

# The roar of the V8 object of desire: study of case from the Ford Maverick Automobile in different generations under the Mean-End Chains view.

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## RESUMO

No início do ano de 1970, a Ford do Brasil S.A., trouxe um campeão de vendas dos USA, o Ford Maverick. O automóvel caiu rapidamente no gosto popular, neste novo segmento de carros médios, passando a ter uma legião de admiradores. Esta pesquisa objetiva, a luz da teoria das cadeias meio-fim, comparar o comportamento e valores de usuários do Maverick de duas diferentes gerações em épocas diferentes: nos anos 1970 quando o automóvel foi lançado, cujos principais consumidores eram da geração Baby Boomers e dos filhos desta geração, a geração X. Para este estudo foi utilizado a técnica de laddering, com entrevistas em profundidade com 47 entrevistados, sendo 20 pertencentes a geração Baby Boomers (indivíduos nascidos entre 1940 e 1960) e os outros 27 entrevistados, nascidos entre 1970 e 1990 que fazem parte da geração X, em que seus depoimentos permitiram a comparação das gerações. Os resultados da análise de conteúdo e da análise utilizando o laddering permitiu o desenvolvimento de mapas hierárquicos dos valores respectivos de cada geração. Estes mapas deram como resultado: a geração Baby Boomers demonstrou como valor fundamental para a aquisição do Maverick na época a questão da segurança financeira e motor potente V8 como maior fator motivacional para aquisição deste automóvel. No caso da geração X o estudo indicou

como esperado, o valor nostalgia e saudosismo como maior impulsionador para ainda ter este automóvel, seja como colecionador ou hobby. As gerações apresentam como em comum, o valor de nostalgia e saudosismo. Os resultados sugerem novas abordagens para os estudos do comportamento de consumo e marketing geracional.

**Palavras-chave:** Nostalgia; Gerações; Laddering; Saudosismo; Maverick.

## **ABSTRACT**

At the beginning of 1970, Ford do Brazil S.A. brought to Brazil the USA sales' champion, the Ford Maverick. The car quickly fell into popular taste, in this new segment of medium cars, having a legion of admirers still to actual days. The objective of our research, at the light of Means-End Chain Theory, is to compare Maverick users' behaviors and values, from two different generations at different times: in the 1970s when the car was launched, whose main consumers were the Baby Boomers generation and the sons of this generation, generation X. For this study, using laddering technique, 47 in-depth interviews, with, 20 belonging to the Baby Boomers Generation (individuals born between 1940 and 1960) and the other 27 individuals, born between 1970 and 1990 that belong to X Generation, in which their testimonies allowed the comparison between generations. The content analysis results and the laddering analysis, allowed the development of hierarchical maps for each generation values. These maps showed the following results: Baby Boomers Generation demonstrated as a fundamental value for the acquisition of Maverick in the 70s financial security importance and a powerful V8 engine that was the biggest motivational factor for the acquisition of this car. In the case of Generation X, the study indicated, as expected, the value of nostalgia and love for the oldies, as the biggest driver for more than 40 years later, still having this car, whether as a collector or hobby. The generations study presented, as in common, the nostalgia value. The study results indicated, as expected, the nostalgia and oldies love's values as the biggest driver to still have this car, whether as a collector or hobby. The generations present, as in common, these values. The results suggest new research line and approaches for the studies of consumer behavior and generational marketing.

**Keywords:** Nostalgia; Memories; Generations; Laddering; Maverick.



## INTRODUCTION

Products and automobiles in general have their cycle of life that in the literature is divided into four stages: introduction, growth, maturity, and downfall (Wasson, 1978). However, consumption occurs from a complex experience surrounded by rational and emotional aspects (Carvalho e dos Santos, 2019). Within this sense, products and services have in their cycle of life the power to carry and communicate meanings beyond their useful function (Carvalho e dos Santos, 2019). Therefore, given each day shorter cycle of lives of products and services due to the speed of new technologies introduction, a certain choice instability is verified, which leads to a tendency of a nostalgia feeling (Silva et al., 2020).

In face of such perspective, this study analyzed the cycle of life of the automobile Ford Maverick, which survived for nearly two decades, trespassing generations, being admired until current days by its fans and collectors. Ford Maverick was officially launched in the USA in 1969, from the invasion of Europeans cars and mainly due to Japanese medium cars in the American market. Maverick was a car with simple characteristics and attributes: medium automobile, easy to drive, low maintenance, but with a look inspired by the Mustang, which was, by itself, an inspired innovation at the time (Gregson, 2011).

Despite having a version of a family car, practical, modern, and economic, it was launched with a sports version and a powerful V8 engine, which become object of desire for the American youngsters. Quickly, for its attributes, price, and versatility in the first year in the market, it sold 579,000 units in the USA, quite a record for recently launched automobiles and it kept raising each year. At the time, Ford in Brazil was commercializing two quite successful models: Corcel and Galaxie, the most luxurious automobile now in the market.

However, the market was open to medium cars, intermediate among the popular and the luxurious, there was a space to be filled in the market



quickly perceived by the automakers, filled only by the models Aero-Willys and Itamaraty (Aero's luxurious version), which were already becoming outdated with several mechanical issues. Therefore, seizing the nearly impossibility of importation, the automakers present in Brazil due to petroleum, economic and exchange crisis, launched several models, such as GM's Opala and VW's Passat (Gregson, 2011).

