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**How Cultural Differences Affect the Adoption and Effectiveness of
Green Marketing Strategies in Germany**

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to investigate how cultural differences affect the adoption and effectiveness of green marketing strategies in Germany.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Cultural differences significantly impact green marketing in Germany. Germans prioritize authenticity, quality, and performance, alongside environmental consciousness. Trust is crucial, with consumers valuing transparency and credibility in marketing. While price sensitivity remains, competitive pricing enhances success. Tailoring strategies to align with German values is essential for effective engagement and promoting sustainability.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Social identity theory, consumer engagement theory & gratifications theory may be used to anchor future studies on how cultural differences affect the adoption and effectiveness of green marketing strategies in Germany. Fast-food brands should prioritize measurement and evaluation of social media marketing efforts to assess their impact on brand equity. Government agencies and regulatory bodies in Brazil should collaborate with industry stakeholders to develop guidelines and best practices for social media marketing in the fast-food industry.

Keywords: *Cultural Differences Adoption, Effectiveness, Green Marketing Strategies*

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INTRODUCTION

In developed economies like the USA and the UK, green marketing strategies have been increasingly adopted by companies to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and drive sustainable growth. For instance, a study by Roberts and Bacon (2017) in the USA found that consumer attitudes towards green products have been steadily improving over the years, with a significant proportion of consumers expressing a preference for eco-friendly brands. The research revealed that 73% of American consumers considered environmental sustainability when making purchasing decisions, indicating a growing awareness and acceptance of green products among the populace. Furthermore, the study highlighted that green marketing initiatives not only influenced consumer attitudes but also significantly impacted purchase intentions, with 45% of consumers stating that they were willing to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products, demonstrating a strong correlation between green marketing efforts and consumer behavior in developed economies.

Similarly, in the UK, green marketing strategies have been instrumental in shaping consumer perceptions and fostering brand loyalty towards environmentally responsible companies. According to a report by Mintel (2019), 62% of UK consumers claimed to actively seek out products with eco-friendly credentials, reflecting a shift towards sustainable consumption patterns. The study also revealed that 48% of UK consumers were more likely to trust brands that demonstrated a commitment to environmental sustainability, indicating the influence of green marketing on consumer trust and loyalty. Moreover, the research highlighted that companies implementing effective green marketing strategies experienced tangible benefits, with 53% of consumers reporting a higher likelihood of purchasing from brands that actively promoted sustainability, underscoring the positive impact of green marketing initiatives on brand perception and consumer engagement in developed economies.

Moving on to developing economies, the effectiveness of green marketing strategies may vary due to socio-economic factors and differing levels of environmental awareness. However, studies have shown promising trends in consumer attitudes and behaviors towards green products in countries like Brazil and China. For example, a study by Monteiro et al. (2018) in Brazil revealed a growing interest among consumers in environmentally friendly products, with 55% of respondents indicating a willingness to pay more for green alternatives. The research also highlighted the role of green marketing in influencing consumer perceptions and purchase decisions, with 67% of Brazilian consumers considering environmental sustainability as an important factor when choosing products. Similarly, in China, a study by Li and Bai (2016) found that green marketing strategies positively influenced consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly brands, with 60% of respondents expressing a preference for products from companies with strong environmental credentials. This underscores the potential for green marketing to drive consumer behavior and foster sustainability in developing economies, albeit with cultural and contextual nuances shaping its effectiveness.

In developing economies such as Brazil and China, the effectiveness of green marketing strategies is influenced by unique socio-economic and cultural factors, yet trends suggest a growing interest

in environmentally friendly products and sustainable consumption practices. For example, in Brazil, a study by Monteiro et al. (2018) found that despite economic challenges, there is a strong willingness among consumers to pay a premium for green products, indicating a shift towards more environmentally conscious consumption behaviors. The research highlighted that 67% of Brazilian consumers consider environmental sustainability an important factor in their purchasing decisions, suggesting the potential for green marketing strategies to influence consumer attitudes and behaviors towards eco-friendly brands.

Similarly, in China, where rapid industrialization has led to environmental concerns, studies indicate a rising awareness and demand for green products among consumers. Li and Bai (2016) demonstrated that green marketing initiatives positively impact consumer attitudes, with 60% of Chinese respondents expressing a preference for products from companies with strong environmental credentials. This underscores the potential for green marketing to drive sustainable consumption behaviors in China, where consumers are increasingly seeking products that align with their values of environmental responsibility and social consciousness. As developing economies continue to prioritize environmental sustainability and corporate responsibility, green marketing strategies play a crucial role in addressing consumer demand for eco-friendly alternatives and promoting sustainable development.

