of the tie. The number of persons tied by a specific identity determines the identity's importance, level in the identity hierarchy and probability of possible selection and activation as a behaviour guide (Stets and Burke 2003). Varying strengths of identity commitment (identification) with specific social foci exist between individuals and may range from low to high (Abdelal et al. 2001; Coster et al. 2008; Ibarra 1999; Rousseau 1998; Van Dick 2001). The strength can be conceptualised as a value on a continuum. The strength of identity commitment (identification) with different foci may result in a conflict of interests, for example, stronger career identification than organisational identification (Van Dick 2001).

One school of thought, using a motivational baseline, conceptualised work commitment as a bipolar continuum (*cf.* Roodt et al. 1994). The one side of this continuum represents under-commitment (work alienation) with the middle representing balanced commitment and the opposite side representing overcommitment (workaholism) (Janse Van Rensburg 2004; Kanungo 1979; Kilduff et al. 1997; Roodt 1991, 1997; Roodt et al. 1994). Schaufeli et al. (2006) classify workaholism into positive (good) workaholism (closely related to work engagement) and negative (bad) workaholism. Schaufeli et al. (2008) define workaholism as "…the tendency to work excessively hard in a compulsive way" (p. 204). Such a bipolar

continuum could also be described as "…a cognitive predisposition of alienation from a work focus at the one end and extreme identification with a work focus at the other end" based on a particular work-related focus's potential to satisfy salient needs (Janse Van Rensburg 2004: 52).

Any form of withdrawal behaviour such as job burnout, absenteeism or turnover will tend to manifest towards the under-identification side on the continuum (Janse Van Rensburg 2004; Roodt 2004; Senter and Martin 2007).

Identity Activation According to RIT

There is a consequential difference between SIT and RIT with regard to the activation of an identity. SIT uses the concept salience to describe the activation of an identity in a situation. RIT separates the concepts salience and activation and defines salience as the probability that an identity may be activated in a situation (Burke and Stets 2009). The identities are organised into a salience hierarchy, determined by the probability that an identity will be invoked in a specific situation. The higher the salience of an identity, the more time and effort will be invested (Cassidy and Trew 2001). Identities linked to positive outcomes tend to be located higher in the salience hierarchy (Stets 2005).

In the work context, performing any job (acting out a role) generates a certain level of identification with that job (Kirpal 2004a). The process that leads to the perception of oneness with the job (role) is referred to as identification (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Kirpal 2004a; Stets and Burke 2000). It is important to note that identification "…describes only the cognition of oneness, not the behaviours and the effect of that may serve as antecedents or consequences of the cognition" (Ashforth and Mael 1989: 35).

RIT Resulting Behaviours

According to the RIT, the outcome of the identity formation process of self-categorisation (also referred to as identification) in terms of role is a role identity (Hogg et al. 1995; Stets and Burke 2000). A change in identity is an indication that the meanings within the identity standard have changed (Stets and Burke 2003). Once a role identity is activated, the core cognitive process of self-verification and the motivational process of self-efficacy become active (Stets and Burke 2000). According to Burke and Stets (2009: 5), "…role membership and performance in identity theory have consequences for self-esteem and self-efficacy".

Through a central cognitive process called self-verification (similar to depersonalisation in SIT), individuals strive to keep their role behaviours in line with the identity standard content (Stets and Burke 2003). Self-verification is defined "…as people's tendency to seek evaluations and interaction partners that confirm their self-views" (Ibarra 1999: 767). Rothmann (2003: 23) describes self-efficacy as "…a general, stable cognition (trait) that individuals have and carry with them and that

reflects the expectation that they possess the ability to perform tasks successfully in a variety of achievement situations". Self-efficacy refers to individual performance that relates to specific job performance (Kirkman and Rosen 1999).

2.5 Importance of Identities

The successful construction, transformation and maintenance of an identity are regarded as an achievement that enhances an individual the feeling of belonging somewhere and having an identity (Agostino 2004; Ashforth and Mael 1989; Hogg and Terry 2000; Kirpal 2004b). The higher the number of role identities a person holds, the stronger the sense of meaning and existence and its effect on mental health (Lang and Lee 2005). Work-related identities have a significant influence on employee behaviour (Amiot et al. 2007), which in turn has an impact on subjective work outcomes and objective organisational outcomes. This implies that a collective labour force work-based identity indirectly has a significant impact on organisational performance (Agostino 2004; Aryee and Luk 1996; Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Wayne et al. 2006). People are tied organically through social identities to their groups and within their groups mechanically through their role identities (Stets and Burke 2000).

The above-mentioned body of research that is linked to the identity phenomenon provides the theoretical base for exploring work-based identity as a potential construct in employee identity research.

2.6 Work-Based Identity

Against the background of the previous discussion, WI is therefore a multi-identity, multifaceted and multilayered construct within the self that develops through the above-mentioned identity formation process. The meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values associated with WI are stored cognitively as behaviour guides, also referred to as prototypes. An identity prototype can be divided into three different dimensions, namely, a structural, social and individual-psychological dimension. The structural dimension is culturally embedded and includes concepts of work, patterns of employment and training systems. The social dimension develops through interaction (identity formation process) between the individual and work-related foci, e.g. careers, professions, organisations, work groups and job characteristics. The resulting identities are, for example, career, occupational and professional identities. The individual-psychological dimension includes aspects such as the individual's attitude towards work, perception of the work content, level of career or professional development, occupational history, work centrality and person-environment fit. These different dimensions will be discussed below as dimensions of the WI prototype.

2.6.1 *Work-Based Identity Prototype Dimensions*

Burke and Stets (2009) suggested that the identity standard (according to RIT) and prototype (according to SIT) should be treated equivalently to cognitive representations. Burke and Stets (2009: 19) define the prototype (identity standard) as "…a cognitive representation of a social category containing the meanings and norms the person associates with the social category". For the purpose of this study, the term work-based identity (WI) prototype is used. The conceptualisation of the prototype is reflected in Fig. 2.4.

Figure 2.4 shows that the work-based identity prototype can be divided into three different dimensions, namely, a structural, social and individual-psychological dimension (Kirpal 2004b), which will be discussed in the sections that follow.

2.6.1.1 Structural Dimension

The structural dimension is culturally embedded and includes concepts of work, patterns of employment and training systems (Kirpal 2004b). The identity formation process is influenced by situational or contextual factors (variables) inherent to the specific social or historical setting (Kroger 1997). Individuals are born into different

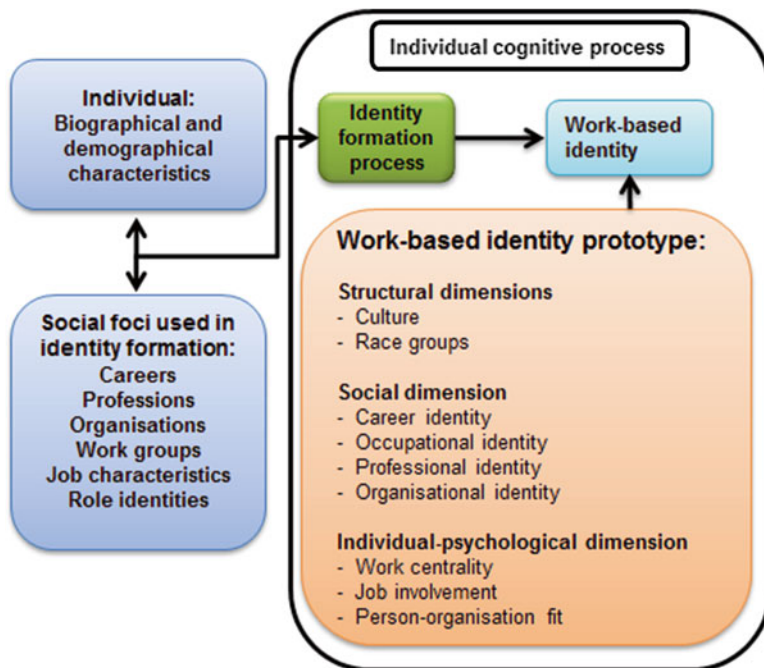

Fig. 2.4 The work-based identity prototype

structured societies that are the product of unique sets of social categories, e.g. cultures, race groups, social groups, organisations or work groups (Stryker and Burke 2000).

Changes in the structural dimensions created a crisis in the work identity of South African employees. Since 1994, the opening of South African markets to global competition, along with the introduction of legislation to ensure equal employment, has been bringing new challenges to the South African workplace. This imposed major changes to the post-1994 work role that employees were accustomed to in South Africa (Thomas 2002). The more diverse deployment of labour by organisations brings its own unique set of problems to the workplace (Van Zyl and Lazenby 2002). As the workplace becomes more diverse, problems experienced have included, differences in value perspectives as well as the way work is viewed (Béteille 2002), all of which impact on the performance of organisations (Thomas 2002).

To define race from a social point of view can be problematic. For the purpose of this study, the primary race groups of the South African population (Asian/Indian, Black, Coloured and White) were used.

2.6.1.2 Social Dimension

The social dimension develops through interaction between the individual and social groupings which results in the formation of collective social identities. Social foci that are the primary antecedents of work-related identity formation are careers, occupations, professions, organisations, work groups, job characteristics (task significance and variety of skills needed) and role identities (technical and general business roles) (Buche 2003, 2006, 2008; Kirpal 2004a, b; Walsh and Gordon 2007). From these social foci, individuals derive, through a cognitive identity formation process, different identities that are incorporated into the self-concept. For example, referring to an individual's professional identity denotes that part of his identity that is derived, through a process of identification, from the profession the individual is a member of (Kreiner et al. 2006).

The work-related identities selected for the purpose of this study are career, occupational and professional identity as well as organisational identification. These identities refer to the different ways in which individuals define themselves within the context of work (Fugate et al. 2004). The work-related identities selected are discussed next, starting with career identity:

Career Identity

Career identity represents how individuals define themselves in career contexts. Acting as a "cognitive compass" career identity assists the individual in realising, creating and using opportunities (Fugate et al. 2004: 17). A career identity is longitudinal, as it makes sense of one's past and present, and gives future direction. It is not the sum of past work experiences but the incorporation of those experiences into meaningful and useful structures (Fugate et al. 2004). The term career is

interchangeable with the term vocational identity which refers to the self-perceptions an individual have over the course of their careers about their long-term skills, abilities and job needs (Thomas and Feldman 2007). Career identity is one of the dimensions of the concept employability (McArdle et al. 2007).

Vocational identity is defined as "…the possession of a clear and stable picture of one's goals, interests and talents" (Holland et al. 1980: 1191). For this study, the definition of McArdle et al. (2007) is used which defines career identity as:

> The ability to gain and maintain employment, both within and across organisations (p. 248).

Occupational Identity

Organisations tend to be structured around specific occupations, e.g. lawyer firms, human resources, procurement, construction, information technology and telecommunications businesses. Job titles, which are descriptive of an occupation, e.g. human resource specialist, technician, nurses, engineer, etc., serve as identity badges. Each occupation develops its own distinct culture, different from those of other social groups (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Brewer and Pierce 2005; Solomontos-Kountouri and Hurry 2008; Walsh and Gordon 2007). Occupational identity is derived from work experience where the knowledge, skills and abilities are not easily learned. With time, work shapes the individual, and in turn, the individual influences work structures and processes (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Kirpal 2004a, b). Occupational identity is relatively stable over a period of time (Brown 2004), and an employee's occupational role impacts on their attitudes, values and behaviours (Martin et al. 2006). Solomontos-Kountouri and Hurry (2008) reported that there are significant differences between the genders perceptions of occupational identity amongst young Greek Cypriots. "In occupational identity, males were more likely to belong to diffusion status and females were more likely to belong to achievement status" (p. 255). The loss of an occupational identity is a source of depression and anxiety that can have a devastating effect on the individual (Brown 2004; Peteet 2000).

Occupational identity, as one of an individual's many social identities, is defined by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) as "…the set of central, distinctive and enduring characteristics that typify the line of work" (p. 417). For this study, the definition of Kirpal (2004b) was used which defines occupational identity as:

> A multi-dimensional phenomenon, with structural, social and individual-psychological components (p. 274).

Professional Identity

Professional identity is one of an individual's many social identities (Ibarra 1999). The term professional identity describes both the "…collective identity of a profession and an individual's own sense of the professional role" (Feen-Calligan 2005: 122). The

development of a professional identity takes a long time during which the individual learns to become an expert in the field of the specific profession. This involves the acquisition of technical skills and the learning of behaviour associated with the profession through formal and informal learning processes. The identity is relatively stable over time (Beckett and Gough 2004; Coster et al. 2008; Crawford et al. 2008; Dobrow and Higgins 2005; Empson 2004; Feen-Calligan 2005; Hotho 2008; Marhuenda et al. 2004; Miller 1998; Pratt et al. 2006; Quinones and Mason 1994).

Quinones and Mason (1994: 136) define professional identity "…as the acknowledgment and concern for improving the knowledge, skills and values of the profession". For this study, the definition of Ibarra (1999) was used which defines professional identity as:

> The relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role (pp. 764–765).

Organisational Identification

Organisations are defined as "…internally structured groups that are located in complex networks of inter-group relations characterized by power, status and prestige differentials" (Hogg and Terry 2000: 121) each with unique attributes (values, goals and actions) referred to as the organisation's identity (Pratt and Foreman 2000).

Organisational identity is often confused with related concepts such as organisational identification, organisational membership and organisational commitment. Organisational identity refers to the attributes of an organisation which can include values, goals and actions, as well as descriptions of the organisation or organisational members (Lane and Scott 2007). Organisational identity is a fluid concept that changes with the organisational life cycle or change in response to external influences (Miller 1998). Organisational identification on the other hand is a cognitive identity formation process – the link between the individual and the organisation they identify with (Dutton et al. 1994). This implies that the person's self-concept contains some of the organisation's identity (attributes), derived through a process referred to as identification. A person's organisational identification will be more salient than alternative identities if identification with the organisation's organisational membership identity is strong (Dutton et al. 1994).

Organisational membership indicates belonging to a specific organisation. An individual may be a member of the organisation, but not all individuals identify with their organisation. Organisational membership is also not a prerequisite for identifying with the focal organisation, e.g. an art museum (Bhattacharya and Elsbach 2002). A person's organisation may constitute an important source of an individual's identity (Hogg and Terry 2001; Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006). Organisational commitment "…is regarded as a psychological state of attachment or the binding force between the individual and the organisation" which is a reference to the strength of the attachment (Macey and Schneider 2008: 8). In Japanese culture,

work-identities revolve around organisational identity rather than work-role (job) identity (Ishikawa 2007). Dutton et al. (1994) define organisational identification as "…the degree to which a member defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization" (p. 239). This definition is based on self-perception and not the perception the individual has of the organisation. For this study, the definition of Mael and Ashforth (1992) was used to define organisational identification as:

> Perceived oneness with an organisation and the experience of the organisation's success or failure as one's own (p. 103).

2.6.1.3 Individual-Psychological Dimension

The individual-psychological dimension includes aspects like the individual's attitude towards work, perception of the work content, level of career or professional development, occupational history, person-organisation fit and work centrality (Kirpal 2004a, b). The individual-psychological dimension includes aspects selected for this study such as work centrality, job involvement and person-organisation fit. In the next section, the work-related facet, work centrality is discussed.

Work Centrality

Paullay et al. (1994) support Kanungo's (1982) finding that there is considerable confusion between the concepts job involvement and work centrality. To address the problem and provide guidance the following conceptual and operational distinctions are suggested. Kanungo (1982) argues that the term work involvement should be used when referring to the value of work (e.g. as a central life interest). The term job involvement should be used when referring to the need-satisfying potential of a specific job (Rotenberry and Moberg 2007). Paullay et al. (1994) found evidence that job involvement and work involvement (what they call work centrality) are two distinct constructs.

According to Snir and Harpaz (2005) work centrality has two major theoretical concepts, namely absolute work centrality that "…involves a belief or value orientation towards work as a life role and relative work centrality that involves a decision orientation about preferred life spheres for behaviour" (p. 2).

Ishikawa (2007) defines work centrality as "…the extent to which people regard work as important in their life" (p. 317). For the purpose of this study the definition of Paullay et al. (1994) was used which defines work centrality as:

> The beliefs that individuals have regarding the degree of importance that work play in their lives (p. 225).

Job Involvement

Paullay et al. (1994) found evidence that work centrality and job involvement are two distinct constructs. They conceptualised the notion that job involvement has two sub-dimensions namely job involvement role and job involvement setting. Job involvement role is defined as "…the degree to which one is engaged in the specific tasks that make up one's job". Job involvement setting is defined as "…the degree to which one finds carrying out tasks of one's job in the present job environment to be engaging" (Paullay et al. 1994: 225). Brown (1996: 251) describes a job-involved person in terms of the following three salient personality traits: "He or she strongly endorses the work ethic and is high in both internal motivation and self-esteem. However, the job-involved person is not identifiable in terms of demographic characteristics. Job involvement does not depend on age, gender, education, length of service, or salary".

Paullay et al. (1994) found evidence that job involvement is a construct distinct from work involvement which has a concept with a wider meaning. This finding is supported by Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) who presented evidence that job involvement and work engagement are two empirically distinct constructs. The term job involvement should be used when referring to a specific job a person does, as suggested by Kanungo (1982) and supported by Paullay et al. (1994). Job involvement in this sense refers to an aspect associated with the identification process, a "cognitive or believe state" (Schaufeli et al. 2002: 74). Schaufeli et al. (2002) use the term dedication, which in a qualitative sense refers to a very strong involvement that includes an affective dimension.

Lodahl and Kejner (1965: 74) define job involvement as "…the extent to which a person psychologically identifies with his/her work and the importance of work for his/her total self-concept." This approach focuses on how a job can influence the self-esteem of a person (Hallberg and Schaufeli 2006). For the purpose of the study, the definition of Paullay et al. (1994) was used who define job involvement as:

> The degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one's present job (p. 225).

Person-Organisation Fit

The term person-environment fit refers to the match between a person and the social environment. In the work context, a distinction is made between person-team fit and person-environment fit (Ballout 2007; Van Vianen et al. 2007). Person-organisation fit "…pertains to how an individual matches an organisation's values, goals and mission" (Lauver and Kristof-Brown 2001: 455). It is an indication of the compatibility between the individual and the organisation (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Organisations try to attract individuals that match the company values, and individuals, in turn, search for career opportunities with companies with values similar to their own (Ballout 2007).

High levels of person-organisation fit minimise high turnover intention and actual labour turnover (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Values are conceptualised as latent constructs of a general nature that serve as a standard to guide and evaluate socially acceptable behaviour (Barnea and Schwartz 1998; Elizur 1996; Klenke 2005). Values are defined as "…a generalized, enduring organisation of beliefs about the personal and social desirability of modes of conduct or end-states of existence" (Klenke 2005: 51). A high level of shared values is an indication of a good fit, while a low level of shared values is an indication of a discrepancy between what management and employees see as important (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Watrous et al. 2006). Person-organisation fit is defined by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) as the "…compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched" (p. 281). For the purpose of the study, the definition of Kristof (1996) was used who defines person-organisation fit as:

> The compatibility between people and organisations that occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs, they share similar fundamental characteristics, or both (pp. 4–5).

The next section explains the different life spheres and roles individuals are engaged in and how this may potentially influence their choice of work facets they want to identify with.

2.7 Work-Based Identity Defined

The term *work-based identity* (WI) was created for this research project to describe a set of work-related identities, as no suitable term was found in the literature. Different identity definitions that define parts of WI are presented below. Work identity is defined by Buche (2003: 11, 2008: 134) as "…a socially constructed representation of an individual's self-perception of his/her own interactions within the employment environment". Agostino (2004: 26) defines workplace identity as "…the sense of individual identity that an employee derives from being part of a particular workplace". Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001: 180) conceptualised work identity as "…partly cognitive that describes the attributes and the more holistic conception that people have of themselves at work. At the same time, individuals make claims about what work is and what it is not, making work identity a set of actions as well as a set of cognitions".

Witt et al. (2002: 488) define work identity as "…the work-relevant target with which the individual primarily identifies". Other researchers conceptualised work identity as a multilayered and multidimensional phenomenon that describes one's self-concept and understanding of it in terms of the work role (Baugher 2003; Kirpal 2004a). Walsh and Gordon (2007) define individual work identity as "…a work-based self-concept constituted of a combination of organisational, occupational and other identities that shape the roles individuals adopt and the corresponding ways they behave when performing their work in the context of their jobs and/or careers" (p. 2). Against the backdrop of the previous discussion on the

work identity dimensions, the definition of Lloyd et al. (2011) was used for the purpose of this research project. They define WI as:

> A multi-identity, multi-faceted and multi-layered construction of the self (in which the self-concept fulfills a core, integrative function), that shapes the roles that individuals are involved in, in their employment context (p. 65).

For the purpose of this project, the term identification will be used for the identity formation process and the term prototype will present behaviour guides. These meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values associated with a specific identity are "stored" in identity prototypes (according to SIT) or identity standards (according to IT).

2.8 Guidance on the Following Chapters

From 1988 to 1999 alone, more than 12,000 articles were published on identity in general. Based on the extent of the topic, it was not possible to review all research manuscripts on the identity concept for this study. Emanating from the discussion in this chapter are a few important points to consider when reading other chapters in this book:

1. For the purpose of this project, the term *identification* will be used to describe the identity formation process
2. The term *prototype* will present behaviour guides on the identity formation process. These meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values associated with a specific identity are "stored" in prototypes (according to SIT) or identity standards (according to RIT).
3. The conceptualisation of WI according to the said prototypes includes structural, social and individual-psychological dimensions which in turn incorporate the different work-related identification foci.
4. This said conceptualisation was used to operationalise the WI construct which provides (according to our view) as sound theoretical base for the WI construct. This strongly embeds WI in social identity and role identity theories.
5. The said conceptualisation does however not include the dynamic component of *identity work* which forms an important component for understanding WI formation. This identity work process will be described in more detail in the next chapter.

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Chapter 3
The Process of Identity Work: Negotiating a Work Identity

Anne Crafford, Byron G. Adams, Tamsen Saayman, and Claartje Vinkenburg

3.1 Introduction

The first chapter of this book introduced the context and the research objectives of the Work Identity Research Project. Some of the stated research objectives (refer to Chap. 1) were aimed at addressing issues that required a qualitative research methodology. The aim of this chapter is therefore to report the results of two of those qualitative studies (also see Chap. 1). This chapter consists of four parts. The first part of this chapter introduces the terms *identity work* and *work identity*. The second part introduces a model for work identity negotiation in which key concepts and processes of identity work are explained. More specifically, the concepts personal identity, individual agency, social identity, social practices and job and role context are introduced and explained within the context of this model. The third part of the chapter provides an outline of identity work strategies and a proposed framework for classifying these. Finally, the chapter provides conclusions and implications for practice.

3.2 Identity Work and Work Identity

In a turbulent and multifaceted world, identity is increasingly destabilised and threatened, leading to feelings of dissonance and incoherence (Alvesson 2001; Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010). As people negotiate their identities, they are forced to

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accommodate conflicting demands and tensions that attempt to shape their work identity (Kreiner et al. 2006; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003). These conflicting demands call for ongoing work as people negotiate between the demands associated with various identities and the roles and relationships these entail (Ashforth 2001; Beech 2008; Ibarra 2003; Kirpal 2004; Sluss and Ashforth 2007; Snow and Anderson 1987; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003; Swann et al. 2009; Watson 2008).

The ongoing process of creating a sense of coherence and distinctiveness by shaping, restoring, preserving, fortifying or modifying the constructions that produce this sense is referred to as *identity work* (Kirpal 2004; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003). Negotiating identity most often involves resolving tensions between personal and social identities and the responsibilities and constraints associated with these (Watson 2008, 2009), and it can be said that identity is constructed at "… the intersection of the social and the individual" (Collin 2009: 24), as individuals weigh up the relative benefits and values of group identities in relation to their own personal one.

3.2.1 Definitions of Identity Work

Work identity has been discussed in some detail in the preceding chapters, and we do not want to repeat the discussion here, but to understand the concept of identity work, we need to consider briefly the nature of self-identity, of which work identity is a component. Giddens defines self-identity "…not as a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person….self-identity is continuity (across time and space) as interpreted reflexively by the agent" (Giddens 1991: 53). Giddens (1991) also refers to this process as an individual's capacity "… to keep a particular narrative going" (p. 54). The capacity to "reflexively understand" and "keep a narrative going" implies a process of engagement as identity is constructed from material provided by the cultural milieu such as language, use of artefacts and symbols such as dress codes, sets of meanings, values, countless everyday interactions with others and exposure to messages produced and distributed by agencies (schools, mass media) (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Beech 2008; Humphreys and Brown 2002; Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010; Pratt and Rafaeli 1997; Ybema et al. 2009). It is this process of engagement that is known as identity work. In defining identity work, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) suggest that

> People are continuously engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a precarious sense of coherence and distinctiveness. Specific events, encounters, transitions, experiences, surprises, as well as more constant strains, serve to heighten awareness of the constructed quality of self-identity and compel more concentrated identity work (p. 626)

Subsequently, Alvesson in conjunction with another colleague Sveningsson provided a slightly more succinct definition, describing identity work as "… people being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the

constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness" (Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003: 1165). In this definition key "functions" of identity work are highlighted, namely, forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening and revising a sense of identity, which is characterised by both coherence and distinctiveness.

Simpson and Carroll (2008: 34) highlight the social dimension of identity construction, referring to it as a "… dynamic, relational process". In a similar vein, Essers and Benschop (2009) refer to identity construction as a "… socially accomplished process" (p. 406) that is influenced by the place, time and context in which it occurs. They argue that although "… people have agency in the way they 'do identity', they are also constrained by certain societal structures and discourses" (p. 407). The idea of "doing identity" raises the question of the extent to which identity work is always a purposeful, conscious process or whether it may also be unconscious and reactive, issues we will take up in due course. Ybema et al. (2009) also emphasise the social element of identity and propose that identity construction entails "… the discursive articulation of an ongoing iteration between social and self-definition" (p. 301), thus highlighting the role of discourse and language in the formation of identity. This description also draws attention to the continuous nature of identity work by highlighting the "… ongoing interaction between social and self-definition". This also highlights their view that identity can be viewed as a bridging concept, linking the individual and society.

Watson (2008) highlights similar terms used to denote identity work, and these include "identity construction", "identity achievement", "identity management", "identity manufacture" and "identity project". He also provides a definition of identity work, referring to it as "… the mutually constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, to influence the various social identities which pertain to them in the various milieus in which they live their lives" (Watson 2008: 129). Significant here is the emphasis on the "struggle" people engage in as they strive to find a suitable position for themselves, in a context where powerful influences attempt to regulate their sense of self. This highlights the work involved in the process as people attempt to rescue a sense of self, in the face of powerful social forces (Craig 1995). Beech (2008) also highlights the importance of external influences in the process of identity work and defines it as "… a set of processes through which people develop narratives of the self within a context in which external influences seek to impact on or regulate the nature of the self-meaning" (p. 52). In negotiating the tensions that arise between various external influences, people may even adopt antagonistic positions within their narrative of self (Clarke et al. 2009).

Is identity work a conscious process? Saayman and Crafford (2011) found that identity work occurs at both a conscious and subconscious level. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) suggest that in stable and routinised situations, identity work is unconscious and work identity is reproduced without challenge or at least changes naturally and gradually, to the extent that we may not even notice it is happening (Giddens 1991; Ibarra 2003). However, in challenging social situations and significant

life events, identity work may be triggered by an existential vacuum and psychological angst, given the right amount of self-doubt and openness on behalf of the person, implying a conscious deliberate negotiation of identity (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010; Saayman and Crafford 2011). However, Walsh and Gordon (2008) suggest that much of identity work is a conscious choice by people, as they choose specific social identities over others. Their model of identity work considers the organisation's identity in particular in the construction of work identity.

How far-reaching is identity work? Identity work may differ according to the magnitude or degree of change and revision. Alvesson et al. (2008: 19–20) suggest at least four "moments" in which identity work is taking place: as an ongoing process; as a result of major change, for example, transformational shifts in society, occupation, organisation or individual life course (see, e.g. Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010; Watson 2008); as a consequence of recurring micro-level incidents (see also Beech 2008); and as a result of critical incidents. The latter may include more extreme circumstances involving traumatic events, for example, bullying, in which the sense of contradiction, disruption and confusion is pervasive over a sustained period, and those affected have to engage in intensive identity work to stabilise and repair their work identity (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Lutgen-Sandvik 2008).

Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) assume a measure of stability in work identity over a period of time and in various situations but suggest people have many coexisting self-narratives enabling a flexible presentation of self-able to adjust to the requirements of various contexts and purpose of interaction. Ibarra and Petriglieri (2010) propose the distinct yet complementary notion of identity play – the process of testing possible future selves in the process of identity transition and change. The purpose of identity play is to commit provisionally to potential selves, thus generating a variety of possibilities, before a more permanent commitment to an identity takes place.

Beech (2008) suggests that identity work is influenced by various factors such as emotions, cognitions and power relations. In some instances a close emotional bond may enable a person to hear and accept identity-related feedback, whilst at other times, a more detached (e.g. a professional opinion) may be more effective. Secondly, cognitive reasons for or against change may have an effect on identity work – in some instances serving as a powerful reason to change; in others, a reason for resistance. Thirdly, power dynamics play a major role in identity work, as power is necessary to influence others to accept particular identity constructions. However, if a person feels they are being coerced, attempts to influence identity may be counterproductive (Musson and Duberley 2007).

3.2.2 Typology of Work Identity and Identity Construction

Dutton et al. (2010) propose a four-perspective typology capturing positive work identities and identity construction, these being evaluative, virtue, developmental and structural. The virtue and evaluative perspectives are similar in that they focus

on the content of identity. The *virtue perspective* posits a positive work-related identity if associated with virtuous qualities and character strengths as a person of good character would be viewed. The *evaluative perspective* assumes work identity plays a crucial role in enhancing self-worth and places emphasis on the feelings of self-regard generated by aspects of work, through either the individual's work, work relationships or as a member of a work-based social identity group. Thus, work identity is viewed as positive when regarded favourably.

In the *developmental perspective*, identity construction is viewed as positive if it develops and changes over time, and this can occur in two ways. Firstly, work identity is viewed positively if it is developing towards a higher-order level of development. The second view assumes a positive work identity if it is systematically altered to achieve a more suitable fit with a set of internal or external standards. Finally, there is the *structural perspective* that considers the way identity is organised and suggests that work identity is positive when various elements of identity are functioning in a balanced and/or complementary relationship with each other. Here too they differentiate between two approaches, one focusing on optimal balance and the other on complementarity. The balanced identity structure perspective assumes that work identity is positive when viewed as a balance between personal identity and social identities, requiring the person to negotiate the tension between their need for inclusion and belonging as opposed to the need for uniqueness and differentiation. Complementary identity structure is the second approach of the structural perspective and emphasises the perceived complementarity between diverse social or role identities and considers coping strategies that are developed to reduce the tension caused by the conflict associated with competing demands between various facets of identity.

The model that forms the basis of the discussion of identity work in this chapter is largely shaped by the assumptions of the structural perspective. We assume that identity is shaped by a tension between uniqueness and belonging but that complementarity does exist, and on this basis, the strategies for reducing the tension are also explored.

3.3 A Model of Work Identity Negotiation

In this section, we discuss a model that presents the demands and tensions involved in the process of negotiating work identity. The model (see Fig. 3.1) was constructed from the data gathered as the qualitative part of the Work Identity Project conducted in an international beverage manufacturing company based in Gauteng, South Africa, and represents an attempt to capture the negotiation of work identity in a diverse and complex society. However, before we do so, we consider briefly other models of identity construction and their contribution to our understanding of work identity.

Whilst by no means an exhaustive overview of models of work identity, Table 3.1 highlights some key elements of work in the field to date. The focus has been primarily on specific identities, for example, professional identity and managerial

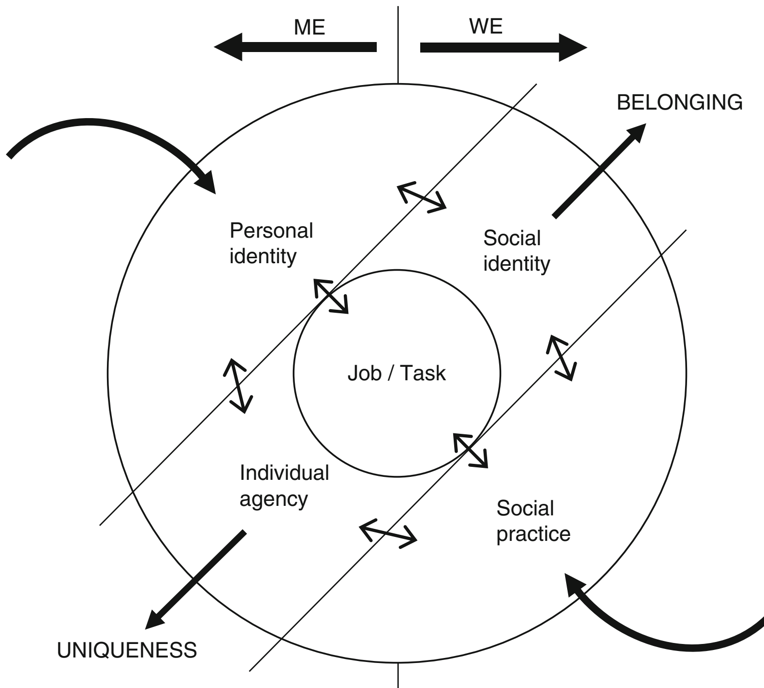

Fig. 3.1 A conceptual model of the identity tensions and demands that mobilise identity work at work (Adapted from "Negotiating work identity" by Saayman and Crafford 2011, p. 5 of 12. © The Authors 2011, Licensee: AOSIS OpenJournals)

Table 3.1 Overview of models of identity construction and negotiation

Authors	Focus	Outcome
Jorgenson (2002)	Considers the positions women engineers take up in constructing gender in technical work	Identifies five positions these women use to position themselves in the prevailing discourses of gender and technical work
Pratt et al. (2006)	The construction of professional identity	Develop a model of the process through which professional identity is constructed
Beech (2008)	The dialogic nature of identity work	Develops a model of the micro-dialogic processes involved in identity work
Watson (2008)	The construction of managerial identity	Considers the relationship between social discourses as locations for social identities and their relationship with self-identity
Slay and Smith (2011)	The construction of professional identity, particularly in the context of a stigmatised cultural identity	Develop a model of professional identity redefinition, as professionals are "forced" to redefine their professional identity given the possibilities and constraints of their cultural/racial identity

identities (Pratt et al. 2006; Slay and Smith 2011; Watson 2008), and how these are constructed and negotiated. Furthermore, specific elements of gender and race are considered and how women and black professionals attempt to negotiate an identity in the face of (potential) discrimination and power imbalance (Jorgenson 2002; Slay and Smith 2011). Finally, there is a consideration of the micro-situation and how identity is constructed within this setting (Beech 2008). In the model that forms a key focus of this chapter, we attempt to broaden the scope in reflecting work identity negotiation and move beyond the specific domains of profession, gender and race and consider the broader context as well. As Alvesson et al. (2008) point out, "How we understand ourselves is shaped by larger cultural and historical formations, which supply much of our identity vocabularies, norms, pressures and solutions, yet which do so in indirect and subtle ways" (p. 10).

The model was developed in South Africa, which provides a fairly unique context for considering work identity negotiation, as it was on the basis of race, that discrimination was legally entrenched during Apartheid. The Apartheid system regulated to a large extent the working lives of a significant part of the population and so doing influenced their work identity in far-reaching ways. Since 1994, the aim has been to bring about transformation in a way that will allow various racial and cultural identities to express themselves fully in all social contexts, including the workplace.

For this reason, identity work cannot be considered without taking the political, social and legal context into account as the work environment is where an attempt has been made to right many of the past wrongs. This has implications for work identity, and the way it is constructed and negotiated in the workplace. The working environment is thus informed to very large extent by the social, political and legal frameworks governing the national context, aimed at transformation. Specifically in education and formal accreditation for learning, systems have been put in place to allow people who were previously excluded from various types of training to obtain formal recognition for informal learning. Legislation also governs the appointment and promotion of employees, based on a redress of past imbalances, and organisations are required by law to ensure these processes are enacted. This has far-reaching implications for the work identity of those previously affected by discrimination but also for those who were not.

All these influences combine to create a complex context in which work identity is constructed and negotiated, and it was in a global firm, with local roots, in which this study took place. The firm itself is a multinational, listed on both the London and Johannesburg Stock Exchanges but has its origin in South Africa and thus provided an ideal context to study the spectrum of influences relevant in work identity negotiation. The model presented below is nevertheless, like all similar models, bound by the historically and culturally context in which it was developed. Nevertheless, the scope of the model is particularly broad and is thus useful as a framework for discussing work identity negotiation more generally, thus locating work done in other studies, within the comprehensive scope allowed by the model.

Data was gathered by seven fieldworkers who were all part of the work identity project, and the dataset formed the basis of three studies within the greater endeavour. The use of multiple researchers counterbalanced the effect of personal differences

and interviewer biases ensuring that the same themes emerged from different interviewers (Roodt 2007). The data was collected by means of unstructured interviews, and each of the seven fieldworkers interviewed four participants twice. A total of 28 participants were included in the study and included representatives from most of the business units in the plant and all levels of employees, thus displaying variety in age, race, gender, mother tongue, level of education, occupation, socioeconomic status and worldview. Given the diverse nature of the South Africa context, ensuring a heterogeneous sample was essential.

Before data gathering began, a preliminary visit to the site gave fieldworkers an orientation to the organisation's history and values as well as the physical demands and constraints. A tour of the plant provided a sense of the scale of production as well as exposure to cultural artefacts and symbols, allowing us to locate the research participants within the organisation and understand the nature of their work environment.

The strategies used in negotiating these tensions and demands, discussed in Section 3.4, were derived from the same study. At the same time as the study was conducted, a member of the research team investigated shifts in working identity, as experienced by research team members (Smith 2011). These findings gave insight into tensions and demands of identity work, as well as strategies, and are included in the discussion of both the model and the strategies.

The model we have constructed was considered against the backdrop of two frameworks, these being individual agency versus social practice (Giddens 1991) and uniqueness versus belonging (Kreiner et al. 2006). Each of these will be outlined briefly.

Individual Agency Versus Social Practice: Giddens (1991) proposes a reciprocal relationship between social structure and individual agency. In the context of identity work, it is assumed that people operate as individual agents within the structures of their work domain, trying to shape these to suit their personal needs and expectations, at the same time as the social practices, roles and expectations inherent in these act in reciprocal fashion trying to shape people into the required social mould.

Uniqueness Versus Belonging: Kreiner et al. (2006) propose that a dynamic tension exists in every individual between the need for uniqueness on the one hand and a sense of belonging on the other hand. People experience a sense of belonging as they identify with a social category or role at work and this leads to group membership and acceptance, which in turn appears to increase self-esteem, thus enhancing work identity (Buche 2006). Whilst belonging is important, people also try to rescue a sense of uniqueness by differentiating themselves from others (Craig 1995). The outcome of the tension will be influenced by the match or mismatch between the individual and situational demands, sometimes shifting towards belonging and other times towards uniqueness.

The aim of the model is to capture the tensions and demands that are experienced as a person negotiates their work identity against the background of tensions between individual agency versus social practice as well as uniqueness versus belonging. Social identities and practices tend the person towards belonging to the "we" whilst personal identity and agency reinforce the uniqueness of "me". In central position is the role or task that forms a critical element in work identity and forms the context from

which a considerable amount of identity negotiation at work is conducted. Personal identity is expressed as individual agency and interacts with social practices to change and/or personalise these. Social identities are also adopted and shaped to suit the needs and uniqueness of the person. Personal identity, of which work identity will be one facet, is by nature thoroughly social and is shaped by the social identities and practices available for identity construction.

Finally, before discussing each of the components of the model in more detail, it is vital to point out that these concepts are socially constructed and particularly the identity-related ones, personal identity, social identity, work identity, identity work, are interwoven and closely related, and whilst it is easy to separate them "in theory" (as depicted in Fig. 3.1), in practice this becomes more challenging. At times it is difficult to determine where, for example, personal identity ends and where work identity begins and exactly the distinction between social identity and personal identity. Karreman and Alvesson (2001: 60) capture the sometimes "blurred" nature of work identity, reminding us that "… quests for identity intersect, intermingle and interact with organisational activity…. and organisational reality and work identities are simultaneously constructed".

The different concepts used in the model are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

3.3.1 Personal Identity

In negotiating work identity, the first component of the model is personal identity, which refers to the relatively stable components of personhood seated in personality, personal history, language, value system, ascribed resources, biographical data and locus of control. In other words, "who am I?" and "how have I come to be who I am today" (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Saayman and Crafford 2011; Watson 2008). Personal identity is influenced by various factors, including interactions with others, current level of motivation and those factors that provide meaning to the person in their particular stage of life, for example, older participants expressing a desire to secure a financial future and leave a legacy before retiring, rather than move up in the hierarchy (Saayman and Crafford 2011). In South Africa, African people, on the basis of their race, were for many years excluded from ownership. However, within the framework of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), there is a drive to increase the number of African people owning and managing businesses in the economy, and many African participants indicated they were using their work environment to develop their skills so as to apply these at a later date in their own businesses which were at that the time in the embryonic stage (Saayman and Crafford 2011). The latter highlights the influence of the local context in the negotiation of personal identity.

Personal history includes factors such as upbringing, parental influences and the role of a individualist or Western society, which impact on the concepts of work,

personal motivation and resilience (Saayman and Crafford 2011). Personal identities are developed in a cultural context and will reflect culturally sanctioned qualities, traits and expectations that are internalised by the person (Burke 2004; Saayman and Crafford 2011; Storey et al. 2005). These culturally sanctioned qualities have meaning for the person and are regulated and confirmed through their dealings with others (Burke 2004).

Alvesson et al. (2008) suggest that personal identity implies a position of (often positive) subjectivity, entwining feelings, values and behaviour and pointing them in particular directions, which may at times be conflicting. Personal identity is the outcome of a particular blend of chosen social identities and the adaption and adjustment of these in line with personal needs and expectations, resulting in a relatively unique sense of personhood. Personal identity is continually negotiated and redefined, in response to existential crises and changes in meaning over time (Saayman and Crafford 2011).

Personal identity also determines the extent to which people express individual agency and is influenced by the need for power, affiliation and personal expression (Saayman and Crafford 2011). In extreme situations, where agency is not or cannot be exercised, personal identity may be subsumed in a social context as the social identity that proves to be too "colonising" and self-alienation occurs (Costas and Fleming 2009). In these situations people lose touch with "who they are", as the social identity, required by the occupation or organisation, has become "the truth of themselves" (Costas and Fleming 2009: 370). This can prove to be both depressing and devastating as the required identity may be very different from who they believe themselves to be, or want to be.

3.3.2 Individual Agency

Individual agency refers to the expression of personal identity, as it is mobilised and expressed in an active way to negotiate and address challenges in the environment. It is through the active expression of identity that people define themselves as unique beings, and individual agency as an expression of subjective identity is a means of self-determination that includes a degree of intentionality and personal influence (Down and Reveley 2009; Musson and Duberley 2007; Saayman and Crafford 2011; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003; Watson 2008). As Craig argues, it is only through the active expression of who they are that a person can be said to have an identity at all (1995). The model assumes that individual agency is active (or should be) in shaping work identity in the context of wider social influences and practices at work.