Meanwhile, Ford brought to Brazil its champion of sales in the USA, Ford Maverick in the year of 1973. An automobile with a bold design, powerful engine and that had a double family version, but had a very big sports vocation due to its similarity with the Mustang, object of desire by almost every youngster at the time (Gregson, 2011). With double focus on a family medium car super, super luxurious or sports - GT with an imported V8 engine, of 4.95 liters, which came out of the fabric, with metallic painting and hydraulic steering as only options, but with a motor which its noise was unmistakable and recognized by the admirers.

Maverick GT and the other versions reached significant sales, the sports version managed to achieve 2.000 units sold in 1973 and over 4.000 in 1974. The competitors at the time, especially Opala 6cc and Dodge Dart and Charger RT, V8 engine equipped sports cars, came not even closer to such numbers in sales. This way, a profound change in the market at world level appeared due to the petroleum crisis for a country that imports and is dependent of petroleum in the late 70's and has become a problem for its consumption for the consumer's economy.

Since the Maverick for its power was rather not economical, it gained the nickname "Gas drunkard" and it became to fall in disgrace with this profound change in the market that started searching for more economic cars. After more than 100.000 units were sold in 1979 the legendary Maverick left the production line to give place to the Corcel II, with more fitted characteristics to the consumer's needs at the time, mainly due to the consumption, but leaving a legion of fans and faithful followers missing it (Gregson, 2011).



To live historical and social experiences, whether individual or in group, may leave to an identification, as to belonging to a group: “we-sense” (Corsten, 1999). In this sense, consumers from different generations have become interested in participating in movements, groups or communities which share interests, attitudes, and similar perceptions in face of a product or a brand (Lyu e Kim, 2020). Therefore, the consumption develops identities when we choose, experience, and buy something demonstrating the way that we visualize the world around us (Carvalho & dos Santos, 2019). It can also provide feelings of belonging so that we can build up ties in a certain social group or simply to be a part of a technological or nostalgic movement (Silva et al., 2020).

The possibility of finding similar values in the different generations related to a same product at different ages opens new pathways in generation marketing, which can be used in publicity campaigns in current days. Parents, children, and grandchildren operate symbolically in very distinct worlds, in constant transformation, according to historical events and related to social groups in which one is inserted, always in construction and with flexible borders (Barth, 1996). In some cases, the father is the master to be followed, in others, the contrary, which suggests being a case of conflict of generations (Zaluar, 1985).

The purpose of the research was to compare the behavior and motivations of consumers from the automobile Maverick in two different generations (Baby Boomers and Geração X). The individuals from the baby boomers' generations were the buyers of the Maverick at the time, which means, from the cycle of life of the Maverick in the 70's. Generation X at the time were teenagers, youngsters who already admired such automobiles and many of them today are collectors or have a profound feeling of nostalgia by the automobile Maverick. In a survey performed by Datafolha (2008) among young people from 15 to 25 years of age, the bigger object of desire or dream consumption were cars and motorcycles, up to 40%, as for housing



and computer articles corresponded to 15% and 20%. It is interesting to notice that in that research the advance technologies, such as notebooks, video games and mobile cell phones had not been launched yet in the market. To be able to capture such different nostalgia from the generations, we used the methodology of means-end chains.

In this study, a comparative process is proposed of two generations on how consumer's values influence the choice of a certain product. Initially, an evaluation of the utility meaning of the product occurs. According to the authors Vinson, Scott & Lamont, (1977), consumers use a step-by-step judgment in detail, evaluating the benefits or cons of the product, this way, promoting an Instrumental Motivation. Afterwards, human values of such individuals are contemplated by these consumers, determining which tangible aspects are important for them, in practice, according to the authors, consumers compare the tangible aspects of the product with those tangible aspects preferred by them and choose the product that comes closer.

However, when consumers evaluate the symbolic meaning of the product, they use an affection judgment, attributing an emotional meaning to the product, values which directly influence the choice of the product. Individuals compare cultural values symbolized by the products to its values, choosing the product with higher congruence (Vinson, Scott e Lamont, 1977). In this sense, the main contribution of the study is in translating the consumer's experiences through their memories and past remembrances with products and/or services (Izquierdo, 2018; Lyu e Kim, 2020). Therefore, to analyze the behavior and motivation of Maverick consumers from Baby Boomers and X generations becomes relevant and meaningful to aim at comprehending the attributes which lead the human being in becoming nostalgic in face of a product or service which one had contact in a recent past.

## THEORETICAL REFERENCE



## Consumer behavior

The hedonistic value of products has direct importance to emotional, experimental, and symbolic domains of consumption since it raises the appearance of emotions of pleasure and excitement. The utilitarian value of products is firstly directed to goals and purposes (Hirschman e Holbrook, 1982). The daily tasks, such as work, behavior, some habits of consumption and the use of time to fulfill one's dreams, such as desires, hobbies, social events and fun seems to follow a pattern of values from the individuals (Solomon, 2016).

Values, according to Blackwell, Miniard & Engel (2000) are shared belief, or the adoption of group rules internalized by the individuals regarding their life and social behaviors. The group of values from an individual proves strong influence in one's decision-making process of purchase and consumption, indicating goals, motivations and means through which individuals reach such goals (Rokeach, 1972; Solomon, 2016). Therefore, what one individual understands as correct and recommended may be considered a value (Rezsöházy, 2001).

