# RELATIONS BETWEEN GENERATIONAL COHORTS AND GENERATIONS X AND Y: MULTICULTURAL STUDY ON COCA-COLA SOFT DRINKS

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to present an analysis of consumer attitudes towards the brand and its purchase intentions, as well as to explore the relationships between brand image, brand tradition, company image and beliefs regarding the brand's role in society. As a research of a descriptive nature, it was decided to approach the research problem quantitatively through the application of a survey. The questionnaires were applied to university students from private institutions of the Business Administration course in Brazil, Spain, Mexico and Paraguay in the period of May and June 2016. The marketing scale presented by Vieira (2011) was used and validated by Pereira, Almeida and Laux (2006). Data processing for presentation and analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. The results demonstrated relevant information about consumers' attitudes towards the brand and their purchase intentions. It became evident that companies can develop marketing strategies at different levels of intensity for each of the categories analyzed and, from them, establish marketing strategies with greater criteria and objectivity in their strategies of positioning.

**Keywords:** Generational cohorts, Generations X and Y, Marketing strategies.

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# RESUMO

*Esse estudo teve como objetivo apresentar uma análise sobre as atitudes dos consumidores em relação à marca e às intenções de compra deles, bem como explorar as relações existentes entre imagem da marca, tradição da marca, imagem da empresa e as crenças relativas ao papel da marca na sociedade. Como uma pesquisa de natureza exploratória e descritiva, optou-se por abordar o problema de pesquisa de forma quantitativa através da aplicação de uma survey. Os questionários foram aplicados a estudantes universitários de instituições particulares do curso de Administração de Empresas nos países Brasil, Espanha, México e Paraguai no período de maio e junho de 2016. Foi utilizada a escala de marketing apresentada por Vieira (2011) e validada anteriormente por Pereira, Almeida e Laux (2006). O tratamento dos dados para apresentação e análise foi realizado através do software de análises quantitativas Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Os resultados demonstraram informações relevantes sobre as atitudes dos consumidores em relação à marca e suas intenções de compra. Ficou evidente que as empresas podem desenvolver estratégias de marketing em níveis de intensidade diferentes para cada uma das categorias analisadas e, a partir delas, estabelecer estratégias de marketing com maior critério e objetividade em suas estratégias de posicionamento.*

***Palavras-chave:*** *Coortes geracionais, Gerações X e Y, Estratégias de marketing.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

In studies about consumer behavior, elements such as brand image, brand tradition, company image and beliefs regarding the role of the brand in society have been pointed as forces that can characterize the gain or loss of competitive advantage in companies. Market globalization implies a focus of research to understand the generational behavioral changes on global or international brands in countries and cultures that encompass these changes.

Brand image can be considered as its primary value and source of competitive advantage as it refers to the general perception of how consumers feel about it and its influence on human behavior. For retailers, whatever their marketing strategies, the main purpose of their marketing activities is to influence consumers with regard to perception and attitude toward a particular brand while establishing the brand image in mind. these individuals and stimulates their actual buying behavior. This increases sales and maximizes market share and the development of brand equity.

According to Zhang (2015), academics and marketers support the understanding that brand value should be the focus of companies planning to position themselves in their target market. However, most studies on brand equity are from the perspective of the consumer or the company itself. Some authors, including Sommers (1964), Levy (1973) and Noth (1988), argue that the subjective perception of consumers as attitude, assessment and brand satisfaction is the key to brand value. While the consumer decision is influenced by brand characteristics and attributes, consumers' perception of its image has a deeper meaning. Despite continuous changes in consumer lifestyle, brand image remains the dominant impact factor in consumer decisions. And these, of course, may vary according to the generation to which the consumer belongs.

According to Ma and Niehm (2006), Nayyar (2001), Paul (2001) and Neuborne (1999), Generation Y, which is more than three times the size of Generation X, is the largest consumer market in South America, America. Central and Europe from the Baby Boomers. The research by Pereira, Almeida and Laux (2006) shows that it is vitally important for companies to understand which strategies should be adopted in order to identify between the brand and the consumer. Given the differences in consumption among ethnic groups of young Brazilians, this study aims to analyze a worldwide brand accepted by several generations, specifically by Generations X and Y. Thus, this study analyzes the intentions of buying a brand of soft drinks from consumers. Brazil,

Mexico, Paraguay and Spain, pointing information to companies in the soft drink segment, so that they can redirect strategic actions of brand positioning. According to studies by Cervieri Jr. et al. (2014), the Latin American countries achieved relevant positions as major consumers of processed drinks, being inferior only to the United States and China. Other authors, such as Monteiro et al. (2014) and De Vogli, Kouvonen and Gimeno (2014), mention that from 1999 to 2013, per capita sales of ultra-processed products increased steadily in Latin America, replacing traditional diets based on fresh foods. Thus, it is believed that Latin America is a crucial study base for the development of strategic brand positioning actions for these products.

It is understood that this article will focus on consumer attitudes towards the brand and their buying intentions, as well as explore the relationships between brand image, brand tradition, company image and brand role beliefs in society.

## 2. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COHORTS AND GENERATIONS

Meredith and Schewe (1994) describe that even though a cohort and a generation refer to age-related groups of people, they do not necessarily have the same characteristics. Generations, according to Schewe and Noble (2000), are formed when individuals are created. The Depression Generation, for example (born 1912-1921), gave birth to the Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) who in turn are parents of Generation X and Y. The Depression Generation is given a cohort label, because they became young adults in 1930 and 1939, when there was the great depression.

For Schewe and Meredith, (2004) a cohort can be conceptualized as groups of individuals born during the same time, traveling together, and experiencing similar external events during late adolescence or early adulthood.

However, for Williams et al. (2010), a cohort shares a common social, technological, political, historical and economic environment. The events in these environments are called defining moments and influence people's values, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and buying behavior in ways that stay with them throughout their lives.

