

# THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

## Departmental Research Seminar

### Identities without Products: When the Preference for Self-Linked Products Weakens

By



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**Date : 12 Nov 2024 (Tue)**  
**Time : 10:30 am – 12 noon**  
**Venue : GH120C, PolyU**

#### Abstract

Extant literature and common marketing practices converge around the idea that stronger self-links to a brand and its products lead to increased brand loyalty. In this article, we challenge this conventional notion by revealing situations where the preference for self-linked brands diminishes, despite the self-links remaining unchanged. We introduce a key distinction between two types of consumer identities based on whether identity expression relies on specific products: product-dependent (e.g., chef) and product-independent (e.g., foodie). Our theory posits that self-links to products exert less influence on preference when a product-independent identity is prominent. Across five studies examining consumer leisure identities, we find that priming a product-independent (vs. product-dependent) identity reduces preference for self-linked products/brands. Interestingly, it can also enhance preference for negatively self-linked (dissociative) products/brands among materialistic consumers. In a sixth experiment and a real-world Facebook study, we illustrate that the extent to which consumers' identity is chronically product-independent can be assessed either directly or indirectly from social media interests, allowing for more effective targeting of brand-switching appeals. Adding to the literature on the symbolic role of products in identity expression, our research uniquely investigates the functional role of products in identity expression and its profound impact on product/brand preference.

**Dr Liad Weiss** is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Warwick Business School. His research centers on consumer judgment and decision-making, examining how psychological processes related to self-concept and identity shape these outcomes. Dr Weiss's primary research stream, Egocentric Categorization, investigates how consumers categorize products and brands relative to themselves, revealing how this self-referential perspective influences cognition (e.g., memory, response time), perception (e.g., product and self-judgments), and behavior (e.g., product choice, willingness to pay). His work, published in leading journals such as the *Journal of Consumer Research* and *Journal of Marketing Research*, provides valuable insights into how identity shapes consumer decisions and informs critical marketing strategies around segmentation, targeting, positioning, and branding.

**All interested are welcome.**



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