One way, in which people express their personal identity through agency, is the process of identity negotiation. According to Swann et al. (2009), identity negotiation is a process "… whereby relationship partners reach agreements regarding 'who is who'" (p. 82). Identity negotiation, which occurs in all relationships including those at work, enables people to establish as part of their respective identities mutual

expectations, obligations and common goals, providing a measure of "interpersonal glue" (p. 82). In a relational context like the organisation, Swann et al. (2009) propose that people aim to achieve identity congruence and in so doing satisfy a need for coherence ("a sense that the world fits with past experiences") and connectedness ("positive relations with valued others") (p. 85).

An ideal organisational environment is one where a person is able to meet their need for connectedness and coherence through preferred agented strategies, for example, where a young woman is able to meet her need for connectedness by cultivating an identity of a skilled and conscientious team member (Swann et al. 2009). In this way, the competent performance of a job serves as a strategy for achieving connectedness and coherence in the organisation. But organisational contexts are not always ideal and the process of identity negotiation assumes people are able to negotiate identities that minimise tensions between who they are and the considerations of their context. As indicated above, identity negotiation is not possible or successful and self-alienation may be the result.

However, where people have the freedom to express their uniqueness, it has a validating and personalising function, and opportunities, or lack thereof, for individual agency in turn inform personal identity and affect motivation and drive, self-esteem and people's concept of work (Saayman and Crafford 2011). As people express personal agency, they become active role players in constructing a work identity that is meaningful to them and are no longer passive recipients of identities assigned by others. This is experienced as both liberating and empowering, and as people are given the opportunity to shape their work environment, it becomes more meaningful to them as it is effectively an expression of themselves (Saayman and Crafford 2011). Thus, the expression of personal identity, through personal agency, has a dual function: it increases a sense of being valued and allows for personal distinctiveness which in turn fosters feelings of participation and an increased sense of belonging. Thus, a sense of belonging, rather than being viewed as a consequence of conformity, is in fact fostered by allowing for a measure of individual agency and expression.

3.3.3 Social Identity

As Watson (2008) points out, identity work cannot be understood without accounting for the structural and sociological contexts within which the person operates, and the work environment provides a rich source of material for identity production and reproduction. Social identities exist in a cultural context and the conditioning, affiliations and societal codes these comprise (Burke 2004; Ybema et al. 2009). Social identities help the person make sense of their social environments and help them find a place for themselves within it (Walsh and Gordon 2008).

Social identities refer to:

1. "Cultural, discursive or institutional notions of who or what any individual might be" (Watson 2008: 131)
2. "A set of social definitions and redefinitions" (Ybema et al. 2009: 301)

3. "An individual's perception of him or herself as a member of a group, particularly in terms of value and emotional attachment" (Alvesson et al. 2008: 10)
4. "Set of named categories that people in the culture learn to apply to themselves and to others" (Burke 2004: 9)

The work environment makes available various socially constructed categories that comprise roles and functions and make up the social structure (Burke 2004; Saayman and Crafford 2011; Watson 2008). These categories have names as well as common meanings and expectations that define how a "typical" someone located in that position would (or should) act. These meanings and expectations are tied to the social structure within which they are located and would thus be local and specific (Burke 2004). Organisational, professional, occupational, team and role identities are all examples of work-related identities (Saayman and Crafford 2011; Walsh and Gordon 2008). Organisational identity would, for example, influence the roles people adopt as well as what would be considered acceptable behaviour when acting on behalf of the organisation (Golden-Biddle and Rao 1997). These assigned work identities may be internalised, or resisted (Saayman and Crafford 2011; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003). In some instances, a fulfilling social identity may be integrated into personal identity, for example, a person who identifies closely with her job may say, "I am a career counselling specialist". Markus and Kunda (1986) suggest that a particular social identity may be more central to personal identity (or work identity for that matter).

In other instances where a person does not identify with a social identity, the elements of the identity may be resisted especially where these differ significantly from who they are in other parts of their lives and may even be in conflict with these (Watson 2008). In such instances, identity malaise may set in, decreasing belonging as people withdraw into themselves or express dissatisfaction through defiance and reduced cooperation (Saayman and Crafford 2011).

Work identity is however influenced by social identities outside of the work environment as well, for example, identities such as mother, father, husband, Black female and Christian (Smith 2011). Additional social identities are also to be found as people participate in their local communities, take on hobbies, and further their education via affiliations with other bodies (Saayman and Crafford 2011). The demands and expectations of these identities are varied and may be a source of potential conflict, for example, a mother who is also a manager may have to attend a school function at the same time as having to make a presentation to the company board. This often requires additional support in juggling the demands of competing identities (Smith 2011).Watson (2008) differentiates between five types of social identity:

1. Social-category social identities: class, gender, nationality, ethnicity (e.g. upper class, female, Asian, Hindu, Scottish)
2. Formal role social identities: occupation, rank, citizenship (manager, cleaner, captain, an Italian citizen)
3. Local organisational social identities: an old style Nottingham professor, a Boots pharmacist

4. Local personal: characterisations others make of an individual, in the context of specific situations or events
5. Cultural stereotype: a boring accountant, a devoted mother

As much as social identities place demands and expectations on people, they also provide the platform for people to apply their agency within the accepted social structures (Down and Reveley 2009; Watson 2008). Alvesson et al. (2008) emphasise that taking on a social identity does not imply "… stepping into pre-packaged selves, but always involves negotiating intersection with other simultaneously held identities (e.g. Black male professor) and making individualized meaning in interactions with people and systems around us" (p. 10). This highlights two very important factors, work identity involves negotiation between internally held identities as well as negotiating the common expectations and meanings associated with those identities in relationship with others (Halford and Leonard 2006; Ybema et al. 2009). In this way work identity is personalised, as various elements of social identities are negotiated and adjusted to suit personal identity and goals (Saayman and Crafford 2011; Swann et al. 2009; Watson 2008).

This tension between social structure and individual agency not only makes work identity distinctive but allows for a bridge between the individual and the social (Alvesson et al. 2008; Burke 2004; Ybema et al. 2009). Identity work is thus "… a complex, multifaceted process which produces a socially negotiated temporary outcome of the dynamic interplay between internal strivings and external prescriptions, between self-presentation and labelling by others, between achievement and ascription and between regulation and resistance" (Ybema et al. 2009: 301). There is thus a relationship of mutual influence between social and personal identities. Personal identity being the moderated and the unique expression of a social identity influences the nature of the social identity itself (Saayman and Crafford 2011).

Whilst social identities play a role in regulating behaviour, they can also inhibit the invocation of other, perhaps more relevant, identities in a particular situation. Karreman and Alvesson (2001) demonstrate in their study of a newsroom meeting how newsmakers strive to maintain a shared social identity, in the face of reasonable suggestions that other identities in that situation may be more appropriate. This suggests that in particular circumstances, a fixation on an identity narrative prevents people from considering alternative identities that may be more effective or useful in particular contexts and can thus inhibit performance (Karreman and Alvesson 2001).

We have alluded to the fact that identity work includes negotiating between various social identities, though at times these do not always make comfortable bedfellows, as highlighted by Essers and Benschop (2009) in their study of Muslim women entrepreneurs. Acting as entrepreneurs in a restrictive religious and/or cultural tradition provides challenges with regard to work identity construction, as tensions between the various social identities require delicate balance. However, whilst some may interpret these as constraints, others have used these as entrepreneurial opportunities, demonstrating particularly creative individual agency, for example, one female Muslim entrepreneur opened a driving school for women, knowing other Muslim women may be hesitant to go to male instructor (Essers and Benschop 2009).

Whilst social identities are often viewed as something with which people identify, Ashcraft (2013) challenges this idea, arguing that they have been constructed over time to be associated with embodied features which determine who may more or less legitimately identify with these identities. She uses the metaphor of the glass slipper to illustrate how some social identities have come to be constructed to fit certain embodied identities as opposed to others, for example, in the story of Cinderella, the glass slipper will only fit a small female and excludes all those not fitting those bodily criteria. In the work domain, certain professions have come to be associated with particular genders, for example, engineering is associated with a "male identity" even though an analysis of the tasks required shows no real reason for this (Faulkner 2000). This emphasises the constructed nature of identity and challenges the notion that work shapes people only, when in fact types of people come to "shape" work and the social identities associated with it.

3.3.4 Social Practices

We have already discussed social identities and their role in the construction of work identity. In addition to the role demands and responsibilities connected with a social identity, there are also associated social practices depending on a particular social system. These practices exist at various levels of society, including the organisational, group and individual level, providing both implicit and explicit guidelines for behaviour and so doing form the basis of organisational control (Saayman and Crafford 2011). According to Alvesson et al. (2008), "How we understand ourselves is shaped by larger cultural and historical formation, which supply much of our identity vocabularies, norms, pressures and solutions, yet which do so in indirect and subtle ways" (p. 11) (also see Alvesson and Willmott 2002).

Because social practices provide such fruitful material for identity construction, in the construction of identity generally and work identity, particularly, they exercise considerable influence, and for this reason, we cannot understand social practices apart from the power influences they inevitably exert (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Alvesson et al. 2008; Saayman and Crafford 2011). Alvesson et al. (2008: 19) list possible resources for identity construction, and these include:

1. Embodied practices of the organisation which includes activities carried out by people at work
2. Material and institutional arrangements which include the division of labour, organisational hierarchies, job titles and descriptions
3. Discursive formations that inform the ways particular versions of the self, work and the organisation are constructed
4. The circulation of local narratives and the storytelling performances they make possible
5. Interpersonal relations, both the mundane, everyday interaction and the challenging social issues that must be resolved

6. Anti-identities which provide the person with the option of dis-identification, for example, Watson's (2009) case who entitled his autobiography "I don't want to be an engineer"

Whilst social practices provide a rich source of material for the construction of work identity, these must be meaningful to the person for some reason and thus have valency – "either affirming or negating" – for example, a bonus system will only work if money and accumulation are significant to people as part of their identity (Alvesson and Willmott 2002).

The degree of control, however, lies in the meaningfulness of the practice, as interpreted by the person. In some instances, control is extreme and people experience the attempts at control, represented by social practices, as extremely negative and resort to a strategy of "de-identification" in order to continue operating in the environment (Costas and Fleming 2009). Much like wearing a mask, employees adopt a "front" identity that enables them to perform their work role by establishing "… a boundary between what is perceived to be genuine and what is counterfeit, performed and mere pragmatic pretense" (Costas and Fleming 2009: 354). However, in extreme cases, the employee may become alienated from the self and is no longer able to distinguish between real and façade with the façade taking over or absorbing the "authentic" or "personal" self, something Costas and Fleming (2009) refer to as *self-alienation*.

In the context of the model, social practices include structure, organisational culture and the management and leadership framework (Saayman and Crafford 2011). The context created by these practices present considerable situational demands and tensions to which individuals respond by negotiating their work identity. Once again, it is important to remember that there is considerable overlap between these dimensions, for example, management practice should be closely aligned with culture and be mutually influenced by it. For example, the management practice of participation should manifest over time as a culture of participation. This will become clearer as we proceed with the discussion.

3.3.4.1 Structure

Organisations exist in particular contexts that all impact on the structure thereof and thus have implications for the negotiation of work identity. Kirpal (2004) identifies three levels of structure. Firstly, the macro-environment includes labour markets and the way these are nationally and culturally embedded, as well as relevant work concepts and vocational education and training systems. The second level includes sectoral differences and unique demands and norms flowing from these. The third level refers to the immediate working domain.

Brown (2004) highlights the relationship between the way work is organised and work identity. In an investigation of changes in work identities in the engineering and metal working sectors in France, Spain, the UK, and Germany, he found that structural features of the national systems attempted in different ways to regulate employees' work identities through mechanisms such as education and training, continued vocational development and apprentice systems. Furthermore, Brown

suggests that employers use organisational structure, vertical and horizontal mobility, flexibility, learning and development, individual scope, power and control to shape work identity in three areas of the job: (1) the way employees engage with work activities, (2) interaction with others and (3) learning and development. Constraining factors in these attempts to shape work identity include societal influences, expectations emanating from training and development, the occupational structure and the labour market (Brown 2004).

Saayman and Crafford (2011) also found that the various levels of structure had an impact on work identity in South Africa, and these included fears for personal safety, the skills shortage, emigration and political and legislative issues. Regarding personal safety, male participants expressed their discomfort at having to work through the night, knowing their wives felt unsafe being at home without them. Emigration had caused several vacancies that were slow in being filled and often required finding affirmative action candidates, which took a long time. In the interim, employees had to fill in to compensate for the lack of resources. On a sectoral level, social practices are influenced by the norms of the manufacturing industry, often viewed as demanding and invasive given a continuous production cycle, and included overtime, shift work and stand-by arrangements (Saayman and Crafford 2011). These had implications for both work and personal identity, as it was, for example, quite acceptable (in some areas) to contact co-workers at any time of night, an obviously invasive practice. Within the internal structure of the organisation, social practices were influenced by a person's position in the organisational hierarchy as well as the team of department of which they were part (Saayman and Crafford 2011).

Considering structure from a slightly different perspective, Kamp et al. (2011) highlight the importance of time, the temporal order and the meanings that have come to be associated with it, as an integral part of working life, and the consequences of these for work identity. People live in a constant state of haste, often putting in many more hours than required (even though these are often not monitored) to produce the outputs expected of them. In the age of modern technology and connectedness, what in the past were natural breaks are now filled with "quick time" chores such as checking e-mails and quickly replying to a text. These social practices have a significant influence on the way relationships are built and conducted and thus have implications for work identity.

3.3.4.2 Culture

Shared values and meaning amongst organisational members have been identified as key constructs in understanding performance and motivation and organisational identification can help to facilitate this (Hoogervorst et al. 2004). Whilst culture reduces uncertainty by providing a framework of values that facilitate social integration, these act as regulators of behaviour, as they bring organisational goals and personal activities together (Hoogervorst et al. 2004). Culture is thus a crucial means by which organisations exercise control over employees (Alvesson and

Willmott 2002) as from the organisational perspective, it is particularly desirable that the individual would align aspects of his or her identity with that of the organisation. Organisations often engage in active identity work as they introduce new means of control via practices of "teamwork" or "partnerships", though these efforts are not without contestation and resistance (Alvesson and Willmott 2002).

Whilst the discourse of participation is also means of control in organisations, participative practices have become an established part of the management practice in the current *zeitgeist* and thus a reasonable expectation (Musson and Duberley 2007). People tend to experience a culture of production and a lack of participation in decision-making as demotivating and disempowering, as they no longer feel heard or included (Saayman and Crafford 2011). This is perceived as a loss of individual agency as decision-making and changes occur without their involvement, and they are unable to express their needs and desires (Saayman and Crafford 2011). Whilst Jackall (1988) argues that an organisation expects its members to become functionaries of the system, where there is misalignment between organisational demands and individual needs, tension arises between social practices and individual agency and leads to an emotional withdrawal initially and reduced personal accountability (Saayman and Crafford 2011; Smith 2011). Reduced personal accountability may be exacerbated in organisations where there is an influence of a collectivistic culture and where group rather than individual accountability is the norm.

3.3.4.3 Management and Leadership

In the context of the model, the organisation's management and leadership framework refers to organisational leadership, relationships with managers and management practices with particular references to rewards, recognition and performance (Saayman and Crafford 2011). These have a significant influence of work identity (see also Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003).

Watson (2009) explains the importance of the management hierarchy as a source of identity construction as managers are required to be both authority figures and to interact informally in a flexible and socially skilled way. From a work point of view, relationships with management are viewed as a source of personal validation and feedback as well as much valued support, all critical in the negotiation of work identity. However, this extends to a more a personal level as well, and Saayman and Crafford (2011) found that employee's particularly valued management's support and understanding, in personal matters as well, for example, a phone call after an operation. Where this was lacking, people felt "used", one drawing on the metaphor of Cinderella as "… required by all and loved by none" (Saayman and Crafford 2011: 9).

Other factors that influence the negotiation of work identity include the leadership's vision for the future, being micromanaged, and a concern with a short-term focus on production, at the expense of participation (Saayman and Crafford 2011). Participative, people-centric management practices have a more positive influence on work identity as people need to be feeling wanted and needed and as an integral part of a team. Where these are lacking, people were inclined to renegotiate

Table 3.2 Intensive remedial identity work: phases, types and remedial goals

Pre-bullying phase	*First-level stabilising*: Re-establishing a sense of safety and security and reducing discomfort
	Sense-making: Confirming perceptions, establishing possible causes and validating the self
Bullying phase	*Reconciling*: Highlighting past successes to neutralise and counter accusations
	Repairing: Convincing others of one's value, convincing them to treat you according to one's valued identity and prompting them to action based on one's value
	Second-level stabilising: Recovering from the trauma of bullying and recalibrating one's belief system in coming to terms with an unfair world. Rebuilding a self-narrative, which includes these beliefs
Post-bullying phase	*Grieving*: Accepting the loss and working this into the self-narrative
	Restructuring: Healing from the trauma and reconstructing a valued self-identity and work-related identity

Adapted from Lutgen-Sandvik (2008)

boundaries, stepping away from the collective and exercising personal agency as part of their identity work (Saayman and Crafford 2011).

Sometimes, however, not only is support lacking, but employees are subject to intimidating, insulting and exclusionary behaviour, often at the hands of managers. These actions are intentional and aimed at harming, controlling and driving them from the workplace (Lutgen-Sandvik et al. 2007). Because work plays such an integral part in the construction of identity, this constitutes a considerable threat to identity, and those affected have to engage in intensive identity work to stabilise and repair work identity (Lutgen-Sandvik 2008). She identifies various strategies victims engage in during the various stages of bullying, summarised in Table 3.2.

The three components of social practices, structure, organisational culture and management and leadership, work interdependently to regulate and shape individual work identities, sometimes by means of "normal" control and other times in more sinister and consciously destructive ways. Employees, in turn, exercised their individual agency to influence social practices, resulting in a dynamic tension between agency and structure/social practices. Where employees experienced a sense of inclusion and a feeling of making a valued contribution, this increased their sense of belonging and improved organisational or team commitment (Saayman and Crafford 2011).

Conversely, where social practices become too prescriptive and gave little room for individual agency and expression, people feel robbed of their identities and began to feel like participants in their own lives (Saayman and Crafford 2011). This leads to a sense of depersonalisation, feelings of exclusion and irrelevance and a sense of belonging wanes, shifting a focus from "we" to "me". From a management and organisational point of view, one must remember that people can express agency either in the direction of the collective or away from it. Social practices, which are aimed at control in any event, may as well work in the favour of the organisation and encourage the production of favourable outcomes rather than negative ones. Thus, social practices should always allow for a degree of individual agency to be expressed.

3.3.5 Job and Role Context

In the context of the model, job and role context refer to the tasks, activities, responsibilities and demands associated with the individual's work role. Along with Dif (2004) and Simpson and Carroll (2008), we argue that the concept of *role* should not be understood in a traditional way, often associated with prescriptive and static features, but in line with the more contemporary notion of *job description* which is less rigid and demarcated, allowing for a varying measure of flexibility in constructing the nature of the work role.

From the employee's perspective, there are several factors that should be considered with regard to work identity, including the degree of personal development made possible by a job, the extent to which work is both meaningful and challenging, a sense of belonging and interpersonal relationships (Gini 1998; Hoogervorst et al. 2004; Kirpal 2004; Saayman and Crafford 2011; Smith 2011; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003). Role expectations play a significant role in work identity as an individual may embrace, negotiate or reject their roles, depending on their expectations thereof. Whilst people differed greatly in what is perceived as "meaningful" work, that it is meaningful to them, is of prime importance and the absence thereof led to a process of identity work, as people consider alternative options (Saayman and Crafford 2011; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003). At the same time, people indicated they would stay in job they perceived as meaningful, despite the possible negative financial implication of doing so.

In a study of engineering identities in Europe, Brown (2004) highlighted the following trends with regard to requirements for work roles, which will have an influence on work identity:

1. *Identification with challenging work:* Whilst this is more possible in some sectors and organisations than others, challenging work implied high engagement with work activities, close interaction with others and learning and development.
2. *An increasing use of graduates:* The principal driver for this tendency was the assumption that young, more highly qualified graduates were more likely to be flexible in approaching their work, easier to retrain when necessary and willing to take on a broader range of work.
3. *Employers prefer employees with a wide range of communication skills:* Employers wanted employees to shift their work identities to include greater interaction with others both inside and outside the organisation.
4. *Attempts to influence nonwork values:* Whilst this has changed, some employers still attempt to influence employees in choices made outside of the work domain (e.g. refusing career progression for a refusal to relocate).

Having explained the model, we now turn to a discussion of the strategies people use in negotiating the demands and tensions examined above.

3.4 Strategies Used in Identity Work

In the process of identity work, people draw on various types of strategies as they navigate and negotiate between various identity tensions and demands. Strategies for identity work refer to the decisions and actions people take as they engage in ongoing process of shaping, restoring, preserving, fortifying and modifying a sense of identity (Iedema and Scheeres 2003; Kirpal 2004; Kornberger and Brown 2007; Kreiner et al. 2006; Rothbard and Edwards 2003; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003).

Various authors have contributed to the scholarship on strategies used in the process of identity work and from very different perspectives. Whilst this may initially seem confusing, when one considers the scope of identity work alluded to earlier in the chapter, it is to be expected that a diverse range of identity work strategies are required. The challenge however is to find some way of making sense of this diverse array of strategies.

In Table 3.3, we provide an outline of some of the work that has been done on identity work strategies, with an indication of the context in which the strategies were developed as well as the nature of the strategies involved.

What should be immediately apparent from the Table 3.3 is the diversity in the nature and scope of these strategies. Some are focused on the here and now; others focus on the long-term achievement of identity objectives. Several of these are based on face-to-face interactions; others require many face-to-face interactions. Particular strategies are focused on actual engagement with a person; others involve no interaction but "do" identity in silent yet powerful ways. Many of the strategies occur at the level of the individual; others are developed in the context of the collective as group members react and develop communal strategies for managing common "threats" to identity (see, e.g. Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Essers and Benschop 2009). However, despite the variety, all of these represent powerful strategies in the "arsenal" of identity work (Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010).

In the section that follows, we discuss in slightly more detail the identity work strategies identified in the qualitative stage of the Work Identity Project discussed earlier. Nine strategies were identified and these are classified into four broader themes, namely, personal philosophies, relationships, career management and negotiating balance. The nature of data collection and the level at which it was gathered meant that the detail with which identity work strategies could be explored remained at a fairly high level of abstraction. These strategies are outlined in Table 3.4 and will be discussed in more detail in the sections that follow. Thereafter, we consider a means by which the "arsenal" of strategies may be classified.

3.4.1 Theme 1: Personal Philosophies

Personal philosophies refer to a foundational set of strategies used by people to make sense of their world and cope with difficulties they encounter in their working lives (Adams and Crafford 2012). These are regarded as foundational, as they

Table 3.3 Overview of identity work strategies

Pratt and Rafaeli (1997)	Explore how dress is used in constructing and negotiating hybrid identities in a hospital rehabilitation unit	Nurses in a rehabilitation unit wore civilian clothes as this supported the image of patients getting well and moving on
		Nurses in the critical centre wore traditional white "nursing" clothing to reinforce their status as medical professionals
Ashforth and Kreiner (1999)	Strategies used in positioning "dirty work" aimed at maintaining a positive identity in the face of occupational stigmatisation	*Beliefs and ideologies*: reframing, recalibrating and refocusing
		Practices: condemning the condemners, supporting the supporters, selective social comparison
Ibarra (1999)	Strategies used by professionals in the process of adapting to a new role	*Wholesale imitation:* mimics self-presentation of a single role model without much adaption
		Selective imitation: mimics selected traits or behaviours from multiple role models
		True to self: relies on internal models and own style
Humphreys and Brown (2002)[a]	Explore the use of dress as a means of expressing political and religious values	Students wearing the Muslim headscarf to resist perceived hegemonic influence
Elsbach (2003)	Whilst this study was focused on the interpretation of office décor in interpreting workplace identity, the underlying assumption is that office décor can be a strategy in expressing identity	Office décor acts as a relatively "permanent" (generally stays in place for lengthy periods), deliberate strategy in negotiating work identity
Ibarra (2003)	Strategies for reworking identity	*Crafting experiments:* attempting new activities and roles on a small scale
		Shifting connections: developing new contacts, identifying role models and peer groups
		Making sense: generating catalyst for change
Brown (2004)	Strategies used to build engineering work-related identities	*Identification:* identifies with both work and the organisation
		Long-term adjustment: conditional adaption, constrained by outside forces
		Short-term adjustment: identification over the short term
		Redefinition: changing and shaping the role
		Strategic careerists: identification as one phase in a career path

(continued)

Table 3.3 (continued)

Dif (2004)	Strategies used in constructing work identities in the telecommunications sector	*Redefinition strategies:* developing a broader and more open vocational mindset
		Retreat strategies: survival strategy used in the face of turbulent change
Kreiner et al (2006)	Strategies used by Episcopalian priests as they create a balance between personal and work identity	*Three categories of strategies:*
		Differentiation: emphasising the uniqueness of the personal
		Integration: integrating self with work
		Dual function: aimed at differentiation or integration
Lutgen-Sandvik (2008)	Strategies used to repair identity after incidents of bullying	Outlined in Table 3.1
Essers and Benschop (2009)	Strategies used by Muslim women in managing conflicts between their gender, ethnicity and religion in the context of entrepreneurship	Resistance and appeals to essential professions
		Emphasise the individuality of faith
		Embrace feminist interpretation of the Qur'an
		Historicise and contextualise the Qur'anic guidelines
Down and Reveley (2009)	Explore the strategies used by first-line managers in identity work	Self-narration, dramaturgical performance, face-to-face interaction
Czarniawska (2013)	Explores the strategies women use in positioning themselves from a gender perspective	Proposes a "discoursive" production of selves and includes discourse as well as elements such as dress codes, bodies, ornaments and other symbols. *Self-positioning* refers to an identity posited by the "self"
		Attributive positioning: identity attributed to "the self" in an interactive situation

[a]This study is not focussed specifically on the work identity per se but we have included it here as it represents an important strategy by which identity is negotiated

involve personal beliefs, morals and values that influence all spheres of life and thus the other strategies used to negotiate work identity. This theme includes two strategies, living work ethic and living personal ethic.

3.4.1.1 Strategy 1: Living Work Ethic

Living work ethic refers to those attitudes, beliefs and values people hold regarding their work and the organisation for which they work (Adams and Crafford 2012). These influence work engagement and in turn work identity and the value people placed on work. Living work ethic includes aspects such as commitment to work, job satisfaction, the proactive completion of work tasks and taking responsibility for work.

Table 3.4 Strategies in identity work at work

Strategy	Strategy label	Strategy definition
Theme 1: Personal philosophies		
Strategy 1	Living work ethic	Living work ethic that guides decisions and behaviour whilst creating meaning when faced with difficult situations at work
Strategy 2	Living personal ethic	Living personal ethic that provides guidance for decisions and behaviour in life, also including work
Theme 2: Relationships		
Strategy 3	Relationship work	Investing in relationships and actively manage these relationships to achieve goals
Strategy 4	Managing relationships with family	Participating in family relationships and deriving fulfilment, strength and motivation from these
Strategy 5	Managing relationships at work	Engaging in relationships at work to gain emotional support and to achieve their work goals
Theme 3: Career management		
Strategy 6	Education	Educating (formal and informal) oneself because it provides the knowledge and skill to work successfully
Strategy 7	Career mobility	Moving between organisations to achieve work-related, career, financial, and personal goals
Theme 4: Negotiating balance		
Strategy 8	Managing boundaries	Managing one's boundaries and making decisions that enhance temporal flexibility and relaxation to achieve work-life balance
Strategy 9	Work-life integration	Integrating work into life and vice versa in order to become more holistic

Both pride for work and the organisation are critical elements of this strategy, as these reflect commitment shown to both work and the organisation. Also included as part of this strategy is how meaning is created at work and in particular how participants make sense of the difficulties they experience.

Storey et al. (2005) highlight the way in which freelance workers draw on the notion of enterprise as a means of protecting themselves and their self-concepts. In the face of threatening circumstances, freelancers, drawing on the language of business and enterprise, redefined themselves as a business. By doing this, they were able to sell their services as a business and thus fend off the identity threat that failure would imply, thus constituting an effective psychological defence mechanism. By reconstructing meaning associated with work identity, people were able to cope with circumstances that may have otherwise proved overwhelming.

The ability to employ this strategy has significant implications for work identity, as work provides people with purpose and the drive to accomplish their goals, and the construct meaning in defence of the continued achievement of these constitutes a powerful strategy. Adams and Crafford (2012) cite the example of a participant who makes a choice to enjoy work, whether this is pleasant or not, reflecting a deliberate and conscious effort to choose contentment at work as opposed to focusing on negative aspects. This is particularly beneficial considering the security (including financial) that work provides and the central role work plays in life.

3.4.1.2 Strategy 2: Living Personal Ethic

Living personal ethic refers to the moral and ethical code by which people live and includes the attitudes, beliefs and values that influence their behaviour (Adams and Crafford 2012). Living personal ethic guides all aspects of people's lives and includes characteristics such as integrity, respect and self-discipline, acting as a moral "bedrock" which makes deviation from this personal ethic difficult. A strategy such as this should not be viewed as unusual, as part of identity work entails "establishing both who one is and who one is not (in the eyes of oneself and others)" (Watson 2009: 446). According to Taylor (1989), this process is reliant on some definition of what it means to be a "good" person, and the construction of identity is inevitably linked with various forms of morality. Watson (2009) found a similar tendency in his work with managers who "… brought together their competence as managers with their moral worthiness" (p. 446).

Adams and Crafford (2012: 6) refer to an example of a participant who was given a reasonable sum of money by one of the organisation's suppliers, which in his own mind was construed as a bribe. Whilst the money would have been very useful, his living work ethic would not permit him to accept the money. Instead he gave this to his manager mentioning that the supplier had given him a donation for the Christmas fund and would he (the manager) please write a letter to thank the supplier in question. In this context, living work ethic enables the person to express individual agency and to regulate their own work identity, thus highlighting the value and influence strategies have in regulating identity. We suggest that this is closely aligned to what Dutton et al. (2010) define as the virtue perspective of work identity and people for whom the latter is significant may be particularly inclined to use these types of strategies.

Religious and spiritual beliefs also form part of this strategy and in the work context played a vital role in people's lives (Adams and Crafford 2012; Smith 2011). Spiritual and religious beliefs proved to be, for whom they are salient, a source of comfort and guidance, a place from which they could find renewal and draw strength to continue. Kreiner et al. (2006) also highlight tapping spiritual resources as a dual function strategy, and whilst this is to be expected in a sample of Episcopalian priests, this appears to extend to a diverse group of people in a secular organisation. However, Essers and Benschop (2009) argue that religion "…is not 'left at home'; it infuses working life" (p. 404).

The theme of personal philosophies may appear somewhat abstract, yet people use these in practical ways to create meaning in situations that are challenging, as a source of strength in times of struggle and to establish standards for acceptable behaviour (in life and work). The various strategies associated with personal philosophies can be equated with foundations on which work identity is built as well as the ideals against which various external demands are measured. In this way boundaries are set regarding what is considered acceptable and unacceptable, a set of criteria that provide guidelines for making decisions, planning the future and directing behaviour.

3.4.2 Theme 2: Relationships

Given that identity is inherently social, it is not surprising that strategies relating to relationships should be used in negotiating work identity and relationships proved to be a strategy used consistently by people to reinforce their identities. Whilst people use their relationships to define themselves and establish what is paramount in their lives, this manifested in different foci in the use of relationships (Adams and Crafford 2012).

3.4.2.1 Strategy 3: Relationship Work

Relationship work refers to the effort people invest in their relationships and the role of conscious reflexive thought on how these are managed. Adams and Crafford (2012) found that people consciously decide whether or not to engage in particular relationships as well as how their effort in these relationships would best utilised. This proved to be a powerful strategy as engaging with others is a critical element in "getting the job done", for example, one participant in their 2012 study highlighted the importance of recognising the value of diversity and treating people with respect to earn their trust, an element that had been missing from previous work relationships. As such, relationship work involves investing in relationships and adjusting relational behaviour to fit the context, for example, what constitutes acceptable conflict resolution behaviour at work and at home may look very different. Thus, relationship work involves adjusting behaviour and choosing the most appropriate behaviour for the context.

These strategies take on heightened significance, in work environments where relationships form the crux of how work is conducted, for example, knowledge-intensive organisations. Alvesson (2001) suggests that in knowledge-intensive organisations, a category he uses to describe inter alia professional organisations (including law and accounting firms, management, engineering and computer consulting firms, advertising agencies, R&D units and high-tech companies), tangible or measurable results are often hard to estimate. In some instances, results are measurable, but often such evaluation can only be done after a considerable time period, for example, the development of a new product. This does not mean that knowledge-intensive companies are without substance but rather lack the "weight" of tangible results, giving rise to ambiguity around the "actual" value of the organisation's products and services, especially as compared to other similar firms. To overcome the ambiguity surrounding the value of their services, organisations are required to build close relationships with clients who come to know them and trust the work and products they provide. On the other hand, the client is also faced with ambiguity in terms of the quality of services rendered by knowledge-intensive firms and would rather stick with a company he or she knows and has worked with in the past. In this process, client relationships are critical as they are the glue that keeps clients coming back. In addition, knowledge-intensive organisations rely on their

employees as the means by which they add value, as knowledge and expertise reside in their employees and they too need to be managed appropriately. Thus, in addition to technical competence, employees require relational competence, and the value of a strategy such relationship work increases.

3.4.2.2 Strategy 4: Managing Relationship with Family

Managing relationships with family may be viewed as an integral part of personal identity, as they are a means of maintaining the self. Relationships with wives, husbands, parents and children provide a valuable source of strength and fulfil relational needs that cannot be met by work (Adams and Crafford 2012; Kreiner et al. 2006; Smith 2011). Their influence on work identity lies in the fact that these relationships provide a break from work and, where supportive, strength and purpose in the work role. In addition, families and especially parents play a significant role in personal and subsequently work identity by laying a foundation of values that shape people's characters and value systems, which later manifest as a living work ethic and a living personal ethic (Adams and Crafford 2012). This highlights the importance of relationships in the formation of personal philosophies, reinforcing the relational nature of identity.

The importance of relationships as strategies in the process of identity work is also suggested by Kreiner et al. (2006) and Storey et al. (2005). Storey et al. (2005) highlight the importance of significant others such as spouses and friends, who provided much needed support and encouragement when faced with identity threats specific to the freelance enterprise, for example, going through a period where no work is forthcoming. Kreiner et al. (2006) identify involving people as a strategy in identity work, referring to involving family and friends to help them maintain their personal identity in the face of occupational demands.

3.4.2.3 Strategy 5: Managing Relationships at Work

The strategy *managing relationships at work* refers to the importance of sound relationships in the working environment and includes relationships with managers or supervisors, colleagues or co-workers and reportees (Adams and Crafford 2012). There are various reasons for the importance of sound relationships, including the achievement of work goals, the provision of feedback and support and guidance. The achievement of organisational goals in many instances relies on effective team work, and for this reason, work relationships are critical (Watson 2008; Adams and Crafford 2012). In addition, work relationships provide a valuable source of feedback in the process of self-improvement, though this is only possible in the context of open relationships. Whilst in some instances work relationships are poor, they may also be a significant source of support and guidance. Networking was found to be a particularly helpful relational strategy as a means by which people develop and improve their knowledge about work by seeking input and guidance from others in

similar work environments (Adams and Crafford 2012; Smith 2011). This strategy proved to be beneficial for both the individual and the organisation.

3.4.3 Theme 3: Career Management

People use various strategies within the sphere of career management to develop their professional and vocational lives. Different strategies are used at various times of their working lives as they work towards goal achievement in their careers. Significant in the strategies related to career management is the development of work goals that people set for themselves as part of their career development (Adams and Crafford 2012). Goal setting provides a more formal means through which people are able to meet their need for challenge and competition and in some instances results in career advancement as well as recognition. A key part of this process, from an employer's perspective, is to have clear organisational goals, as these allow people to align their personal work goals with those of the organisation.

3.4.3.1 Strategy 6: Education

Education is an essential building block in development, both personally and in the work environment, and provides people with a foundation to fall back on in the event of an unstable job market (Adams and Crafford 2012). People are aware that a good education increases their chances of success, including financial security, and use education to manage their career paths. People make career decisions based on their interest and the need to be challenged. Education may be in the formal sense of a qualification, though this is only one aspect thereof and work itself provides an invaluable informal opportunity to learn. This implies that people are provided with opportunities to learn (e.g. promotions and challenging assignments) as well as the freedom to learn (Adams and Crafford 2012).

In the South African context, the government has recognised the value of informal learning and practical experience and has made provision to formalise this form of education. This is necessary in a country where people, based on the colour of their skin, were denied access to decent education and the opportunity to develop themselves. This is made possible through Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and their Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) systems, which are run within the framework of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The system allows people to receive recognition for the experience they have developed over many years and gain a qualification that reflects the value of their accumulated competence (Adams and Crafford 2012). This proved to be popular strategy amongst affected groups as it provides much of the recognition of a formal qualification, although achieved through informal means.

3.4.3.2 Strategy 7: Career Mobility

Career mobility as a strategy refers to a person's ability to exercise agency by choosing to leave a specific work environment and find an alternative, in an attempt to control his or her career. This may be because of a need to grow and develop, the need for change, or because the person is seeking improved work benefits and is obviously reliant on a favourable alternative (Adams and Crafford 2012). For some, this strategy is significant as they are reluctant to stay within one job or organisation for any length of time.

The value of career mobility was also highlighted by freelance workers in a study by Storey et al. (2005). Whilst they acknowledged that the career made one fairly vulnerable, not knowing where the next job would come from, participants highlighted the flexibility this type of work offered. It enabled participants to develop an "amoebic-like" ability, adapting to the needs of clients and demands of the market that had positive implications for skill development.

3.4.4 Theme 4: Negotiating Balance

Negotiating balance refers to the strategies people use to balance the demands of work and their personal lives so as to manage the impact of these tensions on their work identity. Two strategies were identified, namely, managing boundaries and work-life integration.

3.4.4.1 Strategy 8: Managing Boundaries

Managing boundaries implies a deliberate conscious strategy of setting clear boundaries between work and home lives, enabling people to focus on what is paramount in the moment, be it work, family or the self. This was significant particularly in an organisational environment that is operational 24 h a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year (Adams and Crafford 2012). However, employing this strategy required flexibility and the ability to control certain aspects of the environment. A good example from the Adams and Crafford (2012) study is of an employee who negotiated, on joining the organisation, to have 3 months leave every year to travel home to visit her family. Whilst she views this concession as integral to the success of her family and home life, it comes with sacrifices, for example, the inability to move to other divisions, where this arrangement would no longer be possible. Smith (2011) also highlights the necessity of compromise as people have to balance career aspiration with personal needs, in an attempt to find what for each of them will be the "right" fit.

In their study of freelancers, Storey et al. (2005) found that the notion of enterprise discussed earlier was extended to the domain of work-life balance as well, and freelancers drew on the idea of enterprise to justify working from home, taking holidays, and working 3–4 days a week, constructing the achievement of a desired life style

(work-life balance) as evidence of the success of their "enterprise". Kreiner et al. (2006: 1044) identified a strategy they term "… flipping the on-off switch" which refers to a conscious separation of social/work identity (priest) work and personal life.

As part of managing work-life balance, employees emphasised the importance of relaxation, which included a variety of personal activities, interests or hobbies that provided an outlet for frustration and an opportunity to relax (Adams and Crafford 2012). Kreiner et al. (2006) identified a strategy of "… enacting ephemeral roles" (p. 1044) that highlights the importance of relaxation and a focus on outside interests and other roles (e.g. community work) as a means of achieving balance.

3.4.4.2 Strategy 9: Work-Life Integration

As much as people find it necessary to manage boundaries between work and their personal lives to ensure work-life balance, some people have emphasised the benefits of associating their work with other aspects of life. This is considered *work-life integration* (Adams and Crafford 2012). For example, one participant in the study highlighted the seamlessness between his work and personal life, indicating that it has become natural to integrate what he learns and derives from work into his home life, thus enhancing the benefit. Another explained how the effects of relaxation, experienced within the personal space, spilled over into the work domain and influenced this too. As part of their integration strategies, Kreiner et al. (2006) identified the strategy of "merging one's role with (work) identity", a strategy that allows for integrating work and personal identity and not treating these as separate at all. It would thus appear that at times people work to separate work and self, whereas at other times, it is to their benefit to integrate these. People thus alternate between separation and integration, depending on the requirements of the situation.

The strategies discussed above operate across all spheres of the person's life. Some of the strategies rely on factors present in the environment outside of work, namely, education (formal), relationships with family and living personal ethic. Other strategies, including relationships at work and living work ethic, apply particularly in the work environment. Several of the strategies, for example, managing boundaries and work-life integration, are used to manage tensions between the demands of various contexts, and finally, relationship work as a strategy is used in multiple relationship contexts.

3.5 Classifying Identity Work Strategies

In the preceding sections, we provided an overview of the various studies of identity work strategies with an emphasis on the diversity evident in the field. Thereafter, we discussed on some detail the identity work strategies emerging from the Work Identity Study conducted in South Africa (Adams and Crafford 2012). In this section, consider a means by which to make sense of the "arsenal" (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010) of strategies discussed in the chapter.

As indicated earlier in the discussion, Alvesson et al. (2008: 19–20) suggest at least four “moments” in which identity work takes place:

- As an ongoing process
- As a result of major change, for example, transformational shifts in society, occupation, organisation or individual life course
- As a consequence of recurring micro-level incidents and
- As a result of critical incidents

We propose that the moments identified by Alvesson et al. (2008: 19–20) be used as a framework to classify various strategies of identity work. In the Table 3.5, we attempt to group these strategies according to our understanding of

Table 3.5 Typology of identity work strategies

“Moments” of identity work (Alvesson et al. 2008)	Strategies of identity work
Used as part of an ongoing process	Strategies related to dress, bodies, office décor and other symbols (Czarniawska 2013; Elsbach 2003; Humphreys and Brown 2002; Pratt and Rafaeli 1997)
	Strategies of identification, long-term adjustment and strategic careerists (Brown 2004)
	Strategies used to create a balance between personal and work identity (Kreiner et al. 2006)
	Strategies used by Muslim women in managing conflicts between their gender, ethnicity and religion in the context of entrepreneurship (Essers and Benschop 2009)
	Strategies of living work and personal ethic, managing relationships with family and at work, managing boundaries and work-life integration (Adams and Crafford 2012)
Used in major occupational, societal, organisational or personal life course change	Strategies used by professionals in the process of adapting to a new role (Ibarra 1999)
	Strategies for reworking identity (Ibarra 2003)
	Redefinition and retreat strategies used in telecommunication environments (Dif 2004)
	Strategies of short-term adjustment and redefinition (Brown 2004)
	Strategies of education and career mobility (Adams and Crafford 2012)
Used in recurring micro-level incidents	Strategies related to positioning “dirty work” (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999)
	Strategies used by first-line managers in identity work (Down and Reveley 2009)
	Strategy of relationship work (Adams and Crafford 2012)
	Strategies related to positioning of gender (Czarniawska 2013)
Used in response to critical incidents	Strategies used to repair identity after incidents of bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik 2008)

the author's work[1] and, so doing, bring a measure of order to this field. Furthermore, it must be noted that the classification in Table 3.5 is not based on empirical work of any kind but is a suggested means of making sense of the diversity of strategies that have been outlined in this chapter.

The moments identified by Alvesson et al. (2008) provide a useful means of classifying the various identity work strategies. Some of the strategies are used on an ongoing basis and may involve both conscious and unconscious identity work (Alvesson and Willmott 2002). Other strategies are used in specific instances, as people contemplate shifts or readjustments in their work as a result of societal, organisational or personal changes. In extreme cases, where work identity has been threatened, for example, in the case of bullying, very specific strategies are required to restore work identity. Strategies at the level of micro-level incidents may be used throughout, in the context and service of the other strategies, for example, in redefining one's work identity, one may require specific micro-level incidents in which the "other" is convinced of the value and veracity of the new version of self.

