

Plastic Dreams: consumption goals of Melissa collectors

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this essay is to understand the behaviour of brand collectors and to identify the goal hierarchy behind it. Melissa was the brand used as study object. We performed a literature review and two surveys, qualitative and quantitative, with collectors of the brand. The Means-End Chain Model was used and the Hierarchical Value Map was outlined as a result of the likelihood of relationships between different “having”, “doing” and “being” goals answered by each interviewee. In the qualitative phase, it was discovered that, in order to characterize a Melissa collection, the consumer must take care and preserve items long after they have lost their original purpose, describing them affectionately and associating them to symbolic representations. The quantitative phase showed that the strongest life goals are the Search for Pleasure and for Modernity, and that one of the main concerns and consumption intention of the consumers is to “show they are in the know regarding trends”.

Keywords: Collection, brand, means-end chain, hierarchical value map

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1. INTRODUCTION

The brands have come to give products identity, to differentiate them from competition. Many brands have accomplished this goal so efficiently that, not only they have differentiated their products from the competition, but they have also created such a tight bond with their consumers that they start to relate to them in a very close way and for a long time, which is the case of the brand collectors. Such behaviour, very specific and not much studied, requires more information to identify which attributes a brand must have to generate such involvement by consumers that lead them to start a collection. To discover attributes and benefits leading to the consumption of certain items, a model has been broadly used: the Means-End Chain Model, initially proposed by Gutman (1982, p. 62).

This model consists in identifying three goal levels (having, doing and being) that lead to a certain kind of consumption. The final result of the relationship between those three levels is well represented in a map called HVM (Hierarchical Value Map), which shall be described and presented further, in the methodology and result analysis section.

Melissa, a prominent Brazilian shoe brand nowadays, was chosen as the study object. The focus is on identifying what are the goals that lead to the consumption of a brand as a collection. For this purpose, two researches were conducted: qualitative and quantitative. This essay is composed of four parts: the first part presents the literature review about brand collection, Means-End Chain Model and shoes; the second part focus on the methodology used; the third part presents the obtained results and the final part explains the results found.

LITERATURE REVIEW

BRAND COLLECTION

By the end of the 20th century, studies pointed out that most products had become commodity and that the best way to make them stand out would be through their brands (Keller, 1993, p 01; Zeithaml, 1988, p. 02; Aaker, 1991, p.04). Nowadays, with the large amount of brands everywhere, the challenge has become differentiating the brands to ensure consumption preference.

Some of these brands have managed to achieve this goal of standing out so successfully that they became known as synecdoche for their product category, such as

Leite Moça (condensed milk) and BomBril (steel wool) (McDaniel; Gates, 2003, p. 119); others can be so strongly involved with their consumers that they come to be associated to their “self” and to form consumption subcultures, such as Harley-Davidson (Schouten; McAlexander, 1995, p. 44). Considering the involvement with the brand as a differentiation factor, Zaichkowsky (1986, p. 06) verified that consumers highly involved with a brand tend to be more interested in information about this brand and give more value to their attributes, preferring them over other brands, besides keeping a long-term relationship.

A specific long-term relationship and high involvement with brands is brand collection (Slater, 2002, p. 366). The act of collecting is a kind of behaviour that instigates scholars of consumer behaviour due to its unique characteristics.

Belk (2001, p. 23) says that the first record on the existence of collectors dates from far back as year 133 A.d., Roman collectors. As this people moved about a lot, they had contact with many different cultures and artefacts and ended up developing a taste for some of these artefacts or specific cultures. An artefact that caught their attention was Greek art, which became, at that time, object of collection by many Romans (Rigby; Rigby, 1944, p. 128).

Collectors are usually so involved and identify themselves so much with their collections that they come to see them as a representation of their “self” (Ligas, 2000, p. 984; Price; Arnould; Curasi; 2000, p. 181; Belk, 1988, p. 151; Grubb; Hupp, 1968, p. 60). Such symbolism is so strong that many collectors leave their collections to next of kin, so they can be remembered through them. (Price; Arnould; Curasi, 2000, p. 182; Belk, 1995 p. 144; Rigby; Rigby, 1949, p. 49).

Scholars of collection, such as Belk (1995, p. 479; 2001, p. 37) and Muensterberger (1994, p. 03), define it as a passionate way of acquiring products that allows the collector to amass “fantastic” stories about their purchases, as if they were treasures that inspire pride, lust and greed. Belk (2001, p.37) also states that collecting is “acquiring and storing objects in a constant and passionate way, detaching them from the world and from their ordinary purpose and giving them status of special and dear objects.”

