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**CROSS-CULTURAL BRAND PERCEPTION**

Thesis

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences

School of Business and Administration

Degree Programme in International Business

03.12.2010

School Business	Degree Programme International Business
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Title Cross-Cultural Brand Perception	
Optional Professional Studies	Supervisor(s) Sami Malm
	Commissioned by
Date 03.12.2010	Total Number of Pages and Appendices 107
<p>The purpose of this research is to analyze how global brands differ according to markets and are viewed differently. In order to do this Mercedes-Benz was used as an example of a global brand and Germany and USA as the market places where the perception of this brand was to be compared.</p> <p>The main similarities and differences in the perception of this brand in the stated countries were compared. The first step that was taken was the preparation of a survey for the two countries, which involved creating 10 questions to be answered by both Americans and Germans. The survey was based on the Mercedes-Benz brand and also included general questions that would help to give a better insight into buyer behavior. Furthermore, respondents were randomly selected, with the only prerequisite being that they are either German or American. Quantitative research was conducted through the survey. The goal was to collect as many surveys as possible in order to lower chances of error. After responses from both countries were received, they were analyzed using the program SPSS.</p> <p>Thus, the fashion in which Mercedes-Benz is perceived in both countries could be identified and compared. The results showed that the brand is perceived very similarly in both countries and there are only minor differences. However, it also showed that German consumers prefer German car brands, while Americans show less of a preference towards domestic car brands.</p>	
Language of Thesis    English	
Keywords	Brand Perception, Branding, Mercedes-Benz, Marketing
Deposited at	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronic library Theseus <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kajaani University of Applied Sciences Library

## PREFACE

The author has been interested for a long time in how brand perception is affected by cultures. As an American who lived in Germany for 12 years, he has witnessed such differences first hand, even if some differences could be considered minor ones. In addition to this the author is interested in marketing and wishes to have a career revolving around this subject. Thus, it is important for him to further his understanding of brands and their perception, since it plays a significant role in marketing.

The research started while the author was completing an internship in a marketing department at a German company. Since he is an American and felt confident in his knowledge of the German culture, he decided to use the USA and Germany in his thesis. However, the idea to analyze the brand perception of Mercedes-Benz came to him when he visited the Mercedes-Benz museum in Stuttgart, Germany. It was there that he realized that there were many things that he had not previously known about the brand. One of these facts was that Mercedes had invented the first gas powered car. This is how the idea of analyzing the brand perception of Mercedes in the USA and Germany came to be. However, it isn't just important to know how the company is viewed but also to know how it wants to be viewed. This is why the author started his research by collecting information on the company.

After having gained more knowledge about the Mercedes-Benz brand, the author developed a survey that could be used to analyze how the brand is perceived. Furthermore, he thought of questions that could be used to find important in other related factors, such as for example brand preferences. In addition to this, the author wishes to express his sincere gratitude to Jukka Sirviö, especially for his help with the statistical part of the thesis. Without his advice and unique support this thesis would never have become a reality. Furthermore, he wishes to thank his family and friends for their help and great support.

## CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 BRAND AS A MARKETING TOOL AND HOW IT DIFFERS ACCORDING TO CULTURES	3
2.1 Brand as a means of communication	4
2.2 Branding across cultures	12
2.3 Mercedes Benz as an international brand	16
3 CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILIRIATIES IN BRAND PERCEPTION BETWEEN GERMAN AND AMERICAN CULTURES IN THE CASE OF MERCEDES-BENZ	18
3.1 Particularities of Mercedes Benz brand perception in the USA	20
3.2 Particularities of Mercedes Benz perception in Germany	35
3.3 The differences and similarities based on the survey	50
4 CONCLUSION	70
SOURCES	72
LIST OF APPENDICES	74

## 1 INTRODUCTION

When looking at any given brand, there is one factor that stands out the most, this is the brand image. Nowadays, mainly due to globalization, almost any given brand can be found all over the world. However, even though this brand is in fact the same brand everywhere, it may be viewed differently according to countries and cultures. Many companies have used the changing of names, changing of target group and changing of advertisement as a means of making their brand popular abroad. This shows the importance of brand image and how it can lead to a brand being successful or failing in other countries. Any given brand can be more successful if the management team understands how their brand is viewed. This is due to the management team being able to influence the brand perception if it is not desired, or working with it and creating suitable commercials and promotions.

The research topic analyzes brands and their perception across borders. For this different success and failure stories of brands are given. These mainly serve to show that a brand is a complex subject which can be perceived in different ways. Furthermore, this will add some background knowledge about brands so that the reader can better understand the results of the survey.

The aim of this research paper is to analyze how brands can be viewed differently and similarly across borders. Furthermore, the aim is to analyze the brand perception of a global brand and see to what extent the perception of a global brand differs according to countries. This is why the author will analyze how the Mercedes-Benz brand is perceived through a survey in Germany and the USA. Furthermore, this research serves to help understand of what importance cultural differences are in marketing and how brands can preserve their image abroad. Brand perception is explained in more detail in the theoretical part of this research paper. In order to do this the author of this paper will use different sources and previously conducted research by various authors.

The research topic revolves around brand image. It will analyze how the Mercedes-Benz brand is viewed in the USA versus how it is viewed in Germany, its country of origin. The results of both countries will be analyzed in the empirical part of this research paper. After stating the differences and similarities of the results, the conclusions are given.

Some of the difficulties that the author had to face in this research were the fact that he was in Europe at the time of the research and thus could only survey few Americans for the research. This is the main reason why more Germans were surveyed than Americans. However, even if a larger amount of people had been surveyed, with the USA having the third largest population in the world and Germany the second largest in Europe, it seems unlikely that an appropriate amount of Americans and Germans could have been surveyed in order to represent both countries. Furthermore, not only differences in nationality have an effect on brand perception but also other factors such as age and gender. This made the analysis truly difficult. Due to this reason the survey was not just analyzed according to nationality, but also according to gender, thus eliminating one of the factors which could have corrupted the final results.

## 2 BRAND AS A MARKETING TOOL AND HOW IT DIFFERS ACCORDING TO CULTURES

Nowadays, creating brands and brand management practices have become a special focus in marketing. The term brand refers to a name, symbol, or design that one company uses to differentiate its products from those of its competitors (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1990, 275).

Any product, which appears on the market, creates a certain impression, positive or negative. This appears inevitable as soon as the consumer learns about the product. Furthermore, a connection between a brand mark and brand name is made in the mind of consumers. For example, the cigarette brand “Camel” uses a camel as a brand mark, so when this camel is seen, consumers may make the connection with the brand. Such brand marks may become invaluable to a company, when the product itself cannot be promoted. One example, for this can be seen by the Marlboro brand. In most European countries there are legal restrictions on the advertisement of cigarettes, thus Marlboro features advertisements showing only the Marlboro cowboy, since he is famous throughout the world (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1990, 275).

Some areas of branding are more than just a part of marketing. Furthermore, branding gives a lot to a company. It helps to increase profitability and sales volume, expand the range and knowledge of consumers about the unique qualities of the items reserved for a particular segment and the implementation of long-term development programs, etc. However, it does not require much. First of all, it includes the professional knowledge and management culture of the company, the ability to work with intellectual property and trademarks as well as the ability to evaluate the brand and its components. It is also important for a company to create a strong brand prestige and connect their brand with desired impressions. These desired impressions should be unique and favorable in order to provide a competitive advantage and “reason why” consumers should purchase the brand. However, for some brands it is enough if they are viewed at least as favorably as competitor brands. Thus, it may be sufficient if the attributes of a brand are seen as roughly equal to the competitors. These

associations are designed to provide “no reason why not” for consumers to purchase the brand (Keller 2003, 74).

The best way for a company to make these qualities known is through repetitious ads. This is due to repetition increasing the odds that the brand and its message are stored in the long term memory of potential customers. The brand name should also be associated with the brand's most prominent characteristic. For example, many people associate Crest with “cavity prevention” and Coca-Cola with the word “refreshing” (Clow & Baack 2010, 34-35).

## 2.1 Brand as a means of communication

When defining what a brand is, it is very important to pay attention to its purpose, in other words, the human perception of the information contained therein. A brand should be associated with the goods, to be a kind of personification of its essence, to reflect its purpose and contain a special meaning inherent in the product. Brand names should convey the image of the product or service offered (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1990, 275). Therefore, a brand in today's terms is a central concept of marketing. A product is perceived through the brand. Accordingly, the brand should reflect the properties of the goods, its quality so that when a consumer is analyzing it, a positive image of the product itself should be formed.

The concept of brand is quite extensive. This includes all the properties of the product: name, history, reputation, packaging and price. It is complex separate concepts, which eventually form an impression about the product. The impression could easily change with the brand. However, the product remains unchanged. In other words, brands provide a consistent and lasting way of identifying the offerings of a company (Craig & Douglas 2000, 273-274). The brand creates a special way for goods, setting it apart from the gray mass of alternative products and creating the possibility of competition. The firms with brand products are much more successful than their competitors and their segment of buyers is much broader. A brand is the name and, at the same time, the term and the sign, symbol or any



other value that identifies the goods or services of one seller and distinguishes it from other products or services of the same sellers. The brand also sets a product apart from other similar products, which are of a different brand (Upshaw 1995, 11).

However, the brand should be tested over time. A product belonging to a successful brand is a proven product, which is known in the purchasing environment. This product has become popular thanks to the bright name as well as a good quality. The purpose of branding can be summed up as a means for the facilitation of the company's task of creating and keeping a loyal customer base in a cost-effective way in order to gain the biggest possible return on their investment (Chernatony & McDonnald 1998, 17).

### *History of branding*

Originally the word "brand" seems to have come from the word "brandr" which meant "to burn". This can be interpreted as "a permanent mark deliberately made with a hot iron" (Hansen & Christensen 2003, 12). Perhaps the first known use of a brand was practiced by mankind in the days of ancient Egypt, when artisans put their brand on their bricks that they made themselves. There is also documented evidence of the emergence of trade marks in Greek and Roman lamps, as well as Chinese porcelain. Branding was actively used in the middle ages, when artisans tagged craft items with a particular brand. This was necessary because the population grew, and in the same area there were more than one blacksmith, mason, or carpenter. In some old European cities such as Salzburg and Rottenburg, tourists can still see the original iron brands, which were marked by the workshops, where the holders of these brands used to work (Keller 2003, 52-53).

In the early history of the United States stamps were often used for identification of livestock (cows, sheep). Later it was used to mark the special quality of the goods provided by the owner of a particular farm or ranch. Nowadays the original meaning of the word has changed. The brand, its creation ("branding» - «brand building») and management practices ("Brand Management") have become a special focus in marketing (Chernatony & McDonnald 1998, 28).

Brand management is a management of brand process, including its creation, promotion, and adapting to changing conditions. It takes its origin from the middle of last century. Brand management developed simultaneously in several countries, but the UK and the USA made the main contribution to its development. The development of brand management in the United States will be considered, as it first appeared there as an official control system of products (Keller 2003, 52-53).

The history of American brand management is divided into 4 distinct but overlapping time periods. The first period is from 1870 to early 1900's. Brands appeared in 1870 as an alternative to the enormous amount of doubtful reputation, and low quality that flooded the U.S. While in America, as almost everywhere in the world, breeders produced faceless products - soap, cereal, light bulbs, which have not acquired a proper name, were bought by wholesalers for resale through the small shops and large stores. For a manufacturer such a situation was not favorable because his product did not differ from the competition and, consequently, the rules of the game were made by the wholesalers, who could decide at what manufacturer it is better to purchase a product from. Therefore, manufacturers were producing a huge number of variants of the same products to satisfy store owners. For example, Colgate in 1906 produced 160 different types of toilet soap, 625 perfume flavors and 2000 other types of products. The gradual improvement of the transportation system (facilitating the delivery of goods), manufacturing process (high volumes at low cost), packaging (the attractiveness of the product and simplifying its identification with the manufacturer), changes in laws (laws on the protection of trade marks), increasing the effectiveness of advertising, new ways of selling (by mail, online shops) have created the prerequisites for the emergence of the brand manufacturer. At that time the emergence of brands was welcomed by the mass buyer because this allowed the users to expose themselves to risk through the purchase of non-brand goods, and in case of poor quality of the brand could be avoided in the future (Keller 2003, 53).

Owners of firms and their helpers, the first top managers in history, created the first consumer goods. Many of those later became successful brands and still exist even today. Paral-

lel to this process, there was a fundamental improvement in the quality of goods, in building its distribution channels, as well as in the advertising business. Leading manufacturers of consumer goods perpetuated their success in the second period, which was 1915-1929, by developing existing brands, as well as by creating and implementing new ones. During this time, the category of mid-level managers existed, who were actively accumulating knowledge to promote products on the market, in addition to learning to work with advertising and research agencies (Keller 2003, 54).