3.6 Conclusions and Practical Implications for Practitioners

The aforementioned discussion has some important conclusions and implications for managing people in organisations:

1. Understanding the processes through which work identity is constructed and negotiated is beneficial for managers in organisations because work identity influences the degree to which a person actively engages their work and working environment, thus organisational performance.
2. People who are given freedom to express their personal identity through their working life experience work as more meaningful as it becomes an expression of "who they are".
3. Organisations, whilst fostering a sense of coherence through, for example, organisational identity and culture, should nevertheless allow for individual expression, as people experience attempts at extreme control, as negative and may resort to a strategy of "de-identification" to continue operating in the environment. This however leads to emotional withdrawal and the potential for reduced personal accountability.
4. Participative, people-centric management practices have a positive influence on work identity as people need to feel wanted and needed and part of a team. Where these are lacking, people were inclined to renegotiate boundaries, stepping away from the collective and exercising personal agency as part of their identity work.

[1] These classifications represent our understanding of the author's work, and they would quite possibly classify these differently should they have the opportunity.

5. Management should understand their importance as a means of personal validation and feedback for employees, as well as a source both work and personal support.
6. A person's job should be meaningful (as interpreted by them) and provide scope for personal development, learning, challenge, a sense of belonging and interpersonal relationships.
7. The importance of family and work relationships in negotiating work identity needs to be understood, acknowledged and supported through organisational practices.
8. The powerful effect of employees' personal philosophies in regulating work identity must be understood and given space for expression and valuation. This has implication for aspects such as organisational identity and culture and the importance of ensuring, from both an individual and organisational perspective, that individual and organisational identity and culture are aligned, in the most crucial matters, at least.

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Chapter 4
Personal and Situational Work-Based Identity Antecedents

Roslyn de Braine and Gert Roodt

4.1 Introduction

The broad research aims of the Work Identity research project were formulated in relation to the research model (Fig. 1.4) presented in Chap. 1. Chapter 2 provides an explanation of the work-based identity (WI) formation process based on two prominent identity theory streams. The WI construct was conceptualised based on the identity prototypes resulting from the identity formation process. The aim of the current chapter is therefore to present a review of the literature on specific personal and situational antecedents potentially related to WI that are to be used in the Bester (2012) and De Braine (2012) studies.

Firstly, this chapter explains how the interactions between the personal or individual and situational or work characteristics help to develop WI. Thereafter, the relevance of using the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as a basis or as a foundational framework for the prediction of WI is explained.

What follows next is a series of discussions on personal resources and job demands, and how those selected JRs and JDs are to be used in these two studies. The possible mediation role of JDs on the relationship of JRs and WI is briefly explained.

This chapter then concludes with a discussion of the literature on the potential biographical and demographical control variables and their role in the possible prediction of WI.

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4.2 Interaction of Individual and Work Characteristics

Work identities develop as a result of the interplay between an individual's dispositions and structural conditions of the work context (Kirpal 2004a). These dispositions could be personality, self-efficacy and the regulatory focus of an individual (Tims and Bakker 2010). It could also include constructs like work beliefs, intrinsic motivation, organisational-based self-esteem and optimism. These constructs or individual dispositions could also be viewed as personal resources. The role that personal resources may have with WI has never been studied before. This is discussed later in this chapter.

These constructs have not been included in any of the doctoral studies in the research project, but it is worth mentioning for future studies on WI. The scope of the two doctoral studies that looked at the antecedents of WI focused mainly on the prediction role of structural conditions. Structural conditions of the work context could, amongst other variables, include work characteristics. Work characteristics were delineated into two broad categories: job demands and JRs, as postulated in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model in the prediction of work engagement (Xanthopoulou et al. 2007). Consequently, both JDs and JRs are adjusted by employees through the process of job crafting (Tims et al. 2012), which helps employees to modify their work identities (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001).

4.2.1 Relevance of the JD-R Model in Predicting Work-Based Identity

The JD-R model was developed and introduced by Demerouti et al. in 2001. It has been more extensively used to predict work engagement, well-being and burnout (Hakanen et al. 2005; Mauno et al. 2007; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004) than older stress models such as the Job Demands-Control model (Karasek 1979) and the Effort-Reward Imbalance model (Siegrist 1996). This is due to the limited number of job characteristics that the older models consider (Bakker and Demerouti 2007; Van den Broeck et al. 2008), whereas the JD-R model can incorporate all types of both proximal resources or demands (those close to the individual – e.g. supervisor support, etc.) and distal resources or demands (those more removed from the individual – e.g. such as supporting climate). The JD-R model has therefore demonstrated external validity (Xanthopoulou et al. 2007). On these grounds it also becomes highly applicable in the study of WI, as it potentially caters for all professional, occupational and career identities of individuals. The foundational argument is that the ratio between JRs and JDs will either grow (in the case where JRs are proportionally dominant) or inhibit (in the case where JDs are proportionally dominant) WI.

The specific JDs and JRs that were used in this study were primarily taken from the Job Demands-Resource Scale (JDRS) that was developed by Jackson and

Rothmann (2005). These resources were growth opportunities, organisational support and advancement. The job demands taken from the JDRS were overload and job insecurity. Additional JRs were also added that were outside of the traditional JDRS model. These included task identity (Hackman and Oldham 1975), team climate (Anderson and West 1998) and perceived external prestige (Carmeli et al. 2006). Work-family conflict (Netemeyer et al. 1996) was an additional job demand outside of the JDRS that was also included as a possible predictor of work identity. Task identity was chosen due to its positive correlation with job involvement (Udo et al. 1997). Job involvement is considered to be an indicator of WI. Team climate was chosen because the use of teams is becoming more prevalent in South African organisations (Robbins et al. 2011). Perceived external prestige was chosen because it influences organisational identification (Smidts et al. 2001), which is regarded as another indicator of WI. The additional job demand work-family conflict was specifically chosen because of the role pressure incompatibility that it can create. This directly influences work identity.

4.2.2 Job Resources

Job resources (JRs) are '…those physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of a job that either/or (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; and (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development' (Demerouti et al. 2001: 501). JRs can further be grouped into proximal and distal JRs. Proximal resources (those closer to the individual) could include resources like skill variety, relationship with supervisors and peers and role clarity. Distal resources (those further removed from the individual) could include team climate, perceived external prestige and flow of information and communication. Furthermore JRs are considered critical for employee retention. When employees experience low work engagement, low job autonomy and low departmental resources, they are more likely to leave their companies or transfer to other departments (De Lange et al. 2008). It is not clear at this point in time whether distal resources show weaker relationships with outcome variables.

JRs are linked to identification through the process of social exchange. A social exchange is judged to be one of quality when employee inputs (examples include work, time and effort) into the relationship are equivalent to the benefits (examples include salary, promotion and recognition) that the employee receives from the relationship. If the social exchange is deemed favourable by the employee, the employee then becomes more motivated to maintain the work relationship (Van Knippenberg et al. 2007). From this point, a merging occurs between the individual and the organisation, and deep structure identification begins to develop (Rousseau 1998). JRs are also related to work-based identity through the process of job crafting. It is postulated that employees may increase their level of JRs in order to handle JDs more successfully (Tims and Bakker 2010). This influences the revision of an individual's work identity (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001).

4.2.3 Job Demands

Job demands (JDs) refer to '…those physical, social, psychological, or organisational aspects of a job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e. cognitive and emotional) effort on the part of the employee and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs' (Demerouti et al. 2001: 501). JDs can further be grouped into proximal and distal job demands. Proximal JDs (those closer to the individual) include emotional demands, role ambiguity, role conflict, lack of job control, lack of social support from supervisors and colleagues, lack of feedback and work overload. Distal JDs (those further removed from the individual) could include an unfavourable physical work environment and an unsupportive climate. Job demands are usually associated with the negative characteristics in an individual's job that, if not adequately dealt with, can lead to ill-health. It is not cleat this point in time whether distal JDs show a weaker relationship with outcome variables.

However, JDs may at times be viewed in a more positive light as job challenges (Van den Broeck et al. 2010). Van den Broeck et al. differentiated between two types of JDs: JDs that hinder optimal functioning, termed *job hindrances*, and JDs that challenge an employee to exert energy and effort to execute work tasks, termed *job challenges*. Job hindrances serve to frustrate the process of employees achieving their work-related goals and can lead to ill-health. *Job challenges* serve to stimulate individual effort to overcome work difficulties and contribute to the fulfilment of individual needs. In as much as job challenges may contribute to as increased well-being, it can also contribute to burnout and ill-health (Van den Broeck et al. 2010). The implication may be that when job challenges become too high to cope with, negative consequences may occur.

Evidence that JDs may be related to work-based identity alludes to the process of job crafting and the process illustrated by Hockey's (1997) Compensatory Regulatory-Control model, in which employees aim to protect themselves against the pressure from JDs. This is explained later in this chapter. Job crafting is defined as '…the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work' (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001: 179). It is postulated that, as employees engage in crafting their jobs, they may increase their level of job challenges to increase opportunities to use more of their skills, or they may decrease the level of job hindrances to limit the possible negative effects of job hindrances (Tims and Bakker 2010).

4.3 Dual or Parallel Processes of the JD-R Model

Another motivation for using the JD-R model in the prediction of work-based identity is its ability to view two parallel processes that influence employee well-being. The two parallel processes are: (a) a de-energising process in which JDs exhaust an employee's mental and physical resources, which could lead to burnout and,

eventually, ill-health, and (b) a motivational process in which JRs promote work engagement, which could lead to organisational commitment (Hakanen et al. 2006; Hakanen and Roodt 2010).

The *de-energising* process associated with the JD-R model is due to the influence of job hindrances. This process can be understood by applying the premise of Hockey's (1997) Compensatory Regulatory-Control (CRC) model, which states that stressed employees struggle with protecting their primary performance goals (benefits) in the midst of dealing with increased JDs that require an increased amount of mental effort (costs). An employee thus mobilises his or her compensatory effort to cope with this struggle. If this compensatory effort is continuous, the employee will experience energy loss, which could ultimately result in burnout and ill-health. This process is associated with physiological and psychological costs, such as increased sympathetic activity, fatigue and loss of motivation (Hakanen et al. 2006; Hakanen and Roodt 2010). Evidence of this process was found in a cross-lagged longitudinal study done on Finnish dentists in whom JDs were positively correlated with burnout and depression over a period of 3 years (Hakanen et al. 2008).

As part of the *motivational process*, JRs intrinsically help to foster employee growth, learning and development or extrinsically by helping an employee to achieve his or her work goals (Hakanen et al. 2006; Hakanen and Roodt 2010). The self-determination theory provides support for this motivational process (Deci et al. 1991). The self-determination theory postulates that if the need for competence, relatedness and autonomy (or self-determination) is met in any social context, well-being and increased commitment are enhanced. An example of this can be demonstrated by the proximal JR organisational support, which is shown by supervisory and peer support. JRs play a vital role in promoting work engagement (Bester 2012). Work engagement is closely related to WI. Consequently it has been shown that work engagement and work-based identity shared about 70 % common variance (De Braine and Roodt 2011). WI has also shown to predict work engagement (Bester 2012).

Hobfoll's (1998, 2002) conservation of resources (COR) theory also provides a sound board for the motivational role that JRs play in employee well-being. The basic premise of this theory is that employees aim to conserve, retain or protect the resources that they have at their disposal in their work environments. They also attempt to bring in additional resources to prevent losing their existing resources, and they will even risk resources to gain resources (gain spiral). Furthermore, employees with many resources are less likely to lose resources, and, vice versa, employees with a lack of resources are more likely to lose resources (loss spiral) (Hobfoll and Shirom 2001). Gaining more resources also enhances engagement (Hakanen and Roodt 2010). Individuals also use their physical, emotional and cognitive selves to perform their roles (Kahn 1990). These are personal resources that assist an individual to work. According to Fredrickson's (2000) broaden-and-build (BAB) theory, positive emotions help to build enduring personal resources. It helps to foster creativity and the willingness to experiment with new things.

4.4 Interactions Between Job Demands and Job Resources

Generally, JDs are negatively correlated with JRs (Bakker and Demerouti 2007; Xanthopoulou 2007). JRs have been found to be the strongest predictors of work engagement (Bakker et al. 2008; Mauno et al. 2007; Rothmann and Jordaan 2006; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004), especially in the midst of high JDs (Bakker et al. 2008; Rothmann and Jordaan 2006), and have shown to be negatively related to exhaustion and cynicism (Bakker et al. 2004). Furthermore, empirical evidence indicates that JRs are able to buffer the negative impact of JDs on burnout. It was found that JRs buffer the relationship between workload and exhaustion. Social support, for example, buffers the relationship between workload and cynicism (Xanthopoulou et al. 2007). The buffer effect has not been supported in every study on burnout (Bakker et al. 2004). Although the buffer effect of JRs was not addressed as an objective in the current studies of WI, it is mentioned to motivate how important JRs are in employee well-being.

4.5 Personal Resources

As indicated earlier, the study of the possible relationship that personal resources may have with WI has never been studied before. It is an important construct to study in terms of WI, as personal resources have shown to have positive effects on physical and emotional well-being (Chen et al. 2001; Scheier and Carver 1985). Personal resources are aspects of the self that are generally linked to resiliency and refer to individual's sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully (Hobfoll et al. 2003). Personal resources could include self-efficacy, organisational-based self-esteem and optimism. Personal resources were included in the JD-R in the prediction of work engagement (Xanthopoulou et al. 2007). They were found to mediate the relationship between engagement and exhaustion and influenced the perceptions of JDs. Furthermore in a longitudinal study by Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), it was suggested that personal resources were reciprocal with JRs and work engagement. This in essence means that JRs predict work engagement and personal resources, and in turn personal resources predict JRs and work engagement (Demerouti and Bakker 2011). A useful construct that can be used to explain personal resources is *PsyCap* (abbreviated from Psychological Capital), which consist of the following constructs: hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism (Avey et al. 2010). PsyCap has been shown to positively influence well-being (Avey et al. 2010).

An assumption could be made that it would, based on the positive nature of identification in the workplace and the finding that WI predicts work engagement (Bester 2012), that personal resources as part of the JD-R model could predict WI. Also the development of work identity as a result of the interplay between an individual's dispositions and structural conditions of the work context is yet to be investigated. This will provide insight into the possible role of personal resources on work identity.

4.6 Job Resources and the Rationale for Using Some of Them in These Studies

As stated earlier, JRs include those '…physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of a job that either/or (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; and (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development' (Demerouti et al. 2001: 501). The JRs that were used in the two doctoral studies on the antecedents of work-based identity were chosen based on the above listed aspects. In this section of the chapter, a specific focus is placed on the following JRs: growth opportunities, organisational support, advancement, task identity, perceived external prestige (organisational reputation), team climate and need for organisational identity (nOID). Growth opportunities will be the first JR discussed.

4.6.1 Growth Opportunities

The following variables related to growth opportunities within organisations will be discussed: skill variety and opportunities to learn. These indicators of growth opportunities were derived from the adapted JD-Resources Scale (JDRS) (Jackson and Rothmann 2005) that was used in De Braine's (2012) doctoral study.

4.6.1.1 Skill Variety

The presence of skill variety has a highly motivational role in the work life of an employee (Nel et al. 2008; Rothmann and Jordaan 2006) and has been shown to be a predictor of job satisfaction (Anderson 1984; Glisson and Durick 1988; Udo et al. 1997). Skill variety refers to '…the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involves the use of a number of different skills and talents of the employee' (Hackman and Oldham 1975, p. 161). It also positively relates to an employee's experienced meaningfulness and responsibility in his or her work (Nel et al. 2008), which helps with the cultivation of work engagement (Olivier and Rothmann 2007). What is important to note is that skill variety has been shown to be positively correlated with job involvement (an indicator of work-based identity) and intention to stay (Udo et al. 1997). Moreover, a job that allows scope for skill variety aids employees in the execution of their daily tasks. This in turn helps employees to fulfil their respective roles and thus strengthening their work identities.

4.6.1.2 Opportunities to Learn

The growth and development of employees cannot be achieved without providing employees opportunities to learn. Such opportunities assist employees to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to fully participate in their respective

occupational communities of practice. These communities foster the development of professional identities (Kirpal 2004a; Loogma et al. 2004). Professional identity is regarded as one of the indicators of work identity. This has been regarded as a strategy that employers use to develop and enhance the work identities of their employees (Brown 2004), which can happen through the individual and social learning experiences of employees at work (Collin et al. 2008).

4.6.2 Organisational Support

Individuals need the support of their organisations to perform in their jobs. An example of organisational support could include managerial and peer support. The perceptions that employees have of the respective support that they get from their organisations can also be regarded as important for the enhancement of work identities. This is known as perceived organisational support. This term was coined and defined by Eisenberger et al. (1986: 501) as the '…global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing'. If an employee perceives that the organisational support helps to meet their needs for recognition and approval, they will incorporate their organisational membership into their self-identities (Ashforth and Mael 1989). The cognitive schema that is derived from the organisational membership leads to an experienced congruence between their working selves and their broader self-concept (Turner 1978), which enhances their work-based identity.

The following variables related to organisational support within organisations will be discussed: relationship with supervisors and colleagues, communication, role clarity and participation in decision-making. These variables were also taken from the JDRS.

4.6.2.1 Relationships with Supervisors and Colleagues

Work identities in essence are social identities that individuals display in their specific roles in organisations. Employees take on a role and a relational identity as they interact and work with colleagues, supervisors and clients in their particular work context to achieve their work goals. Research suggests that healthy interpersonal relationships between supervisors and subordinates are critical for the development of organisational identification (Witt et al. 2002) and also help to develop employees' professional identities (Dobrow and Higgins 2005). Both organisational identification and professional identity are indicators of WI.

Subordinates judge the kind of supervisory support that they receive from their supervisors. Supervisory support refers to '…the degree to which employees perceive that supervisors offer employees support, encouragement, and concern'

(Babin and Boles 1996: 60). This creates positive relationships between supervisors and subordinates. Furthermore, positive relationships with supervisors and peers assist with developing teams (Riketta 2005), creating satisfaction (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton 2002; Cohrs et al. 2006) and engaged employees (Bakker et al. 2007; Mostert and Rathbone 2007; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). It also helps to buffer the effects of JDs on employees (Berry 1998; Xanthopoulou et al. 2007). Interactional justice (perceived fairness of the interpersonal treatment received from the supervisor) is also strongly associated with work-unit identification (Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006).

4.6.2.2 Flow of Information and Communication

Employee communication has been defined as '…the communication transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialisation that are intended to design and redesign organisations, to implement designs and to coordinate day-to-day activities' (Frank and Brownell 1989: 5–6). Employee communication is an antecedent of organisational identification through two of its components: the content of organisational messages and the communication climate of an organisation. The content of organisational messages includes information about the organisation's goals and objectives and information regarding the roles that employees perform. Communication climate is described as the communicative elements within a work environment, such as the trustworthiness of information (Smidts et al. 2001). In the study by Smidts et al. communication climate proved to be a better predictor of organisational identification than the content of communication.

4.6.2.3 Role Clarity

Work roles are regarded as important aspects of the self (Mortimer and Lorence 1989), in which individuals display their WI (Lloyd et al. 2011; Walsh and Gordon 2007). Therefore, the issue of role clarity becomes so important to employees. Role clarity refers to the certainty that individuals have regarding what is expected from them in their work roles (Bush and Busch 1981). If employees lack role clarity, they will struggle to craft their jobs on a task and relational level and struggle to identify with their work. Job crafting is defined as '…the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work…' and which causes work identities to be revised and changed (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001: 179). Furthermore, a lack of role clarity also affects employee affective commitment (Meyer and Allen 1988). It can also lead to employees experiencing mental distance and exhaustion in their work (Koekemoer and Mostert 2006), which will then further cause a de-identification with work.

4.6.2.4 Participation in Decision-Making

Modern workplaces are allowing employees to engage or participate in decision-making. This has led to the improvement of production methods, the lessening of bureaucracy and the blurring of the boundaries between workers and management. Through this, a decline of traditional class-based identities has occurred (Baugher 2003). Organisations now have to consider how employees participate and exercise their selves in their work (Billet 2006). Active participation in an organisation through an open communication climate helps to develop organisational identification, which, in turn, increases the self-enhancement of employees (Smidts et al. 2001). Self-enhancement is a key motive for identification according to social identity theory (Pratt 1998).

4.6.3 Advancement

The workplace is considered to be one of the key places where human development and growth occur (Gini 1998). The following variables related to advancement within organisations were taken from the JDRS (Jackson and Rothmann 2005): remuneration, career possibilities and training opportunities. These will be discussed in the next section.

4.6.3.1 Remuneration

Although it has been shown that individuals connect and identify with organisations based on more than just receiving economic rewards (Dutton et al. 1994), economic rewards are still considered to be one of the primary reasons why people work (Steers and Porter 1991). Pay satisfaction has shown to have a positive impact on job satisfaction (Igalens and Roussel 1999) and intentions to stay (Brown et al. 2004). Furthermore, an argument more closely related to work identity is the notion that a salary helps to enhance an employee's self-status as they progress to higher career levels. Employees see a connection between a salary increase and the attainment of the next career level (Rowold and Schilling 2006).

4.6.3.2 Career Possibilities

It is assumed that employees who exhibit high career salience will spend more time exploring career possibilities in organisations. It is also assumed that such employees will also become more involved in their profession's community of practice, where they can interact with others in their field and further develop their abilities and skills to improve their career or professional identity. This allows for self-status and self-enhancement to occur as the individual's skill increases (Brown 2004).

4.6.3.3 Training Opportunities

In a similar way to opportunities to learn, training opportunities can also be utilised as an employer strategy to develop work identities. Such opportunities allow employees to gain job-related competencies (Noe 2005). Furthermore, formal training also plays a motivational role as it helps employees to develop expertise and confidence, to facilitate the process of professional exchange between colleagues, and assists with new options for broader learning (Kirpal 2004b). This encourages employee identification with work (Kirpal 2004b). In a study by Collin (2009), it was found that learning and work-related identity are related to one another.

4.6.4 Task Identity

Task identity, in a similar way as skill variety, also plays a strong motivational role on both an intrinsic and extrinsic level for employees (Rothmann and Jordaan 2006). It is defined as '…the degree to which the job requires completion of a "whole" and identifiable piece of work – that is, doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome' (Hackman and Oldham 1975: 161). Previous studies have shown that task identity is positively correlated with job involvement (an indicator of work-based identity) and intention to stay (Udo et al. 1997). It is also a predictor of job satisfaction (Anderson 1984; Glisson and Durick 1988; Udo et al. 1997). Task identity also influences the experience of meaning at work and sense of responsibility in employees (Nel et al. 2008).

4.6.5 Perceived External Prestige (PEP)

Perceived external prestige is related to organisational prestige. According Carmeli et al. (2006), there are three key constructs that are presented in research on organisational prestige: corporate reputation, organisational identity and perceived external prestige (PEP). They further stated that each of these constructs can have an influence on employee identification.

Perceived external prestige (PEP) is defined as '…the judgment or evaluation about an organisation's status regarding some kind of evaluative criteria, and refers to the employee's personal beliefs about how other people outside the organisation such as customers, competitors and suppliers judge its status and prestige' Carmeli et al. (2006: 93). In a study on corporate image, another term related to PEP by Riordan et al. (1997), it was found that corporate image is positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to intentions to leave the organisation.

Organisational prestige was found to be a significant antecedent of organisational identification (Mael and Ashforth 1992) and job satisfaction (Tuzun 2007). This may be due to the role that identification with a group plays in enhancing self-image

(Ely 1994). Smidts et al. (2001) found that the more prestigious the employee perceives an organisation to be, the greater the potential for identification with the organisation. Similar findings were established by Fuller et al. (2006).

4.6.6 Team Climate

Team climate represents a team's shared perception of organisational policies, practices and procedures (Anderson and West 1998). They further propose that it is comprised of four broad factors: (a) shared vision and objectives, (b) participative safety, defined as '… a situation in which involvement in decision-making is motivated and occurs in a non-threatening environment' (Bower et al. 2003: 273), (c) commitment to excellence, involving a shared concern for the quality of task performance and (d) support for innovation, which includes expressed and practical support (West 1990).

According to Klivimaki and Elovainio (1999), team climate also includes perceptions of a shared commitment to teamwork, high standards and systemic support for cooperation. This notion of shared perceptions is supported by Al-Beraidi and Rickards (2003). Individuals need to share their perceptions and work together as a team, and for a healthy team climate to develop, individuals need to interact (Anderson and West 1998). This is supported by Loewen and Loo (2004). The sharing of insights and having a common goal are indicators that individual team members have adopted the group's perspective as their own (Burke and Stets 2009). This, in turn, helps to create a positive self-identity (Goldberg 2003). Team climate is known to predict process improvement, customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction (Howard et al. 2005).

The following JR, need for organisational identification (nOID), does not form part of the traditional JRs as in the JD-R model list, but was added in an exploratory way by Bester (2012) as a potential resource or pull factor for individuals.

4.6.7 Need for Organisational Identification

Bester (2012) considered *need for organisational identification* (nOID) in his study as an antecedent of WI. NOID falls outside the definition of JRs as formulated in the traditional JD-R model. NOID should rather be viewed as a pull factor or a factor that will facilitate WI within the framework of a force field analysis model of WI. NOID is defined as '…an individual's need to maintain a social identity derived from membership in a larger, more general social category of a particular collective' (Glynn 1998: 240). The larger social category could be an organisation (Kreiner and Ashforth 2004). Individuals are motivated by an organisation's attributes if it helps to reinforce their individual self-concept (Walsh and Gordon 2007), which thus drives increased performance (Kreitner et al. 1999). Through nOID, a person

expresses which role the opposing drives of 'I or me' (individual distinctiveness) versus 'we' (organisational inclusivity) play in WI (Brewer 1991: 476). Finally, in a study to establish different degrees of identification, Kreiner and Ashforth (2004) found that nOID, organisational identification and positive affectivity are positively associated with one another.

4.7 Job Demands and the Rationale for Using Some of Them in These Studies

As stated earlier, JDs include '…those physical, social, psychological, or organisational aspects of a job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e. cognitive and emotional) effort on the part of the employee and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs' (Demerouti et al. 2001: 501). JDs may also be categorised as physical, cognitive and emotional demands. The JDs overload and job insecurity form part of the JDRS that was used in this study. The JD work-family conflict was an additional JD that was added in De Braine's study. The fifth demand (breach of psychological contract) was added in an exploratory fashion in the Bester (2012) study which also falls outside the traditional JD-R model. In this case breach of psychological contract is viewed as a push (restraining) factor in the force field analysis framework. Overload and job insecurity can be regarded as being both cognitive and emotional demands. They both have the potential to trigger cognitive and emotional effort from individuals when required. Work-family conflict can arise as a result of high JDs which can be the result of demands that can be either physical, cognitive and/or emotional. Breach of psychological contract can be regarded as a cognitive and emotional demand. These JDs will be discussed in more detail in the following four sections.

4.7.1 Overload

Work identities are greatly influenced by workload pressures and competitive work environments (Collin et al. 2008). *Work overload*, cited as the most frequent job stressor (Oliver and Griffiths 2005), is regarded as anything that places high attentional demands on an employee over an extended period of time (Berry 1998). It is also known as a job strain due to the high demands that is coupled with it (Bakker and Demerouti 2007). Overload can be categorised into quantitative and qualitative overload. Quantitative overload is described as having too much work to do in the time available. This kind of load is known to lead to stress-related ailments such as coronary heart disease. Qualitative overload is characterised by work that is too difficult for an employee (Nel et al. 2008) or work that requires high concentration levels (Dietstel and Schmidt 2009). Two distinctive types of overload are mental overload and emotional overload.

Mental overload influences how an employee delivers his or her work outputs. If employees struggle to perform their daily tasks, it will affect the way they craft their jobs which will, in turn, affect their work identities. On a positive note, cognitive demands have also been shown to be positively related to work engagement (Bakker et al. 2005).

'Emotions are dependent and activated by social relationships' (Cartwright and Holmes 2006: 203) and are regarded as being pivotal to how identity is formed and defined (Zembylas 2003). Some jobs and occupations are characterised by a high amount of emotional load or emotional demands, which can negatively influence an employee's identity. A classic example of this emotional load is particularly prevalent in the work of teachers. Having to continually display a caring attitude can be seen as an emotionally exhausting professional demand (O'Connor 2008). Emotional exhaustion is defined as '…the feeling of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work' (Maslach and Jackson 1981: 101). It is usually coupled with time pressure and work overload (Lee and Ashforth 1996).

4.7.2 Job Insecurity

Job insecurity refers to 'feeling insecure in *the current job* and level with regard to the future thereof' (own emphasis) (Rothmann et al. 2006). It forms part of the JDs resources scale (JDRS) (Jackson and Rothmann 2005) and is considered a JD. It is also regarded as '…a sense of powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation' (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 1984: 438). From an employee's point of view, job insecurity is judged on a cognitive and affective level (Wong et al. 2005). Low job insecurity has a significant, positive effect on the amount of dedication an employee displays in his/her work (Mauno et al. 2007). Bosman et al. (2005) found that individuals who experience job insecurity often experience less work engagement, more exhaustion and work disengagement. Wong et al. (2005) found that job insecurity also has an effect on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and job performance. They further state that these relationships are dependent upon the organisation type and the level of employee trust (Wong et al. 2005), and it has been found to be dependent and varied according to economic sector, gender and the measuring scales used in a particular study (Mauno and Kinnunen 2002). In another study, job insecurity was found to be negatively related to job performance and positively related to absenteeism (Chirumbolo and Areni 2005). In light of the above findings, it is assumed that job insecurity would lessen work identification. It is also noted that organisations that offer job secure work environments are more able to facilitate the development of deep structure identification (Rousseau 1998).

4.7.3 Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Work-family conflict has received considerable attention due to the increasing rate of participation by women in the workplace (Chandola et al. 2004), the rise in work-family conflict to the general increase in working hours (Brett and Stroh 2003) and the extension of work hours into family time (Milliken and Dunn-Jensen 2005), and the negative effects of WFC experienced by individuals (Allen et al. 2000). It is usually an outcome of high work demands. In this study we have used it as a predictor of WI because of how closely it is related to the effects of high JDs and the role pressure incompatibility that it can create.

Work-family conflict is also described as work-family interference (WFI) (Greenhaus et al. 2006) and as a job hindrance (Lepine et al. 2005). It is defined as '…a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect' (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985: 77). Greenhaus and Beutell explicate this by stating that work-family conflict exists when '(a) time devoted to the requirements of one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another role, (b) strain from participation in one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another; and (c) specific behaviours required by one role make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another' (p. 76).

This is supported by Huang (2000). Due to the incompatibility of roles, work-family conflict is also defined as '…the extent to which experiences in the work (family) role result in diminished performance in the family (work) role' (Greenhaus et al. 2006: 65). This definition allows for the cross-role reference in performance to be explained (Greenhaus et al. 2006). There are three forms of work-family conflict: (a) time-based conflict, (b) strain-based conflict and (c) behaviour-based conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Time-based conflict is associated with the amount of hours that individuals work and inflexible work schedules. This can lead to strain-based conflict, which usually develops from role conflict and role ambiguity. Behaviour-based conflict arises when behaviour in one role makes fulfilling another role difficult (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985).

Each of the types of work-family conflict relates to role pressure incompatibility (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Role pressure incompatibility will negatively affect the role identity of the individual at work, which, in turn, will negatively impact the individual's WI (Walsh and Gordon 2007).

4.7.4 Breach of Psychological Contract

Bester (2012) also considered the *breach of psychological contract* as an antecedent in his study. The psychological contract is a subjective set of expectations (and obligations) that an employee and employer have of each other (Muller-Camen et al. 2008; Robinson and Morrison 2000). An employee's experience of the

psychological contract is influenced by the expectations that the employee has about fairness, employment security, scope of tasks, development, career, involvement and trust (Guest and Conway 1997, 2004). This in turn influences absences, turnover, retention and performance (Muller-Camen et al. 2008). Employees' perceptions of contract vary depending on the type and contract of breach (Schaupp 2012). On these grounds breach of psychological contract was included as a push factor or demand in this study.

If employees perceive that a breach of psychological contract has occurred between themselves and their organisation, feelings of resentment can develop which can lead to the breakdown of organisational commitment (Geurts et al. 1999) and cause organisational de-identification (Kreiner and Ashforth 2004).

4.8 Mediation of Job Demands on the Relationship of Job Resources on Work-Based Identity

The JD-R model holds that JRs help to reduce the physiological and psychological costs associated with JDs (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). Furthermore, employees who have high JDs with a lack of resources are likely to develop burnout and experience a reduction in engagement (Hakanen et al. 2006; Hakanen and Roodt 2010). JRs influence JDs. One of the conditions for mediation is that the independent variable (JRs) must significantly account for variation in the presumed mediator (JDs). JRs predict WI (De Braine 2012). It is assumed that the presence of JDs would reduce the relationship that JRs have with WI. This is based on the possible physiological and psychological costs that can be associated with JDs. This provides the basis with which to assess whether JDs mediate the relationship between JRs and work-based identity. The aim was to establish if JDs (mediator) account for the relationship between JRs (predictor) and work-based identity or reduces that relationship. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) if a significant reduction occurs between an independent variable and dependent variable via a mediator, then mediation has occurred. There has been no research conducted on this as yet.

4.9 Biographical Control Variables in the Prediction of Work-Based Identity

Race, age, nationality and gender are the biographical variables that were explored as possible moderators of the relationship that JDs and JRs had in predicting work-based identity. The theoretical model (the proposed bow-tie model in Fig. 1.4 in Chap. 1) and the concomitant theoretical framework (suggested in Table 1.1 in Chap. 1) guided the researchers in selecting these demographic and biographic variables, since very little empirical evidence exists that links these variables to work-based identity.

4.9.1 Race

Race is often linked to cultural differences but is usually associated with the physical differences in people (Human 2005). Individuals who are different from the majority race group experience less positive emotional responses to their employing organisations and usually receive lower performance evaluations from their supervisors of a different race (Miliken and Martins 1996). The concept of *similarity to others* provides insight into this. This concept stems from the similarity-attraction paradigm in which demographic similarity amongst group members leads to interpersonal attraction (Jackson et al. 1991).

Other findings indicate that diversity usually negatively affects groups in the early stages of a group's development, until individual members become more comfortable with one another and learn how to integrate (O'Reilly et al. 1989). This may imply that race influences identification with an organisation from the initial contact that potential employees have with an organisation. Within the South African work context, race still remains a contentious issue that affects organisational cultures (Motileng et al. 2006). It was found in one study that black, coloured and Indian employees experience higher levels of job insecurity than white employees (Buitendach et al. 2005). There may be several reasons related to this finding in this study, but it is an indicator that race does play a role in the experiences of employees. Furthermore, race is part of an individual's social identity, according to social categorisation theory (Ashforth and Mael 1989). This means that race can be a social category from which individuals view their in-group (their own race group) in comparison to an out-group (another race group) in an organisation. This can influence social identification within an organisation. As stated earlier, race is also related to cultural differences amongst people; this may also serve as a contributor to differences in work identification. This study will therefore explore if race groups are related to differences in WI levels.

4.9.2 Gender

Gender is not only a physical characteristic, it is also a socially constructed factor into which girls and boys are socialised into gendered work identities (Buche 2006). The media, educational institutions and role models play a role in this socialisation process. Girls, in particular, may develop a negative, self-fulfilling prophecy that becomes internalised into their work identities, as a result of barriers that have hindered from entering more traditionally male-dominated professions, such as engineering (Buche 2006). According to the gender model, women's self and professional identity are developed around their interdependent relationships with others and family roles, whereas men are socialised to take on a work identity that is more independent and goal directed (Dick and Metcalfe 2007).

In terms of gender and JDs, it was found that gender influences job insecurity, where males experience higher levels of job insecurity than women (Buitendach

et al. 2005). With regard to work-family conflict – another JD – female participants who have high levels of family role salience experience higher work-family conflict than their male colleagues (Biggs and Brough 2005). A study conducted by Mannheim et al. (1997) revealed that the work centrality of women is lower than that of men. This may be attributed to the female identity having strong associations with the family role (Hill et al. 2004).

In the SA context, the younger generations of black women are choosing careers that are more male dominated and are rejecting the more traditional roles of women (Gaganakis 2003). This is contrary to what has occurred in the past and is at least one step in the right direction regarding equal work opportunities. Although these great strides have been made, an argument still exists that gendered work identities require renegotiation and change to cater for the needs of the current world of work (Abrahamson 2006). This change is important as women are experiencing work-family conflict, motherhood issues, insufficient acceptance in the workplace and a paucity of female role models and mentors (Buche 2006). Gender discrimination, for example, still continues, and glass ceilings still exist for women who aspire to top management positions (Grobler et al. 2006). These factors inevitably affect the level of identification that women experience in the workplace. Many women are engaging in what Johnston and Swanson (2007) term *cognitive acrobatics* to manage their mothering responsibilities and their work identities. In as similar way, this study will explore if gender groups relate to differences in WI score levels.

4.9.3 Nationality (Cultural Differences)

Bester (2012) considered the moderating role of different nationality groups (national cultures) in his study of the work identities of employees in various multicultural work settings within the UAE. As this study investigates WI in multicultural work settings, the inclusion of nationality is essential to examine this aspect. Within multicultural work settings, sometimes there are many cultural differences amongst individuals within a specific nationality. Hofstede's (1983) studies on the different cultural dimensions across nations noted that differences influence individual identity, the execution of political power and individual mental programming.

Bester (2012) further noted that national values provide shared meaning in a nation. The thinking patterns and perceptions of different nationalities may therefore be different (Hofstede 1983; Keating and Abramson 2009). This may mean that different nationalities could think about or perceive a WI process in diverse ways as the results of multiple studies into WI-associated concepts have shown. Some researchers proposed that organisational commitment is subordinate to the cultural context (Adler and Graham 1989).

4.9.4 Age

Each generation has its varying values and needs (Allen 2003, cited in Nel et al. 2008) that influence job satisfaction. Laff (2008) found that all generations in the workplace currently experience dissatisfaction with their current employers, but the younger generation, between the ages of 21–30, is by far the most dissatisfied. Many studies have indicated that older workers experience more job satisfaction that their younger counterparts (Spector 2000). In one study, the psychological contract of older workers was stronger than younger workers (Bal et al. 2008). This may be due to jobs becoming more intrinsically satisfying for individuals in their final career stages, which is shown in most career development models (Berry 1998). In some instances, there are no significant differences between older and younger workers in their job attitudes towards social support, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Brough et al. 2011). Age is also considered a positive determinant of work engagement (Barkhuizen and Rothmann 2006) and work (role) centrality, which is an indicator of work-based identity (Mannheim et al. 1997).

South Africa has a relatively young population – more than 60 % are younger than 30 years of age (Grobler et al. 2006). According to Martin (2006), employers need to be aware of the characteristics of young workers in the twenty-first century, known as Generation Y. Martin (2006) stated that they are the self-esteem generation who believe that education is 'cool'. They are multicultural, socially conscious team players who have a sense of immediacy and are requiring the highest 'maintenance' in history. It is also noted that, within the South African context, older employees find the growing number of younger workers, women and female managers stressful (Nel et al. 2008), and this has implications for older workers' WI. Some large companies in France, for example, hire young and highly qualified workers due to the expectation that they will be more flexible in their approach to work and that they would generally display attitudes that are more in tune with the modern workplace (Kirpal 2004a). It is argued that age would have a moderating influence as different generations differ in terms of their needs and values. This would in turn influence what they seek in organisations.

4.10 Demographical Control Variables in the Prediction of Work-Based Identity

Flowing from the proposed theoretical model and the suggested research framework (in Chap. 1), the following demographic variables have been used as control variables in the doctoral studies: academic qualification, marital status, job level, medical fund and work region. The first moderator under consideration is academic qualification.

4.10.1 Academic Qualification

Education includes all educational qualifications from elementary level to university degrees (Hankin 2005). It provides individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills (e.g. reading, writing and arithmetic skills), moral values and an understanding of life. Education, in essence, prepares individuals for career success (Nel et al. 2008). It therefore enables individuals to develop a professional identity (Feen-Calligan 2005). In one study, academic qualification was shown to have a small moderating effect on affective and cognitive insecurity (Buitendach et al. 2005).

4.10.2 Marital Status

Marital status influences internal career orientations (Chompookum and Derr 2004). A career orientation is the occupational self-concept of an individual, which encompasses the individuals '…skills, needs, and expectations evolving in the development of a career' (Van Wyk et al. 2003: 62). This is then directly linked to the career identities (an indicator of WI) of individuals. Internal career orientations vary from individual to individual. It is the product of individuals' motives, values, talents and personal constraints (Chompookum and Derr 2004). Personal constraints are those things that may constrain an individual pursuing certain career decisions solely on the basis of their values, motives and talents. An example of this would be a mother who has children and is given an opportunity to develop her career by studying abroad and decides not to embark on this opportunity due to her spousal and mothering responsibilities.

Furthermore, it has been reported that married employees with children have a 'getting secure' internal career orientation (characterised by a need for lifetime employment and job security), while single employees tend to have 'getting high' (characterised by exciting work and entrepreneurial opportunities) and 'getting free' career orientation (characterised by seeking positions with greater autonomy and personal space) (Chompookum and Derr 2004; Derr 1986, 1987). It was found that husband-wife relationships moderate the relationship between experienced stress and well-being (Burke and Weir 1977). So marital status may influence work identity through an individual's internal career orientations.

4.10.3 Job Level

Another term for job level is job grade. Job grades are used to sort jobs into categories based on their value within an organisation. Through the process of job evaluation, which is '…a systematic comparison done in order to determine the worth of one job relative to another…', job grades are created for pay purposes (Dessler

2008: 433). Each job grade contains jobs that are similar in terms of requirements, duties and responsibilities (Dessler 2008). Job grades are also associated with certain roles, so it is assumed that job grades are related to an employee's role identity. It is therefore argued that job level will have a moderating influence on the relationship that work-based identity has with JDs and JRs.

4.10.4 Medical Fund

Individuals that have permanent work contracts usually receive the benefit of having a medical aid or fund with the organisation. Many organisations usually contribute towards a portion of their employees' medical fund. This is a benefit that is regarded as very important to employees due to the high cost of medical treatment. This may encourage or enhance organisational identification, as employees may feel greatly supported by their organisation. Although there was no literature that provided evidence that membership of a medical fund moderates the relationship that work-based identity may have with JDs and JRs, it is assumed that it will have an influence, due to the increase in employees experiencing burnout and occupational stress. Employees that experience stress-related illnesses are more likely to make use of their medical funds membership.

4.10.5 Work Location (Work Region)

Large organisations usually operate within different geographical regions or provinces of a country. Organisations differ in how they set up or organise their operations across a given geographical space – resulting in organisational regions. Within these different regions, the organisation has various interrelationships with its consumers, competitors, suppliers, intermediaries and the labour market. These regions are often referred to as an organisation's market or task environment (Banhegyi et al. 2008). Each region has its own sociocultural environment that influences the way the business operates (Banhegyi et al. 2008). Furthermore, employees may be more attracted to work in certain regions that have certain facilities such as universities, schools and shopping malls than regions where this is lacking. Sometimes large organisations base some of their functions within certain regions, for example, one region may be responsible for manufacturing or production, and another region may be responsible for its head office activities. This then ultimately influences the functions and responsibilities of employees in a particular region. In turn, such decisions have an impact on what development and growth opportunities are available to individuals and may therefore influence the activation or development of their work identities.

