

Flavor and wellbeing: relationship between product's attributes and consumers' personal values of regional coffee brands

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to evidence the cognitive structure of values of customers of regional brand from the South of Minas Gerais and Triângulo Mineiro regions. It aimed to identify perceptions about attributes, consequences, values and connections among these elements through a hierarchical map of values (HVM). The laddering technique helped in the collection, analysis and interpretation of field data. Thirty four in depth interviews were conducted in 7 retail stores, from the cities of Uberlândia and Lavras, in 2008. Results show that the brand's regional aspect consists in a buying determinant. The HVM shows that personal values, such as: well-being and self-accomplishment might be reached through attributes perceived in the brands. Such perception is shown, mainly, in the chains which originate in the attributes: 'from the region', 'sensorial characteristics', 'pure food' and 'cheaper product'. These chains may bring important orientations to marketing practice in such industry.

Keywords: Regional brands; attributes; values; laddering.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers show growing preference for food products because of the typical characteristics of certain regions of origin. This relationship between origin and desired attributes can enhance levels of loyalty to regional brands (SCHLEYERBACH; ALVENSLEBEN, 1998; ENKE; GEIGENMÜLLER, 2004; ONOZAKA; NURSE; MCFADDEN, 2010).

The regional brands are characterized for having distribution in some regions and do not cover the entire national territory (BRONNENBERG; DHAR; DUBE, 2007; AMA, 2009). Another supplementary definition assumes that the regional brands are endowed with typical attributes of a particular country or region and are recognized in different geographic regions due to such unique characteristics (SCHLEYERBACH; ALVENSLEBEN, 1998; ENKE; GEIGENMÜLLER, 2004; ORTH; WOLF; DODD, 2005.) Therefore, in the latter definition, there is no geographical restriction as to distribution. In this paper, we analyze brands as the first definition of a regional brand, i.e., related to the proximity between the regions of production and distribution. Thus, consisting of brands that do not cover the national market in terms of distribution.

Bronnenberg, Dhar and Dube (2007) point out that studies on regional demands are important for the development of marketing strategies aimed at covering specific regions or that draw attention to variations of preference between regions where the product is distributed. Despite the growing consumer preference for regional food brands, research in this field are still restricted (SCHLEYERBACH; ALVENSLEBEN, 1998; ENKE; GEIGENMÜLLER, 2004). In this context, it is necessary to understand consumer perceptions during the purchase decision process. Information on the cognitive structure of consumer values can subsidize the development of marketing strategies and new product development; which would represent benefits to manufacturers and retailers who work with regional brands. This article aims at highlighting the values of the cognitive structure of consumers in relation to regional brands of coffee, in the regions of the Triangulo Mineiro and Southern Minas Gerais. Specifically, we intend to identify the attributes, consequences and values that characterize consumer perceptions and their connections between these elements, through the development of a hierarchical map of values. Thus, we adopted the perspective of Means-end Chain (GUTMAN, 1982), in conjunction with the laddering technique (REYNOLDS; GUTMAN, 1988), who supervised the collection, the analysis and the interpretation of research data.

The paper is organized as follows: first, the theoretical framework that deals with definitions and general characteristics of the brands is presented, in addition to theoretical considerations about regional brands and food consumers. Then, we present the methodological procedures adopted in the study and the characteristics of the laddering technique. Afterwards, we discuss and analyze the survey results, including interpretation of the hierarchical map of values. Finally, we present the conclusions and suggestions for future research.

2. BRANDS: DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS

The idea of brand is age-old, it has existed since the time of the exchange markets in the Middle East and the craft and trade guilds in Western Europe. The strengthening of the concept of "brand" such as is understood today, took place from the establishment of the Union of Industrial Property Convention established at the Paris Convention after the Industrial Revolution, in 1883 (OLIVEIRA, 2005), which began to protect the "marked" products of certain manufacturers to ensure quality and Confidence of traded items (AAKER, 1998). In this period, large industrial companies arose, and brands became known worldwide (SOUZA; NEMER, 1993).

Authors like SOUZA and NEMER (1993), AAKER (1998), ROCHA and CHRISTENSEN (1999), OLIVEIRA (2005) and, DE CHERNATONY (2005) use the definition of proposed brand, in 1960, by the American Marketing Association (Ama), according to which "brand" is the name, term, sign, symbol or drawing, or a combination thereof, which aims at identifying the products or services of a seller or group of sellers and differentiate them from goods or services from the competition.

According to Aaker (1998, p.7), the "brand indicates to consumers the origin of the product and protects, both the consumer, and the manufacturer, from competitors who offer products that look identical." Thus, brands can be interpreted by customers as a logo, a company (especially when associated with the same name), a risk reduction (promotes Confidence), a position, a personality, a set of values, identity, an image or a relationship (DE CHERNATONY, 2005).

According to Arnold (1992), the brand is, basically, essence, attributes and benefits. The essence of the brand is an element of easy understanding, it is the brand's personality, i.e., what makes a certain brand is distinct from the others. The consumer can become loyal to that aspect of the brand. Then, the consumer observes the benefits brought by the brand and

compares their needs and desires. Only after that, the consumer will examine the attributes of the brand.

