



**Universidad Ramon Llull**

## **DOCTORAL THESIS**

Title	<b>An Investigation into Consumers' Relationship with Their Consumption Activities</b>
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# Abstract

Retaliatory behaviors are consumer actions taken to damage a brand for its actions. Prior research has discovered that the more deeply a consumer embeds a brand's identity into their identity the more strongly they retaliate following a brand change. Despite evidence that consumers use activities to construct their identities, retaliatory research has primarily focused on one facet of identity construction, brand possession. This research addresses this gap by investigating if the consumer-activity relationship is a predictor of intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors following a brand change. Specifically, an experimental survey research design found that activity promotion tendencies have a significant, positive relationship on consumers' likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. Moreover, the impact of activity promotion on retaliatory behaviors was more pronounced following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption. Based on these findings, specific propositions that identify the antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of consumer-activity identification are developed. The outcomes are discussed in terms of their impact on the consumers' relationship with both the consumption activity and the brands enrolled in the consumption activity. The implications from the empirical analysis also suggest that marketing strategies are needed that place priority on facilitating consumers engagements in consumption activities. Therefore, the thesis formulates four market orientation strategies that embrace the notion that firms provide resources for consumers to enroll into their consumption activities in an effort to accommodate and support the consumer-activity relationship. Accordingly, this thesis composed of three articles empirically explores consumer-activity and consumer-brand relationships together to better understand consumer retaliatory behavior; theorizes on the impact the consumer-activity relationship has on consumer behavior; and, develops four market orientations that focus on inserting offerings into consumers' consumption activities.

# An Investigation into Consumers' Relationship with Their Consumption Activities

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	i
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Tables .....	vii
List of Figures .....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
1.1.1. Introduction .....	1
1.2.1. Research Questions .....	2
1.2.2. Hypothesis 1: Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Connection.....	3
1.2.3. Hypothesis 2: Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Identity Overlap.....	4
1.2.4. Hypothesis 3: Activity Promotion and Brand Promotion .....	4
1.2.5. Consumers' Relationship with Consumption Activities.....	5
1.2.6. Market Orientation Strategy.....	5
1.3.1. Structure of Thesis .....	6
1.4.1. Chapter Summaries .....	6
1.4.2. The Role of Activity Promotion Tendencies on Consumers' Retaliatory Behaviors Following a Brand Change (Chapter 2) .....	7
1.4.3. Consumer-Activity Identification: A Theoretical Model of the Impact of Consumption Activities on Consumer Behavior (Chapter 3).....	9
1.4.4. Market Identification to Generation: A Practice Theory Market Orientation (Chapter 4) ..	9
1.5.1. Paper Interconnectedness .....	10
1.6.1. Conclusion .....	12
Chapter 2: The Role of Activity Promotion Tendencies on Consumers' Retaliatory Behaviors Following a Brand Change .....	13
2.1.1. Introduction .....	13
2.1.2. Retaliatory Consumer Behaviors .....	15
2.1.3.1. Social Identity Theory.....	16
2.1.4. Consumption Based Identity Construction .....	20
2.1.5. Activity Promotion.....	22
2.1.6. Self-Brand Connection.....	24
2.1.7. Self-Brand Identity Overlap.....	26
2.1.8. Brand Promotion .....	28

2.1.9. Summary .....	29
2.2.1. Methods.....	30
2.2.2.1. Procedures .....	30
2.2.3. Participants & Sample.....	33
2.2.4. Data Descriptives .....	34
2.2.5.1 Scales & Sources.....	35
2.2.6. Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	39
2.3.1. Data Analysis & Findings .....	43
2.3.2.1. Testing Hypothesis 1.....	43
2.3.3.1. Testing Hypothesis 2.....	48
2.3.4.1. Testing Hypothesis 3.....	53
2.3.5. Summary of Findings.....	58
2.4.1. General Discussion .....	60
2.4.2. Shaking Activity Love .....	61
2.4.3. Brand Love Becomes Hate .....	62
2.4.4. Summary .....	64
2.5.1. Contributions.....	64
2.5.2. Retaliatory Behavior and Activity Promotion .....	64
2.5.3. Brand Love to Hate Conditions .....	65
2.6.1. Implications.....	67
2.6.2. Brand Use and Possession.....	67
2.6.3. Consumer-Activity Relationships .....	68
2.7.1. Limitations & Avenues for Future Research .....	69
2.8.1. Conclusion .....	72
2.9.1. References.....	73
<b>Chapter 3: Consumer-Activity Identification: A Theoretical Model of the Impact of Consumption Activities on Consumer Behavior .....</b>	<b>81</b>
3.1.1.1. Introduction.....	81
3.2.1.1. Social Identity Theory.....	83
3.3.1.1. Consumer-Activity Identification .....	84
3.3.2.1. Identification and Social Legitimization.....	85
3.3.3.1. Consumer-Activity Identification Propositions .....	85
3.4.1.1. Discussion .....	95
3.4.2.1. Consumption and Identity Construction .....	95
3.4.3.1. Consumption and Social Identity Theory .....	96
3.4.4.1. Consumption and Branding .....	96
3.5.1.1. Acknowledgements.....	97

3.6.1.1. References .....	98
Chapter 4: Market Identification to Generation: A Practice Theory Market Orientation.....	103
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	115
5.1.1. Introduction.....	115
5.2.1. Thesis Discussion.....	115
5.3.1. Chapter 2 Implications .....	117
5.4.1. Chapter 3 Implications .....	117
5.5.1. Chapter 4 Implications .....	118
5.6.1. Avenues for Future Research .....	119
5.6.2. Consumer-Activity Relationship Types.....	119
5.6.3. Consumer-Activity Identification Proposition Testing.....	120
5.7.1. Thesis Conclusion .....	121
5.8.1. References.....	122
Appendices.....	127
Appendix A: Activity Video and Diagram Assignment .....	128
Appendix B: Brand Logo Change Scenario.....	131
Appendix C: Branded Product Withdrawal Scenario .....	132



## List of Tables

Table 2.1. Brand Logo Change Scenario .....	32
Table 2.2. Branded Product Withdrawal Scenario.....	32
Table 2.3. Activity Promotion Tendencies Scale Items.....	35
Table 2.4. Self-Brand Connection Scale Items .....	36
Table 2.5. Self-Brand Identity Overlap Items.....	37
Table 2.6. Brand Promotion Tendencies Scale Items .....	38
Table 2.7. Consumer Retaliatory Intentions Scale Items .....	39
Table 2.8. Confirmatory Factor Analyses Results .....	40
Table 2.9. Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted and Factor Correlation Matrix with Square of the AVE on the Diagonal.....	42
Table 2.10. Model 1 Indicators and Sources.....	45
Table 2.11. Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables Related to Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Connection (Model 1).....	46
Table 2.12. Model 2 Indicators and Sources.....	50
Table 2.13. Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables Related to Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Identity Overlap (Model 2).....	51
Table 2.14. Model 3 Indicators and Sources.....	56
Table 2.15. Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables Related to Activity Promotion and Brand Promotion (Model 3) .....	56
Table 2.16. Summary of Results on Retaliatory Behavior Intentions .....	60

## List of Figures

Figure 2.1. Retaliatory Intentions following a Branded Product Withdrawal Across Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Connection Groups .....	47
Figure 2.2. Retaliatory Intentions following a Logo Change Across Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Identity Overlap Groups.....	52
Figure 2.3. Retaliatory Intentions following a Branded Product Withdrawal Across Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Identity Overlap Groups .....	53
Figure 2.4. Retaliatory Intentions following a Branded Product Withdrawal Across Activity Promotion and Brand Promotion Groups.....	57
Figure 3.1. Consumer-Activity Identification Antecedents, Moderators and Outcomes.....	86

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1.1. Introduction

It is challenging for brand managers to meet financial targets while simultaneously managing consumers' relationship with the brand when making brand changes. Sometimes consumers embrace brand changes and sometimes consumers retaliate against the change. For example, on December 8th, 2012 the University of California (UC) unveiled a new logo. Almost instantly a "Stop the UC Logo Change" petition was created on Change.org<sup>1</sup> and in fifteen hours the campaign's Facebook page, StopTheUCLogoChange<sup>2</sup>, reported over 10,000 signatures were collected. Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom even took to Twitter to encourage others to sign the petition stating "As a member of the UC Regents, I agree, the new logo is a disaster" (Fox40.com). In support of the petition, signatories argued that the old "logo provided me a sense of pride and joy knowing that I was accepted into such a prestigious institution" (Denny Phan) and they were "personally attached to the logo as it represents prestige and elegance. The new logo is, without question, a downgrade" (Grace Gealey) because it "does not accurately represent what the student bodies - past, present, and future - want" (Andrew Lowe). With over 50,000 petition signatures collected in a few short days, on December 14th UC's Director of Marketing and Communications released a statement indicating that the new logo's use has been suspended. Similar instances of consumer retaliatory behavior have occurred when Gap tried to change their logo and Apple withdrew its Newtown personal organizer (Muñiz & Schau 2005, 2007).

Retaliatory consumer behaviors are "actions that are designed to punish and cause inconvenience to a firm for the damages the customer felt it caused" (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008, p. 247). As cultural artifacts, brands are charged with meaning that consumers use to construct their identity (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; McCracken, 1986). Identity construction is an active process (Townley, 1993), not only based on what brands a consumer possess but also on what consumption activities they integrate the brands into. Despite evidence that consumers use activities to construct their identities (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), retaliatory research has primarily focused on aspects of the consumer-brand relationship. Focusing on one dimension of identity construction hinders advancements in retaliatory research as the consumption activity is effectively devalued. This research addresses this gap by investigating if the degree consumers promote the consumption activity they integrate the brand into is a predictor of retaliatory behavior intentions following a brand change.

A consumption activity is defined as the conscious use of objects and human abilities to alter their environment (Nardi, 1995). The consumption activity can extend through time, across contexts or carried out continuously within a discrete time period, intermittently over a time period or

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.change.org/p/university-of-california-stop-the-new-uc-logo>. Last accessed February 26, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/StopTheUCLogoChange>. Last accessed February 26, 2015.

repeatedly enacted with no clear ending (Kuutti, 1995). Cooking breakfast can be considered an activity as the individual uses various objects (i.e., pans, hands, heat) to change the environment, from uncracking eggs to placing a meal on a table, for instance. This thesis is primarily concerned with consumption activities that are repeatedly carried out as repeated engagement increases the relevancy of the activity and brand compared to an isolated, one-time consumption activity. This conceptualization opens the door to explore consumers' relationship with activities as a conceptual object and offers a starting point for marketers to design marketing strategies that strive to insert brands into consumers' consumption activity. Based on the findings from investigating if the degree consumers promote the consumption activity they integrate the brand into is a predictor of retaliatory behavior intentions, this thesis further theorizes on the relationship consumers form with their consumption activities and formulates four market orientation strategies that focuses on facilitating the enactment of consumers' consumption activities.

The imbalance in extant literature, of focusing on brands over consumption activities, is surprising as prior research suggests that consumers primarily incorporate brands into their identity when: the brand has a positive image; the consumer-brand relationship is visible; and, social relationships revolve around the brand (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Press & Arnould, 2011; Stokburger-Sauer, Ratneshwar & Sen, 2012). But, a brand's image is determined by its socially situated consumption activity (Diamond, et al., 2009; Douglas & Isherwood, 1996), brands are visible only when they are incorporated into consumption activities (Coulter, Price & Feick, 2003), and social relationships require consumers to engage in shared consumption activities (Brown & Duguid, 1998; Cova, 1997). In sum, consumers need to incorporate brands into their socially situated activities before they can identify with them. Therefore, by effectively devaluing the role of activities in consumers' identity construction process marketers may be over-estimating the importance of the consumer-brand relationship. Accordingly, this thesis rectifies this imbalance by empirically exploring consumer-activity and consumer-brand relationships together to better understand consumer retaliatory behavior; theorizing on the impact the consumer-activity relationship has on consumer behavior; and, developing four market orientations that focus on inserting offerings into consumers' consumption activities.

### **1.2.1. Research Questions**

Prior consumer retaliatory research has primarily focused on the consumer-brand relationship while ignoring the consumer-activity relationship. This research addresses this gap by investigating if the degree consumers promote the consumption activity they integrate the brand into is a predictor of retaliatory behavior intentions following a brand change. Specifically, the over-arching empirical research questions to be answered in this thesis are:

- 1) Does a positive relationship exist between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors considering consumers' existing brand relationship?

- 2) Is this relationship stronger following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption?

This thesis tests three differing hypotheses. As prior research indicates the type and strength of a consumer-brand relationship can impact consumers' retaliatory intentions following a brand change, three different types of consumer-brand relationships were tested. Each tested hypothesis is summarized in the following sub-sections and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. The empirical findings are then integrated with existing literature to theorize on the impact the consumer-activity relationship has on specific brand and activity related behaviors. Chapter 2 demonstrates that consumers' relationships with their consumption activities has an impact on their retaliatory behaviors. Therefore, Chapter 3 develops specific propositions that identify the antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of consumer-activity identification. Additionally, the findings from Chapter 2 suggests that branding strategies may want to consider how the consumer integrates the brand into their consumption activities. Chapter 4 extends on this notion by formulating four market orientation strategies that embrace the notion that firms provide resources for consumers to enroll into their consumption activities in an effort to accommodate and support the consumer-activity relationship. Accordingly, Chapter 2 answers the empirical research questions while Chapters 3 and 4 expand on the findings by theorizing on the impact the consumer-activity relationship has on consumer behavior and developing four market orientations that focus on inserting offerings into consumers' consumption activities. The next sub-sections presents the three hypotheses investigated in Chapter 2 and are followed by overviews of Chapters 3 and 4.

### ***1.2.2. Hypothesis 1: Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Connection***

A high self-brand connection indicates that the consumer views the brand as a reflection of their identity and effectively represents who they are to others (Escalas, 2004; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Rindfleisch, Burroughs & Wong, 2009). Consumers with high self-brand connection levels have been shown to have higher re-purchase intentions, brand loyalty levels and are less susceptible to negative brand information (Escalas, 2004; Swaminathan, Page & Gürhan-Canli, 2007). However, consumers who value their brand relationship report higher levels of retaliatory intentions following a brand change (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Johnson, Matear & Thomson, 2011). Coupled with the expectation that high activity promotion rates also have a positive relationship with retaliatory intentions the following hypotheses will be tested:

- H1a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for self-brand connection levels.
- H1b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.
- H1c) Self-brand connection levels have an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

### ***1.2.3. Hypothesis 2: Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Identity Overlap***

Building on the closeness to self (Aron, Aron & Smollan, 1992; Aron, Aron, Tudor & Nelson, 1991) and brand identification literature (Lam, et al., 2010; Mälär, Krohmer, Hoyer & Nyffenegger, 2011), self-brand identity overlap is defined as the degree a consumer feels what they stand for and what the brand stands for overlap. Self-brand identity overlap is narrowly focused on potential overlaps between the consumer's and brand's identity (Lin & Sung, 2014) while self-brand connection is more encompassing by including the brand's ability to communicate who they are (Escalas, 2004; Escalas & Bettman, 2005). High perceived similarity between the brand and consumer increases the self-relevancy and importance of the brand in consumers' lives (Johnson, Matear & Thomson, 2011). According, brand changes are more likely to be perceived as a threat to their identity investments resulting in higher retaliatory intentions following a brand change. Similarly, consumers who promote the consumption activity in which they use the brand also increase the self-relevancy and importance of the consumption activity. Therefore, brand changes that threaten their identity will result in higher retaliatory intentions. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for degree of self-brand identity overlap.

H2b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.

H2c) The degree of self-brand identity overlap has an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

### ***1.2.4. Hypothesis 3: Activity Promotion and Brand Promotion***

The third hypothesis simultaneously investigates the role activity promotion and brand promotion tendencies have on consumer's retaliatory intentions following a brand change. Consumers with high brand promotion tendencies indicate congruence between their values and the brand's values. Moreover, elevated brand promotion tendencies is a consequence of a strong consumer-brand relationship (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). As a consequence of a consumer-brand relationship and because not all consumers with strong brand relationships will regularly promote the brand, the predictive power of brand promotion is expected to be higher than self-brand connection or self-brand identity overlap. This is because those with high brand promotion tendencies demonstrate a disposition towards talking about the brand with others. Therefore, changes to the brand provide an additional event that may be worthy of sharing with consumers, especially if they already discuss the brand at a relatively high rate.

Moreover, promoting a brand includes an implicit promotion of at least one of the brand's consumption activities. Minor brand changes, such as a logo change, still enable the consumer to engage in the consumption activity while product withdrawals create uncertainty in the consumer regarding their ability to engage in the consumption activity. Therefore, the projected positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory intentions is expected to be more pronounced following the branded product withdrawal treatment. Consumers who love their brands are often the brand's harshest critics (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009) but consumers who view the brand's and their identity are completely overlapping are more likely to protect the brand than consumers who feel the brand almost completely represent them (Lin & Sung, 2014). Therefore the following hypotheses are tested:

H3a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for brand promotion tendencies.

H3b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.

H3c) Brand promotion tendencies has an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

### ***1.2.5. Consumers' Relationship with Consumption Activities***

Consumers who promote an activity are comfortable expressing their relationship with the activity and having others judge them based on their relationship with the activity. Research on consumer-brand (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013; Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001), consumer-company (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003) and consumer-organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) relationships all suggest that as consumers increase their connections or identity overlap with target objects they tend to promote the object more. Drawing from existing research and the results from Chapter 2, specific propositions are developed that identify the antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of consumer-activity identification (see Chapter 3). Additionally, the outcomes are discussed in terms of their impact on the consumers' relationship with both the consumption activity and the brands enrolled in the consumption activity.

### ***1.2.6. Market Orientation Strategy***

Consumption research has repeatedly shown that identity formation is not solely based upon possessions but also upon how and what activities those possessions are incorporated into (Holt, 1997). The empirical findings presented in this work are no different. In particular, the significant relationship between activity promotion and retaliatory behaviors highlights the idea that identity construction is not solely based on brand or object possession but is based on how and what activities the brand is enrolled in. Thus, the findings suggest that not only should firms manage the

consumer-brand relationship but they also should consider managing the consumer-activity relationship. Therefore, Chapter 4 formulates four market orientation strategies that embrace the notion that firms provide resources for consumers to enroll into their consumption activities in an effort to accommodate and support the consumer-activity relationship.

### **1.3.1. Structure of Thesis**

This thesis is considered a monograph based on articles and is structured in the following manner. The remainder of Chapter 1 provides a summary of each chapter and discusses the interconnectedness among the three articles contained in this work. Chapter 2 empirically investigates if a positive relationship exist between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors considering consumers' existing brand relationship; and, if this relationship is stronger following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption. After revealing that consumers' relationship with their consumption activities impacts consumer behavior the second article extends on these findings by developing a theoretical model for understanding consumer-activity identification and its relationship to specific brand and activity related behaviors. In particular, the model developed in Chapter 3 considers activity promotion tendencies as a moderator between the antecedents and CAI. The likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior following a brand change is included as a brand related outcome to CAI. Chapter 4 extends the implications of the consumer-activity relationship to marketing strategy formation. Specifically, it formulates four market orientation strategies that embrace the notion that firms provide resources for consumers to enroll into their consumption activities in an effort to accommodate and support the consumer-activity relationship. Chapter 5 closes the thesis by discussing the implications of each paper and the thesis, more generally, as well as providing avenues for future research. Collectively, the thesis demonstrates that consumers form relationships with consumption activities, often relying upon them to help construct dimensions of their identity, and it is prudent for brand managers to develop strategies that address the consumer-activity relationship when implementing brand changes and facilitate the engagement in consumption activities when designing a market strategy.

### **1.4.1. Chapter Summaries**

Officially, this thesis is a monograph composed of three unpublished articles however one article has already been accepted in a peer-reviewed journal. Specifically, Chapter 4 was accepted by the *Journal of Strategic Marketing* on March 25, 2014. The article is currently available online as an early access article. The submission plan for the other two articles is as follows. Chapter 2 will be condensed into an article following the comments received during the thesis evaluation process. Chapter 2 will target *Psychology & Marketing* for submission. Chapter 3 has already been submitted and is currently under review at *Marketing Theory*. The following sub-sections provides a high-level overview of each of the three articles contained in this monograph.



### ***1.4.2. The Role of Activity Promotion Tendencies on Consumers' Retaliatory Behaviors Following a Brand Change (Chapter 2)***

This article takes a social identity theory (SIT) perspective on identity construction (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). To construct an identity consumers identify, evaluate and then select into groups that are perceived to project the desired identity constructing dimensions (Ahearne, Bhattacharya & Gruen, 2005; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Tajfel, 1982). There are three guiding principles of SIT: 1) Individuals engage in consumption activities that enhance their sense-of-self in positive ways; 2) The identity enhancing dimensions of an identification target are based on comparisons against other potential targets that are perceived less positively or distinctively; and, 3) To maintain or enhance one's identity or sense-of-self individuals join or leave groups (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1975).

Consumers utilize brands to construct their identities and project the values they care about (Elliot & Davies, 2006; Firat & Venkatesh, 1996). As consumers' dependence on brands increases so does the strength of their relationship with the brand. Prior research has found that consumers with strong consumer-brand relationships have a higher tendency to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Johnson, Matear & Thomson, 2011; Lin & Sung, 2014). The positive correlation between brand relationship strength and retaliatory behavior intentions is often characterized as brand love becomes hate (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Lin & Sung, 2014). However, solely focusing on the consumer-brand relationship fails to recognize the crucial role that the consumption activity has on developing and maintaining the consumer-brand relationship. Therefore, research is needed that simultaneously investigates retaliatory behavior and consumers' relationships with their activity and brand. This is needed as consumers also use consumption activities to construct their identities (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) and to ensure brand managers are not over-valuing the consumer-brand relationship's impact on retaliatory behaviors.

Consumers promote certain consumption activities to strategically construct their identity (Murray, 2002). Activity promotion indicates a consumer is committed to the activity (Marzocchi, Morandi & Bergami, 2013) and strengthens their relationship with the activity (Garnefeld, Helm & Eggert, 2011). Additionally, high levels of activity promotion indicate that past activity disclosures were positively received; activity promotion disclosures that are negatively received are less frequently disclosed or the consumer may even cease engaging in the activity (Hsieh & Hu, 2011). Therefore, higher levels of activity promotion tendencies indicates a stronger and more deeply entrenched relationships exists between the consumer and the activity over consumers with low activity promotion tendencies.

## Introduction

An experimental survey research design was implemented to test a series of hypotheses. Two hypothetical treatment scenarios: brand logo change and branded product withdrawal, were tested. Brand logo change serves as a minor disruption of identity construction as the activity can still be enacted following a relatively similar process but brand related identity dimensions may be effected. Branded product withdrawal then serves as a major threat to identity construction as their activity process has a higher likelihood of changing if the brand is no longer available and that particular branded product cannot be incorporated into their identity. The data collection process consisted of three waves and resulted in a total sample size of 71 participants. All scales used in the study were based on extant literature, obtained sufficient reliability and are empirically distinct.

A series of between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) using two differing consumer-brand relationship measures as well as brand promotion tendencies on intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior were conducted. In total, six differing models are analyzed. Each model tests one of the hypotheses while the over-arching research questions were answered based on the results of H1 to H3. Activity promotion tendencies was included as an independent variable in all models as well as retaliatory intentions as a dependent variable. Thus, as there are two treatment groups, in total, two models included self-brand connection, self-brand identity overlap, and brand promotion tendencies separately, as independent variables.

The main finding from this empirical work is that activity promotion has a significant positive relationship with intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors following a brand change. This relationship held across both consumer-brand identity tests (self-brand connection strength and degree of consumer-brand identity overlap) and brand promotion tendencies under the branded product withdrawal treatment. Activity promotion was not significant under the logo change treatment in the self-brand connection model however it was significant in the brand promotion and identity overlap models. The findings reveal mixed support for the brand love becomes hate concept, which asserts consumers who highly incorporate the brand into their identity exhibit higher tendencies to retaliate against the brand (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Lin & Sung, 2014). In particular, consumers with high brand identity connections but low activity promotion tendencies show a higher likelihood to retaliate against the brand than consumers with a low brand identity connection. However, this difference is erased if the activity is highly promoted suggesting that consumers' relationships with the activity plays an important and previously unidentified role in consumer behavior.

It is important to understand the main assumption and limitations of this research study in order to judge the findings and implications appropriately. The main assumption is the use of activity promotion tendencies as a proxy for consumers using the consumption activity to construct their identity. Additional research is encouraged to explore the various dimensions of a consumer-activity relationship however the revelation of a positive relationship between activity promotion and retaliatory intentions is encouraging. Promotion tendencies has been repeatedly shown to be an

outcome of a strong relationship existing between the promoted object and the consumer (Garnefeld, Helm & Eggert, 2011; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Thus, research designs that specifically focus on self-activity connections or self-activity identity overlap may reveal that what we do has a bigger impact on consumer behavior than the brands we use.

### ***1.4.3. Consumer-Activity Identification: A Theoretical Model of the Impact of Consumption Activities on Consumer Behavior (Chapter 3)***

This article explores consumers' relationships with their activities by conceptualizing and theorizing on consumer-activity identification. Consumer-activity identification reflects the extent to which individuals consider a consumption activity to be central to their identity and sense-of-self. Specific propositions are developed that identify the antecedents, moderators and outcomes of consumer-activity identification based on SIT, a socio-psychological view of consumer behavior (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). SIT explains how individuals develop their identities through classification, categorization, and identification. SIT assumes that individuals are primarily motivated by status enhancement. Status enhancement is achieved by categorizing groups, brands, and activities by their symbolic values they represent and then the consumer (dis)identifies with the values they perceive will enhance their identity (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Theoretically, this work refines SIT to account for both identifying with a group and being a socially legitimated group member.

This research contributes to consumer behavior and branding research in a number of ways. First, developing a theoretical model and research propositions on consumer-activity identification offers a framework for future empirical research. Second, theorization on consumer-activity identification offers a foundation for branding strategies that strive to insert brands into consumers' consumption activities (Hawkins, 2014). Consumption research has linked activity engagement to identity formation (Celsi et al., 1993; Kozinets, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) however linking consumer-activity identification antecedents to specific brand and activity outcomes have been absent.

### ***1.4.4. Market Identification to Generation: A Practice Theory Market Orientation (Chapter 4)***

To develop four market orientations that embraces the role the consumption activity has on consumer behavior the practice-based theory of resourcing is consulted to explain how a brand enables individuals to enact practices. Practice refers to the act of enrolling resources to accomplish a goal in a specific time and space (Jarzabkowski, Lê & Feldman, 2012; Levina & Orlikowski, 2009) Practice theory argues that the meaning of discourse, actions and objects are (re)constituted through engaging in activities. Then, an individual's practice narrative provides the conscious and

unconscious rationales that motivate and guide the way they enact the practice (Hawkins & Saleem, 2012). Repeatedly and regularly enacted practices produce memory traces that structuralize and normalize how to engage in specific practices or consumption activities across individuals, time and space (Giddens, 1984; Schatzki, 2006; Sewell, 1992). Accordingly, marketers are urged to recognize that the meaning of their brand based on how it is actually consumed and not how they firm desires the brand to be consumed.

Building on Storbacka and Nenonen's (2011a, 2011b) view of markets as dynamic evolving resource configuration systems, the purpose of this article is to formalize a resource-market orientation based on practice theory principles. This perspective argues firms provide resources for consumers to enroll into their socially situated practices and recognizes that a firm's market scripting activities can effect users' practices and routines. Under the resource-market perspective, there are four main market orientations models: resource identifier (RI), resource activator (RA), resource configurer (RC), and resource generator (RG). This chapter specifically addresses the market actions, benefits, challenges and appropriate research methods for each orientation.

The three main features of the resource-market perspective are as follows. One, while marketers desire to identify or generate the meanings and markets they would like to work within, it is only when the brand is resourced into consumers' practices is the actual market constituted. Second, in order to develop a better understanding of a brand's in-use meaning and surrounding practice narratives it is important to collect stories and narratives from all relevant stakeholders. Third, generating a new practice or market is a difficult task. Accordingly, firms need a certain level of market power or clout to continue to influence market configuration as competitors and alternative narratives enter the market.

Besides developing four market orientations, this article suggests that when making brand changes it is important to understand that brands may be resourced into multiple, overlapping practices. Thus, some changes may have unintended consequences in other practices. However, firms that are able to have their brand resourced across multiple practices may see elevated rates of brand loyalty and repurchasing.

