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Abstract

This Professional Doctorate sets out to answer the question:

*What does it mean to be a member of IOSH, and
how can IOSH support their members' professional development?*

The literature review critically explored the theoretical understanding of professional identity, in the context of the safety and health profession, developing on the work of Provan (2018). It provides a new definition of professional identity:

the ongoing critical reflection of the sum of the professional's values, motives, competencies, and contributions made within their community of practice.

The research analysed the membership benefits provided by IOSH and created a set of recommendations to support members' development. The research also examined the construct of professional identity in the context of IOSH Membership. From a critical realist standpoint, the research utilised a mixed method approach, which comprised of a survey given to IOSH members (n = 159) and an autoethnographic inquiry. Quantitative data was analysed utilising Excel, and qualitative data utilising NVivo 12. The key findings, which have been positively received by IOSH (O'Malley, 2021, see appendix K), are that their members generally believed that membership benefits currently offered added value. A significant number of members are unaware of all the benefits IOSH currently offer. A wide range of views of how IOSH could further support their membership and professional development are expressed, under three generated themes (recognition/prestige; provision of information/training; and networking/sense of belonging). Members acknowledged how IOSH directly supports the development of their professional identity. The key reason for being a member appears to be the recognition membership brings, for example, the use of postnominals, e.g., CMIOSH. Even though the safety and health profession has evolved over the last 40 years, there has been limited research into the professional identity of safety and health professionals' (Provan, 2018). Therefore, this Professional Doctorate adds to the body of knowledge through examining the construct of professional identity in the context of IOSH Membership.