

HOW TO ENHANCE MARKETING STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION?

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Professional identity is an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences and it can be seen as a process of lifelong learning (Beijaard et al. 2004). Also, career success is associated with successful professional identity construction (Slay & Smith 2011). Thus it is pivotal to marketing educators to understand how marketing students construct their professional identity in order to support the construction of professional identity already during studies. Therefore purpose of this study is to deepen our understanding on different ways that marketing students use while constructing their professional identity.

The theoretical discussion on the construction of professional identity is based on social identity theory and identity process's guiding principles. These are distinctiveness, continuity, self-efficacy and self-esteem (Breakwell 1986, 1992).

The qualitative data is gathered from a Finnish business university, from an international client-based marketing course, where design and business students worked together. The data consists of feedback forms and learning diaries. The data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984). The data analysis process has been abductive in nature, keeping the eyes open to both the theoretical understanding and the originality and distinctiveness of the data.

The results show how the students use the principles of identity construction in making sense of their own profession now and in the future. Professional identity evolves in interaction between own profession and other professions and the knowledge and skills needed in own profession become more evident. The implications on how educators can enhance the professional identity development among students are discussed.

References Available upon Request