4.11 Conclusions and Implications for Research

A systematic review of the literature on the potential antecedents of WI highlighted the following key points:

1. WI is a relatively 'new' construct in the literature that has been explored more qualitatively, than quantitatively. The lack of quantitative empirical research that specifically links potential antecedents to WI is evident from this review.
2. The traditional JD-R Model as used in the JDRS has shown potential to be a highly applicable as a predictive or baseline model for explaining WI due to its ability to be used across a variety of jobs and its consideration of situational characteristics of work (i.e. JDs and JRs) that are important for WI formation and ultimately well-being. It should however also be kept in mind that the JD-R model was not initially designed to predict WI.
3. Based on sound theorisation it was argued why these selected JRs and JDs in this study are (or could be) related to WI. These selected JRs and JDs do not all fall within the traditional JD-R model, and some were selected based on pure pragmatic grounds or evidence from practice.
4. However, the literature is sparse on these relationships. Only in some instances is it reported that certain JDs and JRs have a relationship with WI facets, for example, perceived external prestige has a strong relationship with organisational identification. No specific studies could be found that related such antecedents to the complete WI construct.
5. No empirical evidence is reported in the literature that indicates that JRs mediate the relationship between JDs and WI. The current study's assumption of a relationship was based on the premise of the JD-R Model where JRs serve as buffers that help to reduce the physiological and psychological costs associated with JDs (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004).
6. The rather restrictive nature of the traditional JD-R model is also acknowledged, because it does not incorporate all possible push and pull factors that relate to WI. Other push and pull factors outside the traditional JD-R model were included in this study.
7. Many of the biographical and demographic variables show relationships with the facets of WI, such as age with work (role) centrality, but no evidence is reported on such relationships with the WI construct.
8. The role that personal resources could play in the prediction of WI was also considered in this review. These personal resources' impact has yet to be explored and established in research. Based on their proximity to the individual, it is argued that they may potentially serve as mediators with a wide range of other more distal variables.

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Chapter 5
Subjective and Objective Work-Based Identity Consequences

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5.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 of this book introduced a model (also referred to as the bowtie model, see Fig. 1.4) to explain the antecedents and consequences of work-based identity (WI). Subsequently, a framework was suggested for systematically investigating the antecedents and the consequences of work-based identity (Table 1.1 in Chap. 1). With reference to this model and framework, the following chapter then aims to provide a systematic literature review of these selected consequences of WI. A distinction is made between subjective and objective consequences. The first part of this chapter includes a review on the subjective consequences (labelled 'subjective', because these are self-report measures completed by the respondents and reflect their subjective experiences) and how they may relate to WI. These subjective consequences are personal alienation, helping behaviours (H-OCB), the three dimensions of burnout, and work engagement.

The second section presents a review on two objective consequences, namely, turnover intention (as a proxy for actual turnover) and task performance (as rated by supervisors) and how they may relate to WI.

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The third part theorises whether the subjective (intermediate) consequences mediate the relationship between WI and the objective consequences (turnover intention and task performance).

The fourth and final section presents a literature review on the possible moderation effects biographical and demographical variables may have on the relationship between WI and the two objective consequences (turnover intention and task performance), respectively.

5.2 Subjective Consequences

Although work identity is not a new concept (Buche 2006) in scholarly (academic) literature, very little research has been done on its antecedents and consequences (Walsh and Gordon 2007). Aryee and Luk (1996) made some effort to measure work identity with a four-item scale adaption of a scale developed by Lodahl and Kejner (1965) to measure job involvement. Wayne et al. (2006) used the same scale in their study on work identity. It seems that most of the research was done on specific features of the work content, namely, career, occupational and professional identities (Empson 2004; Johnson and Kyriacou 2001; Marhuenda et al. 2004; Miller 1998; Pratt et al. 2006).

The purpose of this section is to establish theoretical foundations for selected subjective consequences (i.e. personal alienation, helping behaviour (H-OCB), the three burnout dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment), and work engagement) in relation to WI, with the emphasis on the theoretical frameworks of the concepts, their dimensions and respective definitions. This objective also aims to establish the nature of their relationships with the key concept WI, based on empirical research findings from the literature review.

5.2.1 Personal Alienation

Banai and Reisel (2007) conceptualised personal and social alienation as two manifestations of alienation. Alienation '…in the work setting represents the phenomenological experience of profound disengagement covering a worker's sense of self (personal alienation) and connection to others (social alienation)' (Banai and Reisel 2007: 466). Personal alienation at work is a cognitive belief state that workers develop when they are convinced that work has lost its potential to satisfy their salient needs (Kanungo 1979, 1982a, b; Nasurdin et al. 2005; Roodt 1991).

As stated earlier (in Chap. 2), employee's identification with work can be viewed as a bipolar continuum that varies between withdrawal and extreme identification. Any form of withdrawal behaviours from work (also referred to by Bakker et al. (2004) as disengagement), such as absenteeism or turnover, will tend to manifest

towards the alienation side on the continuum (Janse Van Rensburg 2004; Kanungo 1979, 1982a; Roodt 1991, 1997). For instance, Japanese workers' work identities revolve mainly around organisational identification (Ishikawa 2007), and this illustrates the case of extreme identification with work.

Korman et al. (1981) conceptualised personal alienation as '…a discrepancy between one's everyday behaviour and one's self-image' (p. 344). In their study, Banai et al. (2004) used the 18-item alienation measure developed by Korman et al. (1981) to measure alienation. In their study, Banai et al. (2004) used the theoretical definition of Kanungo (1979) who defined alienation as:

> A state of psychological separation from work in so far as work is perceived as lacking the potential to satisfy one's salient needs and expectations. (p. 131)

In the available research literature (Banai et al. 2004; Banai and Reisel 2007; Blanch and Aluja 2010; Efraty et al. 1991; Hirschfeld and Feild 2000; Kanungo 1992; Korman et al. 1981), no research was found that specifically investigated the relationship between personal alienation and WI.

Any form of withdrawal behaviours such as absenteeism or turnover will tend to manifest towards the alienation side on the continuum (Janse Van Rensburg 2004; Roodt 2004a). Kanungo (1979) perceived alienation, as a facet of WI, as the opposite of job involvement. Based on this research finding, it was assumed that there would be a negative relationship between personal alienation and WI.

The following research findings on the relationship between WI facets and personal alienation report both positive and negative relationships: Efraty et al. (1991) report a nonsignificant relationship (r (208) = .02; p = ns) between job involvement and alienation, but a negative one (r (208) = −.13; $p < .10$) between organisational identification and alienation. Banai and Reisel (2007) report a negative relationship (r (1,933) = −.07; $p < .01$) between task identity and personal alienation, while Hirschfeld and Feild (2000) report positive relations between work alienation and work centrality (r (349) = .17; $p < .01$) as well as job involvement (role) (r (349) = .41; $p < .01$). In conclusion, it is evident from these findings that varying and contradicting results are reported on different WI facets in relation to personal alienation. Furthermore, there is a clear void in the literature on research findings on personal alienation in relation to an integrative WI construct.

5.2.2 Helping Behaviour (H-OCB)

The literature on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and related concepts is diverse with respect to the nature of the behaviour dimensions studied and their labelling (LePine et al. 2002). Although organisational citizenship behaviour is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct, Garma et al. (2007) mention '…there is a lack of consensus on the structure of this dimensionality' (p. 2557). According to Motowidlo et al. (1997), job performance is divided by theory into contextual performance and task performance that also '…includes two categories of basic

tendencies: cognitive ability and personality' of employees which may have an influence on job performance (p. 79). Task performance forms part of the selected objective consequences of this study.

The different organisational citizen behaviours are conceptualised as contextual performance (Borman and Motowidlo 1993, 1997; Motowidlo 2000; Motowidlo et al. 1997; Organ 1988, 1997; Podsakoff et al. 1997; Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1994; Podsakoff et al. 2000). Contextual performance is a process that '…maintains the broader organisational, social and psychological environment in which the technical core must function' but does not contribute to the core technical process of the organisation (Motowidlo et al. 1997: 75). It is '…an aggregate multi-dimensional construct' (Motowidlo 2000: 122). Contextual performance can be split into the two-performance types, namely, job dedication (e.g. to work alone without direct supervision) and interpersonal facilitation (e.g. helping others with their workload) (Stone-Romero et al. 2009). The latter is also referred to as helping behaviour within the organisation citizenship (H-OCB) context.

As the current research project focuses on the contextual performance type interpersonal facilitation, the specific type or dimension of OCB, labelled helping behaviour by LePine and Van Dyne (1998), will be used as a subjective consequence of work-based identity. Helping behaviour is very similar to Organ's (1988) organisational citizenship behaviour dimension labelled altruism as well as the facilitation dimension, contextual performance (LePine and Van Dyne 1998; Podsakoff et al. 2000).

Borman and Motowidlo (1997) define contextual performance as '…activities that include volunteering to carry out task activities that are not formally part of the job and helping and cooperating with others in the organisation to get tasks accomplished' (p. 100). This definition is very similar to that of Organ (1997) who defines organisational citizenship behaviour '…as contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance' (p. 91). Van Scotter et al. (2000) define contextual performance as '…behavioral patterns that support the psychological and social context in which task activities are performed' (p. 526). More specifically Podsakoff et al. (2000) define helping behaviour as '…voluntary helping of others with or preventing the occurrence of work-related problems' (p. 516). For the purpose of this study, the definition of Van Dyne and LePine (1998) was used who define helping behaviour (H-OCB) as:

> Promotive behavior that emphasizes small acts of consideration. Helping is cooperative behavior that is noncontroversial. It is directly and obviously affiliative; it builds and preserves relationships; and it emphasizes interpersonal harmony. (p. 109)

The first part of the definition of helping behaviour includes various conceptualisations of helping behaviours (e.g. altruism, peacemaking, cheerleading and interpersonal helping) (Podsakoff et al. 2000). Bakker et al. (2004) stated that exhaustion will lead to disengagement (withdrawal from work) which in turn will lead to a decrease in contextual (extra-role) performance.

Available literature reported significant, positive relationships between WI facets and organisational citizenship behaviour. Bell and Menguc (2002) and Olkkonen

and Lipponen (2006) found positive relationship between extra-role behaviour (work unit) and organisational identification ((r (212) = .36; $p < .05$) and (r (160) = .22; $p < .01$) respectively). Olkkonen and Lipponen (2006) found positive relationship between extra-role behaviour (organisation) and organisational identification (r (160) = .26; $p < .01$). Rotenberry and Moberg (2007) reported nonsignificant findings between organisational citizenship behaviour (ind) and work centrality but a significant one with job involvement (r (236) = .32; $p < .05$). Rotenberry and Moberg (2007) also reported nonsignificant findings between organisational citizenship behaviour (org) and work centrality but a significant one with job involvement (r (236) = .32; $p < .001$). Based on the literature review, it is foreseen that the level of identity activation will influence the quality of organisational citizenship behaviours displayed by an individual. In conclusion, all the studies listed above report positive relationships between WI facets and organisational citizenship behaviours, but not on a combined, integrative WI construct. It was stated earlier in Chapter 2 that WI contains a number of different work-related identification foci.

5.2.3 Burnout

Summers (2010) cited numerous burnout theories reported in the literature. For the purpose of the current research project, the research approach to study burnout as conceptualised by Maslach and Jackson (1981) was followed. This approach is probably still the most authoritative and most frequently cited approach in studying the burnout phenomenon. The difficulties that arise when the relationship between an individual and his work goes awry are recognised as a worrisome phenomenon in the work environment (Maslach et al. 2001). The multidimensional phenomenon, described as burnout, is a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to stressors in the workplace (Maslach 2003). Cherniss (1980) identified work overload as the primary antecedent of burnout.

Burnout was initially conceptualised by Maslach and Jackson (1981) as a psychological syndrome that can occur among individuals who deliver a service to other people. They developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure burnout. The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Scale (MBI-HSS) (Maslach et al. 1986, 1996) was designed to measure burnout in people working in the human services and health-care environment. The three dimensions of burnout are emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach 2003; Maslach and Jackson 1981; Maslach et al. 1986, 1996, 2001).

Emotional exhaustion is about '…feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work'. *Depersonalisation*[1] is the '…unfeeling and impersonal response towards recipients of one's care or service' (Maslach and Jackson

[1] Please note that meaning of the term depersonalisation in this context differs from the meaning attached to it to when describing a social identity outcome.

1981: 101). Individuals try to distance themselves from their customers through their negative behaviours (Maslach et al. 2001). *Reduced personal accomplishment* '…describes feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people' (Maslach and Jackson 1981: 101).

Garma et al. (2007) see the manifestation of burnout in three stages, starting with emotional exhaustion (e.g. loss of energy) followed by depersonalisation (e.g. an uncaring attitude towards customers and co-workers), and ended with reduced personal accomplishment (e.g. low motivation and reduced self-esteem). The MBI-HSS-22 was later adapted to measure burnout of more task-orientated occupations. The Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Services (MBI-GS) burnout dimensions were conceptualised in a slightly broader way and were renamed as exhaustion, cynicism (disengagement) and reduced professional efficacy (Bakker et al. 2004; Maslach et al. 2001). For this study, the original burnout sub-construct depersonalisation (i.e. negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients) was used in place of cynicism, seeing that the MBI-GS, which measures cynicism, is copyright protected (Maslach et al. 1996). This conceptualisation of burnout, as measured by the MBI-HSS-20 forms the base of this study (Gil-Monte 2005; Vanheule et al. 2007).

Burnout is defined by Maslach (2003) as a psychological syndrome that involves a '…prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job that is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism and sense of inefficacy' (p. 189). For the purposes of this study, the definition of Maslach et al. (1996) was used. It defines burnout as:

> A psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. (p. 192)

Using theoretical analysis, Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) identified two underlying dimensions, activation and identification, necessary for employees' work-related well-being. Activation is conceptualised as a continuum with the antipodes vigour ('high levels of energy and mental resilience') versus exhaustion ('feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work' (Maslach and Jackson 1981: 101; Schaufeli et al. 2002). From this approach, burnout is associated with low activation and identification, while work engagement is associated with high activation and identification (Schaufeli et al. 2002).

Activation is the term used in identity theory to indicate that an identity was activated (evoked) and that certain outcomes are imminent (Burke and Stets 2009). As the antipodes of the activation continuum vigour and exhaustion both refer to energy levels, it implies that this activation continuum refers to the amount of energy available with which a specific identity is evoked. According to Maslach and Jackson (1981: 101) and Schaufeli et al. (2002) identification (a cognitive state) is conceptualised as a continuum with the antipodes, cynicism versus dedication. Cynicism (associated with low identification) reflects indifference or a distant attitude towards work in general or towards work in specific tasks, but not necessarily towards other people. Dedication (associated with high identification) refers to a strong involvement in one's work, with feelings of enthusiasm, significance, a sense of pride and inspiration (Maslach et al. 1996; Schaufeli et al. 2002).

The concept identity commitment has both a quantitative and a qualitative dimension. The quantitative dimension refers to the number of persons an individual is tied to through an identity. The qualitative dimension refers to the strength of the ties (Stets and Burke 2003). As the antipodes of the identification continuum dedication and cynicism both refer to identification (association) levels, it implies that the continuum refers to the strength/intensity of the ties or the level of commitment.

Kirpal (2004b) presented evidence that conflicting work demands created a major crisis in occupational identity. A lack of motivation and the manifestation of burnout resulted in a crisis in occupational identity that in turn negatively influenced nurses' work performance as well as their personal lives. A negative relationship was also reported between reduced personal accomplishment and the other two burnout dimensions emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (Demerouti et al. 2005). In the available research literature, the burnout construct was mostly used as a dependent variable (Alimoglu and Donmez 2005; Bakker et al. 2004; Bakker and Schaufeli 2008; Demerouti et al. 2001, 2005; Kirpal 2004b; Langelaan et al. 2006; Low et al. 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004; Schaufeli and Enzmann 1998; Rothmann 2003; Wiese et al. 2003). In conclusion, it is evident that little or no empirical research evidence suggests that a link exists between an integrative WI construct and burnout.

5.2.4 Work Engagement

Around 1997, the positive organisational behaviour movement triggered a focus on the positive antithesis of burnout, namely, work engagement (Maslach 2003; Maslach and Leiter 1997). Two schools of thought exist that explain the relationship between burnout and work engagement. The first argues that burnout (negative) and work engagement (positive) are opposite poles on a continuum called work-related well-being (Maslach and Leiter 1997; González-Romá et al. 2006). The degree of work-related well-being is measured with the different versions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach et al. 1986, 1996). Secondly, a group of researchers argue that, although work engagement is conceptualised as the direct opposite of burnout, it must be regarded as an independent state of mind that needs a different operational definition (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004).

The construct work engagement, from a work environment perspective, quickly evolved in the practitioner community. However, academic research only followed slowly. This bottom-up evolvement of the construct resulted in inconsistent interpretations of its meaning. For this reason, it is necessary to explain the conceptualisation of engagement as used in studies (Macey and Schneider 2008). In a review, Simpson (2008) identified four lines of engagement-related research, namely, personal engagement (Kahn 1990), employee engagement (Harter et al. 2002), burnout/engagement (Leiter and Maslach 2004) and work engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). The differences of the different approaches will not be explored here.

For this research project, the work engagement conceptualisation of Schaufeli and Bakker (2001), as measured by the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli and Bakker 2003), was used.

According to (Schaufeli et al. 2002: 74) work engagement has three sub-constructs. *Vigour* is '…characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work and persistence even in the face of difficulties'. *Dedication* is '…characterised by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge'. *Absorption* is '…characterised by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work'.

From a more general perspective on employee engagement, Kahn (1990) defines the construct personal engagement '…as the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances' (p. 694). Harter et al. (2002) refers to employee engagement '…as the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work' (p. 269). More specifically Maslach et al. (2001: 417) define work engagement as a '…persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment'. For the purpose of this research project, the definition of Schaufeli et al. (2002) was used. They define work engagement as:

> A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication and absorption. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behavior. (p. 74)

In the available work engagement research literature, the engagement construct was mostly used as a dependent variable (Bakker and Schaufeli 2008; Bakker et al. 2008; Langelaan et al. 2006; Macey and Schneider 2008; May et al. 2004; Olivier and Rothmann 2007; Rothmann 2003; Salanova and Schaufeli 2008; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004; Schaufeli et al. 2002, 2008a, b; Simpson 2008; Wiese et al. 2003; Xanthopoulou et al. 2009).

On a conceptual level it appears as if work engagement shares two sub-concepts with WI, namely, commitment (referring to the strength of an identity, Stets and Burke 2003) and involvement. Work engagement is conceptualised by Schaufeli et al. (2002) as having the facets vigour, dedication, and absorption. The term dedication (in a qualitative sense) '…refers to a particularly strong involvement' (Schaufeli et al. 2002: 74). Maslach et al. (2001) conceptualised work engagement as a construct distinct from organisational commitment, job satisfaction or job involvement. In their review of engagement, Macey and Schneider (2008) refer to the terms dedication and absorption, as defined by Salanova et al. (2005), as commitment and involvement, respectively.

To be and feel involved in one's job is an important source of meaning and identity (Wiesenfeld et al. 2000). May et al. (2004) report a relationship with engagement and work–role fit (r (199) = .56; $p < .05$), while Olivier and Rothmann (2007) found a relationship between work engagement and work–role fit (r (171) = .68; $p < .05$). In the research literature only studies that report relationships between WI

facets (work-related identification foci) and work engagement were found. In conclusion, no studies were reported on an integrative WI measure and work engagement. As job involvement (work centrality) is a facet of WI, and identity commitment is an indication of the strength of that identity, it is argued that there would be a strong positive correlation between WI and work engagement.

5.3 Objective Consequences

The purpose of this section is to establish the selected objective consequences of work-based identity (i.e. turnover intention and task performance), with the emphasis on the theoretical frameworks of the concepts, their dimensions and respective definitions. This objective also aims to establish the nature of their relationships with the key concept WI, based on published empirical research.

5.3.1 Turnover Intention

Employee turnover is one of the consequences most frequently studied in organisational demographic research. Withdrawal behaviour is the primary way in which employees deal with issues in the employment relationship (Lo and Aryee 2003). Turnover intention is regarded as the last in a sequence of withdrawal cognitions (Tett and Meyer 1993). It is a coping strategy used by employees to escape the current situation. It can be permanent, when employees leave the employment institution, or can be characterised by horizontal mobility when employees seek and accept transfers to other departments (Kirpal 2004b). However, leaving a job may not always be an option for an individual.

The decision to leave is influenced by many factors. Perceived chances and ease of finding another job, especially in tough economic conditions, the role of mobility cognitions and individual differences in search behaviour all contribute to an individual's turnover intention. Actual labour turnover behaviour is influenced by perceived alternative employment opportunities (Agarwal et al. 2007; Akgün and Lynn 2002; Allen and Meyer 1996; Bellou 2008; Boies and Rothstein 2002; Brown 1996; Carmeli and Gefen 2005; Chen et al. 2008; Jaros et al. 1993; Kirpal 2004a; Lee and Mitchell 1994; Martin 2007; Mobley 1982; Senter and Martin 2007; Wheeler et al. 2007).

Lacity et al. (2008) presented a summary of well-tested models of turnover intention based on different theories within organisational behaviour literature (e.g. the two-factor theory, theory of needs, person–organisation fit theory and the job investment model). Behavioural intention is a reliable determinant of actual behaviour (Jaros et al. 1993; Muliawan et al. 2009). This implies that turnover intention (intention to stay or leave) can be used as a proxy for actual labour turnover (Jaros et al. 1993; Muliawan et al. 2009; Tett and Meyer 1993). Therefore, turnover intention was

categorised as an objective outcome for the purposes of this study. The relationship between WI facets and turnover intention is also negative (Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Scroggins 2008; Wayne et al. 2006; Wheeler et al. 2007).

The turnover phenomenon has significant cost consequences for any organisation. Losing skilled employees disrupts organisational functioning, service delivery and administration. It also contributes to hiring and training costs (Roodt and Bothma 1997; Sulu et al. 2010). As a result, employee turnover and its associated expenses for organisations are key challenges. Lacity et al. (2008) define turnover intention as '…the extent to which an employee plans to leave the organisation' (p. 228). For the purpose of this study, the definition of Tett and Meyer (1993) is used, who define turnover intention as:

> The conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organisation. (p. 262)

This implies that turnover intention, as measured in this study, focuses on those employees who plan to leave the organisation voluntary. A six-item version of the Turnover Intention Scale was used in this research project (*cf.* Bothma and Roodt 2013). This scale is based on a longer 15-item scale developed by Roodt (2004b).

Using a hierarchical regression model to predict turnover intention, a negative association between work identity (comprising of Aryee and Luk's (1996) 4-item identity scale) and turnover intention ($\beta = -0.34$) was reported by Wayne et al. (2006). In the available research literature, no other evidence was found where WI was used as a predictor of turnover intention.

Wheeler et al. (2007) investigated aspects that occur when individuals do not fit with an organisation. They found that when the individual experienced a decrease in person–organisational fit (a facet of work-based identity), it leads to a decrease in job satisfaction, which, in turn, increased turnover intent if the individual also perceived alternative job opportunities. This implies that an individual who experiences a lack of fit within an organisation will only resign if alternative job opportunities exist (Wheeler et al. 2007). Chiu et al. (2009) found evidence that in a situation of high job demands with low job control, the turnover intentions would increase.

Kirpal (2004b) presented evidence that conflicting work demands created a major crisis in nurses' occupational identity (a facet of work-based identity). The consequences were a lack of motivation and the manifestation of burnout that in turn affected both their work performance and personal lives. One of the coping strategies or mechanisms that nurses employed to counter this identity conflict was to leave the nursing profession either temporarily or permanently. Another coping strategy used was horizontal mobility. This implies seeking and accepting transfers to other departments (wards) or changing employment institutions. The latter option is influenced by the strength of the individual's organisational identity (Kirpal 2004b).

A strong significant, negative correlation was found between personal alienation and turnover intention (Sulu et al. 2010). The relationship between WI facets and turnover intention is consistently reported as a negative one, respectively, for the following WI facets: job involvement (Hallberg and Schaufeli 2006), organisational and work unit identification (Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006), work identity (Wayne et al. 2006), and person–organisation fit (Wheeler et al. 2007). The above findings

provide support that WI (as predictor) and turnover intention (as an outcome variable) comply with the prerequisite for mediating effect testing that a relationship must exist between the predictor and outcome variables in the mediating model (Bennett 2000; Frazier et al. 2004; Holmbeck 1997). Based on these findings, it is then concluded that there would be a negative relationship between WI and turnover intention. Specifically, work engagement and organisational citizenship behaviours are significantly negatively related to turnover intention, while burnout and work alienation were significantly positively related to turnover intention.

5.3.1.1 Turnover Intention as a Proxy for Actual Turnover

The obvious question that arises is: 'why turnover intention (which is subjectively reported) is substituting actual turnover (which is an objective indicator)?'. In order to address this question, Bothma and Roodt (2013) reported on the findings where the turnover intention scores of 84 employees who resigned from the ICT company in the *4-month* period directly after the survey was conducted were compared with a group of 88 employees who stayed with the company that were randomly selected from the remaining sample ($n = 2{,}345$). Independent sample t-tests were then conducted to compare the group of leavers with the group of stayers.

A significant difference was found in the turnover intention scores between the group of employees who resigned ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.26$) and the group who stayed ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.28$): $t(170) = 5.20$, $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed). The difference in the means (mean difference = 1.01 95 % CI, 0.63–1.39) has a large effect ($\acute{\eta}^2 = 0.14$). This finding supports the criterion-predictive validity of the turnover intention scale to predict actual turnover.

The same procedure was also repeated for the *4-year* period directly after the survey was conducted, where the turnover intention scores of a group of 405 employees who resigned from the ICT company were compared with a group of 405 employees who stayed with the company that were randomly selected from the remaining sample ($n = 2{,}024$).

A significant difference was also reported in the turnover intention scores between the leavers ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.42$) and the stayers ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.30$): $t(801) = -4.10$; $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed). The difference in the mean scores (mean difference = −0.39, 95 % CI, −0.58 to −0.20) only had a small effect ($\acute{\eta}^2 = 0.02$) but was still significant.

These results confirm the view of other researchers (Jaros et al. 1993; Muliawan et al. 2009) that turnover intention is a reliable determinant of actual behaviour. It was also empirically established by other researchers that turnover intention has a positive relationship with actual turnover (Byrne 2005; Hendrix et al. 1998; Steensma et al. 2004). Several authors are of the opinion that turnover intention can be used as a valid proxy for actual labour turnover (Jaros et al. 1993; Muliawan et al. 2009; Tett and Meyer 1993). On these grounds and on the empirical evidence provided, turnover intention is used as a proxy for actual turnover in the current research project.

5.3.2 Task Performance

Industrial and organisational psychologists and human resource practitioners view job performance improvement as a very important focus in their work (compare Kahya 2008). Employees display two types of work behaviour during a working period. First, they display behaviour that neither help nor hinder organisational goal attainment. Second, they display behaviour, called job performance, that helps organisational goal attainment. The output of job performance, called a result (the changes induced by job performance on the states or conditions of people or things), is linked to an evaluative component that may be evaluated positively or negatively (Motowidlo et al. 1997).

Available literature reports a positive relationship between job performance and some WI facets, such as 'self-concept–job fit' and meaningful work (De Cuyper and De Witte 2005; Scroggins 2008). In the available research, evidence can be found that work engagement is a predictor of job performance (Kahn 1990, 1992; Harter et al. 2002; Leiter and Maslach 2004; Schaufeli et al. 2002). According to Bakker et al. (2004), research investigating the relationship between burnout and performance is scarce and conflicting results are reported. According to the researchers the main reason for these conflicting results is possibly that several studies used only the exhaustion dimension of burnout together with self-reporting instruments and did not distinguish between contextual (extra-role) and task (in-role) performance.

The other subjective outcome criterion variables that were included in this research survey were personal alienation, helping behaviour, and the three burnout dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment. Wright and Bonett (1997) presented evidence that emotional exhaustion predicted work performance but they failed to establish a relationship between depersonalisation, reduced personal accomplishment and performance.

Performance was conceptualised by Motowidlo et al. (1997) as '…behavior with an evaluative component' (p. 72). Job performance is divided into the dimensions contextual performance (organisational citizen behaviours or extra-role performance) and task performance (in-role performance) (Motowidlo et al. 1997; Motowidlo and Van Scotter 1994). Kahya (2008) mentioned that these '…are two distinct dimensions of behaviour at work' (p. 1). According to Motowidlo et al. (1997):

> Task performance bears a direct relation to the organization's technical core, either executing its technical processes or by maintaining and servicing its technical requirements. (p. 75)

Motowidlo et al. (1997: 71) define job performance as '…the aggregated value to the organisation of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual performs over a standard interval of time'. Rotundo and Sackett (2002: 66) define job performance '…as those actions and behaviours that are under the control of the individual and contribute to the goals of the organisation'. Van Scotter et al. (2000) define job performance as '…patterns of behaviour that are directly involved in producing goods or services, or activities that provide indirect support for the organisation's

core technical processes' (p. 526). Task performance is defined by Borman and Motowidlo (1993) as '…activities that contribute to the organisation's technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services' (p. 73). For the purpose of this study, the definition of Williams and Anderson (1991) was used which defines in-role (task) performance as:

> behaviours that are recognized by formal reward systems and are part of the requirements as described in job descriptions. (p. 606)

Rotenberry and Moberg (2007) found that if job involvement and work centrality (as facets of WI) are properly measured, they can predict in-role performance. This finding is supported by Chughtai (2008), who reported that job involvement as well as organisational citizenship behaviour was significantly positively related to job performance. Similar findings were also reported by Cropanzano et al. (2003) where job performance was related to organisational citizenship behaviour (org) as well as to emotional exhaustion. Meaningful work experiences are an important antecedent of employee wellness. Employees who have a high self-concept–job fit and perform meaningful work tend to perform better and have lower turnover intentions (Scroggins 2008). According to Walsh and Gordon (2007), when an individual's occupational or professional identity is in conflict with that of the derived organisational identity, the individual's job performance differs from what is expected by the organisation.

These findings reported above confirm that WI (as a predictor) and task performance (as an outcome variable) comply with a prerequisite for mediating effect testing that a relationship must exist between the predictor and the outcome variables in the mediating model (Bennett 2000; Frazier et al. 2004; Holmbeck 1997). Based on the foregoing literature review, it is argued that when an identity is activated, the level of energy available for identity activation will have an influence on the quality of an individual's task performance.

5.4 Research Findings on the Possible Mediation Effects Between Work-Based Identity and Objective Consequences

The primary purpose of this section is to determine the possible mediating effect the subjective consequences (personal alienation, helping behaviour (H-OCB), work engagement and the burnout dimensions emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment) may have on the relationship between work-based identity and the objective consequences turnover intention and task performance.

Mediation occurs when a third variable (mediator) explains (completely or only partially) the relationship between a predictor (independent variable) and an outcome variable (dependent variable) (Baron and Kenny 1986). It is likely that such

mediation will occur if the mediation variable is related to both the predictor (WI) and the outcome variables (turnover intentions or task performance).

5.4.1 Personal Alienation

Conflicting results about the relationship between facets of WI and personal alienation were reported in the available research literature. Efraty et al. (1991) reported a statistically significant, negative relationship between alienation and the WI facet organisational identification, while Banai and Reisel (2007) found a statistically significant negative relationship between alienation and the WI facet task identity. Hirschfeld and Feild (2000), on the other hand, found a statistically significant positive relationship between personal alienation and work centrality as well as between personal alienation and job involvement.

According to Sulu et al. (2010) fairness in organisations (as partially manifested in leadership behaviour) is an important predictor of employee behaviours such as turnover intention, job performance and organisational commitment. Sulu et al. (2010) presented evidence that personal alienation partially mediated the relationship between organisational injustice and organisational commitment. It is therefore concluded that in the reported research literature, no evidence was found that personal alienation has a mediating effect on the relationship between WI, turnover intention and task performance.

5.4.2 Helping Behaviour (H-OCB)

Organ (1997) defined organisational citizenship behaviour as '…contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance' (p. 91). Olkkonen and Lipponen (2006) reported a statistically significant positive relationship between OCB and organisational identification, a facet of WI. Rotenberry and Moberg (2007) reported in a similar vein a statistically significant positive relationship between OCB and job involvement (a WI facet). These research findings support the possible relationship between WI and OCB.

Khalid and Ali (2005) reported a statistically significant, negative relationship between facets of OCB and turnover intention. This research finding is supported by Bellou (2008) and Olkkonen and Lipponen (2006). These research findings confirm the existence of a relationship between OCB and turnover intention. Cropanzano et al. (2003) reported a statistically significant, positive relationship between organisational citizenship behaviour and job performance. In this case it is concluded that some research evidence suggests that helping behaviours (H-OCB)

may mediate the said relationship between WI and outcome variables (turnover intentions or task performance).

5.4.3 Burnout

Burnout is defined by Maslach et al. (1996) as '…a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity' (p. 192). In the available research, no direct evidence was found of studies that investigated the mediating affects that the burnout facets emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment may have on work-based identity. Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009) reported that emotional exhaustion was not significantly related to job performance. The researchers further reported that emotional exhaustion partially mediated the relationship between emotional dissonance and turnover intention.

There is a significant positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (Schaufeli et al. 2008a, b). Cropanzano et al. (2003) found that emotional exhaustion (the core facet of burnout) predicted performance and turnover intention. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) presented evidence that burnout was related to turnover intention and health problems. Since no research evidence was found that related WI specifically to burnout, it is therefore hypothesised that burnout will not mediate the WI and the objective outcomes variables relationships.

5.4.4 Work Engagement

Schaufeli et al. (2002) define work engagement as '…a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption' (p. 74). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) presented evidence that engagement and turnover intention were related and that work engagement mediated the relationship between job resources and turnover intention. Saks (2006) reported that employee engagement mediated the relationship between antecedents (e.g. job characteristics, organisational support, supervisor support, rewards and recognition) and consequences (e.g. job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover intention and organisational citizen behaviours). Simpson (2008) provided a literature review on the important findings regarding engagement. It can therefore be concluded that since WI and work engagement are expected to be positively correlated, it can be hypothesised that work engagement will mediate the WI turnover intention or task performance relationships.

5.5 Research Findings on the Possible Moderating Effect of Biographical and Demographic Variables in Predicting Turnover Intention

This section aimed to determine which of the selected biographical and demographic variables may moderate the relationship between predictors (including WI and selected subjective consequences) and turnover intention. The biographical variables, selected for the study that may moderate the relationship between predictor's (including work-based identity and selected subjective consequences) and the objective consequences turnover intention and task performance, are presented and briefly discussed. Biographical variables refer to personal attributes of the individual such as age, gender and race. A demographic variable refers to work-related attributes of the individual, namely, job tenure, education, region, marital status and job level.

5.5.1 Age

The last birthday of respondents was used to determine their age in years. For the purpose of this research project, *age* is defined as the period of time a person has existed since birth. In a meta-analysis of employee turnover, Cotton and Tuttle (1986) reported that age was negatively related to employee turnover. This finding is supported by Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009) as well as Cropanzano et al. (2003), who found a relationship between employees' ages at the time of appointment and turnover intention. The lower the age of the appointee, the higher the probability of turnover (Jacobs 2005). In a meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover, Griffeth et al. (2000) reported that age moderated the tenure–turnover relationship. Ingersoll (2001) reported that the turnover rates of younger and older teachers were higher than that of middle-aged teachers. Cha (2008), however, found no link between age and turnover intention among teachers. No evidence was found in the research literature that age moderates the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

5.5.2 Gender

For the purpose of this study, the term gender is used to refer to sexual status, namely, females or males. According to Kroger (1997), men and women use similar psychological structures and developmental processes in identity formation. However, contextual or situational factors (variables) in the social structure affect the identity formation process, which, in turn, results in identity differences between genders (Kroger 1997; Solomontos-Kountouri and Hurry 2008). Furthermore, the

spheres of work differ between the genders and are normally not rated equal (Béteille 2002). A relationship was found between gender and turnover – an indication that '…women are more likely to leave than men' (Cotton and Tuttle 1986: 60). This finding is supported by Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009) and Coyne and Ong (2007). However, in a study among IT professionals, Buche (2008) found that women's intent to leave was lower than that of males. No evidence was reported in earlier studies that gender moderates the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

5.5.3 Race

To define race from a social point of view can be problematic. The variable race is defined as a local geographic or global human population distinguished as a more or less distinct group by genetically transmitted physical characteristics. For the purpose of this study, the primary race groups of the South African population (Asian/Indian, Black, Coloured and White) were used.

The value assigned to work is different between cultural groups (Béteille 2002). In an effort to address the legacy of apartheid in the South African workplace, government introduced affirmative action legislation. This opening of opportunities for previously disadvantaged race groups resulted in excessive labour turnover as those with skills started job hopping from one position to the next higher position (Jacobs 2005; Thomas 2002; Vallabh and Donald 2001). The larger a race group, the more likely it is that the employees of that race group will stay. This is linked to the supportive environment created by race group size (Zatzick et al. 2003). No evidence was found in previous studies that race moderates the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

5.5.4 Job Tenure

Job tenure refers to the length of time one has been employed in the current organisation in a specific job (Carmeli 2003). For the purpose of this study, the variable job tenure refers to the length of time of the participant in his current job. Young employees lack job experience and are more tolerant of working conditions. Views change over time and, with more experience, employees start looking out for better job opportunities (Allan et al. 2006). Jacobs (2005) reported a statistically significant, positive relationship between tenure and turnover intention. In a meta-analysis of employee turnover, Cotton and Tuttle (1986) reported that organisational tenure was negatively related to employee turnover, mainly because of the risks associated with leaving. This finding was supported by Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009), who reported a significant, negative relationship. No evidence was found in earlier research that job tenure moderates the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

5.5.5 Education

Education refers to the highest formal academic degree or diploma an individual has completed at a school, vocational training, on-the-job training, college, technikon or university. The highest formal academic qualification was used as a proxy for education. In a meta-analysis of employee turnover, Cotton and Tuttle (1986) reported that education is positively related to employee turnover. The better qualified the employees are, the better their possible job opportunities (Thomas 2002). No evidence was found in earlier studies that education moderates the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

5.5.6 Region (Location)

Geographic region refers to the seven business focus areas South Africa is divided into by the South African Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector company. The ICT sector company's regions are Corporate with a main office in Pretoria, North Eastern region with a regional office in Pretoria, Southern region with a regional office in Port Elisabeth, Western region with a regional office in Cape Town, Central region with regional offices in Bloemfontein and Gauteng and Central region with a regional office in Johannesburg. The ICT sector company has satellite offices spread across the regions. Region (or location) refers to the seven business focus areas of the ICT sector company in South Africa. The impact of factors like marital status, property, school-going children and cost of living makes it difficult for some employees to move from a metropolitan area to the countryside or vice versa. It is therefore concluded that no evidence from earlier research was found that geographic region moderates the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

5.5.7 Marital Status

Marital status indicates whether an individual is single (e.g. lives alone), married, cohabitating (living with partner of any gender), divorced, separated or widowed (lost the partner for reason indicated) (Answers.com). Married employees are less likely to resign than unmarried employees (Cotton and Tuttle 1986). Marital status is regarded as a personal constraint, as some of those who are married feel responsible towards their dependants, as opposed to unmarried employees, who enjoy more freedom (Chompookum and Derr 2004). It may also affect promotion opportunity, e.g. single teachers are more likely to accept promotions elsewhere (Cohen et al. 2007), implying that it is easier for single employees to change jobs than for married employees who have family constraints. It is concluded that no evidence from earlier research was found that marital status moderates the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

5.5.8 Job Level

Job level is the term used to indicate the level of function of the individual in the South African Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector company. Employees on the operational level (e.g. technicians, cleaners) are responsible for performing routine tasks on a day-to-day basis. Employees on supervisor level have the primary responsibility of managing the people on the operational levels. Specialist employees are responsible for job functions where specific specialised knowledge and skills are needed (e.g. programmers, satellite technicians). Managers are responsible for the key functions planning, organising, directing and controlling of organisational resources. Specialist employees on this level are responsible for conducting specific job functions where advanced knowledge and skills are needed (e.g. engineers and technologist). Chiu et al. (2009) reported that employees in jobs with high job demands combined with low job control frequently reported turnover intention. Those on higher job levels may perceive themselves as important stakeholders that make significant contributions to the organisation (Thomas and Feldman 2007). These jobs are less routine and more satisfying than lower level jobs (Podsakoff et al. 2000). It is concluded that no evidence was found in earlier research that job level moderates the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

5.6 Research Findings on the Possible Moderating Effect of Biographical and Demographic Variables in Predicting Task Performance

This section is to determine which of the selected biographical and demographic variables may moderate the relationship between predictors (including WI and selected subjective consequences) and task performance. The research findings on the biographical and demographic variables that may moderate the relationship between predictors (including work-based identity and selected subjective consequences) and task performance are presented and briefly discussed.

5.6.1 Age

According to some researchers no relationship exists between age and job performance (Chughtai 2008; Kahya 2008; McEvoy and Cascio 1989), while others reported a negative relationship (Karatepe and Aleshinloye 2009). Other researchers (Skirbekk 2003) reported an inverted U-shape relationship between work performance and age. Employees in their 30s and 40s have the highest job performance levels, while employees in the age group 50+ have higher wage levels but lower job performance than younger employees on lower wage levels (Skirbekk 2003). Adeogun

(2008) reported that age does not moderate the relationship between monetary motivation and job performance or between monetary motivation and job satisfaction. It is concluded that no evidence was found in previous research that age moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

5.6.2 Gender

For this study, task performance evaluation of employees was done by the participant's supervisors. According to Nieva and Gutek (1980), evaluation bias appears to be affected by level of performance. The tendency is to give females a less favourable score than males if they perform well. When the performance is not up to standard, females get a better evaluation than males. This finding was supported by Igbaria and Baroudi (1995), who provided evidence that males received higher performance ratings than females. Some studies reported that gender was unrelated to in-role performance (Kahya 2008; Chughtai 2008), while others reported weak negative relationship (Karatepe and Aleshinloye 2009). Adeogun (2008) reported that gender did not moderate the relationship between monetary motivation and job performance or monetary motivation and job satisfaction. It is concluded that no evidence was found in earlier studies that gender moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

5.6.3 Race

In an effort to address the legacy of apartheid in the workplace, the South African government introduced affirmative action legislation. This opening of opportunities for previously disadvantaged race groups resulted in excessive labour turnover as those with skills started job hopping from one position to the next higher position (Jacobs 2005; Thomas 2002; Vallabh and Donald 2001). This may have an impact on task performance, as the individual skills may not fit the higher position. It is concluded that no evidence was found in earlier studies that race moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

5.6.4 Job Tenure

Job tenure refers to the length of service of the participant in his current job. According to Kahya (2008: 6), job experience (the number of years an employee has been working in his/her current job) '…may have a direct or indirect causal impact on job performance'. In their study of basketball teams, Eitzen and Yetman (1972) found a curvilinear relationship between team performance and coaching

tenure. After a certain time in a particular position, it is foreseen that the task performance of the occupant will begin to decline. Moser and Galais (2007) reported that organisational tenure moderated the relationship between self-monitoring and job performance. Adeogun (2008) reported that tenure did not moderate the relationship between monetary motivation and job performance or monetary motivation and job satisfaction. It is concluded that no evidence was found in earlier studies that job tenure moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

5.6.5 Education

According to Nieva and Gutek (1980), evaluation bias appears to be affected by level of qualification. The tendency is to give females a less favourable score than males if they are highly qualified. When both genders are not well qualified, females get a better evaluation than males. Adeogun (2008) reported that educational level did moderate the relationship between monetary motivation and job performance. Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009) reported a weak, negative relationship between education and job performance. It is concluded that no evidence was found in previous research that education moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

5.6.6 Region (Location)

No clear-cut evidence could be found in the available literature on the relationship between geographical region (work location) and job performance. Employees working outside of the office mostly work independently with the minimum direct supervision, as opposed to employees performing office work. It was foreseen that the task performance of employees doing field work would differ from those doing office work. It is concluded that no evidence in previous studies indicates that region moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

5.6.7 Marital Status

Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009) reported a weak, negative relationship between marital status and job performance. The financial needs of married employees may differ from other employees, as a number of dependants are financially dependent on them (Snir and Harpaz 2006). Married women with children carry a double burden – work as well as household responsibilities (Rees and Miazhevich 2005) – which may impact on their task performance. It is therefore concluded that no evidence was found that marital status moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

5.6.8 *Job Level*

Petty et al. (1984) found evidence that the relationship between individual, overall job satisfaction and job performance may be moderated by job level. The stronger relationship found at higher job levels can possibly be explained by the greater reward contingencies and greater opportunity for intrinsic satisfaction (Petty et al. 1984). It was foreseen that the task performance of employees on higher job levels would differ from that of employees on lower job levels. No evidence was found that job level moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

In summary, it is evident from earlier research that no moderation effects were reported in the literature that biographic and demographic variables specifically moderate the relationships between WI and both outcome variables turnover intentions and task performance.

