

COMPARING CONSUMER PREFERENCES IN TWO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: A PARTIALLY-INDIVIDUALIZED CONJOINT ANALYSIS

Adamantios Diamantopoulos, University of Wales-Swansea
Bodo B. Schlegelmilch, Thunderbird-The American Graduate School
of International Management
Johann P. DuPreez, University of Wales-Swansea

ABSTRACT

While the EU has cleared away most regulatory barriers to standardization, firms serving the Single European Market continue to be concerned about differences in consumer preferences that may still limit the standardization potential. This paper attempts to shed light on this issue by contrasting product attribute preferences of British and German consumers with regard to automobile purchases. Within a multi-cue context, particular emphasis is placed on consumer attitudes towards country-of-origin and ecological product features.

A large data-base was gathered via an interactive computer-aided decision analysis questionnaire and the analysis itself was conducted utilizing a partially-individualized

conjoint approach. The latter enables a *quantification* of the expressed preferences.

The results point to a number of differences between British and German consumers in terms of their preferences for a variety of product attitudes, including country-of-origin and ecological product attitudes associated with cars. This highlights the still existing difficulties in approaching the entire EU with a single marketing strategy. While the regulatory environment in the EU may soon be sufficiently harmonized to permit a standardized marketing approach in *principle*, the *realistics* of existing differences in consumer preferences are likely to obstruct the use of standardized marketing programs for some time to come.