In addition to Brazil and China, other developing economies also exhibit trends towards increased interest in green products and sustainability. For instance, in India, a rapidly growing economy with a burgeoning middle class, there is a noticeable shift towards eco-conscious consumption patterns. Research by Jain and Kaur (2017) indicates that Indian consumers are increasingly inclined towards environmentally friendly products, with a significant portion expressing willingness to pay more for green alternatives. The study found that 55% of Indian consumers considered environmental sustainability when making purchasing decisions, suggesting a growing awareness of environmental issues and a willingness to support eco-friendly brands. This trend underscores the potential for green marketing strategies to influence consumer behavior and drive sustainable consumption in India's emerging market.

Similarly, in South Africa, where environmental concerns intersect with socio-economic challenges, green marketing strategies hold promise for promoting sustainable consumption behaviors among consumers. A study by Mudavanhu and Govender (2019) found that green marketing initiatives positively impact consumer perceptions of brand credibility and trustworthiness, leading to increased purchase intentions and brand loyalty. Despite facing challenges such as limited access to eco-friendly products and lack of environmental education, South African consumers are increasingly recognizing the importance of sustainability and environmental responsibility in their purchasing decisions. As such, there is an opportunity for companies to leverage green marketing strategies to not only meet consumer demand for sustainable products but also contribute to environmental conservation efforts in South Africa and other developing economies.

In addition to India and South Africa, other developing economies also show promising trends towards the adoption of green marketing strategies and sustainable consumption practices. For example, in Indonesia, a country with a rapidly growing population and increasing environmental concerns, there is a rising awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability among consumers. Research by Wulandari (2018) revealed that Indonesian consumers are becoming more conscious of the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions, with a significant proportion expressing a preference for eco-friendly products. The study found that 60% of Indonesian consumers were willing to pay a premium for products that are environmentally friendly, indicating a growing market for green products and opportunities for companies to capitalize on this trend through effective green marketing strategies.

Similarly, in Nigeria, where environmental issues such as pollution and deforestation are prevalent, there is a growing interest among consumers in supporting environmentally responsible brands and products. Studies by Adeola and Osabutey (2017) and Ibe (2019) have shown that Nigerian consumers are increasingly willing to pay more for green products and support companies that demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability. These findings suggest that green marketing initiatives have the potential to influence consumer behavior and drive sustainable consumption practices in Nigeria and other developing economies. By promoting eco-friendly products and communicating their environmental efforts effectively, companies can not only attract environmentally conscious consumers but also contribute to positive environmental outcomes in these regions.

Lastly, in sub-Saharan economies, the adoption and impact of green marketing strategies may face additional challenges due to infrastructural limitations and socio-economic disparities. However, studies have indicated a growing interest in sustainable consumption practices among consumers in countries like South Africa and Nigeria. For instance, research by Adeola and Osabutey (2017) in Nigeria found that consumer awareness of environmental issues was on the rise, with 48% of respondents expressing a willingness to pay more for green products. Similarly, in South Africa, a study by Mudavanhu and Govender (2019) revealed a positive correlation between green marketing initiatives and consumer perceptions of brand credibility and trustworthiness, indicating the potential for green marketing to drive brand loyalty and engagement in sub-Saharan economies. Despite facing challenges such as limited access to eco-friendly products and lack of environmental education, these studies suggest that green marketing strategies hold promise for promoting sustainable consumption behaviors and fostering environmental stewardship in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition to Nigeria and South Africa, other countries in sub-Saharan Africa are also witnessing a growing interest in green marketing strategies and sustainable consumption practices. For instance, in Kenya, a country known for its diverse ecosystems and wildlife, there is an increasing awareness of environmental issues among consumers. Research by Mwita (2018) indicates that Kenyan consumers are becoming more conscious of the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions, with a significant portion expressing a preference for eco-friendly products. The study

found that 58% of Kenyan consumers considered environmental sustainability when choosing products, suggesting a growing market for green products in the region. This presents an opportunity for companies to implement green marketing strategies to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and drive sustainable consumption behaviors in Kenya.

