University of Wollongong
Research Online

Faculty of Commerce - Papers (Archive)

Faculty of Business

2012

# A new C-OAR-SE-based content-valid and predictively valid measure that distinguishes brand love from brand liking

John R. Rossiter
*University of Wollongong*, jrossite@uow.edu.au

Publication Details

Rossiter, J. R. (2012). A new C-OAR-SE-based content-valid and predictively valid measure that distinguishes brand love from brand liking. Marketing Letters, 23 (3), 905-916.

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

# A new C-OAR-SE-based content-valid and predictively valid measure that distinguishes brand love from brand liking

**Abstract**
This article provides a new, C-OAR-SE-based, contrastive measure that distinguishes "brand love" from "brand liking." The new measure is tested in an empirical study conducted among German university students about brands of products that they buy in four diverse product categories. From a consumer perspective, the incidence of consumers who have a loved brand in the category was found to be only 17% for laundry detergent, 18% for coffee, and 26% for computers, peaking at 45% in the fashion clothing category — findings that suggest that over half of young consumers do not acquire the state of brand love. Turning alternatively to a brand perspective, the findings indicate that, in general, about one in four of the brand's customers will come to love the brand. Loving the brand, versus merely liking it, clearly pays off behaviorally — thereby demonstrating very good predictive validity for the new contrastive measure. Brand purchase or usage rate and brand recommendations were found to be approximately doubled for those who love the brand in comparison with those who merely like it.

**Keywords**
predictively, measure, that, distinguishes, love, c, liking, se, brand, content, oar, valid

**Disciplines**
Business | Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Publication Details**
Rossiter, J. R. (2012). A new C-OAR-SE-based content-valid and predictively valid measure that distinguishes brand love from brand liking. Marketing Letters, 23 (3), 905-916.

This journal article is available at Research Online: http://ro.uow.edu.au/commpapers/2648

# A new C-OAR-SE-based content-valid and predictively valid measure that distinguishes brand love from brand liking

**John R. Rossiter**

Institute for Innovation in Business and Social Research, University of Wollongong, Australia, and Schumpeter School of Business and Economics, Bergische University of Wuppertal, Germany

e-mail: john_rossiter@uow.edu.au

**Tobias Langner**

Schumpeter School of Business and Economics, Bergische University of Wuppertal, Germany

e-mail: langner@wiwi.uni-wuppertal.de

**Alexander Fischer**

Schumpeter School of Business and Economics, Bergische University of Wuppertal, Germany

e-mail: alexander.fischer@wiwi.uni-wuppertal.de

# A new C-OAR-SE-based content-valid and predictively valid measure that distinguishes brand love from brand liking

**Abstract** This article provides a new, C-OAR-SE-based, *contrastive* measure that distinguishes "brand love" from "brand liking." The new measure is tested in an empirical study conducted among German university students about brands of products that they buy in four diverse product categories: laundry detergent, coffee, computers, and fashion clothing. From a consumer perspective, the incidence of consumers who *have* a loved brand in the category was found to be only 17% for laundry detergent, 18% for coffee, and 26% for computers, peaking at 45% in the fashion clothing category – findings that suggest that over half of young consumers do not acquire the state of brand love. Turning alternatively to a brand perspective, the findings indicate that, in general, about 1 in 4 of the brand's customers will come to love the brand. For instance, considering the most-loved brand in each category, only 14% of Persil laundry detergent users love the brand, 24% of Tchibo coffee buyers love the brand, 24% of Sony computer owners love the brand, and 27% of H&M fashion clothing owners love the brand. Loving the brand, versus merely liking it, clearly pays off behaviorally – thereby demonstrating very good predictive validity for the new contrastive measure. Brand purchase or usage rates and brand recommendations were found to be approximately doubled for "loved" brands in comparison with "liked" brands.

**Keywords**

brand love, brand liking, C-OAR-SE method, new contrastive measure

# A new C-OAR-SE-based content-valid and predictively valid measure that distinguishes brand love from brand liking

## 1. Introduction

This article employs the C-OAR-SE method (Rossiter 2011a, 2011b) to design and test a new measure that distinguishes *brand love* from *brand liking*. The introduction first outlines the main measurement principles in the C-OAR-SE method and includes a new discussion of the nature of rating-scale items that is pertinent to the present study. Next, the introduction briefly points out the problems with previous academic and practitioner approaches to measuring the construct of brand love. The C-OAR-SE-based (content-valid) solution to these measurement problems is to introduce a new "contrastive" measure of brand love vs. brand liking. The study establishes the predictive validity of the new measure with regard to two relevant behavioral outcomes.