5.7 Conclusion

The systematic review of the research literature as reported in the chapter above addresses the chapter objectives stated in the introduction to the chapter and resulted in the first four conclusions listed. The other conclusions listed here are more general and may have a bearing on future WI research:

1. Research reported in this chapter established clear links between WI facets and subjective outcome variables, but little or no research is reported on the relationship between a more comprehensive WI construct and the mentioned subjective outcome variables (personal alienation, helping behaviour (H-OCB), burnout and work engagement).
2. Research reported on the relationship between WI facets and objective outcome variables (turnover intention and task performance), established a similar pattern where relationships were only found on work identity facets, and the mentioned objective outcome variables. A need for research on a more comprehensive WI construct and objective outcomes is therefore evident.
3. Only few studies have established relationships between some WI facets and objective outcome variables, but with little or no research evidence on how subjective outcomes may mediate this said relationship. The need for more systematic research in this area is therefore also evident.
4. No research was found that systematically reports on how the relationship between WI and outcome variables may be moderated by biographic or demographic variables. The research gap in this instance is also evident.
5. It is clear that WI as a research construct is the 'new kid on the block' with very little systematic research evidence available on relationships with other antecedent or consequence variables. Opportunities to systematically explore the said relationships are also evident.

The following conclusions and observations are more general in nature and may have a bearing on future WI research:

6. Since the WI research project had a specific focus, other research questions may arise that also need further investigation. More specifically, differences in work conditions in which employees are working and their potential impact on WI need further investigation. The effects of difficult working conditions such as underground mining or call centres (also sometimes referred to as 'sweat shops') may have moderating effects on WI formation, but the exact nature of these effects are still unknown. In similar vein it may also be investigated how uniform dress codes and strong socialisation practices in order to reflect a uniform organisational culture may affect WI formation such as in the police, prison services, military or airline industry.
7. Different modes exist in which employees could potentially formally relate to or establish a relationship with their employing organisation. In some instances this mode is moderated by a third party such as unions or union representatives. The question that arises is which mode results in the most productive relationships with the employment organisation and why? And how does this affect WI formation?
8. Different social and cultural groups exist in a diverse society, and they may bring different histories with them to the workplace. This may result in different social groups, their associated social identities and also possible different effects on WI formation. These WIs may again in turn result in different degrees of identification with specific work-related identification foci. Which ones are those and why are they given preference?
9. All these aspects may have effects on how future WI studies are conducted and also which aspects will be related to WI.

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Part II
Exploratory Analyses

Given the overview of the development of the WI concept and a review of the literature in respect of possible causes and consequences of WI provided in Part I, this part of the book consists of only one chapter. Chapter 6 firstly reports on how the WI construct was operationalized. The second and third parts, respectively, report on the exploratory analyses conducted to identify possible antecedents (causes) and consequences of WI. The findings of this chapter serve as the basis to test a WI structural equation model as reported in the next part.

Chapter 6
Exploratory Empirical Tests of Work-Based Identity Antecedents and Consequences

Roslyn de Braine, F. Chris Bothma, and Paul G.W. Jansen

6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters (Chaps. 4 and 5) provided an overview of the current research literature on the antecedents and the consequences of WI, respectively. This chapter focuses on the results of two studies that, respectively, explored the antecedents and the consequences of WI.

The first section of the chapter briefly recaps on how the WI construct was conceptualised (covered in more detail in Chap. 2) and then operationalised. The conceptual model and framework introduced in Chap. 1 (Fig. 1.4 and Table 1.1) guides the presentation of the results in this chapter.

The second section mainly reports on the findings of the De Braine (2012) study where selected job demands (JDs) and job resources (JRs) from the traditional job demands-resources (JD-R) model as well as the JD-R survey were used to predict WI. It was also tested whether the relationship between JRs and WI was mediated by JDs that is whether the impact of resources on WI is 'channelled' through dealing with demands. This was tested in De Braine's (2012) and Bester's (2012) study. It was also tested whether JDs moderate the relationship that JRs have with WI. JDs are also usually associated with physiological and psychological costs to individuals (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004), which may in this case serve to weaken an employee's work identity. Furthermore, the prediction model of WI was also tested for possible moderation effects by biographical and demographical variables.

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The third section of the chapter mainly reports on the Bothma (2011) where subjective and objectives outcomes of WI were investigated. It was also tested whether the relationship between WI and objective consequences are mediated by subjective consequences. The prediction models of the objective consequences were also tested as in the case of Bester's (2012) study for moderation effects by biographical and demographical variables.

As a brief background, both the De Braine (2012) and Bothma (2011) studies were conducted in a South African ICT sector company that employs around 24,000 people. A census-based sampling approach yielded a cross-sectional sample of 2,429 employees of all levels in the organisation excluding top management. The survey collected data for both the De Braine and Bothma studies. The respondents were from all regions in South Africa.

6.2 Conceptualisation of Work-Based Identity

WI is conceptualised as '…a multi-layered and multi-dimensional phenomenon' that develops through the interaction (a key process) between an individual (with distinctive personal identity, biographical and demographical characteristics) and the work-related environment as antecedent (Kirpal 2004a: 202). Through the identity formation process (identification), certain meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values that are derived from specific social foci (e.g. careers, professions, organisations, work groups and job characteristics) are cognitively and hierarchically stored in the self, in order of importance, ready to serve as behaviour guides.

Depending on the selected foci, the work-related identity construct (derived from the self-concept through the identification process) may be referred to as career, occupational, professional or organisational identification. In response to a social situation (input), an identity is activated which results in behavioural and cognitive outcomes.

Although work-related identities are closely related to social identity, they differ from the latter, as they are work-related and linked to economic activities, while social identity concerns social status. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2001), employees' psychological identification with work happens within four broad focal areas: firstly, *work* in general (work centrality/work involvement); secondly, *what* the person does (career/occupational/professional identity); thirdly, *where* the person works (organisational membership) and lastly, the *specific work* the person does (job involvement).

6.2.1 The Work-Based Identity Prototype as a Foundation

Through the identity formation process, certain meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values are derived from specific social foci (such as careers, professions, organisations, supervisors, work groups and job characteristics), which are

cognitively and hierarchically 'stored' in prototypes (according to the social identity theory) or identity standards (according to the identity theory) (Abrams and Hogg 2004; Burke and Stets 2009; Hogg 2001; Stryker and Burke 2000) and which are then ready to serve as behaviour guides (Kirpal 2004b). Burke and Stets (2009) suggested that the identity standard and prototype should be treated equivalent to cognitive representations, and defined the prototype (a.k.a. identity standard) as '…a cognitive representation of a social category containing the meanings and norms the person associates with the social category' (p. 19).

Depending on the work-related foci, the WI construct may be referred to as professional, occupational, vocational or work identity (Crawford et al. 2008; Fugate et al. 2004; Kirpal 2004a, b; Pratt et al. 2006). In response to perceptions received about a specific social situation, the most appropriate identity (behaviour guide) is selected and activated to guide behaviour (Buche 2003, 2006, 2008; Hitlin 2003; Hogg and Ridgeway 2003; Hogg and Terry 2000; Kirpal 2004a, b; Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Stets and Burke 2003; Stryker and Burke 2000; Stryker and Serpe 1982; Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1985; Walsh and Gordon 2007).

Work identity has been described as the way individuals define themselves at work. The dynamic content of this identity is stored in the WI prototype that acts as a behavioural guide. The following descriptions provide clarification of the content of this concept. Witt et al. (2002: 488) view work identity as a '…work-relevant target with which the individual primarily identifies: the occupation or the employing organisation'. Another description that is more inclusive of other components of the work environment is that: work identities are primarily identification with the work environment, the company, the company's objectives or the work-related activities and tasks which individuals perform that make individual and collective productivity possible.

Kirpal (2004b: 202) further elaborated on work identity that it is 'multilayered and multidimensional'. Other descriptions focus more on the 'self'. Buche (2003: 10) in her study of information technology professionals' work identities describes it as '…a socially constructed representation of an individual's unique self-perception based on his or her interactions within the employment environment'. Buche (2003: 4) further argues that work identity addresses '…an employee's self-image (at work) …who they see when they look in a mirror' (portion in parenthesis added for clarity).

6.2.2 The Work-Based Identity Prototype Conceptualisation

The following two theoretical definitions have been used as support of the prototype structure conceptualisation. Walsh and Gordon (2007: 2) define work identity as '…a work-based self-concept constituted of a combination of organisational, occupational, and other identities that shapes the roles a person adopts and the corresponding ways he or she behaves when performing his or her work'. For the purposes of the current study, Lloyd et al. (2011: 13 of 15) defined WI as '…a multi-identity, multi-faceted and multi-layered construction of the self (in which the

self-concept fulfills a core, integrative function), that shapes the roles individuals are involved in, within their employment context'. This definition guided the operationalisation of the WI construct.

Both of these aforementioned theoretical definitions of WI are grounded in personal identity, social identity theory and identity theory and they include the 'self-concept' as being multifaceted. Both definitions also make reference to the roles that individuals adopt and fulfil in their work something strongly supported by identity theory. A third reason for their inclusion is that the work-based self-concept consists of a combination of organisational, occupational and other identities. This is supported by social identity theory and social categorisation theory because individuals identify with categories or groups, such as an organisation, a work team or an occupational group.

Considering these theoretical definitions, WI, due to its multifaceted and multi-identity characteristic, is operationalised by an array of possible indicators which include work centrality, job involvement, organisational identification, person-organisation fit and career/occupational identity in the studies of Bothma (2011) and De Braine (2012). In order to understand the importance of each of the above-mentioned indicators in WI, we will make use of Kirpal's (2004a) perspective on the dimensions that influence identity formation processes. A three-part WI prototype was developed that consists of a structural, social and an individual-psychological dimension as set out below.

6.2.3 The Work-Based Identity Prototype Dimensions

The *structural* dimension refers to individual and societal paradigms of work that are influenced and shaped by how work, training systems and patterns of employment are embedded within a country's current and historical culture (Kirpal 2004a). As alluded to in Chap. 1, SA's transition from an apartheid regime to democracy has changed the meaning of the concept 'South African' (Distiller 2008: 273). Through labour law reforms, the SA workplace has increased in diversity and placed more emphasis on skill development for the previously disadvantaged race groups.

The *social* dimension refers to the social interaction that individuals engage in with other individuals (i.e. colleagues and supervisors), groups (i.e. communities of practice, work units and occupational groups) and/or institutional bodies (i.e. trade unions and professional bodies). The indicators of WI that fall under this social dimension include occupational/professional or career identity and organisational identification.

The *individual-psychological* dimension specifically focuses on the individual's personal identity orientation. This dimension focuses on the career history and professional development of individuals (Kirpal 2004a), and it also focuses on how an individual perceives his or her work (Kirpal 2004a). The indicators of WI that fall under this social dimension include work centrality, job involvement and person-organisation fit.

6.3 Operationalisation of Work-Based Identity

Given the aforementioned theoretical foundation and the conceptualisation of the WI construct, the following section will focus on how the WI scale was operationalised.

6.3.1 Work-Based Identity Scale (WI-28)

Although previous attempts were made to measure work identity (Aryee and Luk 1996; Buche 2003, 2006, 2008; Walsh and Gordon 2007; Wayne et al. 2006), no suitable measuring instrument was found that complied with the requirements of the theoretical definition of WI as described above. Therefore, scales that measure individual facets of work identity as defined in the WI prototype (Bothma 2011), such as work role centrality, person-environment fit, organisational identification, job involvement, occupational and/or professional identity and career identity, were sourced, adapted and combined to create a scale to measure WI (Lauver and Kristof-Brown 2001; Lodahl and Kejner 1965; Mael and Ashforth 1992; Roodt 1997; Roodt et al. 2009; Serafini et al. 2006).

A proposed WI scale was compiled, consisting of 36 items that represented the five different facets of WI (refer to the left column of Table 5.1 and to Appendix A for the complete WI scale). Items from the following scales were selected:

Items were selected from the organisational-related commitment scale of Roodt (1997) to capture different work-related foci. Examples of the selected items are: 'To what extent do you regard work as the most important aspect in your life?' and 'To what extent does your job allow for the achievement of personal goals?'

Job involvement was measured with items that were selected from Lodahl and Kejner's (1965) Job Involvement Scale, for example, 'How likely are you to regard your work as only a small part of who you are?'

Items were also selected from three subscales of the Functions of Identity Scale of Serafini et al. (2006), namely, *structure* (defined as '…the structure of understanding of who one is'), *goals* (defined as '…meaning and direction through commitments, values and goals') and *future* (defined as '…meaning and direction through commitments, values and goals and sense of future').

Organisational identification was measured with the scale of Mael and Ashforth (1992). Examples of the chosen items are: 'How often do you say 'we' rather than 'they' when you talk about the organisation that you work for?' and 'How interested are you in what others think about the organisation that you work for?'

Person-organisation fit was measured with items from the scale of Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001). Examples of the selected items are: 'To what degree do your values match or fit the values of the organisation that you work for?' and 'To what degree are you able to maintain your values at the organisation that you work for?' The reliability and validity of the instrument was determined by submitting the

initial 36-item questionnaire to a first- and second-level factor analysis to determine the factor structure. This yielded a final 28-item, unidimensional WI scale (Roodt et al. 2009) with a Cronbach alpha of .95.

6.4 An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Approach

The EFA procedure described below was followed in both the studies of Bothma (2011) and De Braine (2012) and is reported below.

6.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The distribution of item mean scores for the WI scale seems to be slightly negatively skewed. This trend is a desired outcome as one would want employees to have a well-developed WI and a high level of work engagement (Bothma 2011).

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of the dataset indicated a violation of the assumption of normality. As the significance values of both tests are respectively smaller than $p \leq .001$, it can be concluded that the dataset does not stem from a normal distribution. This violation of normality is not serious as long as the non-normality is caused by data skewness and not by outliers in the data. The latter was not the case.

The risk of drawing incorrect inferences is reduced if samples of greater than 200 are used (Tabachnick and Fidell 1996, 2001, 2007), considerably less than the sample of $n = 2{,}429$ used in both the De Braine and the Bothma study. The data collected were therefore suitable for the parametric statistical procedures applied in the study. This statement is supported by Norman (2010, p. 631), who concluded that '… parametric statistics can be used with Likert data, with small sample sizes, with unequal variances, and with non-normal distributions, with no fear of "coming to the wrong conclusion"'.

6.4.2 First-Level Factor Analysis

A first-level factor analysis was conducted on the item intercorrelation matrixes of the initial 36 items of the WI scale (WI-28). (Refer to Appendix A for viewing the 36 items initially included in the scale.) Item scores were intercorrelated and this matrix was tested by means of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to determine its suitability for factor analysis. KMO's MSA values of all the items in the

anti-image matrix exceed the recommended value of .6 (Hair et al. 1998; Kim 2011; Pallant 2005, 2007). Six factors were postulated based on Kaiser's (1970) criterion of eigenvalues larger than unity. Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was used as the extraction method, followed by a varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation.

6.4.3 Second-Level Factor Analysis

A second-level factor analysis was conducted on the extracted first-level factors sub-scores of the WI scale (WI-28). Suitability of the 6 × 6 sub-score intercorrelation matrix for further factor analysis was confirmed with KMO's MSA, which measured .78, that is above the recommended value of .6 (Hair et al. 1998). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Chi-square value was statistically significant (X^2 (630) = 3,884.30; $p \leq .001$), thereby indicating the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Two factors were postulated based on Kaiser's (1970) criterion of eigenvalues larger than unity. These two factors were extracted by means of PAF and a direct oblimin rotation and explained about 66 % of the variance in the factor space. The outcomes of the above-mentioned EFA procedure can be summarised in Table 6.1.

It should be noted from the first column in Table 6.1 that the six theoretical dimensions (work, job, career/occupation, organisational identification, future and person – environment fit) all yielded acceptable internal consistency reliabilities with the exception of person – environment fit (which is on the low side) where the third item was omitted from further analysis. These findings suggest that a different five factor latent model for the WI construct (excluding the *future* dimension) can be tested by means of CFA within a SEM. This option was not pursued in the current work identity project.

The results obtained from the iterative item reliability analysis of the WI scale, (work-based identity in the third column of the above table), yielded a Cronbach Alpha of .95, indicating an acceptable internal consistency reliability. The second extracted factor (that contained experimental items on 'future') did not form part of the theoretical conceptualisation of WI and was omitted from further analysis. WI was therefore conceptualised as a unidimensional construct with an acceptable internal consistency reliability (Cronbach Alpha = .95). Both Bothma (2011) and the De Braine (2012) used this unidimensional scale in their respective exploratory studies that shared the WI scale.

With the antecedents and the consequences of WI now clearly established in the studies De Braine (2012) and Bothma (2011), respectively, it was established that WI can be successfully used as both as a criterion or as a predictor. Bester (2012) then proceeded by including the WI construct in a structural equation model (SEM). The results of this study are reported in Chap. 7.

Table 6.1 Factor analysis of the WI scale

Theoretical sub-constructs			First level FA			Second level FA		
Item per dimension	Item reliability	Dimension reliability	Item	Item loadings	Factor reliability	Item	Item reliability	Construct reliability
DQ1	.77	Work $\alpha = .82$	DQ18	0.79	WI 1 $\alpha = .94$	DQ18	.942	Work-based identity $\alpha = .95$
DQ2	.76		DQ1	0.77		DQ17	.942	
DQ3	.77		DQ7	0.77		DQ7	.943	
DQ4	.81		DQ8	0.74		DQ8	.942	
DQ16	.82		DQ10	0.71		DQ10	.942	
EQ1	.83		DQ9	0.7		DQ9	.945	
DQ5	.79	Job $\alpha = .82$	DQ5	0.67		DQ5	.943	
DQ6R	.82		DQ2	0.67		DQ2	.943	
DQ9	.80		DQ19	0.66		DQ19	.943	
DQ13	.81		DQ3	0.66		DQ3	.943	
DQ14	.82		DQ12	0.65		DQ12	.942	
DQ15	.80		EQ1	0.51		EQ1	.945	
DQ17	.78		DQ6R	0.5		DQ11	.942	
DQ19	.78		DQ11	0.5		DQ1	.943	
DQ20	.81		DQ1	0.49		DQ4	.944	
DQ7	.80	Career / Occupation $\alpha = .85$	DQ4	0.4		DQ2	.945	
DQ8	.76		DQ20	0.38		GQ19	.944	
DQ18	.82		EQ4	0.3		GQ20	.945	
DQ10	.86	Organisational ID $\alpha = .87$	GQ19	0.82	WI 2 $\alpha = .87$	GQ17	.944	
DQ11	.85		GQ20	0.77		GQ18	.943	
DQ12	.85		GQ17	0.7		GQ15	.944	
GQ15	.85		GQ18	0.68		GQ16	.946	
GQ16	.87		GQ15	0.62		DQ15	.944	
GQ17	.85		GQ16	0.46		DQ14	.946	
GQ18	.84		DQ15	0.63	WI 3 $\alpha = .74$	DQ16	.944	
GQ19	.85		DQ14	0.56		DQ13	.945	
GQ20	.85		DQ16	0.56		EQ7	.944	
GQ21R	.88		DQ13	0.35		EQ8	.945	
EQ2	.68	Future $\alpha = .72$	EQ2	0.81	WI 4 $\alpha = .78$	EQ2	.460	Future $\alpha = .74$
EQ3	.65		EQ3	0.72		EQ3	.520	
EQ4	.74		EQ8	0.72	WI 5 $\alpha = .82$	EQ5	.700	
EQ5	.58		EQ7	0.67		EQ6	.560	
EQ6	.67		EQ6	0.8	WI 6 $\alpha = .80$			
EQ7	.34	Person – environment fit $\alpha = .60$	EQ5	0.72				
EQ8	.28							
EQ9R	.82							

Key: Boxes shaded in grey denote deleted items or factors

6.5 Antecedents of WI

The subjective and objective antecedents of WI as reported in De Braine (2012) and Bester's (2012) study will be presented in this section. As in the case of the prediction of work engagement, the JD-R model was used (Hakanen and Roodt 2010), but in the case of this research project, job resources and demands were used to predict work-based identity (WI). Job resources (JRs) as predictors of WI are discussed next.

6.5.1 Job Resources as Predictors of Work-Based Identity

The first objective of De Braine's (2012) study was to establish whether a relationship exists between JRs and WI. JRs are '…those physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of a job that either/or (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; and (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development' (Demerouti et al. 2001: 501). In this study use was made of the JR items of the job demands-resources scale (JD-RS) that was developed by Jackson and Rothmann (2005). The JRs included growth opportunities, organisational support and advancement. Task identity (Hackman and Oldham 1975), team climate (Anderson and West 1998) and perceived external prestige (Carmeli et al. 2006) were used as additional JRs outside the traditional JD-RS model, in the prediction of work-based identity. From the JD-RS, growth opportunities included items related to skill variety and opportunities to learn. Organisational support included items related to relationships with supervisors and colleagues, flow of information and communication, role clarity and participation in decision-making. The items covered under advancement included remuneration, career possibilities and training opportunities. Task identity, as defined by Hackman and Oldham (1975: 161) is '…the degree to which the job requires completion of a 'whole' and identifiable piece of work…' Task identity was measured with two items that were adapted from the job diagnostic survey (JDS) by Hackman and Oldham (1975). Team climate is a team's shared perceptions of organisational policies, practices and procedures (Anderson and West 1998). This was measured with an adapted scale by Howard et al. (2005). Perceived external prestige (PEP) refers to '…the employee's personal beliefs about how other people outside the organization such as customers, competitors and suppliers judge its status and prestige' (Carmeli et al. 2006). PEP was measured with an adapted corporate image questionnaire by Riordan et al. (1997). In Table 6.2 the intercorrelations between the different variables of De Braine's (2012) study are provided.

The JR, *growth opportunities,* was found to be positively related to WI ($r=0.51$, $p \leq .001$) with a large effect size. *Organisational support* also positively related to WI ($r=0.51$, $p \leq .001$) with a large effect size. The JR, *advancement,* positively related to WI ($r=0.35$, $p \leq .001$) with a medium effect size. *Task identity* positively

Table 6.2 Intercorrelations of JDs and JRs with WI in De Braine's (2012) study

	M	SD	OL	JI	WFC	GO	OS	Adv	TId	PEP	TC	WI
OL	39.38	7.37	[.78]									
JI	10.24	5.79	−.06**	[.90]								
WFC	16.75	8.44	.42**	−.07**	[.96]							
GO	31.35	8.81	.12**	.31**	−.03	[.84]						
OS	90.38	18.1	−.01	.33**	−.11**	.56**	[.90]					
Adv	18.54	7.47	−.06**	.40**	−.12**	.39**	.37**	[.84]				
TId	9.63	3.28	−.05*	.24**	−.10**	.43**	.42**	.23**	[.89]			
PEP	18.57	7.01	−.03	.33**	−.08**	.30**	.34**	.41**	.22**	[.90]		
TC	28.24	8.39	−.09**	.32**	−.14**	.50**	.69**	.37**	.38**	.39**	[.89]	
WI identity	136.8	29.3	.12**	.26**	-.04*	.51**	.51**	.35**	.31**	.46**	.48**	[.95]

M mean, *SD* standard deviation. Coefficient alphas are presented in brackets along the diagonal. $*p<0.05$; $**p<0.001$; $n=2,429$
Correlations ranging between: $0.10 \le r \le 0.29$ small effect, $0.30 \le r \le 0.49$ medium effect and $0.50 \le r \le 1.00$ large effect
OL Overload, *JI* job insecurity, *WFC* work-family conflict, *GO* growth opportunities, *OS* organisational support, *Adv* advancement, *Tld* task identity, *PEP* perceived external prestige, *TC* team climate, *WI* work-based identity

related to WI ($r=0.301$, $p \leq .001$) with a medium effect size. The JR, *team climate,* also positively related to WI ($r=.48$, $p \leq .001$) with a medium effect size. The JR, *perceived external prestige,* positively related to WI($r=0.46$, $p \leq .001$) with a medium effect size.

Furthermore, in terms of the average mean scores in Table 6.2, the participants experienced higher than average levels of the following job resources: growth opportunities, organisational support, task identity and perceived external prestige. However, the participants experienced below average levels of advancement and team climate. In terms of the mean score of WI, the participants also displayed above average levels of WI.

In order to assess the overall worth of JRs as a predictor of WI in De Braine's (2012) study, all of the above job resources were combined as a predictor of WI. It yielded a strong relationship with WI ($r=0.622$, $p \leq .001$) with a large effect size. Each JR was also tested as individual predictor of WI. The hypotheses that each of the JRs would have a positive relationship with WI were supported. The same hypotheses were tested on a multivariate level. This analysis was conducted using stepwise multiple regression analysis to establish the amount of variance that each JR accounted for in the prediction of work-based identity. Each of the JRs was entered into the regression equation sequentially.

The results indicated that 26 % of the variance in the WI variable was explained by growth opportunities in the first step of the regression analysis. Hereafter, perceived external prestige, organisational support, team climate and advancement were entered into the regression equation. Perceived external prestige and team climate were JRs that fell outside of the traditional JD-R model and they were not part of the JD-RS. They were included as additional JRs. The sixth and last step in the model accounted for 42 % of the variance in WI. Only a small increase in R^2 was obtained when advancement was entered into the regression analysis. Task identity did not enter into the regression analysis.

So, WI as construction of the self that shapes the work roles that individuals are involved in is codetermined by growth opportunities in the job, by perceived external prestige of the employee's organisation, by support provided by the organisation (mostly through the direct manager) and by climate in the work team. This indicates that the JRs required for employees to identify with their work and work organisation are varied and multifaceted. These factors also provide clues for strengthening WI.

6.5.2 Job Demands as Predictors of Work-Based Identity

The second objective of De Braine's (2012) study was to establish if a relationship exists between the job demands and WI. *Job demands* (JDs) refer to '…those physical, social, psychological, or organisational aspects of a job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e. cognitive and emotional) effort on the part of the employee and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs' (Demerouti et al. 2001: 501). Overload and job insecurity were the

job demands used in this study. Both of them were extracted from the JD-RS (Jackson and Rothmann 2005). Work-family conflict was the additional JD that was used. It was measured with a work-family conflict scale that was adapted from Netemeyer et al. (1996).

Overload is regarded as anything that places high attentional demands on an employee (Berry 1998). *Job insecurity* is defined as '…a sense of powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation' (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 1984: 438). *Work-family* conflict is defined as '…a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect' (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985: 77).

It was hypothesised that each of these mentioned JDs would be negatively related to WI. Overload was found to be positively related to WI ($r=0.12$, $p \leq .001$) with a small effect size. Job insecurity was found to be positively related to WI ($r=0.26$, $p \leq .001$) with a small effect size. Work-family conflict is negatively related to WI ($r=-0.04$, $p \leq .05$) with no effect size (refer to Table 7.1). The hypotheses that each of the JDs would have a negative relationship with WI were not supported, except in the case with work-family conflict. Furthermore, in terms of the mean scores, the participants experienced higher than average levels of overload and average levels of work-family conflict and job insecurity.

In order to assess the overall effect of all these JDs as a predictor of WI, they were combined. All the JDs combined yielded a weak relationship with WI ($r=0.17$, $p \leq .001$). The same hypotheses were tested on a multivariate level. Overload was the only and fourth variable to enter into the regression analysis. Job insecurity and work-family conflict did not enter into the multiple regression analysis when used in combination with JRs, despite the fact that significant relationships were reported on a bivariate level. This also means that job insecurity and work-family conflict do not explain any additional variance than those variables already included in the regression equation.

So, WI as construction of the self that shapes the work roles that individuals are involved in is codetermined, but only to a small degree ($\beta=0.10$), by job overload. An explanation for this may be that the participants perceive their respective overload demands rather as job challenges than job hindrances. It may also be that individuals argue that they have to be able to demonstrate that they can cope with extra role responsibilities that are part of their WI. According to Van den Broeck et al. (2010), when individuals perceive a job demand as a job challenge this stimulates individuals to give more effort as they execute their work tasks in the midst of work difficulties or challenges. WI is therefore not only shaped by resources but also by demands.

6.5.3 *JDs as Mediator or Moderator of the JRs: WI Relationship*

The third objective of De Braine's (2012) study was to establish if JDs mediated the relationship between JRs and WI. It was hypothesised that JDs would mediate the said relationship. The aim was to investigate how JDs would affect the positive relationship that WI has with JRs. The results indicated that there was no

statistically significant main effect for JDs $F(1, 2429) = .739$; $p = .390$, when predicting WI. It was shown in the previous section that JDs had a weak relationship with WI. There was a statistically significant main effect for JRs, $F(1, 2429) = 53.784$; $p < .001$, when predicting WI. However, the interaction effect between JDs and JRs was not statistically significant, $F(1, 2429) = .150$; $p = .699$. As a result, no mediation has taken place as the independent variable JRs did not interact and had no effect on the mediator JDs. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), if this occurs, then there is no evidence of mediation.

In De Braine's (2012) study, the possible moderating effects of JDs on the relationship of JRs and WI were also assessed in a two-step regression model. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant effect for JRs $F(1, 2428) = 1{,}580.419$; $p \leq .000$, when predicting WI in the first step. There was a statistically significant main effect for JRs, $F(1, 2428) = 545.457$; $p \leq .000$, when predicting WI in the second step, when the interaction term JRs*JDs were entered into the regression. But an inspection of the unstandardised coefficients shows that only JRs contributed to the second step. The inclusion of JDs $t(2428) = .474$, $p = .636$, and the interaction JRs*JDs $t(2428) = .765$, $p = .444$, did not make a meaningful contribution in the second step. So in this instance, JDs did not serve as a moderator of the relationship between JRs and WI.

In the Bester (2012) study, it was also postulated that JDs would act as a moderator between JRs and WI. However, the procedure as described in the previous paragraph was not followed in the Bester study. A structural equation model (refer to Chap. 5) has shown that there was a significant path between JRs and JDs in the prediction of WI. So, the JDs (breach of psychological contract and work-family conflict) in Bester's study served to strengthen the relationship that JRs have with WI, contrary to the expectation that JDs would reduce the effect that JRs had on WI. Once again, this may allude to the fact that sometimes JDs are seen as job challenges rather than job hindrances or the individuals may have tended towards making better use of JRs (in this instance, remuneration perceptions, task resources, need for organisational identity and organisation reputation) at their disposal to handle the respective JDs better, thus strengthening their WIs.

6.5.4 Biographical Variables as Moderators in the Prediction of WI

The fourth objective of De Braine's (2012) study was to establish if biographical variables moderated the relationship between JDs and JRs when predicting WI. Only significant moderation results are reported below.

6.5.4.1 Race

Four race groups participated in the study, namely, Black, White, Coloured and Asian/Indian. Race did not moderate all of the JRs and JDs. It only moderated the respective relationships that WI had with job insecurity, work-family conflict, advancement, task identity and perceived external prestige.

The interaction effect between *job insecurity* and race was statistically significant, $F(3, 2421) = 2.937$; $p = .03$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .004). WI was the weakest for the White group in comparison to the Black, Coloured and Asian/Indian groups in terms of job insecurity. The White participants may be feeling less secure about their jobs due to affirmative action measures that are in place within the organisation. South African organisations are required to achieve certain numeric goals in terms of equitable representation of all race groups according to the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa 1998). This sense of job insecurity may be affecting their WI.

The interaction effect between *work-family conflict* (WFC) and race was statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(3, 2421) = 2.71$; $p = .04$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .003). All the race groups WI decreased with an increase in WFC, with the exception of the Asian/Indian group. The White group presented the weakest WI in relation to WFC when predicting WI compared to the Asian/Indian group who presented the WI least affected by WFC when predicting WI. This is an interesting finding as one may assume that all race groups would have a lowered WI by the experience of work-family conflict. This could be the result of different cultural perceptions across race groups regarding how work and family life is seen in relation each other. Amongst the Asian/Indian group, work and family may be seen as almost overlapping. This then may influence the way that they deal with any interrole conflict as a result of any WFC experienced, thus affecting their levels of WI.

There was a statistically significant interaction effect between *advancement*, race and WI, $F(3, 2421) = 3.69$; $p \leq .01$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .005). The White race group WI was weaker in comparison to the other race groups in terms of advancement opportunities. The Asian/Indian race group initially displayed a stronger WI than the Black race group, but as advancement levels increased, so did the Black group's WI become stronger than the Asian/Indian group. This result may be due to the implementation of affirmative action policies as according to the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa 1998) that South African companies have to adhere to. Through this Act, employers are required to achieve equity in the workplace by implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages experienced by the designated groups (African, Indians/Asians, Coloureds, women and disabled people) as a result of the previous apartheid regime. The designated groups are then given preferential treatment in respect of retention, development and other opportunities over White employees. According to the Act, this is done to ensure equitable representation of all race groups in all occupational categories and levels in the South African workforce. This may be the reason to why the White participants experienced weaker identification with their work in relation to advancement opportunities.

The interaction effect between *task identity* and race was also statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(3, 2421) = 3.94$; $p = .008$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .005). The WI of the Black group was the strongest in comparison to the other race groups and the White group displayed the weakest WI. The White participants may have experienced reduced involvement in their job, as a result of

lowered task identity. This may be a result of affirmative action measures that have influenced what employees are doing in this organisation. Task identity is also known to predict job involvement which is an indicator of work identity. This may provide an explanation for their weaker WI.

The interaction effect between *perceived external prestige (PEP)* and race was statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(3, 2421) = 5.77$; $p \leq .001$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .007). The Asian/Indian race group displayed the strongest WI in terms of PEP. The Coloured group displayed the weakest levels of WI, when PEP increased. Based on this result, it is surmised that the Asian/Indian group may feel that their self-status or self-image amongst their own race group is enhanced by working for this organisation, as this organisation may be perceived as a good or a 'high-status' organisation to work for. Thus, their work identity may be strengthened through the enhancement of their self-image or social status by working for this organisation.

6.5.4.2 Gender

Gender only moderated the relationship that growth opportunities had with work-based identity. The interaction effect between gender and *growth opportunities* was statistically significant, $F(1, 2425) = 5.114$; $p = .02$. The interaction plot showed that the females WI were stronger than the males, but as growth opportunities increased, the male's WI levels surpassed the female's WI. The males in this regard are perhaps making more use of the growth opportunities in organisation than the females do, or males perceive these opportunities more relevant and appropriate for them.

6.5.5 Demographical Variables as Moderators in the Prediction of WI

The fifth objective of De Braine's (2012) study was to establish if the demographical variables marital status, job level, membership of a medical fund and work region moderated the relationship between JDs and JRs when predicting WI.

6.5.5.1 Marital Status

Marital status moderated the respective relationships that overload, job insecurity and growth opportunities had with WI. Marital status was divided into single, married/cohabitating and divorced/separated/widowed. The significant results are reported below:

The interaction effect between marital status and *overload* was statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(2, 2423) = 3.759$; $p = .023$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .003). WI was initially higher for the single group in comparison

to the married/cohabiting and divorced groups, but as overload increased, the WI of the single group decreased. The married participants in the end displayed the strongest levels of WI. This may be attributed to the married employees perhaps having extra support, in the form of spousal support to deal with any with any associated overload demands in their jobs.

The interaction effect between marital status and *job insecurity* proved also to be statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(2, 2423) = 4.222$; $p = .015$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .003). Initially the single group displayed the lowest WI in comparison to the married and divorced participants, but when the levels of job insecurity increased, as according to the interaction plot, the single employees exhibited slightly higher WI than the married employees. Single employees may experience job insecurity not as insurmountable to deal with as married employees, because they may not have a family or spouse that they are responsible for, as in the case of married employees. Although it could be argued that it could be easier for married employees to cope with job insecurity, because they have a spouse to fall back on for financial support.

The interaction effect between marital status and the JR *growth opportunities* was statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(2, 2423) = 4.761$; $p = .009$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .004). The married participants presented a stronger WI than the single and divorced participants. Perhaps the married participants are given more growth opportunities by the organisation, which thus influences them to remain with the organisation because they have to support their families.

6.5.5.2 Job Level

Job level proved to be the most significant moderator. It moderated job insecurity, work-family conflict and all the JRs, except task identity's relationship when predicting WI. There were three job level groups: management, specialist and operational. The managerial employees are at a higher hierarchical level within the organisation than the specialist and operational employees.

The interaction effect between job level and *job insecurity* was statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(2, 2423) = 7.345$; $p \leq .001$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .006). It was observed that the management employees exhibited the stronger WI in comparison to the operational and specialist employees. The operational group exhibited higher levels of WI than the specialist group. It is assumed that most organisations hold less management positions that those positions lower down the hierarchical chain. So, these managerial employees who exhibit higher levels of WI than the other employees perhaps feel less threatened of losing their jobs than other employees, thus leading to an enhanced WI.

The interaction effect between job level and *work-family conflict* (WFC) was statistically significant in predicting WI, $F(2, 2423) = 8.614$; $p \leq .001$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .007). The management group displayed stronger WI in relation to WFC than the operational and specialist groups. The operational group was the only group that experienced a decrease in their WI as WFC increased.

The interaction effect between job level and *growth opportunities* in predicting WI was statistically significant, $F(2, 2423) = 3.479$; $p = .031$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .003). In terms of the interaction effect of job level and growth opportunities, the management WI was stronger than that of the specialists and operational workers. This means that growth opportunities had a higher impact on the WI of the managerial staff than for the other two groups. Perhaps WI for the managers for a larger part is driven by the need to excel and grow their careers, whereas WI for the other two groups may consist of just wanting to perform satisfactorily in their jobs.

The interaction effect between job level and *organisational support* was also statistically significant, $F(2, 2423) = 9.377$; $p \leq .001$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .008). The same level of organisational support had a higher impact on the managers' WI than the other two groups. This may be attributed to the managers' WI consisting for a larger part of managing their divisions well, by ensuring that they elicit continuous organisational support. The other groups WI may be more consisting of managing their individual work roles well.

The interaction effect between job level and *advancement* was statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(2, 2423) = 12.773$; $p \leq .001$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .010). The management group displayed higher levels of WI than the operational and specialist workers in terms of similar advancement opportunities. The specialist staff initially presented higher levels of WI than the operational group, but as advancement increased for both groups, the specialist group experienced lower levels of WI than the operational group. Managerial employees already have made some use of the advancement opportunities within the organisation, as they are in management. This may enhance their self-image and thus strengthen their WI.

The interaction effect between job level and *perceived external prestige (PEP)* was statistically significant in the prediction of WI, $F(2, 2423) = 6.354$; $p = .002$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .005). The WI of the managers was stronger than the specialists and operational workers. Initially, the operational workers presented the lowest levels of WI, but as PEP increased, they experienced a stronger WI than that of the specialists. Perhaps WI for managers for a larger part consists of PEP, whereas for the other two groups consists of other work-related components such as task identification.

The interaction effect between job level and *team climate* was statistically significant in predicting WI, $F(2, 2423) = 6.992$; $p \leq .001$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .005). The WI of the management group was the strongest in comparison to the operational and specialist group in terms of team climate. The same level of team climate had a higher impact on the managerial employees than the other two groups. The operational group had initially a lower WI than the specialist group, but as team climate increased for both groups, the operational group WI surpassed the specialist group. The managerial employees WI may consist for a larger part of team-related aspects, such as team leadership, whereas for the other two groups WI, fulfilling their individual role within the team may be more important in WI formation.

6.5.5.3 Membership of a Medical Fund

Membership of a medical fund did not moderate any of the JRs, and moderated only one JD, namely, overload. The interaction effect between medical fund and the JD *overload* was statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(1, 2425) = 7.643$; $p = .006$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .003). Participants who are members of a medical fund exhibited stronger WI in relation to overload. Many South African organisations apportion pay for their employees' medical fund membership. This is regarded as an important benefit for employees, due to the high cost of medical care. Employees may then view this as part of an organisation's support towards their welfare and lessening their burden. This therefore may serve to strengthen their organisational identification, thus enhancing their WI.

6.5.5.4 Work Region

Work region (the geographical region where a person works) had a moderating effect on the respective relationships that work-family conflict, task identity and perceived external prestige had with WI. Participants were grouped according to the region (location) where they were based (Central, Corporate, Eastern, Gauteng Central, Northeastern, Southern and Western).

The interaction effect between region and *work-family conflict* in predicting WI was statistically significant, $F(6, 2425) = 2.583$; $p \leq .01$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .006). The Central region's participants displayed the largest decrease WI in relation to WFC in comparison to the other regions. The Western region displayed the lowest WI. The Central region's employees may be experiencing longer commuting times to and fro from work that may heighten their stress and irritation levels owing to traffic-related problems that may in turn impact their levels of WFC and thus influencing their WI.

The interaction effect between region and *task identity* was statistically significant when predicting WI, $F(6, 2415) = 2.536$; $p \leq .01$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .006). The combination of WI and task identity was stronger for the participants from the Eastern region than participants from the other regions. The Western region participants displayed the weakest WI levels. WI for the Eastern region employees perhaps consists of to a larger part task identity, whereas for the other groups, WI consists of other work-related aspects besides the tasks that they do.

The interaction effect between region and *perceived external prestige* was statistically significant, F(6, 2415) = 2.622; $p \leq .01$, with a small effect size (partial eta squared = .006). The interaction of region and PEP had a higher impact on the WI of the Northeastern region in comparison to the other regions. Perhaps the Northeastern employees' WI consists to a larger part of PEP than the other regions. The other regions WI may consist of other work-related dimensions such as the type of work

that they do. The Northeastern region of the organisation is also based in a province where there are not many large organisations that provide employment. So, perhaps to work for this large South African ICT sector company in this region is regarded as a privilege and as an indication of high social status. This may be the reason why this region's employees display the strongest WI in terms of perceived external prestige.

In the next section of this chapter, the consequences of WI will be discussed.

6.6 Consequences of Work-Based Identity

The subjective and objective consequences of work-based identity (WI) as reported in the Bothma (2011) study will be presented in the next section.

6.6.1 Work-Based Identity Relationships with the Subjective Consequences

The first objective of Bothma's (2011) study was to determine the relationships between WI and the subjective consequences (for ease of reference, abbreviations are used as in Table 6.3), namely, personal alienation, helping behaviour, work engagement and the three burnout dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment. Turnover intentions and task performance were the objective outcome variables. The intercorrelations between the different variables are provided in Table 6.3.