In the view of Duh and Struwig (2015), the cohorts are thus defined by the external events that occurred during the formative years. These years are periods of time when individuals mature - around the age of 17-23. The authors suggest that cohort analyzes be conducted regularly to monitor and predict the degree to which emerging external events affect the resulting consumer values, attitudes, and behaviors. However, considering that different countries have experienced varying external events, there is a question as to which defining events or moments qualify for cohort formation.

Parry and Urwin (2017) argue that this type of literature provides a well-developed theoretical framework: describing how a shared set of experiences can lead to shared values, attitudes, behaviors and outcomes in a cohort of individuals. This in turn can lead to the formation of specific generations.

However, while there is speculation within this theoretical framework about the possible nature of shared experiences and how they can generate generational differences, the authors point out that there is little specific consideration of these causal links. Just as shared experiences result in common behaviors and attitudes; and then, subsequently, to the formation of distinct generations, Parry and Urwin (2017), point out that discussion on the theme develops arguments where this existing theoretical construct is useful as a starting point for research, as it helps to understand how the work Empirical study of generations can be critical. And this stands out when relating cohorts to specific generations, such as X and Y.

## 2.1. Generational cohorts and their relationship with Generations X and Y

The research on generational cohorts was based on the work of the German sociologist Karl Mannhein. In 1923, his studies were the first publications to question why social groups that had the same age group and lived in the same locality, considered distinct only by the historical context of their time, had perceptibly different social behaviors. Other authors, including Buss (1974), Kertzer (1983), Pilcher (1994), Domingues (2002) and Siibak Vittadini and Nimrod (2014), corroborate Mannhiem's legacy (1952) regarding the use of generations, by linking these elements: age, biological and psychological variables and the historical context of a group that lives in a locality.

To have a better understanding of the application of generational cohorts in the field of marketing, it is important to first define it. Rindfleisch (1994) states that the terms cohort, generation and generational cohort are often confused by social scientists.

Cohort is a term of Latin origin, originally used to denote one tenth of a Roman legion of 300 to 600 men. It was adapted by the medical field to designate a research method (cohort study) that compares clinical outcomes between groups exposed or not exposed to a given factor. The method was also adapted for the development of research in the various social sciences (GRIMES; SCHULZ, 2002; KRITZ; ARSENAULT, 2006; YANG; LAND, 2013).

For Ryder (1965), Rindfleisch (1994), Eastman and Liu (2012), generational cohort is a concept that refers to a group of individuals who have as one of their common characteristics the fact that they are exposed in their early years. from adolescence and entry into adulthood (formative years), to socially striking or traumatic events in the historical context of a given geographical location.

The literature on generational cohorts, according to Norum (2003) and Wuest et al. (2008) focuses on three main generational groups: The Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (born 1965-1977) and Generation Y (born 1977-2000). This research uses the most commonly cited generation timeframes, as there seems to be little evidence of discrepancies in the literature defining the birth years of these groups. Research by Mannheim (1952) and Schuman and Scott (1989) reveal that generational cohorts are premised on the notion that the shared experiences of adult individuals in a particular historical and social environment shape the unique identity of each generational cohort. This reasoning is in line with the studies by Davis, Pawlowski and Houston (2006) and Schewe, Meredith and Noble (2000), in which the authors demonstrate that shared life experience creates a cohort of people with homogeneous beliefs, values and customs. distinguish them from other generational cohorts.

Davis, Pawlowski and Houston (2006) and Schewe, Meredith and Noble (2000) show that formative years are categorized to be especially significant periods in shaping each cohort's generational identity. This notion is based on the theories of Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson, which focus on the psychological stages of human development. This, in turn, according to the generational cohort used, can result in a "generation gap" that is created between past and present generational cohorts. The authors have shown that segmentation of a generational cohort explains the influence of time and history on consumer mentality, as in many cases it is adopted in relation to other age-based segmentation approaches, including chronological age, apparent age and life stage.

The dynamic nature of generational cohorts therefore challenges retailers who seek to remain at the forefront of demographic and consumer trends that influence consumer behavior in each generation. Table 1 summarizes the various authors working on the generational cohorts in their research, the age differences according to Generations X and Y, and the converging points between these authors.

**Table 1 - Generational cohorts and their characteristics**

| Authors | Generational cohorts (X e Y) | Generation X Features | Generation Y Features |
|---|---|---|---|
| Oblinger e Oblinger (2005) | X (1965 – 1982) Y (1981 – 1991) | Independent and skeptical individuals value freedom and the ability to perform multiple tasks, as well as the balance between work and personal life. | Determined and hopeful "activist" consumers of the "millennium" who are keen on the latest technology seek parental respect and deny negativity. |
| Tolbize (2008) | X (1968 – 1979) Y (1978 – 2002) | Seek balance between work and personal life, independent and autonomous, value continuous learning and skills development. | Approach and adaptability to technology, value teamwork and collective action, as well as optimistic and adaptable to change. |
| Susaeta et al. (2011) | X (1965 – 1981) Y (1992 – 2000) | Skeptical, non-adaptive consumers, diversity-minded, concerned with family ethics and responsibility, life balance and humor. | They are attracted to change and, unconcerned with life stability, yet constantly seek new job opportunities and an optimistic vision of the future. |
| Reilly (2012) | X (1965 – 1980) Y (1981 – 1999) | This generation is generally characterized as highly concerned with work while being skeptical and independent. | Consumers are confident in their skills and technologically advanced and sense of entitlement (doing what is right). |
| Gardiner, Grace e King (2013) | X (1965 – 1977) Y (1977 – 2000) | Skeptical and pessimistic but ambitious and determined to pursue success and a lifestyle and entertainment. | More environmentally conscious consumers value freedom, value culture for hedonism and the body, giving importance to aesthetics and health. |
| Shacklock (2015) | X (1965 – 1980) Y (1980 – 2000) | Individuals seeking greater balance between work and family. They are considered informal, independent and in a good mood. | Aiming at the revolution in interpersonal communication, they perform tasks simultaneously and collaboratively. They are socially sensitive and optimistic. |

Source: Prepared by the authors.