### **1.5.1. Paper Interconnectedness**

This thesis takes the position that consumers consciously use brands to alter the environment. Prior research has shown that through repeatedly using a brand, consumers begin to rely upon the brand to represent who they are and what they care for (Escalas, 2004; Lin & Sung, 2014; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005). Then, as the consumer relies more heavily on the brand to construct their identity when the brand initiates a change the likelihood a consumer retaliates against the firm for the change increases (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Lin & Sung, 2014; Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012). Despite prior research demonstrating consumers can also rely upon consumption activities to

construct their identity (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), investigations into the impact consumers' relationship with their consumption activities have on their retaliatory behaviors are absent. This research corrects this imbalance by simultaneously investigating if consumers' relationships with their brands and activities are predictors of retaliatory behavior intentions following a brand change.

The first article (Chapter 2) empirically investigates this question and finds that a positive relationship exists between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory intentions. Two implications stemming from this study are consumers not only form relationships with brands but also with their consumption activities. The other implication is marketers may want to consider designing marketing strategies that strive to insert brands into consumers' consumption activities. The second article (Chapter 3) addresses the former implication and the third article (Chapter 4) the latter.

The second article theorizes on a specific type of relationship a consumer may form with their consumption activity. Specifically, the article conceptually develops consumer-activity identification from a social identity perspective. Consumer-activity identification (CAI) reflects the extent to which individuals consider a consumption activity to be central to their identity and sense-of-self. The article identifies three social antecedents and four personal antecedents to consumer-activity identification. Additionally, four moderators between these antecedents are revealed. Extending on the findings from Chapter 2, the model developed in Chapter 3 considers activity promotion tendencies as a moderator between the antecedents and CAI. The likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior following a brand change is included as a brand related outcome to CAI.

The third article builds on the empirical work by formulating four market orientations. The first two articles utilized SIT while the third article takes a practice theory perspective. Chapter 2 demonstrates that consumers have a higher likelihood of retaliate against a brand change if the changes disrupt their consumption activity then when the change primarily impacts the brand's role in identity construction. Accordingly, marketing strategies are needed that place priority on facilitating consumers engagements in consumption activities. SIT emphasizes consumer interactions with symbolic artifacts and relationships with groups (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) compared with practice theory which emphasizes assembling artifacts and acting in accordance to socially prescribed conventions (Feldman & Worline, 2011; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Schatzki, 2006). Therefore, in order to develop market orientations focused on brand use and not the transference of symbolic meaning a practice theory perspective is utilized.

Individually, the three articles investigate differing dimensions of consumers' relationship with their consumption activities. The first article finds that consumers who frequently promote or disclose their relationship with a consumption activity to others are more likely to retaliate against the firm following brand changes, even when considering the consumers' relationship with the brand. The

first article empirically demonstrates that consumers' relationship with their consumption activities impacts consumer behavior therefore the second article extends on these findings by developing a theoretical model for understanding consumer-activity identification and its relationship to specific brand and activity related behaviors. The third article builds on implications stemming from the findings in Chapter 2 by formulating four differing market orientations that embrace a firm's role in developing and supporting the consumer's relationship with their consumption activity. Collectively, the thesis demonstrates that consumers form relationships with consumption activities, often relying upon them to help construct dimensions of their identity. Moreover, the thesis argues that the consumer-activity relationship has important impacts on consumer behavior and it is prudent for brand managers to develop strategies that address the consumer-activity relationship when implementing brand changes and facilitate the engagement in consumption activities when designing a market strategy.

### **1.6.1. Conclusion**

This thesis reveals that a positive relationship exists between consumers' activity promotion tendencies and their retaliatory behavior intentions following a firm initiated brand change. Moreover, the empirical work provides boundary conditions to the brand love becomes hate concept and provides solid empirical evidence that the relationships consumers form with their activities play an important role in consumer behavior. A theoretical model is then developed that further explores the impact consumer-activity identification has on consumer behavior. Additionally, four differing market orientations are formulated that encourages firms to view their offerings as resources to be integrated into consumers' consumption activities. Overall, this thesis helps brand managers avoid over-valuing the consumer-brand relationship's impact on retaliatory behaviors, demonstrates the importance of valuing the relationship between the consumer and their consumption activities, and offers marketing strategies that may help brand managers support consumers in their quest to purposefully alter their environment.

## **Chapter 2: The Role of Activity Promotion Tendencies on Consumers' Retaliatory Behaviors Following a Brand Change**

### **Abstract**

Understanding what motivates consumers to retaliate against brands following a brand change is important due to the potential financial losses and brand image degradation consumers can cause a firm. Retaliatory behaviors are consumer actions taken to damage or inconvenience a brand for its actions. Prior research tends to focus on the consumer-brand relationship effectively devaluing the consumers' relationship with the consumption activity. This research addresses this gap by investigating if the degree consumers promote the consumption activity they integrate the brand into is a predictor of intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors following a brand change. The experimental study reveals that activity promotion has as a significant, positive relationship with intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors following a brand change. The findings provide mixed support for the "brand love becomes hate" concept, where consumers who highly incorporate the brand into their identity exhibit higher tendencies to retaliate against the brand. In particular, consumers with low activity promotion tendencies but strong brand derived identities indicate higher intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors but this difference is erased if consumers have high activity promotion tendencies. This research suggests that the consumer-activity relationship deserves more attention and marketing strategies should take into account a brand change will disrupt the consumption activities the brand is enrolled in.

### **Keywords**

Retaliatory behavior, brand, brand changes, activity promotion, consumption activity

### **2.1.1. Introduction**

On October 6, 2010, Gap unveiled a new, updated logo and consumers responded by developing websites and opening twitter accounts that mercilessly attacked the brand. Consumer retaliation was so severe that Gap abandoned the new logo the following week (AdvertisingAge, 2010; The Guardian, 2010). Similarly, Muñiz and Schau (2005, 2007) show that consumers not only initiate boycotts following a branded product withdrawal but also, in their case, consumers illegally appropriated Apple's registered trademarks and created professional looking anti-Apple ads and even depicted Apple's CEO, Steve Jobs, as the devil for withdrawing the Newton line from the

market. Accordingly, it is important for managers to limit retaliatory consumer behavior following a brand change due to the potential for financial losses and brand image degradation.

Retaliatory consumer behaviors are “actions that are designed to punish and cause inconvenience to a firm for the damages the customer felt it caused” (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008, p. 247). As cultural artifacts, brands are charged with meaning that consumers use to construct their identity (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; McCracken, 1986). Identity construction is an active process (Townley, 1993), not only based on what brands a consumer possess but also on what consumption activities they integrate the brand into. Despite evidence that consumers use activities to construct their identities (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), retaliatory research has primarily focused on brand possession. Focusing on one dimension of identity construction hinders advancements in retaliatory research as the consumption activity is effectively devalued. This research addresses this gap by investigating if the degree consumers promote the consumption activity they integrate the brand into is a predictor of retaliatory behavior intentions following a brand change.

A social identity theory (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) perspective is taken to discover if consumers who promote the consumption activity have a higher likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behaviors following a brand change. An experimental survey research design was implemented to and a series of between-subjects analysis of variance using two differing consumer-brand identity measures as well as brand promotion tendencies on intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior were conducted. In total, six differing models are analyzed. This article reveals that a positive relationship exists between consumers’ activity promotion tendencies and their retaliatory behavior intentions following a firm initiated brand change and this relationship is more pronounced following a more severe disruption to their identity.

The findings further reveal mixed support for the brand love becomes hate concept, which asserts consumers who highly incorporate the brand into their identity exhibit higher tendencies to retaliate against the brand (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009, Lin & Sung, 2014). In particular, consumers with high brand identity connections but low activity promotion tendencies show a higher likelihood to retaliate against the brand than consumers with a low brand identity connection. However, this difference is erased if the activity is highly promoted suggesting that consumers’ relationships with the activity plays an important and previously unidentified role in consumer behavior. Lastly, the findings open the door to a potentially highly fruitful research stream that investigates the impact consumer-activity relationships have on consumer behavior, more generally.



### ***2.1.2. Retaliatory Consumer Behaviors***

Retaliatory consumer behaviors attempt “to punish and cause inconvenience to a firm for the damages the customer felt it caused” (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008, p. 247). Retaliating consumers engage in a wide range of negative behaviors such as creating anti-brand marketing messages (Muñiz & Schau, 2007) but are typically classified into two main behaviors: spreading negative word-of-mouth and boycotting the brand. Traditionally, consumers engage in negative word-of-mouth to reduce the brand’s image and decrease sales by providing current and potential customers with a reason to avoid the brand (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Spreading negative word-of-mouth is a relatively easy consumer behavior whereas boycotting a brand typically involves a greater impact on the consumer’s behavior as they need to adjust their consumption activity (Klein, Smith & John, 2004). Therefore, boycotting a branded offering or its entire product portfolio requires higher levels of dedication and personal commitment making boycotting a stronger indicator of a desire to punish a firm.

Consumers with strong brand relationships often anthropomorphizing the brand and view the brand as having intentions (Fournier, 1998; Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012). Accordingly, service provision failures or brand changes can be interpreted as an intentional act worthy of retaliatory behavior (Puzakova, Kwak & Rocereto, 2013). Perhaps more importantly, brand changes can impact a consumer’s sense-of-self, especially if they highly identify with the brand (Lin & Sung, 2014; Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012). The concept of brand love becoming hate is based on consumers’ tendencies to strongly retaliate against the brand the more deeply they identify with the brand (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009, p. 19; Lin & Sung, 2014, p. 64). However, prior research has ignored the fact that consumers use brands in their consumption activities by treating consumer identity construction as a simple process of brand possession. This tendency effectively devalues the role of brand use and its potential role in influencing retaliatory behaviors following a brand change.

Grégoire and Fisher (2008) investigated how consumers’ feelings of betrayal are impacted by procedural and distributive fairness following a recovery attempt. Recovery attempts are firm actions intended to correct or resolve the problem or compensate the consumer. They find that consumers whose connection with a brand is low have elevated rates of betrayal when only procedural fairness is violated while consumers with high brand connections reported higher rates of betrayal following violations of both procedural and distributive fairness. The difference in findings is attributed to the differing expectations attributed to consumers with strong brand connections and low connected consumers may lack the knowledge to determine when a distributive fair reparation is appropriate. However, Grégoire and Fisher (2008) do not address

how the consumer relates to the consumption activity nor did they address market disruptions instead they focused on consumer-brand relationships and personal service failures.

Research has also found that consumers with a strong brand relationship tend to see their desire to punish a firm grow through time while those with weak brand relationships tend to see their sense of betrayal and desire to punish a firm reside through time (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009). Additionally, Grégoire and colleagues (2009) demonstrate that recovery effort timing also impacts consumers' desire to punish a firm following a service failure. However, Grégoire and colleagues (2009) do not address the consumption activity itself rather they focus on the selection and purchase phase of the consumption process.

Lin and Sung (2014) explored consumers retaliatory behaviors depending upon the degree of self-brand identity overlap. Consumers who reported the highest level of self-brand identity overlap were categorized as self-brand identity fused while those who reported high levels of identity overlap were categorized as self-brand identified. Their study demonstrates that consumer behavior varies depending upon if the consumer highly identifies with the brand or if their identities have fused together. In particular, identity fused consumers tend to engage in retaliatory behaviors less often than highly identified consumers. Lin and Sung's (2014) study suggests that there could be an underlying mechanism that impacts consumer retaliatory behaviors even when they have high self-brand connections. Perhaps, consumers' relationship with the consumption activity can provide additional insights into consumers' retaliatory intentions.

Consumers need to enroll brands into their consumption activities in order to incorporate the brand into their identity; thus, brand use is an antecedent to consumer-brand identification (Johnson, Matear & Thomson, 2011). Consumers not only incorporate brands into their identity but they also use their consumption activities to construction their identity (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993). Therefore, the retaliatory behavior attributed to those with high consumer-brand identification levels might actually be a result of consumers love with the activity being shaken by the brand change.

### ***2.1.3.1. Social Identity Theory***

Social identity theory (SIT) takes a socio-psychological view of identity construction and human behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Accordingly, individuals develop their identity and sense-of-self by evaluating their perception of the social groups they (do not) belong to (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Tajfel, 1982). In an effort to enhance self-esteem

and social standing individuals identify with groups (Ahearne, Bhattacharya & Gruen, 2005; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994) to indicate similarity with the perceived values or other dimensions associated with those groups (organizations, brands, activities). Thus, the social component of SIT argues that the relevant dimensions of identity enhancing targets are socially constructed while the psychological component addresses individuals' desire to have positive and distinct views of their sense-of-self (Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995; Lam, et al., 2010).

SIT rests on the process of self-categorization (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Self-categorization is the cognitive process of categorizing, classifying and ordering the social world into target groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Category formation enables individuals to compare differing social groups to construct the desired identity. Category formation is facilitated by the observation and interpretation of symbolic boundaries created through consumption practices that reflect others' tastes and beliefs (Holt, 1997). As categories are formed, individuals attempt to self-select themselves into desired social groups that satisfy their self-enhancement and self-distinctiveness needs.

Individuals form mental prototypes of groups and their associated behaviors to assist group comparison, self-selection and guide consumption activity enactment. Hogg and Terry (2000) state prototypes are the general beliefs regarding the attitudes, values and behaviors represented by a group and guide an individual's mental comparison process. It is important to note that the term group does not always refer to an organization with demarcated boundaries rather consumers categorize individuals into groups that they perceive to be similar on some relevant dimension(s), such as they all use a particular brand or engage in a particular activity. Furthermore, identification does not necessarily mean the individual accepts all the beliefs or values of the target, rather a specific dimension of the target might enhance their identity by providing a needed distinctiveness dimension.

#### *2.1.3.2. SIT Principles*

There are three principles of SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40). One, individuals engage in consumption activities that enhance their sense-of-self in positive ways. Social standing or status does not refer to the acquisition of resources like money or luxury brands, rather higher or positive social status is based on group comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Normally, to accrue and develop social status consumers attempt to place themselves in social interactions where they have a higher likelihood of achieving success (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994). In essence, individuals tend to navigate social situations in a manner that enhances or at least maintains one's level of sense-of-self.

Two, the positive connotation of an identification target is primarily based on comparisons against other potential targets that are perceived less positively or distinctively (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Individual's aim to develop higher social standing. Accordingly, this principle involves group recognition and self-categorization knowledge. Comparisons and self-categorization entails evaluating both the perceived image and construed external image of the target. Specifically, individuals combine their personal beliefs of the target with the suspected beliefs held by others about the target, respectively (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994). Therefore, the individual monitors and comprehends the social environment allowing them to identify, categorize and compare groups against each other to enhance their sense-of-self and social status.

Third, in an effort to maintain and enhance positive sense-of-self levels and social status individuals will join groups, leave groups and/or exert energy to manage a target group's relevant, distinct and positive identity enhancing dimensions (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When managing a group's dimensions and values, individuals typically attempt to align the group's values with their current knowledge base as this improves their ability to achieve success in the group (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

This third principle builds on the perceived image and construed external image knowledge required in principle two. The individual needs to constantly monitor the external construed image to determine if the desired dimensions are being promoted and incorporated into their identity. Moreover, they need to devise a strategy that changes the social group's dimensions and values in the desired self-serving direction. Together, these three principles indicate that individuals engage in consumption activities that promote "self-distinctiveness, and self-enhancement" (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003, p. 79; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994, p. 244).

### *2.1.3.3. Identification and Know-How*

As a socio-psychological perspective, SIT values consumers' cognitive processing ability but it is necessary to refine and extend the focus of SIT to include behavior related, know-how knowledge. As Wenger (2000) argues, demonstrating knowledge "is a matter of displaying competences defined in social communities" (p. 227). Identity construction involves more than merely using one's knowledge to identify and select into a social group rather the consumer needs know-how knowledge on assembling objects and coordinating bodily movements that indicate group identification in a socially legitimated manner (Arsel & Bean, 2013; Shove & Pantzar, 2005). Know-how knowledge is the "ability to put know-what into practice" (Brown & Duguid, 1998, p. 91). As such, cognitively knowing what brands and objects to possess is

necessary but not sufficient for successful identity construction. Successful identity construction occurs through learning and demonstrating the behaviors on how to assemble brands and objects in a manner that others deem legitimate (Garud, 1997; Goffman, 1959). Therefore, SIT values consumers' ability to know what values or dimensions a social group represent and the consumers' ability to know-how to identify and demonstrate their membership with select social groups.

#### *2.1.3.4. Targets of Identification*

Early research on organization identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) began the process of moving SIT's focus on bounded groups to non-bounded or formally demarcated groups. Mael and Ashforth (1992) argue that organization identification occurs through internalizing the values and developing a sense of belongingness to an organization. Eventually, consumer-organization and consumer-company identification were refined to account for non-employees developing a connection with the company (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). This refinement was influential in the growth of relationship marketing that strives to form emotional bonds with consumers. Similarly, consumer-brand identification has developed into a productive research stream as it addresses the transfer of brand meaning to the consumer's self-concept (Lam, et al., 2010). Consumer-brand community identification is also a growing field of interest (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001). This occurs when a consumer develops a sense of belongingness to the brand community rather than the brand itself (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005). However, community identification typically involves elevated levels of brand identification as well (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013).

Consumer-brand identification has remained as an attractive research interest for three main reasons. First, brands are filled with cultural meaning consumers can use to construct their identity (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; McCracken, 1986). Two, brands "are a more visible and more persistent signal" (Carter & Gilovich, 2012, p. 1314) of identification than consumption activities or experiential purchases, for instance. Three, categorizing and comparing have foundational roles in social identity theory (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and it is easier to observe consumers and research participants classifying visible, persistent signals, especially in controlled research settings. Taken together, brands are easily seen, categorized and compared making them obvious research targets, eventually generating a large body of research addressing consumer retaliatory behaviors from the brand or object possession perspective.

Despite evidence demonstrating consumers identify with their consumption activities, retaliatory research has left this area of inquiry wide open for exploration and theoritization. This is

surprising since before brand identification can occur the consumer needs to incorporate the brand into their consumption activities (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005) thus the consumption activity has a significant impact on the type of relationship a consumer may form with a brand. Under SIT, consumers categorize others into groups based on their perceived values and observed behaviors. They then compare groups against each other in order to select and target the desired groups to identify with that offer self-enhancement and/or self-distinctiveness dimensions. Prior research suggests that the targets of consumer identification are usually organizations, brands, or various types of groups, such as subcultures of consumption or brand communities. However, a closer look at the literature indicates that activities themselves also serve as a target for identification thereby impacting consumers' retaliatory behaviors.

#### ***2.1.4. Consumption Based Identity Construction***

A consumer's identity is the reflective view, impression and opinion they have of himself or herself as an object and how they are viewed by others (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Lin & Sung, 2014). Consumers strategically manage and actively promote their identity by signaling similarity or difference with others (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Murray, 2002). A consumption based identity perspective focuses on the way consumers actively use brands, products and possessions to construct a coherent identity (Ahuvia, 2005). Consumption based identity construction is a dynamic, continuous and socially situated process (Hsieh & Wu, 2011; Kleine & Kleine, 2000). Accordingly, consumption is not viewed as a destructive process rather it is a productive process in which consumers make sense of the world and place themselves within it (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

Consumers actively seek and construct their identities (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) by evaluating responses and adjusting their behavior accordingly (Goffman, 1959; Swidler, 1986). Evaluation and adjustment are necessary since the meaning of activities and objects are determined through a negotiation process within socially situated contexts (Schroeder & Salzer-Mörling, 2006). For example, golfing may not support the construction of an artistic identity but in a corporate culture, as Murray (2002) details, engaging in golf can be strategically used to construct a legitimate corporate identity.

A review of the consumption literature reveals two components of identity construction: 1) possession of objects and 2) the use of objects. The ability of possessions, objects and brands to construct a consumer's identity has received significant attention over the past three decades (Bardhi, Eckhardt & Arnould, 2012). Belk's (1988) work on the extended self and McCracken's

(1986) meaning movement model have been instrumental in focusing attention on the role of objects and brands have on identity construction. McCracken (1986) argues that objects are charged with culturally relevant meanings and these meanings are then transferred to the consumer through use. Brand meanings and values can become so deeply embedded into a consumer's sense-of-self or identity that the brand is treated as an extension of herself or himself (Belk, 1988). Occasionally, the relationship with the brand can become so intense that the consumer suffers from separation distress if the relationship is terminated (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005).

Brands are particularly powerful elements in identity construction as they carry most of the symbolic values in today's culture (Elliot & Davies, 2006). Firms are highly skilled at commoditizing the counterculture values consumers want to incorporate into their identities (Thompson & Coskuner-Bali, 2007). Therefore, consumers often look to brands as key ingredients in constructing and managing their identity (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Holt, 2002). However, despite recognizing that consumers need to learn how to incorporate brands and objects into their consumption activities in order to project and refine the desired identity there has been relatively little focus on consumer-activity relationships.

Intricately tying enacting activities to identity construction is highly evident in the subculture of consumption literature (i.e., Kates, 2002). A consumer's identity is constructed within a subculture of consumption by committing to the subculture's ethos, developing a sense of belonging with other members and engaging in subculture activities (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). As the subculture derived identity strengthens so do normative pressures to engage in activities and enact practices that support the subculture (Kozinets, 2001; Murphy & Patterson, 2011). Moreover, Celsi, Rose and Leigh (1993) suggest that the primary activity of the subculture can serve as the main identity formation dimension. In their case, consumers formed high-risk identities by engaging in sky-diving. Thus, the subculture of consumption research highlights the fact that identification involves engaging in activities as well as using brands and objects, in a socially legitimated manner.

Additional support for the prominent role activity engagement has on identity construction can be found in the occupational community and community of practice literature. Orr's (1996) ethnographic study on photocopier technicians found that an individual's identity can revolve around activity engagement. In this case, the technicians based a portion of their identity on their ability to perform the technician practice and not Xerox, their employing organization. Community of practice members develop shared values through the repeatedly engaging in shared practices and activities (Brown & Duguid, 1998; Carlile, 2002). Furthermore, the

community of practice literature argues that learning how to engage in activities and enact practices are synonymous with identity acquisition (Brown & Duguid, 2001; Orr, 1996).

Carter and Gilovich's (2012) multi-study research clearly illustrates that consumers not only prefer to define themselves through their experiences but also develop opinions of others based on their experiences. Specifically, they show that consumers tend to place experiences closer to their self-concept than their material possessions. Also, consumers feel that strangers would get a more accurate impression of them if they learned about their experiences over their possessions. Similarly, consumers also feel they would get a more accurate impression of a stranger if they knew their experiences rather than the stranger's possessions. It is quite common to hear someone describe themselves by the activities they engage in (I'm a shopper; I'm a runner) rather than the objects or brands they possess (I'm a Pepsi; I'm Nike). Therefore, Carter and Gilovich's (2012) study provides additional support for investigating consumers' consumption activities rather than solely focusing on brand possession to better understand consumer behavior.

### ***2.1.5. Activity Promotion***

Consumers actively and strategically manage their identity (Murray, 2002) and strive to maintain and enhance positive views and feelings towards their identity and sense-of-self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Brown & Tajfel, 1979). Promoting activity involvement indicates they are comfortable with the activity as well as potentially being a way to protect identity investments, demonstrate competency, take advantage of their social status and refine their activity based identity. Accordingly, a consumer's activity promotion tendency is an appropriate but conservative proxy for the degree the consumer incorporates the activity into their identity.

Promoting an activity indicates that a consumer is comfortable having others become aware of their relationship with the activity. Promotion behaviors inform others that the consumer is committed to the activity and serve as a type of personal endorsement (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). Garnefeld, Helm and Eggert (2011) also found that promoting or providing recommendations strengthens the recommenders' loyalty to the recommended subject. Therefore, activity promotion explicitly draws and strengthens the consumer-activity relationship link.

Actively managing and protecting identity investments sometimes requires consumers to employ various discursive strategies to preemptively dis-identify with activities, objects and brands that may negatively alter their projected identity (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). Arsel and



Thompson (2011) discuss how consumers who have invested in a specific identity engage in aesthetic discrimination by offering justifications for being different than an alternative, and often negatively valued, stereotypical identity being applied to their identity investment. Further, as consumers become more experienced they are better able to define the activity rather than relying upon a general, stereotypical characteristics and dimensions (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Hsieh & Wu, 2011). In this way, consumers promote their activities to protect and, hopefully, enhance their activity related identity investments.

Consumers may promote their involvement in an activity in order to acquire social status through demonstrating competency in the activity (Leigh, Peters & Shelton, 2006; Schau, Muñiz & Arnould, 2009). Social capital is particularly important in subcultures of consumption and more traditionally defined groups where activity related knowledge can increase social status (Stets & Burke, 2000). Pongsakornrunsilp and Schroeder (2011) also note that activity promotion can increase the quantity of subculture of consumption members thereby enhancing the value of activity related knowledge and social status (Schau, Muñiz & Arnould, 2009). Similarly, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) suggest that consumers who are able to promote the subculture of consumption throughout their daily lives tend to have higher levels of social status within the subculture. Accordingly, consumers who integrate an activity into their identity will promote the activity in order to acquire and sustain social status (O'Sullivan, Richardson & Collins, 2011).

Promoting, discussing and engaging in other forms of activity related storytelling also offers the consumer an opportunity to refine their identity by evaluating the responses and feedback offered by others. Identity development is an iterative and interactive process (Kleine & Kleine, 2000). Activity promotion enables the consumer to receive feedback on how their identity is being perceived. They can then incrementally refine their behaviors and activity promotion tendencies in order to strategically (re)present the desired identity.

Therefore, consumers with high activity promotion tendencies believe they receive positive benefits by explicitly identifying with the activity. Benefits can stem from protecting their identity investments, enhancing social status or refining their identity. Consumers who promote an activity to friends, family and acquaintances indicate they are comfortable having the activity connected to their identity. It is expected that brand changes that impact consumers' ability to obtain identity enhancing benefits will retaliate against the brand. Brand logo changes should result in lower retaliation intentions than withdrawing a product from the market. This is because a brand logo change allows the consumer to enact the activity in a relatively similar manner as before the change. Following a branded product withdrawal, however, the consumer needs to

make changes to their activity enactment process, find a suitable replacement and potentially suffer reductions in their ability to perform the activity while they find and become experienced with a suitable replacement. Thus, the over-arching questions to be answered by this work are: does a positive relationship exist between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors and is this relationship stronger following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption.

A positive relationship is expected to be present across both brand change treatments. However, prior literature indicates consumers who highly identify with a brand exhibit increased rates of retaliatory behavior (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Grégoire, Tripp and Legoux, 2009). In order to better understand the impact activity promotion tendencies have on consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change it is important to consider prior findings on the roles of self-brand connections and self-brand identity overlap. As brand promotion tendencies are considered a consequence of a strong consumer-brand relationship and because brand promotion can be interconnected with activity promotion, this section concludes by discussing the proposed relationship between brand promotion and activity promotion tendencies on retaliatory behavior intentions.

### ***2.1.6. Self-Brand Connection***

Cultural meanings and values are embedded into brands; thus, consumers often utilize brands to help construct and project their identity (Escalas, 2004; Holt, 2002). Consumers develop strong self-brand connections the more self-relevant and meaningful the brand becomes to the consumer by helping them achieve their goals (Johnson, Matear & Thomson, 2011; Swaminathan, Page & Gürhan-Canli, 2007). Following Escalas and Bettman (2003, p. 340), self-brand connection is defined as "a measure of the degree to which consumers have incorporated the brand into their self-concept".

A high self-brand connection level indicates the consumer views the brand as a reflection of who they are. They also use the brand to communicate to others who they are (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Rindfleisch, Burroughs & Wong, 2009). Consumers reporting higher self-brand connections have higher re-purchase intention, brand loyalty and more favorable attitudes toward the brand than consumers with lower self-brand connections (Escalas, 2004). Additionally, consumers with high self-brand connections are less susceptible to negative brand information, as they are more prone to protect identity investments by developing counter-arguments that reduce the impact or validity of the negative information (Swaminathan, Page & Gürhan-Canli, 2007). Due to social pressures, the relationship between use and perceived self-

brand connection is elevated when the brand's consumption activity is typically engaged in public (Berger & Heath, 2007; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994; Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

A consumer's activity promotion tendencies are expected to have a positive relationship on intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. Promoting an activity indicates that the consumer is comfortable with others using their activity engagement to develop an impression of their identity. Promoting the activity also indicates the consumer believes that their activity engagement has some social value that can enhance or maintain their social status. Prior research has shown that consumers will either change their opinions or keep non-social status enhancing information to themselves (Hsieh & Wu, 2011). Therefore, it is reasonable to view high activity promotion tendencies as an indication of an elevated self-activity relationship. Further, high activity promotion tendencies indicate the activity has relatively high self-relevancy to the consumer thus disruptions to the activity can provoke retaliatory behavior. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for self-brand connection levels.