The inherent value of brands is loaded with symbolic meanings, perceived by the consumer, that go beyond the physical product or service performed (WEBSTER Jr., 2000). Thus, the purchase of some products depends more on social and emotional meaning of the brand than the functional utility of the product (DE CHERNATONY, 2005).

The consumer's perception about a particular brand is a key factor for the acceptance of this brand. This means that the strength of the relationship between consumer and brand reflects the interaction between the physical and psychological needs of consumers, functional attributes and symbolic values of the brand perceived by the consumer (ATAMAN; ÜLENGİN, 2003).

It may be noted that a brand, in broad perspective, is a very complex symbol that adds to its concept, a series of attributes, consequences, values, cultures and personalities, which differ according to the strategy and target audience. Thus, it is made necessary to deepen the concepts its attributes, consequences and values, as well as, the connection between these elements, according to consumer perception.

2.1 Regional brands and food consumers

The regional food brands provide value perception by means of typical attributes of a particular geographic region that lead to respective benefits (consequences) for the consumption of these attributes. The regional brand products are mainly characterized by being produced and distributed in certain regions, with no national or international coverage (BRONNENBERG; DHAR; DUBE, 2007; AMA, 2009). Although, some authors, like Enke and Geigenmüller (2004), Orth *et al.* (2005), highlight the existence of companies that commercialize nationally and / or internationally, aiming at gaining competitive advantages related to the positive image of the geographical origin.

A third aspect of the study of regional brands regards the implementation of regional brands in industrial clusters in order to strengthen the bargaining power of the producing region through the use of attributes to strengthen the regional brand (XIONG; WANG, 2007). There is also, a fourth area of research, in that scope, which constitutes governmental regulation to stimulate the creation and strengthening of regional brands (YKUTA *et al.*, 2006; RAUSCH, 2008). According to these authors, these government actions can: 1) demonstrate the differentiation of regional attributes in the external market, 2) strengthen its

exports, and 3) generate recognition and desire of these attributes in other regions of the country.

Lewis and Stubbs (1999) point out that some companies holding regional brands adopt expansion strategies and begin to distribute them nationally or internationally. In that transition, the brand continues to be positioned based on typical attributes, preferred in a given region. There are cases in which product and advertising strategies are modified to demonstrate different features of the same product in different regions. In addition, Geigenmüller and Enke (2004) argue that regional brands can actually be recognized and valued in global markets.

Lewis and Stubbs (1999), Enke and Geigenmüller (2004), Orth *et al.*, (2005), suggest that consumers relate desired attributes of quality with products and brands in certain regions. Therefore, these brands become an influencing factor in the purchasing decisions of certain groups. Traditionally, food is the main segment of products whose appeal of the place of origin can be transmitted more strongly to the brand. According to Kahn (1981), cited by Sijtsema *et al.*, (2002), foods carry symbolic meanings and have a social and psychological representation that goes beyond their nutritional value, which becomes secondary to many consumers. Thus, people have a physiological need for food, but in addition, they also have social and psychological needs.

In order to improve the understanding of these cognitive connections, Table 1 presents a theoretical review about factors that influence the consumption of regional brands. Thus, features and effects were identified, which represent features of the symbolic meaning of regional brands, as perceived by consumers and entities involved in this market.

Authors	Factors related to the consumption of regional brands	Sectors surveyed	Areas surveyed
Alavoine-Mornas (1997)	Image of tradition, quality assurance (deeply know the product they are consuming and its production process). Development of sustainability of the regional economy, as well as the welfare of the population living in rural production areas.	Food Stuff	France
Enke e Geigenmüller (2004)	Security and tranquility.	Cleaning products, cosmetics and wine	Germany
Orth <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Quality, price, social acceptance, emotional balance, environmental protection and welfare of humanity.	Wine	United States

Hamin (2006)	Development of the regional economy, consumers feel they have proper conduct to the development of the region.	Electronics and air travel	Indonesia
Cayla and Eckhardt (2007)	Image of development and modernity (the current stage of Asia).	Beer and tourism	Australia, China, Singapore, India, Malaysia
Ikuta, Yukawa and Hamasaki (2007)	Economic and social development of the region.	Governmental	Japan
Tyran (2007)	High quality, uniqueness, being from the region (pride of the country of origin).	Food Stuff	Poland
Van Ittersum <i>et al.</i> (2007).	Consumers are willing to pay more for certified regional food, as it symbolizes quality assurance and economic development for the region of origin.	Food Stuff	United States
Xiong and Wang (2007)	Being from the region and related to the characteristics thereof.	Theoretical Article	China
Durrieu (2008)	Being from the region and related to the characteristics thereof.	Wine	France
Rausch (2008)	Economic and social development of the region.	Governmental	Japan
Chlivickas e Smaliukiené (2009)	Maturity of industry credibility, familiarity, modernity, satisfactory quality, knowledge and tradition.	Telecommunications and foods	Baltic Sea Region
Messely <i>et al.</i> (2009)	Regional brands bring benefits to consumers, such as: Confidence, quality and exclusivity. Also, they can mobilize the rural region of origin.	Food Stuff	Belgium and Ireland
Dubeuf, Genis and Morales (2010)	Economic and social development of the region.	Food Stuff	Mediterranean Region
Hwang, Thomadsen and Bronnenberg (2010)	Promotes differentiation to the store due to the specific characteristics of the region in which they were produced.	Retail	United States
Ishida and	Some Japanese fishing cooperatives use the names of the	Food Stuff	Japan

