

# Inductive and Deductive Models of Customer-Based Brand and Organizational Identification

Jeremy S. Wolter

**Abstract** Though not explicitly specified, a large body of research across marketing, psychology, and social psychology suggests there are two frameworks by which to understand customer identification with organizations and brands. The first is considered a deductive model of identification (DMI) in which a strong and appealing identity is created and communicated to a targeted group of customers. The second is an inductive model of identification (IMI) in which customers are allowed to imbue the organization or brand identity with meaning. Though these two models are not mutually exclusive, each draws on different theories. As a result, their prescriptions for practice can contradict each other. To clarify these differences, the current research details the separate research streams of the IMI and DMI and their key differences. Then, a study is detailed that tests and provides support for a key aspect of the IMI. The results of the experiment suggests greater self-brand congruity can be engendered with a brand that is less clearly defined (i.e. has low brand image clarity). Overall, the current research evidences that marketing practitioners may need to consider another strategy of engendering identification. Inherent in this strategy is that a brand's identity can be intentionally vague and that self-categorization is not a state, but a series of events in which customers are prompted to consider the brand in relation to their self.

**Keywords** Deductive Model of Identification • Inductive Model of Identification • Self-Brand Congruity • Brand Identity

## References

References Available Upon Request

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J.S. Wolter (✉)  
Auburn University, Auburn, AL, USA  
e-mail: [jswolter@auburn.edu](mailto:jswolter@auburn.edu)