H1b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.

However, research indicates that consumers who highly value their relationship with a brand also re-act more negatively to brand changes and service failures than consumers who do not value the relationship as highly (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009). As a brand's self-relevancy increases so does their likelihood to engage in retaliatory behaviors (Johnson, Matear & Thomson, 2011). However, Lin and Sung (2014) found that consumers with very high connection levels will retaliate less than consumers with high connection levels. Thus, it appears the positive relationship between consumer-brand relationship and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior has a slightly taper as the relationship status approaches the highest end of the measurement scale. Accordingly, self-brand connection levels are expected to have an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior:

H1c) Self-brand connection levels have an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

Self-brand connection measures the strength of the consumer's relationship with the brand. The stronger the relationship with the brand the more self-relevant the brand becomes. However,

consumers who promote an activity elevate the self-relevance of the activity. Therefore, high levels of self-brand connection and activity promotion will elevate consumers' likelihood to engage in retaliatory behaviors following a brand change.

### ***2.1.7. Self-Brand Identity Overlap***

The integration of a brand into a consumer's identity is not an all or nothing scenario rather it is a matter of degree. Self-brand identity overlap is considered a continuous variable and addresses the degree a brand is integrated into a consumer's identity (Ahuvia, 2005). In particular, self-brand identity overlap is defined as the degree a consumer feels what they stand for and what the brand stands for overlap. Self-brand identity overlap differs from the self-brand connection concept as identity overlap is narrowly focused on the consumer's perception of the brand's identity and their identity are embedded into each other (Lin & Sung, 2014). Self-brand connection is more encompassing, since it addresses the brand's ability to reflect their identity, communicate their identity and the consumer's overall sense of connection with the brand (Escalas, 2004; Escalas & Bettman, 2005).

Identity overlap draws from the closeness to self (Aron, Aron & Smollan, 1992; Aron, Aron, Tudor & Nelson, 1991) and brand identification literature (Lam, et al., 2010; Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer & Nyffenegger, 2011). Close to self relationships occur when a consumer views themselves as possessing or representing specific characteristics, attributes or dimensions of the target (Aron, et al., 1991). Thus, they develop a feeling of identity overlap (Aron, Aron & Smollan 1992). Similarly, consumer-brand identification is based on the degree the consumer perceives, feels and values their connection with the brand (Lam, et al., 2010; Lam, Ahearne, Mullins, Hayati & Schillewaert, 2013).

Developing a high level of consumer-brand identity overlap requires the brand to be incorporated into the consumer's activities. Furthermore, the consumer needs to embrace the socially held views of the brand (Lam, et al., 2010). A brand's identity is not individually held but is collectively held and developed through a series of negotiations among marketers, consumers and society more generally (McCracken, 1986; Schroeder & Salzer-Mörling, 2006). Therefore, the brand needs to be used in a way that is consistent with the socially legitimated methods otherwise the feedback the consumer receives will not be affirming thereby reducing their feelings of self-esteem and stimulating behavioral refinements in order to project the desired identity.

Consumers who promote a consumption activity in which they have integrated a brand into are demonstrating a tacit acceptance of the socially legitimated brand usage method. Thus, brand changes not only threaten the consumer's brand-derived identity but also the consumer's activity-derived identity. A consumption based identity perspective recognizes the important role brand usage has on the identity construction process (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Thus, while high consumer-brand identity overlap will elevate consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a logo change or product withdrawal consumers who promote the activity will also feel threats to their identity and retaliate against the brand.

Moreover, activity promotion tendencies can be considered an explicit, public display of consumer and activity relationship because encouraging others to engage in the activity is a type of formal endorsement (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). Additionally, activity promotion signals confidence in one's competency and knowledge on the activity. Consumers desire to maintain and enhance self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) therefore, generally, consumers will not promote activities that they are unsure about and risk reducing self-esteem and social status levels (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for degree of consumer-brand identity overlap.

H2b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.

While negative information has a reduced impact on consumers with strong brand relationships than those with low brand relationships (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant & Unnava, 2000), when a consumer feels betrayed by the brand they tend to retaliate more aggressively and have higher boycotting tendencies (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012). But, Lin and Sung (2014) found a positive relationship between consumer-brand identification levels and intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors following a product failure expect for those with very high levels of identification. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2c) The degree of consumer-brand identity overlap has an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

Consumers have a high degree of self-brand identity overlap when they feel what they and the brand stand for are highly similar. This similarity increases the self-relevancy and importance of the brand and changes to the brand are more likely to be perceived as a potential threat to their identity investments. Therefore, brand changes will result in higher intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior when the consumer has high levels of self-brand identity overlap. However, developing a high level of self-brand identity overlap requires the consumer to use the brand. When consumers promote the activity they elevate the importance of the activity in their life and increase their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, especially if this change threatens their identity by impacting the way they engage in the activity.

### ***2.1.8. Brand Promotion***

Promoting the benefits of using a brand or engaging in an activity indicates a high level of trust and commitment towards the brand or activity (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). Moreover, promotion is an active demonstration of a relationship with either the activity or brand (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Consumers strive to maintain positive sense-of-self levels and avoid placing themselves in negative situations (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Accordingly, consumers tend not to promote their affiliation with brands or activities that have the potential to reduce their self-esteem or social status. As Hsieh and Wu (2011) discuss, when presented with non-affirming, un-supportive or negative feedback consumers tend to change their behavior by actively suppressing the promotion of their relationship with the view, brand or activity.

The subculture of consumption and community of practice literature all suggest that engaging in activities is a prerequisite to identity formulation. Elevated brand promotion tendencies are a consequence of a strong self-brand connection and high self-brand identity overlap (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). As a consequence and not an antecedent, the predictive power of brand promotion tendencies on retaliatory behaviors should be stronger than self-brand connection or self-brand identity overlap. This is because those with high brand promotion tendencies demonstrate a disposition towards talking about the brand with others. Therefore, changes to the brand provide an additional event that may be worthy of sharing with consumers, especially if they already are comfortable disclosing their brand relationship and at a relatively high rate. However, brand promotion might be weakened since encouraging others to purchase and use the brand includes an implicit endorsement of the consumption activity. Therefore, activity promotion tendencies should have a positive relationship with intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, while brand promotion tendencies will have an interaction effect on this relationship.

It is further expected that the positive relationship will be more pronounced following major brand changes, such as a branded product withdrawal. This is because withdrawing the brand from the market will create uncertainty causing the consumer to re-evaluate the activity enactment process thereby shaking their relationship with the activity. A brand logo change still allows the consumer to engage in the activity following a relatively similar process and thus the desire to engage in retaliatory behavior will be less pronounced. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for brand promotion tendencies.

H3b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.

H3c) Brand promotion tendencies has an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

Promoting an activity or brand indicates an elevated level of commitment to the activity or brand. However, engaging in activities is an important component of identity construction and promoting a brand includes an implicit promotion of the brand's consumption activity. Therefore, activity promotion tendencies are projected to have a positive relationship on intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change and is expected to be more pronounced in the branded product withdrawal treatment.

### ***2.1.9. Summary***

Changes to a brand can provoke consumers to retaliate against the brand by spreading negative word-of-mouth and engaging in boycotts. Prior research has predominately focused on relationships consumers have with the brand and how these relationships impact consumers' retaliatory intentions. However, consumers strategically construct their identities by enrolling brands into their activities. Integrating a consumption based perspective of identity construction into social identity theory it is proposed that changes to brands used in activities consumers promote will lead to higher rates of retaliatory behaviors. Consumers' who perceive high overlaps between their identity and the brand, have strong self-brand connections levels or promote the brand at a high tendency will have an interaction effect on the positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

### **2.2.1. Methods**

An experimental study was implemented to discover if a positive relationship exist between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors and if this relationship is stronger following a major disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity over a minor disruption. The data collection process involved three phases of data collection composed of four waves of survey implementation. In particular, two waves of pre-treatment data collection were followed by the implementation of two waves of hypothetical brand change treatments (logo change and branded product withdrawal). Following each hypothetical scenario the subjects completed a survey that captured their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior towards the brand. In total, four surveys were implemented.

This section provides a high-level overview of the study's procedures and then discusses each of the three phases and treatment in more detail. Then, the sample and data descriptives are presented.

#### ***2.2.2.1. Procedures***

The data collection process consisted of three different phases. Phase 1 introduced the project to the participants and requested that they identify their favorite activity, make a video of them engaging in the activity and write a narrative on how to engage in the activity. The information sheet that described the project to the participants is provided in Appendix A. Phase 2 consisted of administering two waves of surveys that collected the participants' views on their identified favorite activity and one focal brand within the activity that they knew the most about. The treatment occurred in Phase 3; where each participant was presented with two hypothetical brand change scenarios (see Appendices B, brand logo change, and C, product withdrawal). The participants wrote new narratives detailing the steps they would take to engage in the activity following the brand change and completed a survey that collected their views related to the brand change.

##### *2.2.2.2. Phase 1*

Phase 1 consisted of three tasks and was designed to increase the salience of the participants' activity-derived identity. Contemporary consumers are characterized as a collection of multiple identities that are (de)activated depending upon the social setting (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Kleine, Kleine & Kernan, 1993). The participants were asked to select a favorite activity and video record themselves engaging in the activity for at least 10 minutes to elevate the importance of



this particular identity. The participants were also asked to create a diagram that identified the steps taken to engage in the activity. The third task involved in Phase 1 was to write a narrative describing the steps taken to engage in the activity. Together, it is expected that activity identity activation and the focusing characteristics of Phase 1 will subside before the survey data is collected but the three tasks provide a concrete experience for the participants to focus on when pondering the hypothetical treatment scenarios and completing the respective surveys.

#### *2.2.2.3. Phase 2*

In Phase 2 the participants completed two waves of online surveys administered through Qualtrics. The first survey was administered one week after Phase 1 materials were collected. Participants were allotted one week to complete the survey and then the following week they were assigned the second survey. One survey measured the participants' views toward their favorite activity and the other survey measured the participants' views toward the focal brand identified within their favorite activity. The questions were randomly rotated to limit ordering effects.

Both the brand and activity surveys collected data for other research projects. Accordingly, the omnibus survey tool collected data not used in this study. Additionally, the participants who received the brand or activity first was randomly determined by selecting every third participant on the class roster till two relatively even groups were formed.

#### *2.2.2.4. Phase 3*

Phase 3 is the treatment phase and began one month after Phase 1 was completed and one week after Phase 2 was completed. The two treatments consisted of hypothetical brand change scenarios. The participants were given one week to complete each treatment and there was a one-week gap between the two treatments. As with the brand and activity surveys, the subject pool was divided into two groups using the every third participant procedure. One group received the brand logo change treatment first and then the withdrawal treatment while the other group received the branded product withdrawal treatment first and then the logo change treatment. All participants received invitations to participate in each treatment group and only the order in which they were contacted differed. In total, Phase 3 lasted three weeks.

Each participant was sent an email to the treatment omnibus survey via Qualtrics. The survey first presented them with a hypothetical brand change scenario and then asked them to answer a series of questions on how they would feel if the scenario was true. The participants were also

instructed to imagine if the hypothetical scenario was true and re-write their favorite activity narrative from Phase 1.

The brand logo change scenario is presented in Table 2.1 and served as a minor or conservative disruption to the consumer's activity-derived identity. This is because the functional properties of the brand remained unchanged and the activity enactment process should not be substantially disrupted.

*You are surfing the web and one of your friends posts that your focal brand has changed their logo. They included a link to the brand's webpage so you decide to see what this new logo looks like. The logo doesn't appear to be very different. The webpage says that the logo has been "updated" to look more "modern". However they did change the color of the logo and claim the color change helps to unify their portfolio and overall image.*

**Table 2.1.** Brand Logo Change Scenario

The branded product withdrawal scenario is presented in Table 2.2. Withdrawing the brand from the market has the potential to greatly impact a consumer's identity. Accordingly, it served as a major or severe disruption to the consumer's activity-derived identity.

*You are getting ready to engage in your favorite activity described in the Video Project. However, you notice that you don't have the focal brand. If the brand was a product, imagine you have lost it and it appears that it is not offered anywhere. If the brand was a service or store, you realize that it has closed.*

*Worse, it appears that the manufacturer has actually stopped providing this branded product or service. You then remember hearing over the radio that your focal brand was having financial difficulty and was considering halting production of a few product lines or closing stores. As you start to make sense of the situation, you fully realize that the focal brand is no longer available for you to use in your favorite activity described in the Video Project.*

**Table 2.2.** Branded Product Withdrawal Scenario

Together, the study tests two types of market disruptions: brand logo change and branded product withdrawal. Market disruptions are "major events occurring in the market that threaten customer-brand relationships" (Lam, et al., 2010, p. 128). Market disruptions differ from product failures, as the latter addresses how consumers respond to individual lapses in the brand promise delivery whereas the former addresses events that impact every brand users' relationship with the brand (Lam, et al., 2010). However, unlike prior studies (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004; Lin & Sung, 2014) that solely focused on the consumer-brand identity relationship, this research investigates brand and consumption activity relationships simultaneously.

### ***2.2.3. Participants & Sample***

The original sample consisted of 97 students enrolled in an introductory marketing course at a large public university located in a southern state. The participants took part in the experiment as an alternative to a graded writing assignment. However, the total sample used in the data analysis consisted of 71 students. The experimental design consisted of administering four different surveys. Participants who did not complete all four surveys or were missing more than 10% of the responses in one survey were discarded prior to data analysis. This reduced the sample to 75. The high frequency of participants who did not complete all of the surveys suggested that participants might not be sufficiently engaged in completing the survey. For each survey the standard deviation was calculated for each participant to check for adequate engagement levels. Upon visual inspection, two participants were identified who reported a value of 1 for all questions on the brand change treatment and another participant provided missing data for 13 of the questions plus the questions answered were all marked with a value of 1. The final participant to be discarded due to disengagement, reported a value of 7 for all questions on the activity survey. Only participants who had a standard deviation of 0 (zero) were discarded due to disengagement. Accordingly, the sample was further reduced to 71 through discarding unengaged participants.

The complete data set of 97 participants was analyzed to ensure there was no differential pattern in the missing data. Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test was conducted using SPSS, Version 22. Even with including participants who did not complete entire surveys there was no detectable pattern in the missing data. Specifically, the missing data is random and not attributable to an underlying research design issue (Chi-Square = 676.239, DF = 625,  $p = 0.08$ ). Therefore, the data set was reduced to 71 participants, as described above, and the remaining missing data was replaced.

Missing data was replaced using the expectation maximum (EM) method in SPSS, Version 22. Replacing missing data was preferred over deleting additional cases to maintain statistical power (Roth, 1994). EM was selected as it provides less biased estimates by accounting for variability that other methods, such as regression imputation and replacement with mean values do not (Baraldi & Enders, 2010; Enders, 2001). However, as the data set contains participants with less than 10% of missing data, the differences among missing data techniques is relatively small and negligible (Roth, 1994). EM identifies the value that minimizes the distance between observed points and is appropriate for ANOVA analysis, among others (Baraldi & Enders, 2010).

### ***2.2.4. Data Descriptives***

The analyzed sample was composed of 38 (58.5%) females and 33 (46.5%) males. This composition is slightly higher than the national composition 51% female and 49% male (<http://www.census.gov/popest/data/national/asrh/2013/index.html>). Prior research has found mixed evidence that females and males report differing attachment tendencies (Aron, Aron, Tudor & Nelson, 1991) and retaliatory behaviors (Klein, Smith & John, 2004). Accordingly, this study does control for sex in keeping with prior studies (Swaminathan, Stilley & Ahluwalia, 2009; Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012).

The age of participants ranged from 20 to 32, with an average age of 22. The participants were college students, therefore the age range is more aligned with younger, transitioning adults. Klein, Smith and John (2004) found that as consumers are more likely to boycott a brand as the brand changes or service failures threaten their self-enhancement and identity construction process. Thus, disruptions that are perceived to be self-relevant tend to motivate consumers to retaliate against the brand (Johnson, Matear & Thomson, 2011; Swaminathan, Page & Gürhan-Canli, 2007). As transitioning adults, creating a coherent identity can be an important concern. Therefore, college students are ideal participants to investigate how brand changes impact their identity construction process and motivate them to retaliate against the brand.

Approximately 82% of the respondents were Caucasian, 8% were Asian, 6% were Hispanic, 3% were African American, and 2% self-identified as bi-racial. Compared to national statistics, Asians were over-represented and African Americans were under-represented (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/05000.html>). The limited sample size reduces the reliability of conducting intergroup comparisons however a visual analysis suggested no differential pattern exists across ethnicities. Cross-cultural studies are encouraged to further explore consumers' attachment and retaliatory behavior tendencies.

The most frequently identified favorite activity was related to working-out or an athletic activity (18), followed by baking, cooking or grilling (15), applying make-up (5), and cleaning (4). Many of the identified favorite activities were mundane, frequently repeated activities. The most frequently identified focal brands were Nike (8), Walmart's private label, Great Value (3), Betty Crocker (2), and Mod Podge (2). Even with some activities being frequently cited as being their favorite activity there was ample variation in reported focal brands so that one particular brand did not dominate the analysis. Furthermore, the reported brands did not heavily lean towards being purely symbolic or functional. Therefore, the tested activities and brands should not inadvertently bias the results.

### 2.2.5.1 Scales & Sources

The following section introduces the scales used to measure the independent and dependent variables. All measures used in this study were adapted from or modifications of existing sources.

#### 2.2.5.2. Activity Promotion Tendencies Scale

The primary independent variable was activity promotion tendencies. The four indicators measuring activity promotion tendencies are presented in Table 2.3 and are based on prior research investigating consumers’ brand promotion tendencies (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). The indicators captured the subjects’ tendencies to socially promote the activity to their friends and acquaintances and the subjects’ happiness or pleasure when their friends or acquaintances physically engage in the activity (such as *I show my happiness to those who decide to engage in the activity* and *I try to convince friends and acquaintances of mine to engage in the activity*). Following prior studies, each indicator was measured on a 7 point likert strongly (dis)agree scale with the end and middle points labeled (*strongly disagree, neither agree or disagree, or strong agree*).

<p>I try to convince my friends and acquaintances of the benefits of engaging in the activity.                  I show my happiness to those who decide to engage in the activity.                  I’m very happy when a friend or acquaintance of mine decides to engage in the activity.                  I try to convince friends and acquaintances of mine to engage in the activity.</p> <p>Modified from: Bhattacharya &amp; Sen (2003); Marzocchi, Morandin &amp; Bergami (2013).</p>
<p><i>All items were measured on a 7 point likert scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree with the statement; 4 indicating neither agree nor disagree with the statement; 7 indicating strongly agree with the statement.</i></p>
<p><b>Table 2.3.</b> Activity Promotion Tendencies Scale Items</p>

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) argue that consumers who identify with a target have higher rates of promoting the target to others. Marzocchi and colleagues (2013) empirically demonstrate that a positive relationships exists between consumer-company identification and brand promotion tendencies. Accordingly, activity promotion tendencies is a conservative measure of consumers’ identification levels with the activity, as promotion tendencies are positively correlated with identification levels. Therefore, activity promotion tendencies is an appropriate measure for this research.

2.2.5.3. *Self-Brand Connection Scale*

Five indicators were selected to measure the strength of the consumer’s self-brand connection (see Table 2.4). The scale has been used in prior research (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2005; Rindfleisch, Burroughs & Wong, 2009). Self-brand connection measures whether the subject believes the brand reflects their sense-of-self, communicates who they are to other people and if they have a personal connection with the brand (such as *This brand reflects who I am* and *I feel a personal connection to this brand*). In this way, self-brand connection is a more encompassing variable compared to self-brand identity overlap. Following prior research, each indicator was measured on a 7 point likert strongly (dis)agree scale with the end and middle points labeled (*strongly disagree, neither agree or disagree, or strong agree*).









Escalas and Bettman (2003) discovered that a consumer’s reference group’s values plays a large role in developing self-brand connections. Specifically, consumers who feel that the reference group values a brand or if the brand is an important component of signaling group inclusion tend to have higher self-brand connection levels. Thus, consumers who view the brand as providing group value tend to develop a connection with the brand. Escalas and Bettman (2005) show that brand meanings are partially determined by the social groups that use the brand. Both of these studies support the assertion that consumers use brands to construct their identities and that consumers tend to use visible or displayed brands as cues for forming opinions on groups. Accordingly, self-brand connection is an appropriate measure for determining the connection a consumer has with a brand.

<p>This brand reflects who I am.                  I can identify with this brand.                  I feel a personal connection to this brand.                  I (can) use this brand to communicate who I am to other people.                  I consider this brand to be “me.”</p> <p>Sources: Escalas &amp; Bettman (2005); Rindfleisch, Burroughs &amp; Wong (2009).</p> <p><i>All items were measured on a 7 point likert scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree with the statement; 4 indicating neither agree nor disagree with the statement; 7 indicating strongly agree with the statement.</i></p>
<p><b>Table 2.4.</b> Self-Brand Connection Scale Items</p>

2.2.5.4. *Self-Brand Identity Overlap Scale*

Two indicators measured the consumer’s level of self-brand identity overlap. The indicators were adapted from prior research that investigated consumer behavior under a social identity theory perspective (Lam, et al., 2010, 2013). One indicator presented a series of eight gradually overlapping circles and the participant was prompted to select the set of overlapping circles best

representing the similarity between their identity and the brand’s identity. The other indicator measured the consumer’s self-brand identity overlap verbally (*To what extent does your own sense of who you are (i.e., your personal identity) overlap with your sense of what the Focal Brand represents (i.e., the Focal Brand’s identity)*) on a 9 point likert scale anchored by completely different and completely similar rather than using Venn diagrams (see Table 2.5).

<p>We sometimes identify with a brand. This occurs when we perceive a great amount of overlap between our ideas about who we are as a person and what we stand for (i.e., our self identity) and of whom this brand is and what it stands for (i.e., the brand’s identity). Imagine that the circle at the left in each row represents your own personal identity and the other circle, at the right, represents your <b>Focal Brand’s</b> identity. Please indicate which case (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H) best describes the level of overlap between your identity and the <b>Focal Brand’s</b> identity. (Choose the Appropriate Letter).</p>		
	<p>My Identity                  Focal Brand's Identity</p>	
A		Far
B		Close Together but Separate
C		Very Small Overlap
D		Small Overlap
E		Moderate Overlap
F		Large Overlap
G		Very Large Overlap
H		Complete Overlap
<p>To what extent does your own sense of who you are (i.e., your personal identity) overlap with your sense of what the Focal Brand represents (i.e., the Focal Brand’s identity)?</p>		
<p>Adapted from: Lam, et al., (2010, 2013); Marzocchi, Morandin &amp; Bergami (2013).</p>		
<p>Measured on an 9 pt. scale: -4 = Completely different; 0 = Neither similar nor different; 4 = Completely similar.</p>		
<p><b>Table 2.5.</b> Self-Brand Identity Overlap Items</p>		

Self-brand identity overlap is based on the cognitive component of consumer-brand identification. In particular, this measure captures participants’ personal views of their sense-of-self or identity and the role of a brand in representing and projecting their identity (Lam, et al., 2010). Lam and colleagues (2013) found that higher levels of consumer-brand identity overlap leads to higher rates of brand loyalty. However, the identification process is impacted by the consumer’s openness to innovation and new products and the brand’s consumer relationship building activities. Thus, identification with a target is a mixture of personal and social antecedents (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005).

2.2.5.5. *Brand Promotion Tendencies Scale*

Four indicators measured the participant’s brand promotion tendencies. The four indicators are presented in Table 2.6 and adapted from prior research studies (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). The indicators captured the participants’ tendencies to socially promote the brand to their friends and acquaintances and the participants happiness or pleasure when their friends or acquaintances physically engage with the brand (such as *I show my happiness to those who decide to buy the brand* and *I try to convince friends and acquaintances of mine to buy the brand*). Based on prior studies, each indicator was measured on a 7 point likert strongly (dis)agree scale with the end and middle points labeled (*strongly disagree, neither agree or disagree, or strong agree*).

Marzocchi, Morandin and Bergami (2013) found that as the consumer-brand relationship intensifies brand trust levels also intensify. The elevated levels of brand trust then lead the consumer to promote and support the brand more often than those who have less intense consumer-brand relationships. Similarly, Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) conceptualize brand promotion as an outcome of a strong consumer-brand relationship. Accordingly, brand promotion tendencies is an appropriate but conservative measure of a consumer’s relationship, connection or identity overlap with a brand.

<p>I try to convince my friends and acquaintances of the quality of the brand.                  I show my happiness to those who decide to buy the brand.                  I’m very happy when a friend or acquaintance of mine decides to buy the brand.                  I try to convince friends and acquaintances of mine to buy the brand.</p>
<p>Adapted from: Bhattacharya &amp; Sen (2003); Marzocchi, Morandin &amp; Bergami (2013).</p>
<p><i>All items were measured on a 7 point likert scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree with the statement; 4 indicating neither agree nor disagree with the statement; 7 indicating strongly agree with the statement.</i></p>
<p><b>Table 2.6.</b> Brand Promotion Tendencies Scale Items</p>

2.2.5.6. *Consumer Retaliatory Intentions Scale*

Retaliatory intentions, the dependent variable, was measured using four indicators (see Table 2.7). The same indicators were presented after each treatment. A composite variable was created for each participant and for each treatment group. Therefore, each participant has two consumer retaliatory intentions variable, one for the brand change treatment and one for the branded product withdrawal treatment. The four indicators are adapted from existing research (Brüggen, Foubert & Gremler, 2011; Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Lloyd & Luk, 2011). Three of the indicators measure the consumer’s intentions to spread negative word-of-mouth (such as *I intend*



to say negative things about the brand on social media outlets) and the fourth measured their intention to boycott the products made by the brand (*I will stop buying other products/services made by the brand's manufacturer/provider*). Boycotting a brand requires the consumer to alter the consumption patterns making boycotting a stronger indicator of a consumer's desire to punish or cause inconvenience to a firm (Klein, Smith & John, 2004). Each indicator was measured on a 7 point likert (dis)agree scale with end and middle points labeled (*strongly disagree, neither agree or disagree, or strong agree*). Therefore, this scale captures participants' desire to retaliate against a brand using behaviorally easy and difficult measures.

<p>I intended to say negative things about this brand to friends, relatives and other people  I intended to discredit the brand with friends, relatives and other people.  I intend to say negative things about the brand on social media outlets.  I will stop buying other products/services made by the brand's manufacturer/provider.</p> <p>Adapted from: Brügger, Foubert &amp; Gremler (2011); Grégoire, Tripp &amp; Legoux (2009); Lloyd &amp; Luk (2011).</p>
<b>Table 2.7.</b> Consumer Retaliatory Intentions Scale Items

While the scales draw from existing research, activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory intentions are modifications of existing scales. Moreover, brand promotion tendencies is sometimes treated as a second-order factor composed of social and physical brand promotion dimensions (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). In this study it is treated as a first-order factor. Activity promotion tendencies, the study's primary independent variable, is also based on the brand promotion scale and conceptualized as a first-order factors. Self-brand identity overlap, similarly, can be viewed as one dimension of a larger second-order factor—consumer-brand identification (Lam, et al., 2010, 2013; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013).

### **2.2.6. Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

To test the discriminate validity of the indicators and the unidimensionality of the proposed factors a set of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were conducted. Table 2.8 displays select fit indices for each of the CFAs conducted on each of the six models to be tested. It should be noted that a sample size of around 100 is recommended for CFA's (Hair, et al., 2009; Iacobucci, 2010; MacKenzi, Podsakoff & Podsakoff, 2011). Kline (2011) suggests a more robust ratio of 20 participants per parameter. This study is clearly short of the roughly 600 sample size as desired. Therefore, the findings need to be interpreted with caution due to the low sample size of this study (Bhattacharjee, Berman & Reed, 2013). In particular, the absence of an effect does not preclude larger sample sizes or more powerful analysis techniques from detecting effects where this study finds none.