The standard behavior of an individual, motivated by one's personal values, influences the preferences and choices one makes, generally in accordance the social values of the society one is inserted and regarding to the system of values to which one is exposed. Therefore, the behavior is influenced by values helping to mold preferences, desires and choices, operationalization, and use (Blackwell, Miniard e Engel, 2000). For Silva et al. (2020) there are consumption models and motivations which identify relevant actions generated by internal factors (hedonism, perfectionism, and nostalgia) and external factors (snobbery and of adhesion) to products and to services.

In face of such perspective, consumption occurs in a non-verbal way of presentation of the consumer's personality in face of a product or service (Carvalho e dos Santos, 2019). Within this sense, the consumer's behavior aims





at analyzing the social phenomenon's capable of verifying how experiences occur with a product or service in addition to showing how beliefs, attitudes, values, and consequences influence our present, past, and future choices (Silva et al., 2020). Therefore, the media and business partners may equally influence the adoption of values by consumers. For Zeithaml et al. (1990) such elements link the purchase or the consumption to personal values from consumers. This way, the inter-relations attributes-consequences-values constitute the center of such theory. Values are identified through the representation of the means-end chain which aim at explaining the nostalgic acquisition of a Ford Maverick automobile nowadays.

### **Theory of Means-End Chains**

Gutman (1981) conceptualizes the model of means-end chain in a way that “means” are the products or services in which people engage themselves. The situation of valued experience would be the “end”, for example, happiness, security, and fulfillment.

The concept of the client's value is founded as a perception with hierarchical structures and that the personal values are an abstract condition in the consumption's situation (Rokeach, 1972). The authors Woodruff & Gardial (1996) define as the client's value the consumer's perception regarding one's desire. The same authors explain that the means-end theory is a way to systematically ponder the hierarchical representation, between products and consumers that relate themselves in three levels:

a) Attribute (A) – at the more solid level and closer to the good or service. Consumers generally mention such attributes when asked about a product. The solid attributes are understood and identified in goods and/or services, on the other hand, abstract attributes are particularities of assets and/or services. Such attributes are not entirely identified or noticed through senses (Gutman, 1981).





b) Consequence (C) – are intermediate data in the chain. They may be identified as positive or negative, from the experience and use of an asset or service (Peter & Olson, 2010).

c) Value (V) – this is the most elevated level in hierarchy, where intentions or desired conditions reached the decision-making process, whether in the use of a service or in the purchase of an asset. Terminal values translate the circumstances resultant from the experience, guiding the individual's behavior. Instrumental values, on the other hand, are preferential behavioral actions that individuals use to reach the terminal values. (Allen, 2001; Solomon, 2016).

Reynolds & Gutman (1988) explain that each consumer has a perception, in which the consequence takes place from the use of the product. This way, it is understood that the chain attribute-consequence-value (A-C-V) is the pivot of the model, in which a composition makes a connection from the product's attributes, their generated consequences and the reason to attribute a value, since they are important. Walker & Olson (1991) suggest that the means-end theory provides a mold that allows the observation and the interpretation of how products are perceived by the consumers regarding themselves, since it describes the relation between the attributes and the values (benefits) which may generate satisfaction.

The group of hierarchy of values is graphically symbolized by a Hierarchical Value Map (HVM), which performs the connection between the attributes, consequences and personal values linked to a product or service. The several means-end chains structured in a HVM point to a connection among all attributes, benefits and personal values regarding assets and pondered services (Reynolds e Gutman, 1988). For dos Santos & Johnston (2018) such relation between attributes, benefits and values should be as something with a double direction, which means, the researcher and the marketing practitioners need to comprehend the existing relation between



consequence and the values practiced in face of a product or a desired or acquired service.

## **The Generations**

Generations are group of people who share experiences and are influenced by the time they live in (Kotler e Keller, 2006). In addition, they may also influence the following generations. Furthermore, each generation is strongly influenced by the environment in which it is developed since there are differences in values and attitudes among groups of ages (Kotler e Keller, 2006; Solomon, 2016). This way, age is a variable that is convenient to identify the protests of values on products (Silva et al., 2020). Therefore, consumption becomes the developer of the consumer's identity molding our way to see the world and providing a feeling of belonging to a group or generation (Silva et al., 2020).

In this sense, there is a need to markedly understand the different perceptions of generations by historical events and happenings which have significant influences on the values of everyone (Erickson, 2011; Silva et al., 2020). For Oliveira (2010) when reflecting on generations, we must consider the old classic formation of three generations: such as grandparent, parent and children who were each one influenced by the events from their time and the family values incorporated. For this research, we compared the known characteristics from two generations who lived with the cycle of life of the Maverick automobile. They are Baby Boomers and X Generations.

### **Baby Boomers generation**

According to Erickson (2011), the Baby Boomers generation is composed by people who were born between 1940 and 1960. The formation of values of each generation generally happens during teenage years, which in this generation occur between the years 1960 and 1970. Currently, there was still a hippie movement spreading the idea of "peace and love", with



youngsters wanting to communicate their opposing opinions to a moralist, racist, consumerist and technocrat society (Brandão & Duarte, 2004).

