"HELLO MY NAME IS …"

MARKETPLACE (MIS)IDENTIFICATION AND CONSUMPTION RESPONSE

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Starbucks is known for writing their consumers' names on their coffee cups. However, it is highly probable that in one day, more than a handful of consumers will experience having their name incorrectly written on their cup. Aside from coffee, consumers may receive catalogs, takeout orders, or products that have their name directly printed on the item. How does identifying a consumer (incorrectly, correctly, or not at all) impact consumption? In this paper, I introduce "marketplace misidentification," which I argue, is a type of personal identity threat that is experienced when consumers are called by someone else's given name (Brewer 1991; Hitlin 2003; Stets and Burke 2000; Tajfel and Turner 1986 for discussions regarding personal identity).

In five studies, the effects of marketplace (mis)identification on consumption response are explored. Study 1a, shows that consumers who are identified (i.e., partially identified or identified) consume more (versus those that are unidentified). Study 1b shows that consumers, when identified, consume more, but when misidentified, consume less, and that the latter is mediated by feelings of disrespect. Study 2 shows that misidentified (versus unidentified) consumers engage in compensatory consumption. Study 3 shows that the negative effects of misidentification are strongest for those with lower levels of implicit self-esteem (Greenwald and Banaji 1995). Finally, study 4 shows

that self-affirmation (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Steele 1988) mitigates the negative

effects of misidentification on consumption.

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"You are confined only by the walls you build yourself." ~ Andrew Murphy

At this time, I am still unsure what really sparked my passion for academic research, as the feeling is really indescribable. While, my hunger for creating knowledge was sparked early on, several important people in my life helped get to me to where I am today, and for that I am forever grateful.

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1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Imagine that it is your birthday and you visit a restaurant to enjoy a special dinner. When you arrive to the restaurant, you sit down and notice that the menu reads, "Happy Birthday Pat." While the gesture was well-intended, when you take a closer look, you observe that the restaurant wrote the wrong name on your menu (unless your name is actually Pat, then this example becomes moot). Would this simple error impact how much you order from the restaurant menu? I believe the answer is yes. However, the outcome may be dependent upon the consumer's level of self-esteem (Greenwald and Banaji 1995).

In Western culture, people are defined by and labeled with a name. Names are used in everyday interactions and are strongly connected to peoples' identities (Dion 1983; Kettle and Häubl 2011; Pelham, Mirenberg, and Jones 2002). People like their names so much that they often move to cities, marry others, or choose careers with labels that are similar to their own (Pelham et al. 2002). In the consumer literature, research suggests people, after displaying a specific need for an item, prefer products that start with the same letter as their own first name (Brendl et al. 2005). For example, if a consumer named Pete was thirsty, he may be more likely to choose Pepsi over Coca-Cola, as the brand name starts with the same letter as Pete.

In the marketplace names are often used as a way to identify consumers. For example, in America, Starbucks baristas write the names of their consumers on their cup, as a way to identify their consumers and their consumers' order (Paterson 2012). How does the consumer perceive this endeavor and moreover, how does it impact consumption?

In a BBC News article, Barford (2012) assessed how consumers feel when their name is written on their beverage at Starbucks. Barford (2012) raises two noteworthy questions. First, how do people feel when their name is inscribed on their cup? Second, what happens when their name is transcribed erroneously? While the article never comes to any conclusions, as the inquiry is not empirically tested, the author offers one possibility: consumers find it humorous when their name is incorrectly written on their cup. While Barford suggests that laughter may result from calling a consumer by the wrong name, for this paper I would like to extend and empirically test the latter of the two questions proposed by Barford: are consumers negatively or positively affected when their identity is misrepresented or correctly represented (Howard, Gengler, and Jain 1995; Koole, Dijksterhuis, and van Knippenberg 2001; Koole and Pelham 2003)?

To answer this question regarding (mis)identification, I first review the literature on the self-concept or identity, personal identity (Brewer 1991; Hitlin 2003; Hornsey 2008; Stets and Burke 2000; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner 1985), names (Dion 1983), identity goals, and self-regulation behavior (Brooks, Gino, and Schweitzer 2016; Gao, Wheeler, and Shiv 2011; Nussbaum and Dweck 2008; Park 2010; Tesser et al. 2000; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). Finally, the self-esteem (Greenwald and Banaji 1995) and the self-affirmation literatures are examined (Steele 1988).

After reviewing the literatures, I empirically test the following research questions in a series of five studies: if a consumer is (mis)identified will they display defensive consumption behavior? If yes, do consumers defend the self through approach or compensatory consumption, avoidance or product rejection (Nussbaum and Dweck 2008; Park 2010; Rucker and Galinsky 2012; Sherman and Cohen 2002; Tesser et al. 2000), or

both types of behavior?

It is essential to note that one's name is a direct symbol of one's self and identity (Dion 1983). Thus, I define identity (or the self-concept) as the aspect of the person that contains meaning or information regarding who the person is, both publicly and privately (Baumeister 1991, 93; Howard 2000; Oyserman 2001; Sirgy 1982). Seeing one's self as meaningful may not only impact on one's behavior (Baumeister 1991; Koole et al. 2001) but also, in some situations, may make protecting one's personal identity vital.

When a consumer's name is addressed in the marketplace, it may take on many forms. For this paper, I introduce a marketplace identity taxonomy that represents ways in which one's identity may appear: identified, partially identified, misidentified, and unidentified. "Identified" occurs when a consumer's name has been spelled correctly (Schelling 1968; Small and Loewenstein 2003, 2005). The second concept, "partially identified," describes the situation when a person's name is partially correct (i.e., looks similar), but is misspelled (e.g., Tracy is represented as Traci). The third construct, "misidentified," signifies when a consumer's name is misrepresented (e.g., Tracy becomes Stacey). Finally, "unidentified" (Schelling 1968; Small and Loewenstein 2003, 2005) is used to represent when a consumer's name is not identified at all. Table 1 provides readers with an overview of each term and its definition. Pertinent research from psychology and marketing is reviewed next.

1.1.   THE SELF-CONCEPT AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

The notion of "the ego" or "the self" was primarily explored in the work of

William James (1890). In his book, James (1890) examines the notion of the self and its many parts. Two of these parts include the social and the personal identity (Brewer 1991; Hitlin 2003; James 1890; Tajfel and Turner 1986). The social identity is the part of the self that relates to others (Brewer 1991; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell 1987). The social dimension of one's identity includes an individual's in-group associations or connections such as what university one attends or what dance team an individual is a part of (Brewer 1991; Tajfel and Turner 1986; White, Argo, and Sengupta 2012). For this paper, I focus on the domain of self-identity that has been less popular in the literature (Hitlin 2003), the personal identity (Brewer 1991; Gao et al. 2009; Hitlin 2003; Hornsey 2008; Tajfel and Turner 1986).

The personal identity is the part of the self that stands apart from others (Brewer 1991; Dion 1982; Hitlin 2003; Hornsey 2008; Stets and Burke 2000). For this paper, I have adopted the definition of personal identity used by Hewitt (1989, 179, as also cited in Hitlin 2003, 121), which suggests this dimension of the self contains "a sense of continuity, integration, identification, and differentiation constructed by the person not in relation to a community and its culture but in relation to the self ...". The personal identity focuses on the self's true knowledge of its being (James 1890), which may include, but is not limited to, self-views (Brewer 1991; Gao et al. 2009; James 1890), values (Hitlin 2003), and one's own name (Dion 1983). The focus of this paper is on the latter, as "it is difficult to think of a social symbol that is more closely associated with a person's identity than his or her name" (Koole and Pelham 2003, 99).

1.1.1. Names

Names strongly represent our overall self-identity (Dion 1983). As pointed out by Allport (1955, 44), both apparel and names aid in the start of self-identity development. Names are powerful self-symbols since they communicate a lot about an individual including their history and their level of self-esteem (Gebauer et al. 2008; Gebauer, Leary, and Neberich 2012; Seeman 1983).

In the consumer literature, names have been explored under several accounts (Kettle and Häubl 2011; Howard et al. 1995). Kettle and Häubl (2011) show that the act of signing one's name can elicit one's social identity in certain consumer contexts. For example, if one identifies with being an athlete and signs his or her name while in a sporting goods shoe store, his or her athletic identity will be primed (Kettle and Häubl 2011). Kettle and Häubl (2011) found that when a consumer signed (versus printed) his or her name prior to visiting a running shoe store, the consumer tried on more shoes (study 2). This research shows that our names are powerful representations of our personal selves (Dion 1983). Additional research has explored how individuals respond after being correctly remembered or outright forgotten by a professor (Howard et al. 1995, 201). When a professor successfully recalled a student's name (vs. forgot their name or their name was not addressed), they were more likely to comply when asked to buy a .25¢ cookie for a fundraiser (study 1; Howard et al. 1995).

Our identities are highly accessible and thus, the selections consumers make around their identities are often relatively constant (Higgins, King, and Mavin 1982; Markus and Kunda 1986). In line with this notion, the implicit egoism literature, (Greenwald and Banaji 1995; Pelham, Carvallo, and Jones 2005) shows people favor other individuals, places, and products that have names that resemble their own (Brendl

et al. 2005; Pelham et al. 2002). In ten studies, Pelham et al. (2002; Pelham et al. 2005) found people were overtly positive towards items that had names parallel to their own and the effect is greater for those who have rare names (Koole et al. 2001; Koole and Pelham 2003). For example, the authors show that people were more likely to reside in locations that had the same first letter as their own name or in places that have names similar to the name of their birth month. People were also more likely to select careers that started with the first letters of their own names (e.g., Tracy may live in Tennessee and work as a teacher; Pelham et al. 2002).

Names do not always lead to positive ends – data from an online dating website shows that when people have unfavorable first names (i.e., names that are rated as unattractive by other people), they are more likely to have lower self-esteem and are often neglected by others (Gebauer et al. 2012; consistent with Gerbauer et al. 2008). While the literature on implicit egoism has explored the likelihood of people consuming products, liking individuals, or moving to places that have names similar to their own (Brendl et al. 2005; Pelham et al. 2002), no work to my knowledge has explored how addressing someone by the wrong name may impose a threat, or how addressing someone by the correct name may boost one's ego (Steele 1988).

1.2. IDENTITY GOALS: EGO THREATS AND EGO BOOSTS

A psychological threat can be extremely uncomfortable for one's ego (Aronson 1969; Dommer and Swaminathan 2013; Gao et al. 2009; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). When it comes to the self-concept, people have two overall goals: to act steadily or

consistently and to increase self-worth (Aronson 1969; Epstein 1980; Sirgy 1982, 287; Steele 1988). If either goal is challenged people engage in a variety of behaviors as a way to avoid or mitigate negative feelings (Sherman and Cohen 2002, 2006; Steele 1988). There are many types of self-threats, and thus they have been operationalized in the literature uniquely: private, public, self-esteem, self-worth, control, belongingness, or meaningful existence (Leary et al. 2009; Lee and Schrum 2012; vanDellen et al. 2011; Williams 2001).