Fukushige (2010)	fishing port as a way to differentiate the traded flesh of fish. This indicates a preference for certain attributes of each port in the region.		
Onozaka, Nurse and MCFADDEN (2010)	Image of being healthier; contribute to the local economy due to the fact that they are from that region; it is produced with fewer chemicals and therefore minimizes environmental impacts; due to the fact that local businesses treat workers well.	Food Stuff	United States
Hu <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Consumers are willing to pay more for food that was produced locally, because they have pride in their region. Moreover, they believe it benefits the region and local producers.	Food stuff	United States
Siemieniako <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Regional brands of beer that contribute to young Poles to express their identity, also their moral obligation to buy local brands and strengthen the development of their region.	Beer	Poland

CHART 1. THEORETICAL REVIEW OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONSUMPTION OF REGIONAL BRANDS.

Source: Bibliographic research.

By analyzing Table 1, we can see three basic attributes related to regional brands:

- **Being regional:** people have pride of the place of origin of the product, proud of where they live or were born. People have confidence because they know the brand and the production process. The brand is related to typical characteristics of the region of origin of the product. Notion of exclusiveness, differentiation (ALAVOINE-MORNAS, 1997; TYRAN, 2007; XIONG; WANG, 2007; DURRIEU, 2008; CHLIVICKAS; SMALIUKIENÉ, 2009; MESSELY *et al.*, 2009; HWANG; BRONNENBERG; THOMADSEN, 2010; ISHIDA; FUKUSHIGE, 2010; HU *et al.*, 2011).

- **Quality:** regional brands label products perceived as fresher, healthier, with fewer chemicals (ALAVOINE-MORNAS, 1997; ORTH *et al.*, 2005; TYRAN, 2007; VAN ITTERSUM *et al.*, 2007; CHLIVICKAS; SMALIUKIENÉ, 2009; MESSELY *et al.*, 2009; ONOZAKA; NURSE; MCFADDEN, 2010).

- **Lowest price:** regional brands have lower price compared to traditional brands (ORTH *et al.*, 2005).

Beyond these attributes, the studied literature demonstrates the relationship between the consumption of regional brands and the following consequences:

- **Economic development of the region:** strengthening of industries and rural products of the region (ALAVOINE-MORNAS, 1997; HAMIN; HELLIOT, 2006; CAYLA;

ECKHARDT, 2007; IKUTA; YUKAWA; HAMASAKI, 2007; VAN ITTERSUM *et al.*, 2007; RAUSCH, 2008; CHLIVICKAS; SMALIUKIENÉ, 2009; MESSELY *et al.*, 2009; DUBEUF; MORALES; GENIS, 2010; ONOZAKA; NURSE; MCFADDEN, 2010; HU *et al.*, 2011; SIEMIENIAKO *et al.*, 2011).

- **Welfare of the regional population:** reduction of unemployment and violence. The fact that regional companies treat workers well (ALAVOINE-MORNAS, 1997; ORTH *et al.*, 2005; DUBEUF; MORALES; GENIS, 2010; ONOZAKA; NURSE; MCFADDEN, 2010).

- **Obtaining social acceptance:** consumer imagines he is adopting appropriate behavior to the development of the region. Moral obligation to help strengthen the region (ORTH *et al.*, 2005; HAMIN; HELLIOT, 2006; RAUSCH, 2008; SIEMIENIAKO *et al.*, 2011).

- **Environmental protection:** low chemical usage and care of local producers minimize environmental impacts (ORTH *et al.*, 2005; ONOZAKA; NURSE; MCFADDEN, 2010).

- **Confidence:** (ENKE; GEIGENMÜLLER, 2004; Messely *et al.*, 2009).

- **Tranquility** (ENKE; GEIGENMÜLLER, 2004).

Although citing and defining various attributes and consequences related to regional brands, the bibliographic research does not address the extent of personal values, as well as, the connection between the elements perceived by the consumer. For this matter, there is no need for explanations on the connections between these elements pertaining to regional brands. Besides this limitation, we observed, among the found publications, lack of Brazilian studies addressing the importance of the topic, both for regional development, and to the satisfaction of people with habits of consumption of products from their own region.

3. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This topic outlines the methods used to collect, analyze and interpret research data, in particular the qualitative laddering technique, which was taken as basis on such procedures. This article is part of a larger research, whose project was financed by FAPEMIG (Foundation for Research Support of Minas Gerais), and involved the efforts of research groups located in three universities in Minas Gerais and Sao Paulo. Their results include this kind of studies in two towns in Minas Gerais.

