

Sex role identity and positive psychological constructs amongst South African employees

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DECLARATION

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I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been previously submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between both positive and negative sex role identities and the positive psychological constructs of PsyCap, which aggregates self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism, and work engagement. The study utilised a cross-sectional design and a convenience sample of 478 individuals currently working in South Africa. Three instruments were combined into a composite questionnaire and used to collect data. These instruments were the revised EPAQ (EPAQ-R), the PCQ-24 and the UWES. The study was constructed within a social constructionist framework of sex role identity and used the Conservation of Resources Theory for PsyCap and work engagement.

The results of this study found significant differences between sex role identities for levels of PsyCap and work engagement. In particular, positive androgyny and positive masculinity scored the highest levels of PsyCap and work engagement, while negative androgyny and negative femininity consistently scored the lowest levels. Therefore, the results of this study provided support for the Differentiated Model of sex role identity, with differing outcomes for positive and negative identities.

Furthermore, positive femininity scored significantly lower levels of the positive outcomes of PsyCap, hope and resilience, than the other positive identities. This provided support for the Masculinity Model of sex role identity. Additionally, an important finding was the unexpectedly high levels of positive outcomes for negative masculinity. In fact, negative masculinity performed similarly to all the positive identities in terms of both PsyCap and work engagement. This provided further support for the Masculinity Model.

This study contributed to the existing body of literature by investigating the impact of both positive and negative sex role identities, unlike most previous research, which has focused solely on positive sex role identities and their associated outcomes. Moreover, there is a paucity of applicable research on sex role identities within the South African context. As such, this study utilised a sample of individuals working in South Africa and its findings have a direct bearing on South African organisations.