1.2.1. Ego Threats

People may experience threats for a variety of reasons, for example, one might be threatened when they receive poor or undesirable performance feedback (Campbell and Sedikides 1999), when the brand they care about a lot has been disrespected (Lisjak, Lee, and Gardner 2012), or when they feel the amount of power they have has been diminished (Rucker and Galinsky 2008). Further, people may experience threat when they encounter conflicting information about the self (Ward and Broniarczyk 2011) or when they are in social situations that challenge their self-view or identity (Gao et al. 2009; White et al. 2012; White and Argo 2009). For example, White et al. (2012) and White and Argo (2009) explored how consumers responded to public threat towards one's social identity (Hornsey 2008; Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986). The authors found that when the self is feeling threatened due to group rejection, consumers, specifically those that are interdependent, consume in agreement with their group image or social identity (White et al. 2012). However, those who possess a more independent self,

purchased products that were dissociated with their rejected social identity (White et al. 2012). These consumers abandoned their scrutinized identity and enhanced their ego by using an alternative identity source (Cohen and Sherman 2014; White et al. 2012).

Personal identity threats occur when an aspect of one's personal self are questioned or inconsistent (Gao et al. 2009; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). For example, research shows that when consumers are purchasing a gift for a close friend, the buyer may feel threatened if the product is not affiliated with their own identity (Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). Purchasing a second, more self-representative item, may help reduce feelings of discrepancy (Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). Comparably, if an individual feels uncertain about his or her own self-view, they are more likely to consume as a way to verify their own self-image (Gao et al. 2009). For example, Gao et al. (2009) show that when a consumer's healthy image was put into question, participants were more likely to choose products that confirmed their healthy self-worth. These two examples stem from the threat literature, which suggests that when one's ego is vulnerable, people engage in behaviors that will ultimately decrease uneasy and unwanted feelings of an incompetent self (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Sherman and Cohen 2006; Steele 1988). While challenges to one's self-view may provoke threat (Gao et al. 2009; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011), confirmations of one's identity may boost one's ego.

1.2.2. Ego Boosts

Dissimilar from ego threats, ego boosts often result in feeling confident. For example, people tend to feel positive when they have been complimented or flattered

(Chan and Sengupta 2010), seek advice (Brooks et al. 2016), or have been praised (Fast and Chen 2009). Self-verification and self-consistency research also suggest that when people obtain information that sanctions their own beliefs or world view, they experience an ego boost (Aronson 1969; Festinger 1957; Swann 1983, 1987; Swann, Pelham, and Krull 1989). In line with these notions, narcissistic people are more likely to have fragile, yet naturally inflated egos (Bushman and Baumeister 1998). For this paper, ego boosts refer to when a consumer's personal identity (i.e., name) has been communicated accurately. To my knowledge, little work in marketing has explored the notion of personal identity ego boosts (for a similar yet unique conversation see Howard et al. 1995). When identified, a consumer may not only feel flattered (Howard et al. 1995), but confident and valued. Therefore, these individuals may be more likely to display approach behaviors towards products that contain their correct name or that confirm their personal identity. This behavior may be the direct result of an ego boost.

1.2.3. The Interplay of Names, Ego Threats, and Ego Boosts

From the name literature, it is understood that people not only derive a strong sense of who they are, but also tend to have a vigorous relation with their own name (Koole et al. 2001; Koole and Pelham 2003). Work by Kelly (1955) suggests that when a word, label, or a construct is distrusted, a person may experience threat (McGregor and Marigold 2003, 838). Thus, if a large part of our own ego is entrenched in our name one may experience threat when misidentified (Aronson 1969; Festinger 1957; Koole et al. 2001; Koole and Pelham 2003). I introduce "marketplace misidentification*"* and define it

as a self-threat since the name is, overall, a representation of the self (Koole et al. 2001; Koole and Pelham 2003; Turner 1985); it occurs when one's name is put into "question" or is "challenged" (adapted from Baumesiter, Smart, and Boden 1996, 8). Further, "marketplace identification" or "partial identification" is when a consumer is addressed correctly or with a slight error.

Based on the literature, I predict that there are various levels of ego threats and ego boosts. The consumer identification taxonomy that was introduced earlier will be investigated in order to differentiate them. I propose that the ego threat will be stronger for some forms of consumer identification: misidentified (highest threat) > unidentified (baseline) > partially identified (low threat) > identified (no threat). Likewise, an ego boost will be stronger for some forms of consumer identification: misidentified (no ego boost) < unidentified (baseline) < partially identified (moderate ego boost) < identified (highest ego boost).

1.3. SELF-REGULATION AND CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION

An authentic self is extremely important (Allport 1955). At times people may experience challenges directed towards the self (Sherman and Cohen 2006 for overview). Sherman and Cohen (2006, p. 186), in their in-depth review of self-affirmation theory, point out three unique ways in which people deal with threats to the self: shift one's conduct or outlook, adapt through psychological means, or engage in reminders that reconfirm the self (Sherman and Cohen 2002). For this paper, the latter two will be

explored and described as defensive responses, specifically, as approach and avoidance behaviors, respectively.

1.3.1. Defensive Responses

When threatened, people may engage in behaviors that help protect the self (Lisjak et al. 2012; Nussbaum and Dweck 2008; Tesser et al. 2000). Tesser et al. (2000) describe multiple techniques that people use to guard the self, two of which include rejection and enhancement (Lisjak et al. 2012; Sherman and Cohen 2002; Steele 1988; Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1982). When people receive information, they tend to approach the positive and disregard the undesirable (Swann et al. 1990).

This paper explores two defense mechanisms that people use to protect the self from threat: compensatory consumption, which allows consumers to reconfirm or validate the self, (Rucker and Galinsky 2008, 2012; Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1982) and rejection or avoidant consumption (Park 2010; Sherman and Cohen 2002; Swann et al. 1990). As stated perfectly by Nussbaum and Dweck (2008), "each of these processes is defensive because it restores lost self-esteem without addressing the underlying cause of the negative" threat (599), and thus, people use psychological adjustments to deal with threats (Rothbaum, Weisz, and Snyder 1982).

Consumers may engage in symbolic completion, such as wearing workout clothes after eating an entire box of donuts, when a part of the self has been questioned (Gao et al. 2009; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011), or more avoidant behaviors, such as denying health information, when feeling vulnerable (Reed and Aspinwall 1998). Research shows

that consumers may display approach or avoidant behaviors when exposed to negative stimuli, even at a non-conscious level. For example, when consumers were unconsciously primed with happy (vs. angry) faces, they consumed more Kool-Aid and indicated they would pay more for the fruity beverage (Winkielman, Berridge, and Wilbarger 2005). Results from this study suggest that, even at an unconscious level, our environment may impact our consumption response or in this case, approach and/or avoidant behavior (Winkielman et al. 2005).

For this paper, defensive responses will be referred to as avoidant and approach behaviors. Approach behaviors here will be compensatory consumption, while avoidant behavior will occur when the consumer distances the self from the threatening item or product (Park 2010; Rucker and Galinsky 2008, 2012; Sherman and Cohen 2002; Swann et al. 1990; Tesser et al. 2000; Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1982). Consumers, as a result of how they are identified, may engage in defensive consumption (avoidant and/or approach behaviors) to diminish distress. As mentioned earlier, names are becoming more and more prevalent in the marketplace. Thus, in line with past research, I predict that how consumers are addressed or identified may impact the way they behave. I build on the name and identity literatures to better understand consumer responses as a result of how they are addressed in the marketplace.

1.3.2. Consumer Identification and Avoidant Response

Early research explored how people behave when their own identity is made inconspicuous (Diener 1979). Diener (1979) found that when people were unidentifiable

and in a group (i.e., deindividuation) they were more likely to conform compared to those whose identity was made salient via a nametag. This work (Diener 1979) complements and extends Zimbardo's (Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo 1972; Zimbardo 1970) prison studies that suggest a shift in behavior occurs when one loses self-awareness.

Not only do names impact our own actions, but the presence or absence of other people's names also impact our judgments and behaviors (Schelling 1968; Small and Loewenstein 2005, 2003). For example, when an individual engages in bad behavior and is identifiable, observers tend to have stronger negative reactions (Small and Loewenstein 2005), as people are less inclined to blame a wrongdoer when indistinguishable (Gino, Shu, and Bazerman 2010). Observers also have stronger positive reactions to people that are made identifiable (Small and Loewenstien 2005). For example, consumers are more likely to donate money to a single, identifiable identity in need than to a group of individuals in need that are statistically unidentifiable (Small and Loewenstein 2003). Since consumers are typically nameless in the marketplace, thus in this dissertation the unidentified condition will act as the control or baseline.

In the literature, the term identifiable is operationalized by the presence or absence of an individual's name (Gino et al. 2010; Schelling 1968; Small and Loewenstein 2003, 2005) and thus suggests that for observers and actors, names matter (Diener 1979; Small and Loewenstein 2003, 2005). However, no work to my knowledge has explored to what extent this is true. As Gino et al. (2010) and Small and Loewenstein (2003, 2005) point out, whether a person is nameless or not will have a strong impact on others' perceptions of them. Building from these theories, I predict that when identified (Gino et al. 2010; Schelling 1968; Small and Lowenstein 2003, 2005; Steele 1988),

consumers may feel no threat compared to when unidentified. In fact, since they are

remembered, these individuals will experience an ego boost (Brooks et al. 2016; Fast and

Chen 2009). Therefore, consumers that have been identified or partially identified will

not need to engage in defensive consumption behaviors. Since identified consumers will

not feel that their ego has been threated, but rather boosted, I hypothesize,

   H1a: Identified (versus unidentified) consumers will consume more (less).

  While being identified and unidentified are in the psychology and marketing

literatures, little work has explored how consumers respond when their name has been

misspelled (i.e., partially identified). According to the "name letter effect" (Nuttin 1985),

people are often drawn to letters that appear in their own name (Brendl et al. 2005;

Pelham et al. 2002; Jones et al. 2002). Yet, how do consumers respond when their name

appears, yet is displayed incorrectly? When consumers are exposed to their misspelled

name (partially identified) these individuals may experience little threat. Yet, these

consumers may also experience a partial boost, as the principal letters in their name may

still be evident (Nuttin 1985). Thus, I predict,

   H1b: Partially identified (versus unidentified) consumers will consume

    more (less).