Despite the radical change in the country during the third period, from 1930 to 1945, which occurred during the Great Depression and World War II, the existing methods of managing brands gained popularity among a growing number of firms. At the times a formal concept of brand management emerged, which entered as the control system of its activities in Procter & Gamble and several other firms. However, brand management was not yet widely used during that time (Keller 2003, 54-55).

During the fourth period, which lasted from 1945 till the present, the majority of firms were producing mass consumer products and introducing a system of brand management. In today's world, when the market offers a huge amount of goods, it becomes almost impossible to deceive the modern consumer. Nobody is going to overpay for a brand that has no benefit for him or her personally. Branding is becoming one of the most important, or perhaps the most important tool for doing business in many markets. Nowadays, it represents a new framework for marketing management in general (Keller 2003, 54-55).

#### *Creation of a brand*

According to K. Keller, there are four steps that need to be taken if one intends to build a strong brand. First, one should ensure identification of the brand with customers and make sure that customers associate the brand with a certain product class or customer need. Following this, one should firmly establish the totality of brand meaning in the mind of customers. This is done by linking a number of tangible and intangible brand associations with certain properties of the brand. Then one should elicit the proper customer responses to the

previously established brand identification and brand meaning. The last step involves converting brand response in order to create an intense, active loyalty relationship between the brand and its customers. Together these four steps essentially represent the establishment of brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses and brand relationships (Keller 2003, 75).

One main aspect of the brand is the brand name. This word can correspond to the name of the company. However, not every title is suitable to become a brand. It is not the linguistic features of a word, but the fact that the name should take into account many factors that influence the success or failure of the future brand. These factors include the name's match to consumer specifications, product and target audience, ease of pronunciation and originality, as well as ability to say in other languages. With time it is getting harder and harder to devise a suitable, not registered name for a brand (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1990, 275).

The impression made by a name depends on a combination of sound and shape of the letters. Types of names, which should be avoided, are personal names, terms, descriptions, abbreviations and words with inappropriate homonyms and translations. A convenient brand name can be characterized as unique, associated with the goods or services, short, easy to pronounce, easy to remember and easily translated into different languages without the negative associations. Furthermore, it is important that the name of the brand is in line with the mentality of the people of the country; otherwise it will not be accepted. One good example of this is a brand in Hong Kong called American No. 1. This name was chosen because the market in Hong Kong prefers U.S. products, so although the brand is not actually American, it still has an American image thanks to the name (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1990, 276).

Experts in the field of branding state three groups of criteria for the creation of a brand name, which are: Phonetic criterion, that is, the word must be easy to pronounce and match the language of the country in which it is developed; Lexical criterion, which is, the meaning of the word. It is essential that the name contains something that would cause bright positive association; Legal criterion, which states the importance to register the word (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1990, 276).

Important to note with the legal criterion is that descriptive names characterize the typical properties and quality of products, which are not individual, and therefore not legally protected. Thus, a brand name using characteristics of typical properties becomes vulnerable to copying by competitors. For example, a company that produces beer, Miller, came up with a brand Light and has invested heavily in its promotion. However, the name “Lite” and “Light” are actively used by competitors, so they are able to cash in on Miller’s Light beer advertisements as well (Competition-Based Positioning: Miller Lite vs. Bud Light 2010).

For the use of abbreviations there are positive examples of promoted brands such as BMW and IBM. In connection with these and several other successful brands with abbreviation names, it should be mentioned that they were created long time ago in the specific circumstances and managed to consolidate their position in the minds of consumers. Nowadays, the use of abbreviations for brands is ineffective (Clow & Baack 2010, 31-33).

The process of inventing brand names requires the knowledge of the market of their application, the status and potential consumers, as well as the characteristics and advantages of the goods or services. The brand name can also be borrowed from another language by selecting the word, depending on what sort of impression and associations are formed from its sound. Symbols also can be used. That is to express an abstract idea of a tangible object, for example the automotive industry has traditionally used images of animals. Such use of animal images can be seen in the car brand “Jaguar” and the car models “Chevrolet, Impala” and “Ford, Mustang”. Furthermore, graphical representation of the brand, such as a grapheme or a logo can be used. It includes fonts, composition, color, character or other symbols. A good logo should be original, without complex and fine details, with good reproducibility on different advertising mediums colors, and it should also correspond with the nature of the goods or services. A good title should not only sound good, but also look good. Graphic images and titles accompany a customer throughout the centuries (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1990, 276-277).

Unfortunately, a recipe for the brand development does not exist. Brands embody a vision of an ideal, or are born by analogy or coincidence, or reflect the characteristics and condi-

tions of the product consumption. It is important that the brand makes sense, does not contradict the essence of the product or the company and has graceful overtones, which are easily guessed and understood by the consumers. A shell symbol, which is commonly found on shelves, is the logo of the oil company Shell. It became a symbol for safe technology of oil production, taking into account environmental protection (Clow & Baack 2010, 34-35).

A common practice is when a logo is just the company name with the addition of graphic elements, making additional meaning. For example, the conclusion of the inscription in a circle usually represents the unity of the various components. According to legend, the triangular star in a circle, the logo of Mercedes-Benz, was invented by one of the founders of the brand as a symbol of the superiority of the internal combustion engine in the three elements, which are the land, air and the sea. Hence these are the three beams of the star. The colleague and rival Daimler-Benz used as a symbol of the circle, representing the steering wheel. After the merger, the star and the circle became a single logo, the latter acquired a new sound as well. Another example of a logo that has a meaning is a circle with the vector of movement (forward and upward) used by the brand Volvo. This symbol illustrates the brand name Volvo (Volvo in Latin - "rotate") itself (Clow & Baack 2010, 33 & Daimler AG 2010).

### *Types of brands*

In marketing practice, a brand has its inherent components. Each brand has certain attributes (Brand Attributes). They are functional and emotional associations that are assigned to a brand by its actual customers and potential customers. Attributes of a brand can be both positive and negative and may have a different effect and importance to different market segments. Furthermore, every brand has the principal characteristics that define its essence or in short its brand essence (Sowder 2006). All attributes of the brand together constitute the brand identity, which is created and maintained by a brand specialist. Brand identity is something that the brand should mean and it is a kind of long-term promise to consumers from the authors of the brand (Management study Guide 1998-2009).

At any given time any brand has a certain image (Brand Image) - a unique set of associations that are currently being held in the minds of consumers. These associations reflect what it means to brand right now, and are a short-term promise to consumers from the authors of the brand. In particular, the image of the brand can create an advertising campaign. Brand image is what is currently in the minds of the consumers, whereas brand identity is much more of a long-term concept. Like any other phenomenon, brands may have different strengths and ability to influence the minds of consumers and to form their preferences. A strong brand is a brand that is known and can be distinguished from other brands with the help of key elements (Clow & Baack 2010, 30-31).

There are several basic types of brands, all of which take their place in the market. Product brands are the first of the emerging brands on the market. They are the core of branding, because they clearly prevail quantitatively over other types and are recognized by consumers in the first place. Service brands have a much smaller market than product brands. Intangible services are much harder to provide in an attractive way and sell to buyers who often have difficulty with the choice of even those goods that they can see and feel. Organizational brands are corporations, nonprofit organizations, political parties and educational institutions. Event brands are periodically passing events, usually in the world of sports, entertainment and art. The objectives of the organizers of such events are often achieved by forceful use of traditional branding tools. The amount which advertisers pay for the right to show their product during the breaks of the prestigious sports tournament is the price of similar brands. Personal brands are athletes, singers, politicians and businessmen. They have always existed in human society, but at present they have become like all other brands. Their feature as brand is that their fame extends far beyond the scope of their activities - sportsmen and politicians can be seen in advertising, singers act in movies, actors and businessmen host sports competitions and more. Geographical brands are cities, countries and resorts. This kind of brand is gradually becoming widespread, especially in tourism. The examples of them can be ski resort of St. Moritz, the French Riviera, the Seychelles, etc. (Changing Minds 2002-2010).

In addition to this, brands can be further broken down into four categories according to where they are sold. The first being local brands, which are brands sold in part of a domestic market. Then there are also national brands, which are sold throughout a domestic market and pan-regional brands, which are brands sold in two or more countries. Last but not least, there are global brands. These are brands that have extensive geographical reach, are perceived by consumers as global and have a uniform positioning and image worldwide. Examples of such global brands include Coca-Cola, Rolex, McDonalds, Mercedes-Benz and Marlboro (Craig & Douglas 2000, 275).

## 2.2 Branding across cultures

In this day and age it is practically essential to have your brands reach across borders and even become global brand. Some examples of these types of brands include Coca-Cola, Microsoft, McDonalds, Starbucks and Mercedes-Benz. Furthermore, brands may be more or less successful depending on the country they are competing in. This is why managers should take cultural differences into consideration before entering a new market. Companies can use basically six strategies for internationalizing their brands:

- 1) Cultivate established local brands (develop a national brand into an international one);
- 2) Global concept adaptations (develop one concept for the world, which can carry local products with local values);
- 3) Create new brands (recognize a global need or want and create a brand for it);
- 4) Purchase local brands and internationalize;
- 5) Develop brand extensions (offer a larger variety of products or services);
- 6) Employ a multi local strategy (products and marketing strategies are customized according to markets)(Mooij 2010, 34).

The multi local strategy is a form of adaptation, in which the brand is adjusted to suit the local market. One example of this can be seen in the case of Mr. Clean. The same brand is



sold under the names of “Mr. Proper” and “Maestro Limpio”, as well as other names in other countries (Clow&Baack2010, 49).

However, technology has made international marketing easier than ever. Collecting data through databases and advertising over the internet play huge roles in this. Unfortunately, there are challenges with database marketing when a company moves into another country. Factors such as laws, languages and differences in technology may make it difficult for a company to collect data. Besides this, a company should also decide on how data will be considered. For example, the European Union consists of many countries in a small area. Thus, companies must decide whether information will be country specific or not when moving there (Clow & Baack 2010, 316).

Furthermore, a company should decide what kind of global marketing program they want to use for a brand. The company should choose whether it wishes to use standardization or customization. There are advantages and disadvantages to both options. A truly standardized brand that does not vary from country to country can reach economies of scale in production and distribution, lower marketing costs, consistency in brand image, ability to leverage good ideas quickly and efficiently, power and scope, as well as uniformity of marketing practices. It is important to note though, that critics state that standardized global marketing programs often ignore fundamental differences of cultures and countries. Essentially one would be ignoring differences in consumer needs, wants, and usage patterns for products, consumer response to marketing mix elements, brand and product development and the competitive environment, the legal environment, marketing institutions, as well as administrative procedures (Keller 2003, 683-686).

#### *How cultures can affect brand perception*

Globalization has made foreign brands available in other countries. This in turn has increased competition globally, but also made some products available in places where they otherwise would not have been. With brands from all over the world being available in a country, it comes to no surprise that cultures have an impact on how the brand is perceived. For example the perception of the brands may be linked to the general perception of the

country of their origin. This can be seen in products/brands and their originating countries, such as: Rolls Royce, origin: U.K. (class and heritage); origin: France (style and class, fashion); BMW, origin: Germany (quality and reliability); watches, knives origin: Switzerland (precision); consumer electronics and cars, origin: Japan (miniaturization, value and features) (Kumar 2008, 82).

However, it is also possible that a brand does not use its own country of origin for how it is perceived. One example of this is an Italian chewing gum manufacturer called Perfetti, it has an American sounding brand name called “Brooklyn”. They most likely have chosen this brand name since chewing gum is more associated with the American culture and thus is usefully positioned for the youth who are most likely to follow the American way of life (Kumar 2008, 82).

*How a brand image can be adjusted to suit a culture*

In a dynamic marketing environment, repositioning a brand is as important as formulating the original positioning strategy for it. However, repositioning should be considered with product line management, sub-brands and new kinds of imagery in a changing environment. It should also be noted that brand repositioning in a competitive environment involves a combination of issues concerning brand associations, sub-brands product line offerings and marketing mix (Kumar 2008, 82-84). Furthermore, brand positioning and personality are the most critical components of the brand identity because they dictate how users and prospective users judge the attractiveness and the necessity of the brand. This means that people will purchase a brand mostly because of how they are able to fit this brand into their own lives and because they like the brands personality. It is important to keep in mind that it is the consumers who position the brand in their own lives, based on their perception of the brand. This is influenced by such things as how the brand performs compared to other brands and other purchase alternatives. Whenever the positioning of a brand is changed, it has a big impact on the brands identity. Unfortunately, it is not always easy or even possible to adjust the image of a brand or create a new image (Clow & Baack 2010, 31-32).

