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Join The Club: The Relationship Between Professional Organization Membership And Academic Performance Among Undergraduate Marketing Students

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ABSTRACT

Professional student organizations (PSOs) are often regarded as valuable learning opportunities for students and a source of distinction for students entering the job market. In addition to allowing students the opportunity to integrate classroom concepts (Hall 2012; Peltier, Schibrowsky, and Kleimenhagen 1995); active participation in PSOs has been shown to increase informal student-faculty interaction (Hall 2012), develop member's professional attitude (Bent 1957), and aid in the acquisition and practice of leadership skills (Hall 2012).

PSOs allow students the opportunity to connect with those active in their field of study and allows them to dress the part of a professional (Munoz, Miller, and Poole 2016). These organizations often encourage members to engage in real-world activities outside of the classroom, attend conferences, hold leadership positions, and otherwise engage their profession. Allowing students to do so suggest that the individual will be able to better identify with the profession and take on the identity of someone actually working in the profession (Bent 1957; Peltier, Schibrowsky, and Kleimenhagen 1995). Futhermore, Peltier, Scovotti, and Pointer (2008) found that students active in PSOs tend to be more committed to their professional growth (Peltier, Scovotti, and Pointer 2008).

Self-identity theory is used as a framework for examining the relationship between PSO membership and academic success and career identity. The following research proposals are put forth:

Proposition 1: Students who are active members of a PSO have high self-identity.

Proposition 2: Students who are with high self-identity perform better academically (as measured by GPA) than students with low self-identity.

Proposition 3: Students who are active members of a PSO are high in self-efficacy.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Gary Daniel Futrell is an associate professor of marketing at Valdosta State University (Valdosta, GA USA). He received his Ph.D. from Florida State University and has over fifteen years of management experience. His recent publications have been in the area of relationship marketing and services marketing.