  Partially identifying a consumer may result in a different outcome than calling a

consumer by someone else's name (i.e., misidentification). Baumeister, Sharpio, and Tice

(1985) explored unique types of identity threats that occur from either not having clear

self-defining intentions or having so many objectives that an individual's identities start

to contradict one another. However, these threats occur when a person is having trouble

defining the self through social roles, rather than being mistaken for another person

(Baumeister et al. 1985). From the psychology literature, we know that people experience cognitive dissonance when there is a misalignment between how one sees the self and how others see the self (Higgins 1987). Thus*,* building on the literature (Baumeister et al. 1985; Diener 1979; Howard et al. 1995) I predict that when misidentified, consumers will experience an increased psychological threat, which will be absent of an ego boost. Thus,

> **H1c:** Misidentified (versus unidentified) consumers will consume
>
> less (more).

Next, I discuss the disrespect literature, as I predict that when consumers are misidentified they will feel disrespected by the marketer, which in turn will mediate the effect between identification and consumption response.

1.3.2.1. Feelings of Disrespect. Research shows that feelings of disrespect may impact both behavioral and emotional responses. People feel disrespected when they believe their social needs (e.g., need to belong) or their status (De Cremer and Tyler 2005) have been challenged. Depending on which part of the self has been disrespected anger or sadness may be a consequence (Blincoe and Harris 2011). When someone feels that their need to belong has been disrespected, sadness is the consequence, whereas when one's status has been challenged, anger results (Blincoe and Harris 2011). Feelings of disrespect may also impact nonconformity. When people feel that they were treated as an equal (i.e., respected) they were more likely to collaborate with a group of others compared to those that did not feel they were treated equally (i.e., disrespected; Renger and Simon 2011).

De Cremer and Tyler (2005, 150) emphasize that respect is important, as it is a signal that someone is in a place where they belong. This paper aims to extend the

literature by understanding how calling someone by the wrong name can increase

feelings of being overlooked or undervalued in the marketplace, which in turn will result

in feelings of disrespect. Thus, I define personal identity disrespect as when one's name

has been devalued, unwelcomed, or deemed unimportant and predict that personal

identity disrespect will drive the effect between how a consumer is identified (i.e.,

misidentified vs. unidentified) and their consumption response. Thus, I hypothesize,

> **H2:** Disrespect will mediate the effect of misidentification (vs. unidentification)
>
> on defensive consumption.

While I predict that consumers will engage in avoidant behaviors, I also expect that

consumers will engage in compensatory approach behaviors.

1.3.3. Consumer Identification and Approach Response

While some consumers may avoid products that misidentify their name, literature

on symbolic self-completion suggests that people, when given the opportunity, may also

approach or display products that reconfirm one's threatened identity (Rucker and

Galinsky 2012; Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1981, 1982). For example, if a football player

misses a pass during an important football game, he/she may wear his jersey out to dinner

after the tournament to communicate his/her role to others (Wicklund and Gollwitzer

1981, 1982). Similarly, people may engage in approach behaviors when asked to write

about aspects of the self that they dislike, but are unable to alter (Jones et al. 2002). Jones

et al. (2002) found that when asked to write about something participants like (dislike)

about the self, some individuals were more likely to find their birthdates and letters in their name as more (less) attractive.

In the consumer literature, the idea of enhancing one's threatened self through product consumption is often referred to as compensatory consumption (Gao et al. 2009; Rucker and Galinsky 2008, 2012; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). While Wicklund and Gollwitzer (1981, 1982) have explored many aspects of completing the self through various symbols, no one to my knowledge has explored how consumers respond when their name, a symbol of the self and of one's identity, has been threatened. While self-adequacy can occur in unique ways, a majority of the consumption literature suggests that enhancing the self can be done through product choice (Gao et al. 2009; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). For this paper, I predict that consumers will display greater preferences for products that reconfirm their personal identity after their identity has been questioned (i.e., misidentified). Thus,

H3: Misidentified (versus unidentified) consumers will display a greater

(lesser) preference for products with their names on them (i.e., approach

behavior or compensatory consumption).

While I believe that how one is addressed may impact consumption response, I predict that when a threat occurs in the marketplace, in this case, misidentification, one's level of self-esteem (Greenwald and Banaji 1995; Park 2010) may impact how one copes after being misidentified.

1.4. IMPLICIT SELF-ESTEEM AND DEFENSIVE CONSUMPTION

The way consumers respond to threat and ultimately protect the self may depend on individual differences such as self-esteem (Park 2010). Names and self-esteem are intersected (Gebauer et al. 2008; Koole et al. 2001). Thus, it is beneficial to distinguish between two types of self-esteem found in the literature: implicit and explicit (Greenwald and Banaji 1995; Rosenberg 1965). Implicit self-esteem (ISE) is defined as an automatic response that a person has to stimuli that are strongly connected to or symbolically representative of the person's self (Greenwald and Banaji 1995, 11). Implicit perceptions of the self are often unconscious. Oppositely, explicit self-esteem has been defined as more of a diligent, thoughtful process about how one feels about the self (Greenwald and Banaji 1995; Hetts and Pelham 2001; Koole and Pelham 2003). Since ISE tends to be a stable and a true measure of one's self perception, this type of self-esteem will be further explored (Stieger, Voracek, and Formann 2012).

Implicit self-esteem is developed at a young age, as the self is shaped during the first relationship a child has, which is often with his or her caregiver (Hetts and Pelham 2001, 115 for overview; Bowlby 1982; DeHart, Pelham, and Tennen 2006, 2-3; Koole et al. 2001). According to the literature, ISE can be measured in many ways (Bosson, Swann, and Pennebaker 2000) including the Initials Preference Task or IPT (Kitayama and Rarasawa 1997) and the name liking measure (Gebauer et al. 2008). IPT allows researchers to capture ISE by asking participants to rate all of the letters of the alphabet (Kitayama and Rarasawa 1997; Stieger and Burger 2013; Stieger et al. 2012). According to the research, participants with higher levels of ISE are more likely to rate their own initials (vs. other letters) higher than those with lower levels of ISE (Kitayama and Rarasawa 1997; Stieger and Burger 2013; Stieger et al. 2012). In a similar vein, the

name-liking measure captures ISE by asking participants to rate how much they like their name (Gebauer et al. 2008). Those that like their own name more have higher levels of ISE, compared to those who like their name less, who in turn, have lower levels of ISE (Gebauer et al. 2008).

Self-esteem may play a role in what type of coping mechanisms consumers choose to engage in when exposed to self-threat (Jones et al. 2002; Lisjak et al. 2012; Park 2010). Individuals with lower levels of ISE are more likely to engage in defensive behaviors (Lisjak et al. 2012; Park 2010), as those with lower levels of self-esteem they may base their self-worth on external cues (Crocker et al. 2003; Park 2010) and tend to be more sensitive to being rejected in their relationships with others (Anthony, Wood, and Holmes 2006). For example, consumers with low ISE experience an increase in threat when a brand they are highly connected with is under scrutiny (Lisjak et al. 2012). Park (2010) proposes that when faced with threatening events those with lower levels of self-esteem may be more likely to use avoidance behaviors (Lisjak et al. 2012). Since misidentification may be intensified for those with lower levels of ISE, these consumers may be more likely to display avoidant consumption behavior (Lisjak et al. 2012; Park 2010), and thus,

> **H4:** Misidentification will impact consumers with lower (higher) ISE
>
> to a greater (lesser) extent.

While misidentified consumers with lower levels of ISE may engage in defensive behaviors (e.g., avoidance and approach) as a way to manage threats towards their personal identity, when self-affirmed, they may no longer exhibit defensive consumption responses.

1.5. SELF-AFFIRMATION AND CONSUMPTION RESPONSE

People may not always experience threat from negative stimuli. If the self is protected, consumers may be able to encounter threats, yet still remain secure (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Steele 1988). Research shows that when people encounter situations in which their self is affirmed or validated their self-esteem is boosted, which enhances one's perception of the self and buffers the self against threats (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Steele 1988). For example, when participants filled out a self-affirmation value task (Allport, Vernon, and Lindsey 1960), nerve-racking situations such as giving a speech in front of others were perceived as less threatening (Creswall et al. 2005).

Self-affirmations are behaviors or values that remind people of other resources they have that ultimately (Cohen and Sherman 2014), "protect self-integrity in the face of threat [and] can enable people to deal with threatening events and information without resorting to defensive biases" (Sherman and Cohen 2006, 185). Overall, one's self-system becomes a vital protection agent, as the main objective of a person's self-system is to protect the integrity of the self (Cohen and Sherman 2014, 187; Steele 1988). While Cohen and Sherman (2014) point out many dimensions that make up one's overall self-worth, little work has explored how consumers react when their name is challenged. Further, no work to my knowledge has explored how consumers respond when they are affirmed before their name is challenged.

Self-affirmation and self-threat often go hand in hand (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Sherman and Cohen 2006; Steele 1988). In order for a threat to occur, a valued aspect of one's self must be disputed (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Steele 1988). While self-threat

may impact one's overall self-worth (Crocker and Wolfe 2001) or self-esteem (Gebauer et al. 2008; Greenwald and Banaji 1995; Rosenberg 1965), self-affirmations help people consider the bigger picture, rather than honing in on one single difficulty (Sherman and Cohen 2006; Steele 1988).

Research shows that when people are affirmed, they are better able to estimate the distance of a tarantula (Harber, Yeung, and Iacovelli 2011), are less likely to show a need to confirm the self through product consumption (Gao et al. 2009), and are less likely to engage in self-regulation or self-enhancement (Chatterjee, Irmak, and Rose 2013; Jones et al. 2002). In the lab, primes can be used to manipulate self-affirmations. For instance, Townsted and Sood (2012) demonstrate that consuming good-looking products can also lead to self-affirmation. Yet, a majority of the literature has manipulated self-affirmations by asking participants to write about a value they deem important, which reduces defensive coping behaviors (Chatterjee et al. 2013; Jones et al. 2002; Lisjak et al. 2012; Sivanathan and Pettit 2012). Research also shows that when a potential psychological threat is looming, consumers may proactively engage in self-protection with affirmation purchases, such as by buying "passion tea" (Kim and Rucker 2014).