Collections are also different from other consumption forms because it involves passion in acquiring and keeping collected objects. The act of collecting is so charged with affection (Belk, 1995, p. 483; 2001, p. 146; Slater, 2002, p. 362; Oliver, 1999, p. 41; Muensterberger, 1994, p. 66; Ahuvia, 1992, p.188; Susan; Kleine; Kernan, 1989, p. 363)

that items in a collection can carry status of sacred objects¹ (Belk, 1988, p. 140). Besides, due to the high emotional involvement with the collection, collectors tend to become profound scholars when it comes to the collected objects, whether knowing about what they already possess or knowing about items that can become a part of their collection (Belk, 1988, p. 140; 2001, p. 68; Rigby; Rigby, 1944, p. 428).

VALUES

All beliefs and rules absorbed through human socialization that are shared and internalized by a group represent the values of such group (Engel; Blackwell; Miniard, 1995, p. 620). These values, when unique to an individual, are called personal beliefs and, when shared by a group of people, are called social and cultural beliefs (Engel *et al.*, 1995, p. 619). Therefore, adopting certain values implies judging certain conducts as more appropriate than others (Rokeach, 1973, p. 57).

To Rokeach (1973, p. 05) and Leão e Mello (2007, p. 3), values are culturally absorbed and are useful to create and moralize social interactions, as well as to provide a basis to rationalize beliefs, attitudes and behaviours, guiding people's actions and attitudes towards situations and objects.

According to Mick e Buhl (1992, p. 329), human behaviour predicts and is motivated, not reactive. Therefore, consumer behaviour shall differ depending on the values of each consumer and what will motivate their decisions. Mick e Buhl (1992, p. 329) also come to the conclusion that individuals structure their life goals and meanings in order to create cohesion in their lives. This is confirmed by Thompson (2001, p. 121) on brand consumption, when he says that "people consume brands as a "means" to an end". This concept is aligned to Bagozzi e Dholakia's (1999, p. 24) idea that, in a purchase situation, consumer's choosing process depends on two choice levels; the first one is represented by the product category with its starting point being end values; the second level is represented by choosing the product brand based on instrumental values. It is worth remembering that end values are "representations of preferences of final existence states, while instrumental values represent behaviour types preferred to achieve end states." (Leão; Mello, 2007, p. 04).

In this sense, the use of a Means-End Chain model (Gutman, 1982, p. 62) seems appropriate to analyse collection consumption, once the consumption of items to form and create a collection is attached to the collector's values. Examples of such values can be the concern of collectors with "eternal life", represented by their habit of leaving the collection

as estate, so their next of kin can remember them through their collections; and also the “prosperous life” value, meaning that collecting implies expenses with products that exceed their functional use. Both examples can be identified in Rokeach’s list of 18 end values presented by Sheth; Mittal and Newman, (2001, p. 345), them being: prosperous life, exciting life, a peaceful world, equality, freedom, happiness, national security, pleasure, salvation (eternal life), social recognition, true friendship, wisdom, a beautiful world, family safety, mature love, self esteem, sense of accomplishment and inner harmony.

MEANS-END CHAIN MODEL

The Means-End Chain model (hereinafter referred to as MEC) helps explain how choosing a product enables reaching desired final states (Gutman, 1982, p. 62; Reynolds; Olson, 2001, p. 17; Leão; Mello, 2001, p. 02; 2002, p. 02; 2007, p. 05). This technique assumes that consumers look at products as a means to an end, such end being represented by their values and life goals (Ligas, 2000, p. 986; Mulvey; Olson; Celsi; Walker, 1994, p. 53).

According to Gutman’s (1982, p. 62) proposed model, the consumer chooses the product according to a three-level hierarchical goal structure that, according to Ratneshwar, Huffman and Mick (2000, p. 14), is represented by the “having” goal, which is choosing product’s attributes and benefits (A). Then, there is the “doing” goal, which is the group of consequences arising from attributes and benefits of the chosen product (C). Finally, there are the “being” goals, which are the end values that guide the consumer’s life (V). Thus, the analysis method uses a hierarchical goal sequence (A-C-V), as used by Ribas and Lima (2008, p. 06), by Pimenta and Boas (2008, p. 07), by Alves, Rego, Machado and Oliveira (2008, p.09) and by Kaminski (2004, p. 112).

Escudero and Prado (2008, p. 04), with a view to deepen MEC motivation analysis, proposed an analysis development in the scaling system (A-C-V), including one more level regarding connection between chosen attributes and benefits, adding one more level to the sequence (A-B-C-V).

The MEC allows establishing relationships between end values that are important to the consumers, therefore bearing an influence upon their choices of brands/products and specific brand/product attributes that bear such values. The use of such model allows the

positioning of any such product, to make its attributes tangible in communication strategies for its target-audience, besides pointing out attributes to be kept by the product and those that may one day be replaced (Huffman; Houston, 1993, p. 205). This is done by associating the means (observable product attributes) with desired ends (existential states valued by the consumer) (Gutman, 1982, p. 61).