In addition to this, it is also possible to create local or regional brands in order to for a company to integrate into other markets. Thus, a company would keep its global brand as is but also create local or regional brands in order to better serve a certain market. One brand that has done this is Coca-Cola. The company has its global brand as well as a number of local and regional brands, which cater to region specific tastes (Craig & Douglas 2000, 280).

*Stories of success and failure of international brands*

Many brands have become successful on a global level. Marlboro, Coca-Cola and McDonald's are some of the world's most valuable brands and thus can be considered some of the most successful. Coca-Cola's success is largely due to a clear positioning as a refreshing, fun-type drink, targeted at teenagers and supported by a tradition of quality and continual consumer communication (Chernatony & McDonald 1998,21). McDonald's success, on the other hand, is largely due to a rapid expansion not only within but also outside of the U.S.A. This expansion was mainly possible due to standardized production and distribution, as well as customization of products to local taste. The brand success of McDonald's and Coca-Cola depends greatly on global consumers and standardization in its use and presentation (Gregory 2002, 14-16).

On the other hand, there are also a great number of brands that have failed, especially on an international level. One mistake may be that a company translates its brand name improperly into other languages. For instance, Mirabell, initially translated its brand "Mozart Kugeln" (a chocolate ball of marzipan and nougat) into "Mozart Balls", but then changed the name to "Mozart Rounds" (Czinkota & Ronkainen 1990, 276). But another mistake maybe to not translate or adjust a brand name at all, when moving to other countries. For example, General Motors has a car brand called "Chevy Nova", which means "It does not go" in Spain (Logo & Brand Identity Design 2010).

### 2.3 Mercedes Benz as an international brand

Mercedes-Benz is a German company that produces vehicles such as cars, buses, coaches, trucks and even bicycles. The company was founded in the 1880s and was the first to invent the gas powered car, which was the Benz Patent Motorwagen. This was basically a stage-coach with an added gas engine and was patented by Karl Benz in January 1886. Gottlieb Daimler and engineer Wilhelm Maybach, two competitors of Karl Benz at that time, also created one of the first gas powered cars later that year. However, back then few would have guessed that Mr. Benz and Mr. Daimler would be partners in the not so distant future (Daimler AG 2010).

It was 1900 during a meeting in Nice, France between Daimler's company and Mr. Jelinek's company that the name "Mercedes" was coined. Mr. Jelinek had picked this name after his daughter Mercedes. Thus, a deal was created in which a new type of engine concept would carry the name Daimler-Mercedes. Later that year Mr. Jelinek ordered 36 of these cars for a total price of 550,000 Goldmarks. However, the name "Mercedes" was first registered as a brand name in 1902. The first "Mercedes-Benz" brand name vehicles appeared in 1926, after Gottlieb Daimler and Carl Benz merged their two car companies into one (Daimler AG 2010).

Mercedes-Benz vehicles are manufactured in several countries. Besides Germany, this includes Argentina, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Spain, South Africa, South Korea and Thailand, Turkey, UK, USA and Vietnam. This alone shows that Mercedes-Benz is a global brand, which is present worldwide (Daimler AG 2010).

In its recent history, the Mercedes-Benz brand switched from being owned by Daimler-Benz, to being a division of Daimler AG. Although Carl Benz may have contributed the popular name "Benz" to their brand, it was through Gottlieb Daimler's sons that the famous Mercedes-Benz star was added as a brand symbol. The star is intended to symbolize universal motorization "on land, in water and in the air". Over the years the symbol has changed a

bit in its design, but it has always included the star. Mercedes-Benz strives to be perceived as a brand that produces high quality goods. This can be seen in its motto: “The best or nothing” and in this statement made by the company: “a Mercedes needs to have surfaces that reflect emotion, intellect, and execution. A Mercedes should be premium, in every segment.” It seems that Mercedes-Benz has achieved this goal on an international level and that the brand may be associated with high quality cars worldwide. One can surely say that the brand has internationally gained a reputation for producing high quality and durable products. Furthermore, Mercedes may be viewed as a pioneer or a leader in innovation by many. Having invented such things as the first internal combustion engine, the honeycomb radiator, the safety belt, the air bag and other safety systems, this comes to no surprise (Daimler AG 2010).

### 3 CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND SIMILIRIATIES IN BRAND PERCEPTION BETWEEN GERMAN AND AMERICAN CULTURES IN THE CASE OF MERCEDES-BENZ

The practical part of the thesis includes the analysis of the cross-cultural perception of Mercedes-Benz. The comparison was conducted between Germans and Americans based on the cross-cultural brand perception survey (See Appendix 1). The survey was aimed to find and compare the cross-cultural differences in brand perception of Mercedes Benz between Germany and the USA. Therefore, the survey was given to people in both Germany and the United States.

The survey consists of general questions in the beginning that asks for the nationality, age, gender, and job/occupation. Then there are 12 questions related to the Mercedes-Benz brand itself (see Appendix 1). Since especially factors such as gender and occupation can affect brand perception, these were taken into account when making the comparison. In addition to this, the surveyed people were asked if they own a car and if yes, what kind. This question was asked, since it is not just important to analyze how people living in a certain country perceive Mercedes as a brand, but also what kind of cars they actually drive. This will help give some insight into the taste preference of the countries. Furthermore, it will serve as a cross reference to see if the answers they have given us really match up with what they actually drive. For instance question twelve checks if people prefer cars from their own country or foreign cars. We are able to see if although people may prefer cars from their own country they are still driving foreign cars or vice versa.

The first question helps to determine what the most important influencing factors for the customer are, when purchasing a car (See Appendix 1 for Questions). The second question defines what the most important features of a car are for them. The third question helps to determine what car model is the most popular in the given country. For this the author has chosen two popular American car brands and two popular German car brands, as well as a third option if the consumer prefers another non stated brand. This question is not only de-

signed to determine, which brand is the most popular for the questioned country, but also to determine if people prefer cars from their own country. The fourth is to show how Mercedes Benz ranks overall as a car in the surveyed country. The fifth question further supports the fourth question, by clarifying if Mercedes Benz is viewed positively in respect to quality, price and design. Question number six on the authors survey, is designed to give a little more insight into how the brand is perceived, but it is actually question number seven, which plays a huge role in the clarification of how consumers view the brand. With thirteen words and only four, which can be selected to describe Mercedes-Benz as a brand, we really get to see what the consumer of the surveyed country thinks are the strongest positive features of Mercedes-Benz. The eighth question determines if consumers view brands as important and if they do then they must state in the ninth question for what reasons. This helps us determine why people may prefer brands over non brand products. Question ten determines if customers stick to only one brand, or if they will purchase more than just one brand of car and question eleven clarifies for what reasons they would only purchase one car brand. In the author's opinion, this is also an important question since it helps to determine if consumers of the surveyed country tend to stick to only one car brand due to financial or other reasons. Question number twelve is to check if the surveyed country tends to prefer car brands from their own country. This question will also help to determine if the perception of Mercedes-Benz is influenced through patriotism in the USA or Germany. Before the survey was given to Germans, it was translated into German so that they could understand the questions better and therefore give more precise and proper answers.

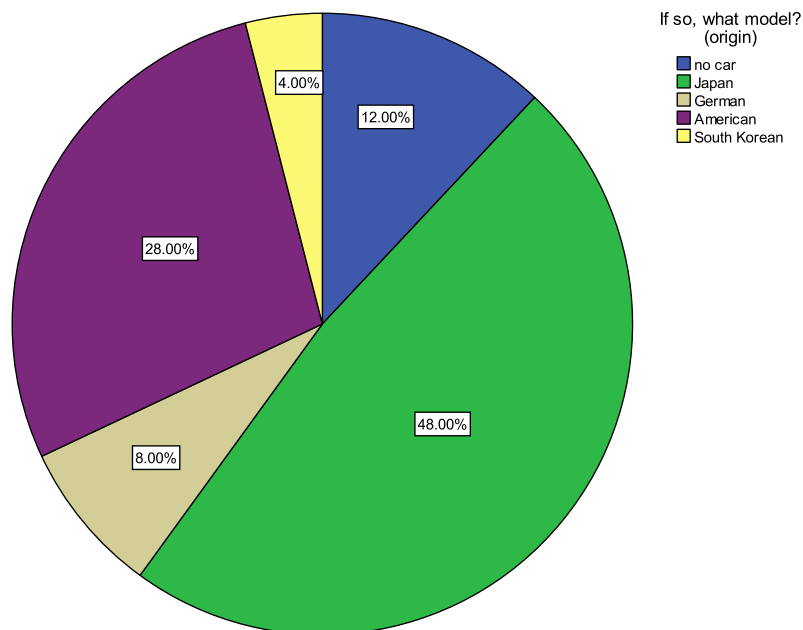
In the work a quantitative research method was used. It measured attitudes, opinion and behavior of both Germans and Americans. All the respondents were asked the same questions (See Appendix 1). In total, 59 people were surveyed (34Germans and 25Americans). They were randomly chosen people as well as of different ages. The author emailed the survey and received answers back from some people in the USA. After receiving the answers from both Germans and Americans, analysis of each answer and comparison of cross-cultural brand perception were conducted. The program "SPSS" was used in order to analyze the data, in a

detailed and professional manner. The results were compared and the differences in cross-cultural brand perception were discussed.

### 3.1 Particularities of Mercedes Benz brand perception in the USA

#### Category 1: Preferred brands of cars vs. driven ones

##### *Cars driven by Americans*



As can be seen above, 48% of the Americans surveyed own a Japanese car. This is followed by American cars, with 28% owning one. Only 8% stated that they drive German cars, which is not very much. It can be concluded that Japanese cars are very popular, or commonly driven in the USA. Since we asked in the survey exactly what cars they drive, one can take this analysis further by analyzing what brands they are driving. The biggest groups are



made up of people who own a Honda, Subaru, Ford and people with no car. These four groups each make up 12% of the total. The second biggest groups are those who own a VW, Mitsubishi, or Nissan. Those three brands each make up 8% of the total. The other seven brands only make up 4% each of the total, with only one person owning a car belonging to each group. We can see that out of the 25 surveyed Americans, none own a Mercedes-Benz. However, there are 2 VW owners, who make up the group of people that own a German car.

#### *Cars driven by American males*

50% of the American males drive cars from Japan. The second biggest group is those who drive American cars (30%), followed by those who do not own a car (20%). Thus, we can conclude that Japanese cars are very popular with American males.

#### *Cars driven by American females*

The American females surveyed drive similar cars to their male counterparts. The two biggest groups are Japanese (46.7%) cars and American cars (26.7%). However, there are two females who own German cars and one who owns a South Korean car. Overall these results show that Japanese cars are also very popular with American females.

#### *Cars driven by American students*

Interestingly, the American students who own a car own a Japanese car. This may be due to Japanese cars being available at lower prices than most others. The majority of American students own a Honda, which makes up 40% of the total. This is followed by Nissan owners, with a group that makes up 20%. In addition to this, 40% stated that they do not own a car.

#### *Car brand preference for Americans*

The majority of the American who were surveyed would have chosen a different car brand besides Mercedes-Benz, Ford, BMW or Chevrolet. None of the Americans who were sur-

veyed chose Chevrolet and the lowest amount of people chose Mercedes-Benz. Furthermore, according to the results, BMW seems to be more popular than Mercedes-Benz in the USA (see Appendix 5).