Similarly, in Ghana, where environmental sustainability is gaining traction as a key concern, consumers are showing an interest in supporting eco-friendly brands and products. Studies by Mensah (2019) and Quist (2017) have shown that Ghanaian consumers are increasingly willing to pay more for green products and support companies that demonstrate a commitment to environmental responsibility. These findings underscore the potential for green marketing initiatives to influence consumer behavior and promote sustainable consumption practices in Ghana and other sub-Saharan African countries. By promoting eco-friendly products and highlighting their environmental benefits, companies can not only meet consumer demand but also contribute to environmental conservation efforts in the region.

Cultural differences play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors towards green marketing strategies. One crucial cultural dimension identified by Hofstede is individualism versus collectivism, which refers to the degree to which individuals prioritize personal interests over group harmony. In individualistic cultures, such as the United States, consumers may be more inclined to embrace green products if they perceive personal benefits, such as cost savings or status enhancement (Minton & Kahle, 2016). Conversely, in collectivist cultures like Japan, where group harmony and social norms hold greater importance, consumers may prioritize the environmental benefits of green products as a way to conform to societal expectations and maintain harmony within their social groups (Kim, 2016).

Another relevant cultural dimension is uncertainty avoidance, which reflects the extent to which individuals feel threatened by ambiguity and uncertainty. In countries with high uncertainty avoidance, such as Germany, consumers may seek out green products as a way to mitigate perceived risks associated with environmental degradation and climate change (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Conversely, in cultures with low uncertainty avoidance, such as Sweden, consumers may be more open to experimenting with new green products and technologies, driven by a greater tolerance for uncertainty and change (Lee & Shin, 2017). Additionally, cultural values such as environmental consciousness and concern for future generations can influence consumer attitudes towards green marketing. For instance, in countries like Norway, where environmental sustainability is deeply ingrained in societal values, consumers may exhibit stronger preferences for green products and demonstrate higher levels of brand loyalty towards companies that align with their environmental values (Reitan & Vik, 2017).

Problem Statement

Despite the increasing global emphasis on sustainable business practices, the adoption and effectiveness of green marketing strategies are influenced by cultural variations, posing challenges for multinational companies operating in diverse markets. Cultural differences encompass values,

beliefs, and norms that shape consumer behaviors and perceptions towards environmental initiatives (Sharma & Iyer, 2020). In the context of Germany, renowned for its strong environmental consciousness and eco-friendly policies, understanding the interplay between cultural factors and green marketing strategies is crucial for businesses aiming to navigate the complexities of the German market effectively (Bundesregierung, 2021). However, empirical research addressing the nuanced relationship between cultural dimensions, such as individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and environmental values, and the adoption and effectiveness of green marketing strategies remains limited, particularly within the German context (Schmidt & Hackenberg, 2018). Thus, there is a pressing need for comprehensive investigations that explore how cultural differences influence consumer attitudes, behaviors, and responses towards green marketing initiatives in Germany, providing valuable insights for businesses seeking to develop culturally tailored sustainability strategies (Tasdemir, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Proposed by Geert Hofstede, explores how cultural values influence behavior across different societies. This theory identifies several cultural dimensions, including individualism versus collectivism, which could impact the adoption of green marketing strategies in Germany (Hofstede, 1980). For instance, Germany scores relatively high on individualism, suggesting that consumers may prioritize personal benefits such as environmental consciousness or health benefits when considering green products, rather than conforming to group norms or social expectations.

The Uncertainty Avoidance Theory

First proposed by Geert Hofstede and later expanded by researchers such as Michael H. Bond, examines how cultures cope with uncertainty and ambiguity (Hofstede, 1980; Bond, 1988). In Germany, a culture with relatively low uncertainty avoidance, consumers may be more open to trying new green products and embracing innovative sustainability initiatives, driven by a greater tolerance for uncertainty and change. Understanding how cultural differences in uncertainty avoidance influence consumer behavior is crucial for the effective implementation of green marketing strategies in Germany.

The Theory of Planned Behavior

Developed by Icek Ajzen, explores the relationship between attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of green marketing in Germany, this theory can help researchers understand how cultural values and norms influence consumer attitudes towards green products, their perceptions of social pressures related to environmental responsibility, and their perceived control over adopting sustainable behaviors. By considering these factors, marketers can design more effective green marketing campaigns tailored to the cultural context of Germany.

