

There is more than one kind of consumer involvement. Depending on the antecedents of involvement (e.g., the product's pleasure value, the product's sign or symbolic value, risk importance, and probability of purchase error), consequences on consumer behavior differ. The authors therefore recommend measuring an involvement profile, rather than a single involvement level. These conclusions are based on an empirical analysis of 14 product categories.

Measuring Consumer Involvement Profiles

The degree of consumer involvement in a product category is now widely recognized as a major variable relevant to advertising strategy (Ray 1982; Rothschild 1979; Vaughn 1980). Depending on their level of involvement, individual consumers differ in the extent of their decision process and their search for information. Depending on their level of involvement, consumers may be passive or active when they receive advertising communication, and limit or extend their processing of this communication. To adapt to these differences, advertisers may consider a number of operational variables such as the type of media, the degree of repetition, the length of the message, the tone of the message, and the quantity of information (Tyebjee 1979). In practice, however, one question arises frequently: how can we know whether a specific group of consumers is indeed highly involved in some product category?

Today, this question generally receives qualitative assessment from advertising and product managers. When quantitative indicators of involvement are used, the instruments often boil down to a single scale (Vaughn 1980) or to a single-item measure of perceived importance (Agostini 1978; Hupfer and Gardner 1971; Lastovicka and Bonfield 1982; Traylor 1981). Should involvement be reduced to a single dimension? Does "perceived importance" alone captures all the richness of the involvement concept? Is it sufficient to classify people in terms of a single involvement indicator or should involvement be analyzed in terms of multiple facets, which need to be measured simultaneously if one wants to provide

managers with a full picture of the type of involvement of a specific target group?

Fifteen years ago, in their extensive review of the involvement concept, Kiesler, Collins, and Miller (1969) called it a pot-pourri concept which may encompass several independent elements. More recently Rothschild (1979) concluded that no *single* indicator of involvement could satisfactorily describe, explain, or predict involvement. In line with these remarks, we suggest that marketing researchers stop thinking in terms of single indicators of the involvement level and instead use an "involvement profile" to specify more fully the nature of the relationship between a consumer and a product category.

Our objective is to provide marketing and advertising managers with a scale specifying the nature and level of consumer involvement that is reliable and valid but also convenient. Satisfying the convenience criterion implies that the items should make sense for any product class—from yogurt to bras, from color TV sets to detergents—and that the total number of items allows the scale to be inserted at little extra cost in a usage and attitude survey.

In the next section we review the uses of the involvement concept, as revealed by the literature and managers' interviews with the authors. This review suggests that consumers differ not only in level of involvement, but also in type of involvement. Then we describe a method by which indicators can be developed for each type of involvement. Finally, data analysis provides evidence about the reliability and validity of the indicators as well as the usefulness of thinking in terms of involvement profile to predict selected aspects of consumers' decision processes and receptivity to advertising.

INVOLVEMENT OR INVOLVEMENTS?

Research on consumer involvement goes back to Sherif and Cantril's (1947) early work. Many authors have re-

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viewed this field of consumer research and theory (Arora 1982; Assael 1981; De Bruicker 1979; Engel and Blackwell 1982; Ray 1973; Robertson 1976). It is not our objective here to add another review, but to focus on *different* facets or types of involvement.

In theory, involvement is considered an individual difference variable. It is a causal or motivating variable with a number of consequences on the consumer's purchase and communication behavior. Thus, depending on their level of involvement, consumers will differ greatly in the extensiveness of their purchase decision process (indicated by the number of attributes used to compare brands, the length of the choice process, and the willingness to reach a maximum or a threshold level of satisfaction) or in their processing of communications (indicated for instance by the extent of information search, receptivity to advertising, and the number and type of cognitive responses generated during exposure) (Krugman 1965, 1967).

The involvement literature and in-depth interviews with advertising managers suggest that the hypothetical construct "involvement" is not a unitary one. There are different views of involvement as revealed by the uses of the concept and the conditions imposed by different researchers to manipulate and measure it.

The Uses of the Concept

Researchers and practitioners tend not to use the word "involvement" alone, but rather imply a distinction between types of involvement. For example, Houston and Rothschild (1977) make a distinction between enduring involvement and situational involvement. The latter reflects concern with a specific situation such as a purchase occasion or election. The former, stemming from the individual, reflects a general and permanent concern with the product class. The crucial difference between these two types of involvement is suggested by Rothschild (1979, p. 77): an individual might usually purchase various low-price brands of liquor in a stochastic manner because of low enduring involvement; on the occasion of a visit by the boss, however, a high involvement decision would be made to purchase a specific brand. Enduring involvement derives from the perception that the product is related to centrally held values (Arora 1982), those defining one's singularity and identity, one's ego (Ostrom and Brock 1968; Rokeach 1968). Situational involvement is heightened when the consumer perceives risk in a specific situation.

Another differentiation is subsumed by the practitioners' tendency to speak of "emotional involvement" (Vaughn 1980). Such a qualification supposes a contrario that there could be a non-emotional involvement, such as what French sociologist Chombart de Lauwe (1979) calls "rational involvement," devoid of any affect. For instance, confronting a choice of steam irons, the consumer would merely try to optimize a cost-benefit ratio, with no emotion or interest toward the product category.

Pleasure is absent. This would not be the case for the choice of a restaurant (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982).

A final differentiation is highlighted by authors who speak of "personal involvement" as though there were another, impersonal, kind of involvement. For instance French semiologist Baudrillard (1968, 1970) posits that "there is involvement only when there is sign." Looking at some product alternatives, the consumer looks for the difference that corresponds to his or her own identity, or ego. When product choice is perceived as the sign of oneself, involvement is present. In their early work Sherif and Cantril (1947) made a similar restriction. They spoke of "ego involvement" to emphasize the personal and emotional nature of involvement. Greenwald (1965) proposes the term "solution involvement" to denote the commitment of the consumer in the search for the right solution to a problem, and views this form of involvement as independent of ego involvement stemming from the individual's very personal and central values.

The Antecedents of Involvement

As a hypothetical construct, involvement cannot be measured directly. Looking at empirical research, one finds a great diversity in the operational indicators of involvement—further reflecting the differences in meaning of the construct for different researchers.

Sherif and Hovland (1961) typically recruited their "highly involved" subjects among WCTU women, emphasizing three possible antecedents of their involvement. Involvement could stem from the "intrinsic importance" of an issue, its "personal meaning" (Sherif and Hovland 1961, p. 197), a public stand taken, or strong affect *vis-à-vis* an issue (Kiesler, Collins, and Miller 1969).