**American males:**

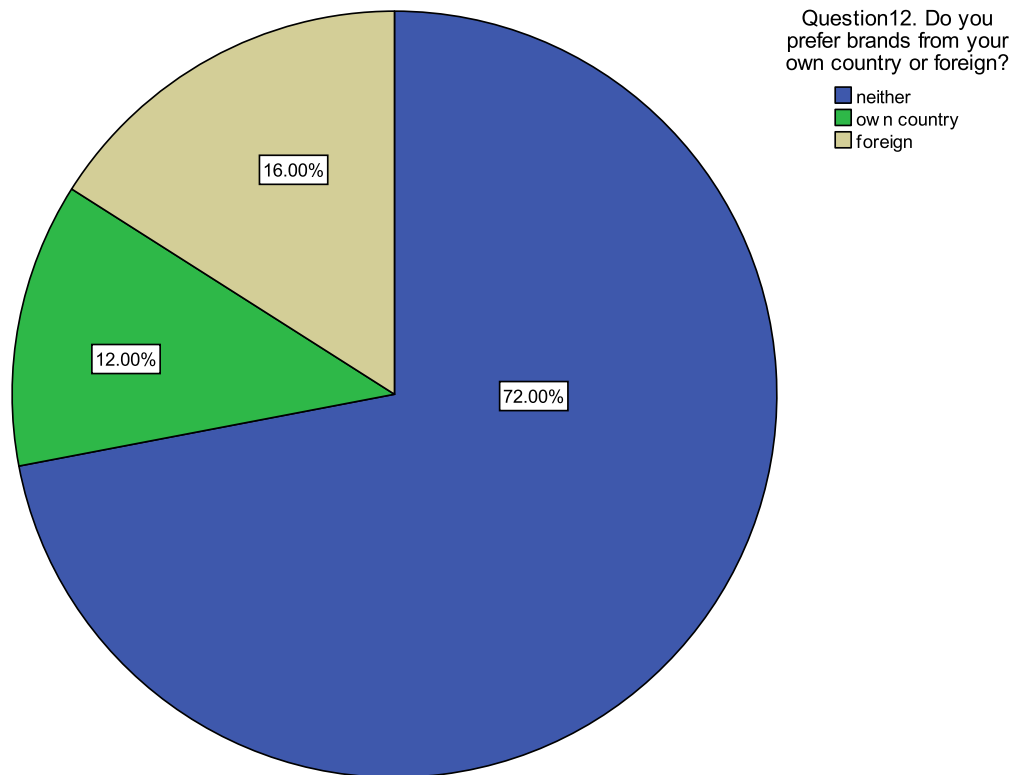
Although the majority of American males surveyed would have picked a different car brand beside the options that were given, a large percentage would prefer a BMW. This shows that also for American males, BMW is preferred over Mercedes-Benz (see Appendix 5).

**American Females:**

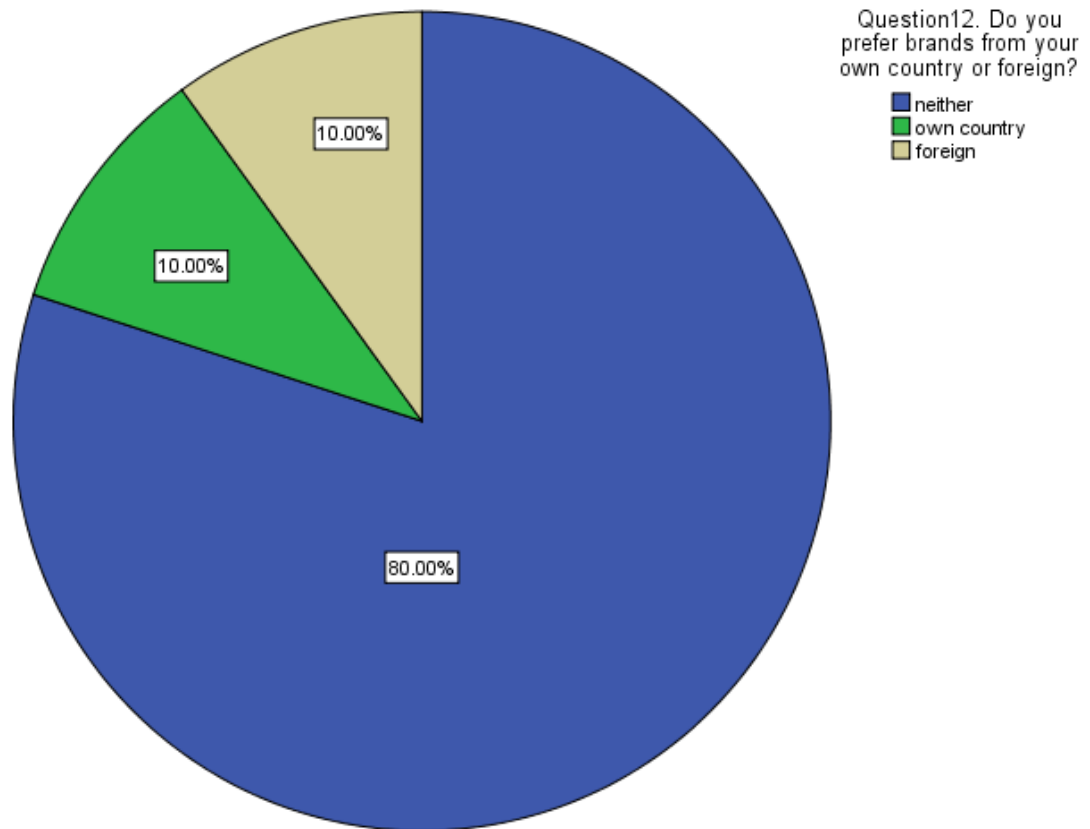
The American females who were surveyed were similar to the men in that the majority of both would prefer a different car brand than the options given. Furthermore, a large percentage would prefer a Ford or a BMW (see Appendix 5).

*Country of origin preference for Americans*

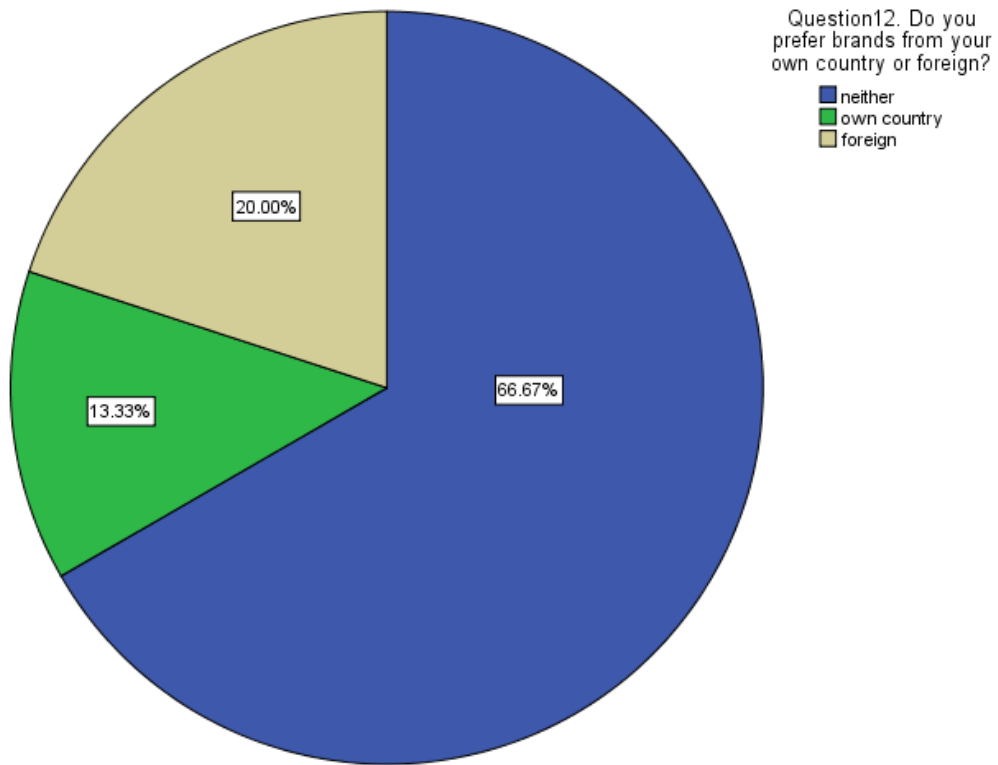
**Americans Total:**



The majority of Americans who were surveyed said that they did not prefer brands from their own country or foreign ones. Furthermore, the amount of people who preferred brands from foreign countries was bigger than the amount that stated they prefer brands from their own.

**American Males:**

80% of the American males who were surveyed said that they neither prefer brands from their own or foreign countries. Out of the 10 people who were surveyed, only 1 stated that he prefers brands from his own country and 1 that he prefers brands from foreign countries. Thus, it can be said that American males do not care whether a brand is foreign or not.

**American Females:**

Although most of the American females who were surveyed said that they do not prefer brands from their own country or foreign countries, more people prefer brands from foreign countries than their own.

## Category 2: Factors considered when buying a car

### *Influence of factors for Americans*

Out of the 25 Americans who were surveyed 17 said they would consider taste when purchasing a car. With this making up 68% of the total it shows that taste plays an important factor for Americans when purchasing a car. Only 8% stated they would consider advertisement when purchasing a car. This is a very small amount of people. However, even though people may not want to let advertisement influence them, it still can play a huge role, especially since consumers subconsciously remember brands through advertisement. As with advertisement, also very few American stated they would consider recommendations from friends or relatives when purchasing a car. However, with 36%, more people said they would take this factor into consideration. Out of the 25 surveyed Americans, 10 said they would take innovation into consideration when purchasing a car. Although it is only 40%, it still seems to be an important factor, since more people said they would consider innovation, than advertisement or recommendations. When asked if they would consider other factor, approximately 50% of the American said yes. These could for example be such factors as price, quality, reputation or experience. In the next questions we will go through such factors in more detail (see Appendix 3).

### **American Males:**

Out of the 10 American males who were surveyed 8 stated they would consider taste when buying a car. This means that 80% chose this option, making it the factor that was considered most by the American males. This is followed by innovation, which 60% said they would consider when buying a new car. Recommendations and other factors both were selected by 30% of the American males. The factor which was chosen by the least amount of people is advertisement. Overall this shows that taste is the most important factor for American males, when purchasing a car (see Appendix 3).

### **American Females:**

The largest amount of American females stated that they would consider taste and other factors. 60% of the females selected these two options. This was followed by recommendations, which was selected by 40%. Only 26.7% of said they would consider recommendations from friends and relatives when buying a car. This is considerably low in comparison to the amount of males who selected this option. None of the American females said they would consider advertisement when purchasing a car (see Appendix 3).

### Category 3: Ranking of how important certain factors are vs. how some of these factors are rated for Mercedes-Benz

#### *Importance of certain car attributes for Americans*

For the surveyed Americans quality was most important, followed by price, then design, brand and the least important for them was the country of origin. This shows that Americans are less interested in the country of origin and are mostly interested in price and quality. However, quality is clearly the most important factor for them (see Appendix 4).

### **American Males:**

Quality is the most important and country of origin the least important. Design was voted slightly more important than brand. Many people rated brand 4th important, while one person said that design is 2nd in importance (see Appendix 4).

### **American Females:**

The results of the American females are very close to the results of their male counterparts. The order of importance is identical to that of the American males and the same as the result for the total of the Americans (see Appendix 4).

*Rating of attributes of Mercedes-Benz by Americans*

Quality:

When asked to rank the quality of Mercedes as low, average or high, 96% of the Americans surveyed rated it high. Only one person rated the quality average. This shows that Americans do not think that Mercedes produces low quality cars (see Appendix 7).

Price:

The majority of the Americans rated the price of Mercedes as high. However, 44% of the Americans rated the price as very high, while one person rated it as reasonable. None of the people surveyed believed the price to be low. This shows that Americans believe that Mercedes is a quite expensive brand (see Appendix 7).

Design:

36% of the Americans believe that the design of Mercedes cars is excellent, while 44% of the people think it is good. The lowest rating that Mercedes received was average with 20% selecting this option. This shows that overall the design of Mercedes cars is well received by Americans (see Appendix 7).

**American Males:**

Quality:

When asked to give their opinion about the quality of Mercedes-Benz all American males answered that they think it is high. This shows that they all agree that Mercedes produces high quality cars (see Appendix 7).

Price:

40% of the American males who were surveyed think that the price of a Mercedes car is very high, while 60% believe it is just high. This means they consider Mercedes to be an expensive car brand (see Appendix 7).



Design:

When the American males were asked to give their opinion about the design of Mercedes cars, the majority rated it to be good. However, a larger amount rated it to be average than excellent. This means that overall the American males think the design is just good (see Appendix 7).

**American Females:**

Quality:

The majority of American females think that the quality of Mercedes is high, however one person believes that the quality is only average. This means that the American males assessed the quality of the brand higher than their female counterparts (see Appendix 7).

Price:

When asked about the price of Mercedes cars the majority of American females believed it to be high or very high. Only one person considered it to be reasonable. This shows that they view Mercedes as an expensive brand (see Appendix 7).

Design:

53.3% of the American females think that the design of Mercedes is excellent. Only 46.7% felt that design should be rated lower. Only 20% of the total rated the design of Mercedes average and none low. This shows that the design of Mercedes cars is well received by the female population in the USA (see Appendix 7).

#### Category 4: Assessment of Mercedes-Benz and the brands strongest qualities

##### *The grading of Mercedes by Americans*

For question 4 the surveyed were asked to assess Mercedes by grading it from -3 to +3. The majority of Americans ranked Mercedes either +2 or +3. Very few gave the brand a lower grade and none of the surveyed Americans gave it a negative one. In total, 88% of the surveyed Americans gave the brand a +3 or +2 grading. This shows that Americans think Mercedes produces very good cars (see Appendix 6).