### 1.1 Overview of the C-OAR-SE method

C-OAR-SE theory (Rossiter 2011a, 2011b) is built around three major principles that distinguish this method of measure design from the now-standard "psychometrics" approach. The three major principles are:

A. The only *requirement* of a measure is expert-assessed high content validity – of the item(s) and the answer scale(s).

B. Predictive validity of the measure is additionally *desirable* for a predictor construct.

C. The notion of "construct validity" is nonsensical and misleading – one cannot "validate" a measure, let alone "validate" the foregoing construct that the measure is purported to represent, by comparing the scores obtained from it, either convergently or divergently, to those obtained from *other* measures.

This last principle, a counter-principle really, is where the psychometrics approach goes badly astray. The first two principles differentiate the C-OAR-SE approach most radically from the psychometrics approach.

The C-OAR-SE method places entire emphasis on the high content validity of the item or items and the answer scale or answer scales if different ones are used for each item. Unless the total item – instruction, question, and answer options – is highly content valid to begin with, it is meaningless to consider the measure's predictive validity for predicting any criterion measure. It is pointless, too, without *a priori* high content validity of the total measure, to assess the "reliability" of the measure's scores, noting that C-OAR-SE theory regards reliability as referring only to the statistical precision of the observed scores obtained from it in a particular application. These arguments and definitions posit content validity as necessary for reliability, reversing the usual psychometric argument that reliability is necessary for validity.

High content validity of the total measure demands careful consideration of the nature and format of commonly employed measures. Most common in psychology and marketing is the Likert measure, a very poor measure in terms of content validity because it has the focal attribute in the question and another attribute, that of disagreement-agreement, in the answer scale, and because the

focal attribute is often unipolar (e.g., the "responsiveness" attribute in the well-known SERVQUAL measure) when Likert answer options call for a bipolar rating (e.g., what can degrees of *disagreement* that a company is "responsive" possibly mean when "unresponsive" or "zero-responsive" is logically the lowest level of the responsiveness attribute?). The wrongly identified negative is also the main problem with the second-most popular measure type, the Semantic Differential measure. In the Semantic Differential item format, the focal attribute is not in the question but in the answer scale (for instance: Extremely unresponsive _ _ _ _ _ _ _ Extremely responsive). Whereas the Semantic Differential format is much less ambiguous in terms of content than the Likert format because it uses the levels of the focal attribute as the answer options so they can't be confused with the single level of the focal attribute stated in the question as in Likert items, the Semantic Differential item format *also* assumes that the focal attribute is bipolar when it may not be. When bipolar attributes (e.g., Hate-Love) are mixed within an item battery with unipolar attributes (e.g., Useless-Useful) the resulting mean score over items – the "semantic profile" – is rendered uninterpretable. A further frequent way in which Semantic Differential items are invalidated is to leave out the *instructions* that must precede the items and which provide the verbal labels for the answer options (see Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1957, pp. 82-84).

The most content-valid way round these problems with common measures is to employ instead an item format that has only the construct's *object* in the question (e.g., "Benetton fashionwear") and has an answer scale consisting of the most frequent *verbal* answers about the attribute that respondents give when the question is asked open-ended in a pretest (e.g., "Tell me how much do you like or

dislike the Benetton brand of fashionwear?"). Inclusion of only the most frequent, freely given verbal answer alternatives – not too few and not too many – is what constitutes high content-validity of the *answer scale* in the C-OAR-SE method. If the object is unambiguously identified in the question part (e.g., the brand name, "Benetton," and the product category, "fashionwear") then the *total item* will be highly content-valid. Most important is that the verbal answer options will automatically signify whether the attribute in the construct is unipolar or bipolar and so, if desired, appropriately zero-to-positive (unipolar) or negative-to-positive (bipolar) numerical scores can be assigned to the respondents' answers.