Multiple fit indices are reported to provide evidences of the model’s suitability from differing perspectives. Generally, a significant chi-square indicates that additional models exist within the data and that these models may fit the data better. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is less sensitive to sample size, compared to the chi-square, and further determines if the proposed model best fits the data or if another, more parsimonious model may exist (Bagozzi & Yu, 2012). Preference is given towards close fitting models with an  $RMSEA \leq 0.05$  and as the values approach 0.10 the proposed model increasingly has poor fit (Hair, et al., 2009; Harrington, 2008; Kline, 2011). The Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI) analyzes the data as if there was a baseline model rather than more parsimonious models as the RMSEA (Kline, 2011). A value above 0.95 indicates an adequate fitting model (Hair, et al., 2009; Kline, 2011). The final reported fit index is the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which first standardizes the variables, as some indicators use differing scales. The analysis investigates the residuals of the proposed model with a preference towards estimates that are  $\leq 0.08$  (Kline, 2011). These four CFA fit indices are commonly relied upon and reported in the marketing field (Iacobucci, 2010).

	<b>Chi-Square/ Degree of Freedom</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>SRMR</b>
<b>Model 1a<sup>1</sup></b>	87.059/62*	0.076	0.959	0.0663
<b>Model 1b</b>	72.830/62	0.050	0.983	0.0706
<b>Model 2a</b>	43.039/32	0.070	0.975	0.0509
<b>Model 2b</b>	40.956/32	0.063	0.979	0.0593
<b>Model 3a</b>	95.451/51*	0.112	0.932	0.0694
<b>Model 3b</b>	83.410/51*	0.095	0.949	0.0710
* $p \leq 0.05$ .				
<sup>1</sup> a = Logo change treatment group, b = Product withdrawal treatment group.				
<b>Table 2.8. Confirmatory Factor Analyses Results</b>				

The CFAs indicates that some measurement models have poor fit and the findings should be critically evaluated. First, in terms of good fitting models, model 1b demonstrated good fit across all four indices, all standardized regression weights were significant at the 99% confidence level and two loading estimates were lower than 0.700. To achieve adequate construct validity estimate loadings are encouraged to be above 0.500 and, ideally, 0.700 (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair, et al., 2009). Similarly, both model 2a and 2b had good fit, significant loadings and only two loading estimates under 0.700.

Models 1a has a significant chi-square, a moderately poor RMSEA, acceptable CFI and an acceptable SRMR. All standardized regression weights were significant at the 99% confidence level and only one loading estimate was lower than 0.700 but above 0.5000. Model 3a had a

worse fit with all indices indicating a poor fitting model, except SRMR. Similar to other models, all standardized regression weights were significant and the same factor loading estimate was lower than 0.700 (Activity Promotion2 = 0.666). Model 3b also has a poor fit with the same two estimates lower than 0.700 as the other model b analyses (Activity Promotion2 = 0.666 and Retaliatory4 = 0.573). Therefore, the findings from Model 1 and especially Model 3 deserve special consideration. Moreover, future research should pay attention to scale development to ensure adequate validity is achieved. The need to develop more precise measurement tools is expanded upon in the limitations section.

To evaluate internal consistency, a Composite Reliability (CR) estimate was calculated as the assumption of tau-equivalence is necessary to use Cronbach's Alpha internal reliability estimate. The small sample size, variations in measurement scales and lack of even distribution of responses across multiple indicators all suggest tau-equivalence is likely violated (Graham, 2006). All CRs are above 0.800 revealing the measures have acceptable reliability, a value over 0.700 is considered adequate for indicator reliability (Hair, et al., 2009). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) addresses convergent validity issues with preference given to values over a 0.500 threshold. The AVE estimates are all above 0.600 suggesting the indicators adequately converge on their respective factor as measurement error is not accounting for more extracted variance than the indicator (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Additionally, the square of the factor's AVE is more than the correlations with other factors indicating adequate discriminate validity (Hair, et al., 2009). While a few of the proposed models have poor fit the constructs demonstrated acceptable internal reliability and discriminate and convergent validity (see Table 2.9).

Since the hypotheses are tested using between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the model only includes three variables at a time separate six separate confirmatory factor analyses were conducted. The chi-square indicates that a few models do not fit the data, suggesting a more parsimonious model may exist within the data (Graham, 2006; Hair, et al., 2009; Kline, 2011). This is to be expected as three independent variables are theoretically related, as they all relate to the consumer-brand relationship. However, the correlations among variables does indicate the measurement of the same construct. Moreover, the high factor loadings in the CFAs suggest the indicators are measuring the intended constructs. Despite the poor measurement fit of a few models the internal, convergent and discriminate validity are acceptable across all variables.

			Independent Variables			Dependent Variable
	CR	AVE	Variables	Self-Brand Connection	Activity Promotion	Retaliatory Behavior
<b>Model 1a</b>	0.915	0.732	<b>SBC</b>	0.855		
	0.901	0.649	<b>Activity Promotion</b>	0.457	0.805	
	0.890	0.669	<b>Retaliatory Behavior</b>	0.150	0.063	0.818
<b>Model 1b</b>	0.915	0.732	<b>SBC</b>	0.855		
	0.901	0.649	<b>Activity Promotion</b>	0.457	0.805	
	0.871	0.636	<b>Retaliatory Behavior</b>	0.246	0.155	0.797
				<b>Self-Brand Identity Overlap</b>	<b>Activity Promotion</b>	<b>Retaliatory Behavior</b>
<b>Model 2a</b>	0.915	0.732	<b>Self-Brand Identity Overlap</b>	0.855		
	0.907	0.838	<b>Activity Promotion</b>	0.301	0.916	
	0.890	0.669	<b>Retaliatory Behavior</b>	0.149	0.041	0.818
<b>Model 2b</b>	0.915	0.731	<b>Self-Brand Identity Overlap</b>	0.855		
	0.880	0.791	<b>Activity Promotion</b>	0.325	0.889	
	0.871	0.636	<b>Retaliatory Behavior</b>	0.247	0.164	0.797
				<b>Brand Promotion</b>	<b>Activity Promotion</b>	<b>Retaliatory Behavior</b>
<b>Model 3a</b>	0.914	0.730	<b>Brand Promotion</b>	0.854		
	0.928	0.763	<b>Activity Promotion</b>	0.542	0.873	
	0.890	0.670	<b>Retaliatory Behavior</b>	0.151	-0.018	0.818
<b>Model 3b</b>	0.914	0.730	<b>Brand Promotion</b>	0.854		
	0.928	0.762	<b>Activity Promotion</b>	0.543	0.873	
	0.871	0.635	<b>Retaliatory Behavior</b>	0.246	0.158	0.797

**Table 2.9.** Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted and Factor Correlation Matrix with Square of the AVE on the Diagonal

### **2.3.1. Data Analysis & Findings**

Consumers promote the activities they engage in to enhance their social status, protect identity investments and, more generally, to indicate they are comfortable with others judging them based on their relationship with the activity. Thus, consumers feel that their identity will either be maintained or enhanced by encouraging others to engage in the activity. Accordingly, brand changes that impact a consumers' ability to continue constructing their identity through a consumption activity will motivate consumers to retaliate against the brand. A brand logo change has a minor impact on the consumer's activity-derived identity as the activity can still be engaged in, however withdrawing the branded product from the market may severely impact the consumer's activity-derived identity. The over-arching article research questions are: does a positive relationship exist between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors and is this relationship stronger following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption.

As an over-arching research questions are answered based on the results of H1 to H3. A series of between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) using two differing consumer-brand identity measures as well as brand promotion tendencies on intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior were conducted to enhance the robustness of the findings. However, the activity promotion variable remains constant across the following three models.

#### ***2.3.2.1. Testing Hypothesis 1***

A consumer's activity promotion tendencies are expected to have a positive relationship on intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. Additionally, to an extent, consumers with a high self-brand connection are expected to retaliate more strongly against a brand following a brand change than those with a low self-brand connection. Therefore, it is expected that a positive relationship exists between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior and self-brand connection levels will interact with this relationship. Specifically, model 1 tests the following hypotheses:

- H1a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for self-brand connection levels.
- H1b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.
- H1c) Self-brand connection levels have an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

### 2.3.2.2. *Independent Variables*

Table 2.10 presents the indicators and sources used to measure the two independent variables (activity promotion tendencies and self-brand connection level), the dependent variable (likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior) and one control variable (typicality of engaging in the activity at home). The second control variable, sex was gathered from official course documents.

Activity promotion was measured with four indicators. Promotion is sometimes considered a proxy for positive relationships since positively speaking about the activity and encouraging others to engage in the activity suggests positive views are held towards the activity (Fournier & Alvarez, 2013; Marzocchi, Morandin & Begrami, 2013). The four indicators were averaged together to form a composite variable and a median split was then conducted to create a dichotomous dummy variable, with 1 representing respondents with low activity promotion tendencies and 2 representing respondents with high activity promotion tendencies.

Self-brand connection was measured with five indicators. Following previous studies (Escalas & Bettman, 2005), the five indicators were averaged together to form a composite variable. Then, based on the median value, a dichotomous variable was created with 1 representing respondents with a low self-brand connection and 2 representing respondents with a high self-brand connection.

### 2.3.2.3. *Dependent Variable*

The respondents' likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior was measured with four indicators. The four indicators were averaged to produce a composite variable for each respondent. The same indicators were used after each treatment. These indicators are appropriate as they address both dimensions of retaliatory behaviors: spreading negative word-of-mouth and boycotting (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Klein, Smith & John, 2004).

### 2.3.2.4. *Controls*

Klein, Smith and John's (2004) research on boycotting found that women tend to have stronger inclinations towards boycott participation than men. Moreover, prior research on consumer retaliatory behaviors controlled for sex (i.e., Swaminathan, Stilley & Ahluwalia, 2009; Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012). Accordingly, sex is controlled for in all models using a dichotomous dummy variable with 0 representing males and 1 representing females.

Visibility increases the pressure to identify with organizations (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994) and brands (Swaminathan, Stillely & Ahluwalia, 2009). Goffman (1959) suggests that private, home spaces provide a backstage where active self-presentation can be minimized thereby reducing social identification pressures. Consumers can strategically manage their projected identity to an extent; however, many behaviors are subconsciously enacted making it difficult to completely manage all identity indicators, especially in public settings. As others view a consumer’s behaviors they tend to hypothesize a relationship existing between the consumer and the activity or brand. Accordingly, public displays of activity engagement or brand use typically result in stronger identification links with the target (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994, Swaminathan, Stillely & Ahluwalia, 2009). Therefore, an additional control variable is the reported degree of engaging in the activity at home.

**Activity Promotion**

- I try to convince my friends and acquaintances of the benefits of engaging in the activity.
- I show my happiness to those who decide to engage in the activity.
- I’m very happy when a friend or acquaintance of mine decides to engage in the activity.
- I try to convince friends and acquaintances of mine to engage in the activity.

Modified from: Bhattacharya & Sen (2003); Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami (2013).

**Self-Brand Connection**

- This brand reflects who I am.
- I can identify with this brand.
- I feel a personal connection to this brand.
- I (can) use this brand to communicate who I am to other people.
- I consider this brand to be “me.”

Sources: Escalas & Bettman (2005); Rindfleisch, Burroughs & Wong (2009).

**Retaliatory Behavior Likelihood**

- I intended to say negative things about this brand to friends, relatives and other people
- I intended to discredit the brand with friends, relatives and other people.
- I intend to say negative things about the brand on social media outlets.
- I will stop buying other products/services made by the brand’s manufacturer/provider.

Adapted from: Brügger, Foubert & Gremler (2011); Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux (2009); Lloyd & Luk (2011).

**Engage in Activity at Home**

- Engaging in this activity is typically done at home.

Adapted from: Swaminathan, Stillely & Ahluwalia (2009).

*All variables were measured on a 7 point likert scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree with the statement; 4 indicating neither agree nor disagree with the statement; 7 indicating strongly agree with the statement.*

**Table 2.10.** Model 1 Indicators and Sources

Table 2.11 presents the means and standard deviations for the dependent variable, under each treatment, as a function of activity promotion and self-brand connection.

	Activity Promotion	Logo Change	Branded Product Withdrawal
Self-Brand Connection	Low	1.092 <i>0.239 (19)</i>	1.316 <i>0.628 (19)</i>
		1.382 <i>0.825(17)</i>	2.029 <i>1.278 (17)</i>
	High	1.281 <i>0.464 (16)</i>	2.000 <i>1.372 (16)</i>
		1.604 <i>1.124 (19)</i>	2.540 <i>1.616 (19)</i>
Note: Top number is the mean. Below are the standard deviations in italics and cell sizes in parentheses.			
<b>Table 2.11.</b> Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables Related to Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Connection (Model 1)			

### 2.3.2.5. Hypothesis Testing

Two different 2 (activity promotion: low and high) X 2 (self-brand connection: low and high) between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) on likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior was conducted, one for each treatment type. Sex and the degree the activity is typically engaged in at home were entered as covariates.

### 2.3.2.6. Brand Logo Change

The brand logo change scenario is a minor or conservative test of both self-brand connection breakage and inconvenience on activity engagement. As expected, the main effect for self-brand connection ( $p = 0.548$ ) was not significant. However, counter to expectations, the main effect of activity promotion tendencies ( $p = 0.076$ ) was not significant. This was the only model to not exhibit a main effect in the brand logo treatment and the discussion section (see Section 2.4.2.1.1.) suggests that self-brand connection is a multi-dimensional concept thereby reducing the amount of variance activity promotion can explain.

H1c was also unsupported as the interaction effect was not significant ( $p = 0.797$ ).

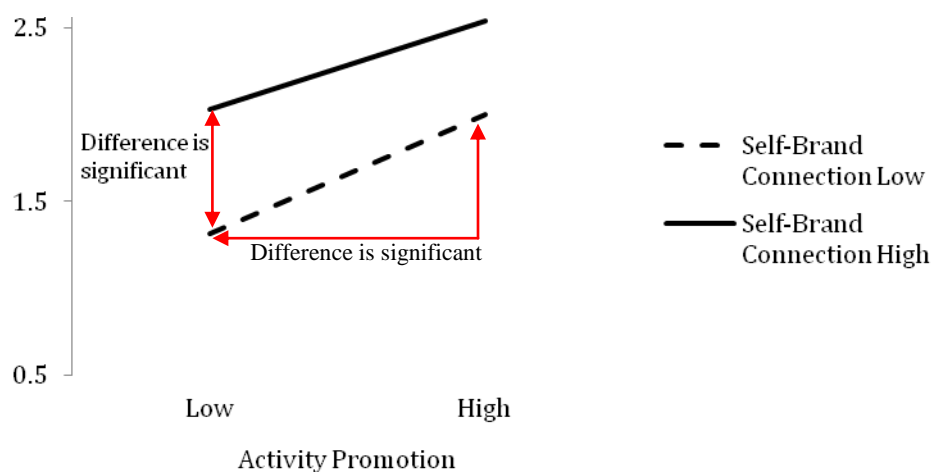
### 2.3.2.7. Branded Product Withdrawal

The 2 X 2 ANOVA for the product withdrawal treatment revealed a significant main effect of activity promotion [ $F(1,65) = 4.699, p = 0.034, \omega^2 = 0.049$ ]. Respondents reporting higher



activity promotion tendencies indicated a *higher* likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior ( $M = 2.305$ ) than those who reported promoting the activity less frequently ( $M = 1.631$ ). The main effect of self-brand connection was not significant ( $p = 0.164$ ).

H1c was partially supported in the withdrawal model as the interaction effect was not significant ( $p = 0.928$ ). But, a series of one-tailed t-test comparisons between subjects were conducted to see if activity promotion still influences consumers to retaliate against the brand, especially with low self-brand connection respondents. Figure 2.1 plots the mean value of each group's intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior. The analyses find that when respondents report a low degree of self-brand connection, they are more likely to engage in retaliatory behaviors when they have high activity promotion tendencies ( $M = 2.029$ ) than when they have low activity promotion tendencies ( $M = 1.316$ ;  $t(23) = -2.088$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ). But, when self-brand connections were high there was no significant difference between the low and high activity promotion groups. A deeper analysis revealed that when subjects reported low activity promotion tendencies, they are more likely to engage in retaliatory behavior when their self-brand connection is high ( $M = 2.000$ ) than when they have a low self-brand connection ( $M = 1.316$ ;  $t(20) = -1.839$ ,  $p = 0.041$ ). However, when activity promotions tendencies are high no significant relationship was found between the low and high self-brand connection groups ( $p = 0.150$ ). The results indicate respondents reporting low and high self-brand connections is only significantly different when the consumer has low activity promotion tendencies but not when they have high activity promotion tendencies.



**Figure 2.1.** Retaliatory Intentions following a Branded Product Withdrawal Across Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Connection Groups

### 2.3.2.6. *Summary*

The logo change treatment did not produce a significant main effect for either independent variable contrary to H1a. The conservative nature of the logo change experiment may not have been disruptive enough to motivate consumers to retaliate against the firm. However, under the stronger treatment, branded product withdrawal, a significant positive relationship was revealed between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior offering partial support to H1a. H1b is supported as a significant difference was found in the withdrawal treatment and not in the brand logo change treatment. H1c is not supported in the logo change treatment as an interaction effect was not significant but partial support is found to H1c as the interaction effect was not significant but a deeper analysis reveals differences in retaliatory intentions depending upon levels of both activity promotion tendencies and self-brand connection.

### 2.3.3.1. *Testing Hypothesis 2*

Consumers with high self-brand identity overlap feel that the brand's and their identity are very similar. This leads the brand to become highly self-relevant to the consumer and when the brand makes changes it will threaten their identity investments. Considering a consumer's activity promotion tendencies are expected to have a positive relationship on intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. This model tests if a positive relationship exists between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory intentions and if the degree of self-brand identity overlap interacts with this relationship. Specifically, model 2 tests the following hypotheses:

H2a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for degree of consumer-brand identity overlap.

H2b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.

H2c) The degree of consumer-brand identity overlap has an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

### 2.3.3.2. *Independent Variables*

Table 2.12 presents the indicators and sources used to measure the two independent variables (activity promotion tendencies and degree of self-brand identity overlap), the dependent variable

(likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior) and one control variable (typicality of engaging in the activity at home). The second control variable, sex was gathered from official course documents.

Activity promotion was measured with the same four indicators used in model 1. The four indicators were averaged to form one activity promotion variable for each respondent. A median split was then conducted to create a dichotomous dummy variable, with 1 representing respondents with low activity promotion tendencies and 2 representing respondents with high activity promotion tendencies.

Self-brand identity overlap was measured using two indicators. The administered self-brand identity overlap scales have been used in prior research to measure the cognitive dimension of consumer-brand identification (Lam, et al., 2010, 2013; Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013). The first indicator presents a series of circles that gradually overlap. The respondents selected the set of circles that best described the level of overlap between their identity and the brand's identity. This question visually depicts the level of self-brand identity overlap while the second indicator measures self-brand identity overlap verbally. In total, this scale captures the respondent's perceived overlap between the brand's and their identity (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann, 2005).

Following standard procedures (Lam, et al., 2010), the two identity overlap indicators were normalized onto a seven-point scale, since the measures used two different scale lengths. Next, the two scores were averaged to form a single self-brand identity overlap variable for each respondent. A median split was implemented to create a dichotomous dummy variable, with 1 representing a low degree of self-brand identity overlap and 2 representing a high degree of self-brand identity overlap.

#### *2.3.3.3. Dependent Variable*

The respondents' likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior was measured with the same four indicators from model 1. Unlike the independent variables, the dependent variable was entered as a continuous variable.

#### *2.3.3.4. Controls*

Similar to model 1, sex is controlled for using a dichotomous dummy variable with 0 representing males and 1 representing females. As in model 1, the reported typicality of engaging in the activity at home was entered as a covariate.

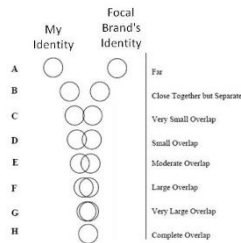
**Activity Promotion**

I try to convince my friends and acquaintances of the benefits of engaging in the activity.  
 I show my happiness to those who decide to engage in the activity.  
 I'm very happy when a friend or acquaintance of mine decides to engage in the activity.  
 I try to convince friends and acquaintances of mine to engage in the activity.

Modified from: Bhattacharya & Sen (2003); Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami (2013).

**Self-Brand Identity Overlap**

We sometimes identify with a brand. This occurs when we perceive a great amount of overlap between our ideas about who we are as a person and what we stand for (i.e., our self identity) and of whom this brand is and what it stands for (i.e., the brand's identity). Imagine that the circle at the left in each row represents your own personal identity and the other circle, at the right, represents your **Focal Brand's** identity. Please indicate which case (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H) best describes the level of overlap between your identity and the **Focal Brand's** identity. (Choose the Appropriate Letter).



To what extent does your own sense of who you are (i.e., your personal identity) overlap with your sense of what the Focal Brand represents (i.e., the Focal Brand's identity)?

Measured on an 9 pt. scale: -4 = Completely different; 0 = Neither similar nor different; 4 = Completely similar.

Adapted from: Lam, et al., (2010, 2013); Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami (2013).

**Retaliatory Behavior Likelihood**

I intended to say negative things about this brand to friends, relatives and other people  
 I intended to discredit the brand with friends, relatives and other people.  
 I intend to say negative things about the brand on social media outlets.  
 I will stop buying other products/services made by the brand's manufacturer/provider.

Adapted from: Brügger, Foubert & Gremler (2011); Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux (2009); Lloyd & Luk (2011).

**Engage in Activity at Home**

Engaging in this activity is typically done at home.

Adapted from: Swaminathan, Stilley & Ahluwalia (2009).

*Unless indicated otherwise, all variables were measured on a 7 point likert scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree with the statement; 4 indicating neither agree nor disagree with the statement; 7 indicating strongly agree with the statement.*

**Table 2.12.** Model 2 Indicators and Sources

Table 2.13 presents the means and standard deviations for the dependent variable across both treatments, as a function of activity promotion and self-brand identity overlap.

	Activity Promotion	Logo Change	Branded Product Withdrawal
Self-Brand Identity Overlap	Low	1.063 <i>0.179 (20)</i>	1.262 <i>0.628 (20)</i>
		1.732 <i>1.353(14)</i>	2.268 <i>1.521 (14)</i>
	High	1.333 <i>0.488 (15)</i>	2.117 <i>1.448 (15)</i>
		1.352 <i>0.656 (22)</i>	2.318 <i>1.470 (22)</i>
Note: Top number is the mean. Below are the standard deviations in italics and cell sizes in parentheses.			
<b>Table 2.13.</b> Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables Related to Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Identity Overlap (Model 2)			

### 2.3.3.5. Hypothesis Testing

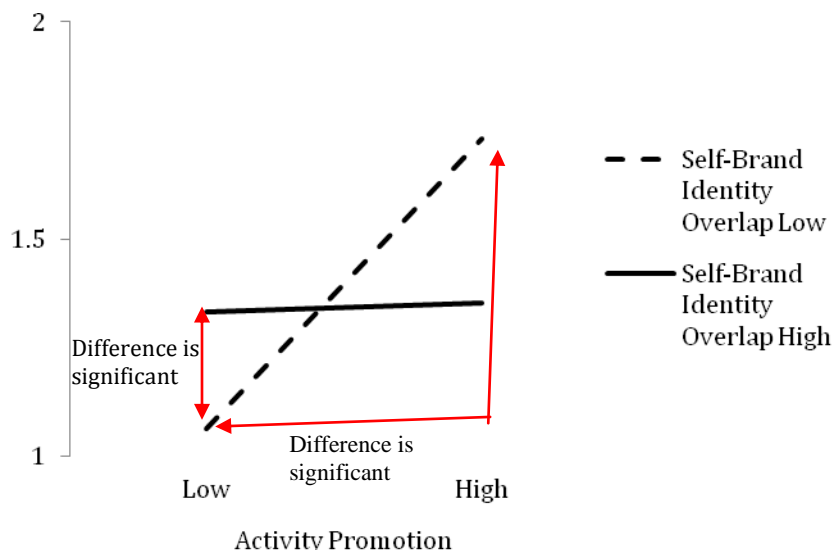
A 2 (activity promotion: low and high) X 2 (self-brand identity overlap: low and high) between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) on likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior for each treatment type were conducted. Sex and typicality of engaging in the activity at home were entered as covariates.

### 2.3.3.6. Brand Logo Change

Supporting H2a, a significant main effect was present between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a logo change, [ $M_{Low} = 1.194$  vs.  $M_{High} = 1.554$ ;  $F(1, 65) = 4.202$ ,  $p = 0.044$ ,  $\omega^2 = 0.041$ ]. The main effect of self-brand identity overlap was not significant ( $p = 0.660$ ).

A significant interaction between activity promotion tendencies and self-brand identity overlap was revealed [ $F(1,65) = 4.399$ ,  $p = 0.040$ ,  $\omega^2 = 0.043$ ]. A one-tailed t-test comparison between subjects was conducted to discover any significant difference among the various groups and the means are plotted in Figure 2.2. In relation to H2c, respondents who reported low activity promotion tendencies but have a high identity overlap ( $M = 1.333$ ) were more likely to engage in retaliatory behavior than when they reported low identity overlap ( $M = 1.063$ ;  $t(17) = -2.049$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ). But, no difference was revealed when respondents reported high activity promotion tendencies and low or high self-brand identity overlap. Moreover, it is revealed that respondents reporting low self-brand identity overlap are more likely to engage in retaliatory behaviors when reporting high activity promotion tendencies ( $M = 1.732$ ) than when reporting lower activity

promotion tendencies ( $M = 1.063$ ;  $t(13) = -1.840$ ,  $p = 0.044$ ). When self-brand connections are high there is no significant difference between the low and high activity promotion groups.



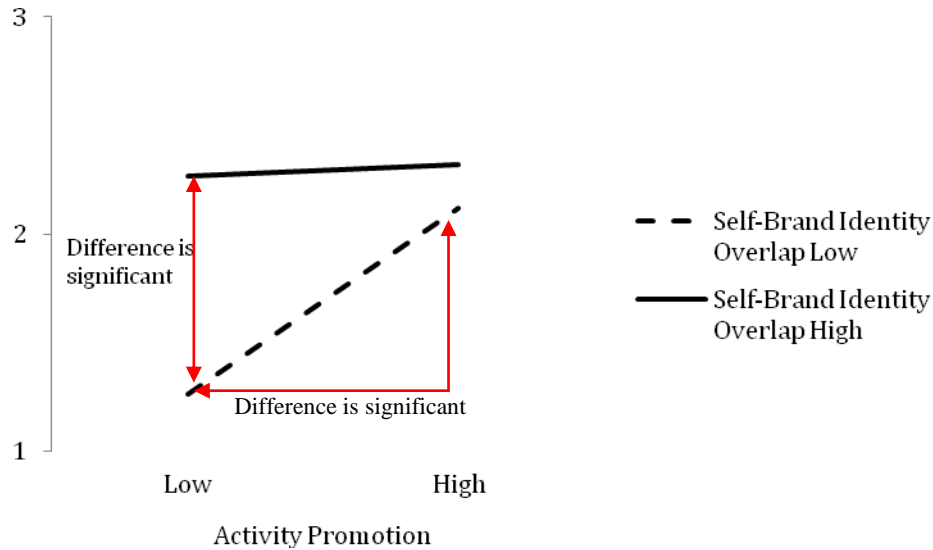
**Figure 2.2.** Retaliatory Intentions following a Logo Change Across Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Identity Overlap Groups

### 2.3.3.7. Branded Product Withdrawal

The 2 X 2 ANOVA for the product withdrawal treatment did not reveal a significant main effect for self-brand identity overlap ( $p = 0.166$ ). Supporting H2a, the main effect from activity promotion was significant [ $F(1,65) = 4.560$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ,  $\omega^2 = 0.046$ ]. Respondents reporting higher activity promotion tendencies indicated a *higher* likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior ( $M = 2.320$ ) than those reporting lower activity promotion tendencies ( $M = 1.658$ ).