##### **American Males:**

The majority of male Americans who were surveyed gave Mercedes a +2 as a brand, however there were also 4 people who ranked the brand as +3. None of the American males surveyed rated Mercedes lower than +1. This shows that the male portion feels that the car brand is very good (see Appendix 6).

##### **American Females:**

Most American females ranked Mercedes as +3. In addition to this, 6 people gave the brand a +2, which is still very good. None of the surveyed gave Mercedes a negative grade, but 2 people did assess the brand as 0 (see Appendix 6).

##### *The perception of Mercedes for Americans*

All of the Americans who were asked if they thought that Mercedes is famous said yes. This shows that Mercedes-Benz is a well-known brand in the USA. 64% of the Americans surveyed believes that Mercedes is a demanded brand, while 36% do not. This shows that Mercedes may be a very thought after brand in the USA. 16 of the Americans who were surveyed stated that they believe Mercedes is a brand with perspective on the car market. This shows that the majority views Mercedes as a very competent brand, which knows what it is doing. Out of the 25 Americans who were surveyed only one person said that she believes Mercedes is necessary on the car market. This shows how easily Mercedes could be replaced by

other car brands and that it is important for Mercedes to be competitive in the American market. 2 of the 25 Americans who were surveyed felt that Mercedes is the best on the car market. The rest of the people did not feel the same way (see Appendix 8).

#### **American Males:**

All of the American males who were surveyed said that they think Mercedes is famous on the car market. This statement was the most frequently agreed to out of the 5. The second most commonly agreed to statements were that Mercedes is demanded on the car market and has perspective. None of the American males agreed that Mercedes is necessary on the car market or the best (see Appendix 8).

#### **American Females:**

All of the American females who were surveyed agreed that Mercedes is famous or popular on the car market. This was also the most agreed to statement for them. As with the males, the second most agreed to statements for the females were that Mercedes is demanded on the car market and that it has perspective. However, the percentage was 10% less than with the males for both of these. In addition to this, 1 American female agreed that Mercedes is necessary and 2 that it is the best (see Appendix 8).

#### *The four most perceived characteristics of Mercedes by Americans*

The four most frequently selected words used by Americans to describe Mercedes-Benz were luxurious, successful, sophisticated and innovative. This means that the majority of Americans think that Mercedes is a high class brand that continually brings new ideas to the market and is successful (see Appendix 9).

**American Males:**

The majority of the American males who were surveyed felt that Mercedes is luxurious, successful and traditional. This is similar to the overall results for Americans in that it includes the words luxurious and successful. However, traditional was not one of the most selected words in the overall results. This shows that the males may also feel that the brand Mercedes brings some traditions with it on the car market, or perhaps they think that the brand is a bit old fashioned (see Appendix 9).

**American Females:**

The most common words selected by the American females to describe Mercedes were luxurious, successful and sophisticated. These words are the same as the ones used in the overall results for the Americans. The only word that is missing from this list is innovative (see Appendix 9).

Category 5: Importance of a brand*The importance of a brand for Americans*

When asked if a brand is important for them, 52% of the Americans surveyed said yes. Since this is approximately half, one can say that brand names are important to about half of all Americans (see Appendix 10).

**American Males:**

As for the American males, a brand does seem to be important to them. This can be seen in that 60% said that a brand is indeed important to them (see Appendix 10).

**American Females:**

Although American females were almost evenly divided between those who do feel a brand is important to them and those that do not, the majority of them said that it is not. Just like

in the overall results, one can say a brand is important to approximately half of all American females (see Appendix 10).

*The reasons a brand is important for Americans*

The majority of the Americans to whom a brand is important, feel that it is important due to quality. This can be seen in that twelve people selected this factor out of the four given. This is followed by style, which was the second most selected factor for Americans (see Appendix 11).

**American Males:**

For American males quality was also the main factor for why a brand is important to them. This was closely followed by style, which only one person less selected. Status and way of life were both selected by only one person. This shows that quality is definitely the main reason why an American male would choose one brand product over another product (see Appendix 11).

**American Females:**

Quality was the most frequently given reason for why a brand is important to American females. Style was the second most selected reason for them. Only one female said that a brand is important to them due to status and two said due to their way of life. Overall it can be concluded that also for American females quality is the main reason why brand products are important to them (see Appendix 11).

*The dependence on one brand by Americans*

Out of the 25 Americans who were surveyed only one answered yes to question 10. This means that only 4% of the surveyed Americans are liable to just one brand. This is a very small amount and shows that the majority of Americans do not depend on only one brand. Thus, a brand which wishes to survive in the USA should be very competitive (see Appendix 12).

**American Males:**

The one surveyed American who answered yes to the answer is a male. However, since this one person only makes up 10% of all of the American males surveyed, we can assume that most males in the USA do not depend on only one brand. This means that American males will not rely on only one brand, but perhaps they may rely on several. In any case it would pay off for a brand to be competitive on the market (see Appendix 12).

**American Females:**

All of the American females who were surveyed stated that they are not liable to only one brand. However, this does not mean that they do not have brand preferences, but just that they do not depend on only one brand (see Appendix 12).

*The reasons one brand is depended on by Americans*

The majority of the Americans who were surveyed stated that they are not liable to only one brand. The American who said that he is, explained that it the entire family relies on a certain brand since a long time ago. Thus, he has been taught from a young age that a certain brand is very good (see Appendix 13).

**American Males:**

Most of the American males are not liable to just one brand. However, 1 out of the 10 who were surveyed stated that he is liable to just one brand. Furthermore, he explained that the reason for this is that a certain car brand has been in the family for many years and the entire family trusts in this brand (see Appendix 13).

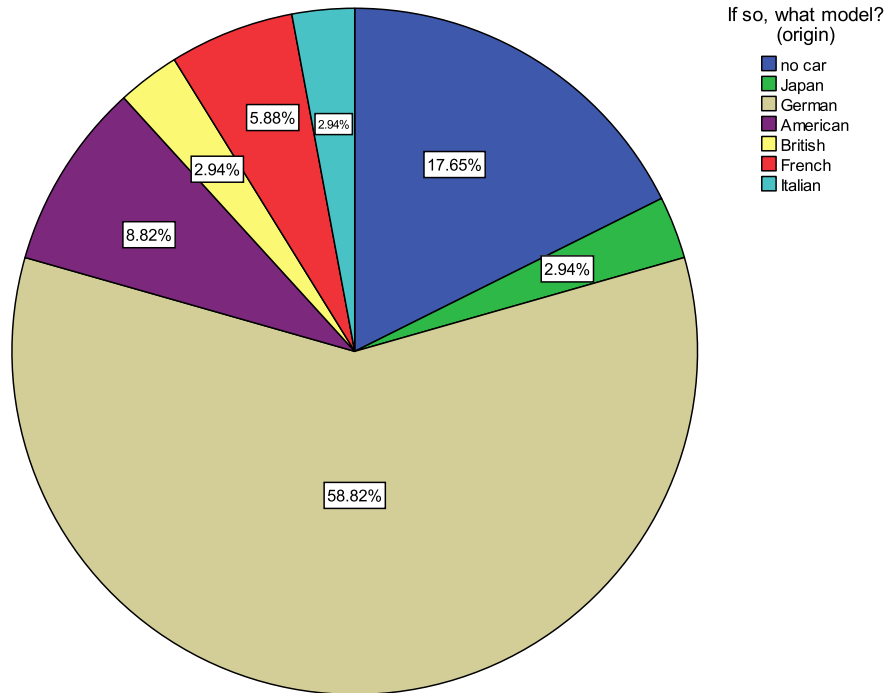
**American Females:**

All of the American females who were surveyed said that they are not liable to just one brand. This shows that there are very many good products and brands on the American market, thus few people depend on only one brand (see Appendix 13).

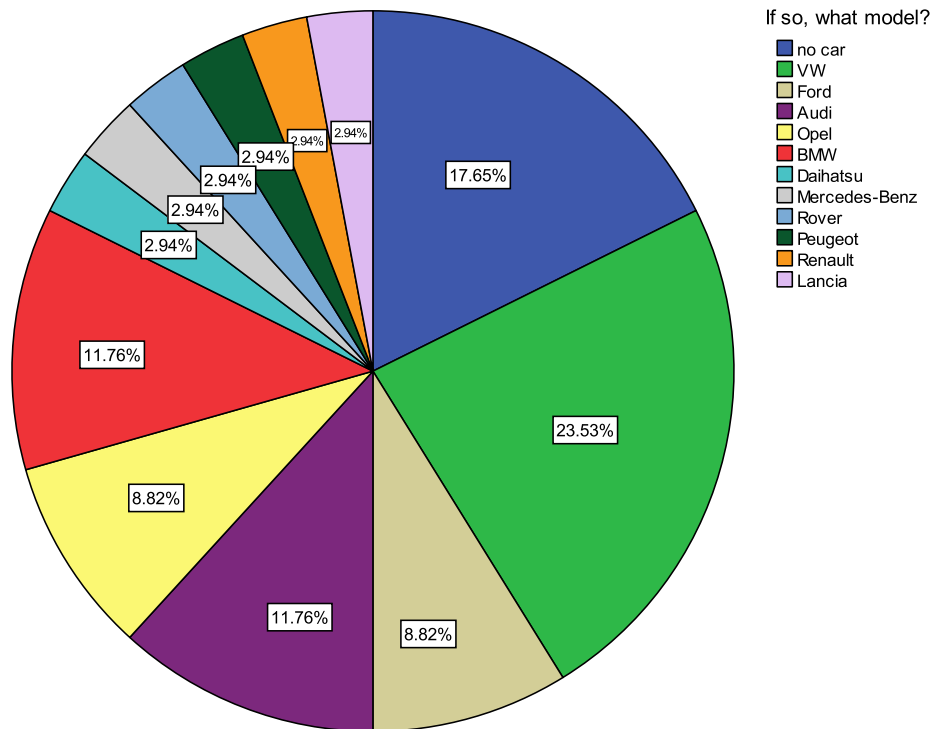
### 3.2 Particularities of Mercedes Benz perception in Germany

#### Category 1: Preferred brands of cars vs. driven ones

##### *Cars driven by Germans*

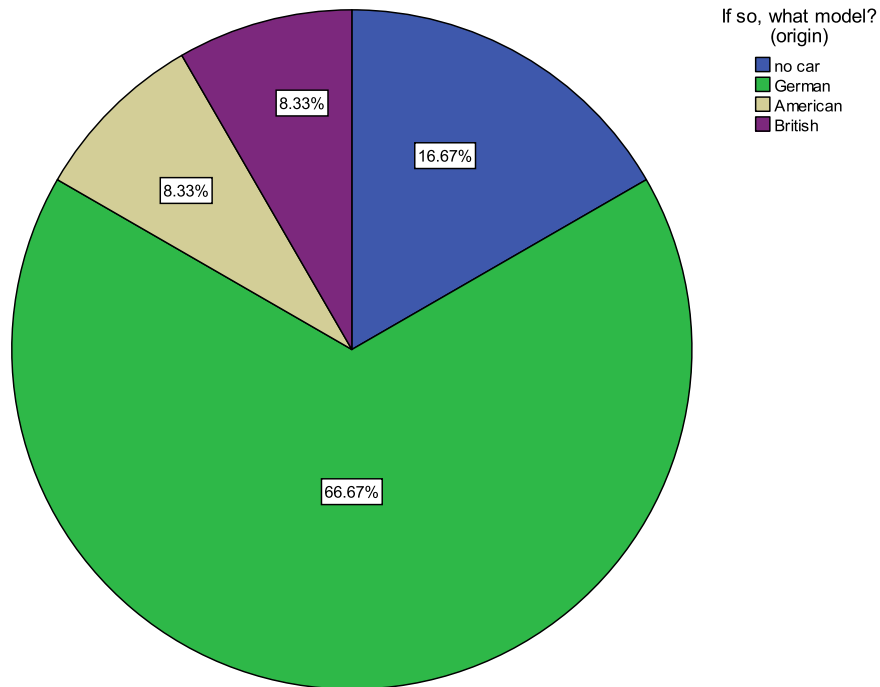


As depicted above, 58.82% of the Germans surveyed, drive a German car. This makes up the largest group for cars by country of origin, driven by the surveyed Germans. There is also a large group of Germans who do not own a car (17.65%). The third largest group is those who own an American car (8.82%). They also drive cars from other European countries, which together make up approximately 10% of the total. Interesting to note is that the amount of people who own a Japanese car is very low, with only one person out of the 34 surveyed Germans owning a Japanese car.