The eminent measurement theorist Clyde Coombs (1964, and actually earlier in a hard-to-get 1952 monograph titled "A theory of psychological scaling") was the first to point out that all polytomous answer scales or rating scales consist of a series of binary-answered single items. This is most easily seen with the Multiple-Choice item format, where each answer is a "single item" with one to be answered affirmatively. But Coombs' insight also applies to all polytomous *rating* scales, be they verbally labeled or numerical; for example, on a Likert answer scale, the respondent has to answer affirmatively to one of the disagreement-to-agreement levels and implicitly make no answers to the others, and on a 1-to-7 Numerical answer scale the respondent has to choose one number and not choose any of the others. The upshot of Coombs' important observation, therefore, is that what looks like, say, a 5-alternative answer scale applied to a single question is in fact a multiple-item measure, in this case a 5-item measure. To be highly content-valid, the answer alternatives – in effect, the items – must be clearly distinguishable as self-contained and separate.

## 1.2 Problems with previous measures of brand love

All previous measures of brand love designed by academics and practitioners have suffered content validity problems. Academic marketing researchers studying brand love have measured the construct using *continuous* answer scales that fail to distinguish brand *love* from brand *liking*. For example, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006, p. 84), in their widely cited *Marketing Letters* study, employed a 5-point, wrongly unipolar numbered, Likert answer scale ("Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree") and reported a mean "love" rating, for brands personally nominated by each of the student respondents as a "satisfactory brand," of 3.8 (out of 5 maximum). This mean rating of +0.8 above the *neutral* midpoint of 3 is clearly more indicative of brand *liking*; a score of 5 would more clearly indicate brand *love*. Compare Gershoff, Mukherjee and Mukhopadhyay's (2006, p. 107) correct usage, also in *Marketing Letters*, of only the two *end-points* of a 5-point "I hate it…I love it" scale to select stimuli for their experiments on "hated" versus "loved" objects; the positive end-category of their answer scale clearly denotes *love* (albeit without defining it). Brand love is a discrete, categorical, emotional state which cannot be validly measured on a continuous answer scale.

Another content validity problem with most academic researchers' measures of brand love is their use of *multiple items*. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) employed no fewer than 10 items in their measure of brand love (see their Table 1, p. 84). Only one of these items, "I love this brand!", was in any way near content valid (but see shortly as to whether use of the single word "love" is appropriate). The completely unnecessary other items, employed surely to adhere to the "always

use multiple items" philosophy of the psychometrics approach to measure design, were either *off-attribute* as attempted synonyms of the emotional state of love (e.g., "wonderful," "feel good," "totally awesome," "very happy," and "pure delight") or else were wrongly *separately* measured, thereby bypassing the *additive* components of the complex emotion known as love (specifically, among these researchers' items, "passionate," and "very attached"). Averaging Likert-answered – or even binary answered – ratings of the 10 attributes, which is what the researchers did to compute their "brand love" measure's scores, will *not* cancel out the content errors (as psychometricians assume by invoking the classic true score = observed score + random error model) and, to put it unkindly but plainly, will produce "rubbish" data.

Problems with the psychometric approach have no doubt reached their nadir with the recent publication, a lead article in the *Journal of Marketing* no less, of the new "brand love" measure designed by University of Michigan academic researchers Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012). In a disturbing illustration of psychometrically inspired overkill, these researchers *ex-post empirically defined* brand love as consisting of 14 first-order components (see their Figure 1, p. 10), each of which was measured with multiple items on continuous answer scales. Only two of the components, "Positive Affect" and "Anticipated Separation Distress," correspond with the jointly necessary defining components of romantic or quasi-romantic love (see Hatfield and Rapson 2000). The 14 components were defined as "reflective indicators" *produced by* the so-called "latent" brand love construct whereas common sense (and C-OAR-SE) would say that the components *form* the construct. Brand love is achieved only when "Deep Affection" (not