Working in the cognitive dissonance paradigm, Zimbardo (1960) experimentally manipulated involvement. In choice or attitude change experiments "highly involved" subjects were led to believe that they would have to make a public stand on their opinion in front of a group of spectators. "Low involved" subjects, on the contrary, perceived their choice or opinions as inconsequential. Such an operationalization typically manipulated a perceived risk antecedent of involvement (Chaffee and McLeod 1973) and specially a psychological risk related to the image one might project.

In marketing, price is probably the most commonly used indicator of involvement. Because the risks of a mispurchase are high when price is high, consumers are likely to be involved (Rothschild 1979). Durable goods also have been used to create conditions of high involvement because, in case of mispurchase, one is stuck with a poor product for a long time. Among those goods, dresses are generally considered as extremely ego-involving because of their symbolic meaning *vis-à-vis* relevant others, their capacity to express one's lifestyle or personality (Levy 1959), or their hedonic character (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982).

Empirical Data

Empirical data also highlight the necessity of thinking in terms of different types of involvement. For example, Lastovicka and Gardner (1979) asked their subjects to evaluate 14 products on a series of items measuring importance, commitment, and affect. Their analysis revealed three types of products: low involvement, high involvement, and special interest or enthusiast products (products expressing one's hobby). The difference between the two last types lay in the presence of affect and hedonic character in the latter case.

To summarize, our review of uses and indicators of involvement and of empirical research suggests that the (permanent or situational) state of "involvement" may stem from different types of antecedents. Frequent use of the word "involvement" with a qualifier (*personal* involvement, *emotional* involvement, etc.) suggests that the source of involvement is important information and that researchers or managers should not be content with knowing only that an individual is or is not involved. Knowing the level of involvement offers a static description. Understanding of the sources of involvement provides a dynamic picture of the consumer's subjective situation and gives clues as to what appeals should be used in communicating with consumers.

Beyond controversies over definitions of involvement, our review of current research and practices indicates five antecedents, or facets, of involvement.

1. The perceived importance of the product (its personal meaning).
2. The perceived risk associated with the product purchase, which in turn has two facets (Bauer 1967):
 - the perceived importance of negative consequences in case of poor choice and
 - the perceived probability of making such a mistake
3. The symbolic or sign value attributed by the consumer to the product, its purchase, or its consumption. This differentiates functional risk from psychosocial risk (Bauer 1967)
4. The hedonic value of the product, its emotional appeal, its ability to provide pleasure and affect.

Instead of developing a composite of items tapping these different sources to obtain a single index of involvement level, it seems essential to keep the full picture of the nature of consumer involvement by measuring the consumers' position on each of these five facets—thus providing their involvement profile.

Before turning to the proposed measurement method, we should note that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the facets of the involvement profile and Houston and Rothschild's distinction between enduring and situational involvement. Two facets of the involvement profile correspond to enduring, nonsituational, aspects of the consumer's relationship to a product: the perceived importance of the product and its hedonic value. Two other facets, however, are more difficult to classify:

the perceived risk associated with the product and the sign value attributed to the product. Certain products entail a risk in all circumstances (e.g., a vacuum cleaner), whereas for other products the risk depends on the situation (e.g., a wine to be drunk alone or with the boss). The former case could be described as enduring involvement, the latter as situational involvement. Similarly, certain products may have an enduring symbolic value, whereas other products may have a symbolic value only in the presence of *relevant others*.

METHOD

Our objective was to create a reliable and valid measure for each of the facets of involvement. Following Churchill's (1979) suggestions, once the facets were identified, we generated a pool of items for each facet. Sources of these items were twofold, a literature review and in-depth interviews of a sample of housewives. Three surveys were necessary to purify the measures and obtain five scales that would be satisfactory psychometrically but also short enough to be of practical use. Two preliminary data collection waves were completed with samples of about 100 housewives, each person being asked about several products. The results reported hereafter are based on the third wave, for which a sample of 207 housewives was recruited on the basis of age and socioeconomic quotas. Face-to-face interviewing was done at home. Each housewife was interviewed on two product categories, with a systematic rotation of product categories by interviewee. Thus, the data analysis was based on 414 cases. Fourteen product categories were studied. To be qualified for the interview, in addition to meeting the sociodemographic criteria of the quotas, the housewife had to be a consumer of the two products.

Each facet of involvement was measured by a multi-item scale with a 5-point Likert-type response format (fully disagree to fully agree). Table 1 lists some items corresponding to each facet that were used in the third and final data collection.

In creating conditions whereby the facets could appear independent if such were the case, the selection of the stimulus products was crucial. Fourteen products were selected to represent contrasting profiles on the dimensions of perceived sign value, perceived hedonic value, perceived risk, and perceived importance. These products were suggested by qualitative in-depth interviewing of housewives; for each dimension, the housewives were asked what typical product came to mind among four categories (food, durables, textile, and drugs). For instance TV sets, washing machines, dresses, and bras were mentioned as high risk products (the consequences of a mispurchase are great). Low-price frequently purchased items were at the other extreme. When asked what products were devoid of any hedonic character, the housewives mentioned detergents, vacuum cleaners, and irons. For the housewives these products are ties to household chores. At the other extreme (high hedonic character),

Table 1
MEASURES OF THE PRESUMED FACETS
 (translated from original French items)

Facet	Number of items	Code name	Examples of items
Product perceived importance	4	Importance	_____ is very important to me. For me _____ does not matter.
Perceived importance of negative consequences of a mispurchase	3	Risk importance	When you get a _____, it's not a big deal if you make a mistake.
Subjective probability of a mispurchase	3	Risk probability	When you get a _____, it's hard to make a bad choice.
Hedonic value of the product class	5	Pleasure	I can't say that I particularly like _____.
Perceived sign value of the product class	4	Sign	You can really tell about a person by the _____ she picks out.

many food items came to mind (wine, chocolate, yogurt, jams, etc.) as well as perfumes and dresses. In terms of sign value, dresses, bras, jeans, wines, perfumes, and cars were mentioned spontaneously.

A choice had to be made among all the mentioned products. In this selection process we dropped products lacking substantial penetration (e.g., only a minority of housewives wear jeans) and products which presumably were high (or low) on all facets (cars, perfume, paper towels); such products would prevent the facets from appearing distinct. Finally, we did not retain products purchased essentially by the husband (cars). The final list of products consists of washing machines, vacuum cleaners, irons, TV sets, dresses, bras, detergents, shampoo, facial soaps, toothpaste, oil, yogurt, chocolate, and champagne. As we show subsequently (Table 3), mean scores of each product category for each facet showed high correspondence with the *a priori* judgments.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FACETS

We first examine the quality of each scale. Discriminant validity also is assessed. Then special emphasis is given to the analysis of the relationships between facets. Finally, we look at predictive validity by focusing on the relationships of the facets to consumers' decision processes and communication receptivity.