Depending on the consumer values, they may have certain goals to accomplish and, soon, they will be motivated to make certain purchases that will lead to their accomplishment. It so happens that such goals are nothing more than consumer's expected results due to their behaviour, that is, they represent targets. In the MEC, such targets are motivated by consumer values and are ranked as explained below.

Ligas (2000, p. 986), using the idea of individual target dynamicity regarding "having" and "being" levels, which are usually moulded by the context in which the consumer tries to accomplish "doing" level goals, as proposed by Ratneshwar, *et al.* (2000, p. 13), developed a dynamic target structure using a three-level motivation classification, which are: "having" goals, "doing" goals and "being" goals.

According to Ligas (2000, p. 986), the **Having Goals** focus on the desire of an individual to own a certain product or brand because of attributes and characteristics associated with them. These goals reflect the consumer's desire to own products with such characteristics and benefits.

The **Doing Goals** focus on the desire of an individual to seek a result in any such situation; it is a consequence of the consumption arising from chosen attributes.

The **Being Goals** represent more abstract goals in an individual's goal structure. In this level, consumer's goals relate to their values and life themes. Under this perspective, the author mentions Rokeach's (1973, p. 58) theory in terms of values, and Mick e Buhl's (1992, p. 329) theory when it comes to life themes.

Using the premise that much of human behaviour is goal-oriented and that the relationship between such goals and what motivates their actions is not ranked horizontally, but vertically (Bagozzi; Dholakia, 1999, p. 22), Huffman, Ratneshwar and Mick. (2000, p. 15) developed a hierarchical model to describe how such goals can be organised in terms of abstraction levels (figure 1).

The model developed by them ranks (from more to less abstract) the goals in three levels: 1) "Being" Goals; 2) "Doing" Goals and 3) "Having" Goals. Each of these goals is divided into two categories. "Being" Goals divide into Values and life themes and Life

projects; “Doing” Goals divide into Current concerns and Consumption intention; and “Having” Goals divide into Sought benefits and Attribute Preference.

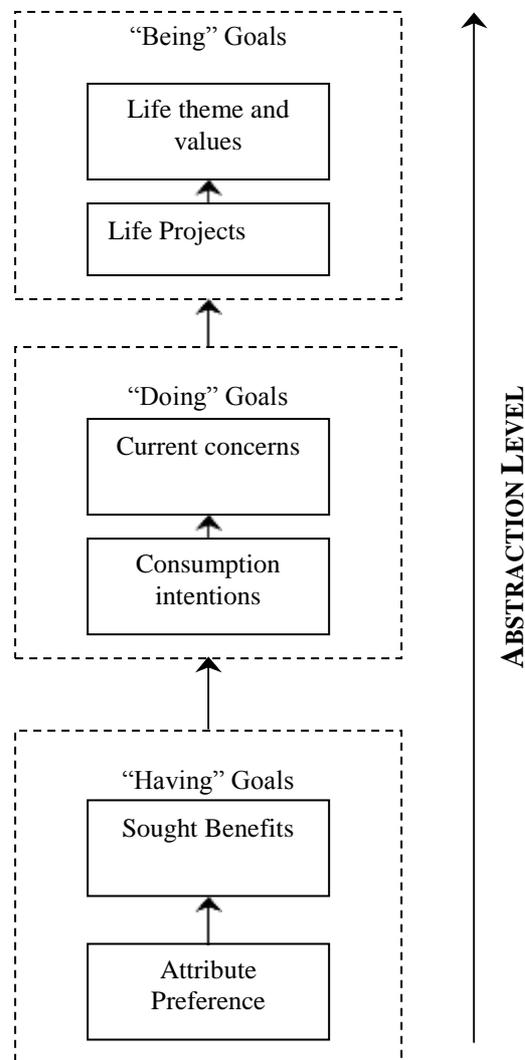


Figure 1 – Goal Hierarchy

Source: Ratneshwar, S.; Huffman, C.; Mick, D. G. *The why of consumption: contemporary perspectives on consumer motives, goals and desires*. London: Routledge, 2000, p.14.

The Life Theme, considered by Huffman *et al.* (2000, p. 15) the highest level in goal abstraction, can be related to an individual’s existential issues, to the idea that each one has of what is “to be” (sophisticated, for instance). Life Projects (also in the highest abstraction level) are responsible for the construction and upkeep of the individual’s “self” (in order to be sophisticated, the individual must be a wine connoisseur).

In the second abstraction level are the Current Concerns and Consumption intentions. Current concerns are activities, tasks or missions aligned to the individual’s life projects, that is, what needs to be done by the individual in order to achieve his/her life

projects (Huffman *et al.*, 2000, p. 18). Current concerns help the person transform purchase problems that are not clear in cohesive purchase problems. According to a Life project example given by one of the authors, any such person that seeks in the first level regarding life themes the wisdom represented by being a “wine connoisseur” will be involved, in the second abstraction level, with the current concern of studying about wine.