People often avoid taking risks, as they may provoke tension (Allport 1955). However, work on self-affirmation theory suggests that confirming the self may act as a buffer against risk or threat (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Correll, Spencer, and Zanna 2002; Steele 1988). For example, individuals who were affirmed were more likely to view arguments as less threatening and thus, observe topics of debate more openly (Correll et al. 2002). When people are exposed to self-affirmations, it may potentially buffer against threats (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Correll et al. 2002). In fact, research

shows that people not only become less defensive towards threats when self-affirmed, they actually are more likely to approach threatening stimuli (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Sherman, Nelson, and Steele 2000; Vohs, Park, and Schmeichel 2013). For instance, coffee drinkers, when affirmed, were more likely to accept conclusions from a heath article that provided coffee consumers with negative health information, compared to non-affirmed coffee drinkers (Sherman et al. 2000). Sherman et al. (2000) found that these individuals were more likely to actually approach and accept the negative health information rather than reject it. Building from this work, I predict that, when misidentified, consumers who are self-affirmed may no longer need to engage in defensive behaviors as they are protected against the threat. Further, when affirmed misidentified consumers will actually approach the misidentifying beverage. Thus,

> **H5:** Not affirmed (versus affirmed) consumers will consume less (more)
>
> when misidentified.

In the next section, five studies are discussed, which test the six proposed hypotheses regarding the question at large: how does the way a consumer is identified in the marketplace impact consumption response? Figure 1 outlines the proposed model for this paper.

2. CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss the results from the five studies that were run to test seven unique hypotheses. Studies 1a and 1b provide evidence to support identification threat. In study 1a, using three conditions (unidentified [control], partially identified, and identified), I successfully demonstrate that when identified by name, whether correctly or partially, consumers consume more compared to those that are unidentified. There is no difference in amount consumed for those who are identified and those who are partially identified. However, as predicted, there is a difference in consumption between those who are unidentified and those who are identified as well as those who are partially identified.

While results from study 1a suggest that consumers who were partially identified displayed approach behaviors, results from study 1b show that consumers who were misidentified (vs. unidentified) displayed avoidant defensive behavior and that this effect was mediated by feelings of disrespect. Further, similar to study 1a, in study 1b those that were identified consumed more compared to those that were unidentified. Study 2 demonstrates that consumers may also display approach behaviors (compensatory consumption) when misidentified (vs. unidentified).

Study 3 demonstrates that avoidant consumption against misidentification is stronger for those with lower levels of ISE (Greenwald and Banaj 1995). In study 4, I show that misidentified (vs. unidentified) consumers, when self-affirmed no longer engage in avoidant defensive consumption. Finally, marketplace implications along with the research limitations and future research are discussed. Next, in two experiments (study 1a and 1b), I explore how identifying a consumer (identified, partially identified,

misidentified, or unidentified) influences consumption response. Studies 1a and 1b explore avoidant consumption through two unique measures (consumption response and purchase behavior).

2.1. STUDY 1A: THE EFFECTS OF CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION ON AVOIDANT CONSUMPTION

The main objective of study 1a is to understand how being unidentified (control), partially identified, or identified influences consumption. The objective of study 1a was to understand if consumers experience a personal identity threat or an ego boost as a result of being identified or partially identified (when compared to the control) and thus would they display avoidance or approach behavior. The dependent variable was the amount of water consumed in grams.

2.1.1. Method and Procedure

2.1.1.1. Participants and Design. One hundred and twenty-five participants (64 males, M_{age} = 22.90, *SD* = 4.49) from a northeastern university took part in a three-level (identified, partially identified, unidentified) between-subjects design for course credit. Three participants were removed from the analysis due to experimental error (e.g., spilled their water), leaving 122 participants for analysis.

2.1.1.2. Procedure. Prior to visiting the behavioral lab, students signed up online for a research experiment using their name. On the day of the study, students arrived to the lab on campus and checked in with a research assistant. Each participant was

presented with a three-question survey. First, participants were asked if they would like to participate in a taste test (yes, no; adapted from Krishna and Morrin 2008). After answering the first question, the experimenter approached the student and asked for their name for their tasting cup. Participants saw the experimenter then write on their tasting cup. Their name was written on their cup either partially incorrectly (partially identified), correctly (identified) or not at all (unidentified). A number was also written just below the participant's name on each tasting cup to note each condition (0 = no name, 1 = incorrect, 2 = correct). Each student was then given their cup and filled out two additional questions, which asked participants to indicate the color (black, red, green, or blue) and number (0, 1, or 2) that appeared on their cup. Color and number were not used as part of the manipulation, but rather were used to ensure participants were aware of the way their identity was addressed on their cup (identified, partially identified, unidentified). Every participant's name was written in black ink (see figure 2 for example of cups).

FIGURE 2. EXAMPLES OF TASTING CUP STIMULI USED IN STUDIES 1A, 1B, 2, AND 4

Identified   *Partially Identified*   *Unidentified*   *Misidentified*
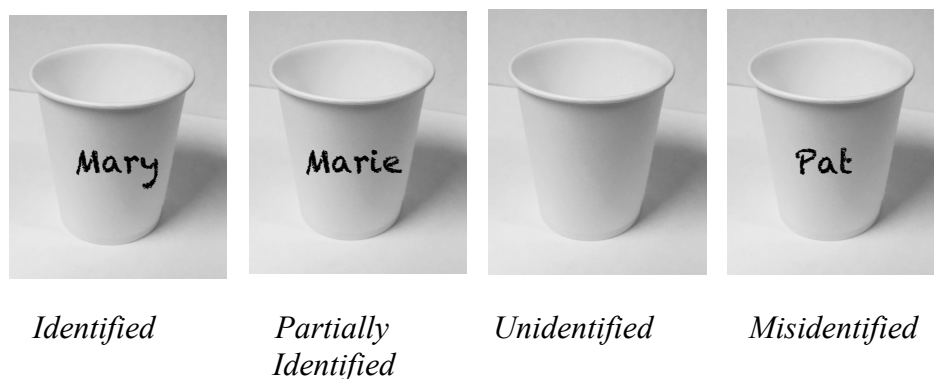
NOTE. - The consumer's correct name in the figure 2 example is Mary.

After the participants completed the first part of the study, participants were told that they would be taking part in the taste test (adapted from Krishna and Morrin 2008). Each student received a small cup of mineral water which was "one can of sprite to six liters of…water" (Krishna and Morrin 2008, 811). Each cup was poured to weigh 76 grams. Once the participants received the cup they were told to taste the water and that they could drink as much as they wanted throughout the remainder of the study.

Next, participants filled out the following mineral water evaluation items on a seven-point scale (1=Very low to 7= Very high) as part of the cover story: quality of the drink, taste of the product, carbonation level, level of fruitiness, bitterness, and sweetness (adapted from Baumeister et al. 2005; Krishna and Morrin 2008), as well as additional items including demographics. At the end of the study, participants were thanked and their cup was collected, weighed, and amount consumed was recorded.

2.1.2. Results and Discussion

2.1.2.1. Avoidant Consumption Response. A one-way ANOVA shows that the way a consumer was identified (identified, partially identified, or unidentified) impacted consumption. The way the participant's name appeared on their tasting cup (i.e., consumer identification) affected how much the participant drank ($F(2, 119) = 3.18$, $p <$ .05). Exploring the results further, those who were identified drank more ($M_{identified} =$ 41.41) compared to those who were unidentified ($M_{unidentified} = 28.00$, $p < .05$), but no different than those who were partially identified ($M_{partiallyidentified} = 34.15$, $p > .15)$.

Further, partially identified participants did not consume any differently than those who were unidentified ($p > .20$).

----Insert figure 3 about here----

2.1.2.2. Discussion. From study 1a, we see that those who have their name on a cup (whether partially identified or identified) consumed more compared to those that were unidentified, suggesting that that those who were identified or partially identified experienced an ego boost. Yet, since partially identified participants consumed slightly less than those in the identified condition, these individuals may have experienced a fragment of threat. Since consumers responded similarly when partially identified and identified, moving forward, misidentification will replace partial identification, in order to explore extremes (i.e., positive and negative responses) of the consumer identity taxonomy spectrum.

2.2. STUDY 1B: THE EFFECTS OF CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION ON AVOIDANT CONSUMPTION (MEDIATED BY DISRESPECT)

In study 1a, participants who were identified or partially identified consumed more compared to those who were unidentified. In study 1b, I explore what occurs when consumers are misidentified to better understand consumption response. Additionally, while actual consumption behavior was used in study 1a, in study 1b, virtual consumption and a six-item avoidance measure was used to test consumer avoidant behavior (White and Dahl 2006; Zhang and Khare 2009). Disrespect was measured as a

mediator. Before running study 1b, a pre-test was conducted to ensure that the names used for the misidentified condition were gender neutral.

2.2.1. Gender Neutral Name Pre-Test

Thirty-nine participants (18 males; M_{age} = 20.26, SD = 4.37; one participant did not report age and gender) rated eleven different names (Terry, Pat, Jessie, Ryley, Milan, Cameron, Marion, Charlie, Avery, Peyton, and Harper) on a seven-point scale (1 = Not at all gender neutral; 7=Extremely gender neutral). Results suggest that the names Pat (M_{Pat} = 4.28, SD = 1.92), Terry (M_{Terry} = 4.64, SD = 1.78), and Jessie (M_{Jessie} = 5.03, SD = 1.86) ranked highest for being gender neutral. Jessie and Pat (which was also used in Campbell and Kirmani 2000) were the names used for the misidentified conditions.

----Insert tables 2a and 2b here-----

2.2.2. Method and Procedure

2.2.2.1. Participants and Design. For a small monetary sum, 343 participants (150 males; M_{age} = 35.52, SD = 12.01) took part in a three-level (identified, misidentified, unidentified) between-subjects design online. Thirty-two participants indicated they were not truthful about their name at the start of the study and thus were removed from further analysis.

2.2.2.2. Procedure. Participants were told that they were going to fill out a survey regarding consumption. All participants were asked to imagine that they walked into a very busy, loud coffee shop. They were asked to imagine that they placed an order with a store employee. When placing the order, the store employee asked the consumer for his or her name. The participant was then asked to spell his or her name. When doing so, the employee started to write the participant's name on his or her cup, but it was very clear that the individual was having a hard time hearing the consumer. Participants were then instructed to walk down to the end of the counter to pick up their beverage. When participants picked up their beverage, they received a cup that contained one of the following: their correct name (identified), the name Jessie (misidentified), or no name (unidentified). This scenario was used in study 1b to ensure that misidentification was seen as an unintentional act or a mistake on the marketer's behalf (Hieder 1958; Malle 1995).