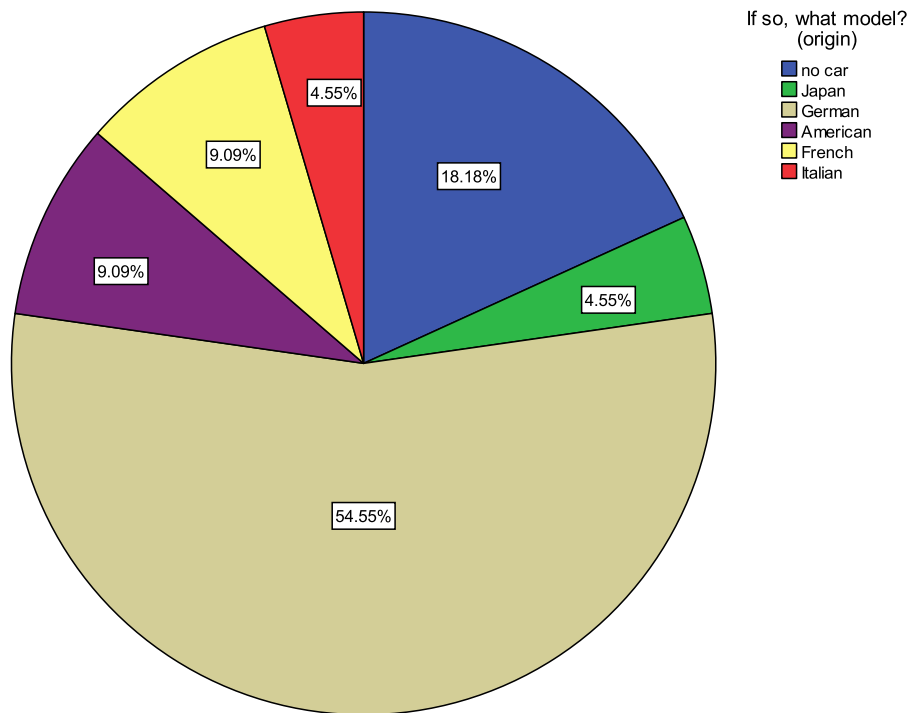
Above the exact car brands driven by the surveyed Germans can be seen. The biggest group is made up by people who own a VW. This is followed by a large group of people who do not own a car. There are also large groups of people who own an Audi or BMW, followed by smaller groups of people who own a Ford or Opel car. In addition to this there are six people who own car brands that others did not. One of these brands is Mercedes-Benz, which out of all the people surveyed, only one German owns.



*Cars driven by German males*

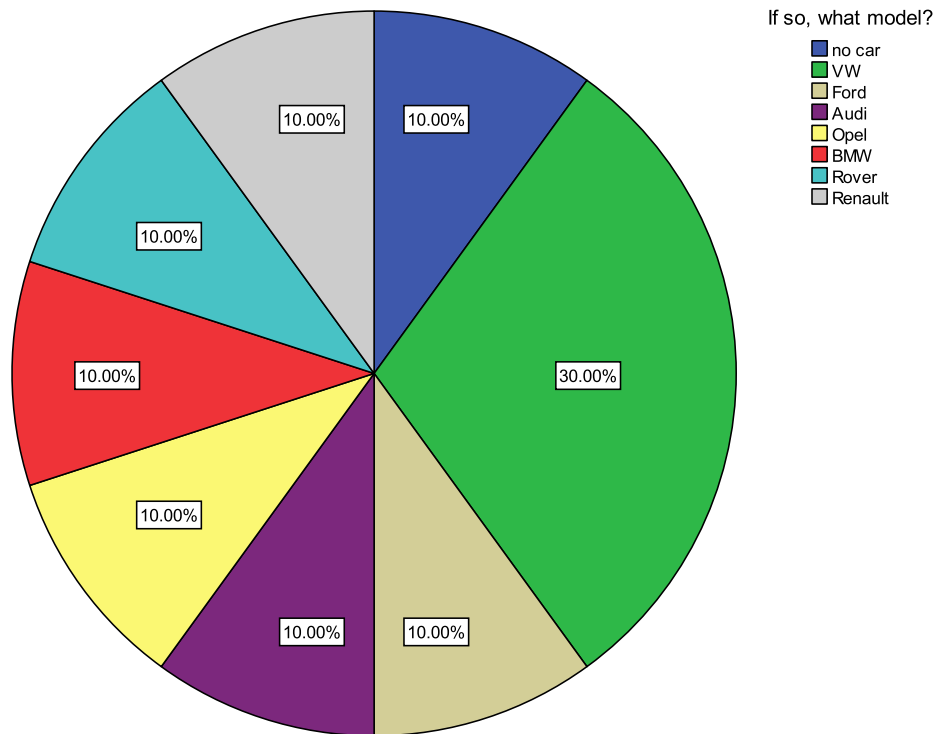
The majority of German males surveyed, own a German car (66.67%). This was followed by a group of people who do not own a car. There are also two minor groups, one being those who own an American car and the other those who own a British car. These two groups each consist of one person owning a car from the stated countries.

*Cars driven by German females*



The largest amount of the surveyed German females drives German cars (54.55%). However, in comparison to their male counterparts, the German females drive cars from a larger variety of countries. The second biggest portion for is made up of those who do not own a car (18.18%). Two other groups of considerable size are those who drive French cars and those who drive American cars. These are made up of 2 people each.

### *Cars driven by German students*



As shown in the pie chart above, the largest amount of the German students who were surveyed, own a German car. This group makes up 60% of the total for German students. In addition to this, there is one person who owns an American car, one who owns a British car, one who owns a French car and one person who does not own a car at all. Interesting to note is that although German cars are not cheap in Germany either, many students still drive them. The largest amount is VW owners. This group is the largest with three people having stated that they own a VW.

### *Car brand preference for Germans*

A large percentage of the German who were surveyed said they would prefer another car brand. This was followed by BMW and then Mercedes. None of the surveyed Germans selected Chevrolet and very few Ford. This may mean that American cars are not very popular in Germany. Furthermore, they seem to prefer BMW over Mercedes (see Appendix 5).

**German Males:**

As shown in the bar chart above, the majority of German males would have selected another car model. Mercedes was the second most selected option for them followed by BMW. None of the German males would prefer a Ford or Chevrolet (see Appendix 5).

**German Females:**

The German women would mostly prefer another car model than those they were able to choose from. BMW scored second highest and Ford third highest. However, unlike the German males very few German females selected Mercedes-Benz (see Appendix 5).

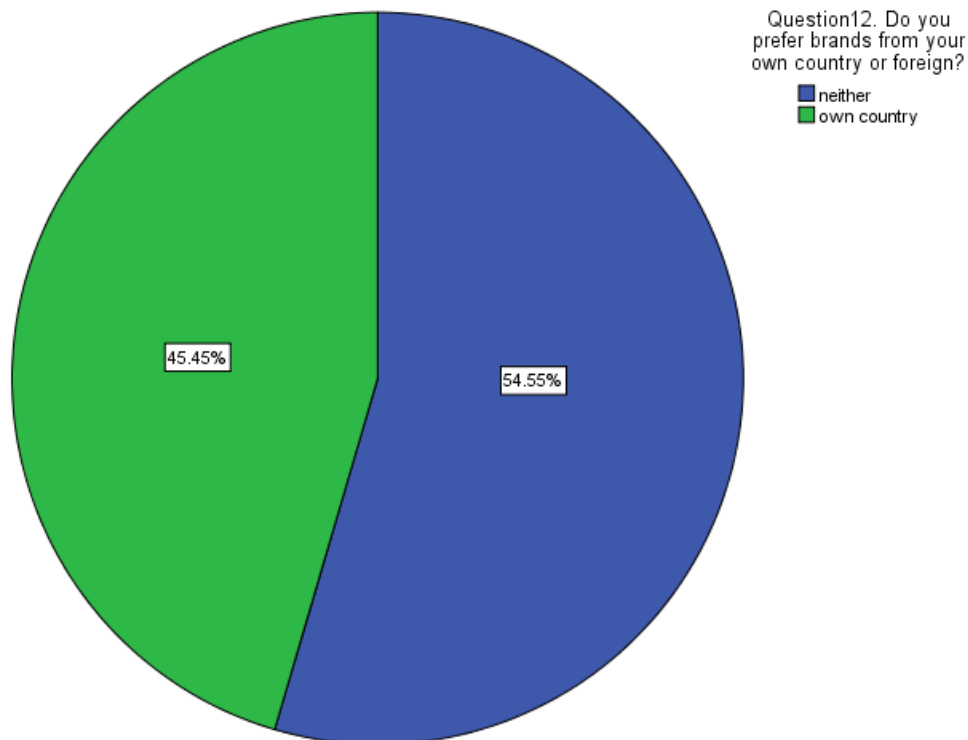
*Country of origin preference for Germans***Germans Total:**

The majority of the Germans (61.76%) who were surveyed stated that they prefer brands from their own country. However, 38.2% said that they do not prefer brands from their own country or foreign countries. None said that they prefer brands from foreign countries.

**German Males:**

Out of the 12 German males who were surveyed, only one stated that they do not prefer brands from their own country or foreign countries, while the rest said they prefer ones from Germany. This could mean that males from that country would rather buy brands and products from their own country. Perhaps, they even associate products from their country with high quality or they are just patriotic.

### German Females:



German females seem to be divided between those who prefer brands from their own country and those that do not prefer foreign brands or brands from Germany. However, 54.5% of them said that they do not prefer either one, while 45.5% stated that they prefer German brands. No one said that they prefer foreign brands.

### Category 2: Factors considered when buying a car

#### *The influence of factors for Germans*

When asked if they would consider taste when purchasing a car, 28 out of the 34 Germans who were asked, said yes. This means that 82.4% of them would consider this factor, making it very important just as with the Americans who were surveyed. When asked if they would take advertisement into consideration when purchasing a car, only 3 people said yes. This makes advertisement one of the less deciding factors for the average German who is

purchasing a car. 41.2% of the Germans who were surveyed said they would consider recommendations from relatives or friends when purchasing a car. When asked if they would consider innovation when purchasing a car, only 32.4% said they would. This is considerably low, but only about 8% lower than the amount of Americans that said they would take this factor into consideration. Out of the 34 Germans who were surveyed, 13 said they would consider other factors when purchasing a car. This number also seems to be very low, since other factors could be anything such as quality, experience, price etc. (see Appendix 3).

**German Males:**

83.3% of the German males who were surveyed said that they would consider taste when purchasing a car. The second most selected factors were recommendations by friends and relatives, as well as innovation. 41.7% of them said they would consider these factors. 4 out of the 12 males said they would consider other factors and only 2 said they would consider advertisement (see Appendix 3).

**German Females:**

81.8% of the German females who were surveyed said they would consider taste when purchasing a car, making this the most selected factor for them. Recommendations from friends and relatives and other were the second most selected options. 40.9% of the German females chose these factors. The third most selected option for them was innovation, with 6 out of the 22 people selecting this reason. The least selected factor was advertisement (see Appendix 3).

Category 3: Ranking of how important certain factors are vs how some of these factors are rated for Mercedes-Benz

*The importance of certain car attributes for Germans*

The results for the surveyed Germans are very similar to those of the surveyed Americans, regarding question 2. The surveyed were asked to rank the factors from least to most important. They did so by using 1 for most important, 2 for important, 3 for average, 4 for less important and 5 for least important. The order of the importance is the same, with quality being the most important, price important, design average, brand less important and country of origin least important. However, with the Americans it is clear that quality is the most important. On the other hand, with the Germans price and quality is almost equally important (see Appendix 4).

**German Females:**

According to the German males, Quality is the most important, price important, brand average, design less important and the country of origin is the least important. This is different from the results of all Germans in that brand and design have traded importance for German males alone (see Appendix 4).

**German Females:**

The results for German females are the same as those of all Germans together. For them quality is the most important, price important, design average, brand less important and the country of origin is the least important (see Appendix 4).

*The rating of attributes of Mercedes-Benz by Germans*

Quality:

When asked their opinion about the quality of Mercedes cars, 91.2% of the Germans stated it is high. Only 8.8% believed it to be average. This shows that most Germans view Mercedes as a brand with high quality (see Appendix 7).

Price:

44.1% of the surveyed Germans think that the price of a Mercedes car is very high, while the majority felt it to be high. This shows that even in Germany, Mercedes is viewed as a very expensive brand (see Appendix 7).

Design:

The majority of the Germans who were surveyed feel that the design of Mercedes cars is good. The second most selected option was average, with 32.4% of them choosing this option. Only 1 out of the 34 Germans who were surveyed rated the design low and 1 rated the design excellent (see Appendix 7).

**German Males:**

Quality:

Most of the German males who were surveyed think that the quality of a Mercedes car is high. There is however one person who feels that it is average (see Appendix 7).

