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-- Paper Summary --

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Title: The car segment reconceptualization in Portugal: new users, new functions

Track: 2nd International Conference on Ergonomics In Design

Abstract: This article focuses on an ongoing investigation that has as main objective the development and implementation of processes of analysis centered on the design, including the identification, study, and redefinition of new concepts for car segmentation.

This project also proposes to identify the typologies that were top sellers in Portugal during the period from 1990 to 2013, and to produce knowledge in the field of car design according to the characteristics and preferences of Portuguese drivers, focusing essentially on the user with driving license under the age of 30 years.

Portugal is among the European countries with younger qualified to drive (Caderno Automóvel do Observador Cetelem, 2011, sp.), representing a strong growth of a market untapped by brands. In the case of Portugal and Spain, the segment of the youth drivers exceeds in proportion the segment of the older drivers (Caldeira da Silva, 2011, sp.).

Car brands act on a global market and its design centers are targeted to the needs and culture of the market that claim to achieve, regardless of the country of origin of the brand.

Manufacturers tend to predict the demand of vehicles to the level of segmentation models, versions or options. This type of product offering, in force since the beginning of the automobile industry and product segmentation is done by identifying subsets with similar characteristics together and distinguished from other subsets.

The target audience is also segmented, closing in groups previously identified. The characterization and distinction of the user versus the car typology must be approximated by common indicators, no longer limited by technical terms that do not adapt to the Portuguese market, the function and its user.

Allied to the reconceptualization of the segment, the sector of the customization of components provides the change the passenger compartment of the automobile and the consequent adaptation to the different needs of users, roles, fashion trends, versatility, space optimization and load zone.

The new paradigms of production of small and medium-sized Portuguese enterprises of automotive components have shown flexibility, innovation and responsiveness, gathering together the know-how needed to develop and test new car concepts that matches the needs of young Portuguese drivers.

Portugal offers good conditions to serve as a "living laboratory" to experience new mobility concepts. The small size of the territory joins to the propensity of the Portuguese for innovation, gathering the ingredients to make Portugal a space for testing and experimentation (Pinto, 2011).

The use of research and development also allows the identification of new opportunities for the design sector (Marcelino, 2008).

Keywords: Portuguese car design | Portuguese car components industry | automotive niche | car design individual segment | youth drivers

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