It should be noted that the concept of regional brand, adopted here, regards brands whose distribution is restricted to a few states of the federation, and whose share of sales in the state of Minas Gerais is higher than 50.0% of total company sales. National brands, in turn, are those who possess expertise and significant presence in several states of the federation, as the concept of Kapferer (2004).

Thirty four interviews were conducted with consumers of coffee brands, distributed in the Triângulo Mineiro region and Southern Minas Gerais. Were only interviewed people who bought these products at the moment of approach, and that do the same at least once a month. The interviews were conducted in four retail stores, in the city of Lavras, and three in the city of Uberlândia, from September to December 2008. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and submitted to content analysis for grouping synonyms and attribution of short codes for each synonym. This procedure was intended to determine which elements (attributes, consequences and values) were perceived by consumers and which attributes led to certain consequence and value scales.

The guidance for the collection, interpretation and data analysis came from the assumptions of literature on laddering, which is characterized as a qualitative research technique used by many researchers to study the structure of values involved in the process of consumer buying decision, or his perception of value of a certain product. To that end, the technique was used by Reynolds and Gutman (1988); Gutman (1991); Reynolds, Gengler and Howard (1995); Leão and Mello (2001); Veludo de Oliveira and Ikeda (2004); Padel and Foster (2005); Vilas Boas (2005; Pimenta *et al.* (2008); Krystallis, Maglaras and Mamalis (2008). Laddering is a methodological basis, the Theory of Means-End Chain, which assumes that the consumer has the perception of attributes, consequences and values related to a product or brand. Thus, it is necessary for the interviewee to reveal, naturally, the reasons for the consumption of specific goods or in a specific location (GUTMAN, 1982). According to Reynolds and Gutman (1988) the laddering phases, include:

☐ **Survey** of consumer perception through questions like: "Why is this important to you?" repeatedly, i.e., as the interviewee reveals the perceived attributes, he is asked about such importance, until his personal values related to these attributes are revealed. Through these repetitive questions, it is possible to highlight the reasons of the importance of an attribute in consumer perception;

☐ **Content** analysis and standardization of identified terms (codes) in the interview. Distinction between attributes, consequences and values. In the item on the research results (item 4), the codes are called synonyms in adaptation to the national literature;

□ **Construction** of a table (matrix of implication), representing the amount of connections between the codes, i.e., how many times each element leads to the achievement of each attribute, consequence or value. This table accounts for the direct and indirect relations between these elements, forming coordinates that serve to outline the construction of hierarchical map of values;

□ **From** this matrix, a hierarchical map of values (MHV) is created, which corresponds to a diagram, shaped like a tree, which graphically represents the connections or associations between attributes, consequences and values obtained in the interviews.

In the stage of construction of MHV, the cut-off, which eliminates the links below a particular incidence, must be set. Such determination may vary depending on the amount of relationships among attributes, consequences and values obtained. This variation should be relative facing the frequency of relationships found in the content analysis. Thus, the recommendation of Reynolds and Gutman (1988) is taken regarding the cut-off, which should cover between 75% and 80% of the relationships shown in the implication matrix. Thus, relationships with low incidence, and consequently, not significant are not highlighted. Beyond this recommendation, it is suggested that the map has sufficient clarity in order to facilitate viewing of the main chains (REYNOLDS; GUTMAN, 1988; MAKATOUNI, 2002; VILAS BOAS, 2005; PIMENTA *et al.*, 2008). Before these recommendations, we used cut-off 3, which covered 72.4% of the relationships, and provided a coherent MHV, composed of elements of incidence greater than or equal to 3. According to Gutman and Reynolds (1988), the last step of the analysis is to identify the dominant value orientations, i.e., which MHV chains are more relevant in order to observe those that most contributed to the result.

In aid to the use of laddering, the Mecanalyst software, developed and used by Naspetti and Zanolli (2004), collaborated on building the matrix of involvement and the hierarchical map of values, derived from data obtained in the field research.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As mentioned in the methodological aspects, we interviewed 34 consumers of regional brands of coffee, in two cities in Minas Gerais. It is worth commenting briefly, on the profile of these respondents. An interesting finding is that the majority of respondents (24) corresponds to people born in the cities surveyed, or who have been living in them for over 20 years. This may indeed collaborate with a preference for regional attributes, but lacks future research that can affirm and to characterize this relationship.

In terms of gender, 11 men and 23 women were interviewed, most of which (18) had completed or were attending college, 11 people had completed high school, and only 5, basic education. Most respondents (12) were between 20 and 35 years of age, 11 people were over 51, 9 people were between 36 and 50, and 2 were less than 20 years of age. Regarding family income, 12 respondents reported having an income between 2 and 4 times the minimum wage, 10 reported earning more than 20 minimum wages, 8 people responded between 8 and 16 minimum wages, and four other reported an income of 4 to 8 wages.