Evaluation of the Quality of Each Scale

Two criteria were used to evaluate each scale, multiproduct fit and reliability. The first criterion is very important if one wants to build a tool appropriate for any product. Unfortunately many items that would fit well

in the case of, say, washing machines are found silly by the interviewee when applied to yogurt and vice-versa. Consequently two surveys were necessary to prune a large initial item base. Items were rejected if they had a significant number of nonresponses or don't-know answers (and after negative feedback from the field team about the interviewees' actual reaction to them). At the third data collection phase, all items met the first criterion. The second criterion is Cronbach's alpha measure of internal consistency of a scale (Carmines and Zeller 1979). To make the full instrument easy to use in commercial market studies, we limited each scale to no more than five items; for reliability purposes, each scale had no less than three items. Despite the small number of items per scale, the Cronbach's alpha values proved satisfactory—importance .80, sign .90, pleasure .88, risk importance .82, and risk probability .72.

Trait and Discriminant Validity

Campbell (1960) and Nunnally (1978) suggest that each scale should measure a single dimension if it is considered to have "trait validity." Discriminant validity of each scale represents the distinctiveness of each scale *vis-à-vis* others. It might be possible—despite different names and items and good alpha values—for two scales to be so correlated that they cannot be considered as measuring different concepts. They would lack discriminant validity (Campbell 1960). To test simultaneously trait and discriminant validity, we undertook a factor analysis of the items using all 414 observations. To have trait validity, a scale should load on one and only one factor. To have discriminant validity, a scale should not load on the same factor as another scale.

Because the scales tap different facets of the same concept, the factors should not be expected *a priori* to be orthogonal. With this in mind, we used an oblique factor analysis. The eigenvalue criterion leads to four significant factors, reproducing 66% of the total variance. Table 2 reports the loadings of the items.

The loading patterns show that each scale is single-factored (trait validity). As predicted by theory (Bauer 1967), each dimension of perceived risk loads on a factor. However, "perceived importance of the product" and the first dimension of risk do not display discriminant validity, but instead load on the same factor. Therefore, in further analyses, these items are merged to form a single scale of seven items (resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of .87). Its code name is "imporisk"—denoting that for consumers to deem a product important is akin to feeling that a mispurchase would have high negative consequences.

From this data analysis, we conclude that the involvement profile should have four distinct facets.

1. Imporisk (the perceived importance of the product and the perceived importance of the consequences of a mispurchase).
2. The subjective probability of a mispurchase.

Table 2
OBLIQUE FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE ITEMS OF THE
INVOLVEMENT FACETS^a

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Importance 1	.59			
Importance 2	.56			
Importance 3	.62			
Importance 4	.74			
Pleasure 1		-.73		
Pleasure 2		-.68		
Pleasure 3		-.82		
Pleasure 4		-.67		
Pleasure 5		-.58		
Sign 1			.78	
Sign 2			.94	
Sign 3			.73	
Sign 4			.77	
Risk importance 1	.62			
Risk importance 2	.74			
Risk importance 3	.74			
Risk probability 1				.76
Risk probability 2				.64
Risk probability 3				.50

^aOmitted loadings are inferior to .25.

3. The hedonic value of the product class.
4. The perceived sign value of the product class.

It appears that involvement cannot simply be equated with perceived risk. Our results provide a direct and positive response to Chaffee and McLeod's (1973) conclusion after their literature review: "Although perceived risk appears clearly a sufficient condition for involvement, it is problematic whether it is a necessary one. There would seem to be a number of more positive sources of involvement, such as rewards inherent in the product after purchase" (p. 389).

What Are the Relationships Between Facets?

Oblique factors are not expected to be independent because the facets belong to the same construct. The following table is the matrix of the correlations between facets, computed over all 414 observations (each facet score is measured by the scale described before).

	Imporisk	Risk probability	Sign
Imporisk			
Risk probability	.47		
Sign	.40	.16	
Pleasure	.46	.15	.53

A relationship does exist between facets. However, the correlations indicate that one facet cannot be fully predicted by another. It is not possible to pick up a single index, for no single facet alone catches the richness of the relationship between a consumer and a product class. The extent of correlations warns that a consumer may be high on one facet but low on another. Two scatterplots illustrate the relationships between facets of in-

volvement. Figure 1 shows how the perceived sign value varies with the perceived importance of consequences (imporisk). Each point corresponds to the average scale scores of a product category, computed over all respondents interrogated on that product category. We see that, despite their visible covariation, one facet cannot be fully predicted by the other. For example, though they have similar sign values, chocolate and irons are perceived differently in terms of the importance of consequences. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between perceived sign value and perceived pleasure value, using average scale scores of each product category.