## 2.2. Brazilian generational cohorts

According to the study by Faria (2016), the Brazilian generational cohorts were initially composed by the researches that adopt the proposal of Motta, Rossi and Schewe (1999) and perfected by authors such as Rubens and Motta (2005), Ikeda, Campomar and Pereira. (2008), Feitosa (2009) and Feitosa and Ikeda (2011). This composition is presented by the definition of the cohort itself, by the period in which it occurred and the characteristics of each generation.

Before presenting the characteristics of the Brazilian generational cohorts, it is important to highlight what the research by Benazzi and Motta (2002) shows. According to the authors, there are three elements that are interrelated and exert influence on the behaviors of a market segment: the life stage, the conditions of the economic and social conjuncture and the formative experiences of the cohorts.

The consumer's stage of life is linked to three factors: age, where he resides and current state of his physical or psychological health. As his needs, responsibilities, and desires change over time, he demands different products and services, which in large part have extremely different characteristics. Economic conditions, also called period effects, refer to events that, at a specific time, affect the life and behavior of a group of consumers. Formative cohort experiences are shared by members of a specific generation, and this imprints a set of characteristics that form and affect the values, habits, and attitudes of these consumers (BENAZZI; MOTA, 2002).

Thus, Table 2 presents a synthesis of the Brazilian generational cohorts according to the three elements that characterize them.

**Table 2 - Model of the Brazilian Generational Cohorts**

| Cohorts | Period of Birth | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| Vargas Period | From 1909 to 1926 | Individuals who have limited access to education and suffer shortages of industrialized products. They value nationalism, have conservative attitudes and are religious. |
| Post 2nd War | From 1927 to 1936 | This period is made up of people with a high moral tradition. They are modern, kind and hospitable individuals, and have a high degree of sentimentality. |
| Industrialization | From 1937 to 1949 | The people in this cohort are adept at political freedom. For this reason, they believe in rapid industrialization and value order as the essential guide of a correct life. |
| Military Regime | From 1937 to 1949 | This cohort is characterized by the presence of the military dictatorship, in which moral and ethical values are extremely weakened. The period is also marked by dizzying economic growth and high expansion of the educational system. |
| Mass Culture | From 1966 to 1977 | Individuals in this cohort are characterized by frustration with economic plans, which has led them to be more adept at materialism and individualism, becoming skeptical of reality. |
| Be yourself / Uncertainties | De 1978 a 1992 | This cohort is characterized by the recovery of ethical and moral values (lost during the "Iron Years"). Individuals born in this period are more concerned with consumerism and are part of the digital reality that characterizes this cohort. |

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on Feitosa (2009).

It can be observed that the description and evolution of each cohort represent significant events and changes in the Brazilian context, and this leads the consumers of each cohort to have unique characteristics that evidence their behavior. It is important to highlight that the first decade of the 21st century has social, political and economic evidences which, in turn, justify the presentation of a new Brazilian cohort.

The research by Motta, Gomes and Valente (2009) predicted the development of this new cohort, based on significant changes in Brazilian society - as ethical and moral values - in politics - for the development of new regulatory trends in the powers of the nation - and in economy - related to

changes in the world market. According to the studies by Meredith, Schewe and Karlovich (2001), Oblinger and Oblinger (2005), Herring (2008) and Kennedy (2008), there is a denomination that characterizes this new cohort: Net Generation. For the purposes of this research, you may want to call it "Connected." Table 3 explains the characteristics of this new cohort.

**Table 3 - New Brazilian Generational Cohort from 1991**

| Cohorts | Period of Birth | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| Internet generation | From 1991 | This cohort is characterized by the rapid spread of the Internet not only as a means of communication, but also as a new form of relationship. They are individuals who suffered the consequences of economic crises of a global and national nature, which directly affected their consumer relations. |

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on Motta, Gomes and Valente (2009), Meredith, Schewe and Karlovich (2001), Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) Herring (2008) and Kennedy (2008).

Each of the Brazilian cohorts presented in this research has specific characteristics that define it. However, each generation of consumers also has certain characteristics that are closely related to each of them.

## 2.3. Generation X

Generation X was so named because those who belonged to it were seen as members of a generation without a specific nomenclature, as well as being in the shadow of the Baby Boomers; For this reason, they are also labeled as Baby Buster Generation (HERBIG; KOEHLER; DAY, 1993). Generation X is from 1965 to 1977. During this time, Western society has witnessed the breakdown of the traditional family, as the study by Roberts and Manolis (2000) points out, with rising divorce rates, increased participation of women. in the workforce and high unemployment. Because of this scenario, Fall (2004), Heaney (2007) and Norum (2003) state that Generation X has been described as skeptical and pessimistic. Thus, according to Arsenault (2004), consumers have been described as an ambitious generation that admires those who are "agents of change". Consumers categorized in Generation X can be said to be experienced as compared to those who belong to all other generations, and described as cautious buyers seeking an honest and straightforward marketing approach. The studies by Wuest et al. (2008) and Herbig, Koehler and Day (1993) describe these consumers as individuals who are consciously seeking brands and are aware of their value and quality, but are not necessarily loyal to them.