The process of content analysis and codification has identified 26 synonyms, classified into 6 attributes, 13 consequences and 7 values. These synonyms are species of grouping codes of consumers' views on the attributes of the regional brand coffees and its relationship with their personal values. Table 2 presents these synonyms and its classification as attributes, consequences and values.

Attribute 1 (sensory characteristics) represents the flavor and aroma of coffee from a regional brand, which, according to consumers, it is stronger and more full-bodied than the national brands. Attribute 2 reflects the perception of a coffee that is produced, packaged and distributed regionally, and highlights the consumer's familiarity with the brand. Attribute 3 represents the perception that products have a practical and safe packaging. More affordable prices are perceived by consumers of these products (attribute 4). Attribute 5, "purity of the food" corresponds to the absence or the reduced presence of impurities and mixtures (cereals, twigs, inferior coffee beans) that may impact flavor and aroma. The quality, represented by attribute 6, corresponds to the adequacy of roasting and grinding, both at medium level not to harm the economy and taste (in brown tones, not to be too bitter).

TABLE 2. CODES OBTAINED AFTER CONTENT ANALYSIS.

Attributes	Consequences	Values
1. Sensory characteristics	7. Brand reliability	20. Self fulfillment
2. And the region	8. Increased consumption	21. Wellness
3. Attractive packaging	9. Regional economic development	22. Welfare of the population
4. Lowest price	10. Vitality	23. Happiness
5. Purity of food	11. Money saving	24. Nostalgia
6. Quality	12. No medical and medication expenses	25. Quality of Life
	13. Ability to buy other things	26. Living Longer
	14. Pleasure in eating	
	15. Careful production	
	16. Satisfaction	
	17. Health	
	18. Confidence	
	19. Value added to my birth land	

Source: prepared by the authors.

Regarding consequences, the confidence that the consumer places on the brand is represented by the consequence 7. For various reasons, the consumer is motivated to consume more quantities (consequence 8). There is concern among consumers, about the social-economic regional development, represented by consequence 9. There is desire for vitality, which represents the need for greater performance at work and personal activities (consequence 10). These consumers desire consequences such as: saving money, no medical or medicine expenses and purchasing non-routine items (cars, recreational items, travel, other foods), also, they appreciate reaching pleasure in food. The production represents a careful prior knowledge of consumers about the manufacturing process of the company, which must be sanitary and clear as to mixtures of other elements to coffee. Consequence 16 represents the feeling of satiety and the ability to stay awake, provided by coffee. Also, consumers wish to obtain Health and Confidence (lack of uncertainty about the origin and poor quality). Consequence 19 (value added to my birth land) represents emotional aspects, not economic ones that link consumer preference to the origin of the brand.

Out of the personal values identified, item 20, "Self-fulfillment" represents the sense of feeling useful, self-sufficient, acknowledged, achieving personal goals, while 21, "welfare" corresponds to the pursuit of pleasure in one's own life and family. Value 22 represents concern for health, culture, the study, economy and the general welfare of the regional society, towards a better place to live. Values 23 (happiness) and 24 (nostalgia) means an appreciation of personal states of joy and the search for elements of life in childhood / youth, especially those who were raised in rural areas and relate regional coffee to this context, respectively. Value 25 (quality of life) represents the search for pleasure, absence of routine frequenting bars and restaurants. Value 26 represents the valuation of longevity.

The elements have been grouped to form sequences of links between attributes that lead to certain consequences and, then, to certain values. The groupings, which form a common cognitive perspective, are defined as chains.

As mentioned in the method, we created a matrix of implication, which allows the numerical analysis of relationships between the elements (attributes, consequences and values) and provides coordinates for the construction of the hierarchical map of values. The matrix of implication consists of involvement in a structure of columns and rows, being one column and one row for each coded element (synonym), in a sequential manner from the number of codes assigned. It corresponds to the representation of scales (ladders) of elements which were obtained through interviews and content analysis. Each cell contains the number of times that a code leads to another, directly or indirectly. The records of the matrix serve as

coordinates for the construction of the hierarchical map of values (MHV), which is the aggregation of scales that reached incidence above the cut-off, in the perception of values and which attributes / consequences lead to them (REYNOLDS, GUTMAN, 1988).

The hierarchical map of values, obtained from these scales, suggests a way to express the kinds of behavior of the interviewed audience, and contains rectangles that represent attributes (dark color), consequences (intermediary color) and values (light color) as well as the numeric code set to the element and, the amount of direct links (nr).

4.1 Hierarchical map of values

Figure 1 shows the hierarchical map of values (MHV) in which a total of 39 chains, starting with 5 attributes, with connections of 6 personal values, was identified. From the 521 connections between the 26 elements found in content analysis, only 377 links between 23 elements appear on the map, due to the application of cut-off, which covered 72.4% of total connections.