Also according to Huffman *et al.* (2000, p. 18), consumption intentions comprehend the goals, the idea behind an individual’s desire to engage in the behaviour of using or consuming a certain product. While Current concerns involve consumption goals for many products, the Consumption intentions guide consumers towards a goal (Huffman *et al.*, 2000, p. 18). In the example of seeking to become a wine expert (concerns), the consumption intention would be the desire to buy a specific book about French wines.

In the third abstraction level, there are the Benefits sought and Attributes Preferred. The search for benefits relate to the consequences wanted by an individual when buying a product (Huffman *et al.*, 2000, p. 19), for instance, the individual who bought a book about French wines intends to know more about these wines. Attribute Preference relates to the product attributes that are preferred by the consumer (Huffman *et al.*, 2000, p. 19), such as the preference for a book from X Publishing instead of a book from Y Publishing.

Ratneshwar *et al.* (2000, p. 12) identified that most studies about goal-oriented consumption usually establish a direct connection between “Being” and “Having”, without really building the road that connects higher and lower goals; this is why this essay concentrates so strongly in analysing the association between “Having” Goals (attributes-benefits), Having and Doing goals and Doing and Being goals.

In order to use the MEC, the laddering technique needs to be used, which, in Veludo de Oliveira and Ikeda’s (2004, p. 213) point of view, can be done in two ways: either soft or hard laddering.

Soft laddering demands a more skilled researcher, as the question “Why is this important to you?” must be insisted upon so as to obtain goal hierarchy information. Bagozzi e Dholakia presented in 1999 (p. 23) a cognitive scheme proposal to analyse how goal relate to motivations behind people’s actions. In this study, the authors suggest that, in order to identify the goals beneath the cognitive scheme representing the means to accomplish “what someone wants” (which, in Gutman’s model, 1982, p. 62, correspond to “Having” goals), the interviewees must answer the question: “How can I achieve what I want?”. To identify the goals called by Bagozzi e Dholakia (1999, p. 23) focals (which, in Gutman’s model, 1982, p. 62, correspond to “Doing” goals), interviewees must answer the

question “What am I looking for?”. Finally, to identify Bagozzi e Dholakia’s (1999, p. 23) subordinate goals, representing the reasons why someone wants to accomplish what they look for (which, in Gutman’s model, 1982, p. 62, correspond to “Being” goals), the interviewees must answer the question: “Why do I want to accomplish what I seek?”.

Hard laddering demands a more structured model to gather data, such as a questionnaire and not only an interview script (Veludo de Oliveira; Ikeda, 2004, p. 213) that allows the interviewee to associate all attribute possibilities (A) regarding the analysed product, in the questionnaire, with all consequence possibilities (C) arising from such attributes regarding the analysed product, and also to connect them to all the values in the research (V); that is, the questionnaire must allow association between all alternative answers (A-C-V).

SHOES

Regarding shoes, Belk (2003, p. 27) says that they are “candy for the eyes, poetry for the feet, icing on your soul”. This quote expresses deep meaning associated to shoes and their importance to people.

Linden (2004, p. 266), analysing the perception of comfort and risk associated to the use of shoes in the women’s market, realized that people have such a strong relationship with this product that they can even be incoherent in their evaluation on the subject. Shoes are seen as hedonistic consumption and, for most women, they are considered so important to their personal appearance that pointed-toe high-heeled shoes are seen as pleasant to be used, only due to the positive impact they have on the user’s overall appearance. In this case, the psychological comfort surpassed the relevancy of the physical comfort.

To Belk (2003, p. 27), shoes represent an extension to the consumer’s “self” and have different meanings for both genders, which can be noticed by the amount of shoes that women and men usually have. The average man possesses 12 pairs of shoes, while the average woman owns 30 pairs.

Women say that some shoes have affective memories, while men usually associate shoes to practical issues; however, when men evaluate women’s shoes, they see them as extremely seductive (Belk, 2003, p. 32). The pointy-toe high-heeled shoe carries such a strong seductive symbolism that, even though they are physically uncomfortable, they are

the most used by consumers when they want to seduce. (Seale, 1995, p. 380; Linden, 2004, p. 118).

Judging and interpreting people by their shoes is a cultural issue (Belk, 2003, p. 31), which means that every shoe may be interpreted differently, depending on the culture. Besides, shoes have many connotations. They can quickly reflect different personalities and interests, such as: cowboy boots suggest that the owner comes from a rural background. Shoes can also represent ripening, when a girl turns into a woman and starts using her first high-heeled shoe (Belk, 2003, p. 28), or, when a young man starts working and stops being just a student, sneakers, which were once the dominant shoe in his closet, is abandoned and other, more mature-looking shoes come to replace them (Petersen-Wagner, 2007, p. 65).