In Brazil, at the time, there was a strong political disbelief, students had become political activists and music was used to make the more popular layers more conscientious. From 1968 a process of cassation, prisons and the imposition of silence to the student, trade union, intellectual and artistic classes, lasting up to middle 70's (Brandão & Duarte, 2004). Therefore, during the seventies, there were political, economic crises, rise in the petroleum price, exorbitant inflation, lying politicians, Brazilian currency devaluation, external indebtedness, and popular movements reorganizing themselves, student movement manifests returned, and strikes began to happen.

Such events lived by the Baby Boomers generation had made them skeptical regarding authorities and they started not believing in the government anymore. However, in contrast the Baby Boomers have learned, from early age, to respect parents, family, studies and work (Erickson, 2011).

## **X Generation**

X Generation are people born between 1960 and 1979, having teenage years between 1980 and 1990. X generation have had its teenage years a period of uncertainties and social changes (Erickson, 2011). The eighties have confirmed conservatism and consumerism generated by the cultural industry conceived in the 70's. Youngsters from the eighties kept raising flags and defending important ideas such as the environment preservation and protested against unreasonable industrial progress. At the same time, Brazil was facing an enormous economic crisis, from the period of the dictatorship. However, on the political scope, the country was heading to the political opening with a new Constitution (1988) and the direct elections for President of the Republic, which for 29 years was demanded by the population (Brandão & Duarte, 2004). Erickson (2011) highlights as characteristics of the X Generation in face of their livings, the ability to deal



with any situation, are good parents, good friends, choose how they wish to spend time counter-balancing their activities. Baby Boomers had hoped that their children would be successful, once the X Generation hoped to be good parents. Other characteristics of the X Generation are the fulfillment of their obligations, seriousness and the commitment to their jobs, the search for self-independence, business fulfillment, technology users and with tendency to innovation.

### **Collecting and Nostalgia**

Based on the experimental perspective of consumers, collecting is a type of behavior that Slater (2001) defines as a process of obtaining and possessing objects in an active and passionate way. On the other hand, Murphy (2000) highlights that for most collectors, their hobby represents contentment, an instinct in search for the beautiful or the eager to preserve history. There are different motivations to be a collector, who makes hard to form a theory on collecting (Belk,1995). The feeling of nostalgia appears as a great booster so that the collector obtains and gets hold of elements from the past, and this way can record the fine memories experienced.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research has exploratory character once the proposed theme has the character of exploring a phenomenon. According to what was proposed by Gil (2014), the exploration provides a general view of a seldom explored theme, which makes the formulation of hypothesis difficult. The approach of the study is qualitative, once the generalization of the collected data is not aimed, this an investigation from the behaviors and motivation of the buyers of the Maverick automobile belonging to two generations (Baby Boomers and X Generation).



The strategy used in this exploratory researched involved the application of interviews in depth, of 27 individuals from the Baby Boomers Generation, who posse or had possessed Maverick automobiles, and 20 individuals from the X Generation, who equally posse or had possessed these automobiles up to current days, as a relic or collection. All interviews were performed in person being the location of the interviews chosen by the interviewees, searching for way for the interviewees to feel comfortable in telling their life histories and their experiences with the Maverick, and for the preservation of such passion, through exhibitions and collectors encounters. All participants in this research accepted the terms of the research and given consent so that their answers could be analyzed and published according to the research's informed consent.

Participants were selected using the snowball gathering technique, mainly in collectors encounters and old cars exhibitions in the months of August to September 2018. The sample was a group of people with age equal or superior to 65 years (Baby Boomers) and another group with people between 25 and 45 years of age (X Generation), who possess or had possessed a Maverick automobile. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher 1 in its totality with the permission from the interviewed who were orientated through the reading and signature of the informed consent. For the characterization of the subjects of the research, the real names were modified to fictitious names. The forty-seven interviews were all transcribed and totaling over twenty hours and thirty minutes of recordings of the six open questions presented by the interviewers. Each question answered raised new questionings in search of a deeper depth in the interviews, with mean of eight questions performed to each interviewed.

For the data analysis, the laddering technique was used with posterior analysis of the content. Laddering refers to a technique of individual interview in depth, used to develop a comprehension of how consumers translate the product's attributes in meaningful associations regarding themselves,



according to the Means-End Theory (Gutman, 1981; Reynolds e Gutman, 1988). Such technique involves an adaptation of the format of the interview using mainly a series of directed and typified questions by the “why is this important to you?”, with the express purpose of determining group of links between the key-elements of perception in all range of attributes (A), consequences (C), and values (V). Such association nets, or ladders, known as perceptive guidance, represent combination of elements that serve as basis to distinguish among products in a certain class of products (Gutman; 1981; Reynolds e Gutman, 1988).

To complement the study, the content analysis of the information gathered from the interviews was performed to understand the behavior of the analyzed consumers. In studies of consumer behavior, it becomes necessary to analyze the lines that generated content that bring meanings related to consumption (Allen, 2001). The content analysis in this study had as purpose to organize and summarize data, aiming at obtaining the answers of the researched theme (Gil, 2014). After the transcript of the interviews, the three main steps of content analysis were performed, according to Bardin (2011, p. 148): pre-analysis, exploitation of the material, and at last, interpretation. In the pre-analysis, the detailed reading was performed and the preparation of the material so it could be explored, by categorization, defined by the authors as a structuralist process which consists of the state of inventory, with isolation of the elements and classification which consists in “looking for or imposing certain organization to the gathered information from the interviews”.