"Positive Affect," which is too weak an attribute) and "Separation Anxiety" (not "Anticipated" anxiety, which is an oxymoron) are *jointly* felt in relation to the potential love object. And it's a very real feeling, not a "latent" one. Ironically enough in light of the well-publicized C-OAR-SE argument favoring single-item measures under certain conditions (see Bergkvist and Rossiter 2007), the researchers decided to devise a much briefer, and more direct, alternative measure of brand love (see p. 9) for the C-OAR-SE-deemed illogical purpose of demonstrating the "convergent validity" of their impossibly complicated 14-component measure. The "short" measure was a patently content-redundant 2-item measure as follows: (1) "Overall, how much do you love [Brand]?" and (2) "Describe the extent to which you love [Brand]," both of which items presume that respondents *know* and *share the same concept* of what "brand love" is; and both items are to be answered on the same *wrongly continuous* answer scale of 1 = "Not at all" through 7 = "Very much." Practitioners who subscribe to *JM* would balk at seeing the first measure and "COARSEicans" would reject the first and the second as being not content-valid.

Marketing research practitioners measuring brand love have opted for the *overly simplistic* approach. They simply ask consumers directly, "Do you love this brand? Yes or No?" This single item also presumes, undoubtedly unjustly, that consumers know and share the same meaning of the concept of "brand love." The presumption of universal understanding is encapsulated in advertising campaigns such as McDonald's "I'm lovin' it" and, much earlier, "I ♥ New York," as well as in Saatchi & Saatchi's concept of "Lovemark™" brands (see Roberts 2004). In terms of everyday language usage, however, it is questionable whether an

affirmative answer to an item such as "Do you love McDonald's?" is measuring *love* as opposed to merely a strong degree of *liking*. The question arises because the verb "to love" is greatly ambiguous when the verb is used in conjunction with *different objects*. For instance, in the statements "I'd love to see that movie," "I love Cheerios," and "I love you," the verb "love" hardly means the same thing. Only the last usage reasonably refers to romantic love, whereas the others surely refer to no more than strong liking. When the object is another *person*, as in the carefully reserved and rarely uttered statement, "I *love* you," the meaning of "love" is definitely *beyond liking*.

1.3 New contrastive measure

The present study proposes a solution to this evident semantic dilemma. The solution is to measure brand love by defining it in the measure and contrasting it with brand liking. A *contrastive measure* can be defined as a measure in which the answer options form obviously separate and discrete categories. Pawle and Cooper (2006) happened to employ a contrastive measure in their operationalization of Saatchi & Saatchi's (and Roberts' 2004) concept of a Lovemark™. These researchers asked consumers to sort brands into five categories: those "you actively dislike," "are indifferent to," "just like," "are passionate about," or "you love." Pawle and Cooper's measure, however, does not clearly distinguish the *liking* category because their liking category is labeled as "*just* like," and nor does it distinguish the *love* category, because the category preceding "love" is labeled as "*passionate* about" whereas passion is itself a defining component of "love" (the other defining component, absent from their

measure, being *separation anxiety*). A better worded and clearly distinguishing *contrastive* measure is offered in the present study.

### 1.4 Predictive validity

The second C-OAR-SE principle is that good predictive validity is *desirable* for a (predictor) measure *given* fulfillment of the first principle of *essential* high content validity of the measure.

The key predictive validation question for the new contrastive measure is: do consumers "conquered by brand love" deliver a better behavioral return for the marketer than mere "likers" of the brand? This question is investigated in the present study by asking consumers, with regard to their loved versus liked brands, about their purchase or usage rate of the brand and recommendation of the brand to others. Strictly speaking, in a one-shot survey design as available here, this is actually a test of *concurrent* validity, with the findings interpreted as also signifying the measure's predictive validity.

## 2. The study

### 2.1. Purpose

The theoretical purpose of the study was to devise a contrastive measure distinguishing "brand love" from "brand liking." The practical purpose thereafter was to test the predictive validity of brand liking versus brand love for relevant behavioral outcomes.

## 2.2. Method

The method of devising the new measure was to write a single item with five carefully defined answer categories representing "hate," "dislike," "neutral," "like," and "love." The measure (reported as the first finding from the study) incorporated two deliberate features. The first was to define "liking," for the respondents, in clear contrast with "love"; thus, this answer category was labeled with appropriate emphasis in the questionnaire as "I would not say I love this brand but I would say that I like it." The other was to define "love" as being like *romantic* love, which has two essential components, technically called Passion and Separation Anxiety (see Hatfield and Rapson 2000); this answer category had the two components worded in everyday language as "I would say that I feel deep affection, like love, for this brand and I would be really upset if I couldn't have it." Use of the phrasing "like love" was to allow the respondents to admit to *quasi* romantic love for the brand – *true* romantic love would be too extreme and inappropriate to apply to inanimate objects such as branded products and also would no doubt result in an unduly low incidence of admission of love.