Thus, shoes represent a product category with a strong “self” representation for its users, besides representing a kind of product with high emotional involvement potential. According to collection theories that strongly defend people’s involvement with their collections and the importance they have in representing the collectors’ “selves”, it is a wise choice for this study.

METHODOLOGY

Taking into consideration that this essay aims at bolstering information regarding interpretation of brand collector behaviours according to Being, Doing and Having goals (Huffman *et al.*, 2000, p. 15) and using the brand Melissa as the study object, the MEC, initially proposed by Gutman (1982, p. 62) and adopted by Escudero and Prado (2008, p. 04) was chosen. This choice is justified by the fact that the MEC represents a deeper analysis model, once it ranks the direct connection between low and high level goals and also intermediate goals within the chain.

Melissa was chosen because it has been established in the market for over thirty years (what allows the analysis of the collected items’ history); for its strong symbolic appeal (a typical attribute of collectible items, according to the theory’s review) that “plays with the promotional campaigns of its consumers’ “girl-woman” image.

This essay was written using qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques, deep interviews and online questionnaires. In the qualitative phase, the soft laddering technique was used (Veludo de Oliveira; Ikeda, 2004, p. 213) and 12 shoe and/or accessories collectors were interviewed, so as to identify their Having, Doing and Being goals. In the

quantitative phase, the hard laddering technique was applied (Veludo de Oliveira; Ikeda, 2004, p. 213) and the strongest relationships between Having goals (attributes and benefits), Having and Doing goals and Doing and Being goals were identified for those Melissa collectors. Two hundred sixty one Melissa consumers answered an online questionnaire and 138 interviewees were considered collectors². Due to the brand's attributes, the sample was composed of women from 15 to 47 years old, mostly from A and B social classes (92% of the sample) (according to Brazil 2008 criterion). In the qualitative phase, they were asked about the amount and frequency of Melissa purchases. As for the amount, 74% of the interviewees said they buy Melissas more than once a year, and only 2.9% said they buy them less than once a year.

RESULTS

QUALITATIVE PHASE

According to the narrative analysis (Jovchelovitch; Bauer, 2000, p. 96)³ used to construe the interviews, a brand collector was profiled as: consumers of such brand that owns more than four items from this brand; who plan to keep on buying items from this brand; who do not get rid of items that can no longer be used for its original purpose and that describe those items affectionately, in addition to giving them symbolic meanings.

In the interviewees' opinion, the true Melissa collector does not buy items from all collections launched by the brand. The collector buys whatever catches their eyes for whatever reason that is not specifically a new fashion launching. These collectors claimed that they browse the internet for old collection models that may no longer be in stores and that, usually, are sold by another individual. These items are chosen because they are rare and because they are a reminder of nostalgic moments, such as childhood. Another ever present attribute in the collectors' speech is that they do not like using Melissa's launched products just after they have been launched. They justify it by saying that if they do that, they would just look like any other ordinary, non-collector Melissa customer, losing their edge as a Melissa collector and being engulfed by ordinary fashion consumers.

The attributes, benefits, Doing and Being goals that a shoe/accessory brand must have or represent to become a collection object were also identified. Regarding Melissa, specifically, ten attributes were found (unique style, priced a little below the market, being a plastic shoe, variety of models and patterns, durability, many colours, exclusive editions,

collections with daily themes, comfort and lightness). Six benefits were found associated with this brand collection (differentiation, economy, the fact that it can be used in many occasions, beauty, indicates the mood of those wearing it and does not hurt their feet). As for the Doing goals, six possibilities were identified: showing they are in the know when it comes to trends; expressing who they are and how they see the world; an investment; feeling good about themselves; establishing a connection with the brand and valuing art. Regarding Being goals, nine examples were mentioned: individuality, pleasure, modernity, freedom, beauty, self esteem, wisdom, sense of accomplishment and prosperous life.

A curious fact regarding Melissa collections is that their collectors actually use the collected items, which is not the same as stamp collectors, for instance, because stamps can only be looked at.

QUANTITATIVE PHASE

After establishing the attributes, benefits, Doing and Being goals identified in the qualitative phase, three matrices were generated: matrix AB (attributes vs benefits), matrix BF (benefits vs Doing goals) and matrix FS (Doing goals vs Being goals), which correspond to the previously described (A-C-V) connections, which have been tested through the online questionnaire, so as to build the HVM and to verify most relevant connections between such matrices (AB-BF-FS).