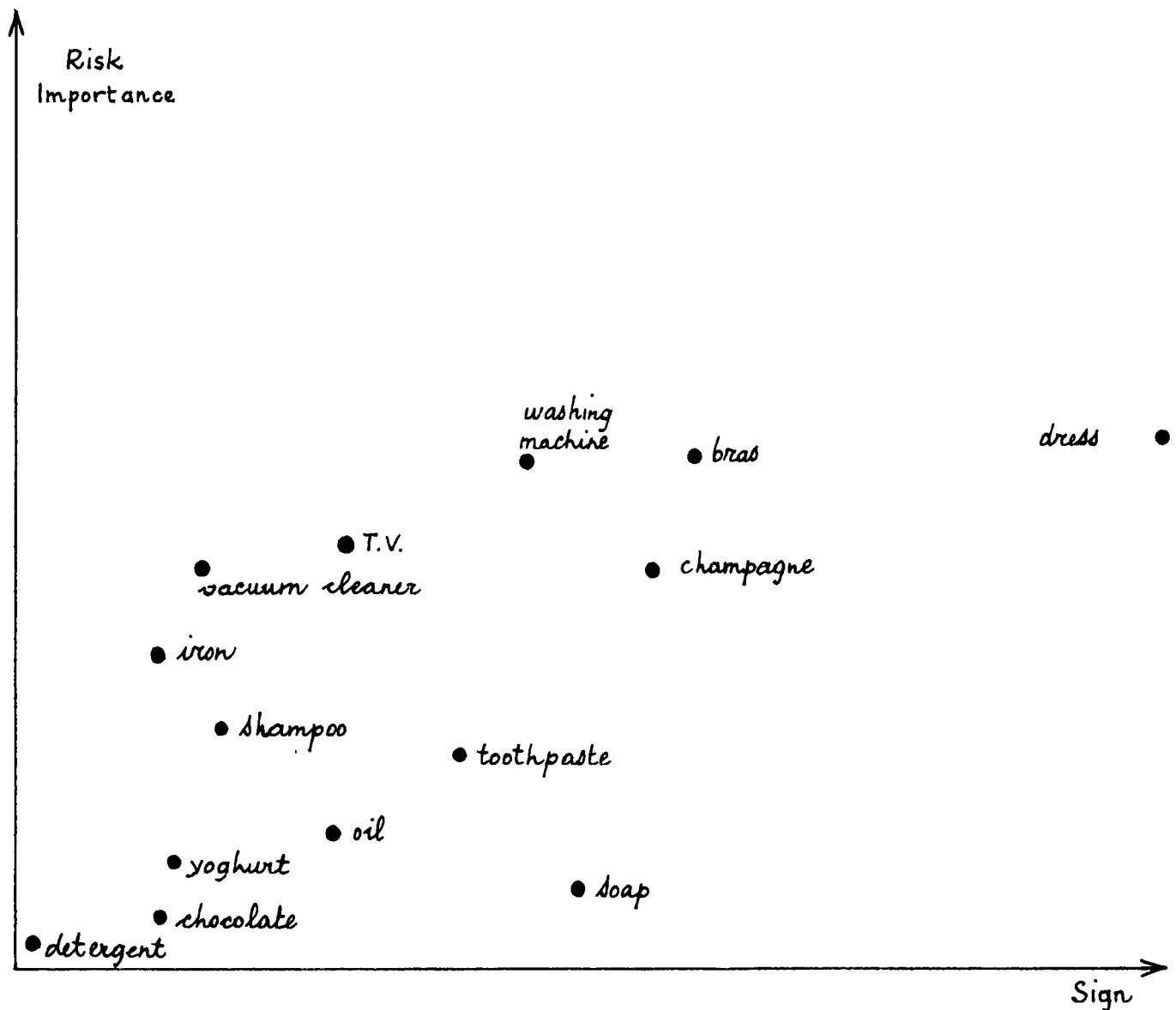
These scatter plots suggest the desirability of measuring the full *involvement profile* of a consumer in a product category because no facet alone summarizes consumers' relationships to products. Table 3 describes the average profiles of the product categories on the four facets. There is a good correspondence between empirical data and the *a priori* judgments that led to the selection of this product sample. However, the profiles of some products warrant a comment. The involvement profile of washing machines differs from that of vacuum cleaners or irons. There is pleasure value in purchasing a washing machine for it liberates the housewives by giving them free time, whereas the latter products necessitate the housewives' presence and evoke "bondage" to household chores. Devoid of any hedonic or sign value, vacuum cleaners create risk involvement. A vacuum cleaner is an expensive durable product and in case of a poor choice one is stuck with it for many years. Furthermore, there are many different features on the various brands and the consumer may not feel at all assured of making a good choice. Her subjective probability of mispurchase is high. Facial soap position mirrors soap advertising appeals. There is no mention anymore of the washing power, but rather the fragrance and the physical and psychological sensations. Facial soap advertising is

Table 3
INVOLVEMENT PROFILES^a

	Importance of negative consequences	Subjective probability of mispurchase	Pleasure value	Sign value
Dresses	121	112	147	181
Bras	117	115	106	130
Washing machines	118	109	106	111
TV sets	112	100	122	95
Vacuum cleaners	110	112	70	78
Irons	103	95	72	76
Champagne	109	120	125	125
Oil	89	97	65	92
Yogurt	86	83	106	78
Chocolate	80	89	123	75
Shampoo	96	103	90	81
Toothpaste	95	95	94	105
Facial soap	82	90	114	118
Detergents	79	82	56	63

^aAverage product score = 100.

Figure 1
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FACETS OF INVOLVEMENT: RISK IMPORTANCE/SIGN



now very similar to perfume advertising. Marketers have prevented soap from becoming a low involvement product by playing on two conditions of involvement, pleasure and sign value.

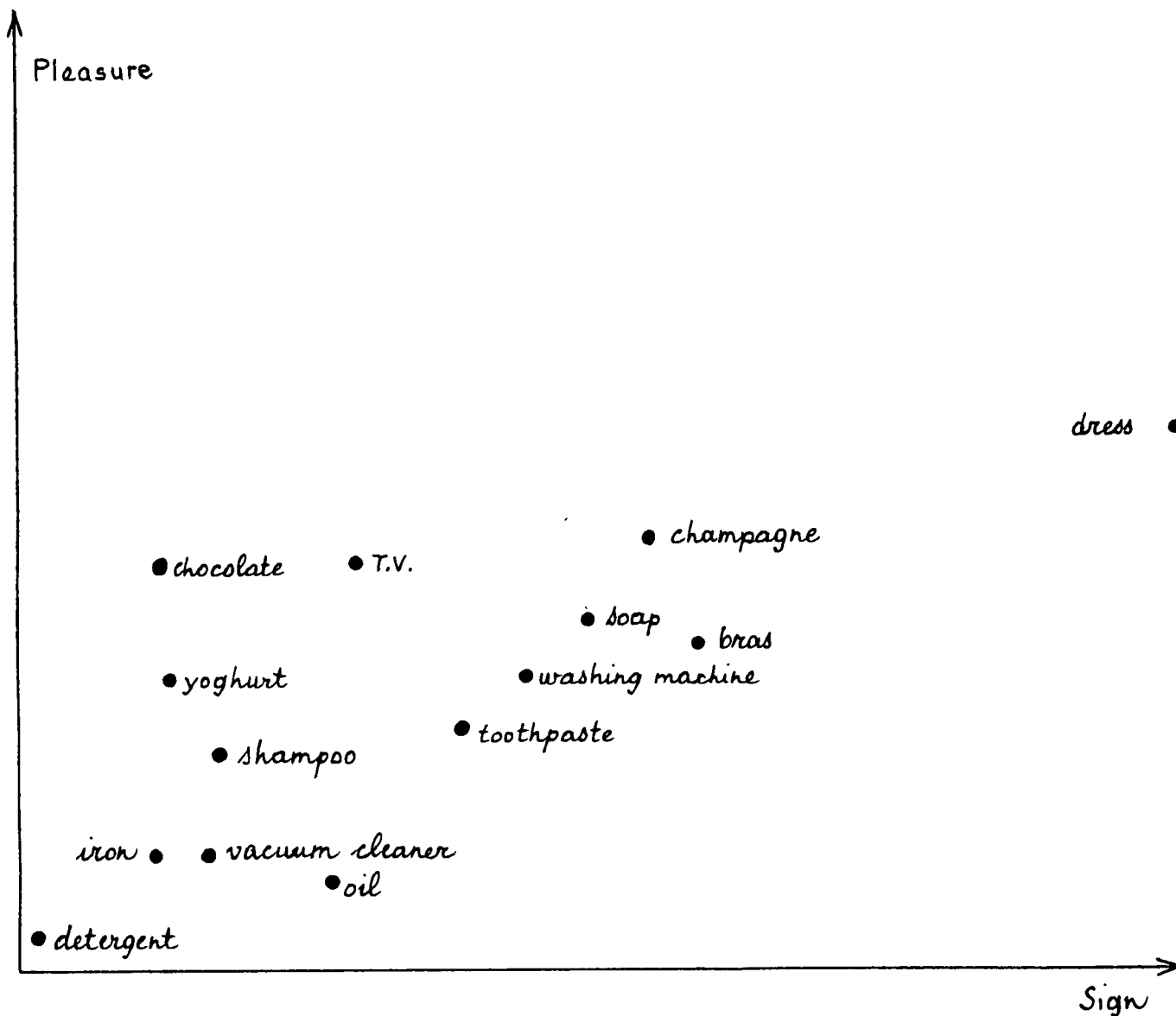
Naturally, the figures are averages for each product category, based on small samples. Consumers do vary in their perceptions. Intraproduct typologies are recommended to isolate the groups of consumers with homogeneous involvement profiles.