## 2.4. Generation Y

According to Heaney (2007) and Thach and Olsen (2006), Generation Y represents the children of the Baby Boomers, who are born between 1946 and 1964. Therefore, they are often referred to as the Echo Boomers. This generation comprises the period from 1977 to 2000. In analyzing this period historically, several authors suggest that Generation Y is more environmentally conscious, as Thach and Olsen (2006) point out, and socially conscious, according to Bennett and Henson (2003) , Sullivan and Heitmeyer (2008), than previous generations. At work, Generation Y values the status of value and freedom, as stated by Cennamo and Gardner (2008). In addition, Generation Y has grown into technology, such as computers and the Internet, which facilitates exposure to various categories of products, services and brands. For Morton (2002), Miller (2007) and Sullivan and Heitmeyer (2008), consumers categorized in this generational co-

hort are described as those who consciously seek brands and demand the latest trends. They are more interested in fashion and lifestyle when compared to previous generations. Studies such as Bridge Research (2009) also point out that Generation Y values culture for hedonism and the body, valuing aesthetics and health. A change in the drinking habit, specifically soft drinks, is remarkably remarkable, as these consumers switch from drinking to juice, water or energy drinks.

By observing these characteristics, it is possible to list twelve attributes, which were initially described by Debard (2004), to better characterize Generations X and Y. Table 4 shows the characteristics of both according to these attributes.

**Table 4 - Characteristics of Generations X and Y - Extended**

| Attributes | Generation X Features | Generation Y Features |
|---|---|---|
| Trust level | Not about authority but your own. | Aimed at authority, but questioning it whenever possible. |
| Respect for the rules | Considered naive. | Committed |
| Admiration | For people who value entrepreneurship. | For a personal reference that can guide your personal and professional activities. |
| Professional goals | Build a lasting career. | Build parallel careers. |
| Rewards | Freedom to choose your own actions. | For a job that rewards effort and dedication. |
| Family involvement | Distant. | Intrusive. |
| Family formation | Definitive. | Doubtful. |
| Familiar life | Protective. | Alienated. |
| Education | Pragmatic. | Structured. |
| Evaluation | Questions about how the work is being done. | Seeks feedback whenever needed. |
| Political orientation | Individual. | Collective. |
| Main life question | "Is this works?" | "How do I do this? |

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on Debard (2004).

## 2.5 The Profile of Generations X and Y in Brazil

According to studies by Fraone, Hartmann and McNally (2011), in Brazil, since the 1950s, the transformation from an agriculture-based economy to a highly diversified manufacturing has dramatically expanded employment and education opportunities for individuals belonging to Generations X and Y.

For Smola and Sutton (2002), in Brazil, Generation X individuals grew up in an environment characterized by popular uprisings, financial crises, family problems and social instability, while rapid technological advances led to increased diversity, which ensured immediate responses to this generation due to technological developments and the evolution of global competition.

This was the generation that experienced the decline of the military dictatorship, which ended in 1985. The people who were part of it witnessed their parents' unconditional dedication to the companies in which they worked so that they could achieve the promised job stability and growth in the world. career, and then being fired in the name of restructuring and reengineering in the 1980s, the so-called "lost decade."

Thus, individuals born in the period classified as Generation Y experienced a Brazil that went through great economic instability in the 1980s and early 1990s. In the understanding of

Coimbra and Schikmann (2001) and Martin and Tulgan (2006), another fact relevant was the reestablishment and consolidation of the economy and democracy in the country. Openness control and economic inflation set a new phase in Brazilian development. At the corporate level, the keywords were competitiveness and employability. These features, which became even more important in the early 21st century, were added to new consumer demands such as the convergence of technologies, the evolution of communication to the internet relationship, as well as the mobility and explosion of social networks.

Despite having a very different history, generations of consumers in Brazil have been mirroring generations of the United States. Studies by Zhong and Schwartz (2010) show that Generation X exhibits greater entrepreneurial spirit than the previous generation, Baby Boomer, and tends to look for a group of rewards that offer incentives, including personal time and personal development opportunities. and professional. Meanwhile, Generation Y in Brazil further values-oriented development, placing a reward on work that provides greater personal freedom. She seeks mobility and demonstrates a preference for international work.

For Mowen and Minor (2003) and Pereira, Almeida and Laux (2006), a survey conducted in Brazil, in 2002, by the AKATU Institute and Market Research Indicator, with 259 young people from the transition phase between Generations X and Y , who were 18 to 25 years old, from the main Brazilian capitals, showed that these young people are very concerned about competitiveness in the labor market, reject discussing issues that do not affect their lives and live well in a consumer society. According to the survey, Brazilian youths are the ones who like to shop and watch TV more than young people from other countries. Thus, for 56% of Brazilians between 18 and 25 years, buying more means more happiness, regardless of the environmental problems resulting from excessive consumption.

Pereira, Almeida and Laux (2006) also point out that a survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund in 2000, and also reported by Mowen and Minor (2003), found that regional, race and socioeconomic class differences may have an influence. in the way young Brazilians see the world and relate to it. By analyzing access to culture and information, the study identified a large difference in consumption among the different ethnicities of young Brazilians.

## 3. Research method

This section presents the methodological aspects and procedures that guide the analysis. The research typology is considered descriptive, because according to Malhotra (2012) the main objective of this typology is the description of a fact or something, having a clear statement of the problem, specific hypotheses and or detailed need for information.

It is considered descriptive because it has as its purpose the observation, recording, analysis and correlation of phenomena or facts in a context, seeking the frequency with which they occur. That is, this research seeks to describe the characteristics of a given population or to establish relationships between the variables that occur in it (SILVA; SCHAPPO, 2002). Still, according to Hair et. al. (2014) descriptive research provides answers to who, what, when, where and how. In Marketing, this information includes attitudes, intentions, consumer preferences, and buying behavior.

The approach to the research problem is quantitative in nature, and the method is considered Survey Survey, which is characterized by direct interrogation with the research subjects and aims at describing the distribution of characteristics or phenomena that occur naturally in research. population groups. With this method, we request information from a significant group

of people about the problem studied, and then, through quantitative analysis, obtain the conclusions corresponding to the collected data (GIL, 2002). Table 5 presents the periods comprising Generations X and Y used in this research, as well as the relationships between them and the Brazilian generational cohorts.