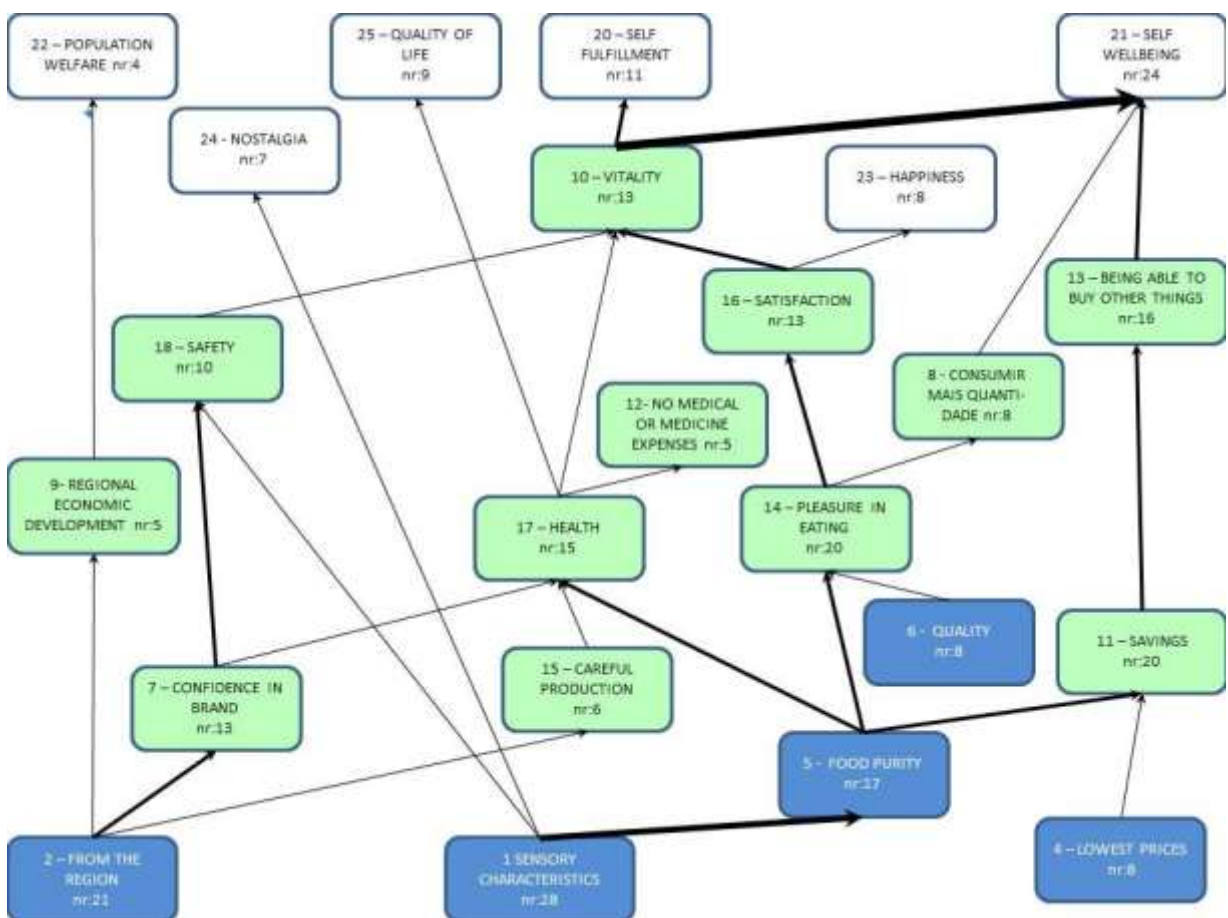


FIGURE 1.HIERARCHICAL MAP OF VALUES.

Among attributes 1, "sensory characteristics" and 5, "purity of food", there is a strong relationship, represented by the thickness of the arrow in which 9 chains are formed, 3 of them being considered the dominant chains of the map. Dominant chains, identified by thicker lines on the map, have greater representation power in relation to the motivation of purchasing of the respondents, because they relate to the most incidents chains. The top three identified chains, initiated by these two attributes (1 and 5) are 1-5-11-13-21, 1-5-14-16-10-21 and 1-5-14-16-10-20. These chains have a high representative capacity on ways consumers search to reach their own well-being, i.e., personal pleasure in life, as well as self-fulfillment.

On the other hand, chains 1-5-11-13-21 and 1-5-14-16-10-21 and 1-5-14-16-10-20 show consumer preference for full-bodied, strong-tasting, without the taste of mixtures (straw, leaves, dirt) and strong-smelling coffee. These attributes can provide "pleasure in eating", i.e., eating food with strong flavor. The strong flavor of coffee will lead to satisfaction that represents the state in which the person does not need not keep drinking coffee " all day", thus one has it a few times and senses the vitality required to reach values like well-being and self-fulfillment (values 21:20).

The link of attributes 1 and 5 with consequence 17, "health" generates 4 chains. Items 1-5-17-12 represent the perception that purer and unblended food pure is good for one's health and avoids the need to go to the doctor or spend money on medicine. Items 1-5-17-10-21 and 1-5-17-10-20 explain the range of own well-being and self - r fulfillment, through the vitality provided by bodily health. Items 1-5-17-25 represent the desire for quality of life, provided by the existence of health, which is a consequence of consumption of fresh and tasty food. Another chain initiated by attributes 1 and 5 consists of 1-5-14-8-21, which shows the consumer's perception that strong smell and taste are related to purest, unblended food, which means that one will consume larger amounts to achieve personal well-being.