Participants were then asked to indicate how much of the beverage they would consume at this exact moment (0 to 6 ounces). They were then asked several other measures including a purchase intent measure, which asked participants how likely they would be to purchase this beverage again in the future (1=Not at all; 7=Extremely), an approach measure regarding questions about the beverage they ordered ("I like the beverage", "I would buy the beverage again", and "the beverage is attractive to me" (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree; α = .94; adapted from Zhang and Khare 2009, 528), and finally, a measure about how much they liked the product: "good/bad" (reverse coded), "dislike/like" and "unfavorable/favorable" (α = .82; White and Dahl 2006, 407). The two latter measures for approach were highly correlated with purchase intent:

approach (r(311) = .819, p < .001) and liking the product (r(311) = .813, p < .001; see

table 3 for correlation table).

----Insert table 3 about here----

Participants then filled out a personal identity disrespect measure which asked

them to indicate how they felt on a seven-point scale (1= Strongly disagree; 7=Strongly

agree) as a result of how their beverage appeared: valued (reverse coded), important

(reverse coded), respected (reverse coded), appreciated (reverse coded), worthless,

unimportant (α = .90). Finally, participants answered several additional measures

including demographics, a hypothesis probe (no one guessed the true purpose of the

study), and a question that asked participants to indicate if they were truthful about their

name at the start of the study (yes, no).

2.2.3. Results and Discussion

2.2.3.1. Avoidant Consumption Response: Product Evaluation. Since all six

approach measures (not including intention to drink) were highly correlated, the mean of

the six-item measure was taken to create an avoidant consumption response scale (α =

.93). Results from an ANOVA show that the way a consumer is addressed impacts

consumption response (F(2,308) = 14.30, p < .001). Consumers, when identified,

displayed more approach-type behaviors ($M_{identified}$ = 5.31) compared to those who were

unidentified ($M_{unidetnified}$ = 4.82, p < .01) and those who were misidentified

($M_{\text{misidentified}}$=4.36, $p < .001$). Those who were misidentified displayed more avoidant type behavior compared to those that were unidentified ($p < .01$)

----Insert figure 4a about here----

2.2.3.2. Avoidant Consumption Response: Intention to Drink. Results from an ANOVA show that consumer identification did not have a significant impact on amount intended to consume, $F(2, 308) = 2.32$, $p =.10$. Those in the unidentified condition indicated they would drink about the same amount as those in the identified condition ($M_{\text{unidetnified}} = 2.52$ vs. $M_{\text{identified}} = 2.53$, $p > .50$), but more than those in the misidentified condition ($M_{\text{misidentified}} = 2.01$, $p = .06$). Further, those in the identified and misidentified conditions were directionally different from one another ($p = .07$).

----Insert figure 4b about here----

2.2.3.3. Mediation Analysis. Since the effects for consumption response were significant for the six-item product evaluation measure, a mediation analysis was run to see whether consumers displayed more avoidant behaviors due to feelings of disrespect when misidentified compared to those that were unidentified and identified. Using PROCESS (Hayes 2013; model 4; Hayes and Preacher 2014) a three-level between-subjects design was run on consumption avoidance response (six items) with disrespect as the mediator.

Results from a three level (identified = 0/1, misidentified = 1/0, unidentified = baseline covariate) regression indicated that being identified decreased feelings of

disrespect ($B = -1.54$, $se = .18$, $t = -8.81$, $p < .001$) and being misidentified increased

feelings of disrespect ($B = .39$, $se = .17$, $t = -2.33$, $p < .05$). When disrespect was added

into the model, it significantly mediated the effect between consumer identification and

product avoidance ($B = -.40$, $se = .05$, $t = -7.48$, $p < .001$). More specifically, when

people felt disrespected as a result of being misidentified, it had a negative impact on

consumption response (increased avoidance). Further, when disrespect was added into the

model, the effects of misidentification ($B = -.30$, $se = .16$, $t = -1.88$, $p > .05$) and

identification ($B = -.13$, $se = .18$, $t = -.69$, $p > .40$) were no longer significant. Further,

zero is not contained in the 95% confidence intervals around the effect (95% CI: -.5032

to -.2937).

---- Insert figure 5 about here ----

2.2.3.4. Discussion. In study 1b, results suggest that consumers, when identified

(vs. unidentified) consume more. Yet, when consumers are misidentified their product

evaluation was lower when compared to those who are unidentified. The results from the

virtual water consumption were similar for these two conditions. Further, study 1b shows

that the relationship between the misidentified and unidentified conditions is mediated by

feelings of disrespect. In study 2, I aim to better understand how consumers respond

when approach behavior (compensatory consumption) is available.

2.3. STUDY 2: THE EFFECTS OF CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION ON APPROACH BEHAVIOR (COMPENSATORY CONSUMPTION)

The purpose of study 2 is to replicate the results of studies 1a and 1b with approach behavior (compensatory consumption) to better understand how consumers respond to misidentification. The the name Pat (see tables 2a and 2b) was used in study 2.

2.3.1. Method and Procedure

2.3.1.1. Participants and Design. One hundred and ninety-four participants (82 males, $M_{age} = 35.82$, $SD = 13.09$) took part in a three level (identified, misidentified, unidentified) between-subjects design. ISE was measured continuously.

2.3.1.2. Procedure. After agreeing to take part in an online study, participants took part in a virtual taste test. They were asked for their name for their tasting cup. Participants then received a tasting cup that contained either their name (identified), the name Pat (misidentified), or no name (unidentified). Participants were then told about the offer that M&M's candies provides to their consumers: via the M&M's website, consumers have the opportunity to personalize their candies (http://www.mymms.com). Participants were told about the offer and asked to indicate how likely they would be to put their name on their M&M's (1 = Not at all likely; 7 = Extremely likely).

Participants filled out additional items including hypothesis probes (no one guessed the purpose of the study), demographics, and finally, indicated if they were truthful about their first name at the start of the study (yes, no). Six participants were not truthful about their first name at the start of the study and thus were removed from the analysis. In addition, three participants were removed for having a same or a similar name as the misidentified condition.

2.3.2. Results and Discussion

2.3.2.1. Approach Consumption Response. An ANOVA was run to compare the misidentified and identified conditions to the unidentified condition (baseline). Likelihood of the consumer putting their name on M&M's (1= Not at all likely; 7 = Extremely likely) was the dependent variable.

Results show that the full model was marginally significant $F(2,185) = 2.58, p <$ .08. The misidentified condition) ($M_{\text{misidentified}} = 3.44$) was significantly different from the unidentified condition ($M_{\text{unidentified}} = 2.64, p < .05$), yet, not any different from the identified condition ($M_{\text{identified}} = 3.41, p > .05$). Those in the unidentified and identified conditions were not any different from one another ($p > .50$).

2.3.2.2. Discussion. Results from study 2 indicate misidentified consumers wish to have their name on their M&M's when their identity is challenged. Yet, those in the unidentified conditions, do not show the same effects. Those in the identified condition wanted their name on their M&M's more as well, which is not surprising since these individuals have a boosted ego. Yet, the results were not significant nor hypothesized. In the next study I demonstrate that ISE is an important moderator for the effects of marketplace misidentification.

2.4. STUDY 3: THE EFFECTS OF CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION AND IMPLICIT SELF-ESTEEM ON AVOIDANT CONSUMPTION

In study 2, misidentification appeared to be a threat to the self, as consumers engaged in approach behavior (compensatory consumption). Thus, moving forward, I aim to understand if implicit self-esteem moderates the effect of misidentification on consumption response. The purpose of study 3 was to understand the process underlying consumers' responses to misidentification through actual consumption behavior. The name liking measure was used as a moderator to measure ISE (Gebaurer et al. 2008). In addition, the name Jessie (see table 2a and 2b) was used for the misidentified condition. Yet, prior to running study 3, a pre-test was conducted to ensure that two measures, commonly used to measure ISE (i.e., IPT and name-liking), were significantly correlated (Gebaurer et al. 2008; Kitayama and Rarasawa 1997; Stieger and Burger 2013).

2.4.1. Implicit Self-Esteem Pre-Test

Eighty participants (34 males, M_{age} = 35.34, SD = 12.74) took part in an online pre-test for a small monetary sum. All participants filled out several measures including two measures of ISE: the name liking measure (Gebaurer et al. 2008) and the IPT measure (Kitayama and Rarasawa 1997; Koole and Pelham, 2003; Stieger and Burger 2013; Stieger et al. 2012). Participants first were asked to rate how much they liked 38 letters and symbols (1 = I do not like at all; 7 = I like). These 38 items were randomized. Following this, each participant indicated how much they liked their first name on a seven-point scale (1 = Not at all; 7 = Extremely). Finally, participants filled out several additional measures including demographics. Measures for the IPT were calculated as suggested in the psychology literature using an unbiased baseline (Stieger and Burger

2013; Stieger et al. 2012 for overview). Results from a bivariate correlation show the two measures of ISE were significantly correlated, $r(80) = .33$, $p < .01$. In study 3, the name-liking measure was used.

2.4.2. Method and Procedure

2.4.2.1. Participants and Design. Sixty-one participants (29 males; $M_{age} = 21.05$, $SD = 5.06$) from a northeast university took part in a randomized between-subjects (misidentified, unidentified) design for course credit.

2.4.2.2. Procedure. Participants checked into the behavioral lab and agreed to take part in a taste test. To disassociate asking the participant for their name with the name that appeared on the bottle, participants' names were asked at the time of check-in. This procedure was different from that in study 1a. Participants then sat down at a lab station and were given a bottle of water. For each bottle of water, the original label had been removed and substituted with a white label the contained either the name Jessie (misidentified) or no name (unidentified; see figure 6). Participants were instructed to taste the water and were told that they could consume as much of the water as they wanted throughout the study. After filling out several cover story items (e.g., quality and taste), participants were asked to fill out several additional items including a measure of ISE, which asked subjects to indicate how much they liked their first name (1 = Not at all; 7 = A lot; adapted from Gebaurer et al. 2008), a hypothesis probe, and demographics. At the end of the study, participants' water bottles were collected, weighed, and amount consumed was recorded. Participants were thanked and given credit for their time. Three

participants were removed from the analysis as they guessed the true purpose of the study

(n = 58).

FIGURE 6. STUDY 3: BOTTLE STIMULUS

Unidentified   *Misidentified*

2.4.3. Results and Discussion

   2.4.3.1. Avoidant Consumption Response. A regression was conducted on amount

consumed as a function of consumer identification (misidentified vs. unidentified).

Consumer identification condition was added into the regression using dummy variables

(misidentified = 1 and unidentified = 0, baseline). Consumer identification, ISE (mean

centered), and their interaction were added into the model. The main effects for

misidentification (B = -7.53, se = 15.13, t = -.50, p > .50) and ISE (B = 5.37, se = 5.82, t

= -.92, p > .30) were not significant. Yet, the interaction between the two was significant

(B = 27.67, se = 11.64, t = 2.37, p < .03).