**Table 5 - Relations between Generations X and Y and the Brazilian Generational Cohorts**

| Generation | Brazilian Generational Cohorts | Period of Birth | Characteristics | Authors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X (From 1965 to 1977) | Mass Culture | From 1966 to 1977 | Individuals in this cohort are understood by frustration with economic plans, which has led them to be more adept at materialism and individualism, becoming disbelieving about reality. | Feitosa (2009) |
| Y (From 1977 to 2000) | Be yourself / Uncertainties | From 1978 to 1992 | This cohort is qualified by the recovery of ethical and moral values (lost during the "Iron Years"). The individuals who belong to it are more concerned with consumerism and are part of the digital reality, which highlights this cohort. | Motta, Gomes e Valente (2009), Meredith, Schewe e Karlovich (2001), Oblinger e Oblinger (2005), Herring (2008) e Kennedy (2008). |
| | Internet generation | From 1991 | This cohort is understood by the rapid spread of the internet not only as a means of communication, but also as a new form of relationship. Individuals in this cohort suffered the consequences of global and national economic crises, and this directly affected their consumer relations. | |

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The questionnaires were applied to university students from private institutions of Business Administration in the following countries: Brazil (Methodist University of Piracicaba), Spain (University of Sevilla), Mexico (Autonomous Popular University of the State of Puebla) and Paraguay (National University of Asunción), from May to June 2016. The average number of participants was 1,500 students per course. It is noteworthy that the universe of these places represents, in essence, most of the generations X and Y, which allows a sample of qualified research, as shown in table 3.

These countries and their respective educational institutions were selected, since the authors of this research believe that this universe can share cultural characteristics in relation to their cohorts and generations. As Hair (2014) points out, this is a procedure called "judgment sampling". According to the author, in judgment sampling (which is also called purposive sampling), respondents are selected because the researcher (s) believes they meet the study requirements. Also, according to Hair (2014), since the assessment of the researcher (s) is correct, the product of judgment sampling may be better than convenience sampling. This, however, will be verified in the analysis and discussion of the results in the next chapter.

The method used for data collection was a structured self-completed questionnaire ap-

plied in classrooms. Considering that doubts could arise regarding the research questions, one of the authors was present at the time of completion to clarify them. This procedure allowed the speed of data collection as well as the required amount of data. The data collection instrument, in addition to the proposed scale for measuring young consumer ratings of the Coca-Cola soda brand, had questions of sample characterization and consumer profile delineation. A marketing scale presented by Vieira (2011) was later validated by Pereira, Almeida and Laux (2006), composed of the 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree". The scale consists of 5 constructs for evaluation, (1) Brand image; (2) Current and future intentions; (3) Company image; (4) Brand tradition and (5) Beliefs regarding the role of the brand in society. Data treatment for presentation and analysis of results was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) quantitative analysis software.

# 4 RESULTS DISCUSSION

For data collection, we used the convenience sampling technique, which according to Hair et. al. (2014) is a method in which samples are selected based on their convenience only. The main advantage of this technique is to obtain large numbers of respondents in a short period of time, but the results cannot be generalized to the population (HAIR et. Al. 2014; MALHOTRA, 2012). Thus, 850 responses from Generations X and Y were obtained, divided between Brazil, Paraguay, Mexico and Spain, as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6 - Sample Profile**

| Country | Total Responses per Generation | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | X | | Y | |
| BRAZIL | 38 | | 159 | 197 |
| SPAIN | 0 | | 263 | 263 |
| MEXICO | 18 | | 147 | 165 |
| PARAGUAI | 224 | | 1 | 225 |
| Total | 280 | | 570 | 850 |

Source: Prepared by the authors from the research data.

It can be observed that Spain did not obtain any Generation X respondents and Paraguay obtained only one Generation Y respondent. From this information, the data presented the averages, which can be seen in Table 7.

**Table 7 - Mean Scores**

| Mean scores | BRAZIL | | MEXICO | | PARAGUAY | | SPAIN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | X | Y | X | Y | X | Y | X | Y |
| Brand Image | 3.76 | 3.32 | 3.05 | 3.32 | 3.37 | 4.00 | n/a | 3.44 |
| Current and Future Intentions | 3.76 | 3.79 | 3.66 | 3.76 | 3.87 | 3.00 | | 3.97 |
| Company's image | 4.34 | 4.56 | 4.61 | 4.47 | 4.42 | 4.00 | | 4.43 |
| Brand Tradition | 4.57 | 4.67 | 4.72 | 4.69 | 4.67 | 5.00 | | 4.72 |
| Beliefs Regarding the Role of Branding in Society | 4.65 | 4.63 | 4.66 | 4.65 | 4.54 | 5.00 | | 4.45 |

Source: Prepared by the authors from the research data.

Because the sample profile shows a close average between the scores (generation and country), data from Spain and Paraguay were maintained. The scale used to extract data from the Survey was proposed by Pereira, Almeida and Laux (2006), which showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.867 in 20 questionnaire constructs, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8 - Cronbach's Alpha**

| Reliability Statistics | |
|---|---|
| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
| .867 | 20 |

Source: SPSS Software.

Thus, by the generated output, the value of 0.867 is significant, because, according to Malhotra (2012) and Hair et al. (2005), shows the consistency of the instrument used and, according to the criteria of Hair et al. (2005), the result is considered very good. For data analysis, from the Survey, all statistical treatment was performed using the SPSS software. Two techniques were chosen, the first one being the Simple Correspondence Analysis (ANACOR), which, according to Fávero (2015), allows to verify the association between two variables and their categories, as well as their intensity from a crosstab data table, to identify whether there are similarities and / or differences between countries and scores. The second technique was Homogeneity Analysis or Homogeneity Analysis by Means of Least Square (HOMALS), also known as Multiple Correspondence Analysis (ACM), which, according to Favero (2015), is a multivariate technique that enables the investigation of existence. association between more than two categorical variables.