The importance of the categorization in this research was due to the fact that the process enabled the encounter of common points between the experiences and the ideas informed by all the participants, making the phenomenon fully and broader analyzed. Sampling was by convenience, recommended by Gil (2014) as the least rigorous type of sampling, without statistical accuracy. According to the author, such sampling is appropriate for



qualitative exploratory research, in case of the present study. Once the researchers are deeply performed, statistical validation is not necessary.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS**

Obtained data were transcribed and processes isolating the attributes, consequences, and values, with the elaboration of a table of ladders and the creation of a hierarchical map of values (HVM). The use of such technique in the development of useful information for the marketing decision making was applied in terms of perceptual segmentation, determining the weights of importance of several ladder components, developing, and evaluating the publicity from such perspective (Reynolds e Gutman, 2001).

The results took into consideration the Laddering capacity to extract from the respondent the true basis to any meaningful connection that they might have had with the product, in this case, with the Ford Maverick automobile. In this sense, the hierarchical map was performed through the identification and content analysis which resulted in attributes, consequences, and values from the consumers. Therefore, the laddering method was allied to the hierarchical map (Hierarchical Value Map – HVM) to reveal and to present the chain hierarchies of the means-end chain (Reynolds & Gutman 1988; dos Santos & Johnston, 2018). Thus, the analysis occurred in four phases:

Content analysis, Implication Matrix, Construction of the Hierarchical Value Map (HVM) and Determination and identification of the dominant perceptions. In this sense, the interviews transcribed, and the content analyzed through the content analysis technique aiming at identifying the variables related to the product's cycle of life – the Maverick automobile and the consumer's feelings in face of such product. Variables were raised through the analysis of the answers which generated a group of analyzed data for the development of the matrix, map and determination of the attributes, consequences and values. The matrix of implication and





hierarchical map were developed to represent the interactions between the contents, information and lines of the interviewed. According to dos Santos & Johnston (2018) such elements are put in lines and columns being the interior of the matrix numbered, which shows how many times an element may lead to another identifying, therefore, the existing interactions on the map.

The hierarchical value (HVM) is a graphic representation in the drawing which resembles to a tree presenting the answers of the interviewed, which represents the line of the consumer's thought when consumes a certain product or service (Reynolds & Gutman 1988; dos Santos & Johnston, 2018). The study used as guide the sequences which appeared from the answers of the interviewed, analyzed in the interaction visualized by the implication matrix, which determined the perceptions on the Maverick automobile. In the last step, the relations were analyzed in direct and indirect form, which formed the sequence Attributes – Consequences – values to consider the highlighted chain in such interactions. According to the recommendations by dos Santos & Johnston (2018), we did not prioritize the quantitative side of this research, since the importance of presentation of the means-end chains should be taken with care analyzing the context in which the research was performed and analyzed. Therefore, the next phase is to identify the attributes, consequences, and values of the X generation in face of the Ford Maverick automobile.

### **Identification of the Attributes, Consequences and Values of the X Generation**

As follows, in table 1 and Figure 1 are listed the Codes and the Map of Values found during the interviews with the X Generation.

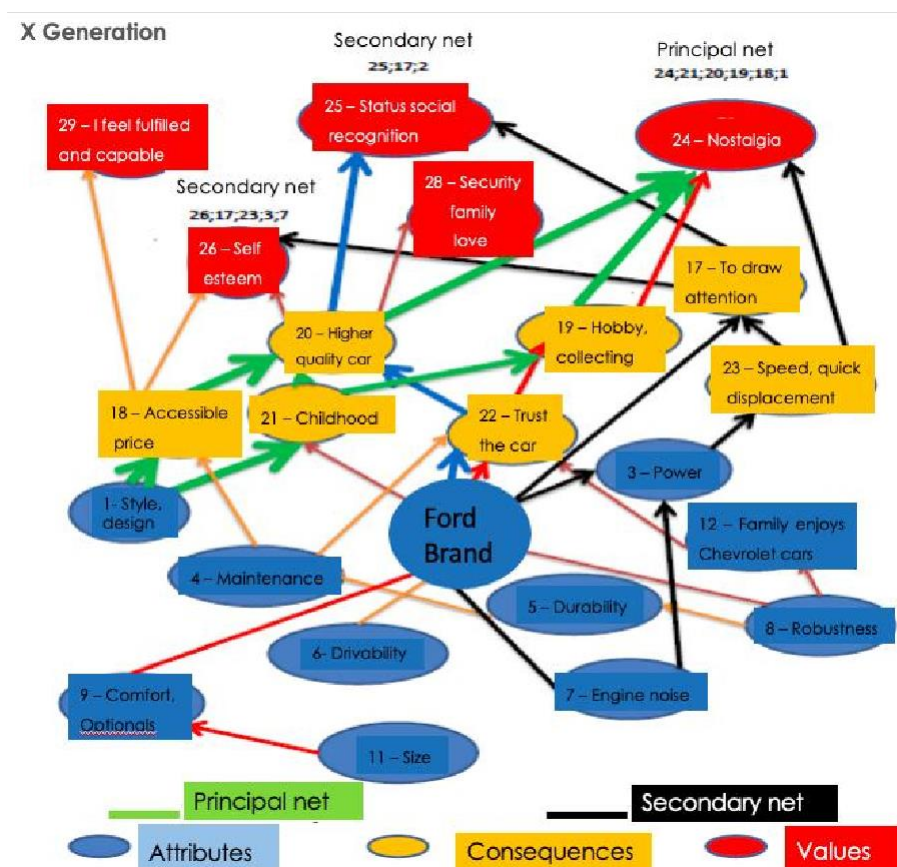
#### **Table 1 – List of summary codes from Generation X.**