Empirical Review

Lee and Shin (2017) investigated into the role of cultural values in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards green products in South Korea. Utilizing a quantitative survey methodology, the researchers aimed to discern the intricate interplay between cultural factors and consumers' propensity to engage with environmentally friendly products. Their findings unveiled that collectivist cultural values exerted a significant influence on consumers' willingness to purchase green products, implying that marketing strategies promoting collective benefits and social responsibility may resonate more effectively with South Korean consumers. Additionally, the study shed light on the importance of aligning green marketing initiatives with cultural norms to enhance their adoption and effectiveness within the South Korean market. By understanding the cultural underpinnings of consumer behavior, marketers can tailor their messaging and positioning strategies to better resonate with the values and preferences of the target audience.

Chan (2018) explored the influence of cultural dimensions on consumers' perception of green advertising effectiveness in China. Employing a mixed-method approach encompassing surveys and focus group discussions, the study delved into the intricate nuances of Chinese cultural values and their impact on consumers' attitudes towards green advertising messages. Their findings illuminated the significance of emphasizing collective benefits and social responsibility in green advertising campaigns to align with the cultural values of collectivism and harmony prevalent among Chinese consumers. By incorporating insights gleaned from cultural analysis into their marketing strategies, brands can enhance the resonance and effectiveness of their green advertising initiatives in the Chinese market. Furthermore, the study underscored the imperative for marketers to adopt a culturally sensitive approach to green marketing, acknowledging the diverse cultural landscape within China and tailoring their messaging accordingly to foster greater consumer engagement and acceptance.

Malaysia, Suki and Suki (2016) explored the impact of cultural dimensions on consumers' perception and acceptance of green products in the Malaysian context. Employing a quantitative survey design, the study sought to unravel the intricate interplay between cultural factors such as power distance and uncertainty avoidance and consumers' attitudes towards green products. Their findings revealed that cultural dimensions exerted a significant influence on consumers' green product preferences and purchase intentions, underscoring the need for marketers to craft tailored marketing strategies that account for cultural sensitivities. By understanding the cultural nuances shaping consumer behavior, marketers can develop more effective green marketing campaigns that resonate with Malaysian consumers' cultural values and preferences. The study offered practical recommendations for marketers, emphasizing the importance of cultural adaptation and localization in green marketing efforts to enhance their relevance and effectiveness in the Malaysian market.

Gupta (2019) delved into the realm of green consumer behavior in India, seeking to uncover the influence of cultural values on consumers' intention to purchase green products. Employing a rigorous structural equation modeling analysis, the study examined the intricate relationships between cultural dimensions such as collectivism and religiosity and consumers' propensity to

engage in environmentally friendly consumption behaviors. Their findings unveiled that cultural factors played a pivotal role in shaping consumers' green purchase intention, highlighting the need for marketers to integrate cultural elements into their green marketing strategies. By aligning their messaging and positioning with cultural values that resonate with Indian consumers, marketers can enhance the effectiveness of their green marketing initiatives and drive greater adoption of sustainable consumption behaviors. The study provided valuable insights into the cultural determinants of green consumer behavior in India, offering actionable recommendations for marketers seeking to navigate the complex cultural landscape and promote environmentally friendly products effectively.

Wang and Chen (2018) delved into the cultural landscape of Taiwan to investigate the impact of cultural values on consumers' perception of green brands. Utilizing a quantitative survey methodology, the study aimed to uncover the influence of cultural dimensions such as Confucianism and environmental concern on consumers' evaluations of green brands and their purchase intentions. Their research revealed that cultural factors exerted a significant influence on consumers' brand perceptions, with Confucian values and environmental consciousness playing a pivotal role in shaping consumers' attitudes towards green brands. Marketers operating in Taiwan can leverage these insights to develop brand messaging and communication strategies that resonate with the cultural values and beliefs prevalent among Taiwanese consumers, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their green branding initiatives.

Amaro (2017) delved into the realm of sustainable fashion in Portugal, aiming to explore the role of cultural dimensions in shaping consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly fashion products. Employing qualitative interviews, the study sought to unravel the intricate interplay between cultural factors such as individualism and environmental consciousness and consumers' acceptance of sustainable fashion. Their findings unveiled that cultural values exerted a significant influence on consumers' perceptions of sustainable fashion, highlighting the need for marketers to incorporate cultural narratives into their green marketing messages. By aligning their messaging with the cultural values and preferences of Portuguese consumers, marketers can enhance the relevance and resonance of their sustainable fashion offerings, thereby driving greater adoption of eco-friendly consumption behaviors.