A spotlight analysis shows that consumers with lower levels of ISE (10th percentile) consumed less water when misidentified ($M_{unidentifed}$ = 90.52 grams) compared to those who were unidentified ($M_{misidentified}$ = 29.96 grams, $p < .05$). Yet, the results do not hold for those with higher levels of ISE (25th percentile to 90th; e.g., 90th percentile $M_{misidentified}$ = 87.56 grams vs. $M_{unidentifed}$ = 65.12 grams, $p > .20$), as these consumers did not consume any differently as a function of identification condition.

----Insert figure 7 about here ----

2.4.3.2. Discussion. Results from study 3 show that consumers with lower levels of ISE (10th percentile), when misidentified, consumed significantly less water compared to those who were unidentified. These results do not hold for those with higher levels of ISE (25th percentile and above). Interestingly, participants that like their name less consume less when called by someone else's name. Yet, the results suggest that those with high ISE, who like their name more, are not bothered when misidentified. The goal of study 3 is to demonstrate that consumers with lower levels of ISE approach products that allow them to reconfirm the self. In study 4, the effects of misidentification are mitigated or reversed via a self-affirmation task.

2.5. STUDY 4: SELF-AFFIRMATION, CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION, AND AVOIDANT CONSUMPTION

While participants may perceive misidentification as a threat to the self, research shows that if self-affirmed, people should not display defensive responses or behaviors

(Cohen and Sherman 2014; Correll et al. 2002; McQueen and Klein 2006). In fact, they should approach the product (Sherman et al. 2000; Vohs et al. 2013). Instead, misidentified participants should respond as they would when the threat is not present at all (i.e., similar to those in the unidentified condition; Cohen and Sherman 2014; Creswell et al. 2005) or similar to how they would if identified (Sherman et al. 2000). Thus, in study 4, half of the participants are self-affirmed, as a way to mitigate or reverse the negative effects of misidentification.

2.5.1. Method and Procedure

2.5.1.1. Participants and Design. One hundred and ninety-four participants (69 males; M_{age} = 33.62, SD = 12.88) took part in a 2 (consumer identity: misidentified, unidentified) X 2 (affirmation: yes, no) between-subjects design online for a small monetary sum. Twelve participants were untruthful about their name at the start of the study and thus were removed from the analysis.

2.5.1.2. Procedure. After agreeing to participate in the study, all participants were first asked to rank 11 different values from one (most important to me) to 11 (least important to me) (Harber 1995). Participants in the affirmation condition were then asked to write about why they ranked their number one item as their most important value and why it was important to them. Those in the non-affirmation condition were asked to write about the item they ranked as least important and why it may be important to other people (Cohen, Aronson, and Steele 2000; Sherman et al. 2000; Steele 1988).

Next, participants were asked to take part in a virtual water taste test. Participants were asked for their name and then received a tasting cup that had the name Pat (misidentified) or no name (unidentified) on their cup. Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to purchase a bottle of this water in the future (1 = Not at all; 7 = Extremely). Participants then filled out several items including a manipulation check for self- affirmation, which asked participants to indicate to what degree did writing about [value] make you feel good/bad about yourself (1 = Not at all; 7 = Extremely; Harber 2005, Harber et al. 2011), a hypothesis probe, demographics, and if they were truthful about their name (yes, no) at the start of the study. Two participants guessed the true purpose of the study and thus were removed from the study. One additional person was removed, as their name was similar to the name used in the the misidentification condition.

2.5.2. Results and Discussion

2.5.2.1. Self-Affirmation Manipulation Check. Two items were used to create a self-affirmation manipulation check measure (mean). Participants, when affirmed, reported feeling better about themselves overall compared to those in the non-affirmation condition ($F(1,177) = 52.65, p < .001$). Participants in the affirmation condition indicated writing about their most important value made them feel better about themselves ($M_{affirmed} = 5.77$) compared to those that wrote about their least important value and why it was important to others ($M_{notaffirmed} = 4.44, p < .001$).

2.5.2.2. Avoidant Consumption Response. The main effects for self-affirmation

($F(1,175) = .58$, $p > .30$) and consumer identity ($F(1,175) = .01$, $p < .90$) were not significant. Yet, the interaction between the two was significant ($F(1,175) = 4.91$, $p < .05$). Consumers who were self-affirmed did not display different purchase behavior regardless of how they were identified ($M_{misidentified} = 4.53$ vs. $M_{unidentified} = 3.83$, $p > .09$). When participants were not affirmed, they displayed similar behavior; participants who were misidentified as they indicated they would be similarly likely to purchase the product as those that were unidentified ($M_{misidentified} = 3.62$ vs. $M_{unidentified} = 4.27$, $p > .10$). When consumers were misidentified they consumed differently as a result of being affirmed ($M_{affirmed} = 4.53$) or not ($M_{notaffirmed} = 3.62$, $p < .04$). Yet, those who were unidentified did not display this behavior ($M_{affirmed} = 3.83$ vs. $M_{notaffirmed} = 4.27$, $p > .30$).

----Insert figure 8 about here ----

2.5.2.3. Discussion. Results from study 4 indicate that when participants were misidentified and not affirmed they avoided the product that had their name labeled incorrectly. In contrast, affirmed participants, when misidentified, did not display this behavior. Similar to the identified condition (e.g., study 1a) individuals that were misidentified, yet affirmed, displayed approach behavior (Sherman et al. 2000). Results from study 4 provide evidence to the premise of this paper in that consumers, when addressed by the wrong name, respond defensively. Yet, results from study 4 show that misidentification threat can be mitigated or reversed with self-affirmation, which acts as a buffer against threats directed at the self (Cohen and Sherman 2014; Sherman and Cohen 2006; Steele 1988). Next, the results from the five studies are discussed, along with research limitations. Finally, future research directions are explored.

3. CHAPTER 3: GENERAL DISCUSSION

3.1. GENERAL DISCUSSION

To my knowledge, little research in marketing has explored consumer names and the impact they have on consumer behavior. For this dissertation, I have developed an identity taxonomy, which explores how consumers respond to how they are addressed in the marketplace. I demonstrate that consumers may be addressed by the correct name (identified), partially the correct name (partially identified), the wrong name (misidentified), or no name (unidentified) in the marketplace. Yet, the way a consumer is addressed impacts the way in which a consumer responds (e.g., approach or avoidance).

In a series of five studies, I show that consumers, when addressed by someone else's name (misidentified), display avoidant behaviors as well as approach behaviors (compensatory consumption) (studies 1a, 1b, 2, 3, and 4). These results are driven by the misidentified consumer feeling disrespected by the marketer (study 1b). The negative effects of misidentification appear to be strongest for consumers with lower levels of ISE (Greenwald and Banaji 1995; study 3). Yet, the negative effects of marketplace misidentification can be mitigated or reversed by self-affirmation (Steele 1988; study 4). While calling a consumer by someone else's name often has a negative effect on consumption, results from two studies show that using consumer names is actually a good thing, as long as the marketer gets it right. Studies 1a and 1b show that using consumer names correctly, boosts the consumer's ego and thus, increases consumption (studies 1a and 1b). In addition, it appears that if marketers get consumers names a little wrong, these consumers may be willing to look past the error, as partially identifying consumers still

appears to somewhat increase consumption, specifically when compared to those that were unidentified (study 1a). Thus, I encourage marketers to start using or to continue using consumer names in the marketplace. However, they should explore technologies that are available for the marketplace to decrease the chances of addressing their consumers by the wrong name. In the next section, limitations and future research directions are discussed.

3.1.1. Research Limitations. This dissertation addresses one important research question: how do consumers respond when called by the correct name, the wrong name, or by no name? My hope is that this research will result in many promising future research streams and lead to more interesting research questions. Before discussing future research, it is important to first address some of the limitations from this research.

This paper explores marketplace misidentification, through the misuse or correct use of consumer names. While names were used in this research, consumers may experience other types misidentification in the marketplace. For instance, some consumers may experience gender marketplace misidentification: a man with long hair may be mistaken for a women and addressed as Mrs. or Miss, while a woman with shorter hair may be incorrectly identified as a male in the marketplace. Aside from personal identity threats, consumers may also experience other forms of marketplace misidentification. For example, more and more consumers are ordering food and products online. How do consumers respond when they place an order online for a specific item, but end up with a product or item that they did not order (i.e., purchase misidentification)? Overall, results from the current paper do not address the following question: is marketplace misidentification name-specific, or does it apply generally to any

consumer label (self or product) mix-up? Thus, future research should aim to address these research questions.

In addition, the current research does not explore the boundary conditions of threat that results from marketplace misidentification. Results from study 1a demonstrate that when partially identified, consumers do not experience an ego threat; instead, the consumer actually consumed slightly more compared to those that were unidentified. These results may be a consequence of the *"name letter effect"* (Nuttin 1985), as participants, when partially identified, may have saw enough letters in their name, which in turn, may have boosted the self, mitigating any potential threat. Yet, from this research it remains inconclusive as to how wrong a consumer's name must be in order for a threat to transpire. Future research should explore this boundary condition.

The current research explores how consumers respond when they are misidentified in the marketplace. Yet, the results to do not explore how consumers respond as a result of being verbally called by someone else's name (i.e., verbal vs. written misidentification). Future research should explore this research question: how do consumers respond when they hear (vs. see) their name incorrectly? Since this area of research is original, it does not go without its limitations; however, most of the restrictions in this paper result in interesting research questions, which would be fruitful areas of exploration for future research.

3.1.2. Directions for Future Research. First and foremost, forthcoming research should aim to better understand how misunderstood consumers respond in the marketplace. For example, what happens when marketers recommend products that do not match a consumer's true style or taste. Further, research questions should better

understand if consumers feel as if they are seen. If they are seen, what happens when they are seen incorrectly? Work by Mead (1934) and Cooley (1902 [Cooley and Schubert 1998]) has long suggested that people incorporate feedback from other people when developing their own identity. Yet, what happens when feedback from others (e.g., marketers, other consumers, etc.), is inaccurate or inconsistent with the ways consumers see themselves? The marketing literature should aim to explore this research question.

Another pertinent question is how do consumers respond when they are correctly addressed or identified? While two studies in this paper demonstrate that consumers display approach behaviors when their names are correctly used, future research should explore these effects further. Building on the ego boost (Brooks et al. 2016), the mimicry (van Baaren et al. 2004), and the expectations literature (Heckler and Childers 1993), may allow researchers to better understand these results.