It was found that there are statistically significant negative relationships between WI and personal alienation ($r=-0.53$; $p<0.01$), WI and emotional exhaustion ($r=-0.39$; $p<0.01$) WI and depersonalisation ($r=-0.23$; $p<0.01$), and reduced personal accomplishment ($r=-0.35$; $p<0.01$). Statistically significant positive relationships were found between WI and helping behaviours ($r=0.37$; $p<0.01$) and WI and work engagement ($r=0.71$; $p<0.01$). Increased levels of WI will therefore result in reduced levels of the negatively correlated subjective outcomes but also in increased levels of the positively correlated subjective outcomes. According to the principles of force field analysis, a work context will become more conducive to exhibiting engaging work behaviours (or more likely to elicit engaging behaviours) if positive aspects (driving forces) are enhanced and negative aspects (restraining forces) are reduced. Interventions to promote WI can therefore be used to effectively manage desired subjective consequences. Caution should however be taken to consider the possible mediation effects of subjective consequences on the WI – objective consequences relationships. Such possible mediation effects are discussed in a section further down.

Table 6.3 Intercorrelations matrix (Pearson correlations) of the different constructs

	M	SD	WI	AL	H-OCB	PA	EE	DP	WE	TI	TP
WI	136.84	29.3	[0.95]								
AL	20.76	7.02	−.53^{++}	[0.81]							
H-OCB	49.36	8.66	.37^{++}	−.13^{++}	[0.86]						
PA	29.15	7.55	−.35^{++}	.22^{++}	−.29^{++}	[0.71]					
EE	19.82	11.6	−.39^{++}	.54^{++}	−.10^{++}	.04^{+}	[0.89]				
DP	8.49	6.34	−.23^{++}	.28^{++}	−.08^{++}	.05^{+}	.60^{++}	[0.70]			
WE	24.13	6.99	.71^{++}	−.59^{++}	.35^{++}	−.42^{++}	−.41^{++}	−.23^{++}	[0.91]		
TI	25.21	8.14	−.56^{++}	.73^{++}	−.12^{++}	.20^{++}	.58^{++}	.31^{++}	−.58^{++}	[0.80]	
TP	51.75	8.79	.08^{++}	−.13^{++}	.13^{++}	−.08^{++}	−.07^{++}	−.05^{+}	.09^{++}	−.13^{++}	[0.94]

AL personal alienation, *H-OCB* helping behaviour, *WE* work engagement, *EE* emotional exhaustion, *DP* depersonalisation, *PA* reduced personal accomplishment, *TI* turnover intentions, *TP* task performance

M = mean, SD = standard deviation. Coefficient alphas are presented in brackets along the diagonal. $^{+}p < 0.05$; $^{++}p < 0.001$; $n = 2{,}429$

Correlations ranging between: $0.10 \leq r \leq 0.29$ small effect; $0.30 \leq r \leq 0.49$ medium effect and $0.50 \leq r \leq 1.00$ large effect

6.6.2 *Work-Based Identity Relationships with the Objective Consequences*

The second objective of Bothma's (2011) study was to determine the relationship between WI and the objective consequences turnover intention and task performance.

It was found that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between WI and turnover intention ($r = -0.56$; $p < 0.01$) as well as a statistically significant but weak positive relationship between WI and task performance ($r = 0.08$; $p < 0.01$). Based on this finding, it is postulated that building a stronger WI amongst scarce talent (and thereby reducing turnover and organisational memory loss) is viewed as a more cost-effective strategy compared to trying to enhance task performance. Stated differently, this means that the monetary benefits of cost savings associated with reduced turnover is relatively higher than the yield of monetary benefits by improving task performance when WI levels are improved. This finding implies that WI has a hygienic effect as it does not increase positive consequences (task performance) but it decreases negative consequences (turnover intentions).

6.7 Subjective Consequences' Mediation Effect

The third objective of Bothma's (2011) study was to determine the possible mediating effect the subjective consequences (personal alienation, helping behaviour, work engagement and the three burnout dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment) may have on the relationship between work-based identity and the objective consequences turnover intention and task performance.

Mediation occurs when a third variable (mediator) explains (completely or only partially) the relationship between a predictor (independent variable) and an outcome variable (dependent variable) (Baron and Kenny 1986). A mediating variable is one which 'specifies how (or the mechanism by which) a given effect occurs' between an independent variable (predictor) and a dependent variable (outcome) (Holmbeck 1997: 599). Bennett (2000) stated that mediators 'provide additional information about how or why two variables are strongly associated' (p. 415). The mediation process can be graphically depicted as in Fig. 6.1.

Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-causal step method, performed with four multiple regression equations, was used to establish if the mediator variables mediate the relationship between a predictor variable (independent variable) and outcome variable (dependent variable). The four-step method:

1. Regression Equation 1: Establish the relationship between the predictor and the outcome variable. This is to determine if the predictor predicts the outcome variable (path c – direct effect).

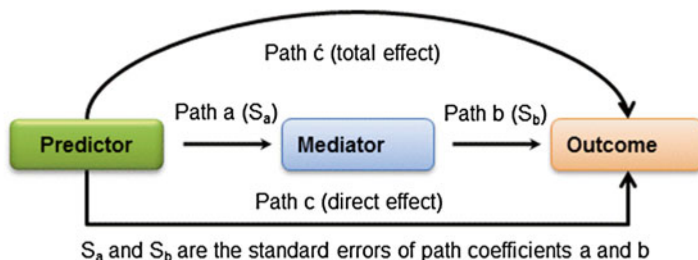

Fig. 6.1 An illustration of mediation (Adapted from Frazier et al. 2004)

2. Regression Equation 2: Establish the relationship between the predictor and the mediator variable. This is to determine if the predictor predicts the mediator variable (path a).
3. Regression Equation 3: Establish the relationship between the mediator variable and the outcome variable. This is to determine if the mediator variable predicts the outcome variable (path b).
4. Regression Equation 4: Recompute path c while controlling for the mediator (path ć). A decrease of the strength of the relationship between the predictor variable and outcome variable compared with Regression Equation 1 would be indicative of mediation (compare path c, direct effect with path ć, mediated effect).

The significance of the mediated effect was tested through computing the product of paths *a* and *b* and dividing it by the standard error term described by Baron and Kenny (1986). The standard error term used is the square root of $b^2sa^2 + a^2sb^2 + sa^2sb^2$, where *a* and *b* are unstandardised regression coefficients and *sa* and *sb* are their standard errors (Baron and Kenny 1986; Frazier et al. 2004). The calculated *Z*-score of the mediated effect confirms if the mediation effect is significant. Full mediation occurs when the mediator accounts for 100 % of the total effect. Partial mediation occurs when the predictor-outcome relationship becomes weaker but still is significant after inclusion of the mediator in the model (Baron and Kenny 1986; Bennett 2000; Frazier et al. 2004; Holmbeck 1997). The mediation effects of the four subjective consequence variables will be provided in Table 6.3.

6.7.1 Subjective Consequences as Possible Mediators

Table 6.4 provides a summary of the mediating effects of the subjective consequences between either WI and turnover intentions (TI) or WI and task performance (TP).

Table 6.4 A summary of mediating variable effects on the objective outcomes

Mediating variable	Path c	Path ć	Mediation effect	% mediation explained	Standard error term	*Z*-score	*p* of *Z*
Personal alienation							
Between WI and TI	–0.75	–0.29	–0.46	61.25	.018	25.0596	≤0.001
Between WI and TP	.08	.01	.068	88.57	.014	4.998	≤0.001
Helping behaviours							
Between WI and TI	–	–	–	–	–	–	ns
Between WI and TP	.08	.05	.0318	41.38	.0083	3.833	≤0.001
Emotion exhaustion							
Between WI and TI	–0.75	–0.54	–0.212	28.44	.0132	–16.024	≤0.001
Between WI and TP	–	–	–	–	–	–	ns
Depersonalisation							
Between WI and TI	–0.75	–0.66	–0.85	11.44	.0088	–9.6995	≤0.001
Between WI and TP	.08	.06	.013	16.88	.0056	2.3087	≤0.001
Reduced personal accomplishment							
Between WI and TI	–	–	–	–	–	–	ns
Between WI and TP	.08	.06	.02	26.93	.0076	2.7174	≤0.001
Work engagement							
Between WI and TI	–0.75	–0.39	–0.36	47.76	.0229	–15.5876	≤0.001
Between WI and TP	–	–	–	–	–	–	ns

ns nonsignificant

It is evident from Table 6.4 that no full mediation effects were detected. The obtained partial mediation effects (ranging between 11 and 88 %) will be further discussed according to the listed mediator variables:

Personal alienation as a mediator. The data supports the hypothesis that personal alienation partially mediates the relationship between WI and turnover intention. This finding therefore suggests that higher WI reduces personal alienation that will result in lower levels of turnover or vice versa in the case of lower WI.

The data supports the hypothesis that personal alienation partially mediates the relationship between WI and task performance. In a same line of argumentation,

these findings suggest that higher WI reduces personal alienation that will result in higher levels of task performance or vice versa in the case of lower WI.

Helping behaviours as a mediator. It was found that helping behaviours did not mediate the relationship between WI and turnover intentions.

The data supports the hypothesis that helping behaviours partially mediate the relationship between WI and task performance. This finding suggests that higher WI enhances helping behaviours that will result in elevated task performance levels or vice versa in the case of lower WI.

Emotional exhaustion (a dimension of burnout) as a mediator. The data supports the hypothesis that emotional exhaustion partially mediates the relationship between WI and turnover intention. This finding suggests that higher WI reduces emotional exhaustion that will result in lower turnover intention levels or vice versa in the case of lower WI.

It was found that emotional exhaustion did not mediate the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

Depersonalisation (a dimension of burnout) as a mediator. The data supports the hypothesis that depersonalisation partially mediates the relationship between WI and turnover intention. In a similar vein this finding suggests that higher WI reduces depersonalisation that will result in lower turnover intention levels or vice versa in the case of lower WI.

The data supports the hypothesis that depersonalisation partially mediates the relationship between WI and task performance. This finding suggests that higher WI reduces depersonalisation that will result in higher task performance levels or vice versa in the case of lower WI.

Reduced personal accomplishment (a dimension of burnout) as a mediator. It was found that reduced personal accomplishment did not mediate the relationship between WI and turnover intention.

The data supports the hypothesis that reduced personal accomplishment partially mediates the relationship between WI and task performance. This finding suggests that higher WI enhances personal accomplishment (absorption) that will result in higher task performance levels or vice versa in the case of lower WI.

Work engagement as a mediator. The data supports the hypothesis that work engagement partially mediates the relationship between WI and turnover intention. This finding suggests that higher WI enhances work engagement that will result in lower levels of turnover intention or vice versa in the case of lower WI.

It was found that work engagement did not mediate the relationship between WI and task performance.

Overall, these findings suggest that by increasing WI in combination with decreasing burnout and personal alienation, the turnover intentions levels can be reduced and/or the task performance levels can be improved. In a similar line it is argued that if by increasing WI in combination with helping behaviours and work engagement, this will also reduce turnover intentions and/or improve task performance levels. It therefore seems that increased levels of WI reduce burnout and personal alienation levels, which in turn will improve task performance levels or

reduces actual turnover. A similar line of argumentation is that increased levels of WI enhance work engagement and helping behaviour levels which in turn will improve task performance levels and reduce actual turnover.

6.8 Work-Based Identity Predicting Turnover Intentions and Task Performance

The fourth objective of Bothma's (2011) study was to determine if the selected predictors (including WI with the subjective consequences personal alienation, helping behaviour, work engagement and the burnout dimensions emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment) could predict the objective consequence turnover intentions.

Hierarchical, stepwise regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that WI can be used to predict turnover intention. A regression model was generated for turnover intention using the variable WI with other predictor variables as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

There was a strong positive correlation between the observed and predicted values of turnover intentions ($R=0.79$). The WI regression model explained 62 % of the variation in turnover intentions ($R^2=0.62$). Both WI and WE have a weak negative association with turnover intentions ($\beta=-0.04$), while personal alienation (AL) has the strongest association with turnover intentions ($\beta=0.54$), followed by emotional exhaustion (EE) ($\beta=0.15$). The insignificant associations between reduced personal accomplishment ($p=0.55$) and depersonalisation ($p=0.58$) and turnover intentions were removed from the equation. The simplified regression equation for turnover intention (TI) is as follows:

$$\text{TI} = 19.41 + 0.54[\text{AL}] + 0.15[\text{EE}] - 0.04[\text{WI}] - 0.04[\text{WE}]$$

Based on the above results, it was found that WI is a predictor of turnover intention. Despite the strong relationships between alienation and emotional exhaustion in relation to turnover intentions, WI still emerged as a significant predictor of turnover intentions.

The finding that WI could predict turnover intention was also confirmed in the Bester (2012) study. The regression showed that WI had a significant impact on turnover intentions, ($F(637)=79.34$ ($p<.001$), $R^2=.11$, adj$R^2=.11$, $t=-8.99$, $p\leq.001$). This result shows that it can be confidently expected that turnover intentions will decrease as WI grows.

The fifth objective of Bothma's (2011) study was to determine the ability of the selected predictors (including WI with the subjective consequences personal alienation, helping behaviour, work engagement and the burnout dimensions emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment) and to predict the objective outcome task performance (TP).

Hierarchical, stepwise regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis that WI can be used to predict task performance. A regression model was generated for task performance using the variable WI with the other predictor variables as described in the paragraph above.

There is a weak positive correlation between the observed and predicted values of task performance ($R=0.17$). The WI regression model explained only 3 % of the variation in task performance ($R^2=0.03$). Personal alienation had a slightly weaker association with task performance ($\beta=-0.14$), followed by a positive association with helping behaviours ($\beta=0.15$). The association between the other variables and task performance was insignificant and removed from the equation. The combined regression equation for task performance (TP) can therefore be depicted as follows:

$$\text{TP} = 48.08 - 0.14\left[\text{AL}\right] + 0.15\left[\text{H-OCB}\right]$$

Based on the above results, it was found that WI is not a predictor of task performance. It is concluded that this insignificant relationship between WI and task performance could possibly be attributed to a skewed task performance measure. However, in the study of Ewinyu (2012) on the same dataset, a skewness correction on the task performance measure indicated no change in the relationship between these two mentioned variables.

6.9 Moderating Effects on Prediction of Turnover Intentions and Task Performance

The sixth objective of Bothma's (2011) study was to determine which of the selected biographical variables (age, gender and race) and demographical variables (job tenure, education, region, marital status and job level) moderate the relationship between the predictors (including WI and selected subjective consequences) and turnover intention. All these variables are classified as categorical variables with no value limit, meaning these variables are divided into many subgroups.

The results of the eight sub-hypotheses tested indicate that none of the selected biographical variables (age, gender and race) and demographical variables (job tenure, education, region, marital status and job level) moderate the relationship between WI when predicting turnover intention.

In the Bester (2012) study only education level and nationality groups were moderators in the structural equation model (these results are presented later in more detail in Chap. 7).

The seventh objective of Bothma's (2011) study was to determine which of the selected biographical variables (age, gender and race) and demographical variables (job tenure, education, region, marital status and job level) moderate the relationship between the predictors (including WI and selected subjective consequences)

and task performance. All these variables are classified as categorical variables with no value limit, meaning these variables are divided into many subgroups.

A two-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of work-based identity and education on task performance. Participants were divided into four groups based on their education: ((1) grade 12 or less, (2) post-school certificate/diploma, (3) national diploma/national higher diploma, (4) bachelor's degree or equivalent or higher). The result of the test for a moderating effect between WI and education on task performance was statistically significant, (F (342, 1,774) = 1.169; p = 0.027) with a small effect size (partial eta squared = 0.03). The results suggest that there is a moderating interaction between WI and education level in the prediction of task performance in that employees with qualifications of a National Diploma/National Higher Diploma showed higher WI levels relative to their task performance scores compared to employees in other qualification categories. The ICT sector company is heavily reliant on technically qualified staff (employees with National Diploma/National Higher Diploma) and the organisation is taking extra measures to retain this scarce talent category to retain or enhance performance levels. This may explain the higher work identification levels in this category. WI and education individually have no significant relationships with task performance. The data support the hypothesis that education moderates the relationship between WI and task performance.

The results of the other seven sub-hypotheses tested indicated that none of the selected biographical variables (age, gender and race) and demographical variables (job tenure, region, marital status and job level) moderate the relationship between work-based identity and task performance.

6.10 Conclusions and Implications for Practitioners

The chapter consists of two sections. The first section reports on the empirical results pertaining to the antecedents of WI. The second section reports on the consequences of WI. The most important conclusions and recommendations are listed below:

1. The De Braine study has shown by means of multiple regression analyses that growth opportunities, perceived external prestige, organisational support, team climate and advancement were the JRs that significantly predicted WI. Based on these findings it becomes evident that opportunities for personal development and growth, career advancement and external prestige co-determine and reflect a seemingly ambitious WI. It seems that organisational support and a conducive team climate are preconditions for realising an optimal functioning WI. The only JD that contributed to WI is overload which is probably more likely to be a job challenge (a structural condition in the SA work context) rather than a job hindrance. SA workers seem to prefer a job that poses some challenge.

2. Bester in his study used push and pull factors outside the traditional JD-R context in his structural equation model. In this case pull factors such as remuneration perceptions, task resources, need for organisational identity and organisational reputation and push factors breach of psychological contract and work-family conflict were significant predictors of WI. This finding shows that other push and pull factors outside the traditional JD-R model may still serve as important co-determinants of WI as they are explaining a significant amount of variance in WE and turnover intention.
3. Findings of both the De Braine and Bester studies indicate that WI is co-determined by factors inside and outside the traditional JD-R model. If these JRs or pull factors are enhanced, the levels of WI can be improved, or alternatively if the JDs or push factors are reduced, WI can also be enhanced. A word of caution here, there may be a range of possible interactions between the different JRs and JDs that may relate to WI. These relationships should not be interpreted in a linear cause-and-effect style only. These relationships may be much more complex.
4. WI development is however not solely dependent on JRs and JDs inside the traditional JD-R model but also on other push and pull factors that contribute to the codetermination of WI. The explanation of WI should therefore not only be restricted to JRs and JDs in the JD-R model.
5. It was also confirmed by the Bester study that there were significant interaction effects between the JDs and the JRs where the JRs acted as buffers for the JDs when explaining WI. This study was conducted in the UAE and may be a context specific finding. However, in the SA context De Braine found no moderation effects between the JDs and the JRs in the prediction of WI. An explanation may be that in the latter case the JDs can be viewed as challenges or that the ICT company where the study was conducted was well resourced (that there were few demands).
6. Some significant moderation effects were reported in both the Bester and the De Braine studies. In the Bester study it was found that education levels and nationality groups (or culture groups) were significantly moderating paths in the structural equation model. In the De Braine study it was also found that gender in relation to growth opportunities and race (in relation to task identity, perceived external prestige, job insecurity and work-family conflict) moderated the prediction model.
7. In the case of gender, it was found that males' WI became stronger as growth opportunities have grown. In the case of race, it was evident that Whites' WI was the weakest in relation to the mentioned JRs and JDs. This is a disturbing finding which shows that the White group probably alienated from the work context and the work organisation, hence the high negative correlation between WI and personal alienation (the inability of the work context to satisfy salient needs). Personal alienation is also a significant predictor of turnover in this study. This finding can most probably be attributed to Broad-based, Black Economic Empowerment (Affirmative Action) legislation which introduced a basis for systematic (reversed) discrimination against Whites.

8. With reference to the second section of the chapter, the Bothma study found that WI significantly relates to subjective consequences (personal alienation, burnout, helping behaviours and work engagement) and to objective consequences (task performance and turnover intentions). In the latter case, turnover intentions were used as a proxy for actual turnover. In view of these findings, WI can be used to reduce the negative effects of personal alienation and burnout or to enhance the positive effects of work engagement and helping behaviours; altogether a more constructive and conducive environment to work in.
9. The study also reported significant mediation effects by subjective consequences between WI and the objective consequences (task performance and turnover intentions). In this case it was found that WI either reduced burnout and personal alienation levels or enhanced helping behaviours and work engagement when explaining task performance and turnover intentions. In practice this means that higher WI would result in reduced turnover and improved task performance levels. Significantly reduced turnover has possibly clear cost advantages above slightly improved task performance benefits.
10. Only education level was found to be a moderator in the Bothma study where the category with a National Diploma or a Higher National Diploma has shown significant relations with WI in the prediction of task performance. In the Bester study both education level and nationality moderated paths in the structural equation model.

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Part III
Testing for Causality

Against the backdrop of the previous chapter, the next chapter in this part reports on the testing of a WI model within the framework of a structural equation model. The first part of this chapter reports on the development and the testing of the SEM. The second part then reports on moderation effects of selected biographical variables that have a significant impact on paths in the model.

Chapter 7
Work-Based Identity Model Testing

Francois Bester, Anita Bosch, and Matthijs Bal

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter only briefly explained how the WI construct was conceptualised and then in more detail how it was operationalised. The core of WI constitutes the different work-related foci that individuals identify within their workplace.

The WI measure was used in an exploratory way as a criterion in the De Braine (2012) study and as a predictor in the Bothma (2011) study. These two exploratory studies established both the construct-descriptive as well as the criterion-predictive validity of the scale. Furthermore, these two studies also identified a range of possible WI causes and consequences.

With these two validities established, in the third study (Bester 2012), the three subscales of the WI construct, that were extracted by means of a PCA, were then subsequently used in an SEM where both antecedents and outcomes were specified in the model. In the second part of the chapter, possible moderation effects of biographical variables were further explored on paths in the model. The Bester (2012) study was conducted in a cross section of a number of organisations in the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) thereby conforming to the suggestion by Hinkin (1998) to conduct such a confirmatory study in a different context. A non-random sample of 1,131 questionnaires send out to these 13 organisations generated 644 complete responses. Some of the research participants in this case were not all

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Emirati citizens, but from different nationalities and regions working as contractors in the UAE. The research participants therefore represent a range of different nationalities.

7.2 A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Approach by Means of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

The overall purpose of Bester's (2012) study was to construct a WI model in multicultural work settings. As model construction was the aim of his study (rather than the exploration of model predictability), the relationships and paths explored in SEM remained close to the identified theoretical relationships. Two hypotheses were tested using SEM. The first related to covariance structure in the research model, and the second dealt with the effect of the moderator variables on the model. The results of the analysis of models fit and a multigroup moderation test are presented in this section (Bester 2012).

7.2.1 The Three-Dimensional Structure of Work-Based Identity

Bester (2012) initially followed an EFA route with a principal component analysis (PCA) where a 13-factor solution was forced in order to establish whether the different scales used in the study emerged as distinct constructs. Following this procedure the WI items emerged in three distinct dimensions, namely, work centrality ($\alpha = .92$), person–organisation fit ($\alpha = .87$), and value congruence ($\alpha = .77$) (refer to Appendix A for viewing the item content of these three dimensions).

The first component, *WI work centrality*, is an established construct and was recognised as a source for the WI questionnaire (Bothma et al. 2010; De Braine and Roodt 2011). Work centrality has been defined as a person's beliefs about the '… degree of importance that work plays' in his or her life (Paullay et al. 1994: 790). Work centrality was also recognised as the opposite of work alienation (Kanungo 1982; Pryor and Davies 1989). The detection of this component is therefore a confirmation of previous research that recognised work centrality as a form of work-based identification (Lawler and Hall 1970; Pryor and Davies 1989).

The second component, *WI person-organisation fit*, is also a recognised concept that was used as a source for the WI survey. Person–organisation fit has been defined as the perceptions that individuals have of the similarity between themselves and an organisation (Piasentin and Chapman 2007). According to Kristof (1996), models of person–organisation fit emphasise practical perspectives. This leaves the specific aspect of the person or the organisation that is responsible for this fit unspecified – sometimes to the detriment of the concept itself. However, rather than being a

jumbled concept, there is a substantial theoretical support for the empirical evidence that person–organisation fit is a facet of WI rather than a separate construct.

The theme of the third component, named *WI value congruence*, refers to equivalence in personal values and workplace values. In this sense, value congruence is distinct from person–organisational fit because the former isolates values as the locus of the congruence, while the latter does not. Kristof (1996) identified the error that some authors do not distinguish between person–*organisation* fit and person–*culture* fit. The finding of a value congruence component of WI shows that this is an important distinction. Indeed, O'Reilly et al. (1991) found this distinction in their research of person–organisation fit and defined it as the congruence between individual and organisational values. There is, therefore, support for value congruence as a facet of WI in the literature related to person–organisation fit. Other previous research provides more evidence of the likelihood of value congruence as a facet of WI. Values were recognised as a source for identification at work by Cheney (1983). Studies of organisational identification also recognised that matching values were a source of identity at workplaces (e.g. Dutton et al. 1994). The opposite was also found; the absence of value congruence had negative effects on identification at work.

As a result of these EFA findings, the three-component model of WI is used in the rest of the SEM analysis of Bester's (2012) results.

7.2.2 A Covariance Model

The SEM process proceeded through five stages, namely, model specification, model identification, model estimation, model testing, and model modification (Bester 2012).

7.2.2.1 Model Specification

Following the review of previous studies, the model presented in Fig. 5.1 was specified. This diagram shows that the model followed the example of the JD-R model. According to the guidelines of Hair et al. (1998), all measured items were allowed to load on only one construct each. Four observed variables were associated with job resources, and two observed variables were associated with job demands.

All the other constructs were allowed to correlate with each other. A recursive model was envisaged whereby the causal effects between the latent variables would be unidirectional and the disturbances (these are unknown causes – variables that were not included in the model) were uncorrelated. Specification errors would obviously have led to a poor fit between the model and the data, and it would have required more model modifications to attempt corrections. However, for completeness sake, this was the model that was specified prior to model identification (which included the CFA). This specified model included three observed variables that

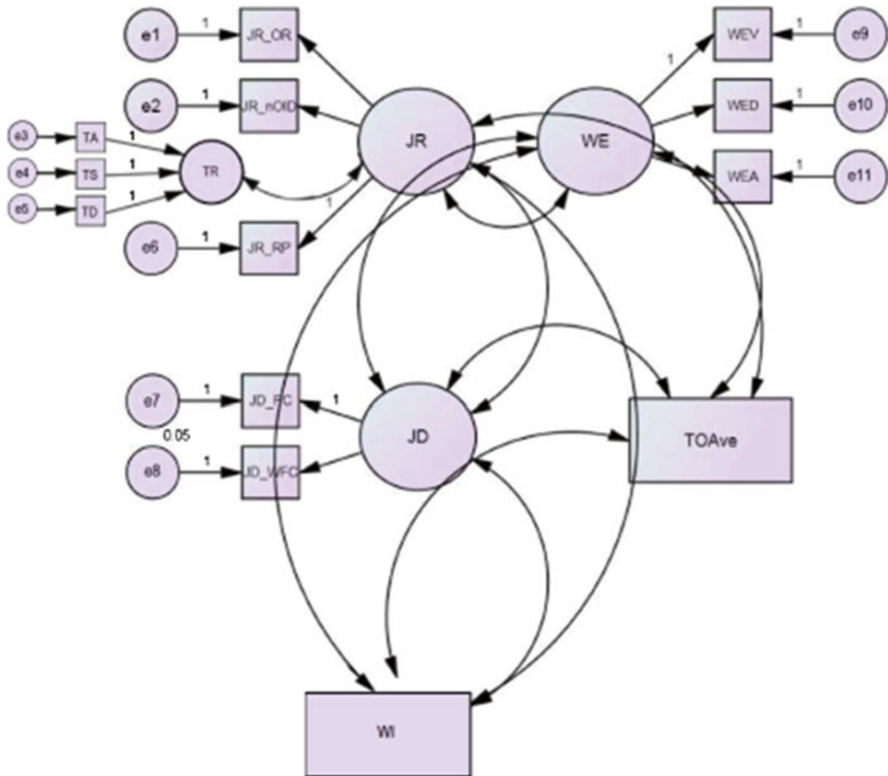

Fig. 7.1 The specified covariance model

specified work engagement, as well as three observed variables that specified task resources. Based upon available literature, WI was originally specified as a single-factor construct as presented in Fig. 7.1.

7.2.2.2 Model Identification

Model identification consists of two parts, namely, model measurement and a path model.

Model Measurement

The measurement model was established by conducting a CFA. This was the essence of the measurement model identification stage. The CFA confirmed that three factors were uniquely explained by independent clusters of observed variables.

Other factors were not confirmed as some of the observed variables associated with these factors were not unique (i.e. cross-loading between factors occurred). Applying an EFA procedure eliminated those observed variables that did not meet the decision rules for factor extraction. These removals then enabled optimum factor extraction from the observable variables that did meet the criteria. This also changed the specified model. As WI was found to be a three-factor structure but work engagement was not, the model had to be respecified. The respecified model is presented in Fig. 7.2.

This changed the number of exogenous variables in the model to 11. The model remained overidentified (37 degrees of freedom) but one of the latent variables, job demands (marked JD in the model), was underidentified. One of the error variables, e6, associated with this parameter was constrained to a low impact, 0.05.

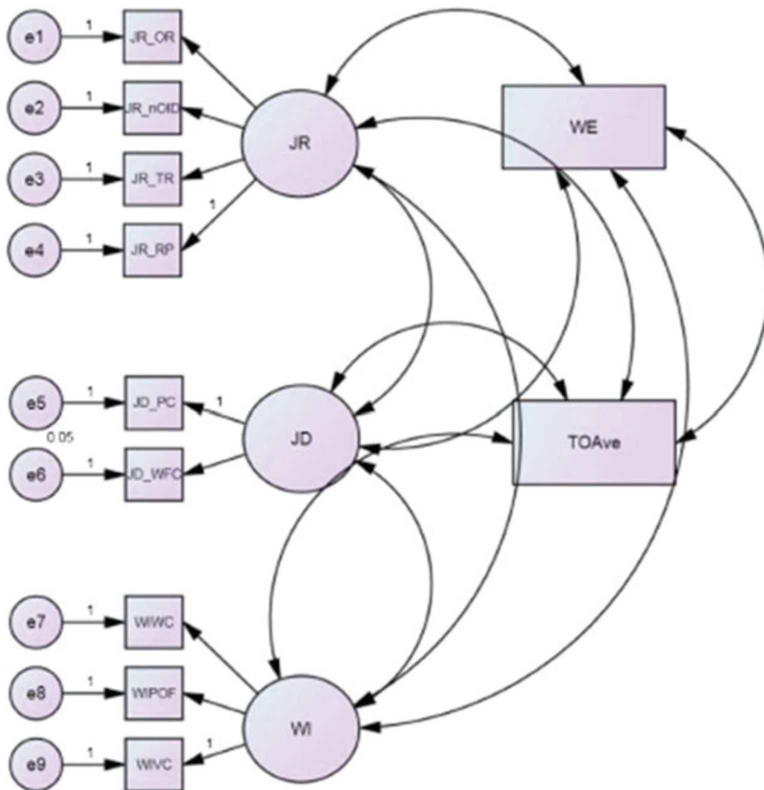

Fig. 7.2 The respecified model after the measurement model was established

A Path Model

Model identification aims to determine if each parameter of the model is fixed, free, or constrained. In the specified model, there were 29 free parameters (this included the variances, plus the covariance, as well as the direct effects on endogenous variables) that had to be estimated. Therefore, to establish a just-identified model, at least 29 distinct values had to be present in the model. Based on the number of observed variables in the model (11), the numbers of distinct values included in the model were:

$$\frac{\left[p\left(p+1\right)\right]}{2}=\frac{\left[11\left(11+1\right)\right]}{2}=66 \quad \left(p=\text{number of observed variables}\right)$$

As the numbers of free parameters were less than the number of distinct values, the model was overidentified and the order condition has been satisfied. This represented 37 degrees of freedom.

7.2.2.3 Model Estimation

The sample size in the Bester (2012) study consisted of 644 participants from various organisations in the UAE. As there were 29 free parameters in the identified model, the requirement of at least ten cases per free parameter was achieved.

The desirable limits for the fit indices were set as follows:

- Maximum likelihood of model fit (relative chi-square measurement): $\chi^2/\mathrm{d}f < 5$
- Goodness of fit index (GFI): .88–.99
- Comparative fit index (CFI): .88–.99
- Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA): .001–.12

For the estimated model, the relative chi-square ratio measurement was $\chi^2/\mathrm{d}f = 235.49/37 = 6.37, p < .001$. The other fit indices were CFI = .89, GFI = .93, and RMSEA = .09. No multicollinearity among latent variables was detected, also in the case between WI dimensions and work engagement. The AMOS program drew up a correlation matrix as a basis for the estimation and subsequent testing stages of SEM. The maximum likelihood estimates for the parameters in the model are presented in Table 7.1.

The estimates in Table 7.1 show that there are sufficient activities in each of the paths to produce a feasible model and therefore model testing could proceed.

7.2.2.4 Model Testing and Modification

Following the initial stages in the SEM process to establish that the model has been specified, identified, and estimated, model testing could take place. Although the fit indices and maximum likelihood estimates (R^2 values) of the estimated model

Table 7.1 Maximum likelihood estimates for the structural model

Parameter	Estimate	*S.E.*	*β*	*p*
RP ← JR	1.00		.52	
TR ← JR	1.12	.10	.73	<.001
nOID ← JR	.54	.08	.37	<.001
OR ← JR	1.21	.12	.64	<.001
WFC ← JD	11.17	5.05	.97	.03
BPC ← JD	1.00		.09	
WI VC ← WI	1.00		.79	
WI POF ← WI	1.02	.07	.62	<.001
WI WC ← WI	.72	.6	.53	<.001

OR organisational reputation, *nOID* need for organisational identification, *TR* task resources, *RP* remuneration perceptions, *BPC* breach of psychological contract, *WFC* work–family conflict, *WI* work identity, *WI WC* work centrality, *WI VC* value congruence, *WI POF* person–organisation fit, *WE* work engagement, *TOI* turnover intentions

Table 7.2 Results of SEM: alternative models with standardised maximum likelihood indices ($N = 644$)

Model	χ^2	χ^2/df	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
M1 original model	235.49	6.83	.86	.93	.09
M2 alternative constrained error	533.11	7.06	.87	.92	.10
M3 BPC removed	479.74	7.86	.85	.89	.11
M4 extra path WE → TOI	279.84	6.83	.86	.91	.10
M4.1 UAE, $N = 223$[a]	117.07	2.86	.89	.91	.10
M4.2 Middle East, $N = 188$[b]	103.67	2.53	.88	.91	.09
M4.3 Asia and India, $N = 123$[c]	116.53	2.84	.79	.84	.12
M4.4 other (West), $N = 110$[d]	117.51	2.80	.78	.82	.13
Parameters		2.0 → 5.0	.88 → .99	.88 → .99	.001 → .12

Note. χ^2 chi-square, *df* degrees of freedom, *CFI* comparative fit index, *GFI* goodness-of-fit index, *RMSEA* root mean square error of approximation

All indices, $p < .001$, unless specified

JR job resources, *NOID* need for organisational identification, *JD* job demands, *WFC BPC* breach of psychological contract, *WI VC* value congruence, *WI POF* person–organisation fit, *TOI* turnover intentions

[a]BPC ← JD, not significant; TOI ← WI, $p < .05$; TOI ← WI, $p < .05$

[b]BPC ← JD, not significant; TOI ← WE, not significant; TOI ← WI, $p < .05$

[c]NOID ← JD, $p < .05$; BPC ← JD, $p < .05$; TOI ← WI, not significant; TOI ← WE, not significant

[d]WI ← JD, not significant; BPC ← JD, not significant; TOI ← WI, not significant; TOI ← WE, not significant; WI ← JR, $p < .05$; WI ← JR, ;WI ← WE, $p < .05$; NOID ← JR, $p < .05$; WIPOF ← WI, $p < .05$; WIVC ← WI, $p < .05$

indicated a good model fit, several alternative models were considered. These models and their fit indices are presented in Table 7.2.

It was, however, considered prudent not to deviate too far from the originally specified model. A model-generating approach was followed in the model

modification stage; instead of investigating new paths in the model, the parameters were adjusted to establish the best fit. The first four models (M1–M4) were generated with the full data set. These models are discussed here, while the results for the other models (M4.1–M4.4) generated with partial data sets are included in this table for comparative purposes but discussed in the next section about moderation effects.

The original model (M1 in Table 7.2) fitted the data adequately. Although this model was overidentified, the job demands parameter was underidentified. This was corrected by constraining the error value associated with the observed variable, work–family conflict to a low impact 0.05. In the second model the error value of the alternative observed variable in the job demands path, breach of psychological contract was constrained instead of the error rating associated with breach of psychological contract. Although the fit indices were still encouraging, this change resulted in a poorer overall model fit. Following this direction of thought, the observed variable, breach of psychological contract was removed from the third model. This also removed the latent variable job demands from the model. Job demands were then only represented by one observed variable, work–family conflict.

This model still indicated good fit although the absolute model fit index of the chi-square measurement dropped a little. In the fourth model a path was added between work engagement and turnover intentions. This model showed the same fit indices as the original model, and this model was therefore retained as the best-fit model.

Model M4 achieved a relative chi-square index higher than the acceptable range, $\chi^2/df = 6.83, p < .001$. This absolute model fit value is, however, not always trustworthy for large samples and more reliance on alternative fit indices was recommended. Furthermore, the CFI was marginally below the acceptable range, (CFI = .86). However, the GFI was within the acceptable range (GFI = .91). The RMSEA value was also within the lenient acceptable parameters and achieved a practical value, (RMSEA = .10), according to the limits set by Browne and Cudeck (1993). Consequently, job resources and job demands (antecedents of WI) and work engagement and turnover intentions (consequences of WI) fit a covariance structure model.

Following the consideration of the fit indices, the attention could therefore shift to the parameters in the model. The path model is presented in Fig. 7.3. The path coefficients indicated in the diagram demonstrated the direct effects on variables in terms of standard deviations. Following the direction of the arrows, this meant that an increase in one standard deviation of the first variable affected the next variable with the increase or decrease in standard deviation indicated by the value of the regression weight.

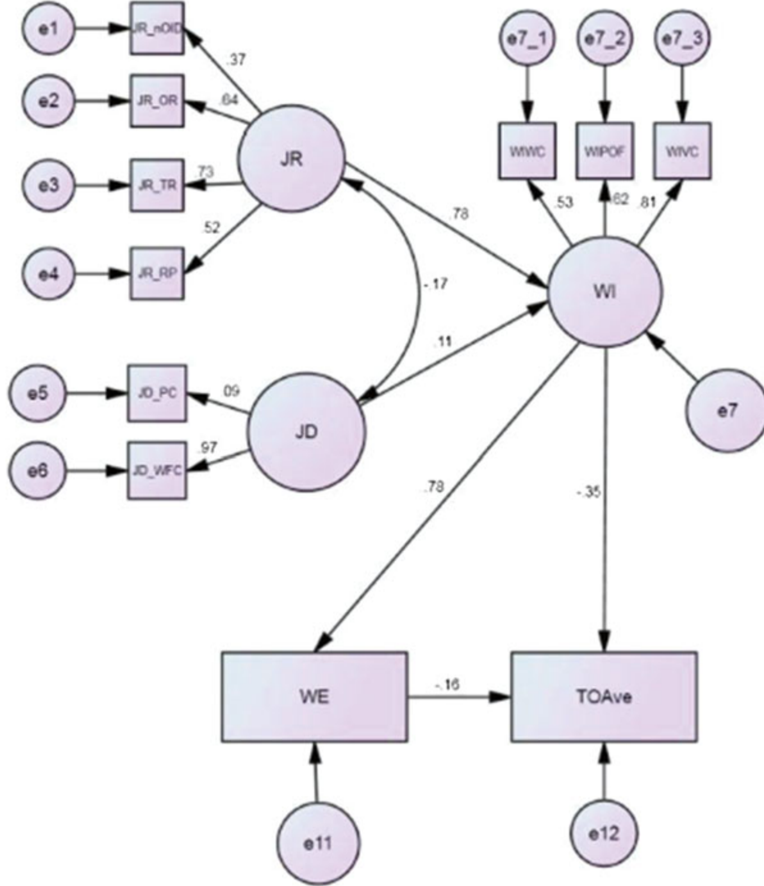

Fig. 7.3 The path model showing regression weights per parameter, $p < .001$

Each path in this model of best fit was significant, $p < .001$ except when indicated otherwise in Table 7.3. Most of the path coefficients were also confirming the theory. More details are provided in Table 7.3, which shows the estimates, the standard errors, and the standardised weights (β) of all the parameters in the best-fit model.

According to these standardised weights (β) in Table 7.3, job resources and job demands had positive causal relations with WI, $\beta = .78$ and $\beta = .11$, respectively. In addition, WI caused work engagement, $\beta = .78$, and deterred turnover intentions, $\beta = -.35$.

Table 7.3 Maximum likelihood estimates for best-fit model

Parameter	Estimate	S.E.	*β*	*P*
WI ← JD	.04	.02	.11	<.05
WI ← JR	.62	.07	.78	<.001
WE ← WI	1.29	.12	.78	<.001
TR ← JR	1.12	.10	.73	<.001
OR ← JR	1.21	.12	.64	<.001
nOID ← JR	1.21	.12	.37	<.001
WFC ← JD	1.00		.97	<.001
BPC ← JD	.09	.04	.09	<.05
WI WC ← WI	1.00		.53	
WI POF ← WI	1.44	.13	.63	<.001
WI VC ← WI	1.42	.11	.81	<.001
TOI ← WI	−1.04	.23	−.35	<.001
TOI ← WE	−.25	.11	.16	<.05

OR organisational reputation, *nOID* need for organisational identification, *TR* task resources, *RP* remuneration perceptions, *BPC* breach of psychological contract, *WFC* work–family conflict, *WI* work identity, *WI WC* work centrality, *WI VC* value congruence, *WI POF* person–organisation fit, *WE* work engagement, *TOI* turnover intentions

7.3 Moderation Tests

Formulated hypotheses postulated that the control variables (age, gender, level of education, organisational tenure, job level, and culture, represented by nationality group) had moderated the structural model. Without a successful structural path model, the analysis of the effect of the control variables would have been limited to bivariate relationships tested by multiple regression procedures. However, there was a covariance model of WI available that could be used. The multigroup moderation tests were applied to the best-fit model.

The basic point of departure of these tests was to apply two different data sets to the best-fit model. The results presented two different model versions. Firstly, the data of the different groups representing a control variable (e.g. younger and older for age or male and female for gender) were entered into an unconstrained (free) model. Secondly, a constrained model that forced the data from the two groups to be the same (which was essentially the assumption of the original version of the best-fit model) was calculated. The two models were then compared with each other. If the model fit indices were significantly different, it indicated that the control variable did influence the model. The procedure could then progress to investigate the paths where the moderation effects occurred. Two results were therefore obtained: moderation of the model and moderation of specific paths. Table 7.4 shows the results of the multigroup moderation tests.

Table 7.4 Results of multigroup moderation test

	Chi-square	*df*	*p*
Age: 2 groups			
Unconstrained model	361.51	82	
Fully constrained model	381.37	93	
Difference	19.86	11	≤.05
Gender: 2 groups			
Unconstrained model	323.70	82	
Fully constrained model	333.42	93	
Difference	9.72	11	=.56
Education: 2 groups			
Unconstrained model	338.91	82	
Fully constrained model	375.81	93	
Difference	36.89	11	≤.001
Tenure: 2 groups			
Unconstrained model	348.37	82	
Fully constrained model	361.94	93	
Difference	13.57	11	=.26
Job level: 2 groups			
Unconstrained model	341.92	82	
Fully constrained model	355.56	93	
Difference	13.64	11	=.25
Nationality: 2 groups			
Unconstrained model	452.27	164	
Fully constrained model	538.72	197	
Difference	86.45	33	≤.001

Note. Applied to M4; see Table 5.3

Evident from Table 7.4 is that only three control variables had a significant effect on the best-fit model, namely, age ($p < .05$), level of education ($p < .001$), and nationality ($p < .001$). This information was sufficient to consider the hypotheses that stated that control variables will moderate the covariance model. Three hypotheses (age affects the model, level of education affects the model, and nationality affects the model) were therefore supported. While the results showed that the control variable, age, had a moderating effect on the model, it did not moderate any specific path significantly.