The method for the predictive validation study was a large-scale survey covering all major brands in four diverse consumer-product categories widely bought by university students in Germany. The product categories were diversified by selecting them to correspond approximately to the brand attitude quadrants of the Rossiter-Percy Grid (see Rossiter, Percy, and Donovan 1991). The products were laundry detergent (low-involvement informational), coffee (low-involvement transformational), computers (high-involvement informational), and fashion clothing items (high-involvement transformational).

For each product category, the seven major brands by usage or ownership share among "young consumers" in Germany were chosen from the industry report, *Verbraucheranalyse 2009*. Participants rated these brands, 28 in total, on the new contrastive brand liking-brand love measure.

Two behavioral outcomes were measured for each brand. *Brand usage* was self-reported for the two frequently purchased products (laundry detergent and coffee) in terms of the brand's current percent of personal usage among all brands personally used. Brand usage for the least frequently purchased product (computers) was measured the same way, that is, the brand's share of total computer usage by the individual. For the less frequently purchased product (fashion clothing), brand usage was recorded as the number of items of the brand currently owned. *Brand recommendation* was measured as the respondent's *net* score in answer to the questions, "Have you recommended it to somebody?" (with "Yes" scored +1 and "No" scored zero) and "Have you recommended not to buy it to somebody?" (with "Yes" scored –1 and "No" scored zero). The *net* score across the two questions, per individual, could therefore be –1, 0, or +1. Brand recommenders were those individuals who, for the brand in question, scored +1, and thus were *net positive* communicators for that brand.

## 2.3. Survey sample

The questionnaire (written in German and self-administered) was distributed to 150 male students and 150 female students attending a major public university in Germany. A total of 291 usable returns was obtained. All but eight

of the 291 respondents were in the under-30 age group: average age = 22.8 years, standard deviation = 2.9 years.

## 2.4. Findings

The new contrastive measure is shown in Figure 1 for one of the product categories presently surveyed – brands of laundry detergent in the German market. Note that for each brand the participant is essentially making five binary answers (with "Yes" to only one) in keeping with the discrete emotional states that make up the measure. All five answer categories are explicitly defined in the answer captions so as to make the measure clearly contrastive.

---

Figure 1 about here

---

The findings from the survey were analyzed from two perspectives: the consumer perspective and the brand perspective.

### 2.4.1 Consumer incidence of brand liking and brand love

Nearly every young consumer reported having at least one brand that he or she *liked* in each product category. In marked contrast was the surprisingly low incidence of students who *loved* any – at least one – of the brands in the category (see Table 1). The incidence of consumers with a loved brand was very low for the two low-involvement products: 17% for laundry detergent and 18% for coffee. The incidence of consumers with a loved brand was not much higher in the high-involvement (informational) computer category, where 26% of students said they

had a brand of computer that they loved. (Apple, *anecdotally* a widely loved brand, was not among the seven leading computer brands used by younger consumers in Germany, according to the 2009 market share data, and was not included in the survey.) A substantially higher incidence was observed in the fourth category – fashion clothing, which is high-involvement and transformational – where almost one in every two students, 45%, said they had a loved brand.

Table 1 about here

2.4.2 "Brand's eye" perspective

From a *brand-based* (managerial) perspective, the distributions of brand likers and brand lovers differed remarkably between brands (see Table 2). Shown first in each product category is the distribution for the survey sample-leading brand and shown second is the distribution for one other brand selected to illustrate the differences in profiles of brand liking vs. brand loving.

Table 2 about here

For laundry detergents, the major brand, Persil – a brand that has gained almost half of all usage by young German consumers – had an excellent "liked" prevalence (58% of all its users like it) as well as, for such a utilitarian product, a good "loved" prevalence (14% of all its users love it). The other brand shown,

Ariel – which has about half the market share of Persil among young German consumers – had an identical prevalence of 57% of brand users who like the brand but only 6% who *love* it.