The next step was the preparation of connection matrices between connection implications. Due to the large number of connections arising from these analyses' levels, Grunert, Beckmann and Sorensen (2001, p. 66) suggest that only a section is taken to assemble the HVM. This section (cut) represents the minimum each cell representing a connection has to have to be considered important. According to the authors, such definition is essential to reduce the complexity of connections and to capture those that are most important in order to create a map with a good understanding of the studied phenomenon. As there is no unanimous definition of this section (Kaminski, 2004, p. 110; Alonso, 2007, p. 118; Escudero; Prado, 2008, p. 03), we chose to cut it at the 88th percentile. With this definition in the matrix AB, the cut was centralized in the likelihood of association 0.39, for the matrix BF, 0.32 and, for matrix FS, 0.25. Connections were also classified in three levels of intensity according to the 33rd and 66th percentile. Thus, the strongest connections were those with association intensity equal or above 0.65; the second classification group got associations valued between 0.45 and 0.64 and the less intense group, 0.25 to 0.44.

In an attempt to reproduce the test on MEC's ability to adapt to consumption goals and to test the APT (Association Pattern Technique) in chains with one more level than the one proposed by Ter Hofstede, Steenkamp and Wedel (1998), already conducted by Escudero (2006) and Escudero and Prado (2008), all chains were submitted to a loglinear regression to test its conditional independency between matrices' connections, which is a pre-requirement to apply APT. This conditional independency relates to the assumption that the relationship between attributes and benefits is unrelated to the relationship between benefits and Doing goals, and Doing and Having goals.

Using the loglinear regression model, 14.520 chains were tested; only 311 presented leaps from the first to third and fourth levels or from second to fourth level. It represents a percentage of relationships with 2.14% of conditional dependency. The low percentage in conditional dependency showed, as in Escudero's (2006) and Escudero and Prado's (2008), that, even by adding a fourth level, matrices' connections still have the conditional independency needed to carry on the analysis.

In table 1, the intensity of the association found between attributes and benefits (Having goals) sought by Melissa collectors can be seen; in table 2, the connections between the Doing goals and Having goals; in table 3, connections between Doing goals and Being goals, represented by collectors' values. The shaded cells in table 1 correspond to most intense crossing (equal or above 0.65). To facilitate the demonstration of matrices' data crossing, codes were given to the goals. Attributes received, respectively, codes (01-unique style, 02-lower prices, 03-many colours, 04-being a plastic shoe, 05-many models and patterns, 06-durability, 07-exclusive editions, 08-daily theme collections, 09-comfort and 10-lightness). Benefits were given the following codes: (11-differentiation, 12-economy, 13-can be used in many occasions, 14-beauty, 15-shows off the mood of the person wearing it and 16-does not hurt the feet). The Doing goals received the following codes (17-showing I am aware of trends, 18 – expressing who I am and how I see the world, 19 – an investment, 20 – feeling good, 21 – establishing a connection with the brand and 22 – valuing art). And, finally, the targets were assigned the following codes (23-individuality, 24-pleasure, 25-modernity, 26-beauty, 27-freedom, 28-self esteem, 29-wisdom, 30-sense of accomplishment and 31-prosperous life).

TABLE 1- MATRIX OF CONNECTION INTENSITY BETWEEN ATTRIBUTES AND BENEFITS

		Attributes									
		01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Benefits	11	0.80	0.26	0.73	0.66	0.72	0.22	0.86	0.35	0.17	0.28
	12	0.01	0.54	0.02	0.09	0.02	0.57	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.04
	13	0.75	0.25	0.59	0.41	0.62	0.26	0.18	0.58	0.23	0.34
	14	0.67	0.22	0.62	0.46	0.66	0.15	0.43	0.48	0.18	0.33
	15	0.38	0.04	0.51	0.26	0.46	0.07	0.12	0.24	0.07	0.15
	16	0.11	0.06	0.05	0.15	0.07	0.07	0.02	0.04	0.48	0.41

Source: prepared by the authors.

TABLE 2- MATRIX OF CONNECTION INTENSITY BETWEEN BENEFITS AND DOING GOALS

		Benefits					
		11	12	13	14	15	16
Doing goals	17	0.49	0.12	0.36	0.42	0.11	0.12
	18	0.59	0.10	0.51	0.49	0.39	0.11
	19	0.06	0.60	0.07	0.06	0.02	0.23
	20	0.42	0.12	0.41	0.46	0.64	0.41
	21	0.30	0.14	0.25	0.38	0.09	0.07
	22	0.33	0.14	0.14	0.10	0.08	0.22

Source: prepared by the authors.