Table 7.5 shows the paths that were significantly moderated by level of education and by nationality, $p < .05$. These paths were inspected by referring to the model diagrams, which also displayed the regression coefficients associated with each path in the covariance model.

The moderation effects of levels of education and nationality on specific paths were clearer. Table 7.5 shows the paths that were significantly moderated by level of education and by nationality, $p < .05$. These results will be detailed in the following paragraphs.

Table 7.5 Identification of moderation effects on specific paths, $p \leq .05$

	Chi-square	d*f*
Age		
Unconstrained model	365.35	83
Affected paths in fully constrained model		
None		
Education		
Unconstrained model	342.76	82
Affected paths in fully constrained model		
nOID ← JR	345.08	
WI VC ← WI	348.93	
WE ← WI	342.80	
TOI ← WE	343.32	
Nationality		
Unconstrained model	456.11	165
Affected paths in fully constrained model		
nOID ← JR	470.93	
BPC ← JD	457.04	
WI POF ← WI	462.45	
WI VC ← WI	483.92	
JD → WI	461.85	
JR → WI	467.52	
WI → WE	472.81	

nOID need for organisational identification, *BPC* breach of psychological contract, *WI* work identity, *WI VC* value congruence, *WI POF* person–organisation fit, *WE* work engagement, *TOI* turnover intentions

Table 7.6 Path coefficients of paths in the covariance model which were significantly moderated by level of education, $p < .001$

	Path coefficients, β	
Path	Lower education (postsecondary diploma or lower)	Higher education (first degree or higher)
nOID ← JR	.57	.29
WI VC ← WI	.68	.85
WE ← WI	.75	.79
TOI ← WE	.05	−.25

nOID need for organisational identification, *WI* work identity, *WI VC* value congruence, *WE* work engagement, *TOI* turnover intentions

The paths that were significantly moderated by the control variable, level of education, were nOID ← JR, WI VC ← WI, WE ← WI, and TOI ← WI. The path coefficients for each of the moderated paths are presented in Table 7.6.

The differences in path coefficients showed that nOID played a larger role in the formation of perceived job resources in the lower education group (postsecondary

diploma or lower), $\beta = .57$, than the higher education group (first degree or higher), $\beta = .29$. This indicated that the need for organisational identification was a far more important component for lower educated employees than for higher educated employees. Conversely, WI value congruence played a stronger role in the formation of WI among employees with higher education, $\beta = .85$, than the lower education group, $\beta = .68$. Although the difference looked small, a significant difference between the roles that WI played in the formation of work engagement existed between the two groups. WI played a stronger role in the formation of work engagement with the higher education group. For every one standard deviation increase in WI, a .79 standard deviation increase in work engagement was observed for this group, $\beta = .79$. Comparatively, work engagement grew by .75 of a standard deviation for the lower education group. Finally, employees with lower education were more inclined to entertain turnover intentions even if they experienced work engagement than higher educated employees. For every one standard deviation increase in work engagement, lower educated employees increased their turnover intentions just a little, $\beta = .05$. However, work engagement was a stronger buffer against turnover intentions for employees with higher education; every standard deviation increase in work engagement reduced their turnover intention by .25 of a standard deviation, $\beta = -.25$.

The control variable, nationality, also moderated several paths in the best-fit model significantly. As the main focus of this study was to investigate a model of WI in multicultural work settings, nationality as the indicator for culture was deemed important. To interpret the results regarding nationality, Table 5.8 is important again. The results of SEM confirmed that a covariance model for WI in multicultural settings, M4, fitted the data from all nationality groups. A single covariance model therefore explained the process of how job resources and job demands caused WI and how WI caused work engagement and turnover intentions. However, within this best-fit model, cultural differences still played a role. In fact, the best-fit model was recalculated four times with data from four different nationality groups. The model remained stable, and the model fit improved with data from fewer cultures. The nationality groups were UAE (Model 4.1), the Middle East (Model 4.2), Asia/India (Model 4.3), and the West (Model 4.4). As Table 7.7 shows, the fit indices for the UAE group and the Middle East group were all well within the acceptable parameters. The relative chi-square measurement χ^2/df (which indicates the maximum likelihood that the data fit the model) for the models containing data from Asia and the West was still within the acceptable parameter (the smaller sample sizes could, however, have played a role). However, in Model 4.3, for Asia and especially for the West group (Model 4.4), other fit indices dropped slightly below the parameters. The error variances that required constraining also increased from Model 4.1 to Model 4.4. While these results reconfirm hypothesis 8, the tested covariance model is clearly best suited for a multicultural population.

Table 7.7 Path coefficients of paths in the covariance model which were significantly moderated by nationality, $p < .001$

	Path coefficients, β			
Path	UAE	Middle East	Asia	West
nOID ← JR	.22	.62	.26	.31
BPC ← JD	.10	.06	.27	−.04
WI POF ← WI	.60	.66	.64	.53
WI VC ← WI	.83	.72	.80	1.01
JD → WI	.19	.05	.27	−.02
JR → WI	.85	.77	.87	.77
WI → WE	.84	.73	.80	.65

nOID need for organisational identification, *JR* job resources, *BPC* breach of psychological contract, *JD* job demands, *WI* work identity, *WI VC* value congruence, *WI POF* person–organisation fit, *WE* work engagement

How nationality moderated the specific paths in the model was tested. Following the second stage of the multigroup moderation test, it was established that nationality moderated many specific paths (refer to Table 7.7), namely, nOID ← JR, BPC ← JD, WI POF ← WI, WI VC ← WI, JD → WI, JR → WI, and WI → WE. The path coefficients of the significantly moderated paths across the four models are also presented in Table 7.7.

The path coefficients showed that the Middle East group relied more heavily on nOID as a job resource than other nationality groups, $\beta = .62$. There were distinct differences in the way that nationality groups processed breach of psychological contract as a job demand. While members of the Asian group perceived that breach of psychological contract is a substantial job demand, $\beta = .27$, members of the West group did not perceive that this variable formed part of job demands at all, $\beta = -.04$. WI person–organisation fit played a smaller part in the formation of WI among members of the West group compared to other nationality groups, $\beta = .53$, but WI value congruence played a more substantial part in their perceptions of WI, $\beta = 1.01$. WI value congruence played a smaller role in the formation of WI among the Middle East group, $\beta = .72$. Members of the West group were the only respondents who perceived that job demands detracted from WI, $\beta = -.02$. This contrast sharply with the way that the Asian group perceived that an increase of one standard deviation in job demands causes an increase of .27 in WI, $\beta = .27$. Similar patterns of perceptions about the job resources as a cause of WI were found among all groups, although the difference between the groups from the Middle East and the West, $\beta = .77$, and the UAE and Asia, $\beta = .85$ and $\beta = .87$, respectively, were significant. Finally, WI caused less work engagement from the West group, $\beta = .65$, and most from the UAE group, $\beta = .84$.

Therefore, while a common variance model for WI existed in multicultural settings, nationality moderated this model in distinctive ways to buffer or enhance the way that WI was caused and how WI caused its consequences.

7.4 Conclusion and Implications for Practice

The aim of this chapter was to report on the development of a WI scale. The following key points are evident from this chapter:

1. The WI scale was developed by using 36 items that measured different work-related identification foci based on the WI prototype developed in Chap 2.
2. These WI identification foci were superimposed on the three identity prototype dimensions, namely, structural, social, and individual-psychological.
3. This WI scale was then subsequently used in exploratory SA studies conducted by Bothma (2011) and De Braine (2012) as a predictor and as a criterion, respectively.
4. The WI scale yielded acceptable metric properties with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.9 in these two studies.
5. Subsequently, the WI scale was also modelled in the study of Bester (2012) where it was applied and confirmed in an SEM. In this context, three subscales emerged, namely, work centrality ($\alpha = .92$), person–organisation fit ($\alpha = .87$), and value congruence ($\alpha = .77$).
6. These three dimensions were significantly related to the job resources (need for organisational identity (nOID), organisational reputation, task resources, and remuneration perceptions) and the job demands (breach of psychological contract and work–family conflict) used in the structural equation model and also to indirectly via WI to work engagement and turnover intentions as outcomes.
7. The Bester study has also indicated that the JRs and JDs interactions (buffering effects) significantly impact the level of WI.
8. The study also indicated that belonging to different nationalities significantly impacts paths in the structural equation model (SEM), in other words belonging to different nationalities moderates paths in the SEM.
9. It should be stated clearly that the WI scale was not tested for measurement equivalence (ME) among different cultural, ethnic, gender, or language groups. This can be done in future studies that specifically have this as an objective.
10. The key points highlighted so far indicate that WI was successfully conceptualised and measured within a criterion mode, a predictive mode, as well as an SEM setting where the construct validity was confirmed.

Appendices

Appendix A: WI Scale Items Grouped According to the Three-Dimensional Structure

WI work centrality (WC)	WI person–organisation fit (POF)	WI value congruence (VC)
1. How much of your identity is based on your occupation?	17. How personally insulted do you feel when someone criticises the organisation that you work for?	23. How much does your job allow for the achievement of personal goals?
2. How much do you see your job as your whole life?	18. How embarrassed do you feel when the media criticises the organisation that you work for?	24. How much does your job prevent you from being yourself or becoming who you want to be?
3. How much is your occupation the most important activity in your life?	19. How interested are you in what others think about the organisation that you work for?	25. How rewarding is the work in itself as an activity?
4. How much do you base the best description of 'who you are' on your career?	20. How much do you think of the organisation's successes as your own?	26. We assume your job have high standards. How easily can you identify with the high standards of your job?
5. How central does the organisation that you work for stand in your life?	21. Does it feel like a personal achievement when someone praises the organisation that you work for?	27. How much are your values the same as the values of the organisation that you work for?
6. To what extent will your life be valueless without your job?		28. How much are you able to maintain your own values at the organisation where you work?
7. How much is your own identity based on your job?		
8. How much do you think of work as the most important aspect of your life?		
9. How directly related are all your achievements to your work?		
10. How much does your work determine your value as a person?		
11. How much is the best description of 'who you are' related to the organisation that you work for?		
12. How big a part of 'who you are' is your work?		
14. How much meaning does work add to your life		

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Part IV
Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

This part consists of two chapters. Chapter 8 draws conclusions based on the three empirical studies reported on and provides some explanations for these findings. Where possible these findings are also linked back to existing literature. Chapter 9 highlights some implications of the reported findings and conclusions but also reports on some recommendations theory, practice and future research.

Chapter 8
Conclusions

Roslyn de Braine, F. Chris Bothma, Francois Bester, and Paul G.W. Jansen

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter (Chaps. 6 and 7), a detailed overview of the empirical results of the three quantitative empirical studies conducted by De Braine (2012), Bothma (2011) and Bester (2012) was provided. The current chapter will therefore take a closer look at these findings, how it relates to the current literature and what it potentially means for practice.

The first part of the chapter briefly introduces the findings in respect of the antecedents of work-based identity (WI) and also how these antecedents may interact in the co-determination of WI. These findings are further interpreted and explained in terms of existing literature as well as its potential meaning and implications for practice.

The second part of this chapter briefly introduces the findings in respect of the consequences of WI. The interaction between WI and its subjective consequences as well as their combined impact on the objective consequences is interpreted and explained in terms of existing literature as well as their potential meaning and implications for practice.

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8.2 Job Resources as Predictors of WI

According to Hakanen and Roodt (2010), the JD-R model can be used to predict work engagement. In the current research project, the JD-R model was used to predict WI. De Braine (2012) empirically investigated whether the job resources (JRs), *growth opportunities, organisational support, advancement, task identity, perceived external prestige* and *team climate* predict WI in the SA context. No other studies conducted earlier could be found that linked these JRs specifically to work-based identity (WI).

The JR, *growth opportunities,* was the second most prominent predictor of WI (in terms of variance explained). It included the variables skill variety and opportunities to learn which the participants are experiencing in their work. Growth opportunities are considered an important job resource as they allow employees to gain new skills through workplace learning (Collins 2009) that inevitably strengthens and builds WIs (Loogma et al. 2004).

The third most prominent JR (in terms of variance explained) was *organisational support.* It is suggested from this result that the participants felt that they were receiving all the necessary support to enable them to perform their jobs. This conclusion is based on the assumptions of perceived organisational support theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986). Perceived organisational support helps to facilitate the growth of deep structure identification (Ashforth and Mael 1989), which precedes the development of organisational identification (Rousseau 1998), a facet of WI.

The JR, *advancement* (career possibilities and training opportunities), accounted for the least variance in the prediction of WI. This may be indicative that advancement is not considered to be of importance to the employees or that the organisation does not have as many advancement opportunities for the participants as desired. This is further supported by the descriptive statistics in which the question on advancement, "To what degree does your job give you the opportunity to be promoted?" scored the lowest, with a mean value of 2.244. The job resource advancement nevertheless showed some prediction of work-based identity. This finding is supported in the literature, where career possibilities are argued to help improve professional identity (a facet of WI) and training opportunities, which help develop WI (Brown 2004).

The JR, *task identity*, did not predict WI, although it had a positive and significant relationship with WI in the bivariate analysis. Its predictive power has been masked by the other predictors in the regression model. According to Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics model, task identity positively influences job performance and satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham 1975). No previous research indicated a link between task identity and WI.

The JR, *perceived external prestige* (PEP), was WI's most prominent predictor (explained the most variance). PEP is defined as "… the judgment or evaluation about an organisation's status regarding some kind of evaluative criteria, and refers to the employee's personal beliefs about how other people outside the organisation such as customers, competitors and suppliers judge its status and

prestige" (Carmeli et al. 2006: 93). The fact that PEP served as a significant predictor of WI paints a picture that the participants generally believe that their organisation has a good reputation in the community, amongst its customers, in the industry and also as an organisation to work for (this refers to internal as well as external branding). It is further assumed that this perception will enhance the employees' self-image and promote strong organisational identification. Perceived external prestige is regarded as a construct that falls under the banner of organisational prestige (Carmeli et al. 2006) or even organisation identity. In earlier research, organisational prestige was found to be a significant predictor of organisational identification (Mael and Ashforth 1992). Organisational identification is regarded as an indicator of WI. So we can also further argue that these participants' organisational identification is also strong.

The JR, *team climate*, served as the fourth prominent predictor of WI. This suggests that the participants share the values and goals of their respective team members within the organisation and that they find the team climate constructive and conducive in performing their tasks.

In addition, to assess the overall impact of all the JRs in this study on WI, the JD-R Scales' (growth opportunities, organisational support, advancement, task identity, perceived external prestige and team climate) mean scores were combined to predict WI. Overall, all these JRs combined yielded a positive and strong relationship with WI. Not only do JRs help to create an engaged workforce (Rothmann and Jordaan 2006), they also help to create strong work identities. Furthermore, WI is considered to be a precursor for work engagement (Bester 2012).

In the Bester (2012) study on WI within a multicultural work setting in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the following JRs were used: *organisational reputation* (related to perceived external prestige), *need for organisational identification* (nOID), *task-level resources* (represented by observable variables growth opportunities, organisational support and advancement) and *remuneration perceptions*. nOID is defined as "…an individual's need to maintain a social identity derived from membership in a larger, more general social category of a particular collective" (Glynn 1998: 240). The collective in this regard is the organisation.

In terms of individual relationships between the independent JR variables and WI, nOID, task resources and remuneration perceptions each significantly predicted WI in which nOID contributed the most in terms of variance explained. The regression model for the WI dimensions *work centrality* and *person–organisation fit* contained three steps. The regression model for the third dimension of *value congruence* contained four steps.

The three job resources (nOID, task resources and remuneration perceptions) significantly predicted work centrality. These results indicated that the three variables (nOID, task resources and remuneration perceptions) explained 28 % of the shared variance of work centrality. Three job resources (nOID, task resources and organisational reputation) also significantly predicted person–organisation fit by explaining 25 % of the shared variance. nOID was therefore the strongest predictor for both work centrality and person–organisation fit. All four observable JRs (task resources, nOID, remuneration perceptions and organisational reputation) in the regression

model explained 34 % of shared variance in value congruence. nOID may be a strong predictor of WI in previously disadvantaged economies where individuals were only part of informal economies and did not have the opportunity to work for and belong to large organisations. Underprivileged groups may view their organisation as a means to be economically active in the larger society. It is suggested that these organisations play a pivotal role in the way they view themselves in relation to work, society and life in general. The identity work involved in finding a balance and resolving tensions between personal, societal and work identity is evident here.

nOID and task resources consistently played the two key roles in predicting work-based identity or its dimensions in Bester's study. It can be assumed that selecting persons that fit the organisation well and persons that have a strong nOID helps to increase WI, in a greater way than an organisation that just provides adequate task resources to increase WI. So, within the United Arab Emirates multicultural setting, WI can be established by providing adequate task resources and selecting individuals with a high nOID. This study therefore echoes the conclusions as in other JD-R studies that it is difficult to capture all the antecedent JRs, especially those outside the JD-R model (e.g. Rothmann et al. 2006; Van den Broeck et al. 2008).

Furthermore, an assumption was made that JRs would have a positive and strong relationship with WI. This assumption was met, since the premises of the social exchange perspective were also met (Blau 1964; Van Knippenberg et al. 2007). This perspective highlights that a social exchange between an employee and employer is judged to be one of quality when employee inputs (examples include work, time and effort) into the relationship are equivalent to the benefits (examples include task resources, promotion and recognition) that the employee receives from the relationship. If the social exchange is deemed favourable by the employee, the employee then becomes more motivated to maintain the work relationship (Van Knippenberg et al. 2007). So, organisations need to ensure that a healthy and equitable social exchange is maintained with their employees to develop and increase WI. They also have to attract and select employees with a strong nOID through assessing person–organisation fit and value congruence. The research conducted by De Braine and Bester has made a unique contribution in the sense that there were no previous studies conducted that established the job resources relationship with WI.

8.3 Job Demands as Predictors of WI

The De Braine (2012) study empirically tested the following job demands (JDs) as predictors of WI: *overload, job insecurity* and *work–family conflict*. The results of these analyses are discussed in the next section.

The JD, *overload*, was found to be positively related to WI; thus, the hypothesis that it would be negatively related to WI was not supported. It was the only JD that

served as a predictor of WI. This finding suggests that the participants experienced their quantitative load (time pressure and mental overload) and qualitative load (emotional overload) perhaps more as job challenges, rather than as job stressors. An alternative view of this finding taken from Tims et al. (2013) is perhaps that in the process of these employees crafting their jobs, they viewed overload in their jobs from a more positive stance or that they are able to demonstrate their capability to deal with moderate overload. They may also perceive that getting more work (increased workload) is a signal that they are accepted and that they belong to the organisation and that the organisation values their contribution, which in return increases their WI.

The JD, *job insecurity*, was found to be positively related to WI as well. Job insecurity did not enter into the multi-regression analysis, although it was found to be significantly related to WI (on a bivariate level). This means that the job (in) security effect was masked by other variables in the prediction model. The job insecurity mean scores were average. In addition, the majority of the participants (28.8 %) have worked for the organisation for 6–10 years. Tenure was positively related to WI. This means that the longer a person worked for the organisation, the stronger their WI became. These individuals have thus developed strong organisational identification.

The JD, *work–family conflict*, was found to be negatively related to WI. The hypothesis was therefore supported by the data. Work–family conflict did not enter into the multi-regression analysis, although it was found to be significantly related to WI which also means that the effect of this variable is mostly explained by other variables already included in the model.

In concluding the discussion on this empirical objective, the JD *overload* was the only JD that predicted WI. In addition, to assess the overall impact of all the JDs on WI, the JD-R Scales' (consisting of overload, job insecurity and work–family conflict) mean scores were combined to predict WI. Overall, all these JDs combined yielded a positive and weak relationship with WI. This was an unexpected finding, as it was assumed that JDs would have a negative WI. This assumption was based on the premises of Hockey's (1997) compensatory regulatory control (CRC) model and the negative physiological and psychological costs associated with JDs (Demerouti et al. 2001). The positive and weak relationship between the two said variables may be the result of the following: (a) the JDs listed in the study are not necessarily experienced as job stressors by the participants, but they are experienced as job challenges (Van den Broeck et al. 2010), and (b) these employees' JRs could be buffering the negative effects of their JDs (Hakanen et al. 2005).

In Bester's United Arab Emirates study, the following JDs were studied as predictors of WI: *breach of psychological contract* and *work–family conflict*. The correlations showed a weak positive effect of breach of psychological contract on WI (not significant) and that of work–family conflict on WI as significant. JDs are therefore not universally perceived as demands. Contrary to expectations, it was not

only the absence of JDs that facilitated WI but also a neutral or positive view of JDs which contributed to WI.

The JD results in Bester's study were similar to the results in De Braine's study, in that weak correlations were found between the various JDs and WI. Currently, there is no other literature indicating that overload, job insecurity, breach of psychological contract and work–family conflict are correlated with WI. This was therefore a unique contribution to the literature on JRs and JDs in terms of the traditional JD-R model and WI and also those JRs and JDs outside the JD-R model.

8.3.1 Job Demands as Mediators and Moderators of the Job Resources–WI Relationship

An investigation of whether JDs would mediate or moderate the relationship between JRs in the prediction of WI was conducted. JDs may affect an already positive relationship that JRs has with WI. To maintain a positive relationship, one has to take into cognisance any possible effect that JDs may have on the relationship that JRs has with WI. It was for this reason that possible mediation or moderation effects were tested. The JDs (overload, job insecurity and work–family conflict) were combined, and JRs (growth opportunities, organisational support, advancement, task identity, team climate and perceived external prestige) were combined.

The following mediation route was tested: JRs → JDs → WI. This route could not be confirmed, since the independent variable JRs had no interaction or effect on the mediator JDs. In terms of JDs being tested as a possible moderator in the JRs relationship with WI, it made no meaningful contribution since the interaction term (JRs*JDs) was also not significant.

So, in De Braine's (2012) study, JDs did not mediate and/or moderate the relationship that JRs had with WI. JDs did not serve (in the case of mediation) to account for the JR–WI relationship, and it did not serve to strengthen the JR–WI relationship (in the case of moderation) either. The participants in De Braine's (2012) study perhaps see their JDs as job challenges rather than job hindrances.

8.3.2 Biographical Variables as Moderators in the Prediction of Work-Based Identity

A further aim of the De Braine study was to establish if the biographical variables moderated the JR or the JD–WI relationships. A two-way between-subjects analysis of variance was conducted in De Braine's study to explore the impact of the biographical variables (race, age and gender) on the respective JDs and JRs relationship with WI.

8.3.2.1 Race, JD-Rs–WI Relationships

It was found that race group significantly moderated the JD (job insecurity and work–family conflict) and WI relationship. Differences were found between the mean scores of the different race groups for both *job insecurity* and *work–family conflict.* The results further suggest that the WI of the white race group is the lowest in comparison to the black, Asian/Indian and coloured race groups in terms of job insecurity and work–family conflict.

It was found that race group moderated the JRs (advancement, task identity and perceived external prestige) and the WI relationship. Differences were found between the mean scores of the different race groups across all of these JRs. The results further suggest that the WI scores of the white group are the lowest in comparison to the black, Asian/Indian and coloured race groups in terms of advancement and task identity.

Preferential treatment is given to designated employees (African, Indians/Asians, coloureds, women and disabled people) in terms of recruitment, selection and development opportunities in the workplace due to the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998. White participants may be experiencing higher levels of job insecurity due to this preferential treatment provided to the designated groups. Furthermore, white employees are not always afforded advancement and promotion opportunities, as a result of the affirmative action measures being used in organisations to achieve equity. This then may also influence the way they view and identify with their roles, tasks (task identity) and the organisation (perceived external prestige). They perhaps feel alienated and not taken care of by the organisation. This thus weakens their work identity. In terms of work–family conflict, the result may be ascribed to different perceptions across the different race groups regarding the balance of work and family life. In some race groups, the work and family life domain may be overlapping resulting in less role pressure incompatibility that may cause work–family conflict.

8.3.2.2 Gender, JD-Rs–WI Relationships

Gender does not moderate any of the JDs' relation with WI. Gender only moderated one JR, namely, growth opportunities. The impact of the interaction between growth opportunities and gender was higher for the males' WI than the females' WI. It is argued in gender theory that men are socialised to be independent and goal directed, whereas women are socialised to take on family roles (Dick and Metcalfe 2007). This may somewhat influence the way men view their work and careers and opportunities to grow in an organisation. They may utilise growth opportunities to a larger extent than women because of the way they view work and the way they have been socialised to develop themselves. On a more general level, providing enough growth opportunities to employees does influence the development of work identity, regardless of the gender of the employees.

A unique contribution was made in respect of these moderator findings in this study, since no other findings are reported in the WI literature.

8.3.3 Demographical Variables as Moderators in the Prediction of Work-Based Identity

A two-way between-subjects analysis of variance was also conducted to explore the impact of the following demographical variables on the respective job demands and job resources relationship with WI: marital status, job level, medical fund and work region.

8.3.3.1 Marital Status, JD-Rs–WI Relationships

Marital status categories played a moderating role on the job demands (overload, job insecurity and growth opportunities) and WI relationship. The married employees presented stronger WI than the single and divorced employees in terms of overload and growth opportunities. This result may be understood from an internal career orientation perspective. A career orientation is the occupational self-concept of an individual, which encompasses the individual's "…skills, needs, and expectations evolving in the development of a career" (Van Wyk et al. 2003). This orientation influences the career decisions of individuals. A study done by Chompookum and Derr (2004) on internal career orientations revealed that married employees usually display a "getting secure" internal career orientation which is characterised by a need for lifetime employment and job security. The married participants in De Braine's (2012) study may have a "getting secure" career orientation due to financial commitments to their families, which influence them to make greater use of growth opportunities so as to secure their employment. This organisation may also be using growth opportunities as a strategy to retain their employees.

8.3.3.2 Job Level, JD-Rs–WI Relationships

Of all the demographic moderators, job level proved to be the most significant moderator for both JDs and JRs in the prediction of WI. The managerial employees were categorised into three groups: management, specialist and operational. It moderated all the JDs (except overload) when predicting WI in the study.

In terms of *job insecurity*, the management group exhibited the strongest WI in comparison to the specialist and operational groups. Job level has a direct relation to role identity and therefore the employee's experience of the job demands and job resources in his or her job is influenced. Most organisations hold less managerial positions than other positions; this may affect the way they view the security of their roles and thus jobs in their organisations. This then influences their WI.

In terms of *work–family conflict (WFC)*, the management group also exhibited stronger WI than the other groups. Managerial employees usually have more responsibilities and a higher status than other employees within an organisation.

The usual expectation of managers is that they will be exemplary in their work. This may lead to them working overtime and longer hours to excel. Out of this, it is suggested that they may resign themselves to more readily accept and live with WFC as part and parcel of the package that comes with being a manager. A managerial position in essence also affords them a higher status in an organisation, which may serve to enhance and strengthen their WI.

Job level moderated all the JRs (except task identity) when predicting WI in the study. In terms of *growth opportunities*, the managerial employees also exhibited the strongest WI. This may be related to the management employees perhaps making more use of growth opportunities. Growth opportunities often allow employees to progress to higher levels within an organisation, thus enhancing career and professional identification.

With regard to *organisational support*, the managerial employees had the highest levels of WI than the specialist and operational groups. This may be due to the managerial staff perhaps having more job resources at their disposal to complete their work-related goals. If that was the case, it clearly provides support for the motivational impact of job resources. According to Hobfoll's (1998, 2002) conservation of resources (COR) theory, employees with many resources are less likely to lose resources (Hobfoll and Shirom 2001), as they are more enabled to increase their resources, based on the resources that they already have at their disposal (Tims and Bakker 2010).

The management employees also exhibited the strongest WI in relation to job-level moderating *advancemen*t. They have obviously advanced to their current management position within the organisation. This has therefore enhanced their career identity (a facet or theoretical dimension of WI).

Job level also moderated the relationship that *perceived external prestige's* has with WI, whereby the managerial employees also exhibited stronger levels of WI than the specialist and operational groups. These managers most likely have high levels of organisational identification. It is known that the more prestigious an employee perceives an organisation to be, the greater the possibility of strong organisational identification (Fuller et al. 2006; Smidts et al. 2001).

Lastly, job level also proved to moderate the relationship that *team climate* had with WI. There is a high probability that these managerial employees are currently responsible for teams. This may strengthen their WI, as they would be responsible for creating a climate where their team members would have a shared perception of organisational policies, practices and procedures. No literature could be found that specifically commented on these mentioned moderating relationships with WI.

8.3.3.3 Medical Fund, JD-Rs–WI Relationships

Medical fund status (belonging to a medical fund or not) only moderated the job demand overload when predicting WI. Participants who were members of a medical fund exhibited stronger WI than the participants with no medical fund. The participants with the medical fund perhaps perceive their organisation's more favourably because of receiving this benefit. A medical aid fund provides a financial safety net for employees in the event of illness. For those employees that do not have a

medical aid fund, there may be extra financial pressure for them to work prudently with their finances, especially in times of illness. This may contribute towards them becoming dissatisfied workers, thus decreasing their WI.

8.3.3.4 Work Region, JD-Rs–WI Relationships

Participants were grouped according to the region (location) where they were based (Central, Corporate, Eastern, Gauteng Central, Northeastern, Southern and Western).

The only job demand that work region moderates is *work–family conflict* when predicting WI, in which the Central region respondents experienced the largest decrease in WI than those of other regions, although the Western's region's WI were the lowest. The Central region's participants may have higher work demands placed on them which are increasing their experience of work–family conflict.

In respect of job resources, it was found that work region moderated work-based identity's respective relationship with *task identity*. Task identity is the extent to which a "…job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work" (Hackman and Oldham 1975: 161). The Eastern regions' participants displayed stronger WI than the participants from the other regions. Different regions may be responsible for different functions and activities within an organisation. The employees within this region are accomplishing tasks that may be more meaningful than employees from other regions. Employees fulfil their respective roles through a variety of tasks each day. It may be that these employees are finding their tasks more meaningful. This then enhances their role identities, thus strengthening their WI. Task identity is also known to encourage a higher sense of job involvement (another indicator of WI) (Udo et al. 1997).

The participants from the Northeastern region experienced the highest WI in terms of perceived external prestige. The Northeastern region of the organisation is based in a province in South Africa where there are not many large organisations providing employment for the people living there. So working for this organisation in this particular region is regarded as being good in the eyes of the community and consumers. It is held as being a very prestigious organisation to work for. It may also be one of a few organisations in the region that has provided stable employment to the people. This may also be influencing this high perceived external prestige and high work identification. No other studies reported on such moderation effects.

A unique contribution is made with moderator findings of this study, since no other findings are reported in the literature.

8.3.4 Control Variables in Bester's Study

Bester (2012) used multigroup moderation tests that were applied to the best-fit model using the following control variables: age, level of education, nationality, gender, tenure and job level (these results were discussed in more detail in Chap. 5).

Only three control variables had a significant moderation effect on paths or the fit of the structural equation model, namely, age, level of education and nationality. This information was sufficient to support the hypotheses that stated that control variables moderate the covariance model.

8.4 WI's Relationship with the Subjective Consequences

The purpose of this section is to explain and interpret the obtained significant relationships between WI and the subjective consequences, personal alienation, helping behaviour, work engagement and the three burnout dimensions emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment.

The following theorisation can possibly provide a basis for explaining the relationship of WI and both work engagement and burnout. Through the identity formation process (identification), certain meanings, norms, expectations, beliefs and core values that are derived from specific social foci (e.g. careers, professions, organisations, work groups and job characteristics) are cognitively and hierarchically stored in order of importance in the self, ready to serve as behaviour guides (Kirpal 2004b). In response to a social situation (input), an identity is activated which results in behavioural and cognitive outcomes (Burke 1991; Kirpal 2004a; Stets and Burke 2000, 2003). These behavioural and cognitive outcomes have different subjective and objective consequences.

Using theoretical analysis, Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) identified two underlying dimensions, activation and identification, for employee work-related well-being as reflected in Fig. 8.1.

Activation is conceptualised as a continuum with the antipodes, exhaustion versus vigour (high levels of energy and mental resilience) (the *vertical* bidirectional arrow in Fig. 8.1), whilst *identification* (cognitive state) is conceptualised as a continuum

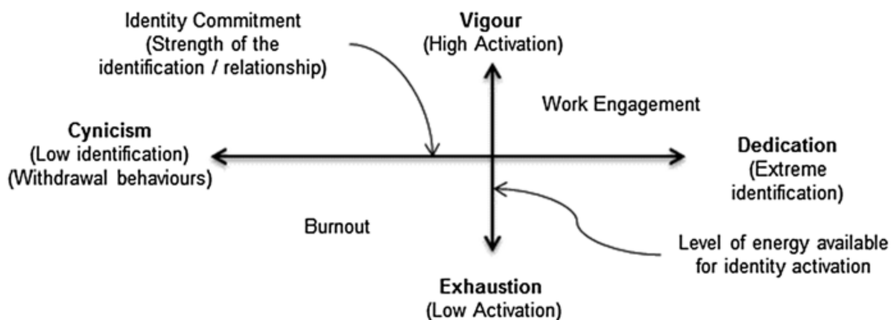

Fig. 8.1 The relationship between employees' identification with work and work-based identity activation (From Bothma and Roodt 2012, Art. #893, p. 4 of 17. © The Authors 2012, Licensee: AOSIS OpenJournals)

with the antipodes, cynicism versus dedication (the *horizontal* bidirectional arrow in Fig. 8.1). Cynicism (associated with low identification) reflects indifference or a distant attitude towards work in general, but not necessarily with other people. Dedication (associated with high identification) refers to a strong involvement in one's work, with feelings of enthusiasm, significance, sense of pride and inspiration (Maslach et al. 1996; Schaufeli et al. 2002). From this approach, burnout is associated with both low activation and identification, whilst work engagement is associated with both high activation and identification (Schaufeli et al. 2002). Based on the above-mentioned research evidence, it appears that the dimension vigour of work engagement and emotional exhaustion of burnout play possibly an active role during the activation phase of the identity formation process. Work engagement and burnout's relation with WI is therefore discussed next.

8.4.1 Work Engagement

A positive relationship was reported between WI and work engagement. This finding is supported by previous research that predicted that there would be a strong positive relation between WI and work engagement (May et al. 2004; Olivier and Rothmann 2007; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004; Schaufeli et al. 2008). The first intuitive reaction is to search for evidence of construct redundancy considering the nearly 50 % shared variance. However, empirical evidence (Bester 2012; Bothma and Roodt 2012) has shown that multicollinearity does not pose a problem and that these constructs are sufficiently different. On a theoretical level, work engagement seems to share two sub-concepts with WI, namely, commitment (referring to the strength of an identity (Stets and Burke 2003)) and involvement. The term dedication (in a qualitative sense) "refers to a particularly strong involvement" (Schaufeli et al. 2002: 74). Bester's (2012) structural equation modelling study found that WI predicted work engagement. The current study's findings on the relationship between an integrated WI construct and work engagement makes a unique contribution. The exact nature of the said relationship between WI and work engagement still needs to be disentangled by further research to explain the shared variance.

8.4.2 Burnout

The three dimensions of burnout are *emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation* and *reduced personal accomplishment* (Maslach and Jackson 1981; Maslach et al. 1986, 1996, 2001). Garma et al. (2007) see the manifestation of burnout in three stages, starting with emotional exhaustion (e.g. loss of energy), followed by depersonalisation (e.g. an uncaring attitude towards customers and co-workers) and ending with reduced personal accomplishment (e.g. low motivation and reduced self-esteem). The three dimensions of burnout's relationship with WI will be explained below.

8.4.2.1 Emotional Exhaustion

A negative relationship was found to exist between WI and emotional exhaustion. Previous research conceptualised an activation (energy) continuum with the antipodes vigour ("high levels of energy and mental resilience") versus emotional exhaustion ("feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work") on the engagement and burnout antipodes, respectively (Maslach and Jackson 1981: 101; Schaufeli et al. 2002).

This implies that the stronger an employee's WI is, the less the employee will be prone to the negative effects of emotional exhaustion that in turn have an impact on work performance.

8.4.2.2 Depersonalisation

A negative relationship was found to exist between WI and depersonalisation. Depersonalisation is the "unfeeling and impersonal response towards recipients of one's care or service" and is typically found on the burnout end of the identification continuum (Maslach and Jackson 1981: 101) as opposed to dedication on the engagement end. According to Maslach et al. (2001), individuals try to distance themselves from their customers through their negative behaviours. It is expected that an employee with a strong WI will be more focused on being dedicated which in turn will result in delivering good customer service.

8.4.2.3 Reduced Personal Accomplishment

A negative relationship was reported between WI and reduced personal accomplishment. Personal accomplishment or absorption "describes feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people" (Maslach and Jackson 1981: 101) on the engagement side of what is provisionally called the "flow" continuum. Reduced personal accomplishment on the other hand is on the burnout end of the continuum. Employees with strong WI will be happier in their work that in turn will have a positive impact on their performance.

The reported relationships between WI and the three burnout dimensions make a unique contribution to the literature, since no other studies previously reported on this relationship.

8.4.3 Personal Alienation

An employee's identification with work can be conceptualised as a position on a bipolar continuum (see Fig. 8.1). The one extreme end of this continuum represents under-identification (alienation), with the middle representing balanced identification, and the other extreme end representing over-identification (workaholism). This view is supported by previous research findings that concluded that any form of withdrawal

behaviours (such as absenteeism, tardiness or turnover) will tend to manifest towards the under-identification side of the continuum and that extreme or excessive involvement behaviours (such as workaholism and Type A behaviour) to the over-identification side of the continuum (Ishikawa 2007; Janse Van Rensburg 2004; Kanungo 1979, 1982; Roodt 1991, 1997). Over-identification is a major problem for Japanese workers whose work identities revolve mainly around organisational identification (Ishikawa 2007). A negative relationship was reported between WI and personal alienation in the current study which adds a unique dimension to the research literature. Employees with a strong WI will assist the organisation in achieving its purpose, whilst those alienated from their organisation will not support its purpose and may even act disruptively towards achieving the objectives of the organisation.

8.4.4 Helping Behaviour (H-OCB)

The different organisational citizen behaviours are conceptualised as contextual performance that can be split into the two performance types, namely, job dedication (e.g. to work alone without direct supervision) and interpersonal facilitation (e.g. helping others with their workload) (Borman and Motowidlo 1993; 1997; Motowidlo 2000; Motowidlo et al. 1997; Organ 1988, 1997; Podsakoff et al. 1997).

Helping behaviours (interpersonal facilitation) as contextual performance type have shown to be strongly associated with WI. It can be expected that individuals who strongly identify with facets of their work will take ownership of their work and assist and support fellow employees in their work efforts by way of interpersonal facilitation. This finding is supported by similar research findings that reported positive relationships between WI facets and organisational citizenship behaviours (Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Rotenberry and Moberg 2007; Williams and Anderson 1991). The WI–H-OCB relationship reported in the current study makes a unique contribution to the research literature. The next section explains the WI and objective outcomes relationships.

8.5 WI as Predictor of Objective Consequences

The purpose of the next section is to explain the nature of the relationships between WI and the objective consequences turnover intentions and task performance.

8.5.1 Turnover Intention

This study reported on self-reported turnover intention (Roodt 2004) that was used as a proxy for actual turnover. Turnover is a coping strategy used by employees to escape the current, undesired situation (Bothma and Roodt 2013; Kirpal 2004b;

Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Roodt and Bothma 1997; Scroggins 2008; Sulu et al. 2010; Tett and Meyer 1993). Turnover intention could be described as a divorce (severing the relationship) between an employee and the organisation.

A statistically significant positive relationship was found between personal alienation and turnover intention. The statistically significant finding is in line with previous research that conceptualised alienation and turnover intention as withdrawal behaviours by individuals, i.e. a de-identification with work-related foci (Banai and Reisel 2007; Carmeli and Gefen 2005; Janse Van Rensburg 2004; Kanungo 1979, 1982; Khalid and Ali 2005; Roodt 1991, 1997). This finding is also supported by previous research that predicted that high alienation would eventually result in turnover (Du Plooy and Roodt 2010; Janse Van Rensburg 2004; Roodt 2004).

A negative relationship was found to exist between WI and turnover intention even when other subjective variables (personal alienation, emotional exhaustion, work engagement) were added to the multivariate equation. No evidence could be found in previous research that related WI to turnover intentions (Jaros et al. 1993; Lo and Aryee 2003; Muliawan et al. 2009; Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Scroggins 2008; Sulu et al. 2010; Tett and Meyer 1993; Wayne et al. 2006; Wheeler et al. 2007). The only studies that reported negative relationships between WI *facets* and turnover intention are by Olkkonen and Lipponen (2006), Scroggins (2008), Wayne et al. (2006) and Wheeler et al. (2007), but not with an integrated WI construct. The finding of the current study on the integrated WI construct therefore makes a unique contribution in this respect.

Since WI describes the identification with different work-related facets, it can therefore be expected that increased levels of WI will be associated with reduced levels of turnover intentions or even actual turnover. Interventions designed to improve WI (such as identity work strategies covered in Chap. 3) can directly result in reduced labour turnover and turnover intentions. Such results may have direct cost benefits to the company in the form of reduced labour replacement costs (such as specialist talent recruiting, head-hunting, advertising and selection costs).

8.5.2 Task Performance

A significant, positive correlation (albeit small) was found to exist between WI and task performance on a bivariate level. This finding is supported by previous research that reported that if an individual's occupational or professional identity is in conflict with that of the derived organisational identity, the individual's job performance differs from what is expected by the organisation (Scroggins 2008; Walsh and Gordon 2007). WI as a type of social identity is the product of an array of social identifications (the perception of oneness) with a range of social foci (e.g. organisation, occupation, career and job) (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Hogg et al. 1995; Walsh and Gordon 2007). Work-related identities have a significant influence on employee behaviour (Amiot

et al. 2007), which, in turn, have an impact on subjective work outcomes and task performance. This implies that the collective labour force's WI indirectly has a significant impact on organisational performance (Agostino 2004; Aryee and Luk 1996; Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Wayne et al. 2006). No previous studies reported specifically on the bivariate relationship between WI and task performance.

On a multivariate level (combined with other predictor variables), WI did not emerge as significant predictor of task performance. The other predictors that emerged as significant predictors of task performance on a multivariate level are personal alienation and helping behaviour. Research in the available literature reported a positive relationship between some WI facets such as self-concept–job fit and meaningful work with job performance (De Cuyper and De Witte 2005; Scroggins 2008). However, no direct evidence was found that WI is a predictor of job performance in a multivariate setting (Borman and Motowidlo 1993; Chughtai 2008; De Cuyper and De Witte 2005; Kahya 2009; Motowidlo et al. 1997; Rotenberry and Moberg 2007; Scroggins 2008; Van Scotter et al. 2000; Williams and Anderson 1991). Since no results were reported on the WI–task performance relationship before, the finding of this study therefore makes a unique contribution in this regard.

For industrial and organisational psychology, job performance improvement is a very important focus as it directly impacts the financial bottom line of the organisations (Kahya 2008). Job and task performance measurement remains a contentious issue, specifically because their measures are normally skewed and not considered to be highly valid. Besides finding solutions for measuring task performance levels accurately, it is also important to improve task performance levels by focusing on relevant WI facets that have a positive impact on task performance.