Some Consequences of the Involvement Profile

Theory predicts that involvement exerts a strong influence on consumers' decision processes and information search. Because involvement is captured better when all its antecedent conditions (facets) are taken into account, it is useful to investigate the influence of these facets on consumer behavior.

The behavioral consequences of involvement have been

Figure 2
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FACETS OF INVOLVEMENT: PLEASURE/SIGN



reviewed often (Assael 1981; Engel and Blackwell 1982; Finn 1982; Robertson 1976). Traditional views hold that highly involved consumers (Assael 1981, p. 84)

- seek to maximize expected satisfaction from their brand choice through an extensive choice process (Chaiken 1980), e.g., comparing many brands, spending time, using multiple attributes,
- are information seekers, actively looking for information from alternative sources,

- are more likely to be influenced by reference groups,
- are more likely to express their lifestyle and personality characteristics in their brand choice, and
- process communication cognitively by going through stages of awareness, comprehension, attitude, and behavior (Krugman 1965; Rothschild 1969).

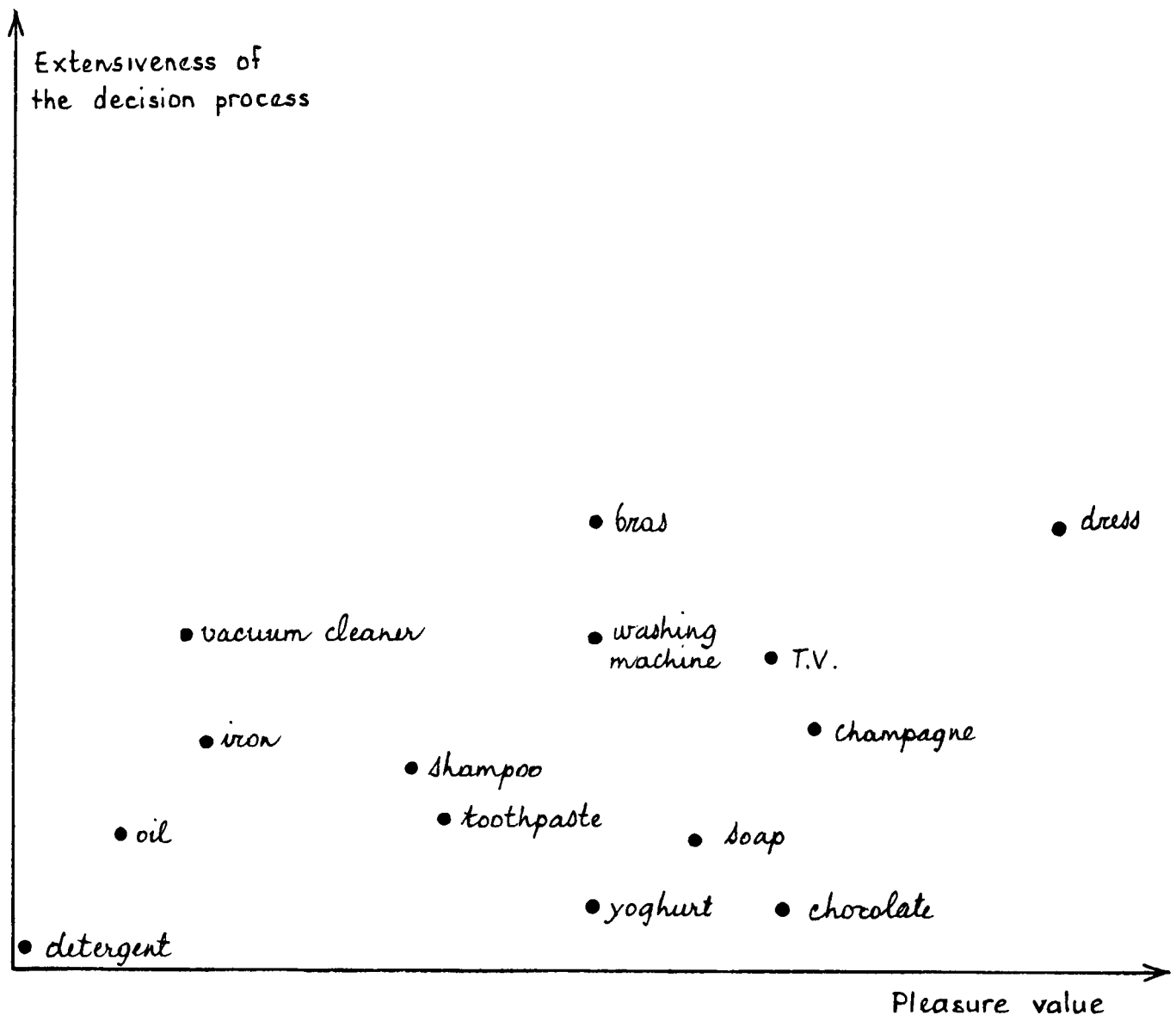
In the context of our study, we selected the first two behavioral consequences to assess the contribution of measuring the full involvement profile instead of a single

indicator of involvement level. A scale of extensiveness of choice process was built with three self-perception Likert-type items (number of attributes used in comparing brands, amount of time spent, degree of attention exerted during choice). This 3-item scale resulted in a high reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha = .80). Information seeking was operationalized by three self-perception items measuring the tendency to keep permanently informed about the product class, interest for articles and TV programs about the product, and pro-

pensity to look at advertising in the product class. The reliability coefficient (.60) indicated that these three items did not actually constitute a scale. Thus subsequent analyses were done on each item separately.