Contrary to H2c, the interaction effect was not significant ( $p = 0.231$ ); despite the lack of a significant interaction effect, a series of a one-tailed t-test comparison between subjects were conducted. These analyses will determine if there is a significant difference between low and high self-brand identity overlap respondents and if high activity promotion tendencies erase this difference, is found in the logo change treatment. A significant difference was found in respondents who reported low activity promotion tendencies, the respondents who also reported high identity overlap ( $M = 2.117$ ) were more likely to engage in retaliatory behavior than those who reported low identity overlap ( $M = 1.263$ ;  $t(16) = -2.207$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ; see Figure 2.3). No difference was revealed when respondents reported high activity promotion tendencies and low or high self-brand identity overlap. It is also revealed that when respondents report low self-brand identity overlap, they are more likely to engage in retaliatory behaviors when they have high activity promotion tendencies ( $M = 2.268$ ) than when they have lower activity promotion

tendencies ( $M = 1.263$ ;  $t(14) = -2.402$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ). But, when self-brand connections are high there is no significant difference between the low and high activity promotion groups.



**Figure 2.3.** Retaliatory Intentions following a Branded Product Withdrawal Across Activity Promotion and Self-Brand Identity Overlap Groups

2.3.3.8. Summary

Model 2 fully supports H2a and H2b as the main effect of activity promotion was found in both treatment groups and this effect was stronger following the withdrawal treatment. H2c was partially supported as only a significant interaction effect was found in the brand logo change treatment. However, upon deeper analysis both models revealed respondents reporting low activity promotion saw a significant difference in intentions to retaliate against the brand when they also reported high identity overlap. However, the difference between low and high self-brand identity overlap respondents was erased when the respondents also reported high activity promotion tendencies.

2.3.4.1. Testing Hypothesis 3

Promoting an activity or brand indicates an elevated level of commitment to and self-relevance of the activity or brand. However, promoting a brand is also expected to be an implicit endorsement of the brand use consumption activity. Following a logo change the consumer can continue to engage in the activity using a relatively similar process while a product withdrawal requires the consumer to either find a replacement product or stop engaging in the activity. Thus, it is expected that subjects in the withdrawal treatment will exhibit higher intentions to engage in

retaliatory behavior than when receiving the logo change treatment. Plus, brand promotion is often considered a consequence to strong brand relationships and consumers who already engage in brand promotion demonstrate their confidence in discussing brand news and performance. Therefore, brand promotion tendencies is expected to have an interaction effect in the model. The specific hypotheses to be tested are:

H3a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for brand promotion tendencies.

H3b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.

H3c) Brand promotion tendencies has an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

#### *2.3.4.2. Independent Variables*

Table 2.14 presents the indicators and sources used to measure the two independent variables (activity promotion tendencies and brand promotion tendencies), the dependent variable (likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior) and one control variable (typicality of engaging in the activity at home). The second control variable, sex was gathered from official course documents.

Activity promotion was measured with four indicators. The four indicators were averaged together to form one composite variable for each respondent. A median split was then conducted to create a dichotomous dummy variable, with 1 representing respondents with low activity promotion tendencies and 2 representing respondents with high activity promotion tendencies.

Brand promotion tendencies was measured with four indicators. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) suggest that consumers who identify or connect with a brand are more likely to promote it socially and physically. Social promotion entails telling others about the brand and its benefits while physical promotion involves encouraging others to incorporate the brand into their consumption activities. The four scales were averaged into one brand promotion variable for each respondent. Based upon the median value, a dichotomous dummy variable was created, with 1 representing the group with low brand promotion tendencies and 2 representing the group with high brand promotion tendencies.



#### 2.3.4.3. *Dependent Variable*

The respondents' likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior was measured with the same four indicators as in prior models. The same indicators were used after each treatment and were averaged to produce a continuous, composite variable for each respondent.

#### 2.3.4.4. *Controls*

As with earlier models, based on prior research (Klein, Smith & John, 2004; Swaminathan, Stillely & Ahluwalia, 2009; Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012), sex is controlled for using a dichotomous dummy variable with 0 representing males and 1 representing females.

As visibility increases the pressure to identify with organizations (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994) and brands (Swaminathan, Stillely & Ahluwalia, 2009) increases, therefore the reported typicality of engaging in the activity at home was entered as a control variable.

#### **Activity Promotion**

- I try to convince my friends and acquaintances of the benefits of engaging in the activity.
- I show my happiness to those who decide to engage in the activity.
- I'm very happy when a friend or acquaintance of mine decides to engage in the activity.
- I try to convince friends and acquaintances of mine to engage in the activity.

Modified from: Bhattacharya & Sen (2003); Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami (2013).

#### **Brand Promotion**

- I try to convince my friends and acquaintances of the quality of the brand.
- I show my happiness to those who decide to buy the brand.
- I'm very happy when a friend or acquaintance of mine decides to buy the brand.
- I try to convince friends and acquaintances of mine to buy the brand.

Adapted from: Bhattacharya & Sen (2003); Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami (2013).

#### **Retaliatory Behavior Likelihood**

- I intended to say negative things about this brand to friends, relatives and other people.
- I intended to discredit the brand with friends, relatives and other people.
- I intend to say negative things about the brand on social media outlets.
- I will stop buying other products/services made by the brand's manufacturer/provider.

Adapted from: Brügggen, Foubert & Gremler (2011); Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux (2009); Lloyd & Luk (2011).

#### **Engage in Activity at Home**

- Engaging in this activity is typically done at home.

Adapted from: Swaminathan, Stillely & Ahluwalia (2009).

*All variables were measured on a 7 point likert scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree with the statement; 4 indicating neither agree nor disagree with the statement; 7 indicating strongly agree with the statement.*

**Table 2.14.** Model 3 Indicators and Sources

Table 2.15 presents the means and standard deviations for the dependent variables across both treatments as a function of activity promotion and brand promotion tendencies.

	Activity Promotion	Logo Change	Branded Product Withdrawal
Brand Promotion	Low	1.125 <i>0.269 (22)</i>	1.421 <i>0.643 (22)</i>
		High	2.659 <i>1.786 (11)</i>
	High	Low	1.981 <i>1.533 (13)</i>
		High	2.140 <i>1.315 (25)</i>
Note: Top number is the mean. Below are the standard deviations in italics and cell sizes in parentheses.			
<b>Table 2.15.</b> Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables Related to Activity Promotion and Brand Promotion (Model 3)			

#### 2.3.4.5. Hypothesis Testing

A 2 (activity promotion: low and high) X 2 (brand promotion: low and high) between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) on likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior for each treatment type were conducted. Sex and typically of engaging in the activity at home were entered as covariates.

#### 2.3.4.6. Brand Logo Change

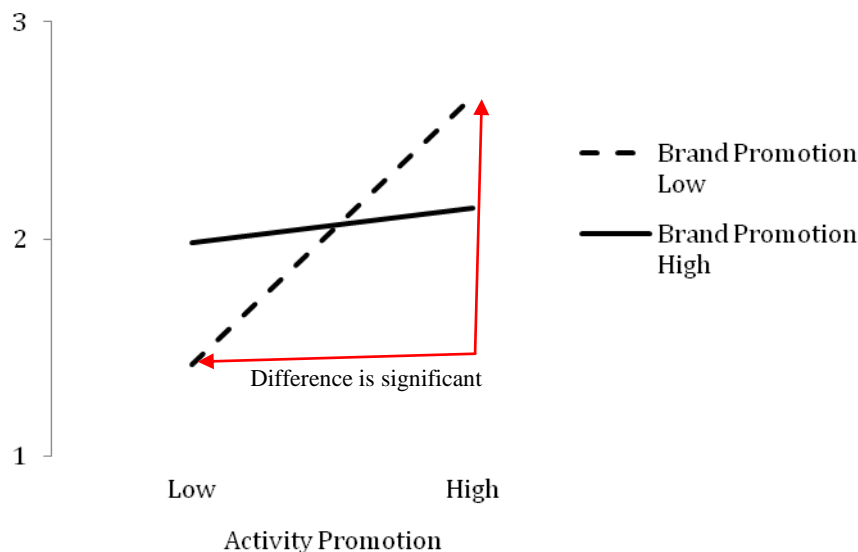
As expected, under the logo change treatment the main effect for activity promotion tendencies was significant [ $F(1,65) = 4.987, p = 0.029, \omega^2 = 0.051$ ]. Respondents reporting higher activity promotion tendencies indicated a *higher* likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior ( $M = 1.605$ ) than those who reported promoting the activity less frequently ( $M = 1.197$ ). This finding supports H3a. The main effect of brand promotion tendencies was not significant ( $p = 0.415$ ). Contrary to H3c, the interaction effect was not significant at the 95% confident level ( $p = 0.056$ ). However, because the confidence level approached significance a series of one-tailed t-test comparison between subjects were conducted. The analyses did not reveal any significant differences between groups.

### 2.3.4.7. Branded Product Withdrawal

Supporting H3a, the 2 X 2 ANOVA for the product withdrawal treatment revealed a significant main effect of activity promotion [ $F(1,65) = 5.313, p = 0.024, \omega^2 = 0.056$ ]. Respondents reporting higher activity promotion tendencies indicated a *higher* likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior ( $M = 2.421$ ) than those who reported promoting the activity less frequently ( $M = 1.676$ ). The main effect of brand promotion tendencies was not significant ( $p = 0.800$ ). The larger effect size found in the withdrawal treatment ( $\omega^2 = 0.056$ ) compared with the logo treatment ( $\omega^2 = 0.051$ ), supports H3b.

Contrary to H3c, the interaction effect was not significant ( $p = 0.094$ ). Despite not obtaining a significant interaction effect, a series of a one-tailed t-test comparison between subjects were conducted. In partial support of H3c, the analyses showed that when respondents report low brand promotion tendencies, they are more likely to engage in retaliatory behaviors when they have high activity promotion tendencies ( $M = 2.659$ ) than when they report lower activity promotion tendencies ( $M = 1.421; t(11) = -2.229, p = 0.024$ ; see Figure 2.4).

When brand promotion tendencies were high there was no significant difference between the low and high activity promotion groups. Additionally, there was no significant difference in the low activity promotion group with low or high brand promotion tendencies.



**Figure 2.4.** Retaliatory Intentions following a Branded Product Withdrawal Across Activity Promotion and Brand Promotion Groups

### 2.3.4.8. Summary

In support of the over-arching research questions and H3a and H3b, activity promotion tendencies had a positive relationship on intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors following both a logo change and branded product withdrawal. An interaction effect was not found in either model, but it appears elevated brand promotion levels protect the brand when activity promotion levels are high but hurts the brand when activity promotion levels are low.

### ***2.3.5. Summary of Findings***

Table 2.16 provides a summary of the results from the three hypotheses tested. In total, six different between-subjects analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted, three for each treatment group, to test the hypotheses. The over-arching research questions are answered by discovering that a positive relationship exists between activity promotion and this relationship is stronger following a major rather than a minor disruption to the consumers' identity construction process. Specifically, a significant positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory intentions was found following a logo change in two of the three models. In the branded product withdrawal treatment, significant positive relationships were found between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory intentions across all three models.

H1a is not supported. This was the only model that did not reveal a significant relationship between activity promotion and retaliatory behaviors, leading to a qualified affirmation of a positive relationship existing between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behavior. H1b is supported, as the positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors was more pronounced following the major disruption. H1c is not supported as an interaction effect was not significant in either treatment group. However, in the withdrawal treatment it appears that high activity promotion levels motivate consumers with low self-brand connection levels to retaliate more strongly than had they had low activity promotion tendencies.

H2a and H2b are both fully supported. A significant relationship was found between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory intentions. This relationship was also more pronounced in the severe disruption treatment. In the logo change treatment, supporting H2c, there was a significant interaction effect. It appears that activity promotion levels has a positive effect on respondents with low brand identity overlap. High brand identity overlap protects the brand from retaliatory behaviors when they promote the activity but if they promote the brand and not the activity high self-brand identity overlap increases the likelihood the consumer retaliates against brand logo changes. Contrary to H2c, a significant interaction effect was not found in the withdrawal treatment group. However, similar to the logo change model, activity promotion levels increases the likelihood a consumer with low self-brand identity overlap will retaliate

against the brand. Statistically, this elevation erases the brand love becomes hate evidenced in consumers with low activity promotion tendencies.

When considering brand promotion tendencies a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors was significant across both treatment groups. Moreover, the positive relationship was more pronounced in the withdrawal treatment groups. Therefore both H3a and H3b are supported. An interaction effect was not present in either treatment thus H3c is not supported. However, partial support is provided in the withdrawal treatment as consumers with low brand promotion tendencies are significantly more likely to retaliate if they have high activity promotion tendencies than when they have low activity promotion tendencies.

Section 2.4 further discusses the findings and followed by the contributions and implications stemming from this work.

Independent Variables	Treatment Group					
	Logo Change			Product Withdrawal		
	Activity Promotion	Activity Promotion	Activity Promotion	Activity Promotion	Activity Promotion	Activity Promotion
	Self-Brand Connection	Self-Brand Identity Overlap	Brand Promotion	Self-Brand Connection	Self-Brand Identity Overlap	Brand Promotion
H1a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for self-brand connection levels.						
	Not Supported	-	-	Supported	-	-
H1b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.						
						Supported
H1c) Self-brand connection levels have an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.						
	Not Supported	-	-	Partially Supported	-	-
H2a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for degree of consumer-brand identity overlap.						
	-	Supported	-	-	Supported	-
H2b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.						

						Supported
H2c) The degree of consumer-brand identity overlap has an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.						
	-	Supported	-	-	Partially Support	-
H3a) There is a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, controlling for brand promotion tendencies.						
	-	-	Supported	-	-	Supported
H3b) The positive relationship will be more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal compared to a brand logo change.						
						Supported
H3c) Brand promotion tendencies has an interaction effect on the relationship between activity promotion tendencies and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.						
	-	-	Not Supported	-	-	Partially Supported
<b>Table 2.16.</b> Summary of Results on Retaliatory Behavior Intensions						

### 2.4.1. General Discussion

A consumption based approach to identity construction argues there are two main components to identity construction 1) object possession and 2) object use. However, prior investigations into retaliatory consumer behavior have predominately focused on the role of object possession (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Lin & Sung, 2014). This research sought to bridge this gap by investigating the impact consumers’ brand and activity-derived identities have on consumer behavior. In particular, it is argued that a positive relationship exists between activity promotion tendencies and likelihood to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change.

The main finding from this research is that activity promotion has a significant, positive relationship on consumers’ likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. Moreover, the impact of activity promotion on retaliatory behaviors was more pronounced following a more severe disruption to a consumer’s activity-derived identity than a minor disruption.

This research also reveals mixed support for consumers who have strong brand derived identities leading to elevated retaliatory behavior, as the notion of brand love becomes hate suggests (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Lin & Sung, 2014). In particular, following a product withdrawal consumers with low activity promotion tendencies and high self-brand connection levels were significantly more likely to retaliatory against the brand than those that do not love

the brand. However, high activity promotion tendencies erased this difference. Similarly, the brand love becomes hate concept was evident in both treatment groups when measured by degree of self-brand identity overlap in respondents with low activity promotion tendencies. However, this difference is erased if the consumer has high activity promotion tendencies. In the final model, no difference was revealed between respondents with low and high brand promotion tendencies, not even in the low activity promotion group as evidenced in prior models. However, there was a significant difference in respondents with low brand promotion tendencies and their activity promotion tendencies. Specifically, as activity promotion tendencies increase so do their intentions to retaliate.

Therefore, brand love does appear to lead to higher retaliatory behaviors only in those consumers who don't also promote the activity. Under certain conditions, the positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors erases the elevated rates of retaliatory behaviors found in consumers who love the brand.

#### ***2.4.2. Shaking Activity Love***

Consumers promote activities they engage in when they expect it to maintain or increase their social status and self-esteem. Consumers strategically manage their identity (Murray, 2002) and tend to avoid experiences that reduce their self-esteem or social status (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Brown & Tajfel, 1979). Additionally, consumers refine and adjust their identity, behaviors and views based upon the feedback they receive from prior activity promotions or disclosures. Consumers who promote an activity are comfortable expressing their relationship with the activity and having others judge them based on their relationship with the activity. It was hypothesized that a positive relationship exists between the degree a consumer promotes an activity and their intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors following a brand change. It was also hypothesized that this relationship is more pronounced following a branded product withdrawal than following a logo change.

In regards to the conservative treatment, the data reveals a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behaviors in two of three models following a logo change. Specifically, activity promotion was not a significant predictor of retaliatory intentions in the self-brand connection model but was in the self-brand identity overlap and brand promotion models. Self-brand connection focuses on how the consumer relates with the brand and if this brand communicates what the consumer stands for (Escalas, 2004; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Rindfleisch, Burroughs & Wong, 2009).

Since self-brand connection encompasses multiple dimensions and self-brand identity overlap is narrowly tailored to one dimension of the consumer-brand relationship, self-brand connection reduced the variance that activity promotion could account for compared to identity overlap. Self-brand identity overlap and brand promotion tendencies are narrowly focused leaving more variance in consumers' responses to be explained by activity promotion ratings. The three logo change experiments, taken as a whole, indicate activity promotion tendencies are a better predictor of intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors following a logo change than self-brand identity overlap and brand promotion tendencies. But, self-brand connection and activity promotion tendencies need further investigation to better understand how these variables relate. However, in the stronger treatment of product withdrawal, activity promotion was a significant predictor of consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior in the self-brand connection model, as well as the other two models.

In regards to the major brand change treatment, product withdrawal, it was expected that there would be a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior and that this relationship would be stronger than in the logo change treatment. High activity promotion rates lead to higher intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a product withdrawal across all three models. Further, the effect sizes were larger in the withdrawal treatment than in the logo change treatment. Therefore, the results show that activity promotion tendencies are positively related to intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a product withdrawal.

These findings suggest that shaking a consumer's relationship with an activity may lead them to retaliate against the brand. An important component of the consumption based identity perspective is the use of brands and objects to construct one's identity. Activity engagement has been shown to be a key component in a consumer's identity in consumer behavior (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993), community of practice (Orr, 1996) and subculture of consumption (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) literature. Accordingly, brand changes that shake the relationship consumers have with an activity can provoke the consumer to engage in retaliatory behavior.

### ***2.4.3. Brand Love Becomes Hate***

Consumers have been known to form relationships with brands (Fournier, 1998). Strong consumer-brand relationships lead to higher re-purchase rates and protect the brand against new market entrants (Lam, et al., 2010). However, consumers with a strong brand relationship have been shown to more intensely retaliate against a brand than those with a weaker brand relationship (Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012). Consumer-brand relationships are similar to



interpersonal relationships characterized by commitment, separation distress (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005) and feelings of betrayal following brand changes and service failures (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009). The seemingly contradictory nature of consumers with strong brand relationships who in one moment love a brand by re-purchasing and promoting it (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013; Muñoz & O'Guinn, 2001) but then hate the brand and encourage others to boycott it (Muñoz & Schau, 2005, 2007) has been termed “brand loves becomes hate” (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Lin & Sung, 2014). The findings outline some boundary conditions of the brand love becomes hate concept.

In the withdrawal treatment, it was shown that consumers with low activity promotion tendencies and high self-brand connections, self-brand identity overlap or brand promotion tendencies all indicated higher intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior than those with low self-brand connections, self-brand identity overlap or brand promotion tendencies. These findings indicate that a strong brand relationship, operationalized through three different measures, does lead consumers to turn their brand love into hate following a severe market disruption. However, there are two nuances to this finding. One, high activity promotion tendencies erases this difference between weak and strong brand relationship consumers. Two, the positive difference between weak and strong brand relationship consumers is less pronounced following a logo change, a less severe market disruption. In fact, high self-brand identity overlap may actually reduce consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior when the consumer also has high activity promotion tendencies.

A significant, positive relationship between activity promotion and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior was found across all three models in the withdrawal treatment. However, no main effect was found between intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior and self-brand connection, self-brand identity overlap or brand promotion tendencies in any model, in both the minor and major brand change treatments. This suggests that the brand love becomes hate is not a simple process. The data indicates that only when consumers have low activity promotion tendencies do strong brand relationships lead to higher rates of retaliatory behavior; whereas, when the consumer has high activity promotion tendencies there is no significant difference in consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors.

The findings from the logo change treatment offer an additional boundary condition to the brand love becomes hate notion. Besides not obtaining a positive relationship between retaliatory intentions and self-brand connection, self-brand identity overlap or brand promotion tendencies only the self-brand identity overlap model revealed a difference between low and high identity overlap consumers on retaliatory intentions. This finding supports prior research by Lin and Sung (2014) who found that consumers whose identity is highly overlapping with a brand are

more tolerant of brand transgressions than consumers whose identity has low overlap with the brand. In this case, it appears that self-brand identity overlap leads to elevated intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior in some instances, when having low activity promotion tendencies, but in other cases high identity overlap may protect the brand during times of change.

Therefore, this study suggest that brand love becomes hate is, at least partially, conditioned on the consumers' relationship with the activity. If the consumer is highly connected to the brand but not the consumption activities in which they use the brand then they should be more inclined to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. However, if the brand change is more modest and does not substantially disrupt the consumers' relationship with the brand then consumers who perceive high levels of self-brand identity overlap are more likely to stay with the brand and may even protect the brand against negative word-of-mouth even if the consumer highly promotes the brand's consumption activity.

#### ***2.4.4. Summary***

The data reveals a positive relationship between activity promotion and intentions to retaliate against a brand for making changes and this relationship is particularly pronounced following major changes, such as a product withdrawal. Besides demonstrating that activity promotion tendencies is a significant predictor of intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change, the findings provide boundary conditions to the brand love becomes hate concept. Specifically, while a strong brand relationship can lead to higher intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior, higher rates of activity promotion erase this difference. Accordingly, brand changes that shake consumers' activity love are likely to provoke consumers to retaliate against the brand.

#### **2.5.1. Contributions**

This research contributes to consumer behavior research in two main ways. One, the findings reveal that activity promotion tendencies have a positive relationship on consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. Two, boundary conditions to the brand love becomes hate concept are presented. After discussing the contributions, the implications and avenues for future research stemming from this work are presented in conjunction with a few limitations of the study.

#### ***2.5.2. Retaliatory Behavior and Activity Promotion***

Retaliatory research focuses on identifying the factors that motivate consumers to punish or inconvenience a firm (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009). While prior

research has focused on individual brand transgressions, such as product failure or poor service delivery (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Lin & Sung, 2014) this study focused on brand changes that affect all consumers. Therefore, this research contributes to the retaliatory behavior research following market disruptions rather than brand transgressions, as this study focused on all users and not individual consumer-brand relationships (Lam, et al., 2010). However, both market disruption and brand transgression research have identified the consumer's identity construction process as a relevant and important phenomenon of interest in understanding retaliatory behavior.

A consumption based approach to identity construction highlights two components 1) possession of objects and 2) the use of those objects. Consumers strategically manage their identity through selecting objects, brands and products to enroll into the activities in which they engage (Murray, 2002). Similar to brand promotion, consumers may promote the activities they engage in to acquire or maintain social status, protect identity investments and refine their identity. Generally consumers want to either maintain or enhance their self-esteem levels (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Brown & Tajfel, 1979) and will either stop promoting the activity or change their beliefs if they receive negative feedback after disclosing or promoting their relationship with the activity (Hsieh & Wu, 2011). The findings indicate that brand changes that threaten a consumer's identity investments, especially ones they promote to friends and acquaintances lead to higher rates of retaliatory behavior.

Activity promotion has previously not been identified as a predictor of retaliatory behaviors. Marketing and branding literature, in particular, have traditionally focused attention on issues related to recognition, selection and purchase (Wells, 1993). Thus, consumption activities have received less attention. Activity promotion was a significant predictor of retaliatory behaviors across all three models in the product withdrawal treatment and in two of the three models in the logo change treatment. Further, brand promotion tendencies, self-brand connection strength and the degree of self-brand identity overlap were not significant in any model when activity promotion was included. Therefore, the main contribution from this research is the introduction of activity promotion as a predictor of retaliatory behavior following a brand change.

### ***2.5.3. Brand Love to Hate Conditions***

Research on retaliatory consumer behavior has identified an interesting tendency in consumers who have strong relationships with a brand; they exhibit higher tendencies to retaliate against the brand following brand changes than consumers with a weak consumer-brand relationship (Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009). This research contributes to developing a deeper

understanding of how consumers with strong brand relationships respond to brand changes. This is important as strong brand relationships generally result in consumers discounting negative information (Swaminathan, Page & Gürhan-Canli, 2007) and protecting the brand from new market entrants (Lam, et al., 2010). Further, strong brand relationships can lead consumers to engage in extra-role behaviors, such as becoming brand ambassadors who promote the brand to their friends and colleagues (Marzocchi, Morandin & Begrami, 2013; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). Brand love becoming hate presents managers with a dilemma of encouraging consumers to integrate the brand into their identity but in a way that enhances the positives to the brand but limits their elevated retaliatory intentions following a brand change (Lin & Sung, 2014).

Similar to Lin and Sung (2014), this article finds that consumers with high self-brand identity overlap reduces consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior than consumers with low self-brand identity overlap. This finding is particularly evident following a logo change. A logo change predominately disrupts the consumer's brand derived identity while a product withdrawal disrupts both the consumer's brand and activity-derived identity. Thus, high self-brand identity overlap may protect the brand from retaliatory behaviors following minor brand changes but this protection is limited if the consumer also promotes an activity in which the brand is used.

This work contributes to prior research on the brand love becomes hate concept by introducing the role of activity promotion as a consumer behavior that erases the higher retaliatory tendencies found in consumers with strong brand relationships. Muñiz and Schau's (2005, 2007) qualitative work discovered that consumers organize in efforts to retaliate against a firm. In their case, consumers not only advocated boycotting the brand but they also actively worked to degrade the brand's image. However, their work also showed that consumers can form communities to support each other as they continue to use and repair the discontinued product. Therefore, similar to Muñiz and Schau's (2005, 2007) findings, this work suggests that disruptions to activity enactment is an integral part of retaliatory behavior.

Activity promotion tendencies provide a boundary condition to the brand love becomes hate concept. Specifically, the positive relationship between activity promotion erases the difference between consumers with weak and strong brand relationships and intentions to engage in retaliatory behaviors. This finding is particularly important as it indicates that brand love becomes hate is not a simple process but is impacted by multiple variables. Lin and Sung (2014) show that different operationalizations of the consumer-brand relationship impacts retaliatory intentions, with high self-brand identity overlap being more protective of the brand. This research shows that despite brand love strength and method of operationalization, consumers that

highly promote the activity in which they use a brand will have higher intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior.

### **2.6.1. Implications**

There are two main implications from this article. One, it elevates the importance of brand use in understanding consumer behavior. Two, it suggests that consumers not only form relationships with activities but consumer-activity relationship may better explain consumer behavior. The following sections will discuss these two implications in further detail before introducing a few limitations of this study and potential avenues for future research.

### **2.6.2. Brand Use and Possession**

Consumer behavior research tends to focus on consumers' recognition and search behaviors (Wells, 1993). For example, Lam and colleagues (2010) find that consumers who strongly rely on a brand to construct their identity have a lower likelihood of switching to new market entrants than those consumers who do not incorporate the brand into their identity. However, they treat identity formation as a simple process of selecting and possessing brands. Consumption research has repeatedly shown that identity formation is not solely based upon possessions but also upon how and what activities those possessions are incorporated into (Holt, 1997). Leigh, Peters and Shelton (2006) demonstrate that how a consumer uses a classic car influences their subculture identity and social status within the subculture. For instance, individuals who have a 100% original car but trailer it to car shows tend to have reduced social status within the car restoring subculture than those whose cars are less than 100% original but are driven to car shows. Additionally, Elliot and Davies (2006) discuss how teenage consumers may not be accepted by some social groups because they are not deemed authentic by the social group. In particular, only rare, chameleon like teenagers can wear a "jock" outfit one day and a "goth" outfit the next and still be accepted or have friends in both subcultures. Thus, merely possessing objects and brands does not construct a socially legitimate identity. The significant relationship between activity promotion and retaliatory behaviors highlights the idea that identity construction is not solely based on brand or object possession but is based on how and what activities the brand is enrolled in.

McCracken's (1986) meaning movement model demonstrated that objects have meaning and consumers' activities can put meaning into or clean meaning out of objects. A quick example involves placing mementos into a new car in order to put personalized meaning into the car but when selling the car the consumer will clean out those meanings by removing personal objects.