Aside from work adding to the name literature, future research should further explore the effects ostracism on consumption response. A large body of work in psychology and more recently in marketing has explored how ignoring or rejecting people (i.e., ostracism) impacts well-being (Williams 2002) as well as consumption behavior (Lee and Shrum 2012). Future research should aim to tease apart the unique nuances between ostracism and misidentification and the impact of each on consumption. For example, research by Ward and Dahl (2014) suggests that consumers will pay more when a salesperson from a luxury brand is ill-mannered towards the consumer. The authors note that this is specifically true when a consumer's ideal self is primed. Yet, findings from this dissertation and the paper by Ward and Dahl (2014) present somewhat conflicting results and therefore, would be an important avenue for future research. While

I speculate that the results from Ward and Dahl (2014) are a direct result of what part of the self is threatened (i.e., the ideal self or the actual self), if the person was rejected or ignored (Lee and Shrum 2012), and what type of product is used (luxury vs. common goods), future research should better understand when consumers approach or avoid products as a result of being dismissed by the retailer.

Finally, future research should explore how consumers respond when they are overly included rather than rejected in the marketplace. While we know that including people is often seen as positive, what happens when consumers are included, but do not wish to be? For instance, recent work by Li and Kanazawa (2016) suggests that intelligent people do not place the same value on social relationships when compared to those that are less intelligent. Based on these findings, intriguing questions result, is there a segment of consumers that dislike being included and therefore, feel threatened or uncomfortable when others attempt to include them? If so, how does this impact consumption?

Overall, in five studies I add to the current marketing literature by introducing a consumer identity taxonomy around the notion of marketplace (mis)identification. Results from this dissertation suggest that identifying or partially identifying a consumer results in an ego boost, while misidentifying a consumer can become a personal identity threat. While this dissertation starts a conversation on the negative (positive) effects of consumer misidentification (identification), future research should aim to better understand this phenomenon and its impact on consumption.

4. CHAPTER 4: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

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4.2. Tables and Figures

TABLE 1. IDENTITY CONSTRUCTS

Condition	Definition	Example(s)	Visual
Identified	When a consumer's name is communicated and spelled correctly.	Tracy	
Partially Identified	When a consumer's name is communicated correctly, but is spelled incorrectly.	Traci or Tracey	
Misidentified	When a consumer's name is communicated incorrectly.	Pat or Jessie	
Unidentified	When a consumer's name is not addressed at all.	_____	

NOTE. – In the above example, the consumer's name is Tracy when spelled correctly.

TABLE 2A. GENDER NEUTRAL NAME PRE-TEST RESULTS

Name	Gender Neutral Mean
Jessie	M = 5.03
Terry	M = 4.64
Pat	M = 4.28
Ryley	M = 4.21
Cameron	M = 4.15
Peyton	M = 4.03
Charlie	M = 3.85
Harper	M = 3.44
Avery	M = 3.28
Marion	M = 3.26
Milan	M = 3.18

NOTE. - Names are listed in order from highest to lowest gender-neutral using the mean

score.

TABLE 2B. GENDER NEUTRAL NAME PRE-TEST RESULTS

Paired Names	Paired Difference Means	*t*-test	*df*	*p*-value (2 tail)
Jessie				
Jessie - Charlie	1.179	3.181	38	.003
Jessie- Ryley	.821	2.235	38	.031
Jessie - Avery	1.744	4.136	38	.000
Jessie – Milan	1.846	4.915	38	.000
Jessie - Pat	.744	1.750	38	.088
Jessie - Terry	.385	.970	38	.338
Jessie - Cameron	.872	2.371	38	.023
Jessie - Marion	1.769	4.735	38	.000
Jessie - Peyton	1.000	2.387	38	.022
Jessie - Harper	1.590	3.829	38	.000
Terry				
Terry - Charlie	.795	1.861	38	.070
Terry- Ryley	.436	1.312	38	.197
Terry - Avery	1.359	3.251	38	.002
Terry – Milan	1.462	4.107	38	.000
Terry - Pat	.359	1.057	38	.297
Terry - Cameron	.487	1.196	38	.239
Terry - Marion	1.385	3.758	38	.001
Terry - Jessie	-.385	-.970	38	.338
Terry - Peyton	.615	1.731	38	.092
Pat				
Pat - Charlie	.436	1.266	38	.213
Pat- Ryley	.077	.221	38	.826
Pat - Avery	1.000	2.317	38	.026
Pat – Milan	1.103	2.595	38	.013
Pat - Terry	-.359	-1.057	38	.297
Pat - Cameron	.128	.330	38	.744
Pat - Marion	1.026	2.307	38	.027
Pat - Jessie	-.744	-1.750	38	.088
Pat - Peyton	.256	.615	38	.542
Pat - Harper	.846	2.081	38	.044

NOTE. - The three highest ranked gender-neutral names from table 2a were analyzed further. The results are presented in table 2b.

TABLE 3. STUDY 1B: PRODUCT EVALUATION CORRELATION TABLE

	Purchase Intent	Liking Product
Liking Product	.81*	
Approach	.88*	.82*

NOTE. - * $p < .01$
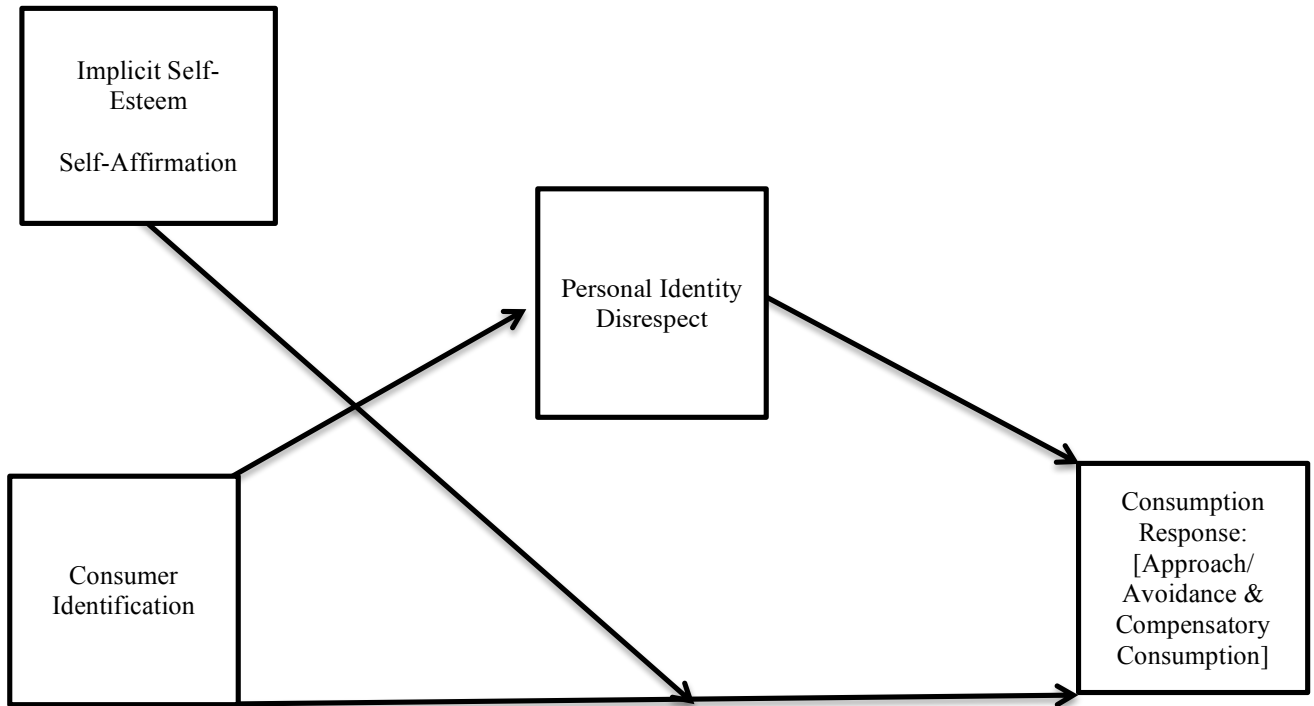
FIGURE 1: THE MARKETPLACE MISIDENTIFICATION MODEL

FIGURE 3. STUDY 1A: AMOUNT OF 'MINERAL' WATER CONSUMED AS A
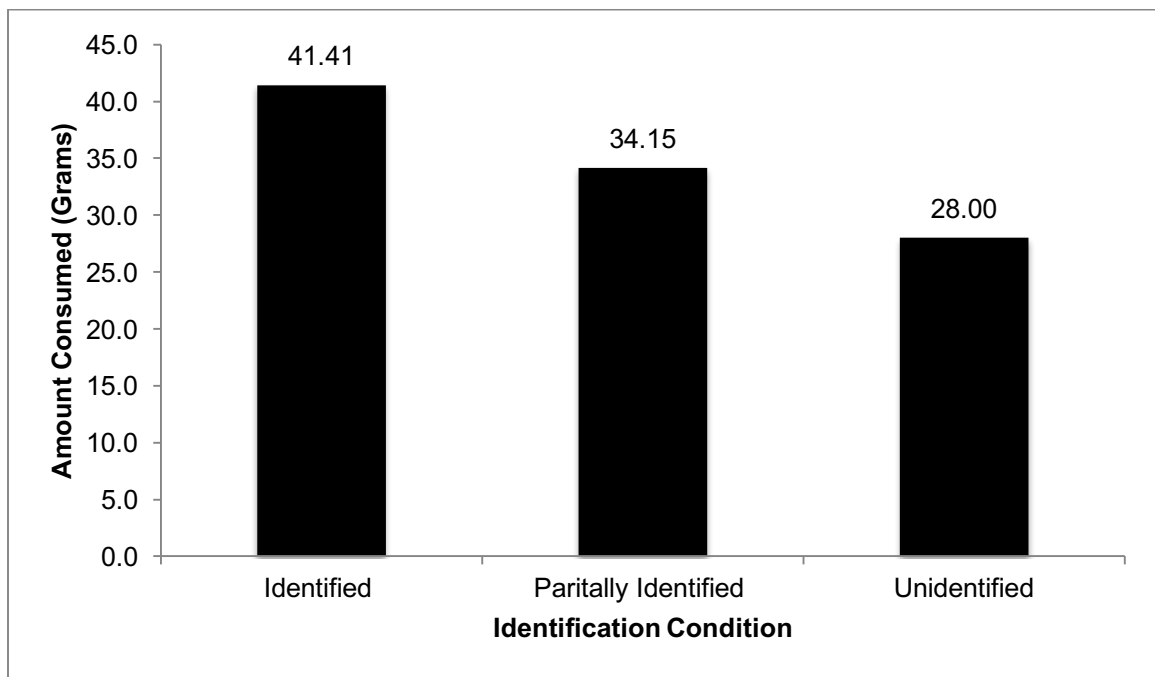
FUNCTION OF CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION

FIGURE 4A. STUDY 1B: APPROACH BEHAVIOR AS A FUNCTION OF
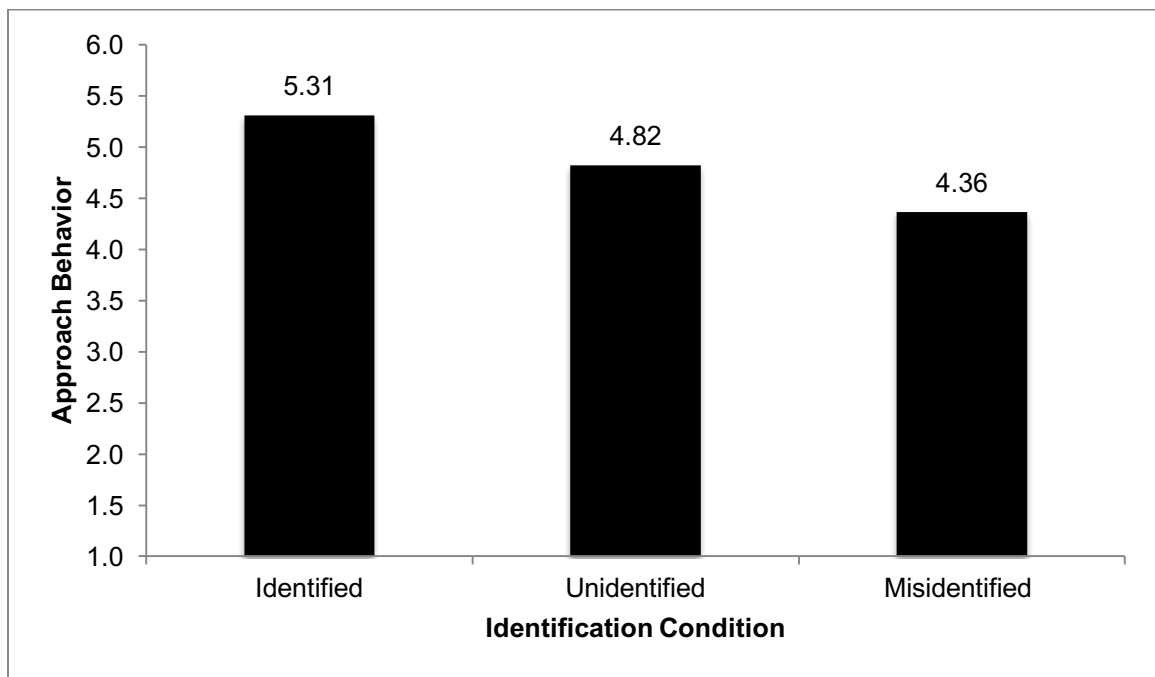
CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION

FIGURE 4B. STUDY 1B: CONSUMPTION INTENTION AS A FUNCTION OF
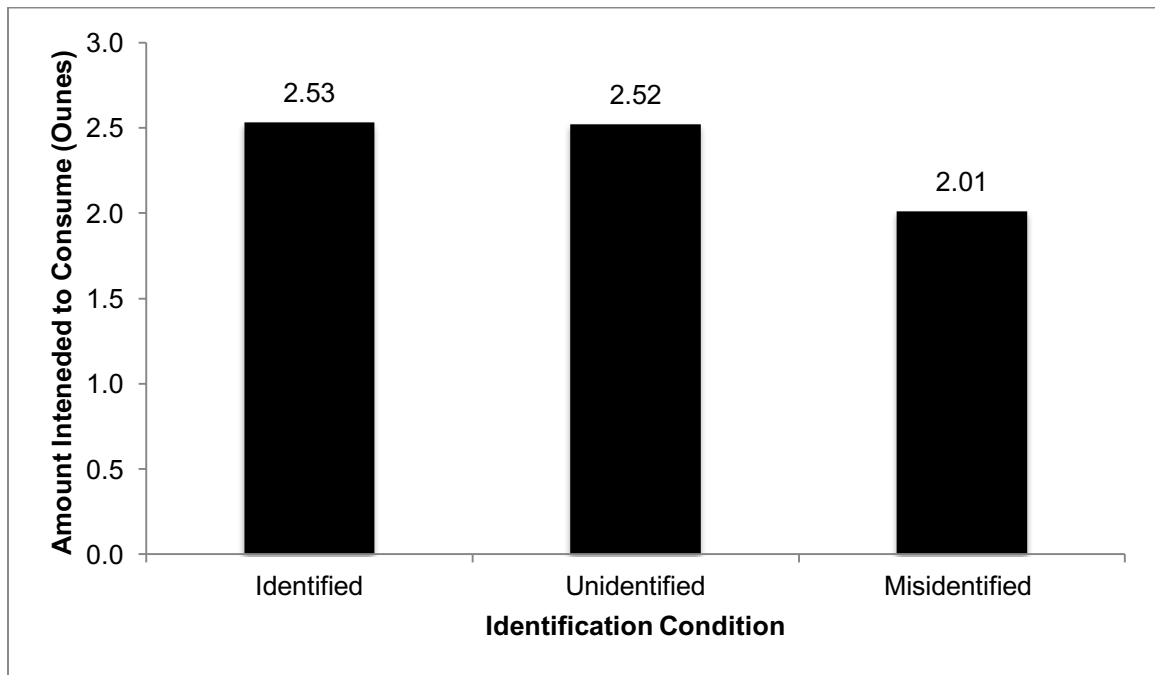
CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION

FIGURE 5. STUDY 1B: THE EFFECTS OF CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION ON

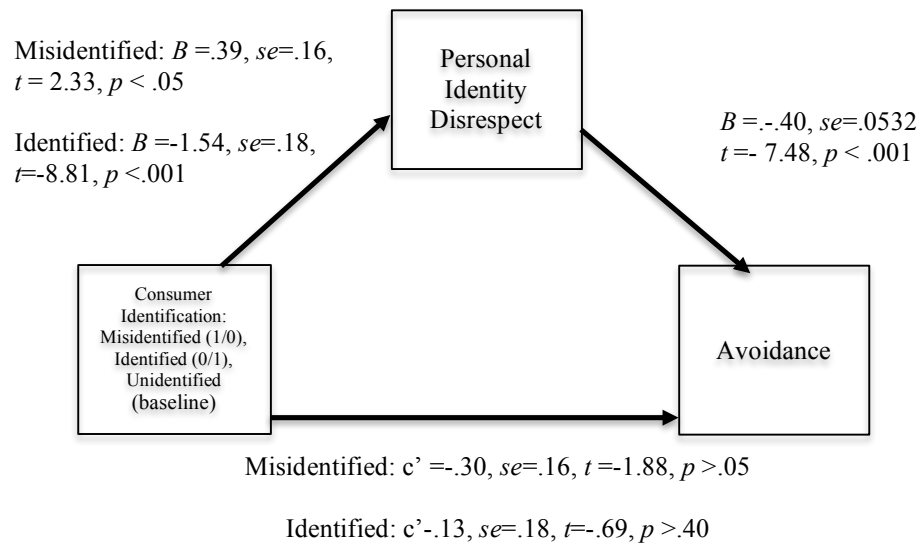CONSUMER APPROACH BEHAVIOR MEDIATED BY PERSONAL IDENTITY

DISRESPECT

Misidentified: B =.39, se=.16, t = 2.33, p < .05

Identified: B =-1.54, se=.18, t=-8.81, p <.001

Personal Identity Disrespect

B =.-.40, se=.0532 t =- 7.48, p < .001

Consumer Identification: Misidentified (1/0), Identified (0/1), Unidentified (baseline)

Avoidance

Misidentified: c' =-.30, se=.16, t =-1.88, p >.05

Identified: c'-.13, se=.18, t=-.69, p >.40

FIGURE 7. STUDY 3: CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION AND AMOUNT

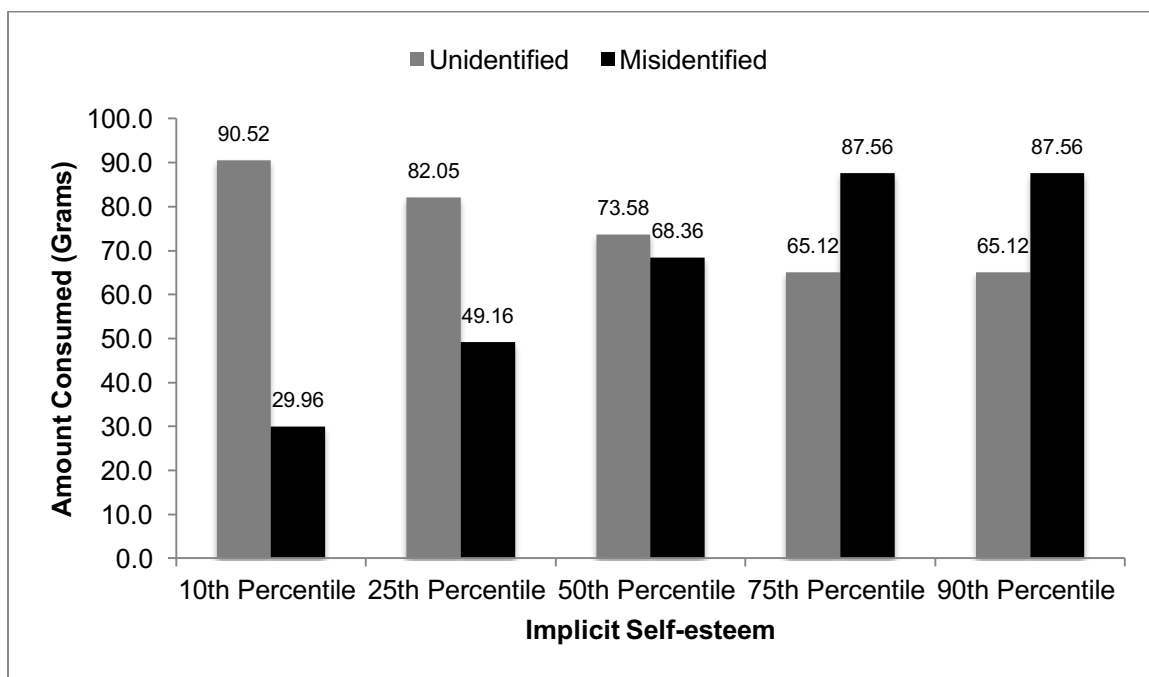CONSUMED MODERATED BY IMPLICIT SELF- ESTEEM

FIGURE 8. EXPERIMENT 4: PURCHASE INTENT AS A FUNCTION OF SELF-AFFIRMATION AND CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION