Identification Management and Its Bases: Bridging Management and Marketing Perspectives Through a Focus on Affiliation Dimensions

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There has been growing interest in both management and marketing regarding how individuals become identified with organizations and how organizations attempt to manage these identifications. The authors present a framework built on explicit and implicit points of convergence in research conducted in both these disciplines. In their review of the management and marketing literatures, the authors suggest three fundamental mechanisms, or "bases," for managing organizational identification: relational, behavioral, and symbolic. Furthermore, the authors argue that how an individual is affiliated with an organization will impact the relative influence of these identification management bases. The authors conclude by suggesting how management and marketing scholars can create a theoretical space for future interdisciplinary work. Such a change would involve moving away from "employees" versus "customers" as a prime division between the fields and moving toward a more fine-grained approach that emphasizes the unique characteristics of individual-organizational relationships.

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In the past 15 years, there has been growing interest among both management and marketing researchers in how individuals become identified with organizations.[1] On the management side, strong organizational identification has been linked to decreased employee turnover, increased job satisfaction and employee motivation, and a propensity to interpret and enact one's environment in ways that benefit the organization (see Pratt 1998 for a review). On the marketing side, organizational identification is thought to be associated with benefits such as increased loyalty, positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and customer recruitment (Bhattarcharya and Sen 2003; Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn 1995). Taken together, scholars in both fields see the benefits of organizational identification and believe that organizations are realizing that to stay competitive, they must engender or "manage" identification not only with their members (Cheney 1983, 1991; Pratt 2000) but with nonmembers as well (McAlexander, Schouten, and Koenig 2002; Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987; Reynolds and Beatty 1999).

Despite common interest in identification management, the literatures in these two disciplines have tended to develop rather independently, with different foci for attention: organizational employees and customers. However, we assert that to better gain insights into how organizations can manage identification, significantly more cross-fertilization should occur between these two fields of inquiry. We build our assertion on two critical insights. First, we argue that research in both organizational behavior and marketing has tended to operate with similar definitions, assumptions, and beliefs about how identification can be managed. Second, we argue that the distinction between employees and customers, a distinction that serves as a primary divide between organizational behavior and marketing, is blurry. For example, customers are not paid by organizations, but neither are volunteers and certain types of "nonstandard" workers in organizations (Pfeffer and Baron 1988). Customers are not located in corporate headquarters, but neither are remote or dispersed workers (e.g., Wiesenfeld, Raghuram, and Garud 1999). Just as the "traditional employee" is fading into our collective organizational past, consumer segmentation suggests that there is also no such a thing as a "typical" customer. Consumer differences in norms, values, and preferences may influence the types of relationships they seek to develop with organizations. For example, consumers who participate in brand or consumption communities (McAlexander et al. 2002) may possess characteristics that encourage them to seek and sustain more frequent and longer contact with organizations, thus making them more like some types of organizational members. The diversity characterizing employee and customer types suggests that a strict dichotomization of these groups might not be warranted. Thus, we propose viewing identification along a series of affiliation dimensions, rather than through the labels of *employee*, *member*, or *customer*, in hopes of spurring further interdisciplinary work.

Building from these insights, the purpose of our article is to present a framework that builds on points of convergence in identification research conducted in both management and marketing to gain new insights into identification management. More specifically, by recognizing common bases for identification and affiliation dimensions for individuals who interact with organizations, we can (1) facilitate interdisciplinary cross-fertilization and (2) identify underdeveloped and new areas of research in this area. With regard to the former, as our subtitle suggests, our goal is to build a bridge. We use the metaphor of a bridge because our goal is to make linkages between two disciplines. Bridges are not rezoning projects; we do not attempt to wipe out all disciplinary distinctions under one new banner or flag. However, we undertake this "building project" with some humility. Given our backgrounds in organizational behavior, we realize that we have likely missed some of the nuances that separate customers from employees, as well as the similarities and differences in how they come to identify with organizations.

WHY CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COMPARISONS ARE POSSIBLE: SURFACING COMMON ASSUMPTIONS

There are several points at which the management and marketing literatures tend to converge when discussing organizational identification. First, scholars from both fields tend to focus on similar conceptualizations. Both management and marketing scholars view organizational identification as referring to an individual's self-definition and the inclusion of an organization in that definition. The importance of this conceptual overlap is not trivial, given the rather large disparities in how management and marketing scholars use identity-related terms when referring to organizations (see Brown, Dacin, Pratt, and Whetten 2006). We should note that this convergence on definitions is largely driven by marketing scholars' willingness to span disciplinary boundaries. For example, Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) and Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) drew on managerial research (e.g., Ashforth and Mael 1989; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail 1994), as well as on the social-psychological research from which organizational scholars draw (e.g., Turner 1985).

A second point of convergence between management and marketing literatures is that both literatures assume that membership in an organization is not necessary for identification to occur (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Pratt 1998; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Extant research in management suggests that individuals are predisposed to identify and to extend their definitions of self to social entities, such as organizations (Burke 1937; Glynn 1998). Moreover, research suggests that identification can exist in the absence of interpersonal interaction and group cohesion. As such, individuals need not interact with or even be members of organizations to identify with them; rather, organizations need only appear to reflect individuals' self-concepts (see Pratt 1998 on "affinity identification").

Finally, as noted above, both management and marketing scholars assume that organizational identification can and should be managed. That is, organizations can and do attempt to manage organizational images and individual associations in attempts to be more representative of individuals' unique identities (see Pratt 2001 and Dacin and Brown 2002 for reviews). They are able to do this because the expression and formation of organizational social identities are responsive to contextual conditions (Bartel 2001; Scott and Lane 2000). While the assumption of identification "malleability" is common to both disciplines, what has been less explored are commonalities among these literatures about how identification can be managed. This article addresses this gap.

Our review of both the management and marketing literatures regarding the tactics used to influence identification, as well as our review of the identification literature more broadly, suggests that there are a relatively small number of "core" theories that have served as the foundation of research on organizational identification and its management. These theories in turn suggest at least three fundamental "bases" for identification: (1) relationships, (2) behaviors, and (3) symbols. We argue that researchers have implicitly or explicitly built from these bases in discussing identification management. Our examples of these bases taken from the literature and discussed below

TABLE 1
Bases of Identification: Illustrative Examples of Theory and Research

Base	*Theoretical Perspective*	*Examples From Management and Marketing*
Relationships		
• Personal	Social interaction theory (e.g., Festinger et al. 1950; Zajonc 1968) Conversion theory (e.g., Lofland and Stark 1965) Early commitment theory (e.g., Kanter 1968; Sheldon 1971)	Arnett et al. (2003), Bendapudi and Berry (1997), Bullis and Bach (1989), Fournier (1998), McAlexander et al. (2002), Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), Morgan and Hunt (1994), Pratt (2000), Scott and Lane (2000)
• Impersonal	Social identity theory/self-categorization theory (e.g., Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1979)	Ashforth and Mael (1989), Bhattacharya et al. (1995), Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), Dutton et al. (1994), Pratt (1998, 2001), Ahearne et al. (2005), Bartel (2001)
Behaviors	Self-schema (e.g., Markus 1977; Markus and Wurf 1987) Identity theory/role theory (e.g., Stryker and Serpe 1982)	Ashforth (2001), Ibarra (1999), McAlexander et al. (2002), Pratt (1998, 2000), Schouten and McAlexander (1995), Solomon (1983)
Symbols	Extended self (e.g., James 1890; Maccoby 1980) Personal narratives (e.g., McAdams 2001; Singer 1995)	Belk (1988), Elsbach (2003), Czarniawska-Joerges (1994), Escalas (1997), Fournier (1998), Kleine et al. (1995), Schouten and McAlexander (1995), McAlexander et al. (2002), O'Conner (1997), Pratt (2000), Pratt and Rafaeli (2001), Solomon (1983)

are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive. A listing of these bases, the associated theories, and a sample of works reflecting each base is found in Table 1.

BUILDING FROM OUR COMMONALITIES: IDENTIFYING BASES OF IDENTIFICATION

Looking at Table 1, we can see that management and marketing scholars have, to varying degrees, tended to hone in on three interdependent but distinct bases of identification. Using this table a point of reference, we flesh out these various bases.

Relationships

One way that identification occurs (and consequently can be managed) is via personal and impersonal relationships. Personal relationships are shaped through social interactions. Specifically, the creation of strong "intragroup" bonds has been found to create a sense of cohesion and oneness within groups (Brewer and Gardner 1996), and such affiliation can be generalized to an entire organization. Several theories touch on this relationship. Social interaction theory (Festinger, Schachter, and Back 1950; Zajonc 1968), for example, suggests that interpersonal contact influences factors such as communication, feelings of similarity, and the development of close relationships. Similarly, theories of identity conversion (e.g., Lofland and Stark 1965) and mentoring (e.g., Kram 1983) and early work on organizational commitment (e.g., Kanter 1968; Sheldon 1971) have each argued that the formation of strong intragroup relationships are essential to creating what we today refer to as organizational identification.

In management, identification has been argued to occur via personal relationships when strong mentoring relationships form among organizational members (e.g., Bullis and Bach 1989; Pratt 2000). Pratt (2000) argued that strong interpersonal bonds within an organization both serve as a favorable comparison point with other nonwork relationships and serve to "encapsulate" members from nonmembers. More generally, interpersonal relationships in organizations, such as mentors and role models, have been viewed as important in fostering a sense of membership, meaning, and belongingness (Ibarra 1999). The marketing literature, by comparison, has spoken extensively on this issue in terms of "relationship marketing" (e.g., Arnett, German, and Hunt 2003; Bendapudi and Berry 1997; Morgan and Hunt 1994). Relationship marketing encourages organizations to view customers and other stakeholders as partners and to build relationships with these partners that emphasize creating value for both individuals and organizations. Brand or consumption communities are examples of avenues that have been shown to provide opportunities for establishing relationships between customers and brands, between customers and organizations, or between customers (McAlexander et al. 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001).

Both managerial and marketing researchers have also used impersonal relationships to explain identification with organizations. This research tends to draw on social identity theory and self-categorization theory. According to these theories, people classify themselves into a multitude of social categories, one of which is an organizational category (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Social identities are derived from those social categories to which one feels a sense of belonging and self-definition (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Hence, identifications are "impersonal" in the sense that connections between individuals and organizations are not due to social cohesion or strong interpersonal bonds; rather, they result from being part of the same social group. In the management literature, research focused on the antecedents of identification has tended to emphasize those characteristics, such as organizational distinctiveness, outgroup salience, and interorganizational competition, that distinguish organizations from other targets of identification (Ashforth and Mael 1989; Bartel 2001; Dutton et al. 1994; Mael and Ashforth 1992) and on characteristics, such as organizational prestige and attractiveness, that are likely to increase members' self-esteem (see Pratt 1998 for a review). The marketing literature takes a similar perspective on the antecedents to consumer-company identification. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) drew on social identity theory to present a model that predicts enhanced identification when an organization is perceived by a consumer to be distinctive, attractive, and salient. Comparisons that result in perceptions of congruence between personal and company identities provide individuals with self-definition and allow them to fulfill affiliation goals (Bhattacharya et al. 1995).

Behaviors

The relationship between behaviors and identity can be seen in both schema and role theories. Markus's schema theory argues that self-schemas develop in an attempt to explain one's own behavior in a particular domain (Markus and Wurf 1987). According to role theory, identities are parts of the self that represent participation in certain role-related behaviors. It is through these roles, and their associated interactions, that identity develops through a process of coming to know who and what we are (Stryker and Serpe 1982). Both schema theory and role theory see the relationship between identities and behaviors as reciprocal. In schema theory, for example, core conceptions of identity tend to be the most well elaborated and therefore have been found to affect behavior the most significantly (Markus 1977). Identity-related behaviors may consist of maintaining the identity or "trying on" a number of possible selves (Markus and Cross 1990). Similarly, in role theory, role requirements carry with them commonly held behavioral expectations that in turn provide purpose, meaning, and direction to individuals (Thoits 1983). While behaviors can clearly exist outside of roles, roles provide one of the most constructive and powerful avenues for the enactment of behaviors.

In management, both theories have been used in explaining member identification. Drawing on the work of Markus (1977), Pratt (1998) argued that to the degree that organizations can facilitate behavioral consistency at work, they can influence individuals' identity formation around organizational values and beliefs and thus foster identification with the organization. Therefore, mechanisms such as role structures, socialization, and rewards that serve to encourage behavioral consistency in organizations may also serve to influence identification within individual employees by fostering the formation of organizationally relevant schemas. In a similar vein, Ashforth (2001) adopted a role perspective on identity formation. Roles and their associated behaviors help locate an individual's self-conceptions in a particular domain and can influence one's identity and identification in at least two ways. First, since roles tend to dictate behavior, complying with behavioral norms and expectations may predispose one to identify with a role. Second, because roles are often public, they can be affirmed or not. The more one is affirmed in one's role, the greater the chance that one will identify with that role.

The links between sustained behaviors and identification are also presented in the marketing literature. Studies of Jeep (McAlexander et al. 2002) and Harley-Davidson motorcycle communities (Schouten and McAlexander 1995) illustrate the way in which a company can use behavioral rituals, events, and routines to promote feelings of organizational membership among consumers through shared experiences. Furthermore, organizationally relevant consumption behaviors set the stage for the numerous roles consumers play, such as mother, athlete, professional, and cook, and may help individuals define and validate new or existing roles (Solomon 1983).

Symbols

Organizational symbols, such as physical artifacts and stories, have also been shown to be important in fostering organizational identification. For example, both the management and the marketing literatures have used theories of the "extended self" to explain how physical symbols affect identity. According to William James (1890), possessions, also referred to as physical artifacts, can be defined broadly to include anything that can be associated with someone and can be represented physically, such as a flashy sports car, a beautiful daughter, or an apartment. As Maccoby (1980) noted, "the self is not just a physical entity bounded by skin, it is a psychological construct in which the concept of *me* and the concept of *my* are blended" (p. 252). Organizationally relevant physical symbols can become incorporated into the self-concept and thus can facilitate identification (Pratt and Rafaeli 2001). In addition to theories of the extended self, research has also incorporated social identity theory, depictions of "ideal selves," and narrative theories to explain how symbols influence identification.

Historically, marketing scholars have tended to emphasize the ways in which customers form relationships with organizations through the use of symbols, such as brands, products, and other artifacts (e.g., Belk 1988; Fournier

1998). Schouten and McAlexander (1995) described the way in which symbols surrounding Harley-Davidson—the bike itself, biker apparel, tattoos, long hair, and biker rituals—provide visual indicators of commitment to Harley-Davidson and are symbolic reflections of bikers' "core values," such as personal freedom, patriotism, and machismo. Ethnographic studies of Jeep have also shown that the vehicles themselves, the slogan "tread lightly," and the associations of Jeep with adventure and the outdoors, are symbolic representations of Jeep values such as fun, authenticity, protecting the environment, and access to off-road trails (McAlexander et al. 2002). Products serve as symbols of a "desired self" or representations of who one would like to be (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). They communicate social meaning (Solomon 1983) and identify individuals as members of specific communities or groups. In these ways, symbols serve as powerful influencers of identity formation for customers.

In management, symbols have been shown to have a substantial role to play in the way in which employees become attached with and within organizations (Pratt and Rafaeli 1997). To illustrate, drawing on social identity theory, Elsbach (2003) argued that physical symbols provide an avenue through which individuals can experience affirmation for important workplace identities; therefore, when physical space or other constraints limit employees' ability to display physical artifacts that enhance perceptions of distinctiveness, employees experience a threat to their personal and social identities. Pratt and Rafaeli (2001) drew on extended selves, social identity, and language theories in their recent work on "symbols as language." They argued that both organizations and individuals engage in "conversations" via physical symbols that serve to enact member identification.

While much less common than research on physical symbols in management and marketing, there is some evidence that narratives and other verbal symbols may influence an individual's identity. For example, research suggests that personal narratives influence how we come to interpret the numerous stories, images, events, thoughts, and roles in our lives (McAdams 2001; Singer 1995). From this perspective, individuals can be seen as actively constructing and communicating narratives of the self in an effort to convey life meaning and purpose. Personal narratives, formed through repeated exposure to group (e.g., organizational) stories, events, images, and roles, provide the mechanisms for identity formation and maintenance (e.g., Singer 1995).

Organizational researchers have to a limited degree explored the relationship between identity construction and organizational narratives (O'Conner 1997). While not always drawing directly from research on personal narratives, this research similarly suggests that organizational narratives help individuals experience a sense of individuality or distinctiveness associated with their organizational relationships (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994). This contributes to self-enhancement, self-reflection, and self-construction and can therefore help employees achieve greater levels of organizational identification (O'Conner 1997). From marketing, we are aware of few articles that have looked at consumer construction of narratives surrounding brands. Escalas (1997) examined consumers' stories about experiences with products and found that consumers with strong brand connections were more likely to write stories that included themes of brands as portraying images congruent with their self-concepts. It is not yet clear, however, whether or how consumer narratives might translate into organizational identification.

CREATING NEW COMMONALITIES: HOW IDENTIFICATION BASES INFORM THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFFILIATION DIMENSIONS AND IDENTIFICATION MANAGEMENT

Despite various points of synergy, the management and marketing literatures remain divided on the "target" of identification management attempts, largely as a result of their unique disciplinary foci. In this section, we attempt to replace the traditional dichotomization of "employees" versus "customers" with a more integrative and more comprehensive approach that focuses on the affiliation arrangements between individuals and organizations and the dimensions that characterize these arrangements. After their introduction, we then discuss how these affiliation dimensions relate to our identification bases and identification management.

In developing our arguments about affiliation dimensions, we draw largely on the work of Pfeffer and Baron (1988:264), who described three dimensions of externalization that exist between workers and organizations: the externalization of place, the externalization of administrative control over employees, and externalization through reductions in the duration of employment. Since this important initial work, the organizational rationale for and implications of these externalization factors have been examined by scholars exploring areas such as nonstandard and dispersed work arrangements (e.g., Davis-Blake and Uzzi 1993; Lautsch 2002).

We use Pfeffer and Baron's (1988) externalization factors as a starting point because externalization deals explicitly with the various types of work arrangements an individual can have with an organization. While we see the work on externalization factors as a logical point of departure, we use the distinct term *affiliation dimensions* for two main reasons. First, while Pfeffer and Baron's factors refer to the degree of externalization of employees from organizations, affiliation is intended to capture nonemployment relationships with organizations as well. As such, the use of *affiliation* allows us to include a broader range of individual-organizational relationships and therefore to establish more common ground between the management and marketing literatures. Moreover, our use of *affiliation* demarks our interest in how externalization influences members' psychological orientation (i.e., identification) toward organizations. Thus, while organizations may have employment relationships with members that vary in terms of where they are located (externalization by place), it is the physical proximity outcomes of these arrangements that influence identification. Motivated by these distinctions, we present three affiliation dimensions that characterize individual-organizational relationships—physical proximity, reward-based control, and temporal contact—and argue that these dimensions may uniquely influence the effectiveness of each of the identification bases we have identified. These dimensions are continuous in nature and thus move us away from traditional categorical views of organizational attachments.

Physical Proximity

Pfeffer and Baron (1988) used *externalization of place* to refer to where an employee works compared with his or her coworkers. Taken more broadly to refer to any individual (member or not), the proximity dimension refers to the degree of physical closeness to an organization and relates to whether an interaction with the organization is organizationally colocated or not colocated. By *organizationally colocated*, we refer to whether the interaction takes place at the organizational site. By this definition, members who work at the organizational site would be considered highly proximal or colocated, while members who work off site or nonmembers who are remote from the organizational site would be seen as distal or not colocated. Similarly, consumers who have on-site interactions with organizations would be considered to be more highly proximal compared with those who do not have such contact.

Research, especially on identification in distributed groups, suggests that a lack of physical proximity can hurt identification (e.g., Wiesenfeld et al. 1999).[2] More generally, an individual's identification with an organization occurs as a function of situational cues that signal to the individual that he or she is part of a larger whole, with shared interests and common outcomes (Rousseau 1998). When such cues are absent, the potential for identification is diminished. Consequently, individuals who are dispersed from their organizations have been shown to increase their likelihood of replacing their organizational identification with identifications associated with more proximal categories (Scott 1997).

Using the logic of our identification bases, this effect can be explained in at least three ways. First, physical proximity helps members form membership categories. Thus, professors at the University of Illinois's business school may feel distinct from those at the University of Michigan's business school in part because of their difference in geographic location. Additionally, physical proximity increases an individual's visibility in association with an organization, which in turn increases the salience and accessibility of the organization as a social category (Dutton et al. 1994). Second, physical proximity helps foster the formation of personal relationships. Extrapolating from social interaction theory (Festinger et al. 1950; Zajonc 1968), proximity facilitates interpersonal contact, which in turn fosters the personal relationships that foster identification. Similarly, research on embeddedness and identification (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, and Gruen 2005) suggests that when individuals are embedded in a social context, they are more likely to have long-term, stable relationships with the social group. This results in increased interpersonal interaction and a heightened sense of organizational importance and salience (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Scott and Lane 2000). Thus, physical proximity seems to influence identification through its effects on both impersonal and personal relationship development.

Finally, proximity influences the availability and salience of organizational symbols for both members and nonmembers. For members, symbols may take the form of organizational dress, technology or machinery, the office space itself, organizational stories, or artifacts. For nonmembers, such as consumers, symbols may take the form of advertising, the products themselves, or organizational events. These symbolic forms are important because they convey identity by demarcating who is "in" and "out," by identifying organizational members, and by implying a collective organizational identity (Elsbach 2003; Pratt and Rafaeli 1997). Thus, proximity may also influence identification through an individual's exposure to organizational symbols. Taken together, the lack of physical proximity with organizationally relevant people influences an individual's access to organizational relationships and symbols.

Proposition 1: All other things being equal, when physical proximity is low, individuals are less likely to identify with an organization.

In terms of identification management, we would suggest that the relational and symbolic bases would be the most effective in managing individuals at a distance. As marketers have known for years, dressing celebrities in organizational garb (to create desirable organizational categories), conducting relationship marketing, and distributing portable organizational symbols (e.g., McAlexander et al. 2002; Pratt and Rafaeli 2001) and products can be highly effective in creating identification for nonproximal individuals. By contrast, given that direct organizational control over individuals likely wanes as dispersion increases, the behavioral base is not likely to be as effective for managing the identification of nonproximal individuals.

Reward-Based Control

Pfeffer and Baron (1988) used *externalization by administrative control* to refer to whether an individual is paid or not paid in conjunction with his or her relationship to an organization. Furthermore, if an individual is paid, consideration is made for whether payment is extended by the organization or by a third party (e.g., an employment agency in the case of temporary workers). Because of the role of pay as a behavioral reinforcer (Hamner 1974), we refer to the affiliation dimension associated with this type of externalization as reward-based control. By implication, an organization with low administrative control (e.g., one working with volunteers or consumers) is likely to have lower reward-based control than one whose administrative control is direct (e.g., the organization directly monitors and pays an individual).

Since rewards influence behavior, and control over organizationally relevant behaviors is important for the process of identification via identity change (Ashforth 2001; Pratt 1998), when organizations are less able to directly provide individuals with rewards, such as financial incentives for behavior, they lessen their control over individual behavior and weaken their chances to use the behavioral base for identification. This should be true not only for volunteer and contract workers but for customers as well.

Proposition 2: All other things being equal, when reward-based control is low, individuals are less likely to identify with an organization.

In terms of identification management, we would suggest accordingly that the behavioral base should be the most relevant. When reward-based control is highest, organizations will be more able to manage the behavioral base of identification; when it is lowest, the reverse should be true. Extrapolating from our arguments above, the assignment of organizationally relevant roles to nonpaid individuals—such as providing clear task guidelines for volunteers and temporary workers and providing clear behavioral norms associated with brands (e.g., "Marlboro men" do not eat quiche)—should help bolster identification in the absence of reward-based control. Moreover, financial incentives, such as coupons and free samples, may also facilitate identification to the degree that they lead to behavioral consistency.

We believe that the relationship base might act to influence the potency of the behavioral base. With regard to impersonal relationships (i.e., categorical memberships), when members view themselves as belonging to a group (regardless of employment status), they tend to deindividuate and act like prototypical group members (Hogg, Terry, and White 1995). Additionally, fostering close interpersonal bonds may help influence behavior because "liking" is a powerful base of persuasion (Cialdini 2001). The marketing literature shows evidence of companies attempting to manage the behavioral base of identification among those over whom they lack reward-based control through the formation of "consumption communities" (McAlexander et al. 2002; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). These communities, typically centered around a brand (Jeep, Harley-Davidson), not only engage individuals in brand-related events, rituals, and other behaviors related to product use and promotion but also foster the formation of strong interpersonal bonds. These social bonds increase the likelihood that organizationally relevant behaviors will continue and that identification will be facilitated.

Temporal Contact

Pfeffer and Baron (1988) used *duration of employment* to refer to part-time versus full-time and short versus long terms of employment. We believe that duration influences identification through temporal contact, or the amount of time one spends in contact with an organization. Such contact can be physical or technologically mediated. Moreover, it can be "real" or imagined (e.g., daydreaming about the Walt Disney Company). Temporal contact has at least two subdimensions related to it. One relates to the total length of time—in terms of days, months, and years—that an individual is exposed to an organization (e.g., tenure). Empirical studies have supported the relationship between organizational tenure and identification, showing that individuals with longer organizational tenure not only have stronger identification but attach more importance to their organizational identification (e.g., Hall and Schneider 1972). A second subdimension of temporal contact refers to the episodic nature of the affiliation. For example, employees can be divided into full- and part-time employees, as well by a host of other contingent or temporary work arrangements (Risher 1997). Similarly, customers and other nonmembers can vary in terms of how often they make contact with organizations or organizational representatives (McAlexander et al. 2002).

We are unaware of research that looks directly at the influence of various temporal factors on organizational identification. One exception, however, is Hall and Schneider (1972) and Hall, Schneider, and Nygren (1970), who looked at tenure and identification and demonstrated that over time, individuals become more invested in their roles with respect to organizations and invest more of their identities in these relationships. Thus, low temporal contact may erode role investment and the behavioral base of identification. With regard to personal relationships, Rousseau (1998) described how individuals who interact with organizations over long periods of time are more likely to experience sustained or deep-structure identification. Similarly, with regard to impersonal relationships, Dutton et al. (1994) argued that attractiveness to an organization increases with the length and intensity of exposure. Finally, research on narratives suggests that the longer an individual is affiliated with an entity, the more elaborated the personal narrative regarding that entity (e.g., Singer 1995) will be and the more likely identification is to occur. Taken collectively, these studies suggested the following proposition:

Proposition 3: All other things being equal, when temporal contact is low, individuals are less likely to identify with an organization.

When the duration of contact with an organization is limited, the organization should face the greatest challenges to identification management. When affiliation is characterized by low levels of temporal contact, organizations are limited in their ability to control exposure to important relationships, behaviors, and symbols. In this scenario, an organization will need to address this through strategies that attempt to lengthen temporal contact to enhance exposure to more of these bases. In the case of employees and volunteers, this may take the form of retention programs or mentorship programs. In the case of consumers, this may mean efforts to foster repeat exposure to the organization in the form of frequent advertising or through heightened relationship marketing. Given that there are multiple means of establishing contact, organizations that are able to use any of the bases to secure the attention of and sustained temporal contact with their target audiences should be effective. Further research is needed to establish which of the bases, if any, might be most effective in facilitating contact.

DISCUSSION

We have attempted to help bridge research in management and marketing on organizational identification. We have done so by pointing out that both literatures share common definitions and assumptions, as well as similar "bases of identification" that are used in identification management. We have suggested that an integration of the management and marketing disciplines, and therefore the development of a more comprehensive theoretical framework, could be furthered by looking at affiliation dimensions rather than at discrete categories, such as customer or employee. In particular, we have discussed how different types of affiliation arrangements may be amenable to different types of bases when managing identification.