Further, the car buyer will often vacuum the car and remove stickers and other previous owner mementos to further clean meaning out of the car and get it prepared to begin their personalization process (McCracken, 1986). Fournier's (1998) empirical work formally introduced the consumer-brand relationship to consumer research. Similar to McCracken (1986), Fournier (1998) argued meaning resides in the brand which empowers consumers to enact their identity (p. 350). Both of these works have been highly influential in guiding future work on consumer-brand relationships and identity formation. However, the primary focus on objects and brands may have effectively devalued the ability of activities to carry meaning and impact consumer behavior. The significant role of activity promotion on consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change indicates that activities not only transfer meaning but also impact consumer behavior and deserve further attention.

### ***2.6.3. Consumer-Activity Relationships***

Activity promotion may be considered a consequence of a consumer-activity relationship. Research on consumer-brand (Marzocchi, Morandin & Bergami, 2013; Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001), consumer-company (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003) and consumer-organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) relationships all suggest that as consumers increase their connections or identity overlap with target objects they tend to promote the object more. Coupled with the significant, positive relationship of activity promotion on retaliatory behaviors, this research indicates that consumer-activity relationships impact consumer behavior.

The conservative logo change and severe product withdrawal experiments revealed activity promotion tendencies as a predictor of consumer retaliatory behavior but not self-brand connection, self-brand identity overlap and brand promotion tendencies. This further indicates that prior studies solely focusing on consumer-brand relationships may have been neglecting an influential consumer behavior motivator. The more immediate managerial implication to be drawn from this research is brand managers need to be aware that a change in the brand or product impacts not only the consumer's brand derived identity but also their activity-derived identity. Developing marketing strategies that take into account how the change will disrupt the activities in which the brand is enrolled appears to be a prudent strategy.

Grégoir, Tripp and Legoux (2009) discovered that consumers with strong consumer-brand relationships typically view the relationship as communal in nature. Thus, brands that tried to rectify service failures by offering excessive financial reimbursements often generated more negative emotions as this transformed the relationship into an exchange relationship. If the financial recovery attempt is timely and modest, retaliatory behaviors can be reduced in consumers with strong relationship. However, providing a monetary offering to consumers

following market-wide brand changes is financially prohibitive and logistically infeasible. This research supports the recommendation made by Johnson and colleagues (2011) to provide consumers with options to move on from the brand to another brand or product. Their recommendation stems from the finding that as the number of substitutes increases, the likelihood of strong brand relationship consumers retaliating against the brand following changes is reduced. This study suggests that informing consumers of potential replacement brands or products should reduce retaliatory intentions because it limits disruptions to their activity-derived identity.

### **2.7.1. Limitations & Avenues for Future Research**

This research has a few limitations that not only offer potential avenues for future research but also deserve mentioning to ensure the findings and implications are judged appropriately. The first limitation addresses the small sample size. The small sample size greatly reduces the precision and power of key analyses, including ANOVAs. Therefore, the findings should be evaluated considering the low power of the tests and small sample size. While the absence of evidence significant relationships as hypothesized additional work is warranted in developing scales that adequately measure the consumer-activity relationship in order to improve measurement model specification.

The experimental design asked respondents to identify their favorite activity and then select a brand they know the most about from that activity. As the study was designed to explore the impact of activity promotion on retaliatory behaviors, the research design may have been too focused on the consumption activity thereby preventing respondents to identify brands in which they have strong self-brand connections or self-brand identity overlap. The research design did capture high or strong consumer-brand relationships but the results may be different if a favorite brand was first selected and then the activity promotion tendencies of an activity in which they use the brand were measured.

Prior research indicates that brands that are used and activities that are engaged in the public provide increased social pressure to identify with the brand or activity (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994; Malär, et al., 2011; Swaminathan, Stilley & Ahluwalia, 2009). As the first investigation into the role of consumer-activity relationships generally and activity promotion specifically, this study controlled for this effect to help isolate the impact of activity promotion. However, future research should begin to test how specific consumer-activity relationships impact consumer behavior. For instance, cleaning one's adobe is commonly a private and individual task and some even consider cleaning to be therapeutic but it is also commonly

engaged in prior to entertaining or social events. Thus, the activity is private but the results are social. This argument is even more pronounced in activities such as making art, cooking, and putting on make-up, all of which were mentioned as favorite activities in this data set. There are numerous ways activities can be categorized, with public or private only being one way that deserves further attention.

Similar to varying the types of activities tested, varying the types of brands tested is also recommended. Consumption based identity construction embraces the symbolic role brands play in consumers' lives (Elliot & Davies, 2006). First selecting an activity and then identifying a brand within that activity may have biased respondents to select more functional brands relative to symbolic brands. The data collection method included consumers with high self-brand connections and self-brand identity overlap but it would still be a worthy endeavor to test the boundary conditions of activity promotion's relationship with retaliatory behavior intentions. Thus, future research should consider investigating highly functional and symbolic brands separately.

The use of college student respondents, predominately from one region of The United States of America, limits the generalizability of the findings. College students have just begun making consumption choices free from parental controls. This includes shopping for products and engaging in activities. Therefore, college level respondents may not have developed long-term, enduring relationships with brands or activities. The discovery of a positive relationship between activity promotion and retaliatory intentions may actually be stronger in older consumers who have been engaging in the activity for many years. Especially if they have formed friendships with other activity participants or acquired a significant amount of activity related possessions as they may solidify their identity and prevent identity change (Kleine & Kleine, 2000). Additional research is needed to determine if a consumption based identity becomes stronger and more enduring through long-term activity engagement.

The implications from this research suggest that consumers may form relationships with activities. However, Kleine, Kleine and Allen's (1995) research on consumers' favorite objects discovered that "liking was associated with utilitarian possessions" (p. 335) and liking does not mean the consumer strategically employed the object to construct their identity. Consumers use their consumption activities to, in part, construct their identities (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993; Kates, 2002; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) however a detailed analysis on the types of relationships consumers form, if any, with their consumption activities has not been conducted.



Fournier's (1998) work on brand relationships could serve as a helpful template for developing a better understanding of the types of relationships consumers form with activities. Conducting long interviews (McCracken, 1988) with consumers that focus on the reasons for and consequences of engaging in an activity is recommended. The data collection method should also include tracing the consumer's historical involvement with the activity, touching upon low and high points, or periods of non-engagement and re-engagement. An in-depth, detailed analysis of consumers' relationships with their consumption activities could develop a typology which can then guide future empirical work on understanding the impact various types of consumer-activity relationships have on consumer behavior.

Fournier (1998) argues that "consumer-brand relationships are more a matter of perceived goal compatibility than congruence between discreet product attributes and personality traits" (p. 366). Park and colleagues (2010) state that "[c]onsumers can be connected to a brand because it represents who they are (i.e., an identity basis) or because it is meaningful in light of goals, personal concerns, or life projects (an instrumentality basis)" (p. 2). While Thomson and colleagues (2012) assert that consumers may "derive satisfaction from consumption relationships due to deficits in interpersonal relationships" (p. 295). It is expected that consumer-activity relationships will form for all of these reasons. However, particular attention should be given to understanding the role of activities to produce a mental or ephemeral state, such as a feeling of flow or re-living a peak experience.

A flow experience is a "state of mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered" and the consumer engages in the activity "they are doing for its own sake" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990/2008, p. 6). Feeling a lack of self-consciousness and complete control over bodily movement can be a source of happiness and self-esteem enhancement (Schouten, McAlexander & Koenig, 2007). Achieving a flow state can even become a primary goal of activity engagement, as Csikszentmihalyi (1990/2008) advocates. With practice, flow states can be achieved on a regular basis and across multiple activities. On the other hand, peak experiences occur on a less regular basis. This is because they are transformational experiences that have high personal meaning and can be accompanied by a sense of epiphany (Press & Arnould, 2011; Schouten, McAlexander & Koenig, 2007). Accordingly, consumers may form relationships with activities in an attempt to re-create or re-live past peak experiences or they could form relationships with activities to achieve a sense of flow or self-control. Therefore, research that investigates the types of relationships consumers form with activities needs to be aware consumers could be engaging in an activity to achieve a certain mental or ephemeral state.

### **2.8.1. Conclusion**

Consumers strategically construct their identity by possessing and using brands and objects. Prior research has discovered that brand changes can provoke consumers into retaliating against the brand. Consumer may spread negative word-of-mouth about the brand or even boycott the brand's offerings. However, prior research has traditionally focused on the consumer-brand relationship when investigating retaliatory behavior. This research addressed both the consumer's relationship with the brand and with an activity in which they use the brand.

This article revealed that a positive relationship exists between activity promotion tendencies and consumers' likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. This finding not only provides boundary conditions to the brand love becomes hate concept but also suggests that the relationships consumers form with their activities may play an important role in consumer behavior. This article provides a better understanding of retaliatory behavior and opens the door to a highly fruitful research stream that investigates the impact consumer-activity relationships have on consumer behavior, more generally.

## 2.9.1. References

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## **Chapter 3: Consumer-Activity Identification: A Theoretical Model of the Impact of Consumption Activities on Consumer Behavior<sup>3</sup>**

### **Abstract**

This article theorizes consumers' relationships with their activities by conceptualizing consumer-activity identification from a social identity theory perspective. Consumer-activity identification reflects the extent to which individuals consider a consumption activity to be central to their identity and sense-of-self. In order to fully develop consumer-activity identification it is necessary to refine social identity theory by embracing consumers' know-how knowledge on how to be a socially legitimated group member. Managerially, firms may want to promote their brand as an activity facilitator rather than a potential relationship partner, as this article asserts: what we do may well be more powerful in explaining consumer behavior than what we have.

### **Keywords**

Consumer-activity identification, consumer behavior, marketing, brand, social identity theory, identity

### **3.1.1.1. Introduction**

Consumer behavior research has been dominated by seminal papers that heavily impact the field. For example, Belk's (1998) work has burgeoned a productive and insightful stream of research exploring the antecedents, outcomes, and theoretical underpinnings of consumers relying on brands and possessions for identity construction (Ahuvia, 2005; Bardhi et al., 2012; Fournier, 1998; Lam et al., 2013; Lin and Sung, 2014; Thomson et al., 2005). This domination has left a wide area of inquiry on how what we do impacts consumer behavior underdeveloped. Specifically, despite evidence of consumers using consumption activities to construct their identity (Celsi et al., 1993; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) theorizations on how consumer relationships with their consumption activities impact consumer behavior remain sparse, unconnected, and underdeveloped.

This imbalance of focusing on brands over consumption activities is surprising as prior research suggests that consumers are prone to incorporate brands into their identity when: the brand has a positive image; the consumer-brand relationship is visible; and, social relationships revolve around the brand (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Press and Arnould, 2011;

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<sup>3</sup> This chapter is currently under review at *Marketing Theory* and formatting has been tailored to their guidelines.

## Consumer-Activity Identification

Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). But, a brand's image is determined by its socially situated consumption activity (Diamond et al., 2009; Douglas and Isherwood, 1996), brands are visible only when they are incorporated into consumption activities (Coulter et al., 2003), and social relationships require consumers to engage in shared consumption activities (Brown and Duguid, 1998; Cova, 1997). In sum, consumers need to incorporate brands into their activities before they can identify with them. Accordingly, this research explores consumers' relationships with their activities by conceptualizing and theorizing on consumer-activity identification. Consumer-activity identification reflects the extent to which individuals consider a consumption activity to be central to their identity and sense-of-self.

Specific propositions are developed that identify the antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of consumer-activity identification based on social identity theory, a socio-psychological view of consumer behavior (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Social identity theory (SIT) explains how individuals develop their identities through classification, categorization, and identification. SIT assumes that individuals are primarily motivated by status enhancement. Status enhancement is achieved by categorizing groups, brands, and activities by their symbolic values they represent and then the consumer (dis)identifies with the values they perceive will enhance their identity (Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001; Hogg and Terry, 2000). Theoretically, this work refines SIT to account for both identifying with a group and being a socially legitimated group member.

This research contributes to consumer behavior and branding research in a number of ways. First, developing a theoretical model and research propositions on consumer-activity identification offers a framework for future empirical research. Second, theorization on consumer-activity identification broadly contributes to consumer behavior research and offers a foundation for branding strategies that strive to insert brands into consumers' consumption activities (Hawkins, 2014). Prior consumption focused research has linked activity engagement to identity formation (Celsi et al., 1993; Kozinets, 2001; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) however linking consumer-activity identification antecedents to specific brand and activity outcomes have been absent.

This work follows Wells' (1993) call to shift focus to consumption based research as it promises to offer greater insights into consumer behavior than focusing on brand selection and recognition. Managerially, consumer-activity identification highlights the fact that consumer-brand relationships form through use and brand meanings are, in part, dependent upon the socially prescribed meanings of its consumption activity. Moreover, building a strong brand identity and developing enduring consumer-brand relationships are challenging endeavors demanding continuous focus, learning, and substantial investments in consumer relationship management (Aaker, 1996; Grönroos, 2006; Payne et al., 2009). Therefore, marketers may want to promote their brand as an activity facilitator rather

than a potential relationship partner in an effort to ease budget and resource pressures, as what we do may well be more powerful in explaining consumer behavior than what we have.

### **3.2.1.1. Social Identity Theory**

Social identity theory takes a socio-psychological view of identity construction (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Individuals develop their identity and sense-of-self by evaluating their perception of the social groups they (do not) belong (Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Tajfel 1982). In an effort to enhance self-esteem and social standing individuals identify with groups (Ahearne et al., 2005; Dutton et al., 1994) to indicate similarity with the perceived values or other dimensions associated with those groups (organizations, brands, activities). Thus, the social component of SIT argues that the relevant dimensions of identity enhancing targets are socially constructed while the psychological component addresses individuals' desire to have positive views of their sense-of-self.

There are three principles of SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1979: 40). One, individuals engage in consumption activities that enhance their sense-of-self in positive ways. Positive refers to a belief that the dimensions (values, characteristics, image) of the target enhance an individual's sense-of-self (Turner, 1975). Normally, to develop a positive sense-of-self consumers place themselves in social interactions where they have a higher likelihood of achieving success (Dutton et al., 1994). In essence, individuals tend to navigate social situations in a manner that enhances or at least maintains one's feelings of sense-of-self.

Two, the positive dimensions of an identification target are based on comparisons against other potential targets that are perceived less positively or distinctively (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Accordingly, this principle involves group recognition and self-categorization knowledge. Comparisons and self-categorization entails evaluating both the perceived image and construed external image of the target. Specifically, individuals combine their personal beliefs of the target with the suspected beliefs held by others about the target, respectively (Dutton et al., 1994). Target group formation is facilitated by the observation and interpretation of symbolic boundaries created through consumption practices that reflect others' tastes and beliefs (Holt, 1997). Therefore, the individual monitors and comprehends the social environment allowing them to identify, categorize, and compare groups against each other to enhance their sense-of-self.

Third, in an effort to maintain and enhance one's sense-of-self individuals will join and leave groups and/or exert energy to manage the target group's relevant identity enhancing dimensions (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). This principle builds on the perceived and construed external image

knowledge required in principle two. Individuals constantly monitor the target's image to determine if the desired dimensions are being promoted and incorporated into their identity. Moreover, they may need to devise a strategy that changes the social group's dimensions and values in the desired self-serving direction. Together, these three principles indicate that individuals engage in consumption activities that develop a positive sense-of-self (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Dutton et al., 1994).

### **3.3.1.1. Consumer-Activity Identification**

Under SIT, consumers categorize others into groups based on their perceived values and observed behaviors. They then compare these groups against each other in order to select and target the desired groups to identify with. Prior consumer behavior research has been particularly interested in consumer-brand identification and consumers use of brands to construct their identities. However, a closer look at the literature indicates that activities themselves also serve identification targets.

Based on the foundations laid by Belk (1988) and Fournier's (1998) work, consumer-brand identification has attracted researcher interest for three main reasons. First, brands are filled with cultural meaning consumers can use to construct their identity (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; McCracken, 1986). Two, brands "are a more visible and more persistent signal" (Carter and Gilovich, 2012: 1314) of consumers' identification intentions. Three, categorizing and comparing have foundational roles in social identity theory and it is easier to observe consumers and research participants classifying visible, persistent signals. Taken together, brands are easily observed, categorized, and compared making them attractive consumer behavior research targets.

Despite evidence demonstrating consumers identify with activities, a comprehensive model on consumer-activity identification (CAI) has yet to be formulated. This is surprising because before brand identification can occur consumers need to incorporate the brand into their consumption activities (Marzocchi et al., 2013; Thomson et al., 2005). Furthermore, intricately tying activity engagement to identity construction is evident in the subculture of consumption literature. Consumers identify with a subculture of consumption by developing a commitment to the subculture's ethos through repeatedly engaging in shared subculture activities (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995). As subculture identification strengthens so do normative pressures to engage in activities and enact practices that support the subculture's group identity (Kozinets, 2001). Moreover, Celsi, Rose and Leigh (1993) suggest that the primary activity of the subculture can serve as the main identity formation dimension. In their case, consumers constructed high-risk identities by engaging in sky-diving. Thus, subculture of consumption research highlights the fact that identity construction begins with engaging in activities.

Additional support for CAI can be found in the organizational community and community of practice literature (Wenger, 2000). For example, Orr's (1996) ethnographic study on photocopier technicians reveals that an individual's identity can revolve around the doing of an activity and not the employing organization. In this case, the observed technicians based their identity on their ability to perform the technician practice and not Xerox, their employing organization. Similar to subcultures of consumption, community of practice members' values, ethos, and world-views align through repeatedly engaging in shared activities (Brown and Duguid, 1998). Furthermore, a foundational tenet of the community of practice literature is: learning to do activities in a socially defined manner is synonymous with identity acquisition (Brown and Duguid, 2001; Orr, 1996).

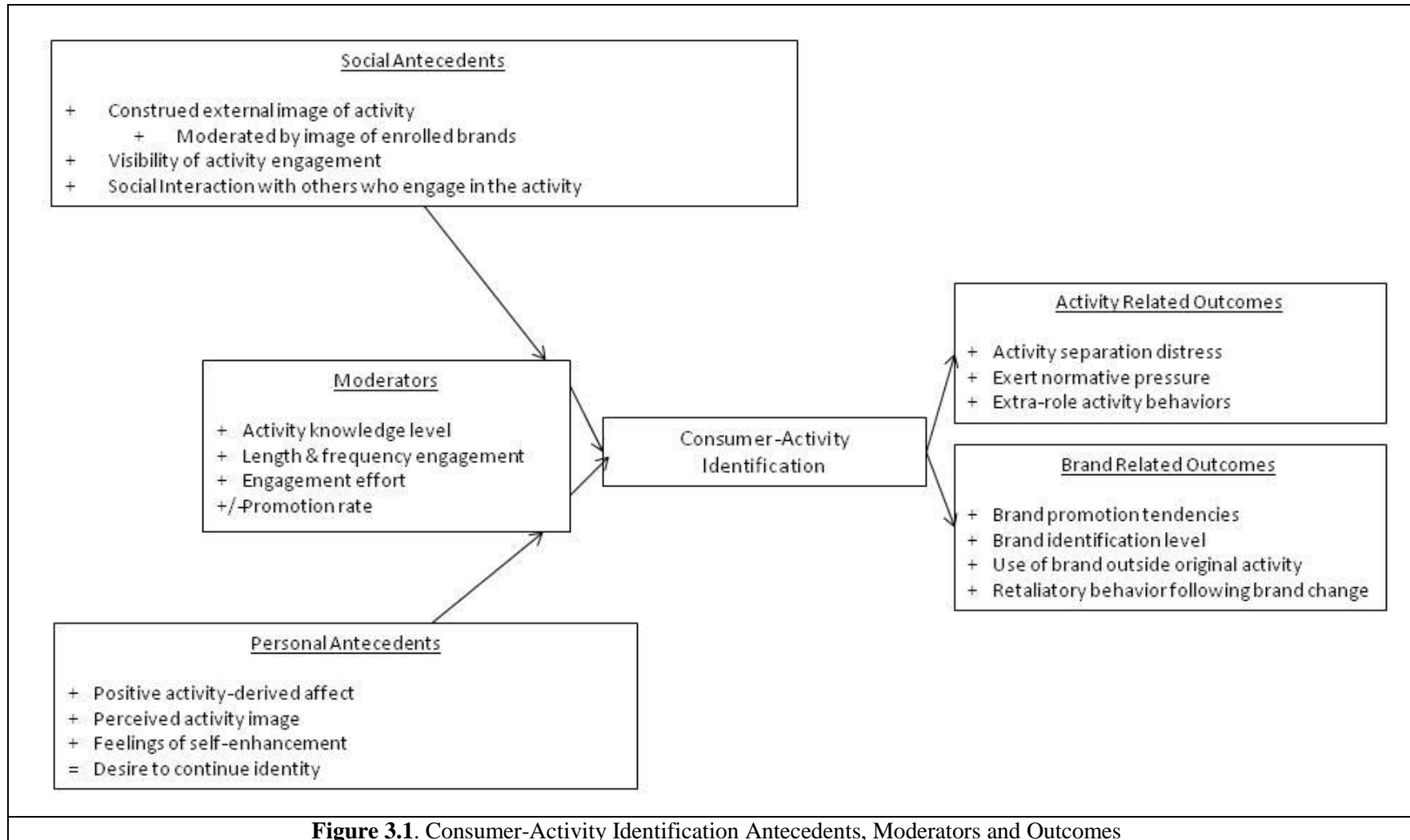
### ***3.3.2.1. Identification and Social Legitimization***

As a socio-psychological perspective, SIT values consumers' cognitive processing ability but in order to fully develop the consumer-activity identification it is necessary to refine and extend the focus of SIT to include behavior related, know-how knowledge. As Wenger (2000) argues, demonstrating knowledge "is a matter of displaying competences defined in social communities" (227). Identity construction involves more than merely identifying and selecting into a group rather the consumer needs know-how knowledge on assembling objects and coordinating bodily movements that indicate group identification in a socially legitimated manner (Arsel and Bean, 2013). Know-how knowledge is the "ability to put know-what into practice" (Brown and Duguid, 1998: 91). As such, cognitively processing what brands and objects to possess is necessary but not sufficient for successful identity construction. Successful identity construction occurs through learning and demonstrating the behaviors that assemble brands and objects in a manner that others deem legitimate (Garud, 1997). Therefore, consumer-activity identification values consumers' ability to categorize a group based on its perceived beliefs and values along with the consumers' ability to demonstrate their knowledge on how to *be* a socially legitimated group member.

### ***3.3.3.1. Consumer-Activity Identification Propositions***

Consumer-activity identification reflects the extent to which individuals consider a consumption activity to be central to their identity and sense-of-self. This definition draws from social identity theory (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Tajfel, and Turner, 1979) and prior work on organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), consumer-brand (Lam et al., 2010) and consumer-community (Marzocchi et al., 2013) identification. In keeping with SIT principles the antecedents leading to CAI are categorized as social or personal in nature (see Figure 3.1).

## Consumer-Activity Identification



**Figure 3.1.** Consumer-Activity Identification Antecedents, Moderators and Outcomes



### 3.3.3.2. *Social Antecedents*

The first proposition is consumers have a higher tendency to identify with activities that have a positive construed external image than those with a negative construed external image. Construed external image is defined as the activity's image a consumer believes others hold toward the activity. Organization (Dutton et al., 1994) and company (Ahearne et al., 2005) identification research argues that a positive relationship exists between external construed image and identification levels. Generally, activities that have a positive or distinctive social image will result in higher identification levels. Resting on the self-enhancing principle of social identity (Turner, 1975), consumers who believe others in their social groups endow the activity with potential status enhancing dimensions will be more inclined to identify with the activity.

Moreover, it is proposed that the positive relationship between external construed image of the activity and CAI is moderated by the image of the brands enrolled into the activity. Brands perceived to have a positive image will enhance CAI levels and, conversely, brands with a negative image will weaken identification levels. The moderating relationship should be particularly evident in activities that are owned by one or a few brands. This is because visible brand usage increases the perception of identification (Kleine, et al., 1993).

**P1a:** There is a positive correlation between the activity's construed external image and consumer-activity identification levels.

**P1b:** The perceived image of brands enrolled into an activity moderate the positive relationship between the activity's construed external image and consumer-activity identification levels.

Activities that are engaged in public and are visible to others are more likely to lead to stronger levels of CAI than activities that are less visible. This second proposition is based on prior identification research that argues performing or possessing objects in front of others signals tacit acceptance of the object's values (Dutton et al., 1994; Kleine et al., 1993). The desire to explicitly promote activity engagement is classified as a moderating variable to activity identification, but engaging in activities in front of others produces social pressure to identify with the activity. While consumers may deploy a series of discursive strategies to reduce the perception of identification (Arsel and Thompson, 2011), the deployment of these strategies indicates the existence of social pressure to identify with the activity.

## Consumer-Activity Identification

- P2:** There is a positive correlation between the level of visibility of an activity and consumer-activity identification levels.

The third proposition is increased social interaction with others who engage in the activity will elevate CAI levels. Organization and brand identification research find that higher rates of social interaction leads to higher levels of identification (Marzocchi et al., 2013; Press and Arnould, 2011). Moreover, brand connections are often a vehicle to form relationships with other brand users (McAlexander et al., 2002; Muñiz and O’Guinn 2001). Furthermore, research on consumption tribes suggests that consumers often use activities to facilitate the formation of social links (Cova, 1997; Goulding et al., 2013; O’Sullivan et al., 2011). Therefore, activity identification will increase as social connections with others who engage in the activity increase.

- P3:** There is a positive correlation between the level of social interaction related to an activity and consumer-activity identification levels.

### 3.3.3.3. *Personal Antecedents*

The first personal antecedent proposition to CAI is higher levels of activity-derived affect leads to higher identification levels. Activities that generate happiness, joy, and positive feelings in consumers are more likely to be repeated. This hypothesis dovetails with the positive sense-of-self principle of social identity theory, in that consumers engage in activities that elevate self-esteem. Moreover, it is quite common for consumers to state “that was fun, let’s do it again”. Accordingly, individuals tend to engage in activities that produce positive affective states.

- P4:** There is a positive correlation between positive activity-derived affect and consumer-activity identification levels.

The second personal proposition is consumers are more likely to identify with activities that have positive perceived images. Construed external image addresses what others think of the activity, perceived image addresses the personally held image of the activity (Dutton et al., 1994). Generally, consumers will not highly identify with activities they personally do not like. Activity engagement does not guarantee activity identification, which involves perceiving a sense of similarity with the activity and their senses-of-self. A complex, interlinked relationship exists among the personal and social antecedents but, generally, consumption activities with a positive perceived image are more likely to lead to identification than those the consumer personally perceives as negative.

- P5:** There is a positive correlation between the perceived activity’s image and consumer-activity identification levels.

Overcoming barriers, achieving personal goals, and other types of personal, self-enhancing activity related experiences will increase CAI levels. Celsi, Rose, and Leigh's (1993) work on constructing high-risk identities through skydiving noted that some skydivers expressed "an increasing intrinsic interest in mastering skydiving" (11). Performing an activity at a personally improved level and, perhaps, better than others produces feelings of self-enhancement resulting in increased rates of activity identification. It is also expected that activities that produce transcendental or peak experiences could help in elevating activity identification levels. Schouten, McAlexander, and Koenig (2007) found that consumers who reported having these types of experiences at a brand sponsored event had higher levels of attachment to the brand. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that engaging in an activity that focuses attention, tests personal limits, or has transformation potential can lead to higher activity identification levels.

- P6:** There is a positive correlation between feelings of self-enhancement and consumer-activity identification levels.

The fourth personal antecedent addresses a combination of the self-continuity principle and a consumer's ability to purposefully construct their identity. Specifically, it is proposed that a consumer's desire for identity continuity will stabilize activity identification levels while a consumer's desire for identity management will produce fluctuations in activity identification levels. Kleine, Kleine, and Allen's (1995) research shows that consumers' object attachment levels vary depending on their desire to continue a connection with a current identity or to change their current identity. This proposition also draws on subculture of consumption (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995), communities of practice (Brown and Duguid, 1998, 2001) and organization (Press and Arnould, 2011) research that shows consumers' ethos and world-views change as they construct a new identity. Accordingly, consumers undergoing purposeful identity transitions will exhibit less stable CAI levels while consumers focused on self-continuity will exhibit stable identification levels.