Beyond these chains combined with attribute 5, attribute 1 forms three more chains. Chain 1-24 shows a consumer who perceives the strong taste and smell of coffee, characteristic traits of his childhood or youth living in rural areas, indicating the longing of people and moments related to the period. On the other hand, chains 1-18-10-21 and 1-18-10-20 represent the perception this peculiar flavor makes the person feel safe and willing, and, therefore, the consumer has the feeling of achieving well-being and of self - fulfillment.

On attribute 2, "it is from the region" several interviewees narrated phrases like: "It is from our land", "This is typical of Minas", "The name Minas is catchy", "Brands of Minas, which come from the region", "I live near the place where it is made", "Giving prestige to the region", "Valuing the region", "I know the brand from the region" .These meanings denote the

consumers' perception that regional brands are like a cultural trait valued by the inhabitants of the areas surveyed. Moreover, there is a relationship of trust with the brand, motivated by knowledge about the origin of it. This attribute, which initiates 11 chains, is the only from MHV that allows both the scope of collective values (welfare of the population), and individual values (welfare, quality of life and self-fulfillment).

Chains 2-7-17-12, 2-7-17-10-21, 2-7-17-10-20; 2-7-18-10-21; 2-7-18-10-20 and 2-7-17-25 explain that the consumer appreciates the fact that the brand is from the region, and that creates the possibility of knowing the production process, and even the people who work in their production. Those consumers identify these as healthier products, and, by obtaining health, there is a higher quality of life, wellness and personal fulfillment. Chains 2-15-17-12, 2-15-17-10-21, 2-15-17-10-20 and 2-15-17-25, also show the relationship between a brand "from the region" and values of "self-fulfillment", well-being and quality of life, but in such cases, the consumer reaches these values because he knows the production process (consequence 15), the people who produce, or the owners of the factory themselves. Thus, the consumer relies on the origin, hygiene and seriousness of the production process.

The only scale of MHV to reveal a relationship of value of the consumer with non-individualistic concerns was 02-09-22, that shows a consumer concerned about consuming products with brands from the region, with the expectation that such a habit that can stimulate the development of regional economy. Such a development could bring social benefits to the inhabitants of the region, such as: employment growth, income, reducing violence, valuing producers in the region and reduction of pollution (because the trucks will travel shorter distances between the factory and the retail store).

Attribute 6, "quality" for the respondents, means that he values products that are replaced on the shelf more often i.e., they are always complete, without seeming "a spoiled or moldy product". Moreover, products are perceived to be more nutritious and concentrated. These features imply the formation of 4 chains, which are 6-14-8-21, 6-14-16-23, 6-14-16-10-21 and 6-14-16-10-20. These chains denote the connection that the consumer perceives between a recent and integrate product on the shelf, with the pleasure of eating food and physiological satisfaction that the consumption of quality coffee provides. These items have connection with the values: wellness, self-fulfillment and happiness.

The final analysis, 4, "lowest price" corresponds to the perception of consumers that products of regional brands have lower prices than national brands. In this sense, the consumer believes that the lowest price generates monthly savings, in the purchased amount. Provided with such a surplus of money, the consumer is able to buy other items, less

uneventful, to vary the menu, buying new furniture, or, traveling with the family. These actions, uneventful, allow the achievement of personal pleasures that characterize "welfare" represented by chain 4-11-13-21.

Among the aspects analyzed, it is worth highlighting 3 connections that showed high incidence of responses, as shown by the thickness of lines: 10-21, 1-5 and 07/02/18. Items 10-21 represent the physical vitality caused by the consumption of good, quality, integrate and unblended coffee. Thus, the consumer believes he has reached his personal state of well being. The connection between 1 and 5, shows that, in the opinion of respondents, coffee with strong taste and smell gives the impression that such product is pure, unblended and without impurities. On the other hand, connection between 2 - 7 and 18 shows the belief that regional brand products are more reliable and, therefore, safer.

Table 3 highlights, the synthesized form, the perceptions of consumers surveyed in accordance with the analysis of the hierarchical map of values.

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF PERCEPTIONS OBTAINED IN THE HIERARCHICAL MAP OF VALUES.

Attribute	Characteristics of value perception
1. Sensory characteristics	Consumers seeking a stronger coffee, without taste of impurities, with light brown color and strong smell.
	Desire to achieve happiness and self - accomplishment, in order to feel more motivation to consume larger quantities of coffee with strong aroma and taste.
	There is a very strong link between these characteristics and the desire for pleasure in eating.
2. It is from the region	Lead to the achievement of the "nostalgia" value, which refers to the memory of childhood and youth of people who lived in rural area.
	Chains represent consumer concerns about the regional aspect of coffee in terms of their productive characteristics and social impacts
	Desire for a fairer society with more jobs and well being of society, which is achieved by the region's economic development generated by local production.
	Consumers show confidence in the regional brand, due to the belief that they provide health and wellness.
	Careful production in terms of process hygiene and raw material - providing health. Health leads people into taking less medicine and having quality of life. It also leads to the achievement of longer life.