TABLE 3- MATRIX OF CONNECTION INTENSITY BETWEEN DOING AND BEING GOALS

		Doing goals					
		17	18	18	20	21	22
Being goals	23	0.33	0.52	0.09	0.21	0.11	0.17
	24	0.26	0.24	0.16	0.60	0.28	0.23
	25	0.35	0.14	0.04	0.23	0.28	0.24

	26	0.59	0.24	0.09	0.07	0.33	0.27
	27	0.10	0.35	0.16	0.37	0.17	0.19
	28	0.14	0.26	0.09	0.38	0.06	0.09
	29	0.04	0.05	0.41	0.26	0.02	0.06
	30	0.17	0.14	0.23	0.17	0.29	0.10
	31	0.12	0.15	0.30	0.25	0.11	0.14

Source: prepared by the authors.

After preparing the matrix of connection intensity between goals, the HVM was created. Figure 2 represents a section of the full HVM, presenting the full connection hierarchy of Having goals (attributes-benefits) regarding the “unique style”, attributes that received the highest number of occurrences when connecting with one of the six analysed benefits⁵.

The HVM (figure 2) opens up a series of analysis, taking, for instance, chains formed by the most mentioned attribute, the **unique style**. There are many targets (benefits) that can be accomplished through the unique style that the collected brand has, such as **differentiation** (p=0,80), ability to **use the collected brand in several occasions** (p=0.75) and **beauty** (p=0.67). This result shows that, to Melissa collectors, this shoe has such distinctive features that gives them differentiation and flexibility to use it. Such benefits are connected to more abstract goals, such as the Doing goals. Regarding the differentiation benefit, some Melissa collectors choose to **express who they are and the way they see the world** (p=0.59), demonstrate they **are aware of trends** (p=0.49), **demonstrate the way they see the world** (p=0.60), **feeling good** (p=0.42), and **establishing a connection to the brand** (p=0.33). In the final level, there are higher goals, those that give away why a person wishes to accomplish what is sought. Expressing who they are and the way they see the world allows Melissa collectors to preserve their **individuality** (p=0.52), **their freedom** (p=0.35), their **self esteem** (p=0.26). As with the mentioned example, it is possible to use the same analysis logic sequence for all the goals found in the map (figure 2).

It is worth mentioning that, although it is not inexpensive for its category⁴, the benefit of economy compared to the low price attribute was justified in qualitative

interviews as something that Melissa offers, because they never frustrate their consumers, whereas other cheaper brands often fail in their endeavour.

CONCLUSION

The surveyed information help understand better the consumption behaviour involving Melissa brand collectors. Regarding high goals associated with Themes, Values and Life projects, collectors seek and value pleasure, modernity and individuality the most. Hence, their current concerns and consumption intentions are directly connected to feeling good about their lives, showing they are aware of trends and expressing who they are and how they see the world. In this context, feeling good about their lives also means having a prosperous life (once collecting Mellissas is not an inexpensive hobby). To satisfy these consumption intentions, Melissa collectors primarily seek the benefits of showing off their mood and standing out in the crowd. Such benefits are most intensely given by the attributes of many colours and exclusive editions, which represent essential characteristics that not only Melissa, but other shoe brands should have to become collectible.

Considering that differentiation and exclusiveness are important goals targeted by Melissa collectors, it is important to remember that the raw material itself (plastic) is a differentiation factor, once, usually, plastic shoes are cheaper than shoes made from other material. However, in Melissa's case, as design, colour and signature of famous designers make a difference, this is not really a premise. Exactly because they are made out of plastic, a few interviewees said that Melissa reminds them of their childhood, because "when I wear Melissa, it seems like I'm wearing a doll shoe." This nostalgic effect, as a motive behind Melissa consumption, indicates that commemorative collections can be launched in the future, with retro features that create positive associations to the time the model was first launched.

It is worth pointing out that the analysed collections, belonging to a personal use product category and not just for contemplative purposes, as it is with art work, have an uncommon attribute: they are used by their collectors and, the more time or experience the collector has with these items, more valuable they become. The raw material used in Melissa also encourages them to feel good about themselves and to feel free, because it takes "courage" for a grown person to wear a plastic shoe in formal environments such as work. Users are aware that one must be very wise to use Melissa in more formal environments, because they have to coordinate clothes and accessories in a way that is appropriate to the event/location.

In order to deepen the knowledge on the subject, we suggest, as future research, taking other brands into consideration and comparing collectors' behaviours based on social and economic criteria, such as gender, age, income and education.

As for work limitations, the laddering technique to collect data, which is needed to prepare the HVM, is exhausting to interviewees; this may have led some of them to give up answering the questionnaire, which is why only 138 interviewees came through, not really a representative sample. Another limitation is in regard of Melissa being chosen as the analysis object, which does not allow the identification of male collectors' goals. Besides, as Melissa is present in practically one product category (shoes), it is not possible to know if the results here would be similar to those found in analysing the behaviour of collector of brands with many product categories.

NOTES

¹ According to the author, the mere gathering of objects in a same category does not mean it is a collection; for such gathering of objects to be called a collection, they must have been amassed with a symbolic "magic/sacred" meaning.