- P7:** Consumer-activity identification levels will exhibit less stability if the consumer wants to change their current identity than in consumers who want to maintain their current identity.

#### *3.3.3.4. Proposed Moderators*

The first proposed moderator in the consumer-activity identification relationship relates to the consumer's activity knowledge level. Activity related knowledge can be broadly classified into two

## Consumer-Activity Identification

categories: explicit, know-what knowledge and tacit, know-how knowledge (Polanyi, 1962). Know-what knowledge addresses codified knowledge and can be explicitly shared (Boisot, 1998). For instance, knowing brand names one can use to engage in the activity is know-what knowledge. Knowing where to engage in the activity is also know-what knowledge. Know-how knowledge addresses uncoded knowledge, primarily because the knowledge cannot be explicitly expressed (Brown and Duguid, 1998). For instance, the ability to recognize others who identify with the activity or are fellow subculture members requires a refined level of tacit knowledge (Hsieh and Wu, 2011; Kates, 2002). Kates (2002) describes how consumers who enter the gay subculture gradually develop the tacit knowledge and skill to identify other subculture members quickly and with more precision.

Furthermore, consumers search for opportunities to display activity related competency and mastery to improve their sense-of-self and self-esteem. Therefore, they tend to place themselves in positive social situations and as their activity knowledge increase social situations involving the activity will be more positive. Accordingly, an individual's level of activity knowledge is expected to moderate the consumer-identification process.

**P8:** Activity knowledge levels positively moderates the relationship between the social and personal antecedents and consumer-activity identification levels.

A second moderator is the amount of effort the consumer has expended and invested in engaging in the activity (Sung and Choi, 2010). Activity engagement is a multi-factor construct. Two factors are the frequency of activity engagement and the length of activity engagement. Prior research has shown that "regular opportunities to enact the identity" (Kleine et al., 1993: 224) help develop and maintain the identity. Similarly, Hsieh and Wu's (2011) research on the gay subculture shows that engaging in gay friendly activities facilitates fully embracing a gay identity. Meyerson and Scully's (1995) work on tempered radicals offers addition evidence, in that they recommend individuals maintain contact with like-minded individuals who are interested in the same social issues they are or risk having those social values replaced with corporate values. A third factor is the amount of labor or personal energy expended to engage in the activity. Thompson and Coskuner-Balli's (2007) research on consumer-organization identification found that those who expend personal labor had higher levels of organizational identification than those who expended less personal labor towards supporting the organization.

**P9:** The amount of effort an individual expends on an activity positively moderates the relationship between social and personal antecedents and consumer-activity identification levels.

The final proposed moderator addresses the consumer's activity promotion tendencies. There are three main categories of promotion: endorsement, parameter changing, and hiding. Endorsement tendencies are consumer behaviors that signify trust or feelings of identification with the activity (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Marzocchi et al., 2013). Generally, a positive relationship between endorsement tendencies and identification should exist. Parameter changing behaviors are consumer behaviors intended to change the socially relevant dimensions of the activity. If a consumer perceives an opportunity to enhance status or self-esteem by adjusting the parameters of the activity they will (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Therefore, consumers may promote the activity in order to change it as well as to endorse. Hiding promotion tendencies are consumer behaviors that actively reduce or prevent the disclosure of one's activity engagement history. Perhaps the personal meanings embedded into the activity are highly emotional making consumers reluctant to explain them or have them corrupted by others. However, it is expected that a more common motivation for hiding activity engagement is a consequence of receiving negative or non-affirming feedback from a prior activity engagement disclosure (Hsieh and Wu, 2011). Accordingly, activity promotion tendencies is a multi-dimensional construct that impacts the CAI process.

**P10:** Activity promotion tendencies moderate the relationship between social and personal antecedents and consumer-activity identification levels.

#### *3.3.3.5. Activity Related Outcomes*

Based on prior organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992) and brand (Thomson et al., 2005) identification research it is proposed that consumers will experience a sense of psychic loss or separation distress if they are unable to engage in the activity due to an unplanned or unforeseen event. Strong CAI involves a cognitive belief that the consumer's and activity's identities highly overlap, perhaps even fusing together (Gómez et al., 2011). Therefore, being unable to engage in the activity can result in feelings of incompleteness. These feelings of incompleteness will then result in higher levels of separation distress than those with lower levels of CAI.

**P11:** There is a positive correlation between consumer-activity identification levels and separation distress levels due to an unplanned inability to engage in the activity.

## Consumer-Activity Identification

One of the motivating rationales for investigating and promoting organization identification is the realization that organizational members with high identification levels tend to engage in extra-role behaviors (Ahearne et al., 2005; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Accordingly, it is proposed that consumers with high levels of activity identification will tend to engage in more activity related extra-role behaviors than consumers with lower levels of identification. The specific extra-role behaviors are context dependent but can be as simple as defending the activity against degrading or negative word-of-mouth, or can be highly advanced such as participating in formal organizations that promote the activity. Therefore, activity identification will encourage consumers to engage in extra-role behaviors that support the activity.

**P12:** There is a positive correlation between consumer-activity identification levels and activity related extra-role behaviors.

High CAI individuals will also exert normative pressure on others to engage in the activity in a certain manner. Repeatedly engaging in an activity and absorbing its dimension into ones' identity impacts the way the consumer views the world; coupled with the drive for self-continuity and to protect knowledge investments, structures may develop that guide activity engagement (Olson, 1995). Those in the social group will (un)consciously exert social pressure on others to engage in the activity in a prescribed manner (Hogg and Terry, 2000). Intragroup conflict can then arise as individuals try to change the parameters of the activity in ways that benefit their specific expertise or interests. Leigh, Peters, and Shelton's (2006) study on the MG collecting subculture demonstrates that intragroup conflict arises when a rebuilt MG's authenticity is being judged. Some subculture members assert that a rebuilt MG needs to be driven while others argue driving is less important than having all original parts to be deemed authentic. Accordingly, normative social pressures on how to engage in the activity will be exerted by those who highly identify with the activity.

**P13:** There is a positive correlation between consumer-activity identification levels and the amount of normative pressure the consumer exerts on others engage in the activity in a prescribed manner.

### *3.3.3.6. Brand Related Outcomes*

Four main brand related outcomes attributed to CAI levels are proposed. The first three are positive outcomes for the brand and the fourth is a potential negative depending upon how it is managed. First, it is proposed that higher CAI levels will result in higher rates of brand promotion. Engaging in activities typically require the use of brands. As an individual develops a strong relationship with

an activity their reliance upon brands should increase. This is because a portion of their identity depends upon successful activity enactment which, partially, depends on the ability of brands to facilitate activity engagement. Moreover, specialized branded objects allow boats to sail faster, paint to be more vibrant, and clean windows to have less streaks, for instance, thereby elevating the importance of brands as they have the potential to enhance feelings of competency and mastery. Not every brand enrolled into the activity process will receive increased brand promotion; rather, select brands the consumer perceives as facilitating self-enhancement and improving mastery will typically be promoted.

**P14:** There is a positive correlation between consumer-activity identification levels and the consumer's brand promotion tendencies, of select brands.

CAI is proposed to have a positive relationship on consumer-brand identification levels. Elevated rates of brand identification should be most evident in brands that provide crucial enhancements to activity enactment or are highly visible. Brand relationships require brands to be incorporated into consumption activities and strong consumer-brand identification develops following a relatively high degree of brand involvement (Marzocchi et al., 2013). Additionally, as individuals seek out specialized activity related resources and develop specialized activity related knowledge their brand knowledge levels will increase. Higher levels of brand knowledge have been shown to lead to higher levels of brand identification (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Thus, brand identification levels should increase on select brands as consumer-activity identification levels increase.

**P15:** There is a positive correlation between consumer-activity identification levels and consumer-brand identification levels, on select brands.

The third positive brand outcome proposition is high CAI should increase the use of select brands outside the original activity. As the brand demonstrates its quality and trust in the original consumption activity the brand can be viewed as a potential solution for other consumer problems. What is less obvious is the power of suggestion generated through constant presence and use. Old activity artifacts may be re-purposed for seemingly unrelated activities. For example, old golf outfits are transformed into rags for cleaning bicycles or empty paint cans are repurposed into flower vases. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for special events like birthday parties and anniversaries to be held at locations where the activity is conducted, such as on boats or at art galleries. Accordingly, as the activity becomes more salient in the consumer's mind so too will the artifacts necessary for activity engagement thereby leading to higher rates of brand use outside the original consumption activity.

## Consumer-Activity Identification

**P16:** There is a positive correlation between consumer-activity identification levels and the consumer's use of select brands outside the identified activity.

The potential negative brand outcome from high CAI is a potential for increased consumer retaliatory behaviors following a brand change, especially major brand changes. High CAI occurs when the consumer perceives engaging in the activity will maintain or enhance their social status. Brand changes can introduce uncertainty regarding the consumer's perceived ability to engage in the activity at their desired level. Retaliatory behaviors should be particularly pronounced if the brand is withdrawn from the market or production is discontinued. This is because the ability to maintain one's social status related to the activity knowledge will be shaken. Will they be able to find an adequate substitute? Will they need time to learn how to use the new substitute? Therefore, the uncertainty introduced into a consumer's mind regarding their ability to perform the activity and maintain social status will be shaken following brand changes resulting in retaliatory consumer behavior directed towards the brand.

**P17:** There is a positive correlation between consumer-activity identification levels and consumer retaliatory behavior following a brand change.

### *3.3.3.7. Feedback Effects*

The last component of the proposed CAI model is the presence of feedback effects from the CAI outcomes to the antecedents and moderators. As consumers engage in extra-role behaviors their knowledge, visibility of engagement, and engagement efforts increase, for instance. Activity-derived affect and identification also produce a self-perpetuating cycle of actualizing happiness and repeating the activity thereby increasing frequency, knowledge, and identification levels. Furthermore, individuals prefer to socialize with others who are perceived to be similar. As this occurs, the construed external image may become more favorable thereby increasing the potential positive social value of activity identification.

In relation to brands, increased levels of brand promotion and brand identification should motivate consumers to find more opportunities to use the brand, including engaging in the activity more often. However, brand identification could overpower the original activity thereby gaining elevated prominence within the consumer's life and potentially weakening the antecedents leading to identification with the original activity. For instance, in a search for likeminded friends, the consumer could become involved in a consumption tribe that then changes their social group membership and potentially the construed external image of the activity. Also, brand identification often motivates consumers to engage in extra-role behaviors that benefit the brand (Ahearne et al.,



2005; Schau et al., 2009). Thus, consumers could have less energy, motivation, or resources to devote to the activity as they are diverted to maintain their growing brand relationship. Overall, it is expected that there is a positive feedback effect among CAI antecedents and activity related outcomes but elevated levels of consumer-brand identification have the potential to weaken CAI levels.

### **3.4.1.1. Discussion**

Consumer behavior research tends to place emphasis on consumers' recognition and search behaviors (Wells, 1993) and how consumers construct their identities through brand possession (Lam, et al., 2010). The development of testable propositions related to consumer-activity identification lays a foundation for shifting emphasis towards the role consumption plays in consumers' lives and identity construction. Thus, this article asserts: what we do may well be more powerful in explaining consumer behavior than what we have.

#### ***3.4.2.1. Consumption and Identity Construction***

Consumption research has repeatedly shown that identity construction is not merely based on brand possessions but how and in what activities the brand is enrolled play crucial roles in identity construction (Holt, 1997). Elliott and Davies (2006) discuss how teenage consumers may not be accepted by some social groups because they are not deemed authentic by the group. In particular, only rare, chameleon like teenagers can wear a jock outfit one day and a goth outfit the next and still be accepted or have friends in both subcultures. Merely possessing branded objects does not guarantee the construction of a socially legitimate goth, jock, or any other group member.

McCracken's (1986) meaning movement model demonstrates that objects have meaning and consumers' activities embed meaning into or remove meaning from objects. For example, consumers place mementos into new cars to embed it with personalized meaning. When selling the car they will clean out those meanings by removing personal objects. Further, the car buyer will vacuum the car and remove previous owner mementos in preparation for their personalization process (McCracken, 1986). Fournier's (1998) empirical work formally introduced the consumer-brand relationship to consumer research. Fournier (1998) argues values and meanings reside in brands, empowering consumers to construct their identity. Both of these works have been highly influential in guiding research on consumer-brand relationships and identity construction. However, the primacy given to objects and brands may have overshadowed the ability of activities to carry meaning and impact consumer behavior. The proposed CAI model attempts to rectify this imbalance by providing a framework for developing testable hypotheses related to consumers' relationships with their consumption activities.

### ***3.4.3.1. Consumption and Social Identity Theory***

Social identity theory provides a socio-psychological explanation for consumer behavior. Prior research has focused on consumers' ability to observe and categorize individuals into groups based on their beliefs, values, and actions (Lam, et al., 2010, 2013). CAI extends SIT by arguing that identity construction is a socially legitimated process. Thus, this research moves SIT past brand possession as a primary determinate of a consumer's identity to include how and in what activities the consumer enrolls the brand. A consumer's identity is the reflective impression and opinion they have of himself or herself as an object and how they are viewed by others (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Lin and Sung, 2014). Accordingly, consumers not only categorize and select groups but they also engage in activities to indicate group membership.

This does not deny brands are particularly powerful elements in identity construction as they carry much of the symbolic values in today's culture (Elliott and Davies, 2006). Firms are highly skilled at commoditizing the counterculture values consumers want to incorporate into their identities (Thompson and Coskuner-Bali, 2007). Thus, consumers often look to brands as key ingredients in constructing and managing their identity (Escalas and Bettman, 2003; Holt, 2002). However, selecting, purchasing, and possessing brands is not sufficient to construct the desired identity rather consumers need to incorporate the brand into their activities. How they use the brands and how others respond to the consumer's brand assemblage pattern are reflectively evaluated by the consumer to determine their sense-of-self and identity. Extending SIT to embrace the notion that a consumer does not select an identity rather they enact an identity facilitates the advancement of the emerging consumption turn in consumer behavior that recognizes the crucial nature of consumption (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Wells, 1993).

### ***3.4.4.1. Consumption and Branding***

CAI raises two important implications for brand researchers and managers. One, the social antecedents to CAI reveal that the image of an activity impacts a brand's image. Future research is necessary to fully understand the ramifications of the symbiotic relationship between activity and brand image. However, prior branding strategies have predominantly focused on the firm's (in)ability to promote and manage a specific brand image (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 1999; de Chernatony and Harris, 2000). Keller (1993) touches upon the image of the brand user and the how the brand is consumed but specific studies investigating the impact a consumption activity's image has on brand image and consumer behavior have been limited. Thus, this research suggests that a consumption activity's image impacts the image of the brands used in the activity; and, offers fresh insights to firms' (in)ability to manage their brand's image.

Two, understanding consumers form relationships with their consumption activities indicates that branding strategies may want to consider focusing on managing the consumer-activity relationship over the consumer-brand relationship. For instance, research on retaliatory consumer behavior has identified an interesting tendency in consumers who have strong relationships with a brand: they exhibit higher tendencies to retaliate against the brand following brand changes than consumers with a weak consumer-brand relationship (Grégoire et al., 2009; Lin and Sung, 2014). Perhaps, elevated rates of retaliatory behavior stems from disruptions to consumers' activity processes. For example, Muñiz and Schau's (2005, 2007) qualitative work discovered that consumers self-organize when retaliating against a firm but they also support each other so they can continue using the discontinued product. Therefore, disruptions to consumer-activity relationships may play a bigger role in consumers retaliatory behavior than consumer-brand relationships.

Collectively, the antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of CAI indicate that marketers may want to promote their brand as an activity facilitator rather than a potential relationship partner (Hawkins, 2014). Consumers use activities to construct their identity. They devote time, money, and energy engaging in activities that use brands but they also develop knowledge on the consumption activity itself. The consumption activity may even provide opportunities for self-enhancement and to create a distinctive and positive identity in their social groups. Furthermore, consumers can become distressed if they can't engage in the activity. Accordingly, consumer-activity relationships should be considered when making brand decisions.

CAI offers an alternative and promising perspective in understanding consumer behavior. Consumers engage in activities in order to develop a positive sense-of-self. Consumers purchase products so that they can engage in activities. Therefore, what we do is fundamental to consumer behavior and the proposed consumer-activity identification model provides the necessary framework to advance consumer behavior and identity construction research.

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## Consumer-Activity Identification

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## Chapter 4: Market Identification to Generation: A Practice Theory Market Orientation

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### Market identification to generation: a practice theory market orientation

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## Market identification to generation: a practice theory market orientation

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This article puts forth a market perspective based on social practice theory that addresses how marketers and brand managers can view the market, design their marketing mix and market scripting activities, and encourage the integration of their offerings into individuals' practices. The main features of this perspective are: only when the brand is resourced is the actual market constituted, a brand is resourced across numerous practices of each user, and firms have the ability to create new practices. The analysis conceptually develops four market orientations: resource identifier, resource activator, resource configurator, and resource generator. These orientations allow for firms to insert their offering into existing practices, reconfigure the way the practice is enacted, or create new practices for their branded resource. It is suggested that brands utilized across multiple practices will have higher repurchasing rates and levels of brand loyalty compared to brands that are not enrolled across multiple practices.

**Keywords:** practice theory; marketing; branding; market orientation; narrative

### Introduction

The new millennium has ushered in an era of connectedness. Understandings of human behavior are shifting from being completely based on biological explanations to those that embrace a socially constituted, networked view of society (Bruner, 1990). Meaning is not an objective fact, rather meaning and society are constituted through engaging in practice, observing, interpreting, and doing (Giddens, 1984). Therefore, society is continuously socially constituted (Searle, 1995). Accordingly, the meaning of discourse, a human movement, an object, and even a brand rests on how it is used to fulfill a purpose.

An individual's practice narrative provides the conscious and unconscious rationales that motivate and guide the way they enact the practice (Hawkins & Saleem, 2012). However, repeated and regularly enacted practices produce structures, norms, and memory traces on how to enact specific practices across individuals (Giddens, 1984; Schatzki, 2006; Sewell, 1992). Marketers are now being urged to recognize that the meaning of their brand is based on how it is actually used and not how they desire the offering to be used. The rise of co-creation branding (i.e., Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008), for instance, recognizes that consumer interaction and brand use create meaning and value. Consumer culture theory similarly embraces the notion that dynamic relationships exist among resources, consumers, and brand meaning (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, 2007). Despite advancements in brand meaning theory, the role of practice in market constitution has yet to be incorporated into a multi-perspective market orientation. Because the consumer has a significant impact on brand meaning, researchers

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have been focused on improving a firm's market reading and learning capabilities (Cayla & Arnould, 2013; Neill, McKee, & Rose, 2007; Sinkula, 1994). However, market orientation approaches typically focus on learning about existing consumer practices and not generating new consumer practices. Conversely, design-driven innovation research is concerned with radical innovation that changes the way consumers think and act and less concerned with inserting products into existing practices (Verganti, 2009).

Building on Storbacka and Nenonen's (2011a, 2011b) view of markets as dynamic, evolving resource configuration systems, the purpose of this article is to formalize a resource-market orientation based on practice theory principles. This perspective argues firms provide resources for other consumers to enroll into their socially situated practices and recognizes that a firm's market scripting activities can affect users' practices and routines. Under the resource-market perspective, there are four main market orientation models: resource identifier (RI), resource activator (RA), resource configurer (RC), and resource generator (RG). The main features of this perspective are: only when the brand is resourced is the actual market constituted; a brand is resourced across numerous practices of each user or network member, and firms have the ability to create new practices and routines.

The following section explains the practice-based theory of resourcing as it provides the foundation for the resource-market perspective. Then, the four practice theory derived market orientations are conceptually developed.

#### **Theoretical foundation: practice-based theory of resourcing**

To develop the resource-market perspective, practice-based theory of resourcing is consulted to explain how a brand or resource enables individuals to enact practices. Practice refers to the act of enrolling resources to accomplish a goal in a specific time and space (Jarzabkowski, Lê, & Feldman, 2012; Levina & Orlikowski, 2009). Practice theory argues that the meaning of discourse, actions, and objects are (re)constituted through doing. Therefore, social reality is not stable but continuously (re)constituted. Accordingly, to understand the meaning of any resource it cannot be isolated and abstracted from its usage context (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Polanyi (1962) echoes the importance of context by arguing that interpreting objects, actions, and discourse 'are intelligible only within the framework of a useful performance which they successfully serve' (p. 185). Therefore, practice theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for contemporary market approaches by recognizing that the resource system the offering is integrated into determines its meaning (Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Knox, 2009) and by embracing the idea that resource systems can exhibit relative stability allowing for market identification.

Resources are considered to be any object, action, or discourse that an agent expects to assist them in enacting a practice (Feldman, 2004; Feldman & Worline, 2011; Sewell, 1992). As a resource, individuals rely on their narratives or schemas when deciding to resource a brand into a practice. Narratives are an individuals sensemaking cognitive framework that gives meaning to objects, brands, and practices (Hawkins & Saleem, 2012).

It is helpful to distinguish between abstracted and contextualized brand meanings as there is a significant body of literature that relies on brand perceptions abstracted from context. Accordingly, *brand-as-artifact* refers to brand perceptions that are decontextualized and are not socially situated (Orlikowski, 2000). It is through repeated, structuralized interactions that produce similar results that viewing brands and markets as stable artifacts



makes sense. Conversely, *brand-in-practice* refers to brand meanings stemming from the brand being resourced in a particular context (Orlikowski, 2000). Methodologically, surveys that assess brand meaning using contextually devoid indicators (e.g., brand personality; Aaker, 1997) investigate brand-as-artifact meanings while ethnographic and cultural studies are better positioned to capture brand-in-practice meanings.

#### *Resourcing corollary*

As brands are only considered a resource when in-practice, the resourcing corollary to practice theory explains how brands are enrolled into practices. Under the resourcing corollary, a resource is created when it is enrolled into a practice; before integration, it was only a potential resource (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Feldman & Worline, 2011). In relation to branding, a brand is not defined by its innate qualities but by how the brand is (not) used to accomplish a goal *in situ*. Accordingly, marketers attempt to have their offering viewed as a potential resource for practice enactment. The value placed on practice then brings the dynamic nature of brand meaning to the fore. An individual's reality is structured through repeated actions resulting in a structured resource system that can lead to relatively stable in-practice meanings (Giddens, 1984). However, using brands-as-artifact methods to assess brand meanings fail to recognize the contextually-based nature of brand-in-practice meanings and can result in overlooking market changes. Accordingly, marketing perspectives that internalize practice's role in (re)constituting resources are better suited to not only develop a more refined understanding of a particular brand's meaning but, as to be argued, they can also facilitate generating new practices and markets that resource the brand.

#### **Resource-market perspective**

A forward-looking managerial perspective of the market should account for traditional marketing orientations that focus on identifying markets as well as contemporary orientations that strive to create new cultural meanings, practices, and markets. As Storbacka and Nenonen (2011a, 2011b) argue, markets that exhibit relative stability can be said to have high marketness. At the other end of the continuum, markets exhibiting low marketness are resource systems still being contested. Accordingly, approaches to the market should explicitly recognize the degree of marketness of the system they are contributing to.

The four market orientations under a resource-market perspective are: (1) RI, (2) RA, (3) RC, and; (4) RG (see Table 1). Multiple views of marketing activities are necessary to capture the dynamism of the market because as soon as other firms begin to target new practices promoted under a market generating approach, their marketing orientations are either identifying, activating or configuring.

#### *Resource identifier*

The first resource-market approach is the RI and is a commonly advocated branding strategy. As McCracken (1986) and Escalas and Bettman (2005) argue, this is where culturally relevant attributes are embedded into goods and brands through advertising and opinion leaders. In particular, RI strategies attempt to identify and insert their brand into the socially constituted world in a manner that allows it to be seen as a resource to enroll into identifiable, previously enacted practices. An RI strategy requires a mature market

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Table 1. Resource-market orientations overview.

	RI	RA	RC	RG
<b>Illustration</b>				
<b>Market actions</b>	Identify and insert brand into existing practices to be viewed as a resource	Differentiation within dominate practice narrative(s) but are outside actors' current decision set	Construct practice narratives using different resources to identify markets not targeted by competitors	Promote new practices and provide branded resource(s) to support the practice enactment within a new market
<b>Benefits</b>	Relatively stable markets facilitate marketing efforts directed towards building relevant brand attributes	Prevents organization inertia Reduces tendency to view market as stable	Differentiates brand on own terms Avoids direct confrontation with existing brands Takes advantage of changing market	Creates new markets First mover advantages Establish brand as core resource across practices
<b>Challenges</b>	Resisting the belief that society and the market are stable	Correctly reading culture and market changes	Actor reluctance to accept new practice narrative Preventing competitors from moving into the new market	Gaining actor acceptance Supporting practice during infancy Protecting market
<b>Research methods</b>	Surveys	Projective methods Qualitative research on consumption collectives	Qualitative research: interviews; focus groups; observations; field studies	Archival; ethnographic and netnographic Participant-based research

with high marketness that has at least one practice repeatedly enacted by a relatively large number of actors to target.

As practices are repeated through time and space, the resource system exhibits stability thereby increasing the attractiveness and applicability of the RI orientation. A brand can obtain strong market differentiation by owning or associating with relevant resource(s). Implementing brand-as-artifact research methods, such as surveys can be useful under RI. This research can then be used to identify and assess brand attributes to develop market differentiation strategies. The strategic challenges, besides marketing mix development and implementation, are resisting organizational inertia and believing the market is stable (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, 1984).

#### *Resource activator*

Market strategies that pursues differentiation within dominate practice narrative(s) but are outside consumers' current decision making set are approaching the market under a RA orientation. This strategy is particularly attractive for new market entrants or firms with limited resources who want to avoid directly competing with brand(s) that own market attributes by juxtaposing their brand against dominant discourses or stories presented by market leaders. But as the activated market grows in size, it becomes easier and more attractive for other firms to identify. Firms with multiple product lines could experiment with the RA market approach to grow market share or decrease costs through economies of scale.

The challenge presenting managers under an RA orientation is correctly reading culture to avoid promoting a branded resource that is too far from the dominate practice narrative. Adjusting the way actors configure resources requires clout (Storbacka & Nenonen, 2011a, 2011b) and the more novel the promoted configuration, the more challenging it will be to adjust users' narratives and practices. Research methods that not only gauge where culture *is* but where culture *is going* are vital in this orientation. Projective research methods that ask respondents to visualize their behavior in particular situations can be helpful. Work on consumption collectives highlight that understanding brand-in-practice meanings offers various benefits to firms (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002) including identifying future trends (von Hippel, 2005). Therefore, qualitative and cultural research on consumption collectives can help guide market scripting activities.

#### *Resource configurer*

Rather than working within a practice's dominant resource configuration narrative, a RC orientation promotes an alternative practice resource configuration narrative when approaching the market. Marketers then attempt to strategically embed these attributes into their brand in hopes of being viewed as a potential resource. This allows dynamic firms to overtake competing firms suffering from organizational inertia and less likely to adjust marketing strategies to meet the newly configured market.

Constructing and promoting novel resource configurations involve considerable risk and uncertainty. Users can be reluctant to view their practice in the way promoted by the firm's marketing mix. As Feldman (2004) shows, the resulting change in the constitution of one practice will change how resources in other practices are viewed. A resource can be, and is often, resourced across numerous overlapping practices; the ripple effect from a resource change in one practice could change more important practices thereby preventing

(or promoting) brand adoption. Thus, brands that are resourced across multiple practices can be challenging to replace.

The RC market orientations can be viewed as precursors to the RI and RA models. This is because only one firm can promote a new practice; other marketers are then working within the newly promoted resource configuration narrative. Conducting contextually rich research enables managers to strategically develop marketing mixes based on new resourcing stories that are unique, attractive, and easy for actors to integrate into their practice narrative. Qualitative research, such as interviews and focus groups are relatively inexpensive ways to learn brand-in-practice meanings. However, observation- and participant-based research methods allow for social and tacit knowledge to be gathered.

### *Resource generator*

RG strategies focus on developing and promoting new practices and providing the necessary resource(s) for enacting the practice. RG orientations embrace the firm's ability to co-construct new practices through the promotion of new narratives. Similarly, agency enables individuals to overcome the suggestive power of structures to create new ways of performing (Reckwitz, 2002). The constitution of new practices and markets relying upon branded objects offer strategists the opportunity to tightly intertwine their offered resource (s) into the practice narrative. This is similar to studying lead-users because they may be generating new practices or re-configuring existing practices using resources that could be produced by a firm (von Hippel, 1986). As the practice is (re)invented (Shove & Pantzar, 2005) through time, additional practices can become interwoven into this new practice potentially allowing the brand to become a core resource across multiple practices or within a performance. This point further supports the notion that brands enrolled across multiple practices are difficult to replace and can elevate brand loyalty and repurchasing rates.