Price:

When it comes it to the price, half of the German males think it is high and the other half feel that it is very high (see Appendix 7).

Design:

The majority of the German males rated the design of Mercedes cars as good. None of them rated the design as low or excellent. Thus, one can say that not very many Germans feel that the design is outstanding (see Appendix 7).



### **German Females:**

#### Quality:

Twenty of the German females who were surveyed think the quality of Mercedes cars is high. In addition to this, there are two people who are of the opinion that the quality is average (see Appendix 7).

#### Price:

The majority of the German females who were surveyed think that the price of a Mercedes car is high. This however means that German females don't think that a Mercedes car is as expensive as their male counterparts (see Appendix 7).

#### Design:

59.1% of the German females who were surveyed think that the design of a Mercedes car is good. Only one person believes it to be excellent. However, 31.8% rated it as just average and one person even as low (see Appendix 7).

### Category 4: Assessment of Mercedes-Benz and the brands strongest qualities

#### *The grading of Mercedes by Germans*

As can be seen in the chart above 41.2% of the Germans who were surveyed assessed Mercedes as +2. However, 47.1% rated the brand lower. The majority of these 47.1% consist of people who ranked Mercedes as +1, but there were even three people who rated the brand -1 (see Appendix 6).

### **German Males:**

A large amount of the German males who were surveyed ranked Mercedes as +2. Another grade that was given quite often was +1 and one person even gave the brand a -1 (see Appendix 6).

### **German Females:**

The majority of the German females assessed the brand as +2. There was also a large amount of people who gave the brand a +1 and the brand was assessed as -1 by two German females (see Appendix 6).

#### *The perception of Mercedes for Germans*

The majority of the Germans who were surveyed think that Mercedes is a popular and famous brand on the car market. When asked if they think that Mercedes is demanded on the car market, most of the Germans said yes. However, 38.2% do not think this is the case. Overall it can be said that Germans think that Mercedes is demanded on the market. As with the Americans, the majority of the Germans who were surveyed believe that Mercedes has a perspective on the car market. This shows that Mercedes comes across as very competent on the German car market. Out of the 34 Germans who were surveyed 6 people said that they believe Mercedes is necessary on the car market. These 6 people make up 17.6% of the Germans surveyed. This shows that most people in Germany do not feel that Mercedes is necessary on the car market. 3 out of the 34 Germans, who were surveyed, believe that Mercedes is the best on the car market. Since the percentage who believe this is so small and Mercedes received overall good assessments by the same people in question 4, it can be assumed that the German car market is very competitive (see Appendix 8).

### **German Males:**

As with the American males, all German males agreed to the statement that Mercedes is popular or famous on the car market. This was also the most agreed to statement by them. The second most agreed to statements are that Mercedes is demanded and has perspective on the car market. Furthermore, 3 out of the 12 German males who were surveyed agreed to the statement that Mercedes is necessary on the car market and 2 agreed that it is the best (see Appendix 8).

### **German Females:**

Unlike the males, not all of the German females agreed with the statement that Mercedes is popular or famous on the car market. 1 out of the 22 German females who were surveyed did not agree with this statement. In addition to this, the statements that Mercedes is demanded on the car market and that Mercedes has perspective were the second most agreed to statements. 3 out of the 22 females also agreed with the statement that Mercedes is necessary on the car market and 1 agreed that it is the best (see Appendix 8).

#### *The four most perceived characteristics of Mercedes by Germans*

The four words that were used the most by the Germans to describe Mercedes-Benz were successful, luxurious, traditional and reliable. This shows that Mercedes has a luxurious image in Germany and that the brand is or is believed to be successful. Furthermore, unlike with the Americans, the Germans have chosen the two words traditional and reliable to describe Mercedes. This means that the brand may have an old fashioned image in Germany but that people believe it is a brand that can be counted on (see Appendix 9).

### **German Males:**

The four words most frequently used by German males were the same as in the total result for the Germans. These words are luxurious, successful, reliable and traditional (see Appendix 9).

### **German Females:**

As with the males the four most used words by the German females were luxurious, successful, traditional and reliable. However, a large percentage of German females also used the word competent to describe Mercedes (see Appendix 9).

### Category 5: Importance of a brand

#### *The importance of a brand for Germans*

When asked if a brand is important to them, exactly 50% of the Germans surveyed said yes and the other half said no. Thus, one can say half of all Germans feel that a brand is important (see Appendix 10).

#### **German Males:**

Although half of all Germans may feel that a brand is important to them, it seems to be very important to German males. This can be seen in that 83.3% of them said that it is indeed important (see Appendix 10).

#### **German Females:**

68.2% of the German females who were asked if a brand is important for them said no. This shows that a brand seems to be more important to German males than females (see Appendix 10).

#### *The reasons a brand is important for Germans*

Just as with the Americans surveyed, the main reason why a brand is important to Germans is due to quality. Style was also the second most given reason by them (see Appendix 11).

#### **German Males:**

58.3% of all German males stated that a brand is important to them due to quality. The second most given reason was style (see Appendix 11).

#### **German Females:**

For the German females, quality was the main reason given for why a brand is important to them. Style is the second most selected reason and with only one person less choosing it, it is very close behind quality (see Appendix 11).

*The dependence on one brand by Germans*

5.9% of the Germans who were asked if they are liable to only one brand answered yes. This is a very small numbers and shows that most people in Germany do not depend on only one brand (see Appendix 12).

**German Males:**

None of the German males who were asked if they are liable to only one brand answered yes. This shows that most German men do not depend only on one brand (see Appendix 12).

**German Females:**

Only 9.1% of the German females are liable to only one brand. This means that the majority of German females do not depend on only one brand (see Appendix 12).

*The reasons one brand is depended on by Germans*

The two Germans who answered in question 10 that they do indeed depend on only one brand did not give a reason why. However, we do know that it is not due to financial reasons, thus it must be due to a preference (see Appendix 13).

**German Males:**

None of the German males who were surveyed said they are liable to just one brand (see Appendix 13).

**German Females:**

Only 2 out of the 22 German females who were surveyed said that they are liable to just one brand. As a reason they selected the option other, thus we know that they do not depend on one brand due to financial reasons.

### 3.3 The differences and similarities based on the survey

#### Category 1: Preferred brands of cars vs. driven ones

##### *Differences and similarities in cars owned*

While most of the Americans who were surveyed drive Japanese cars, the largest amount of Germans drive German cars. In total 48% of the Americans drive Japanese cars and 58.82% of the Germans drive German cars. Furthermore, 28% of the Americans who were surveyed drive cars from their own country, while 8% drive German cars. 8.82% of the Germans said they drive American cars, while 2.94% said they drive Japanese cars. From these percentages we can see that Japanese cars seem to be very popular in the USA and German cars very popular in Germany. Furthermore, the percentage of people without cars in Germany was a bit larger than those from the USA without a car. The most owned car brands by the Germans are VW, Audi and BMW while the largest proportion of Americans own a Honda, Subaru or Ford.

##### *Differences and similarities in preference of car brands*

The percentage of Americans who would have chosen another car brand is 19.9% smaller than the amount of Germans who would have. In addition to this the percentage of Americans who would prefer a BMW or Mercedes is larger than the amount of Germans who would prefer one. Furthermore, very few Germans selected Ford, whereas a larger number of Americans did. Overall we can say from this that not very many Germans prefer the American car brands Ford or Chevrolet over other brands. On the other hand no Americans selected Chevrolet either, but they do seem to like the German car brands Mercedes and BMW (see Appendix 5).

**Males:**

Overall the results for the males look similar with approximately 40% of each country stating they would prefer another car brand. The two largest selected brands from the list are BMW and Mercedes. However, the American males seem to prefer BMW, while the German males prefer Mercedes (see Appendix 5).

**Females:**

The results for the females are different than those from the males, in that there are some German females who would prefer a Ford. In addition to this the largest percentage of both would prefer another car brand than those named. An equal amount of American women preferred Ford and BMW. For the German females BMW was selected more often than Ford, but they also selected Mercedes less often than their American counterparts (see Appendix 5).

*Differences and similarities in country of origin preference*

The majority of Americans do not have preference for whether a brand comes from their own country or a foreign one. However, most of the Germans who were surveyed prefer brands from their own country. Furthermore, none of the Germans said that they prefer brands from foreign countries, while 16% of the Americans said that they do. This shows that Germans may believe that their brands are better, while Americans do not think that American brands are (see Appendix 14).

**Males:**

Most of the American males do not prefer either brands from their own country or foreign ones. On the other hand, German males have strong preference towards German brands. Furthermore, none of the German males stated that they prefer foreign brands (see Appendix 14).

**Females:**

Both American and German females do not prefer brands from either their own country or foreign ones. This can be seen in that 66.7% of the American and 54.5% of the German females surveyed gave this opinion. However, there still are a very large percentage of German females who prefer brands from their own country (see Appendix 14).

Category 2: Factors considered when buying a car*Differences and similarities in influence of factors*

The percentage of Germans who said they would consider this factor is higher than the percentage of Americans. However, the difference is only by approximately 14%, making it not a huge difference, but still signaling that taste may be more important for Germans when purchasing a car than for Americans. When asked if they would consider advertisement when purchasing a car, both Americans and Germans overwhelmingly stated they would not. The percentages for both are almost identical. This shows that both Germans and Americans equally believe that advertisement is not a deciding factor, when purchasing a car. When those surveyed were asked if they would consider recommendations of friends and relatives when purchasing a car, the majority said they would not. However, the percentage of Germans who said they would consider this factor is higher than the percentage of Americans who said they would. The percentage of American who said they would consider innovation when purchasing a car is higher than the percentage of Germans who said they would. The difference, is however not a huge one with only 8%. When asked if they would take other factors into consideration, the amount of Americans who answered yes was 9.8% higher than the amount of Germans. Although this shows that there may be some other factors that play an important role for Americans, further analysis of the survey is needed in order to find out what exactly these factors may be (see Appendix 3).

**Males:**

10 American and 12 German males were surveyed and compared in order to get these results. Both nationalities seem very similar in that American and German males would con-



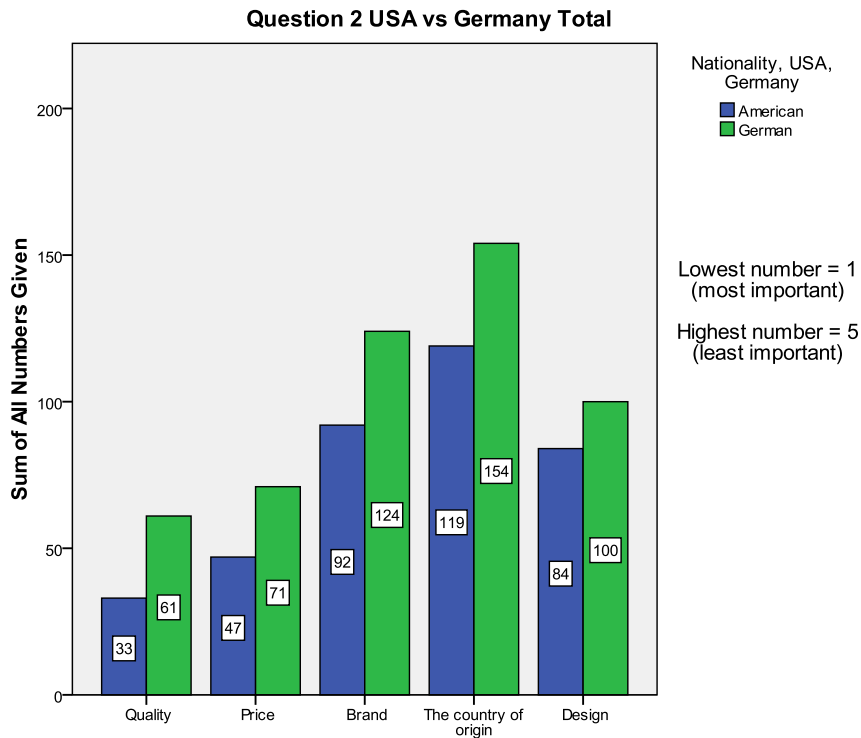
sider taste the most when purchasing a new car and innovation secondly. However, for the Germans innovation and recommendations by friends and family were selected the same amount of times. This may signal that both of these factors are similarly important for German males. Advertisement was selected the least amount of times for both (see Appendix 3).

**Females:**

15 American and 22 German females were surveyed in order to get these results. 60% of the Americans and 81.8% of the Germans said that they would consider taste when purchasing a car. Thus, this is the largest chosen option for the German females and one of the most selected factors for the American females. 60% of the American females also selected other, which shows that there are other factors influencing them (see Appendix 3).