List of codes of analyzed content: Generation X.		
Attributes	Consequences	Values
1 - Style of the automobile	16 - Brand draws attention	23 - Nostalgia of the brand
2 - Design of the automobile	17 - Price	24 - Brand remits to status
3 - Power of the engine	18 - Collecting	25 - Self-esteem
4 - Maintenance	19 - Quality	26 - Quality of life
5 - Durability of the automobile	20 - Nostalgia/Childhood	27 - Feeling of fulfillment
6 - Drivability of the automobile	21 - Trust on the brand	28 - Financial security
7 - Engine roar	22 - Speed/Power	29 - Love/Family
8 - Robustness of the automobile		30 - I am cooperating with the country
9 - Comfort of the automobile		
10 - Brand		
11 - Business opportunity		
12 - Performed marketing		
13 - Cost x benefits		
14 - History/fame of the automobile		
15 - Family reputation of the brand Ford		

Source: The authors (2019)

Figure 1: Generation X Value Hierarchy Map.



Source: The authors (2019)



The research points out as main value Nostalgia, and still four nets of secondary values, the Self-esteem, Status, Security and Fulfillment. This meets the characteristics of the X Generation such as commitment, respect, and family.

### **Status, Security and Fulfillment**

Regarding status, interviewee 7 illustrates such perception when affirming that:

[...] and this issue of enjoying the brand Ford is part of my family [...] my grandfather only liked cars from this brand, didn't the others, me too [...] my mom, my sister [...] everybody this gives us power. (Interviewee 7, 41 years of age).

Ah, it is a neck-turning machine [...] wherever you go through, people look, it's pure pride. (Interviewee 6, 68 years of age).

It is a differentiated car, which is highlighted for having a different engine. You pass on the street the people that know already see that it is something different, you feel good. (Interviewee 5, 71 years of age).

[...] I think that the 2-doors Maverick marked an age yes, it was status, recognition of someone special [...] it reminds very much of the American "Muscle-Car", although the Maverick was not quite that [...], but the drawing yes, that fall from the roof, bold, sportive. (Interviewee 8, 74 years of age).

In this relate, it is possible to recognize what is quoted in the studies of Jones (2004) & Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry (2003) when revealing that the famous brands enhance the repurchase's enthusiasm. It was noticed in the interviewed a sense of trust and pride for having the asset that was always present in the family.



## Self-esteem

Maverick inspires modernity, its resemblance to the Mustang, one of the most desired automobiles in the world, provoked an intense relation, its powerful V8 engine roar was saluted by everyone. Still, the model presented superior quality and in the relates it always appeared as an element which boosted the self-esteem of the users.

The Maverick draws much attention, made me feel good to see my daddy driving one, my friends were jealous [...] (Interviewee 3, 54 years of age).

Men in my family only talked about the Maverick, that it was the best, the most modern and sportive... I heard everything and I was proud that my dad had a Maverick [...] (Interviewee 2, 52 years of age).

The nice and famous people had Mavericks, when my dad bought one was something amazing, the biggest pride, I remember this and feel this up to today with my current super whole 1975 model (Interviewee 8, 48 years of age).

## Nostalgia

The issue of childhood was much highlighted, in which details of the car that is no longer produced were remembered, reminiscing past moments, generally from childhood and with the father or the family member who owned a Maverick.

[...] when my parents separated. I was very young, but when they were still married, he had a Maverick and I remember until today that my dad said that it was the best car he had ever had. (Interviewee 10, 52 years of age).

[...] there was once when I stealthily roared the engine of the Maverick, what a spectacular engine and I saw a man who was around 35 years of age with his 5 or 6 year old son, arriving near my car, pointing to the car and saying to the kid: See this, my son [...] this is a real car [...]



not these crap cars that we have today. (Interviewee 9, 75 years of age).

[...] it was another time, we used to go to the beach, stopped at the green tunnel, for example, to have a snack and continued the trip, it was good and the several Mavericks which dad had we always rode, it was great, I miss that! (Interviewee 6, 71 years of age).

One of the central points from the interviews of the X Generation was the matter of preservation of the asset to perpetuate the memory it represents. Such chain of elements takes us to the main value found, nostalgia. The issue of childhood in which the remembrance of parents, uncles, grandparents with the Maverick is smoldering, which suggests us that the importance that the X Generation gives to the car is a rescue of a time that passed and left marks. In Chart 2 as follows, a list of codes and the map of values found during the interviews with the Baby Boomers:

**Table 2 – List of summary codes from Baby Boomers.**

List of codes of analyzed content: Baby Boomers Generation		
Attributes	Consequences	Values
1 - Style of the automobile	16 - Pride of the Brazilian industry	26 - Financial security
2 - Comfort and automobile's optionals	17 - Accessible price	27 - Security/Family love
3 - Maintenance of the automobile	18 - Collecting	28 - Personal fulfillment
4 - Ford brand's	19 - Quality	29 - Self-esteem
5 - Car Size	20 - Nostalgia/Childhood	30 - Nostalgia
6 - Mechanic of the automobile	21 - Trust the automobile	31 - Status
7 - Roar and power of the engine	22 - Innovation	32 - Love/family
8 - Robustness of the automobile	23 - Drivability	33 - I am cooperating with the country
9 - Stability of the automobile	24 - Speed of the automobile	
10 - Finishing and quality	25 - Design draws attention	
11 - Economy		
12 - Sportiness of the automobile		
13 - Cost x benefits		
14 - History/Fame of the automobile		
15 - Ford brand's Marketing strategy		

Source: the authors (2019)

The employed methodology on the data analysis is the same used for the analysis performed for the X Generation. Cut points were added in attributes, consequences, and values, to focus the research on the more



meaningful elements, which were respectively: Security, Familiar love as Nostalgia and Financial Security.