For coffee, two brands with equal and leading market shares among young German consumers, Jacobs and Tchibo, were compared. Of interest here is the remarkably high prevalence of Jacobs users, 40%, who do *not* like or love the brand; four in 10 Jacobs coffee users were mostly indifferent toward it or disliked it, and perhaps bought it for its low price. Tchibo coffee appeared to be in the better position with 24% of its users loving the brand compared to 9% for Jacobs.

For computers, the market share leader, Hewlett Packard (HP), had a high proportion of brand likers similar to the somewhat less popular brand among German university students, Sony (58% for HP, 60% for Sony). However, a larger percentage of Sony users *love* the brand (24%, versus 16% for HP).

Fashion clothing brands most vividly illustrate the different brand profiles achievable. Adidas, nominally a sports clothing brand but used as fashionwear by many consumers, is mostly a *liked* brand, whereas H&M, a younger-market fashionwear label, has a greater proportion of its consumers, 27%, who *love* the brand.

### 2.4.3 Consumer-based predictive validity

As documented in the final two tables, the emotional state of *loving* the brand has impressive behavioral outcomes, no matter what the product category is. The predictive (actually concurrent) validity of the new contrastive measure is

demonstrated here with managerially meaningful percentaged or frequency counted results in place of the usual correlation coefficients.

The results in Table 3 for usage (or ownership) behavior, the first behavioral criterion variable, demonstrated that consumers who *love* the brand reward it, on average, with approximately *double* the personal usage rate compared to those who merely *like* the brand. The difference was strongest for fashion clothing – the high-involvement transformational product. Those consumers who love the brand (be it H&M, Adidas, or any other of the surveyed fashionwear brands) own, on average, almost triple the number of that brand's clothing items owned by those who like the brand but don't love it.

---

Table 3 about here

---

The results in Table 4 are for word-of-mouth recommendations (percent of consumers giving *net positive* word-of-mouth comments about the brand to others) which is the second behavioral criterion variable. Net positive word-of-mouth is also approximately double for those who love the brand compared to those who like the brand. Notable are the very high incidences of net positive recommenders of loved brands for brands in the two *high-involvement* products categories, computers (68%) and fashion clothing (75%).

---

Table 4 about here

---

**3. Discussion and conclusions**

The C-OAR-SE method (Rossiter 2011a, 2011b) was applied in the present study to design an efficient, highly content-valid measure that distinguishes brand love from brand liking. Previous measures of brand love have not validly measured the construct. The problems affecting the content validity of previous measures are reviewed as follows. Firstly, academic researchers have used multiple items to measure, separately, various presumed sub-attributes of brand love (nine items other than "I love this brand!" in Carroll and Ahuvia's 2006 measure and 14 *sets* of multiple items in Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi's 2012 measure); a single, *multicomponential* item should be used (see Rossiter 2011a), to which the respondent is affirming the presence of both components – which, in the case of brand love, are "Passion" *and* "Separation Anxiety," appropriately worded in everyday consumer language. Secondly, the converse problem is the attempt to measure brand love directly *without* defining it for the respondent (Batra, et al. 2012 did this for their second measure of brand love, and practitioners such as Roberts of Saatchi & Saatchi simply ask "Do you love this brand?"); the problem with using only the word "love" directly in the item is that the verb "love" is *ambiguous* – especially when the object is not another *person* – in that it most often means strong liking rather than love in the quasi-romantic sense. Lastly, academic researchers make the common mistake of measuring brand love on a continuous (or polytomous) answer scale; however, all worthwhile qualitative evidence about love (e.g., Freud's definitive account in *The Psychology of Love* referenced herein as well as Batra et al.'s qualitative developmental research for their main measure) paints love as a very intense emotion rather than a normally

continuous one, such as disliking-liking. The C-OAR-SE-based solution to these content-validity problems is to use what looks like a single item but is in fact five ordered or ordinal items, only one of which is to be answered affirmatively, just as in a multiple-choice test *or* when making a rating on a rating scale. Verbal answer labeling must be used which defines each answer and clearly distinguishes – contrasts – them. Contrastive measures are increasingly being used in consumer research (see, e.g., Chernev 2010, and Chien, Wegener, Hsaio, and Petty 2010) and a contrastive measure is most appropriate for validly distinguishing brand love from the weaker emotional state of brand liking.