Lindgreen (2019) explored the influence of cultural values on consumers' perceptions of green product attributes in the United Kingdom. Through a quantitative survey methodology, the study aimed to uncover the impact of cultural dimensions such as individualism and environmental concern on consumers' evaluations of green product attributes such as quality, reliability, and environmental friendliness. Their research revealed that cultural factors played a significant role in shaping consumers' perceptions of green products, with individualistic values and environmental consciousness influencing consumers' evaluations of product attributes. Marketers operating in the UK can leverage these insights to develop product messaging and positioning strategies that align with the cultural values and beliefs prevalent among British consumers, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their green marketing initiatives.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Gap: Despite insightful research conducted by Lee and Shin (2017) into the role of cultural values in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards green products in South Korea, there remains a conceptual gap in understanding the specific mechanisms through which cultural values translate into consumer actions. While their findings shed light on the influence of collectivist cultural values on consumers' willingness to purchase green products, further exploration is needed to elucidate the underlying psychological processes or decision-making frameworks that mediate this relationship.

Contextual Gap: While Chan (2018) explored the influence of cultural dimensions on consumers' perception of green advertising effectiveness in China, there persists a contextual gap in the representation of diverse cultural backgrounds in green consumer behavior research. While insights from Chinese cultural values provided valuable implications for green advertising campaigns, there is limited research focusing on African, Middle Eastern, Latin American, or Eastern European cultural contexts. Exploring the influence of cultural values on green consumer behavior in these underrepresented regions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural variations in sustainability attitudes and behaviors.

Geographical Gap: While Malaysia, Suki, and Suki (2016) investigated the impact of cultural dimensions on consumers' perception and acceptance of green products in Malaysia, there exists a geographical gap in the representation of diverse regions in green consumer behavior research. Despite their findings shedding light on the influence of cultural dimensions such as power distance and uncertainty avoidance on consumers' attitudes towards green products in Malaysia, there is limited representation from other regions such as North America, Oceania, or South America. Exploring the role of cultural values in shaping green consumer behavior across a broader range of geographical regions could enrich our understanding of cross-cultural variations in sustainability attitudes and behaviors on a global scale.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In conclusion, the effectiveness of green marketing strategies in Germany is significantly influenced by cultural differences, highlighting the need for marketers to adapt their approaches to align with the cultural values, beliefs, and preferences of the German consumers. Cultural factors such as environmental consciousness, sustainability ethos, and trust in institutions play a pivotal role in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviors towards green products and initiatives. Therefore, marketers must recognize and leverage these cultural nuances to develop tailored green marketing campaigns that resonate with the German audience.

Furthermore, the adoption of green marketing strategies in Germany is influenced by cultural norms and societal expectations regarding environmental responsibility and corporate sustainability practices. German consumers tend to prioritize eco-friendly products and brands that demonstrate a genuine commitment to environmental stewardship and transparency. As such, marketers need to emphasize authenticity, credibility, and social responsibility in their green marketing communications to gain the trust and loyalty of German consumers.

Recommendations

Theory

Research can contribute to the development of theoretical frameworks that integrate cultural dimensions into green marketing strategies. By examining how cultural values, beliefs, and norms influence consumer perceptions and behaviors towards sustainability, theoretical models can provide insights into the design and implementation of culturally sensitive marketing initiatives in Germany. This contribution enhances our understanding of the interplay between culture and green consumption, advancing theoretical knowledge in the field of sustainable marketing.

Practice

Practical recommendations can be made for businesses to adapt their green marketing campaigns to align with German cultural values and preferences. This involves tailoring messaging, imagery, and product offerings to resonate with local consumers' environmental concerns and attitudes. By integrating cultural insights into marketing strategies, companies can enhance consumer engagement, trust, and loyalty, leading to increased adoption of green products and services in Germany. This practical contribution supports businesses in effectively navigating cultural differences and maximizing the impact of their sustainability efforts.

Policy

Research can inform advocacy efforts aimed at influencing policymakers to develop supportive regulations and incentives for sustainable practices. By highlighting the role of cultural factors in shaping consumer behavior and market dynamics, research contributes to the formulation of evidence-based policies that promote environmental sustainability in Germany. This policy-oriented contribution fosters collaboration between government, businesses, and civil society organizations to create an enabling environment for green innovation, investment, and consumer choice, driving systemic change towards a more sustainable economy and society.

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