### **Security and Family Love**

According to Oliveira (2010), the issue of respect and importance are characteristics that the Baby Boomers Generation gives to the family as institution. From the interviews, it was extracted that Maverick's acquisition had motivations that aimed at providing family welfare. Users' preoccupation with the car, the commodity of the users, the perception of riding a sportive car, robust and safe, with a V8 engine with a recognized and admired roar. Besides that, a relatively low cost of acquisition, all of this added led to the sensation of family security.

[...] that was a car, powerful, safe, comfortable, fit for the whole family, today there's nothing like that [...] (Interviewee 14, 68 years of age).

[...]I took the whole family and still the bags, and arrived at the beach, with complete security, the family loved to go on field trips during the weekends [...] (Interviewee 13, 75 years of age).

[...]look, I liked because I felt safe to go with my kids on these dangerous roads, but my wife and children liked even more, it was a big family program [...] (Interviewee 16, 72 years of age).

### **Nostalgia**

Curiously, nostalgia is a value also found in the X Generation, thus it is the most quoted and most important. In the research, for the Baby Boomers Generation, Nostalgia assumes a role of motivation when acquiring a Maverick. Every sense of nostalgia comes from the comparison of what a person had in current days, from what the market used to offer at a certain time, compared to imported assets which came to Brazil.





Maverick is quoted as a car with exclusive design, one of the most beautiful national cars. The issue of independence, to see the Maverick as a vehicle that leads to a feeling of freedom, mentioned by Erickson (2011) as being characteristic of the X Generation.

Ford brand, through Maverick, know how to explore such ideal of life from the youngsters from the seventies, which lead us to understand that the nostalgia is one of the values that leads or that had led the Baby Boomers Generation to acquire a Maverick as a remembrance of the American imported cars.

You buy car and you know that car was the champion of competitions, in several modalities they had, it was the Brazilian version of Ford's champion, the Mustang, that until today is south in the American market. What a wonderful car, much better than the Opala's and the Doge, this is a satisfaction to the owner (Interviewee 12, 52 years of age).

Its mechanic mainly was equal or even superior to foreign cars, the V8 engine was very good, the best in all I have ever seen. (Interviewee 11, 64 years of age).

### **Financial Security**

The interviewed mentioned the accessible price, resale value, parts and maintenance, in general as strong attributes which generate the terminal value of financial security. That car at the time was seen as in investment of cheap and easy maintenance and above average durability:

I always liked and always had [...] it happens at the time [...] we always struggled, right? It was a car that used to spend a little, it consumed a lot of gas, but it paid off since it was a good car, easy to sell and gave low maintenance. (Interviewee 15, 72 years of age).

Ah, I've already had about 5 Mavericks [...] always won money at the resale, never had problems. I have one today, a 76 which is the only one not negotiable, it is for my use and will stay with my son. I will leave the car to





him, since he also likes it. The issue of the car, the brand, passes on from father to son, and I already have a grandson and with 3 years of age, he already fights for the Maverick as well (interviewee 17, 75 years of age).

For Erickson (2011) the Baby Boomers expect that their children be well-successful in life. The feeling of having in the family a car, which is considered a valued asset, and to pass it on to the next generation brings with it the ideal of trust, of a better life and financial security.

## CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The following quote is found in the book "To sculpt time", from Andrei Tarkovski (2002) in which the authors try to explain the importance of values associating the object in question to a history. For example, "a cane that wouldn't be just something to help someone to walk, but in reality, a utilitarian piece which brings with itself a life history, life of people "from the old times". Therefore, the power and the unmistakable roar of a classic V8 Maverick have made it admired and wanted by many consumers who love automobiles, immortalized in several Hollywood movies (Mad Max, The Fast and the Furious, and Bullitt). Therefore, to own an automobile of such style reflects on people's daily lives, past histories that go beyond the utilitarian sense of the product (Solomon, 2016).

In summary, this study aimed at evaluating the common values of the generations associating the automobile with technical and management implications from this nostalgic and management consumption behavior.

### Common values of the Generations

The study reached an abstract common value in both generations: Nostalgia. According to the perception grasped by the interviews, the Maverick represents the way of life linked to Brazilian traditions in the 70's. In such decade, Brazil grew in the field of transportation and gained financing



to expand its roads. The Maverick was considered the car that the middle class could afford in the 70's, therefore, the Baby Boomers generation bought and used the Maverick and passed their values, feelings, experiences and impressions on to their children (X Generation). To the following generation, a differentiated, sportive, powerful and quality car was re-passed, extremely desired by the youngsters at the time and with great cost. One generation influenced the other. The Baby Boomers generation saw the Brazilian automotive industry to blossom. Nowadays, such generation still has the need to value the past, a car that used and served the family gaining a high degree of satisfaction. In the same way, the X Generation, the nostalgia was pointed as main value in the research developed by sensorial, emotional characteristics and consumer's fantasies. Nostalgia is pointed as a great booster in the behavior of consumers (Hutcheon, 1998).