It is noteworthy that, in Carvalho's (2004) conception, these techniques facilitate the study of the relationships between the various characteristics existing in a given analysis space. For Greenacre (2008), ACM is a method of representing rows and columns of cross-table data as coordinates in a graph called a perceptual map, which can interpret similarities and differences in behavior between variables and between categories. Thus, the variables Country and Generation were introduced for the analysis. Data were collected in scores from exploratory factor analysis. This, according to Malhotra (2012), seeks to synthesize the observed relationships between a set of interrelated variables, in order to identify common factors, presenting a KMO of 0.891 and a Bartlett sphericity of 8.425, as can be observed in Table 9.

**Table 9 - KMO and Bartlett Test**

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .891 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 8425.386 |
| | Df | 190 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Source: SPSS Software.

The values obtained show that the factor analysis is adequate (MALHOTRA, 2012). This allowed the creation of the following scores: Brand Image (IM_MAR); Current and Future Intentions (INT_AT_FUT); Company Image (IM_EMP); Brand Tradition (TRAD); Beliefs Regarding the Company's Role in Society (CREN_MAR). In the case of the scores, a five-level separation was created based on the Likert scale to verify the association of the variables: (1) Very Low, (2) Low, (3) Indifferent, (4) High and (5) Very high. Each score was first related to Country and then to Generation and Country, which generated the perceptual maps, thus obtaining the results represented in Figures 1 to 5.

**Figure 1 – Brand Image x Country and Generation**
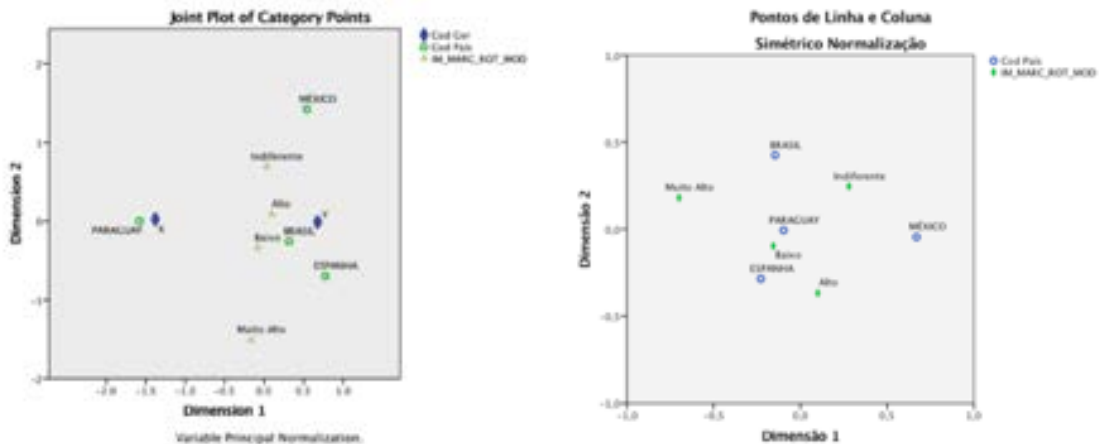


Source: Prepared by the authors based on SPSS Software.

Looking at Figure 1, Spain and Paraguay have similarities associated with the "Low" category. By adding the variable "Generation", the results indicate that Brazil, Spain and Paraguay have similarities. This shows that the three countries have a strong association with the "Low" category with regard to Brand Image, regardless of Generation. This verification demonstrates that Brand Image is not a major factor in the purchase decision for the product, which is not the case with Company Image, as shown in Figure 3.

Thus, the positioning strategies of the cola company, even if they are global, have different impacts on consumers' perception, sometimes for the company's image, sometimes for the brand image. This result is in line with the research by Mannheim (1952) and Schuman and Scott (1989), where they revealed that generational cohorts are premised on the notion that the shared experiences of adult individuals in a particular historical and social environment shape the unique identity. of each generational cohort. Thus, it is evident that one generation is unrelated to the other generation in thinking about the role of generations in consumption.

**Figure 2 - Current and Future Intentions x Country and Generation**
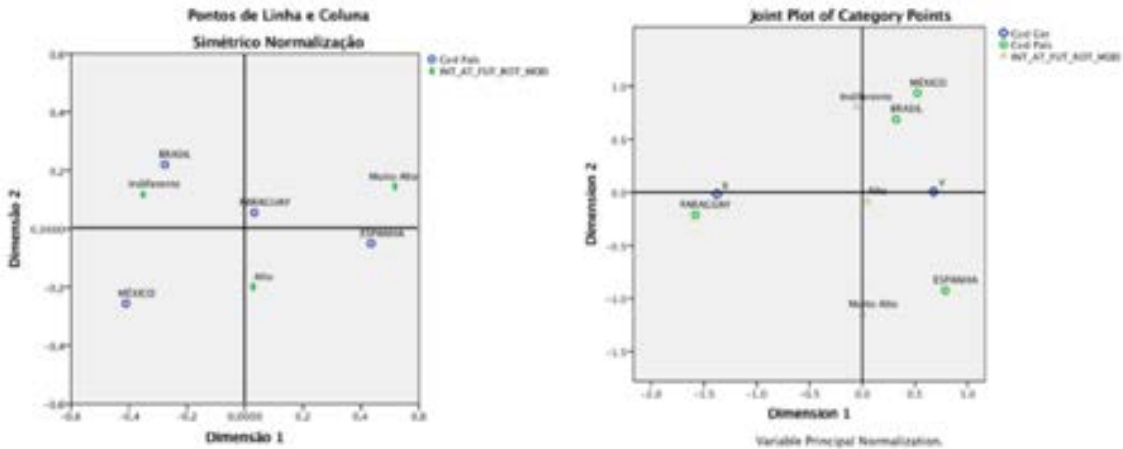


Source: Prepared by the authors based on SPSS Software.