There are several theoretical and practical implications that follow from these arguments. To begin, while it is perhaps obvious, our review suggests that "traditional" customers (nonproximal, unpaid, and episodic) will pose a greater challenge for organizational identification management than traditional (colocated, paid, and full-time) employees. This suggests that management scholars interested in managing the identification of nontraditional members should take a closer look at the marketing literature, because the techniques for managing identification in this discipline may be more observable and more diverse than the techniques used in the identification management of traditional employees. Thus, we believe that the marketing literature is largely an untapped and fertile ground for management scholars. Our arguments also suggest that as we continue to gather techniques for managing the identification of employees, we should keep in mind what base these techniques draw on and the conditions under which the availability of these techniques and bases should be most influential.

Research should also assess the implication of combining bases in the management of identification. As should be clear from our discussion thus far, the relational, behavioral, and symbolic bases are interrelated. Though they each draw on different theoretical traditions, in practice, relationships, behaviors, and symbols can influence one another. Moreover, there are some techniques for managing identification that occur at the intersection of bases. For example, rituals are, by definition, both behavioral and symbolic. Similarly, some relationships are mandated by role behaviors (e.g., customer-provider) and thus have qualities of both relational and behavioral bases. Finally, some impersonal relationships in organizations, such as figureheads, are largely symbolic. Perhaps these "boundary-spanning" techniques will be more effective than techniques that fall squarely within one base. More generally, research should examine whether there is variation in the potency of these bases (i.e., how individual differences play a role, such as the role of extroversion on relationship potency), as well as whether and how bases can work together additively or multiplicatively to influence organizational identification. Toward this end, research might also look into how the bases, alone or in concert, may lead to breaks in identification (deidentification) or to either negative (disidentification) or conflicted (ambivalent identification) attachments with an organization.

We have also suggested a strategy of looking at affiliation dimensions rather than at categories, such as customer or employee. We have proposed three such dimensions: physical proximity, reward-based control, and temporal contact. We believe that calling attention to such dimensions has two related benefits. First, it emphasizes important differences among individuals who might otherwise be lumped into the same category (e.g., employees). This strongly suggests that similar categories of individuals may require different identification management strategies depending on their unique affiliation dimensions. Second, calling attention to affiliation dimensions helps emphasize common ground among different types of individuals who may, on the surface, appear different. For example, it may be that managing the identification of customers who have fairly consistent physical proximity and temporal contact with organizationally relevant others (e.g., as in consumption communities) will be more like managing the identification of nontraditional employees or volunteer workers than it is like managing the identification of customers low in proximity and temporal contact. Both of these benefits allow for a more fine-grained approach to organizational identification that is better situated to take into account the uniqueness of individual-organizational relationships.

While we have focused our attention on three main affiliation dimensions, we believe that there are likely to be other affiliation dimensions beyond what we have discussed here. We arrived at physical proximity, reward-based control, and temporal contact through our use of Pfeffer and Baron's (1988) work on externalized forms of labor as a point of departure. While a logical first step, research suggests other possibilities. For example, Rock and Pratt (2002) noted that one's social context is important for understanding one's identification. Specifically, they argued that whom one spends time with, in terms of the proportion of members and nonmembers, will influence identification with an organization. Taking a broader view, the composition of one's social networks, and the attitudes toward a focal organization of members in that network, may influence an individual's identification.

To close, we believe that the increasing interest in organizational identification among management and marketing scholars provides a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary conversations and insights regarding this phenomenon. Our analysis suggests that bridging insights from both management and marketing on how organizations manage identification has the potential to enrich both fields.

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NOTES

1. Our focus in this article is on identification with an organization, not its products (e.g., brands). However, we often extrapolate from marketing work done on corporate brands.

2. While we acknowledge that technology is sometimes used to promote a sense of "psychological proximity" among dispersed workers, a focus on psychological proximity is beyond the scope of this article.

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