Nostalgic individuals fit their behavior by rescuing something from the past. The research pointed that such value for the X Generation is linked to the issue of the attempt in rescue a past time. By influence of their parents, or friends, such time from the past was considered important and remarkable in their life histories. Another important point is the issue of collecting, which comes linked to the nostalgia value, in a way that collecting an item, in case the Maverick, is to belong to a group of reference. Such feeling of collecting leads to a feeling of belonging to a community which is involved in a cause, movement, will or brand (Aaker, 2007; Lyu & Kim, 2020). The involvement with a product in such communities, in this case "passionate groups by the Maverick automobile" brings back a memory that is accompanied by re- meanings to belonging to movements which make the past present using the product or brand (Fleck, Abdala & Trott, 2008; Lyu & Kim, 2020; Silva et al., 2020).

## Theoretical Implications



The main purpose of such research was to understand the behavior of generations regarding the Maverick automobile, an automobile champion of sales from the Ford brand in Brazil, at the time of its launch and in current days. Nostalgia, as well as the influence between generations were the highlight points which showed by using the Laddering technique.

According to Fleck, Abdala & Trott (2008), men and women showed feelings of nostalgia in unequal magnitudes. For men, nostalgia presents itself more in sportive equipment and automobiles; thus, for women, nostalgia is more noticed in memories such as photographs, knickknacks among others. For dos Santos & Johnston (2018) there is a scaling of priorities when we associate memories and remembrances on a product or service leading the consumer to have nostalgic and generational feelings.

In the research, the importance of the study of generations and the profound connection between the generations with products associated with the Baby Boomers and X Generations were observed.

It was verified that during the launch of the Maverick in Brazil there was an opportunity, a not-attended field in the market, between popular and luxury cars, which means, there was the need of a vehicle with a lower cost than foreign car, but that presented the same attributes. In special, for the middle class, to have the feeling of owning a "Brazilian Mustang" with advanced design and reliable mechanic, engine power with a well-known roar, bringing, therefore, a status to the buyer and for the standards at the time. Ford nailed when offering, to the middle class, a unique luxury and sportive car with a lower price than the competitors Galaxie and Dodge, which were bigger cars, more expensive and with a higher consumption of fuel. The matter of optional items and the way that they could be chosen gave the car a diversification from models and styles.

The Baby Boomers Generation, which consumed the Maverick in the 70's, stated its perceived qualities, assimilated all the marketing campaign that Ford had to promote the Maverick, was also the generation who lived



the petroleum crisis. Therefore, the cycle of life for such spotlighted automobiles was shortened and ended before the '80s, for economic reasons. Such generation realized in the valuation, in the low fuel consumption, and in the low maintenance cost, attributes which guided its main value and, as consequence, passed such feeling to the following generation.

On the other hand, the X Generation, which in the current days still owns a Maverick, notably, represents a rescue of values perceived by their parents and close friends who lived in this longing time, provoking the desire of preservation of the history that the car represents, being part of a movement that remits nostalgia and their memories and of their family members. However, a passionate desire of the consumers of such generations may occur due to past experiences with the automobile. To Kozinets, Patterson & Ashman (2017) consumers always fall in love with histories, with remit to products that leave some memory that in the future may come back reappearing a behavior of use. In other words, consumers may suffer emotional influences through memories or past experiences (Lyu & Kim, 2020). Such memories remit us in translating experiences through memories which supply needs and real desires in some moment in our life.

All such attributes appear in our belief as human being that the memory or remembrance of something does not only leads to a nostalgic dimension of a world which no longer exists, but of a meaningful guidance of a being a consumer who constructs the present by a certain experience which will be powered in a future horizon by either commodities, products, services or brands (Izquierdo, 2018; Lyu e Kim, 2020).

This research had some limitations, a limitation factor was to consider a sample of 47 consumers approached at collector's and old cars exhibitions, which generated results based on the perception of such part of specific consumers. In addition, this study was led through an open script, which was broadened with the support from the answers of the interviewed. Another



limitation is related to the results, which could have been broadened with other instruments and forms of observation.

This way, further studies which amplify the scope of such research are suggested, considering a broader sample not only with collectors and Maverick owners, but with those who have the intention of acquiring this automobile. It is also recommended to perform a study which amplifies the research considering the eight relations (A – C – V) and the concrete and abstract attributes, so the functional versus psychological consequences may be analyzed from consumers of old automobiles, such as the Ford Maverick consumers.

### **Management Implications**

The study shows the importance of companies which use a differentiation strategy, guidance to the client, just as Ford has done with Maverick, which quickly became a champion of sales. Any products which the directing of the market is a segment or specific public, the management cut which it belongs should be taken into consideration since the consumer has preference on certain characteristics and attributes, which may become personal values. One of the interesting aspects is to analyze the sense of belonging to such groups. In addition, to analyzing how actions are stimulated, which can boost such feeling.

The proper understanding of such chain will empower and direct the marketing actions for success. Therefore, the constant study of such evolution of value present in the generations may aid the decision of a marketing positioning and the communication of out of line products or highlighted products in the consumer's market.



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