Regarding Current and Future Intentions, Brazil and Mexico, regardless of generation, have greater association with the "Indifferent" category. This shows that these countries do not take into account their current or future purchasing intentions. As the data from this research obtained more answers from generation Y for Brazil and Mexico, it is convenient to rescue the study by Morton (2002), Miller (2007) and Sullivan and Heitmeyer (2008), which highlights that consumers categorized in this generational cohort are described. like those who consciously look for brands and demand the latest trends. According to the authors, consumers of this generation are more interested in fashion and lifestyle when compared to previous generations. Thus, it was found that the consumption of the product for a specific generation is more clearly related to the company's image and tradition, evident characteristics of generation Y according to the studies presented.

**Figure 3 - Company Image x Country and Generation**
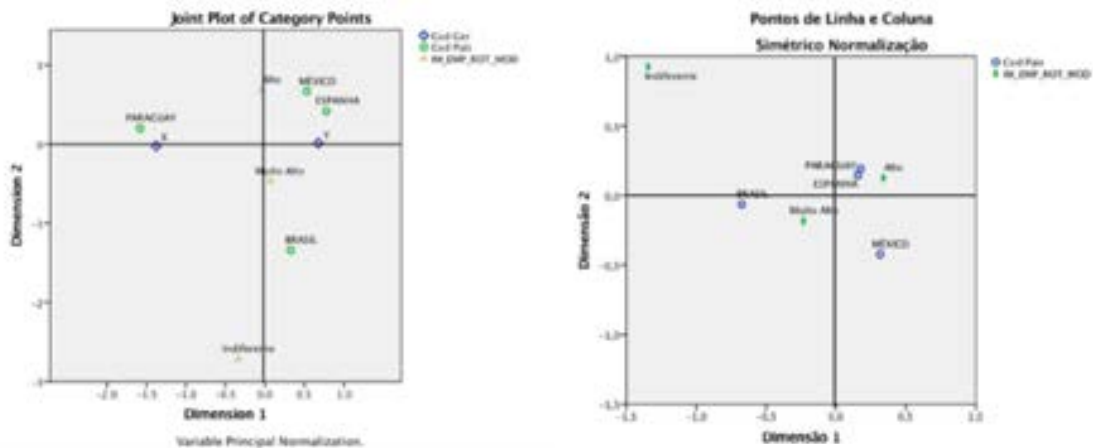


Source: Prepared by the authors based on SPSS Software.

For the Company Image score, Brazil is closer to the "Very High" category. Mexico, Paraguay and Spain, on the other hand, have similarities and are more associated with the "High" category, regardless of generation. In this case, the company's image has a strong appeal to its consumers, which corresponds to actions that the company can take before its target audience,

which can be of the most diverse nature, from ecological to social causes. Table 4, presented on page 9, presents the characteristics of the extended X and Y generations. According to this picture, the generation Y (characterized in the sample of this research as being broad), has as behavioral characteristic to look for a personal reference that can guide their personal and professional activities. Debard (2004) clearly highlights this characteristic, and corroborates the data from this study that pointed to the company's image as a reference source for generation Y in the countries described above.

**Figure 4 - Brand x Country Tradition and Generation**
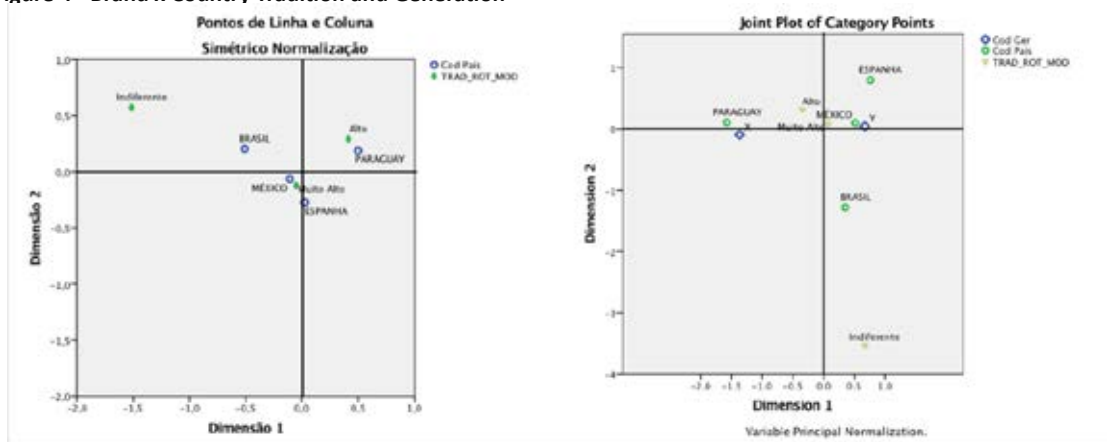


Source: Prepared by the authors based on SPSS Software.

As for Brand Tradition, Spain and Mexico have similarities and are more associated with the "Very High" category. This shows that the brand tradition has some proximity to Paraguay, which is closer to the "High" category. Brazil has greater proximity to the "Indifferent" category, regardless of generation. This shows that not all countries of Latin origin have the same behavior just because they share cultural traits. Spain and Mexico value Brand Tradition in both Generation X and Y cases, which did not happen with Brazil. Regardless of generation, the Brazilian sample is indifferent to Brand Tradition taking into account only other product characteristics.

According to the results, it should be noted that the brand tradition (as shown in Figure 4) is different from the brand image (as shown in Figure 3), especially in the Brazilian sample. For the Brazilian consumer featured in the sample of this research, the brand image has a more significant importance in relation to the tradition that the brand history can promote. This is due to the fact that, according to the research by Coimbra and Schikmann (2001) and Martin and Tulgan (2006), the new consumption demands of the Brazilian market, such as the convergence of technologies, the evolution of communication to the internet relationship. , as well as mobility and the explosion of social networks are major factors for this behavior.