² In order to be eligible to participate in the survey, the interviewees must: have had acquired their first Melissa at least two years before (to avoid the fashion effect on the collection); own at least four pairs (number acknowledged by collectors as representative that the brand consumer is a collector) and keep acquiring goods from the same brand; they cannot have disposed of items even after they can no longer be used for its original purpose; they must store their items in a special place, away from other shoes, and they must feel attached to these items (all data match what was surveyed in the qualitative phase).

³ This analysis model works by putting the narrative text into three columns, in the following order: 1) transcription; 2) first reduction; and 3) just keywords.

⁴ The average price of a Melissa in the first half of 2010 was R\$ 90.00.

⁵ We chose not to show the full HVM, because it would not be easy to understand once printed in letter paper.

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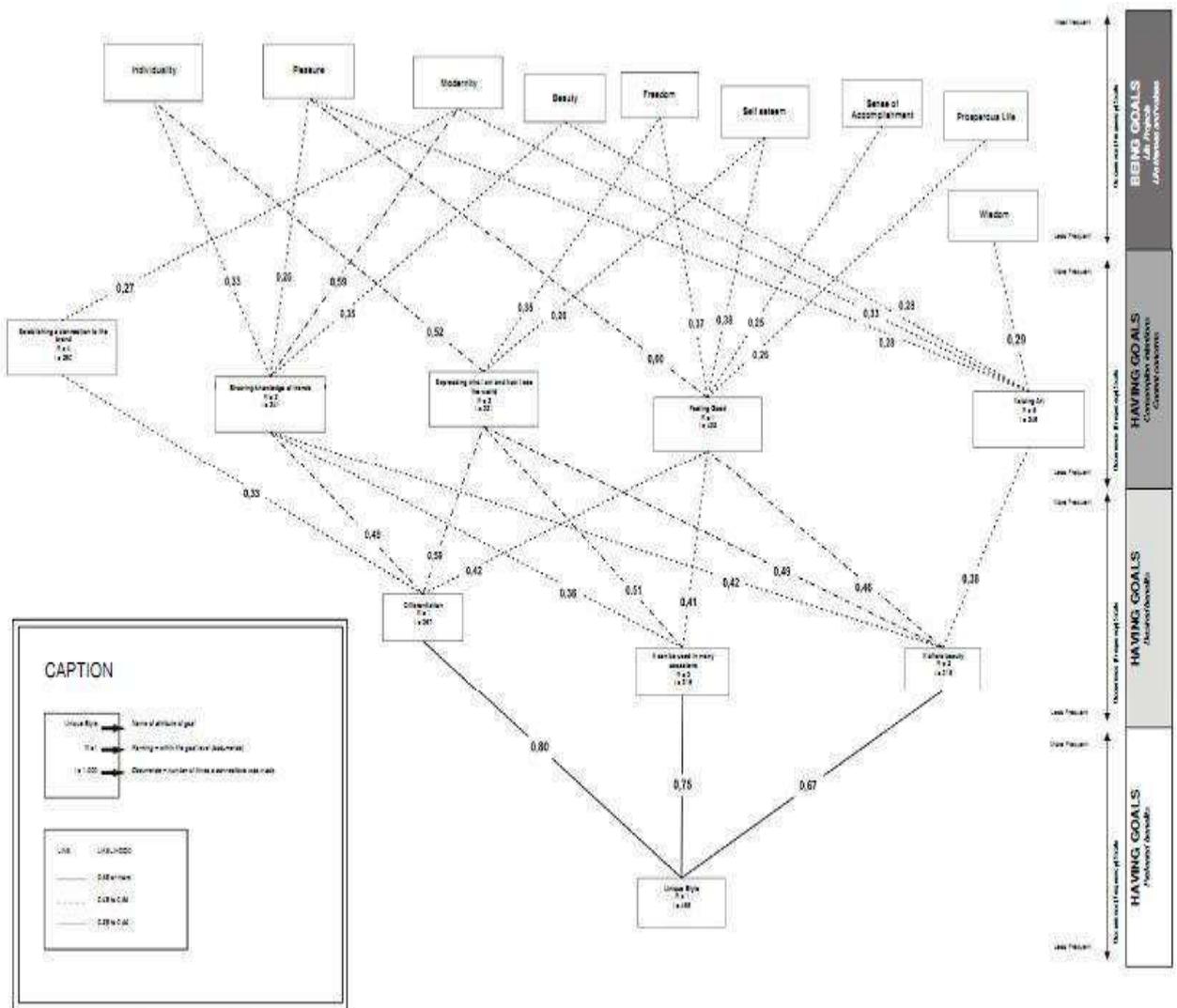


FIGURE 2 – A Section of Melissa Collector's HVM
 Full Attribute connection hierarchy structure Unique style
 Source: Prepared by the Authors