To hypothesize that involvement has an influence on certain aspects of consumer behavior does not imply that these aspects depend from involvement alone. Other explanatory variables may be at work. For this reason, in this section on predictive validity, we take into account variables other than involvement that may be expected

Figure 3
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A FACET OF INVOLVEMENT (PLEASURE VALUE) AND A CONSEQUENCE (EXTENSIVENESS OF THE DECISION PROCESS)



to influence the two consequences of interest: extensiveness of the choice process and information seeking. Omitting these variables would result in specification error. A review of previous empirical research suggested the inclusion of two other variables, perceived differences between alternatives and price. Perceived differences act as a major stimulus of choice and search behavior (Assael 1981; Claxton, Fry, and Portis 1974; De Bruicker 1979; Ray 1973; Rothschild 1979). When price is high, the expectation of obtaining a better price jus-

tifies spending more time in the choice process and actively searching for information (Dommermuth and Cundiff 1967; Kiel and Layton 1981; Newman and Staelin 1972). A 3-item scale measured the perceived differentiation variable (Cronbach's alpha = .71). Price was measured by the index of average retail prices of the product category. We used the logarithm of the price to reduce the skewness of the variable. Because we had four separate dependent variables, we ran four separate regressions on all 414 observations.

Figure 4
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A FACET OF INVOLVEMENT (RISK IMPORTANCE) AND A CONSEQUENCE (EXTENSIVENESS OF THE DECISION PROCESS)

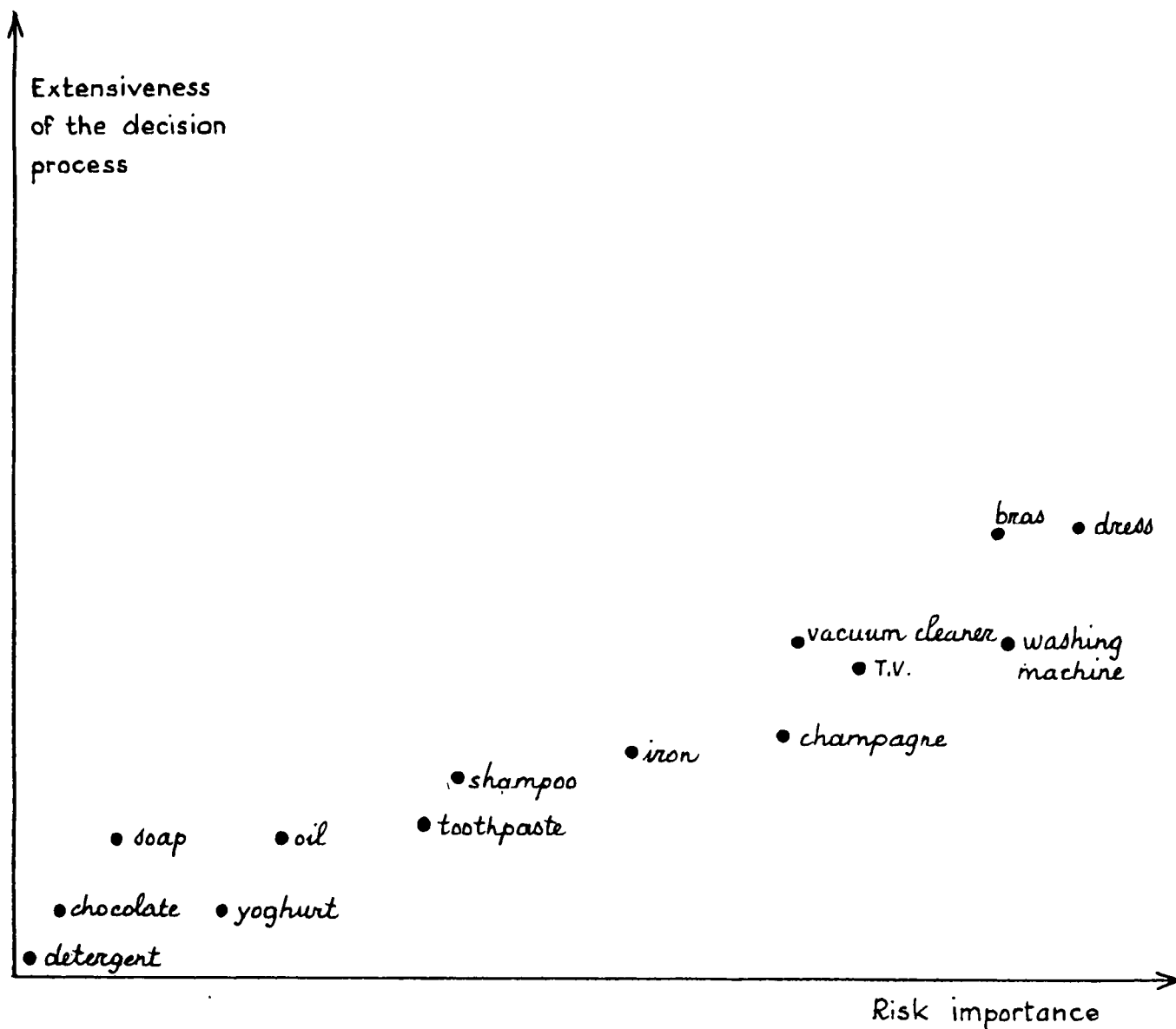


Table 4 reports the results of the regressions. A major conclusion of the analysis is that the facets of the involvement profile have different influences on the dependent variables. Sometimes one facet is determinant and sometimes another facet exerts the major influence. Analysis of the standardized regression weights shows that the extensiveness of the decision process is influenced above all by the perceived importance of the product and by the negative consequences of a mispurchase. The second variable influencing extensiveness is the degree of perceived difference between alternatives. Consumers have a tendency to keep permanently informed

when they perceive the product category as important, or when it has sign value or pleasure value. Consumers take an interest in articles and programs when the product has pleasure value and sign value. Propensity to expose oneself to advertising is dependent on the pleasure value of the product class.

