

IDENTIFICATION OF NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
(NSSE) SOCIALIZATION VARIABLE CLUSTERS THAT PREDICT PRIVATE
MIDWESTERN COLLEGE PERSISTENCE

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ABSTRACT

Concerns about increasing student persistence through understanding engagement led to a study based on the identification of NSSE socialization clusters that predict private Midwestern college persistence. Looking at engagement in context of social constructivism, supportive literature highlights relationships among engagement, persistence, and demographic variables. Archival data were retrieved from the college under study for this quantitative, pre-experimental, post-post comparison. The dependent variable is engagement measured by two NSSE Benchmarks; 1) Student-Faculty Interaction and 2) Supportive Campus Environment. The independent variables are persistence, gender, athletic status, and legacy status. Covariates for the study are ACT or SAT standardized test scores and high school grade point averages.

Descriptive summary analysis, four-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), and discriminant analysis found main and interaction effects of engagement and NSSE variable clusters within the four independent variables. Student interaction with faculty was found to be an indicator of engagement and persistence. The college under study must provide opportunities for faculty to be more socially involved with students.