Creating a practice that is replicable at a collective level and across time and contexts is a challenging endeavor. The practice needs to be accepted by others and this involves considerable organizational learning that demands firm investments of thought, time, and money into supporting the new practice during a period of low marketness. Verganti (2009) discusses the extraordinary efforts Italian design firms go through to promote their design-driven innovations. Designers spend years conducting cultural research (archival and ethnographic) to understand where culture is going. Then, they expend considerable resources (time, money) to promote their new view, such as targeting opinion leaders and trend setters (Verganti, 2009). Furthermore, market players who delay entrance can benefit from learning; both learning from the failures of the market generator and from consumers learning how to use the product that might increase future acceptance. Overall, holistic research (Patton, 2002) strategies should be executed in order to develop a contextually rich understanding of where culture is going. This includes participant-based research, as gaining legitimacy within a consumption collective can be leveraged to encourage practice adoption and brand use (Canniford, 2011).

### **Discussion**

The resource-market perspective has three main features. First, while marketers desire to identify or generate the meanings and markets they would like to work within, it is only when the brand is resourced is the actual market constituted. Taking a brand-as-artifact approach or developing a brand image solely through surveys do not provide significant



insight into in-use meaning which stems from how a brand is actually integrated into practices.

Second, stories and narratives from all relevant stakeholders should be gathered to assess in-use meaning across all supply chain members (Storbacka & Nenonen, 2011a). Creating a clear picture of brand-in-practice meanings needs to include the views of all supply chain members, which the resource-market perspective lends itself to. Therefore, collecting and analyzing the stories from buyers, regulators, stockholders, employees, and other major brand network members will provide a more complete view of a brand's-in-practice meanings than just focusing on end-users, for instance.

Third, generating a new practice and market are difficult and other companies can start promoting marketing mixes under RI, RA, or RC orientations to position themselves within the emerging market. Accordingly, firms need a certain level of market power or clout to continue to influence market configurations, especially within low marketness contexts. The promotion of resourcing stories: expressed frameworks on how practice should enroll a particular brand can help with marketing scripting. A resourcing story has a different objective than developing a unified core brand value in stakeholders (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000; de Chernatony & Riley, 1998) through storytelling. Core brand values are static attributes incorporated into stakeholders' knowledge set, such as viewing the brand as trustworthy or innovative. I argue managers should strive to develop a shared narrative that includes what the brand does and how the brand should be resourced into practices. This would address how the brand fits into a larger assemblage of resources in a continuously transitioning social system and is not a value or singular attribute. Brands need to be seen as a resource that *does* something – not *is* something – in overlapping systems of practices and performances.

#### *Theoretical contributions*

Theoretically, the conclusion that a brand can serve as a core resource offers a novel explanation for increased brand loyalty. As repeated actions structuralize the environment (Giddens, 1984), brands that can integrate themselves into multiple practices should be better able to survive in competitive markets than brands that are not. Brand value increases as the in-practice knowledge becomes utilizable across multiple practices and routines (Boisot, 1998). This suggests that brands utilized across multiple practices will have higher repurchasing rates and levels of brand loyalty compared to brands that are not enrolled across multiple practices.

#### *Managerial recommendations*

The four market orientations of the resource-market perspective are particularly valuable for strategists and marketing managers. Brands that are repeatedly enrolled in practices and enjoy relatively high marketness need to be aware that the market is not stable. Therefore, by analyzing competing brands, firms can offer guidance on how to strategically (re)position a brand so that it continues to maintain a strong presence within a dense but always adjusting collection of individual practices. For example, new market entrants can analyze practice narratives to develop marketing mixes that avoid directly competing with market leaders. Accordingly, brand-as-artifact meanings tend to be more valuable to brands operating with RI and RA orientations while brands pursuing RC and RG strategies value brand-in-practice meanings. It is recommended that firms select positioning strategies based upon market research capabilities. Firms that are still



developing interpretive research competencies should consider RI and RA strategies. Conversely, firms with active ethnographic research departments could consider pursuing RC or RG strategies. Conducting field research has an additional benefit of providing firms with an opportunity to legitimately, but peripherally participate in relevant consumption collectives (Brown & Duguid, 2001; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Once community legitimacy is earned, the firm can exert influence in guiding shared interests and practices towards areas the firm can exploit to generate revenue or to shield the community from branded resources offered by competing firms.

The ability of a brand to serve as a resource across multiple practices is an important concept to internalize. Understanding that brands are resourced to support the enactment of multiple, overlapping practices can help managers implement changes that minimize impacts across practices thereby improving adoption rates (Feldman, 2004). This finding deserves further attention as Storbacka and Nenonen (2011a, 2011b) argue competitive advantages stem from non-redundant network relationships while the resource-market perspective suggests that redundant relationships among resources not only creates the market but also offers the opportunity to firmly and deeply embed offerings into a brand users' practices.

### Conclusion

The resource-market perspective builds upon Storbacka and Nenonen's (2011a, 2011b) view of markets as dynamic and evolving resource configuration systems to offer managers and researchers a framework to view brand meaning and to develop marketing mixes that explicitly embraces the prominent role of the usage context in market formation (Vargo & Lusch, 2011). It is argued that despite the socially constituted nature of markets, the structuralization provided by repeated, collective action leads to relative market stability. This stability allows marketers and entrepreneurs to identify markets. However, firms are able to configure new ways to view the market or to generate new markets through the promotion of new practices and routines.

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## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 5.1.1. Introduction

Extant research on consumers' retaliatory behavior has primarily focused on the consumer-brand relationship while ignoring the consumer-activity relationship. This research addresses this gap by investigating:

- 1) Does a positive relationship exist between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors considering consumers' existing brand relationship?
- 2) Is this relationship stronger following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption?

Chapter 2 presented the findings from an experimental study that found a positive relationship does exist between activity promotion tendencies and intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following a brand change. Further, the data analysis indicates that this relationship is stronger following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption. Chapter 3, then, theorized on the impact the consumer-activity relationship has on consumer behavior more generally while Chapter 4 developed four market orientations that focus on inserting offerings into consumers' consumption activities. The implications from each of these chapters are presented following a discussion on the overall thesis.

### 5.2.1. Thesis Discussion

This research proposed and found that a positive relationship exist between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors considering consumers' existing brand relationship and that this relationship is stronger following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption. This finding demonstrates that the prior research may have been over-estimating the importance of the consumer-brand relationship at the expense of the consumer-activity relationship. A review of the consumption literature reveals two components of identity construction: 1) possession of objects and 2) the use of objects. Over the last few years, possessions and brands have received a consider attention (Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998) especially in retaliatory research (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Grégoire, Tripp & Legoux, 2009; Lin & Sung, 2014). Accordingly, this thesis attempts to rectify this imbalance by empirically exploring consumer-activity and consumer-brand relationships together to better understand consumer retaliatory behavior; theorizing on the impact of the consumer-activity relationship has on consumer behavior;

## Conclusion

and, developing four market orientations that focus on inserting offerings into consumers' consumption activities.

The first article contained in this thesis demonstrates that consumers who frequently promote or disclose their relationship with a consumption activity to others are more likely to retaliate against the firm following brand changes. Additionally, the empirical work provided boundary conditions to the brand love becomes hate concept and solid empirical evidence that the relationships consumers form with their activities play an important role in consumer behavior.

The second article extends on these and prior findings by developing a theoretical model for understanding consumer-activity identification and its relationship to specific brand and activity related behaviors. In particular, the article conceptually develops consumer-activity identification from a social identity perspective. Consumer-activity identification (CAI) reflects the extent to which individuals consider a consumption activity to be central to their identity and sense-of-self. Extending on the findings from Chapter 2, the model developed in Chapter 3 considers activity promotion tendencies as a moderator between the antecedents and CAI. The likelihood of engaging in retaliatory behavior following a brand change is included as a brand related outcome to CAI.

The third article builds on the implications stemming from the findings in Chapter 2 by formulating four differing market orientations that embrace a firm's role in developing and supporting the consumer's relationship with their consumption activity. Consumption research has repeatedly shown that identity formation is not solely based upon possessions but also upon how and what activities those possessions are incorporated into (Holt, 1997). Thus, the findings from Chapter 2 provide additional evidence suggesting that not only should firms manage the consumer-brand relationship but they also should consider managing the consumer-activity relationship. Therefore, Chapter 4 formulates four market orientation strategies that embrace the notion that firms provide resources for consumers to enroll into their consumption activities in an effort to accommodate and support the consumer-activity relationship.

Collectively, the three articles empirically and theoretically demonstrate that consumers form relationships with consumption activities, often relying upon them to help construct dimensions of their identity. Moreover, the thesis argues that the consumer-activity relationship has important impacts on consumer behavior and it is prudent for brand managers to develop strategies that address the consumer-activity relationship when implementing brand changes and when designing a market strategy as impacting the consumption activity has a larger impact on consumer behavior than impacting the consumer-brand relationship.

### **5.3.1. Chapter 2 Implications**

There are two main implications from this article. One, it elevates the importance of brand use in understanding consumer behavior. Two, it suggests that consumers not only form relationships with activities but the consumer-activity relationship may better explain consumer behavior. In terms of the first implication, the article refines social identity theory to view the consumption activity as a potential target of identification. Individuals may identify with the symbolic meanings that surround the activity or they may identify with the process of engaging in the consumption activity. Thus, consumers may retaliate against brand changes not because of a perceived threat to the consumer-brand relationship rather the consumer-activity relationship may be threatened thereby provoking a consumer response.

The second implication is consumers form relationships with their consumption activities and these relationships appear to have significant impacts on consumer behavior. Prior research has predominantly focused on aspects of the consumer-brand relationship (Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005; Thomson, Whelan & Johnson, 2012). Finding that a positive relationship exists between retaliatory behaviors and activity promotion and, similarly, not finding a positive relationship between retaliatory behaviors and three different operationalizations of the consumer-brand relationship indicate that the consumer-brand relationship is being over-valued at the expense of a more predictive variable. Accordingly, a deeper theorization of the consumer-activity relationship is needed to fully understand the impact the consumer-activity relationship has on consumer behavior. Lastly, while additional research is needed, this article suggests that during times of change the consumer-activity relationship is just as important to manage as the consumer-brand relationship.

### **5.4.1. Chapter 3 Implications**

Consumer behavior research tends to place emphasis on consumers' recognition and search behaviors (Wells, 1993) and how consumers construct their identities through brand possession (Lam, et al., 2010). The development of testable propositions related to consumer-activity identification lays a foundation for shifting emphasis towards the role consumption plays in consumers' lives and identity construction. Thus, this article asserted that: what we do may well be more powerful in explaining consumer behavior than what we have.

The presented consumer-activity identification model offers a starting point for researchers and brand managers to begin exploring the impacts the consumer-activity relationship has on consumer behavior and on the brand's image. For example, Chapter 3 asserts that the brand's consumption

## Conclusion

activity has an indirect effect on the brand's image. Thus, brand managers may want to consider monitoring the image around the brand's main consumption activities in order to develop and implement more effective marketing messages.

Collectively, the antecedents, moderators and outcomes of CAI indicate that marketers may want to promote their brand as an activity facilitator rather than a potential relationship partner (Hawkins, 2014). Consumers use activities to construct their identity. They devote time, money and energy engaging in activities that use brands but they also develop knowledge on the consumption activity itself. The consumption activity may even provide opportunities for self-enhancement and to create a distinctive and positive identity in their social groups. Furthermore, consumers can become distressed if they can't engage in the activity. Accordingly, consumer-activity relationships should be considered when making brand decisions.

### 5.5.1. Chapter 4 Implications

Building on the Storbacka and Nenonen's (2011a, 2011b) view of markets as dynamic, evolving resource configuration systems, this article took a practice-based theory of resourcing perspective to formalize a resource-market orientation. This perspective argues firms provide resources for consumers to enroll into their socially situated practices; and, recognizes that a firm's market scripting activities can effect users' practices and routines. Under the resource-market perspective there are four main market orientation models: resource identifier, resource activator, resource configurer and resource generator. The main features of this perspective are: only when the brand is resourced is the actual market constituted; a brand is resourced across numerous practices of each user or network member; and, firms have the ability to create new practices and routines.

These market features indicate that the use of surveys are better suited for stable markets while qualitative research methods are better suited for emerging markets. Additionally, narratives should be collected from all brand users in order to develop a firm understanding of the brand's in-use meanings. This includes all relevant stakeholders who may not consume the brand in a traditional sense but may interact with it, such as retailers, suppliers and regulators. In order to encourage market stability the brand should promote resourcing stories: expressed frameworks on how practice should enroll a particular brand can help with marketing scripting. These would address how the brand fits into a larger assemblage of resources in a continuously transitioning social system. Brands need to be seen as a resource that *does* something—not *is* something—in overlapping systems of consumption activities.



Theoretically, the conclusion that a brand can serve as a core resource offers a novel explanation for increased brand loyalty. As repeated actions structuralize the environment (Giddens, 1984), brands that can integrate themselves into multiple practices should be better able to survive in competitive markets than brands that are not. And, brand value increases as the in-practice knowledge becomes utilizable across multiple practices and routines (Boisot, 1998). This suggests that brands utilized across multiple practices will have higher repurchasing rates and levels of brand loyalty compared to brands that are not enrolled across multiple practices.

The ability of a brand to serve as a resource across multiple practices is an important concept to internalize. Understanding that brands are resourced to support the enactment of multiple, overlapping practices can help managers implement changes that minimize impacts across practices thereby improving adoption rates (Feldman, 2004). This finding deserves further attention as Storbacka and Nenonen (2011a, 2011b) argue competitive advantages stem from non-redundant network relationships while the resource-market perspective suggests that redundant relationships among resources not only creates the market but also offers the opportunity to firmly and deeply embed offerings into a brand users' practices.

### **5.6.1. Avenues for Future Research**

This thesis presents a few avenues for future research. In particular, additional empirical work is needed to develop a full understanding of the types of relationships consumers form with their consumption activities. Additionally, Chapter 3 presents a series of propositions that deserve future consideration. The following details these potential avenues for future research.

#### ***5.6.2. Consumer-Activity Relationship Types***

Fournier's (1998) work on brand relationships could serve as a helpful template for developing a better understanding of the types of relationships consumers form with activities. Conducting a long interview (McCracken, 1988) with consumers that focus on the reasons for and consequences of engaging in an activity is recommended. The data collection method should also include tracing the consumer's historical involvement with the activity, touching upon low and high points, or periods of non-engagement and re-engagement. An in-depth, detailed analysis of consumers' relationships with their consumption activities could develop a typology which can then guide future empirical work on understanding the impact various types of consumer-activity relationships have on consumer behavior.

## Conclusion

This research defines a consumption activity as the conscious use of objects and human abilities to alter their environment (Nardi, 1995). This definition was appropriate for the empirical work presented in Chapter 2. This is because the research questions were not concerned with the impact a particular activity had on consumers' intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior thus what a participant considered an activity was not a focus of this study. However, future research may want to focus on activities at the aggregate level. For example, the motivations for engaging in similar activities may vary, such as meeting affiliation or autonomy needs (Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995). Thus, the conceptual boundaries of a consumption activity may need to be refined.

Chapter 4 argues marketers should develop marketing strategies and scripts that inform consumers how to use their brands in consumption activities. Informing consumers on how to use products is not a new marketing strategy; however, marketers may need to promote or advance the usage of supporting products in order to increase purchase rates of their products. Consumers use brands and products in conjunction with other brands, products and resources. Understanding the symbiotic relationship that exists between brands, products and resources used within a consumption activities can help firms craft marketing strategies that increase brand usage and facilitate consumer acceptance of brand initiated changes. Chapters 3 and 4 further argue that consumers use activities to construct their identity, thus marketers may want to promote their brand as an activity facilitator rather than a potential relationship partner.

### ***5.6.3. Consumer-Activity Identification Proposition Testing***

Chapter 2 demonstrated that the consumer-activity relationship, operationalized through activity promotion tendencies, has a positive relationship with intentions to engage in retaliatory behavior following brand changes. Chapter 3 then developed a theoretical model detailing the antecedents, moderators and outcomes of consumer-activity identification: the extent to which individuals consider a consumption activity to be central to their identity and sense-of-self. Accordingly, Chapter 3 offers a series of propositions ready for empirical testing.

Operationalizing the majority of antecedents and outcomes can rely on existing scales for guidance. However, a few variables included in the model will need additional research to help guide the development of measurement tools. For example, determining the level of social interaction with others who engage in the activity may not be as simple as quantifying the amount of time spent with others while talking about or engaging in the activity. Consumption activities vary in the amount of social interaction required to engage in the activity and the significances of the social interaction also varies. A few participants selected an artistic or creative activity as their favorite activity. These activities are often engaged in isolation but their outcome is publicly displayed, for instance.

Thus, the consumption activity itself could have little social interaction but the product of the activity may have high social interaction. Teasing out the nuances between consuming and producing can complicate the testing of a complex consumer-activity identification model.

### **5.7.1. Thesis Conclusion**

This thesis had two over-arching questions and both were affirmed. Specifically, a positive relationship between activity promotion tendencies and retaliatory behaviors considering consumers' existing brand relationship was revealed. Additionally, this relationship is stronger following a more severe disruption to a consumer's activity-derived identity than a minor disruption.

Two implications stemming from this study are consumers not only form relationships with brands but also with their consumption activities. The other implication is marketers may want to consider designing marketing strategies that strive to insert brands into consumers' consumption activities. Extending on the findings from Chapter 2, Chapter 3 addresses the former implication by theorizing on a specific type of relationship a consumer may form with their consumption activity. Specifically, it conceptually develops consumer-activity identification from a social identity perspective. Consumer-activity identification reflects the extent to which individuals consider a consumption activity to be central to their identity and sense-of-self. Chapter 4 addresses some of the practitioner implications stemming from the findings revealed in Chapter 2. In particular, marketing strategies are needed that place priority on facilitating consumers engagements in consumption activities; therefore, four differing market orientations based on the premise that firms provide resources for consumers to enroll into their activities were formalized.

While additional research is encouraged, the imbalance in extant literature, of focusing on brands over consumption activities, appears to have undervalued an important predictor of consumer behavior: the consumer-activity relationship. This research presents a modest correction to this imbalance by demonstrating a positive relationship exists between consumers' activity promotion tendencies and their retaliatory behavior intentions following a brand change. Collectively, the articles contained in this thesis warns brand managers to avoid over-valuing the consumer-brand relationship's impact on retaliatory behaviors, demonstrates the importance of valuing the relationship between the consumer and their consumption activities, and offers marketing strategies that may help brand managers support consumers in their quest to purposefully alter their environment.

## 5.8.1. References

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# Appendices

## **Appendix A: Activity Video and Diagram Assignment**

**Due Date:** September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Points:** 100 total

### **Project Overview**

This portion of the project has three parts. Each part will be explained below. All parts should be submitted prior to the beginning of class on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013. But, prior to starting the project you need to identify and select one of your favorite activities and one brand you use in that activity. You will then video record yourself engaging in this activity, from start to finish (part 1). A diagram will be developed that depicts the brands, products and actions taken in order to complete this activity (part 2). Besides the diagram, a short narrative will be developed that verbally expresses the steps and objectives in completing the activity and that addresses the use of a focal brand (part 3).

### **Activity Selection**

Please select your favorite activity that takes longer than 10 minutes to complete; however, it is expect that most activities will take longer than 10 minutes. The activity should be appropriate for classroom discussion. You are free to choose anything that you like doing and that has a beginning and end.

If you can't think of a favorite activity, pick an activity that you will do soon and should be fun. Maybe this is going to an event, cooking, doing some sort of hobby or physical activity, maybe it is cleaning, painting or something you do to relax. Maybe you like games, play an instrument or sing, put on make-up or work-out. You can record yourself doing any of these, among others, on your smartphone or with a hand-held camera. Be creative.

### **Focal Brand Selection**

Select one brand within your activity that you know the most about. You will need to mention this brand in your narrative and record your brand usage. The brand can be used once, a few times, a lot, or continuously in the activity. However, you should have opinions about and knowledge on the brand.

### **Video Recording the Activity**

Points: 25

Once you have selected your favorite activity and identified your focal brand, you need to record yourself engaging in this activity from start to finish. You may use any method you like to record the activity. You can self record or you can have a friend or classmate film you. You can use smartphones, camcorders, laptops and webcams are all appropriate. However, you will need to be able to submit the video file to me. You may be as creative as you wish.

However, you need to do a few things:

- Start the recording at or just prior to starting.
- Record you engaging in the entire activity.\*
- Recording the completion of the activity.

\*For activities longer than 25 minutes, you can record the start, key steps or sequences within the activity, and the ending of the activity. Additionally, record every time you use the focal brand. However, the video should be longer than 10 minutes. But, I strongly urge you record the whole activity as this would be easier than turning on/off and planning. Try to be as natural as possible.

Please, you do not have to edit the video. If you would like to edit the video for any reason please write down that you edited the video on the Activity Narrative submission. Points will not be subtracted/added for editing.

The video submission will primarily be graded on meeting assignment criteria: being long enough, capturing brand usage, capturing beginning and end. The quality will not be heavily graded, I am more interested in you capturing the event than making sure camera angles are perfect. Therefore, I expect the video to be choppy and not super professional.

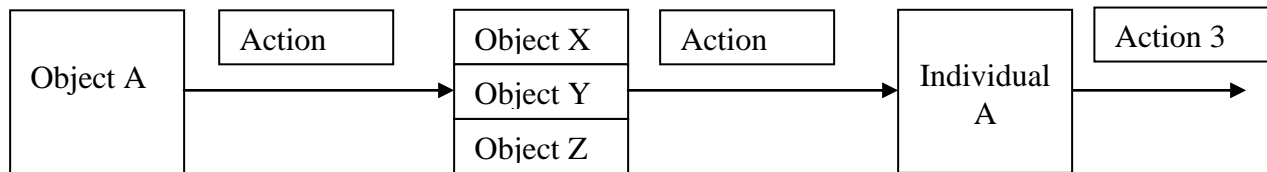
**Activity Diagram**

Points: 25

Next, watch your video and make a flow-chart diagram that identifies each action taken and the branded and non-branded objects used in the activity. At least every time you touch a different (non-)branded object and make an action, that should be recorded in the flow chart.

Typically, boxes/triangles/circles are used to represent objects. The arrow-line connecting boxes represent actions taken. A template is provided to help guide your thinking. You might want to vary box type, for example using boxes for branded objects, triangle for non-branded objects and circles for services. Or, maybe varying boxes by product, service or idea might make more sense. However, please include a key if you make up codes.

If you need help generating ideas, consider using your focal brand as a middle point and diagram all the steps taken till you first use it and then all the steps after using it. It is entirely expected that some steps will be repeated or the same objects are used but for a different reason. Additionally, there could be certain action(s) or object(s) that may be mentioned multiple times.



It would be hard to imagine that any activity longer than 10 minutes wouldn't include at least 15 steps. Additionally, include at least three steps after the last use of your focal brand in the diagram.

**Activity Narrative**

Points: 50

Write a short narrative that discusses what steps you took and why. A narrative is coherent explanation or summary of an event. Therefore, you need to explain why you took certain actions and used certain objects. You must at least mention how and why you used your focal brand in the narrative but the brand could play a larger role. The narrative should be between 2-5 paragraphs.

Your video or activity diagram can serve as guides if you need it.

### **Informed Consent**

This assignment is part of a research project. If you don't wish to participate in this assignment-study there is an alternative option. The alternative assignment is listed on the syllabus and was discussed on the first day of class. Specifically, in-lieu of completing the video and narrative projects, you may write a paper that compares the marketing strategy of two different firms. The paper is expected to be between 20-25 double spaced pages in 12 point, Times New Roman font with 1" margins. The two firms should be considered competitors in a particular market segment. Proper citations and high quality work is expected. The paper is due at the same time as the Narrative Project #2. You must tell me if you choose this option before the Video Project is due. The paper will be worth a total of 200 points, the same amount as the Video Project and the Narrative Projects 1 & 2 combined.

Your participation in the study, through doing the video project, is voluntary. Choosing to do the marketing strategy paper will not adversely affect your relationship with the University or with your professor. Additionally, the project has been approved by the University of Arkansas's Institutional Review Board (IRB) which is responsible for ensuring research projects use safe and ethical practices when engaging with human subjects in research. The IRB file number is: 13-08-061.

To assist your decision making, below is a brief list that describes the procedures of the study. These procedures align with the Video Project and Narrative Projects listed on your syllabus. The procedures are listed in the order in which they will be assigned and collected.

- Make a video: Record a video of yourself engaging in your favorite activity.
- Write narrative: Write a narrative explaining why you engaged in the activity and used the objects you did.
- Create diagram: Create a flow-chart type diagram that depicts the actions taken and objects used when doing the activity.

After submitting the video, narrative and diagram:

- Two surveys: You will complete two (2) online surveys.

Approximately 2 weeks later, you will be presented with one of two scenarios.

- Scenario 1: You will complete another survey and re-write your narrative based on the situation presented in the scenario.

Approximately 1 week later, you will be presented with the other scenario.

- Scenario 2: You will complete another survey and re-write your narrative based on the situation presented in the scenario.

The research study ends once the Narrative #2 is submitted.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Matthew A. Hawkins at (479) 575-2686 or by e-mail at matthewh@uark.edu. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the University's IRB Coordinator, at (479) 575-2208 or by e-mail at irb@uark.edu.

## Appendix B: Brand Logo Change Scenario

### Narrative #1 Instructions

Due: Nov 4<sup>th</sup>, before class.

### Scenario:

You are surfing the web and one of your friends posts that your focal brand has changed their logo. They included a link to the brand's webpage so you decide to see what this new logo looks like. The logo doesn't appear to be very different. The webpage says that the logo has been "updated" to look more "modern". However they did change the color of the logo and claim the color change helps to unify their portfolio and overall image.

### Narrative Re-Visited:

Points: 34

Using the narrative from the Video Project as a guide, envision how you would engage in the activity you described if the brand changed its logo. How would this activity change and why?

Basically, re-write your Video Project activity narrative as if the brand logo changed.

If you replace the brand, indicate why you picked that one. For some of you the narrative might be quite similar to the original. For some, multiple steps might be different to continue the activity. Therefore, if you would replace the product/service with a new one, indicate which one and why?

For others, you might stop doing the activity completely.

Indicate why would you stop doing the activity?

What activity would you replace it with and why?

### 4 P's and the Focal Brand

Points: 16 (4 points each)

Write how each of the 4 P's impacted your decision to use your focal brand (not replacement brand) in the first place. It is expected that each answer will be between 1-3 sentences.

## Appendix C: Branded Product Withdrawal Scenario

### Narrative #1 Instructions

Due: Nov 4<sup>th</sup>, before class.

#### Scenario:

You are getting ready to engage in your favorite activity described in the Video Project. However, you notice that you don't have the focal brand. If the brand was a product, imagine you have lost it and it appears that it is not offered anywhere. If the brand was a service or store, you realize that it has closed.

Worse, it appears that the manufacturer has actually stopped providing this branded product or service. You then remember hearing over the radio that your focal brand was having financial difficulty and was considering halting production of a few product lines or closing stores. As you start to make sense of the situation, you fully realize that the focal brand is no longer available for you to use in your favorite activity described in the Video Project.

#### Narrative Re-Visited:

Points: 34

Using the narrative from the Video Project as a guide, envision how you would engage in the activity you described without the brand. How would this activity change and why?

Basically, re-write your Video Project activity narrative as if you didn't have the branded product/service.

When you get to the replacement brand, indicate why you picked that one. For some of you the narrative might be quite similar to the original. For some, multiple steps might be different to continue the activity. Therefore, if you would replace the product/service with a new one, indicate which one and why?

For others, you might stop doing the activity completely.

Indicate why would you stop doing the activity?

What activity would you replace it with and why?

#### 4 P's and the Focal Brand

Points: 16 (4 points each)

Write how each of the 4 P's impacted your decision to use your focal brand (not replacement brand) in the first place. It is expected that each answer will be between 1-3 sentences.