**Figure 5 - Beliefs Regarding the Role of the Company in Society x Country and Generation**
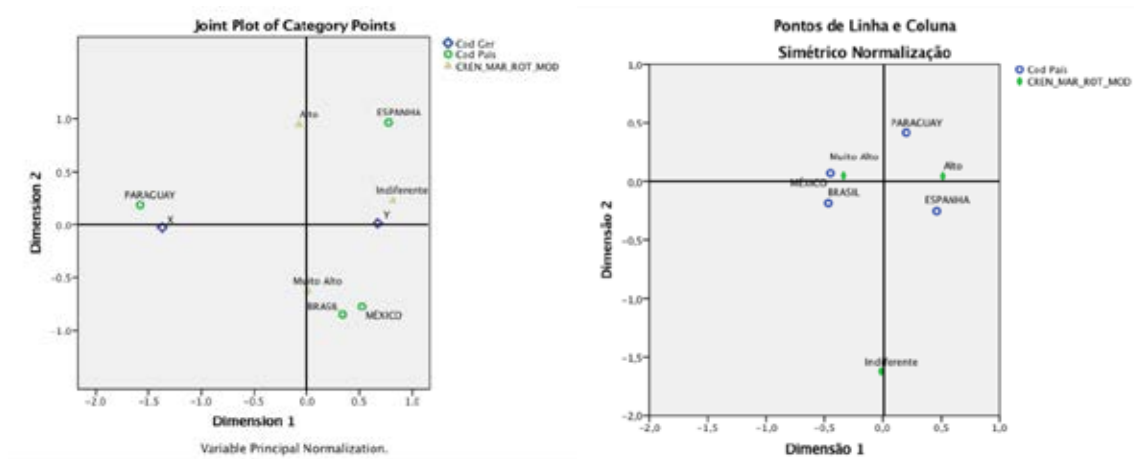
Regarding Beliefs regarding the Role of the Brand in Society, regardless of generation, Brazil and Mexico are strongly associated with the "Very High" category. Spain and Paraguay are closer to the "High" category, regardless of generation.

It can be said that what influences decisions is generational cohorts through their cultural aspect, which is passed down from generation to generation. This was evident when the similarities with the "Low" level were observed among the countries studied for the "Brand Image" score. Thus, the brand image is not taken into consideration when choosing the product of the studied brand. However, the reverse can be seen by analyzing the "Company Image" score. The study by Sommers (1964), Levy (1973) and Noth (1988) stated that the subjective perception of consumers as attitude, brand evaluation and satisfaction is the key to brand value. Even if the consumer decision is influenced by brand characteristics and attributes, consumers' perception of its image has a deeper meaning, even despite continuous changes in consumer lifestyles. Thus, brand image remains the dominant impact factor in consumer decisions, and consumer decisions may vary according to the generation to which the consumer belongs.

# 5 CONCLUSIONS

This study presented relevant data and information on consumer attitudes toward the brand and its purchase intentions, as well as explored the relationships between brand image, brand tradition, company image and beliefs regarding the role of the brand in society. . It was evident that each generation of consumers has their own characteristics, demands and behaviors.

The results of this research showed that generations X and Y do not exert significant influence on the studied scores. They also showed that Brazil considers the image of the company to be highly relevant in choosing its product, and the other countries such as Paraguay, Mexico and Spain, although they deem it relevant, are at a slightly lower level compared to Brazil. This means that Brazilian generational cohorts, in behavioral terms, take much more into account the company's image than the brand in choosing its products, since similar results also occurred when the "Brand Tradition" score was analyzed.

The study also revealed that companies in the soft drink industry can create degrees of priority by introducing a new product to their consumer audience. In the specific sector of this

study, scores can be categorized as levels of importance when establishing medium- to long-term marketing strategies. First is the company's image, secondly, there are beliefs about the role of the brand in society, thirdly, the brand tradition is addressed, fourthly, the brand image and Finally, the current and future intentions of the brand are shown. Companies can develop marketing strategies at different intensity levels for each of these categories and, from these levels, establish marketing strategies with greater discretion and objectivity in their positioning strategies.

During the development of this research, it was possible to identify some challenges that companies in the study sector may encounter. Among them are the understanding of each generational cohort that companies need to have, as well as accommodating generational differences in the attitudes, values, and behaviors of their respective audiences. Another point is the development of the ability of managers and marketers to be more sensitive to the strength and weakness of each generation, especially in the advancement of technology (as pointed out in the theoretical framework and demonstrated in the data analysis. It is noteworthy that companies can Make it a point to gather generational differences by utilizing these differences to enhance the work of the entire company team.

This study presented a comparative view between South America and Europe for a specific brand of cola-based drinks and across two distinct generations of consumers. In addition, it has an objectivity and focus on research, which allows companies to more specifically select their marketing strategies. This research may open opportunities for other segments in other regions and in a given generation or generational cohort to be studied.

It should be noted that this study was limited to two continents and countries that tend to share cultural ties. However, further studies in two or more countries in the same geographic region are encouraged to identify differences and similarities between the behaviors of individuals within a specific analysis variable, be it a generation or a cohort.

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## Contribution of authors

Every author should account for at least one component of the work. Paper approved for publication need to specify the contribution of every single author.

| Contribution | [Author 1] | [Author 2] | [Author 3] |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** Definition of research problem | √ | | √ |
| **2.** Development of hypotheses or research questions (empirical studies) | √ | | √ |
| **3.** Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work) | | | |
| **4.** Theoretical foundation / Literature review | √ | √ | |
| **5.** Definition of methodological procedures | | | √ |
| **6.** Data collection | | | |
| **7.** Statistical analysis | √ | √ | |
| **8.** Analysis and interpretation of data | | | √ |
| **9.** Critical revision of the manuscript | | | |
| **10.** Manuscript writing | √ | √ | |
| **11.** Other (please specify) | | | |