8.6 Subjective Consequences as Mediators of the WI–Objective Consequences Relationship

The purpose of this section is to explain and interpret the possible mediating effect of the subjective consequences (mediators: personal alienation, burnout, helping behaviour and work engagement) on the relationship between WI (predictor) and the objective consequences turnover intention or task performance (consequences).

8.6.1 Personal Alienation

It was empirically established that personal alienation mediates both the WI–turnover intention and WI–task performance relationships. Withdrawal behaviours (tardiness, absenteeism or turnover intention) will manifest towards the alienation side of the identification continuum and will have an impact on job performance (Janse Van Rensburg 2004; Kanungo 1979, 1982; Karatepe and Aleshinloye 2009; Roodt 1991, 1997; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). Conflicting results regarding the relationship between WI facets and personal alienation were reported in the

available research literature. Some researchers reported a statistically significant, negative relationship between alienation and the WI facets organisational identification and task identity (Banai and Reisel 2007; Efraty et al. 1991). Others reported a statistically significant, positive relationship between alienation and the WI facets work centrality and job involvement (Hirschfeld and Feild 2000). These findings might suggest that WI is a multidimensional construct where facets manifest themselves in different relationships with other variables as was the case in the Bester (2012) study.

The findings of this study suggest that high WI in combination with personal alienation results in reduced turnover intention and improved task performance. It is argued that high WI will reduce personal alienation levels which will result in reduced turnover intention levels or improved task performance. Since no previous evidence was found in the available research literature to confirm that personal alienation has a mediating effect on the WI–turnover intention or WI–task performance relationships, this study's result makes a unique contribution.

8.6.2 Helping Behaviour (H-OCB)

No empirical evidence could be found that H-OCB mediates the relation between WI and turnover intentions. A significant mediation effect for H-OCB was however found between WI and task performance. The literature reports a statistically significant, positive relationship between the WI facets (organisational identification, job involvement) and organisational citizen behaviour (Olkkonen and Lipponen 2006; Rotenberry and Moberg 2007). A statistically significant, negative relationship was reported between organisational citizen behaviour and turnover intention (Khalid and Ali 2005). A statistically significant, positive relationship was reported between OCB and job performance (Cropanzano et al. 2003).

The finding of the study suggests that those employees whose WI leans towards the high side will display helping behaviours to ensure that organisational objectives are met and in the process elevate overall task performance levels. Helping behaviour in this context supplements the level of social support in organisations where individuals collectively exhibit helping behaviours. The finding in this study therefore supports the research literature that helping behaviour has no mediating effect on the WI–turnover intention relationships, but makes a unique contribution on mediation of the relationship between WI and task performance.

8.6.3 Burnout

The mediation effects of the burnout dimensions were investigated separately in this study. It was empirically established that *emotional exhaustion* mediates the WI–turnover intention relationship, but not the WI–task performance relationship. It was

also empirically established that *depersonalisation* mediates both the WI–turnover intention and the WI–task performance relationships. *Reduced personal accomplishment* was not mediating the WI–turnover intention relationship, but did so for the WI–task performance relationship. These findings suggest that high WI reduces the emotional exhaustion levels which in turn result in reduced turnover intentions but not in increased task performance. High WI results in reduced depersonalisation which in turn leads to reduced turnover intentions and increased task performance levels. High WI results in improved personal accomplishment levels which positively affects task performance, but with no effect on turnover intentions. The positive outcomes and cost benefits of reduced turnover and improved task performance have already been alluded to earlier.

Cropanzano et al. (2003) found that emotional exhaustion (a core dimension of burnout) predicted job performance and that commitment (or strength of the identity tie) did not mediate this said relationship. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) presented evidence that burnout is related to turnover intention and health problems. No direct evidence was found in the available research literature that burnout or its dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment) have a mediating effect on the relationship between WI and turnover intention or on the relationship between WI and task performance. The study therefore makes a unique contribution in this respect.

8.6.4 Work Engagement

No evidence was found that work engagement mediates the WI–task performance relationship. However, empirical evidence suggests that WI mediate the WI–turnover intention relationship. This finding therefore suggests that high WI results in improved work engagement levels which again in turn reduce turnover intentions. The cost benefits of reduced turnover intentions levels to companies have already been alluded to earlier. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) presented evidence that work engagement and turnover intentions are related and that engagement mediates the job resources and turnover intention relationship. Saks (2006) reported that employee engagement mediated the relationship between antecedents (e.g. job characteristics, organisational support, supervisor support, rewards and recognition) and consequences (e.g. job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover intention and organisational citizenship behaviours). No evidence of previous studies was found that investigated the mediating effects that work engagement may have on the relationship between WI and turnover intention. This study therefore makes a unique contribution in this regard.

8.7 Biographical and Demographical Variables as Moderators in the Prediction of Objective Outcome: Turnover Intention

The focus of this section was to determine which of the selected biographical and demographic variables may moderate the relationship between predictors (work-based identity and selected subjective consequences) and turnover intention. Biographical variables selected for this study refer to personal attributes of the individual, including age, gender and race, whilst demographic variables refer to work-related attributes of the individual, namely, job tenure, education, region, marital status and job level.

8.7.1 Biographical and Demographical Variables, WI–Turnover Intention Relationship

The mentioned three biographical and the five demographical variables were tested as potential moderators in the WI–turnover intention relationship. None of the said variables were found to be moderating the WI–turnover intention relationship. However, two moderation effects were detected in the Bester (2012) study, and the findings are interpreted below.

8.7.2 Education Level, WI–Turnover Intention Relationship

It was found in Bester's (2012) UAE study that educational level acts as a moderator when predicting turnover intention in a structural equation model (refer to Chap. 5 for a more detailed discussion on the moderator effects). The inclusion of different educational groupings significantly affected different paths and improved the overall model fit. The need for organisational identification (nOID) was more important for the lower educated than for the higher educated group. Value congruence played a stronger role in the formation of WI in higher educated groups than for lower educated groups. WI also played a stronger role in the formation of work engagement in the higher educated group. Employees with a lower education on the other hand were more inclined to entertain turnover intentions even if they experienced work engagement compared to the higher educated group. In the case of the higher educated group, work engagement acted as a buffer against turnover intentions. It is evident from these findings that educational level affects WI dimensions, turnover intentions and work engagement differently.

8.7.3 Nationality, WI–Turnover Intention Relationship

It was found in Bester's (2012) United Arab Emirates study that nationality acts as a moderator (refer to Chap. 5 for a more detailed discussion on the moderator effects) when predicting turnover intention in a structural equation model. The inclusion of nationality groupings significantly affected different paths and improved the overall model fit. It was found that the Middle East group relied more heavily on nOID as a resource compared to other nationality groups. The Asian group perceived the breach of psychological contract as a substantial job demand compared to the West group that did not perceive this as a demand at all. Person–organisation fit played smaller part in WI formation for the West group compared to other groups, as opposed to value congruence which played a large role in WI formation of the West group compared to the Middle East group where it only plays a minor role. Members of the West group perceived job demands detracted from the WI formation, compared to the Asian group where demands resulted in significant increases in WI. Similar patterns of perceptions of job resources were detected, but with significant differences between the Middle East and West groups and the UAE and the Asia groups. In the West group, WI caused less work engagement but more in the UAE group.

This may possibly explain cultural differences in approaches to develop WI (and choice of WI facets) and how they respond on different job resources and job demands. Acculturation processes adopted by different cultures are not all the same. It is clear that such processes have an impact on which JRs and JDs are viewed as important and how this may again related to choice of WI facets as well as the impact of the WI levels. The exact nature of cultures' choice and prioritising processes still need to be unravelled by further research. It is expected that learned cultural needs may play a role in these choice and prioritisation processes.

8.8 Biographical and Demographical Variables as Moderators in the Prediction of Objective Outcome Task Performance

The focus of this section is to explain which of the selected biographical and demographic variables mentioned earlier moderate the relationship between predictors (WI and selected subjective consequences) and task performance as reported in the Bothma (2012) study.

8.8.1 Biographical and Demographical Variables, WI–Task Performance Relationship

Three biographical (age, gender, race) and four demographical variables (job tenure, region, marital status, job level) were tested as potential moderators in the WI–task performance relationship. It was empirically established that none of the

mentioned variables moderated the WI–task performance relationship. These (lack of) significant results will therefore not be discussed any further.

8.8.2 Education, WI–Task Performance Relationship

It was empirically established that education is a moderator of the relationship between WI and task performance. It was found that in the respondents with a National Diploma or a Higher National Diploma, WI relative to their task performance was significantly higher when compared to the other qualification categories. This finding can potentially be attributed to the fact that this qualification category represents a scarce and sought-after technical skills group that fulfils a core function in the organisation. The ICT company in question takes extra measures to retain this scarce category which may explain the high WI scores related to task performance. This finding is supported by Adeogun (2008), who reported that educational level moderates the relationship between monetary motivation and job performance. No previous studies reported on the moderating effect education might have on the relationship between WI and task performance.

8.9 Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The first section of the chapter provided a discussion and explanation on the antecedents of WI. The second section provided a discussion and explanation on the consequences of WI. Key points emerging from the research project and their implications will be highlighted in the section below:

1. In the first section of this chapter, the SA study (De Braine 2012) reported that employees' ambitious WIs flourished under conditions where there are opportunities for growth and development, advancement and organisational support. The perceived external prestige (a strong organisational reputation and identity (brand)) and a supportive (positive) team climate are further conditions for developing a strong WI.
2. Mild conditions of overload may still support the development of a strong WI. It is argued that employees should be able to demonstrate that they can deal with overload conditions and that they are not shying away from performing extra tasks. This is partly contributing to their identity of who they are at work.
3. In Bester's United Arab Emirates (UAE) study, it was found that WI consisted of three dimensions, namely, work centrality, person–organisation fit and value congruence. It was further established that pull factors need for organisational identification, task resources and remuneration perceptions co-determined work centrality. Need for organisational identification, task resources and organisational reputation predicted both person–organisation fit and value congruence where remuneration perceptions were added in the latter case. WI can

therefore be enhanced by selecting employees for value congruence and person–organisation fit. In this case need for organisational identification, task resources, organisational reputation and remuneration perceptions play a major role in enhancing value congruence and person–organisation fit. Need for organisational identification, task resource and remuneration perceptions play a role in growing work centrality.

4. The two studies confirm that the traditional JD-R model is too restrictive and can only partly explain WI. It should however be remembered that the JD-R model was in the first instance not designed to specifically predict WI, but work engagement. Other JRs and JDs or push and pull factors can be added to enrich the JD-R model, or the model may rather be extended to a broad force field analysis WI model with a range of different push (restraining) and pull (facilitating) factors.
5. A rather disturbing finding was that the WI of whites was consistently lower when compared to other race groups in relation to JRs such as task identity and perceived external prestige or to JDs such as job insecurity and work–family conflict. This finding suggests that whites are most probably feeling alienated from the current organisation (or even society), since they find it difficult to identify with the most important identification facets within the workplace such as task and organisational identification. Alienation of a major portion of a company's workforce has serious cost implications as most of the affected employees only do what is expected from them, nothing more. The effects on organisation citizenship behaviours are evident. The older employees are waiting for retirement, and the younger ones are looking out for work opportunities elsewhere, even overseas. It is further evident that perceptions of job insecurity and work–family conflict would further negatively impact WI levels. This situation can possibly be attributed to the Black Economic Empowerment (Employment Equity and Affirmative Action) legislation in the country which is providing a basis for systematic discrimination against white-first work entrants and thereby creating a new generation of disenfranchised employees who have to pay for the "sins" of a previous generation. This issue needs to be urgently and constructively addressed at a company strategic level as well as on a national policy level.
6. The second section of this chapter reported on the second SA study (Bothma 2011) that established that WI co-determines four subjective consequences as well as two objective consequences. More specifically, it was established that WI is inversely related to personal alienation and burnout and positively related to helping behaviours and work engagement. In practical terms, this means that if WI is enhanced, then personal alienation and burnout levels will reduce or work engagement and helping behaviours would increase. With reference to the objective consequences, it means that increased WI would lead to reduced turnover intentions and improved task performance.
7. However, when viewed in combination, this means that increased WI will reduce personal alienation and burnout, but simultaneously increase work engagement and helping behaviours in about proportionally equal amounts. WI

in combination with these subjective outcomes will in turn reduce turnover intentions proportionally more when compared to improvements in task performance. It is evident from this explanation that the four subjective consequences mediate the WI–objective consequence relationships.

8. In practical terms, this means that WI improvement interventions (such as identity work strategies or interventions aimed at improving co-determining factors of WI) will result in reduced personal alienation and burnout and improved helping behaviours and work engagement (overall a more constructive environment to work in) that in turn will result in reduced turnover intentions and improved task performance.
9. In the second SA study, only educational level was found to moderate the prediction of the consequence task performance. This means that the education level category (those with a National Diploma or a Higher National Diploma) registered higher WI levels relative to their task performance when compared to other educational level categories. This finding can probably be ascribed to the fact that employees in this category are scarce and that the ICT sector company in question is taking extra measures to retain their services which result in higher WI levels.
10. In the UAE study, it was found the differences in educational level and nationality groups resulted in significant changes in paths of the SEM models tested, and the overall model fit of the model was improved when these moderation paths were included.

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Chapter 9
Moving Forward: Practical and Theoretical Implications

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9.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, the empirical results of the work identity research project were presented (Chap. 7) and discussed relative to existing literature (Chap. 8), respectively. This final chapter focuses on three sections, namely, the conclusions, the implications and recommendations for practice and the suggestions for future research.

The first section provides a broad overview of the most important conclusions of the research project emanating from the literature/theoretical review, the qualitative and the quantitative phases of the research project.

The second section then highlights the implications and practice-based recommendations on these aforementioned findings and conclusions.

The third and final section presents some suggestions for future research. These specific suggestions are grouped under three different headings.

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9.2 Conclusions on the Findings

The main conclusions drawn from the findings of the work identity project (as reported in more detail in Chaps. 7 and 8) are the following:

Work identity is the answer to the question 'Who am I at work?' Work-based identity (WI) plays a central role in employee behaviour at work but more specifically in describing or explaining engaging behaviours at work. An overview of the main findings of the project will be provided briefly according to the different parts and chapters of this book: Chap. 1 explains the context and setting of the work identity project and explicates the different research aims of the project. Part I provides the conceptualisation and theoretical foundations of WI used in this book and consists of the following four chapters: Chap. 2 explicates the theoretical foundations for the conceptualisation and operationalisation of WI. Chapter 3 is based on qualitative empirical research and provides a model for explaining identity work and also the tactics and strategies applied to maintain and enhance WI. Chapter 4 focuses on an overview of the existing research literature with respect to the job demands and job resources as possible antecedents of WI. Chapter 5 shifts the focus of the literature review to the subjective and the objective consequences of WI. Part II consists of one chapter: Chap. 6 provides the exploratory empirical research findings of the two SA quantitative studies of the project. Part III also consists of one chapter that focuses on the testing for causality. Part IV, the last part, consists of two chapters: Chap. 8 provides a discussion of these findings indicating the specific contributions of this research project. Conclusions relating to the different chapters will be provided in greater detail in the following paragraphs below.

In retrospect, the decision to ground WI in social identity theory (SIT) (cf. Tajfel and Turner 1985) and role identity theory (RIT) (cf. Stryker and Burke 2000) that respectively emanate from sociology and psychology was a well-considered decision. SIT and RIT with their respective subcategories provide a sound theoretical foundation for integrating work-related commitment research. Subsequently, SIT and RIT provide the potential for integrating a wide array of seemingly disparate and unrelated commitment-related constructs to explain the relationship between individuals and their work or the work facets they identify with. These two broad theoretical streams (as described in Chap. 2) provide the so much needed theoretical foundation for work-related commitment research which is seemingly lacking in some of the current research streams on attachment, involvement, engagement and commitment to work.

WI remains a dynamic construct which is difficult to conceptualise and to capture operationally, especially the dynamic component of identity work. WI and identity work are two distinct but inseparable constructs. Work identity can be viewed as a dynamic condition or state (as an outcome), and identity work is the process leading up to this condition or state (as described in Chap. 3) (Adams and Crafford 2012). But this is a constant and a dynamic process, where the process influences the condition and that feeds back into the process again – in other words a double helix process that continues to develop in a reciprocal and a cyclical manner. This conclusion was again affirmed in the qualitative phase of the work

identity project and is illustrated in the Saayman and Crafford (2011) model proposed in Chap. 3. Furthermore, the qualitative phase of this research project also identified nine different tactics and strategies that employees are using (in their identity work) to promote and maintain their work identities (refer to Chap. 3). These tactics and strategies may appear superficial at a first glance, but they suggest a broad taxonomy of tactics and strategies that are located in different segments/zones of the model suggested by Saayman and Crafford (2011) which can be further explored on deeper levels as was suggested in Chap. 3.

The distinction between antecedents and consequences of WI enabled the researchers to separate the WI construct from its causes and also from its consequences, thereby assisting in conceptualising and operationalising a clearer conceived construct that is less affected by construct contamination. The proposed onion model led Lloyd et al. (2011) to conclude that WI is a multilayered and a multidimensional construct, and their definition was used as a conceptual basis for operationalising the WI construct. Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) argued that employees' psychological identification with work happens within four broad focal areas, namely, with *work* in general (work centrality/work involvement); secondly, with *what* the employee does (career/occupational/professional identity); thirdly, with *where* the employee works (organisational membership) and lastly, with the *specific work* the employee does (job involvement). The decision to also superimpose these different work-related identification foci on Kirpal's (2004b) three-dimensional model (structural, social and individual-psychological) in the conceptualisation and construction of the WI construct and the WI prototype (refer to Chap. 2) yielded usable and interpretable results in both the Bothma (2011) and the De Braine (2012) studies (refer to Chap. 6). WI can therefore be viewed as an umbrella term that covers a range of different work-related identification foci – i.e. the social foci that individuals are identifying within their workplace. These may include identification foci such as the organisation, occupation/profession, career, work team, job or work role of the individual. An abundance of scales currently exists that can measure attachment, involvement, commitment or engagement in these different identification foci (refer to Roodt 2004).

The initial six theoretical dimensions used for the construction of the WI scale yielded three different interpretable dimensions in the Bester (2012) study (also refer to Chap. 7), namely, work centrality, person–organisation fit and value congruence. These three dimensions functioned effectively in the SEM to predict work engagement and turnover intentions in Bester's study. The SEM clearly established some causes and consequences of WI.

The theoretical foundations and the process followed in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the construct are fully explained in Chaps. 2 and 6. Chapter 4 provided an overview of the literature in respect of the traditional JD-R model and some additional selected job demands and resources and their relation to WI. Literature that specifically links job demands and job resources to WI is scarce. Even sparser is literature on empirical studies that examined the moderating effect of biographical and demographical variables on the relationship between job demands and resources with WI.

Chapter 5 also provided an overview of the literature in respect of the subjective (personal alienation, helping behaviours, work engagement and burnout) and the objective consequences (task performance and turnover intention) of WI and also indicated how these relationships were moderated by biographical and demographical variables. Research in this regard reports on how some work identity facets relate to these consequences, but not on a combined or integrated WI construct. There is also a clear void in the literature in this respect.

With reference to the second part of Chap. 6, it was established in the De Braine (2012) study that job demands (JDs) and job resources (JRs) (as in the JDRS model of Jackson and Rothmann (2005)) and other selected JDs (push factors) and JRs (pull factors) are predictors of WI. The term *push factors* is used to describe variables outside the traditional JD-R model that may in a similar way as JDs also lessen or decrease WI. On the other hand, *pull factors* similar to JRs may result in increased or enhanced WI. More specifically, it was found that the following JRs related to WI in a linear and in a non-linear way: growth opportunities, perceived external prestige, organisational support, team climate and advancement. Only one JD, namely, overload, was related to WI in a linear as well as in a non-linear way. (Refer to De Braine (2012) for a more detailed discussion of these non-linear results.) By comparing these linear and non-linear relationships between the JDs, JRs and WI, it was found that these differences were ignorably small. Both these sets of findings clearly established that the antecedent conditions (with reference to the JD-R model) are co-determining WI. Bester's (2012) study (refer to the first part of Chap. 7) also found that different JDs (push factors) and JRs (pull factors) (outside the traditional JD-R model) are related to specific WI dimensions. More specifically, it was found that the following JRs predict WI: need for organisational identification, organisational reputation, task resources and remuneration perceptions. The two JDs that predicted WI were breach of psychological contract and work–family conflict. Both these JRs and JDs fall outside the traditional JD-R model. It can therefore be concluded that the mentioned JDs and JRs are predictors of WI and significantly contribute to the formation of WI. What is also evident is that the traditional JD-R model (discussed in Chap. 6) is not comprehensive enough to contain all possible JDs (push factors) and JRs (pull factors). The model can therefore be enriched by way of including other push and pull factors. All possible interaction effects between push and pull factors or JRs and JDs were not fully explored in this research project. Practitioners and scholars of WI should be cautioned not to focus only on linear cause-and-effect relationships but also on the interactive and reciprocal relationships when predicting WI. This can be more effectively dealt within SEMs or in cross-lagged panel design studies.

With reference to the third part of Chap. 6, it was also determined in the Bothma (2011) study that WI was significantly related to subjective (or more proximate) consequences such as personal alienation, helping behaviours, work engagement and burnout as well as objective (or more distal) consequences such as task performance and turnover intentions. In the case of the latter, turnover intention scores were used as a proxy for actual turnover (something more about this right at the end of this section). Findings of the study also indicate that the subjective (proximate)

consequences mediate the relationship between WI and the objective (distal) consequences. These findings indicate that WI can be used to successfully predict important outcomes in the workplace such as task performance and actual turnover. Bester's study (refer to Chap. 7) not only found that WI could predict turnover intention but that it could also predict work engagement. Based on these findings, the WI construct can be clearly distinguished from the work engagement construct, despite the fact that they are significantly, positively correlated and despite the fact that they share some degree of common variance. Tests for multicollinearity have established that these two constructs were significantly different.

From a methodological perspective, the decision to approach this work identity project[1] in different phases was a constructive and productive decision. First, it helped by conducting a comprehensive literature review as the first stage and thereby developing a better understanding of WI and its underpinning theoretical foundations.

Second, it helped by conducting the qualitative phase of the empirical research first and thereby assisted the project team members in developing an appreciation for the construct in a natural research setting. As explained in Chap. 1, all the researchers in the project were initially involved in the qualitative phase of the study and could experience the 'feel' of the WI construct as perceived and experienced by research participants in this phase. This enabled them (research team members) to better understand the concept and its operationalisation.

Third, against the background of the first two phases, these two earlier phases assisted in conceptualising and operationalising the WI construct that was used in the third empirical, quantitative phase of the project (as reported in Chaps. 6 and 7). Researchers in this phase of the project could therefore develop a better idea about the foundational constructs and could qualitatively experience these in their respective research settings.

The conceptual (bow tie) model proposed in Chap. 1 (refer to Fig. 1.2 and Table 1.1) assisted in conceptualising a range of different causes and outcomes of WI. It was postulated in this research project that the antecedents of WI were significantly related to WI. This finding therefore clearly indicated that WI (as a criterion) could be successfully predicted and is partially co-determined by these selected antecedents. The postulated consequences in this project were also significantly related to WI (as a predictor), thereby indicating that WI can be successfully used as a predictor of WI consequences. The proposed research model provides a clear research agenda which can be used to systematically address research questions in the future.

With the construct-descriptive and the criterion-predictive validity firmly established in both the Bothma (2011) and De Braine (2012) studies (refer to both the second and third part of Chap. 6), the WI construct was also used in a structural equation modelling study (Bester, 2012) where both antecedents and outcomes were included in a predictive model (refer to Chap. 7). These findings clearly illustrate that the WI scale can be effectively used to measure the WI construct.

[1] The project was conducted in three discernible phases which are briefly discussed below. Refer to Chap. 1 for a more detailed explication of these phases.

A finding not related to WI per se, but more specifically to the turnover intention scale (TIS) used to predict the consequences in the Bothma study, suggests that the TIS can be used as a proxy for actual turnover, since scores on this scale were significantly related to actual turnover after a 4-month and a 4-year period after the survey was conducted. This was a unique way of establishing the criterion validity of the TIS used as a consequence of WI in this research project. Tracking or tracing WI scores and turnover intention scores over time does provide useful indicators of employees' attachment levels at work.

9.3 Implications and Recommendations

The practical implications and recommendations of this research project are based on these above-mentioned findings and conclusions. The practical implications are the following:

This research project has implications on different organisational levels in practice. More specifically, implications can be mentioned for policymakers on a labour policy level, for strategic HR managers on a company strategy level, for HR practitioners and HR consultants on a tactical level and for people supervisors and managers on an operational level. From a macro policymaking point of view (specifically relevant to the SA context), it should be noted that SA is urgently lacking a national work identity framework. SA labour policy should therefore be aimed at developing an enabling labour context. Such a labour context is required which provides the national resources or pull factors, e.g. a dedicated budget available for skills development, a national culture of skills development, a range of educational programmes in the workplace and the many others, too many to mention. Subsequently, these national resources or pull factors could facilitate the development of a basic work identity for all SA employees on all levels. Furthermore, the SA labour policy should ideally also address the most important constraints or push factors in the SA workplace, e.g. ignorance, the dangers of thinking in terms of ideology, violence, racism, discrimination and also many others that are too much to mention. These constraints or push factors may negatively impact on the development of a basic SA work identity. Such a national or a uniform WI framework constituted by the different push and pull factors may foster a greater understanding between different racial and cultural groups belonging to a very diverse workforce (as explained in more detail in Chap. 1). The authors are of the opinion that these principles may apply equally to other developing or culturally diverse countries that are facing similar development challenges.

On a company strategic (or meso) level, the HR managers concerned with strategic HR issues need to take note of which factors in the traditional JDRS (Jackson and Rothmann 2005) model (job resources) contribute to activating WI and which factors (job demands) contribute to deactivating WI. They should also understand how these forces interact with one another and how this impacts the formation of WI. A strategic culture change to implement and promote engaging work practices

and an engaging workforce may have a significant effect on employee and ultimately company performance (refer to Chap. 8 for a discussion on WI outcomes).

On a tactical and a micro operational level, HR and line managers should be sufficiently informed and skilled in understanding how to develop and create a work context with which employees can and would like to identify with. What job resources (or pull factors) can be provided to grow WI, and what job demands (or push factors) should be restricted to create a conducive and an engaging work context?

The practical considerations presented above suggest that leaders/managers of unions and business organisations in all the different levels should be sufficiently informed about the dynamics of creating and promoting job conditions that would establish and grow a national WI (a work identity that applies to SA nationwide) in SA organisations or in other similar developing country contexts. (The conditions that contribute to the low WI levels were identified and discussed in Chap. 1.) More specifically, could SA leaders/managers give attention to the following job resources and demands (in this particular order) that partially co-determine the construction of WI?

- *Growth opportunities* – require a work context that offers opportunities for growth and development
- *Perceived external prestige* (organisational reputation) – aspires to be associated with an organisation that has a clear identity and a well-developed brand
- *Organisational support* – prefers to work in an organisation that provides comprehensive support
- *Team climate* – wishes to work in a supportive team environment
- *Advancement* – prefers to see opportunities for advancement

The job demand that hampers the development of WI is:

- *Overload* – requires some degree of workload that will pose some challenge to job incumbents

More specifically, in the SA context, the WI framework can be used to develop a unique SA work identity. Given the challenges and tensions that the SA society is facing today (refer to Chap. 1), this framework may assist in creating a more conducive work context for all SA employees and also a so much needed shared frame of reference when it comes to work-related issues and challenges. However, not all employees are similar, and practitioners should therefore be cautioned to allow for individual differences and preferences – since efforts to enforce a uniform approach in the extreme might lead to withdrawal and deactivation of work identities.

The WI construct provides potential parsimony in commitment-related research that is currently characterised by concept redundancy as well as construct contamination (refer to par. 9.2 on this point). The role that the work-related self-concept plays in integrating these different and often redundant work-related identification foci is currently under-explored and provides the potential for further empirical studies.

The research findings clearly show that WI is a construct that holds significant methodological potential. It provides a more parsimonious approach towards explaining

the identification process at work, incorporating a host of other identification constructs and foci. It could therefore assist in bringing some degree of parsimony and order to the field of work-related commitment research and thereby address to some extent the concept redundancy and contamination issues. Some of these issues are explained in more detail below.

Based on the theorisation presented in Chap. 2, the authors of this book argue that WI is anchored in a sound and solid theoretical framework, as opposed to many other engagement and commitment constructs that evolved from practice without any seemingly (or at least without a sound) underpinning or guiding theoretical foundation.

The WI research project has more specifically shown that the JD-R model can also be used to effectively predict WI. The ratio and all possible variations of interactions between JDs and JRs also play, in the case of WI, a significant role in explaining the process of identification with work. The research findings also indicate that the traditional JD-R model alone is not sufficient in explaining WI, probably because it was not designed to do so in the first place. The model can however be enriched by way of including other nontraditional JDs (push factors) and JRs (pull factors). Using a force-field analysis methodology can assist in developing a more inclusive model.

The De Braine (2012) study (refer to the second part of Chap. 6) reported no interaction effects between JRs and JDs when predicting WI. This is most likely a company-, a sample- or a criterion-specific finding where there are no serious shortages of resources and where demands were probably perceived as challenges. Consequently, it should then also be established what interactions are present between JRs and JDs when predicting WI. Previous research on *work engagement* (note: *not* WI) clearly established such moderation effects. However, given the relatively limited number of JRs and JDs explored in the current project, it may also be the case with WI or even in other work contexts outside SA as was confirmed in the Bester (2012) study.

WI also has particular consequences that are either subjective or objective. The more proximate (closer to the individual) subjective consequences (personal alienation, helping behaviours, burnout and work engagement) were all significantly related to WI, and these also played a mediating role in the relationship with the more distal (further removed from the individual) consequences, namely, turnover intentions, work engagement and task performance. This means that distal consequences can be changed by giving attention to how the proximate conditions are perceived by employees.

Work engagement literature per se indicates a relationship between work engagement and organisational commitment. These findings suggest that some gliding scale of deepening identification exists ranging from identification, involvement, engagement to commitment. Such findings will enable practitioners to better understand the causes and the consequences of WI and beg for further investigation. Subsequently, the conditions leading to high WI can be more effectively modelled and simulated.

If practitioners know what the antecedents and consequences of WI are, they can either enhance conditions that activate WI or reduce those that deactivate WI. But

since WI formation is a highly individualised process, practitioners need to keep individual preferences and differences in mind. Negative consequences of WI can thereby be indirectly manipulated or reduced, and positive outcomes indirectly created or enhanced with sufficient knowledge of individual preferences. The proposed bow tie model (refer to Chap. 1) can provide a framework for understanding the causes and outcomes of WI.

WI is a relatively 'new' construct in the research literature. If JDs and JRs (in the broadest sense) co-determine WI, it should be explored in practice which JRs relate more strongly to the activation of WI than others. The opposite is also true; it should be further investigated and established which JDs lead to the deactivation of WI as opposed to others. Thirdly, it should also be determined how these JDs and JRs interact amongst themselves and in relation to WI. This information would enable managers and supervisors to create optimal working conditions for modern-day workers. The JDs and JRs in the current study were mainly linked to selected contextual resources and demands based on the JDRS model which is clearly not all inclusive. Evidence suggests that the model can be further enriched.

WI as a state or as a condition is conceptualised and operationalised in such a way (refer to Chaps. 2 and 4 for a detailed discussion) that it can be distinguished from its antecedent conditions as well as its consequences. Such an approach will ensure that the essence of WI is captured more accurately, compared to other measures that erroneously also include causes or consequences of engaging behaviours at work. Following this approach in the current study addressed the issue of possible construct contamination between WI and its causes and consequences. The value of conceptually separating the WI condition from its causes or consequences lies in the consistency in which WI can be measured despite shifts or changes in the contextual factors. Stated differently, this means that if the contextual factors are changing, it will only result in a change in the level of WI scores and not in the nature of the WI construct itself.

9.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research are grouped under the following three subheadings:

9.4.1 Further Exploring and Expanding the Research Model

9.4.1.1 Exploring Other Variables

The bow tie model of antecedents and consequences of WI proposed in Chap. 1 can be used to systematically investigate the causes and consequences of WI. The list of all possible JDs and JRs or other push and pull factors (not only those included in the traditional JD-R or JDRS models) is therefore not fully explored.

The inclusion of other demands and resources would enrich the predictive model and may explain additional variance in the prediction of WI. On the other hand, it may be possible that a totally different set of push and pull factors may operate to activate and optimise the process of identity work (IW). It is suggested that the complete list of potential JDs and JRs as well as other push and pull factors are explored in future studies, so that it can be determined which JDs and JRs as well as other push and pull factors best predict WI or IW. The continuous double helix process between WI and IW should also be considered in this model. It should also be realised that this list will never be 'complete' in the true sense of the word because it will be continuously 'updated' due to disruptive transitions in the twenty-first-century workplace. The Bester (2012) study has clearly indicated that other variables outside the traditional JD-R model also play a significant role in WI formation. The JD-R model should therefore be enriched or entirely reconceptualised in the explanation of WI per se.

9.4.1.2 Including Personal Resources

We furthermore suggest that personal resources should be included in further predictive research on WI, specifically those included in the psychological capital (PsyCap) model as suggested by Luthans and research associates (cf. Luthans and Youssef 2004; Luthans et al. 2007). These personal resources may explain more variance in WI than contextual factors (e.g. job demands and job resources or push and pull factors) alone. It is also postulated that there may be interaction (mediation) effects between these contextual push and pull factors and the PsyCap elements (hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism), possibly resulting in more variance explained in the prediction of WI. This line of reasoning is based on the fact that PsyCap elements are more closely related to the individual's self-concept and will as such influence WI formation more closely.

9.4.1.3 Activation or Deactivation of WI

It would also be interesting to explore the ratio (relative strength) between specific JD and JR scores to determine under which conditions WI on a gliding scale is more activated or when WI is less or even deactivated. It would then be possible to determine which ones are the most important JRs (pull factors) that activate WI and which ones are the most important JDs (push factors) that deactivate WI. It may also be that the salience of specific individual needs is related to the JRs (or pull factors) or inversely to JDs (or push factors) and that these may activate or deactivate particular work identity facets. It is also unknown at this point in time how these push and pull factors interact amongst themselves and with changes in different working conditions. Stated differently, the question would be if the push and pull factor relationships with WI would remain constant in different working conditions and contexts. These relationships need to be explored and investigated further.

9.4.2 Conceptual and Operational (Theoretical) Matters

9.4.2.1 Exploring the Work Identity Construct

More qualitative research should be conducted on the WI phenomenon – more specifically on the link between WI and the process of identity work. At the very start of this research project, WI was viewed as a 'black box' concept. Though we could unveil and conceptualise WI to some extent in this research project, WI still remains to some degree at this point in time to be still considered a 'black box' concept – something we don't fully grasp or that we can't fully explain yet. Through qualitative research an appreciation can be developed in how the identity formation process unfolds and what particular stages are contained in the process of resolving the tensions between the personal and social-based work identity foci. These tactics and strategies that employees apply at work have not been fully explored yet, and the proposed taxonomy in Chap. 3 suggests a more systematic approach towards investigating possible strategies and tactics in different domains of the proposed model. The integrative role of the self-concept in resolving tensions between conflicting work-related identification foci is currently under-explored. We recommend that the integrative role of the self-concept during these tension-resolving processes should be further explored.

Closely related to the above is the issue relating to different modes of individual–organisation bonding process. In some instances individuals have a personal relationship with their organisations or their representatives. In other cases, the relationship is mediated by a third party such as a trade union or a trade union representative. These two processes follow distinctly different routes of socialising newcomers, and the question is whether this results in distinctly different work identities.

It is further recommended to explore this field in more depth in an interdisciplinary research setting of psychology, cultural/social sciences, business administration and HRM.

9.4.2.2 Including Affective or Emotive Components

The fact that people are or become passionate about their work raises the question that WI may also contain affective/emotive and intentional elements (not only a cognitive element). Consequently, the question can be raised: what exemplary behaviours are related to these other two elements that would better describe the WI construct? Further qualitative and quantitative enquiry may shed more light on the WI construct that may contain cognitive, affective and conative elements but that would still be distinguishable from other constructs such as job satisfaction (that is measuring affect in the workplace) or other workplace intentions such as turnover intentions (that measures intentions to leave or stay).

9.4.2.3 The Identification Continuum

As suggested in the earlier chapters (refer to Chaps. 2 and 6), levels of WI may exist on a continuum with under-identification and over-identification on the extreme ends. If WI is viewed as a bipolar continuum, is there a shift/change in the nature or composition of the identification construct if one moves from one position to another position on this suggested continuum? A related issue may be how this WI continuum and its extreme poles are related to certain outcome variables on a gliding scale such as well-being and psychological health on one end or related to alienation, burnout, type A behaviour and workaholism on the other end?

9.4.2.4 Work-Identification Facets

It would be interesting to know what the salient work facets (identification foci) are that individuals prefer to identify with. How do these work facets relate to individual need salience – in other words, is there a specific relationship between particular individual need salience and the choice of work facets individuals like to identify with? Is the relationship between particular individual needs and WI possibly mediated by specific job resources and job demands? Then, is this choice of particular work identity facets culturally/socially imposed? This knowledge may explain differences in social or cultural preferences in WI – a suggestion made by Bester (2012) in his study.

Closely related to the above is an issue associated with culturally diverse work settings. If different cultures work in the same organisation, do these cultures bring different social identities to the workplace? How would these different social identities then affect the work identity formation process? Do different cultures give preference (or value) to different identification foci in the workplace? All these questions are still unresolved and beg for further investigation.

9.4.3 Methodological Suggestions

9.4.3.1 Exploring Different Research Settings

From a methodological perspective, WI was only investigated in one specific setting – namely, the ICT sector in SA – in this research project which has limit generalisation value. It would be productive to also expand this SA project to other organisational, industry or country settings to test if the research model holds across different contexts and if these findings could be generalised across different organisational, industry or national boundaries. This is an aspect often neglected in published research in general (Roe 2012; Roodt 2012).

Closely related to the above-mentioned aspect is the term ‘difficult’ working conditions. How does working in difficult conditions, such as underground mining (extreme temperatures and high humidity) or in call centre environments (sometimes referred to as ‘sweat shops’), affect the identity formation process at work? Does identity formation evolve in a different manner compared to ‘normal’ working conditions? These questions beg further research.

9.4.3.2 Cross-Lagged Panel Design

As suggested earlier, it appears that work identification (work identity), job involvement, work engagement and organisational commitment are independent but related constructs. It would therefore make sense to test the causal and interactive sequence of these (and other related) constructs in a longitudinal, cross-lagged panel design study where the double helix dynamics can also be considered. It would also indicate what common variances are shared between these constructs. This information would provide answers to the questions in what sequence or interactive relationships these constructs are activated and which ones are triggering or causing the others. Such a study may cast a totally different light on how the work identification process starts and develops across different possible phases or stages. It is postulated that different but deepening levels of identification exist across such stages. These identification stages may possibly be linked to different organisational tenure or career development stages.

9.4.3.3 Non-linear Relationships

Preliminary research findings indicate that there may be non-linear relationships between JRs and WI as well as between JDs and WI (refer to Chaps. 7 and 8). These findings suggest that there is an optimal point of a JR or a JD after which WI will increase or decrease (depending on whether it is a U or an inverted U relationship). The existence of such non-linear relationships should be further explored, since it is unknown whether it is a resource-specific or a demand-specific phenomenon or whether it applies to JRs or JDs (or push and pull factors) in general.

9.4.3.4 Including Objective Measures

On a more practical note, since the work identity project mostly made use of self-report measures, it is suggested that more objective outcome measures (i.e. not only self-report measures but also others such as financial performance of work units, days absent from work, productivity measures, etc.) are also included as dependent variables in future studies.

9.4.3.5 Translation Effects

English was used as the medium in the surveys that were conducted during this research project. This is to most of the research participants in the SA context their second or third language. English language proficiency is therefore a crucial factor to be considered when conducting survey research in a multicultural research setting. At the same time, we realise that using one single language – in this case English – may filter out some relevant monolingual, local-language-speaking participants. However, in an electronic research setting, different languages can be used simultaneously. Translations or back-translations of surveys immediately open up a different set of issues that are related to measurement equivalence – an issue that was already alluded to earlier.

9.4.3.6 Measurement Equivalence

In order to establish the measurement equivalence of the WI scale, it is perhaps self-evident to test if the scale is equivalent for different race, ethnic/language as well as gender groups. Such analyses on potential bias were not conducted on the WI scale during this research project. The range of nonsignificant findings on the moderating relationship of biographical and demographical variables and WI suggested that such analyses were not necessary.

9.5 Concluding Remarks

The work identity research project reported in this book tried to answer the question 'Who am I at work?' within the dynamic and changing SA work context. In order to address this question, the researchers approached the problem in two distinct empirical research phases. The first phase was aimed at establishing how work identity is formed, developed and maintained from a qualitative research methodology perspective. With this phase concluded, the researchers then engaged in a quantitative research mode in the second phase to establish how WI can be operationalised as a predictor or as a criterion. This was done more specifically with a study on the prediction of WI by using the JD-R model as well as a study on the consequence of WI that investigated subjective and objective outcomes. A third study in this second phase developed and tested a structural equation model where WI played a central role in the proposed model. Results of these studies established that WI is a construct worthwhile to pursue (even in multicultural work settings). Because the WI construct can be applied as a predictor and also be related to important consequences that are in turn linked to individual and indirectly to organisational performance, the research objectives of the work identity research project were hereby achieved.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

A

AMOS	Structural equation modelling statistical software program
ANC	African National Congress
AI	Appreciate inquiry
AL	Personal alienation

B

BAB theory	Broaden-and-build theory
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BRICS	Constellation of countries consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa

C

CDGs	Currently disadvantaged groups
CFA	Confirmatory factor analysis
CFI	Comparative fit index
CEPPWAWU	Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union
COR theory	Conservation of Resources theory
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CRC model	Compensatory Regulatory-Control model

D

DP	Depersonalisation, a burnout dimension

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E

EE	Emotional exhaustion, a burnout dimension
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
ETQA system	Education, Training Quality Assurance system

F

FA	Factor analysis
FAWU	Food and Allied Workers Union

G

GDP	Gross domestic product
GFI	Goodness of fit index
H	
HR	Human resources
H-OCB	Helping Behaviours, a facet of Organisation Citizenship Behaviours

I

ICT	Identity control theory
ICT sector	Information, Communication Technology
IT	Identity theory
IT professionals	Information Technology professionals

J

JD-R model	Job demands-resources model
JDRS	Job demands-resources Scale
JDs	Job demands
JRs	Job resources

K

KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

M

M	Arithmetic mean
MBI	Maslach Burnout Inventory
MBI-GS	Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Services
MBI-HSS	Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Scale
MTSF	Medium term strategic framework
MSA	Measure of sampling adequacy

N

n	Sample size
NDP	National Development Plan
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union
nOID	Need for Organisational Identification
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa

O

OD	Organisation development
OCBs	Organisational citizenship behaviours

P

p	Statistical significance
PA	Reduced personal accomplishment, a burnout dimension
PAF	Principal axis factoring
PEP	Perceived external prestige
PDGs	Previously disadvantaged groups
PCA	Principal component analysis
PsyCap	Psychological capital

R

RIT	Role Identity Theory
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation

S

SA	South Africa
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers Union
SAMWU	SA Municipal Workers Union
SAQA	South Africa Qualifications Authority
SCT	Self-categorisation theory
SD	Standard deviation
SEM	Structural equation model
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SIT	Social identity theory

T

TI	Turnover intentions
TP	Task performance

U

UAE	United Arab Emirates
UWES	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

W

WE	Work engagement
WI	Work-based identity
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand
WFC	Work-family conflict

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