Interestingly, the importance facet does not affect all aspects of communication behavior. The pleasure facet influences communication behavior but has no influence on the extensiveness of the choice process. The perceived probability of making a mispurchase exerts a small positive influence on the extensiveness of the decision

Figure 5
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A FACET OF INVOLVEMENT (RISK IMPORTANCE) AND A CONSEQUENCE (LIKING ADVERTISING)

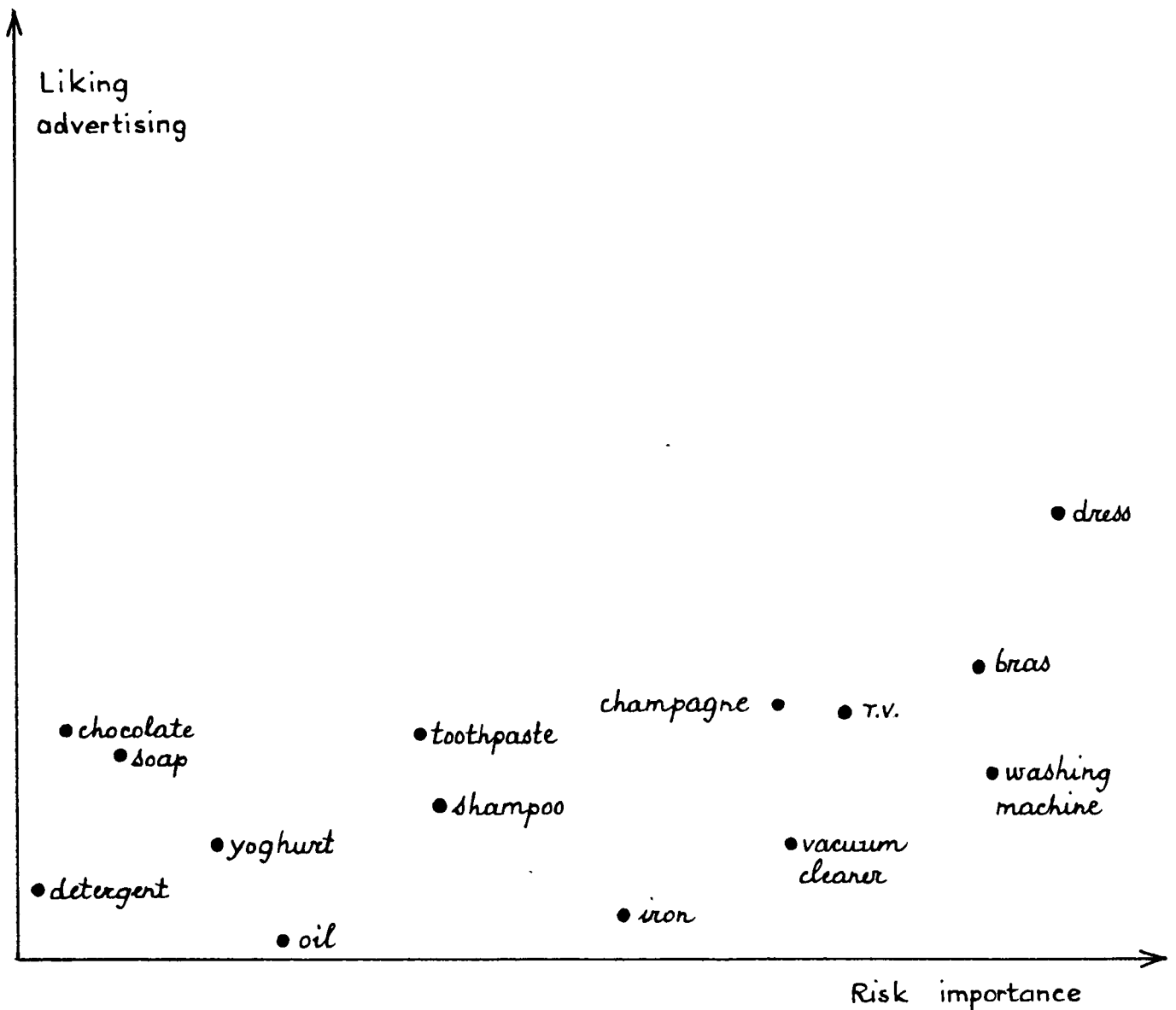


Table 4
 INFLUENCE OF THE INVOLVEMENT FACETS
 (standardized regression weights)