	They are well-known brands, and therefore generate confidence, due to the belief that they provide health and wellness, as obtained from past experience.
4. Lowest price	Reach of well-being (tranquility and personal enjoyment and / or family), through the ability to buy diversified and non-uneventful items. Extra purchase is provided by the savings generated by the lower prices of regional brand products.
5. Purity of the food	Perception that regional brand coffee yields more in the preparation, reducing the expenditure of powder. Moreover, it does not have impurities, or mixtures thereof (twigs, leaves, cereals), and, therefore, it is a more concentrated and flavorful coffee. Consumer concern about purer, unblended food, in order to achieve greater efficiency in the preparation and saving money. With this economy you can buy other non-uneventful items and reach states of personal and family welfare. Pursuit of pleasure in eating.
6. Quality	Fresh food in the counter, which spends less time between the manufacture, transport and supermarket, due to the proximity of the retail store and factory. Furthermore, there is a belief that this product has more nutrients than national brands. This attribute may lead the consumer to personal pleasure, to reach personal goals and self - sufficiency (not dependent on others in old age or in illness conditions).

It is noticed that several attributes and consequences, contained in Table 3, were mentioned by the authors of the literature on the subject, however, the present study examined, in addition, the size of consumers' personal values. In addition to that, the results show the connection among these three elements as a way to explain the reason of the consumption from the perspective of the consumer's perception on regional foods and what they represent to one's life.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The MHV presents cognitive relations that have important managerial implications for the performance of products / brands associated with the regional aspect. It is observed that the strong relationship between the attributes 1, "sensory characteristics", and 5, "purity of food", triggering chains 1-5-14-16-10-21 and 1-5-11-13-21 presents the joint strength of intrinsic (color, appearance, flavor, etc.) and extrinsic (price, place of origin, etc.) attributes of food (SIJTSEMA *et al.*, 2002). Under the marketing perspective, these two chains represent the most appropriate way to achieve customer satisfaction. Thus, manufacturers and retailers should pay attention to the cognitive links between these chains that represent the core of the perceived value of coffee consumers. Therefore, it is suggested that the communication activities of the position of regional brands follow the same "cognitive way", in the attempt of

matching the attribution of regional brand identity to the construction of that image in the mind of the consumer.

The interpretation of MHV provides the identification of other important elements for marketing management of these products / regional brands. Thus, it is clear that the attribute "it is from the region" conveys to the consumer more confidence in the brand. This perception awakens a sense of confidence with regard to the scope of product benefits. In this case, the regional brand serves as a reducer of perceived risk, by promoting greater confidence for purchasing (DE CHERNATONY, 2005). Moreover, the regional aspect also awakens the expression of collective values and enhances culture, which, in practice, represents for some consumers, strengthening of the regional economy (ALAVOINE-MORNAS, 1997). About the regional aspect, it is essential that companies strive to build positive brand associations (AAKER, 1998), capable of promoting the differentiation of regional brands over national brands.

In general, MHV shows that satisfaction in food consumption elevates consumer's vitality which results in the achievement of values, wellness and self-fulfillment. These values, demanded by customers from Minas Gerais, have strong relationship with the traits of the culture of this region. In this sense, it is possible to observe that consumers tend to choose products / brands that are best suited to their self-image (ATAMAN; ÜLENGIN, 2003), which in many cases is filled with social and cultural meanings (DE CHERNATONY, 2005). From this perspective, we suggest that companies develop activities that promote strong bonds and appeals to value the trinomial: consumer from Minas Gerais - Minas Gerais region - Minas Gerais brand.

The analysis of results leads to the conclusion that for some consumers of roasted and ground coffee in Lavras and in Uberlândia, the regional aspect of the brand is a determinant of purchase. Consumers have shown preferences for attributes and consequences specifically found in these brands. Furthermore, analysis of the hierarchical map of values (MHV) found that personal values, such as well-being and self - fulfillment may be achieved through the characteristics perceived in these regional brands, especially those initiated by the attributes "it is from the region", "sensory qualities", "purity of food" and "lowest price", which form dominant chains in MHV.

Before these findings, we suggest that industrial managers, as well as managers of retail stores who work with this type of brand, pay attention to these aspects valued by the consumer. Thus, they can take basis on these concepts in an attempt to improve product marketing strategies, packaging, merchandising as well as developing of new products.

Beyond these practical issues, it is suggested that further research be undertaken with basis on the findings presented here on the perceptions of this consumer profile, in other locations or with other types of regional brand products. In methodological terms, this work shows a thorough overview of the relationship between regional brands and consumer perceptions. Research can be conducted with quantitative methods, with larger samples in other regions, in order to highlight the phenomenon with greater coverage of regional preference for brands.

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