C-OAR-SE theory posits that high content validity of the total item or items is the *only* requirement of a measure. A corollary of the content-validity sufficiency principle is that a new measure *cannot* logically be "validated" in the usual manner of the psychometric approach by appealing to the size of the correlation of its scores with those from *other* measures (such as previous measures of "brand love"). If the construct is conceptualized in theory as a *predictor* variable, then good prediction of relevant "caused" behavioral outcomes is additionally *desirable* for a new measure; for what constitutes "good" predictive validity, see Rossiter (2011a or 2011b) who reminds us that most behaviors are multiply determined and "too good" a prediction is usually the result of common-measure bias, as in the use of the same Likert answer scale to measure the independent and dependent variables. Common-measure bias is not possible in the present study with the very different predictor and criterion measures.

The practical conclusions from the present study are three-fold. One conclusion is that brand love, when validly measured, is an emotional state

experienced only by a minority of consumers, and then mainly with highly involving "experiental" products or services (such as fashion clothing in the present survey). Another conclusion, this time from a brand rather than a consumer perspective, is that brands within a product category can achieve markedly different customer profiles, particularly as regards the proportion of its customers who genuinely love the brand beyond merely liking it. Lastly, once achieved, brand love results in extremely high behavioral returns in terms of the brand lover's own purchase rate and his or her advocacy of the loved brand to other consumers.

Future research can therefore be directed toward investigating the *etiology* of brand love. The origins and causes of brand love are most validly investigated with case-based *qualitative* research along the lines of Fournier's (1998) study of "brand relationships." However, just as with the various "relationships" metaphors (see Blocker, Houston, and Flint 2012), researchers must be careful not to extend the "brand love" metaphor from the inter-human domain too far into the non-human domain. Such a non-credible and unwarranted extension will be prevented by using the contrastive measure of quasi-romantic brand love offered here.

**References**

Batra, R., Ahuvia, A., & Bagozzi, R.P. (2012). Brand love. *Journal of Marketing*, 76(2), 1-16.

Bergkvist, L., & Rossiter, J.R. (2007). The predictive validity of multiple-item vs. single-item measures of the same constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(2), 175-184.

Blocker, D.P., Houston, M.B., & Flint, D.J. (2012). Unpacking what a "relationship" means to commercial buyers: how the relationship metaphor creates tension and obscures experience. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(1), 886-908.

Carroll, B.A., & Ahuvia, A.C. (2006). Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Marketing Letters*, 17(1), 79-89.

Chernev, A. (2010). Semantic anchoring in sequential evaluations of vices and virtues. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(5), 761-774.

Chien, Y-W., Wegener, D.T., Hsiao, C-C., & Petty, R.E. (2010). Dimensional range overlap and context effects in consumer judgments. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(3), 530-542.

Coombs, C.H. (1952). A theory of psychological scaling. *Engineering Research Bulletin No. 34*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Coombs, C.H. (1964). *A theory of data*. New York: Wiley.

Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4), 343-374.

Freud, S. (1940-52/2010 publication of the translation by S. Whiteside). *The psychology of love*. Camberwell, Australia: Penguin Books.

Gershoff, A.D., Mukherjee, A., & Mukhopadhyay, A. (2006). "I love it" or "I hate it"? The positivity effect in stated preferences for agent evaluation. *Marketing Letters*, 17(2), 103-117.

Hatfield, E., & Rapson, R.L. (2000). Love and attachment processes. In M. Lewis & J.M. Haviland-Jones (Eds), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 654-662). New York: Guilford.

Osgood, C.E., Suci, G.J., & Tannenbaum, P.H. (1957). *The measurement of meaning*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Pawle, J., & Cooper, P. (2006). Measuring emotion – lovemarks, the future beyond brands. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 46(2), 38-48.

Roberts, K. (2004). *Lovemarks: the future beyond brands*. New York: Powerhouse Books.

Rossiter, J.R. (2011a). *Measurement for the social sciences: the C-OAR-SE method and why it must replace psychometrics*. New York: Springer.

Rossiter, J.R. (2011b). Marketing measurement revolution: the C-OAR-SE method and why it must replace psychometrics. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(11/12), 1561-1588.

Rossiter, J.R., Percy, L., & Donovan, R.J. (1991). A better advertising planning grid. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 31(5), 11-21.

Please tick (√) your overall opinion (evaluation) of each of the following laundry detergent brands. Read all the answers first. Tick one answer only for each brand (one answer in each row).

| **Brand** | **Hate**<br>I would say that I hate this brand. | **Dislike**<br>I feel that I dislike this brand. | **Neutral**<br>I feel neutral about this brand – no strong feelings either way. | **Liking**<br>I would not say I love this brand, but I would say that I like it. | **Love**<br>I would say I feel deep affection, like love, for this brand and I would be really upset if I couldn't have it. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ariel** | | | | | |
| **Dash** | | | | | |
| **Persil** | | | | | |
| **Spee** | | | | | |
| **Sunil** | | | | | |
| **Tandil** | | | | | |
| **Weißer Riese** | | | | | |

**Fig. 1** The contrastive measure of brand liking and brand love, here illustrated for German brands of laundry detergent.

**Table 1** Consumer perspective: percent of consumers having at least one "loved" brand in the product category

| Product category (grid quadrant) | Loved brand incidence (percent of consumers) |
|---|---|
| Laundry detergent (LI-I) | 17 |
| Coffee (LI-T) | 18 |
| Computer (HI-I) | 26 |
| Fashion clothing (HI-T) | 45 |
| N of participants = 290 (approx.) | |

Notes: LI = low involvement, HI = high involvement; I = informational, T = transformational (per Rossiter-Percy Grid). There were a few cases of missing data in each product category, hence the N is given as "approximately" 290 participants.

**Table 2** Brand perspective: distribution of brand liking and brand love for leading and selected brands in each product category

| Product category and brand (percent share of usage or number owned) | Percent of the brand's users who… | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Feel neutral or dislike the brand (%) | Like the brand (%) | Love the brand (%) | Total |
| Laundry detergent | | | | |
| Persil (44% share) | 28 | 58 | 14 | (100%) n=208 |
| Ariel (20% share) | 37 | 57 | 6 | (100%) n=130 |
| Coffee | | | | |
| Jacobs (22% share) | 40 | 51 | 9 | (100%) n=134 |
| Tchibo (22% share) | 27 | 49 | 24 | (100%) n=130 |
| Computer | | | | |
| HP (21% share) | 26 | 58 | 16 | (100%) n=131 |
| Sony (15% share) | 16 | 60 | 24 | (100%) n=106 |
| Fashion clothing | | | | |
| H&M (av. 23 items) | 31 | 42 | 27 | (100%) n=248 |
| Adidas (av. 7 items) | 25 | 60 | 15 | (100%) n=240 |

**Table 3** Usage rates among likers and lovers of the brand, by product category

| | Usage rates among those consumers who… | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Product category (usage dependent variable) | Feel neutral or dislike the brand | Like the brand | Love the brand |
| Laundry detergent (% personal usage of brand) | 5 | 38 | 72 |
| Coffee (% personal usage of brand) | 4 | 31 | 64 |
| Computer (% of all-computer usage going to the brand) | 6 | 31 | 61 |
| Fashion clothing (number of items of the brand currently owned) | 3 | 11 | 30 |

Notes: For example, for laundry detergent, top row: the average personal usage share among those consumers who feel neutral towards or dislike the brand was 5%; among those who like the brand, 38%; and among those who love the brand, 72%. For fashion clothing (bottom row) the usage dependent variable is the average number of items of the brand currently owned. N = 290 (approx.)

**Table 4** Percent of consumers giving net-positive word-of-mouth recommendation of their liked brands and loved brands, by product category

| | Percent recommending the brand among those who… | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Product category | Feel neutral or dislike the brand | Like the brand | Love the brand |
| Laundry detergent (% recommending) | 1 | 22 | 48 |
| Coffee (% recommending) | 1 | 26 | 54 |
| Computer (% recommending) | 4 | 39 | 68 |
| Fashion clothing (% recommending) | 6 | 39 | 75 |

Notes: For example, for laundry detergent, top row: 1% of those consumers who feel neutral about the brand or dislike it gave net-positive recommendations to others; 22% who like the brand did so; and 48% who love the brand did so. N = 290 (approx.)