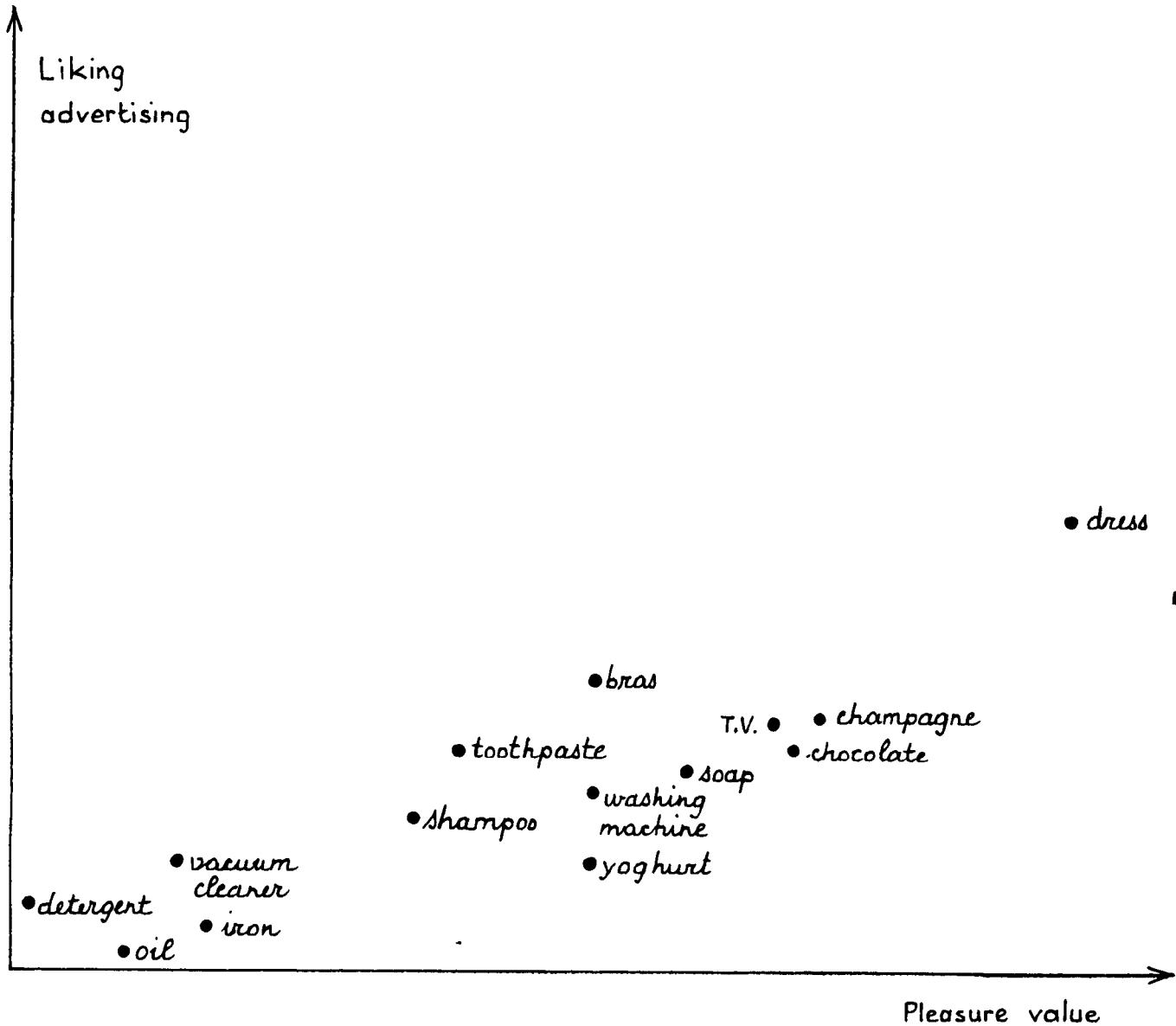
	Risk (importance)	Sign value	Pleasure value	Risk (probability)	Price	Perceived differentiation	R ²
Extensive decision process	.61 ^a	.10 ^b	.00	.06 ^c	.10 ^b	.17 ^a	.71
Keeping permanently informed	.27 ^a	.18 ^a	.15 ^b	.08	-.08	.05	.28
Interest in articles and TV pro- grams	.13	.14 ^b	.28 ^a	.01	.03	.00	.20
Looking at advertising	.05	.06	.37 ^a	-.04	.01	.00	.17

^ap < 0.001.

^bp < 0.01.

^cp < 0.05.

Figure 6
 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A FACET OF INVOLVEMENT (PLEASURE VALUE) AND A CONSEQUENCE
 (LIKING ADVERTISING)



process, but has no influence on the other dependent variables.

Figures 3 through 6 are graphic illustrations of these results. Each of them shows, on the basis of average product scores, the influence of one facet of involvement (abscissa) on a possible consequence (ordinate). They suggest that the extensiveness of the decision process is weakly influenced by a product's pleasure value (Figure 3), but strongly influenced by risk importance (Figure 4). In contrast, propensity to exposure to advertising does not depend much on risk importance (Figure 5), but derives mainly from the product's pleasure value (Figure 6).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Looking at consumer behavior textbooks (Assael 1981; Engel and Blackwell 1982), one sees that involvement theory makes rather simple predictions on the effects of involvement on consumer behavior. Typically, when consumers are involved, they should engage in a number of behaviors (active search, extensive choice process, active information processing, etc.); when consumers are not involved, they should not engage in these behaviors. Knowing the conditions that gave rise to involvement has no role in the theory. Prediction of behaviors entails knowing only the consumer's level of involvement. In contrast, our research was prompted by the fact that managers and researchers use the word "involvement" with a qualifier, implying that the term used alone is too imprecise unless one specifies what kind of involvement is concerned. Here, we propose that the nuances in meanings of involvement derive from differences in the antecedent conditions producing involvement. The literature review suggested five such antecedent conditions of involvement—perceived importance of the product or the situation, perceived sign value, perceived pleasure value, and perceived risk (itself divided in two subcomponents). A factor analysis indicated that though they were correlated, each facet of involvement brought some specific information. One could not capture the consumer's involvement through a single index; all facets of the involvement profile must be taken into account simultaneously.

Regression analyses showed that all facets contributed to the prediction of behavior. Also, some facets influence specific behaviors but not other behaviors. Therefore no precise prediction on the consequences of involvement could be made unless the antecedent conditions were specified. Knowing the involvement level on one facet (e.g., perceived importance, the classical indicator of involvement) is not sufficient. The full profile must be known because different facets have different influences on selected aspects of consumer behavior.

On practical grounds, the involvement profile can be used to segment the market. Rather than merely indicating high-low involvement divisions of the market, the profile allows identification of consumers high on some facets but low on others. Moreover, the involvement

profile affords a better understanding of the dynamics of consumer involvement. Looking at the facets, one may understand better where involvement originates, which provides clues as to what types of appeals should be used in communication for each segment.

How does the involvement profile compare with FCB's advertising planning matrix (Vaughn 1980)? FCB's approach is based on the plotting of products or people or situations in two dimensions, involvement and think-feel (whether the decision is based more on facts or more on feeling). Because the items used to build the involvement index have not been published, it is difficult to assess whether FCB's involvement represents one of our facets or a mix of them. The think-feel dimension is related to the weight of the sign and pleasure value facets within the involvement profile. When one of these two facets is strongly present, people should engage more in "feel" decisions than in "think" decisions. However, the think-feel dimension confounds these two determinants, thus providing fewer clues to advertising managers looking for a clear picture of the involvement dynamics.

On theoretical grounds, Rothschild (1979) spoke of involvement as "a vague concept" (p. 78) and Kiesler, Collins, and Miller (1969) called it "a pot-pourri concept" (p. 279). Our results strongly suggest that, as it stands now, involvement theory may be oversimplified. Involvement does not systematically lead to the expected differences in behavior. They depend on the antecedents of involvement, as measured here by the involvement profile. Some consequences depend on certain facets but not on others. Therefore at a metatheoretical level, if prediction of specific behavioral outcomes depends on knowledge of the specific facets (risk, sign, pleasure, importance), one may question the utility of thinking of the gross concept called "involvement" and instead substitute an analytical distinction between the facets.

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