Category 3: Ranking of how important certain factors are vs how some of these factors are rated for Mercedes-Benz

*Differences and similarities in importance of car attributes*

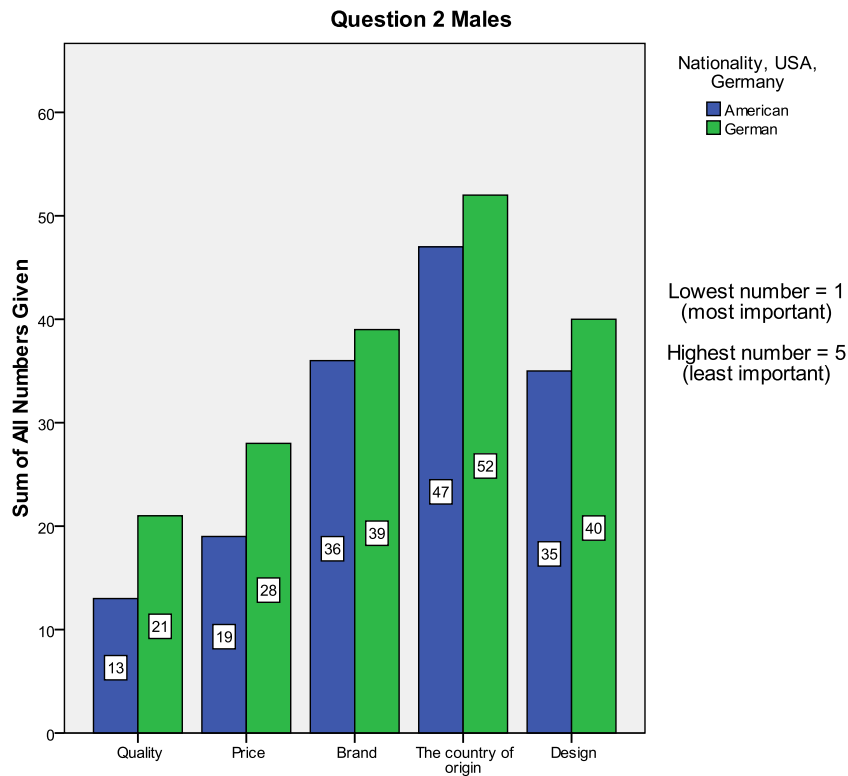


For question 2, the surveyed people were asked to number features 1 through 5, starting with the most important, when purchasing a car. This means that they should have used 1 for most important, 2 for important, 3 for average, 4 for less important and 5 for least important. In order to get a better picture of the results, the received numbers were added up according to factor. This means that the smallest bar received 1 overall and the largest 5.

Although both Germans and Americans said that quality is the most important factor for them when purchasing a car, we can see some differences when we analyze the answers further. The percentage of Americans who rated quality most important is much larger than the percentage of Germans who did. In addition to this, 2 Germans rated quality as less important, but no Americans rated it this low. Price is more important to Germans than Americans. Although this is true, there are some Germans who feel that price is less important or

even the least important out of the five factors. The main difference in how the Americans and Germans ranked the factor brand, can be seen in that the Americans clearly ranked it as 4th most important or in other words, "less important". 68% of the Americans rated brand less important, while only 38.2% of the Germans rated it less important. However, 28% of the Americans did rate brand higher than "less important", but this is still lower than the 38.2% of Germans who rated it more important than "less important". Furthermore, there was a large group of Germans who stated brand is the least important, while there was only one American who felt that brand should be categorized like this. From these results we can see that while the surveyed Germans had very mixed feelings about how they would rate brand, with the Americans it was very clear that they would rate it as "less important". When asked how they would rate the country of origin, the majority of both Americans and Germans answered as the least important. Although this may be true, the percentage of Americans who felt that the country of origin is the least important was 88%, while 61.8% of the Germans felt the same way. There was a large proportion of Germans who felt that the country of origin should be rated as 4th and not 5th most important. From this we can conclude that Germans feel the country of origin is more important than the Americans. If indeed the Germans feel that country of origin is more important than Americans, than a larger proportion of Americans should state that they do not care about country of origin than Germans in question 12. When asked to rank design in importance, the majority of American and Germans ranked it as average. However the percentage of Americans who rated it as average is higher while the Germans had many mixed opinions. There was a large group of Germans who rated design as important or even as the most important. There were only 2 Americans who rated design as important, which means that design is more important for Germans than Americans.

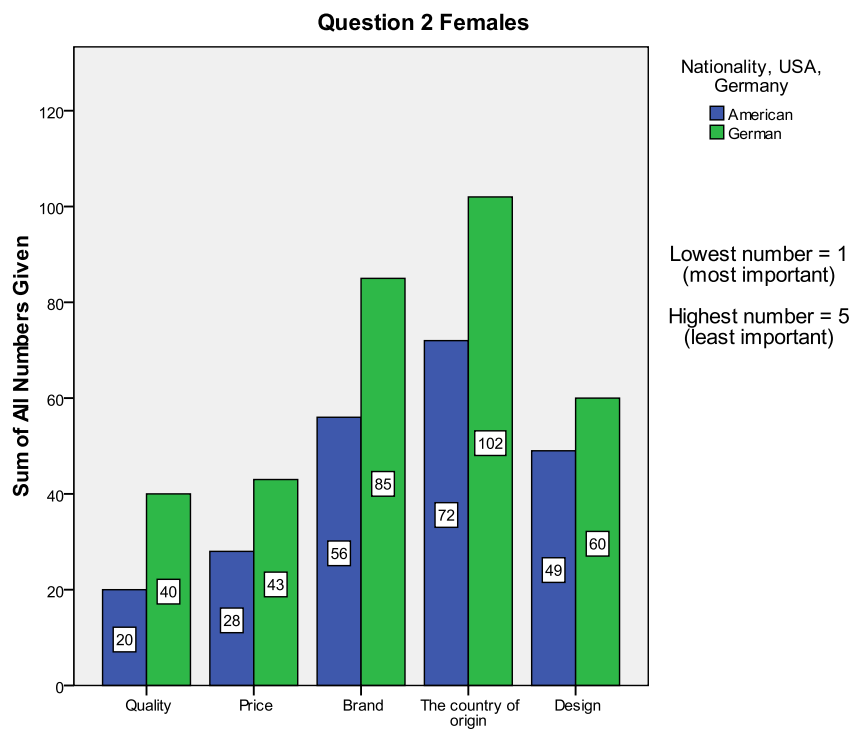
### Males:



As we can see from the tables above, a higher percentage of German males felt that quality is not the most important factor when purchasing a car. The American males who were surveyed very clearly rated quality as the most important factor. The American males who were surveyed also clearly stated that price is important or even the most important factor, while on the surveyed German males were not so clear about this. 25% of the German males rated price as 4th most important.. While with 60% of the American males feeling that a brand is the 4th most important factor, the majority of German males felt that a brand is the second most important factor. This leads one to believe that a brand is more important to German males than to American males. Although one American male ranked the country of origin as important, the percentage of German males who ranked this category higher than the least important is larger than the amount of American males who ranked it higher. This means that the country of origin is more important for German males than for American males.

From comparing the two tables above, it can be seen that design is more important to the German males surveyed than to the American males surveyed. However, this difference is not big and overall both German and American males feel that design should be ranked 4th most important.

### Females:



As shown above both American females and German females ranked quality as the most important factor when purchasing a car. There is a small difference though in that quality is more important for American females than German females and this can be seen in that a higher percentage of German females categorized quality under other options besides most important. American females and German females almost have the same opinion about how important price is when purchasing a car. However, price is slightly more important to American females than to German females. This can be seen in that a higher percentage of German females categorized price as average or even least important. The chart above

shows that American females consider brands slightly more when purchasing a car. However there isn't a huge difference between how important American and German females categorized a brand. For both brand was rated 4th most important. Although the country of origin was rated the least important factor for both American and German females, it was rated slightly more important for German females. This can be seen in that a larger percentage of American females stated that the country of origin is the least important for them when purchasing a car. Overall it can be said that when purchasing a car, design is more important for the German than the American females. 18.2% of the German females even rated design the most important factor for them. Both German and American females felt that design is the third most important factor when buying a car.

*Differences and similarities in the rating of the attributes of Mercedes-Benz*

Quality:

Both the Americans and Germans had similar opinions about the price of a Mercedes car. 96% of the Americans believed it to be high, while 91.2% of the Germans believed the same. Very few people thought that the quality is average (see Appendix 7).

Price:

Out of all of the people surveyed only one American thought that the price of a Mercedes car is reasonable. 52% of the Americans think the price is high, compared to the 55.9% of Germans who feel the same way. However, the car brand is luxurious, thus a high price makes sense. Approximately the same percentage of Americans and Germans thought that the price is very high. This means that Americans and Germans think very similar in regarding the price of a Mercedes car. However, more Americans feel that it is still reasonable (see Appendix 7).

Design:

When asked about how they thought the design of a Mercedes car ranked, Americans gave it better ratings than their German counterparts. 36% of the Americans felt that the design is excellent, compared to only 2.9% of Germans who thought the same. Furthermore, there

was one German who believed the design to be low. According to the results it can be said that Americans view the design of Mercedes cars more positively than Germans (see Appendix 7).

### **Males:**

#### Quality:

When comparing the answers given by the American and German males we can see that they are very similar. Both Americans and Germans thought that the quality of Mercedes car is high. This may be the reason why the brand received such good assessment in question 4. However, there was one German male who felt that the quality is average (see Appendix 7).

#### Price:

Regarding the price there was a larger percentage of German males who felt that it is very high. This means that German males perceive Mercedes as being more expensive than their American counterparts (see Appendix 7).

#### Design:

A larger percentage of American males believed the design of Mercedes cars to be good than German males. In addition to this 10% of the American males surveyed ranked the design as excellent. This means that American males perceive the design of Mercedes cars in a more positive manor than their German counterparts (see Appendix 7).

### **Females:**

#### Quality:

Although it can be said that the results between the American and German females regarding the quality of Mercedes are very similar, American females seem to think that the quality is higher (see Appendix 7).

#### Price:

When asked to give their opinion about the price of a Mercedes car, both the American and German females answered similarly. It can be said that the results for both American and

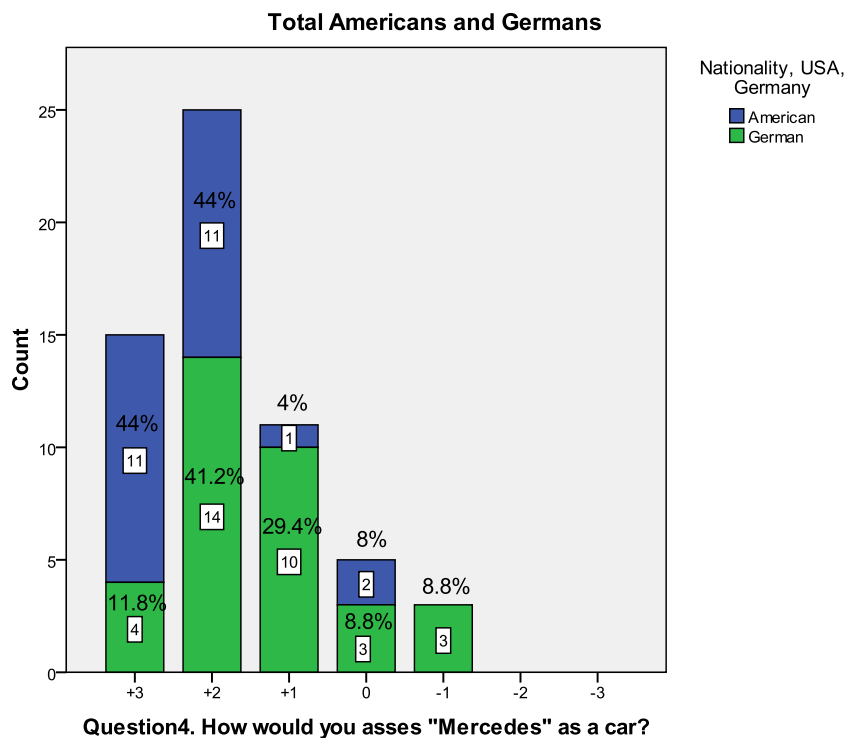
German females are roughly the same. Both feel that the price for a Mercedes car is high (see Appendix 7).

Design:

As can be seen in the tables above, the percentage of American females who felt positively about the design of Mercedes cars is much larger than the percentage of German females who felt the same. Overall it can be said that German females had very mixed feelings, ranging from low to excellent, while American females had mostly positive feelings (see Appendix 7).

Category 4: Assessment of Mercedes-Benz and the brands strongest qualities

*Differences and similarities in the grading of Mercedes*

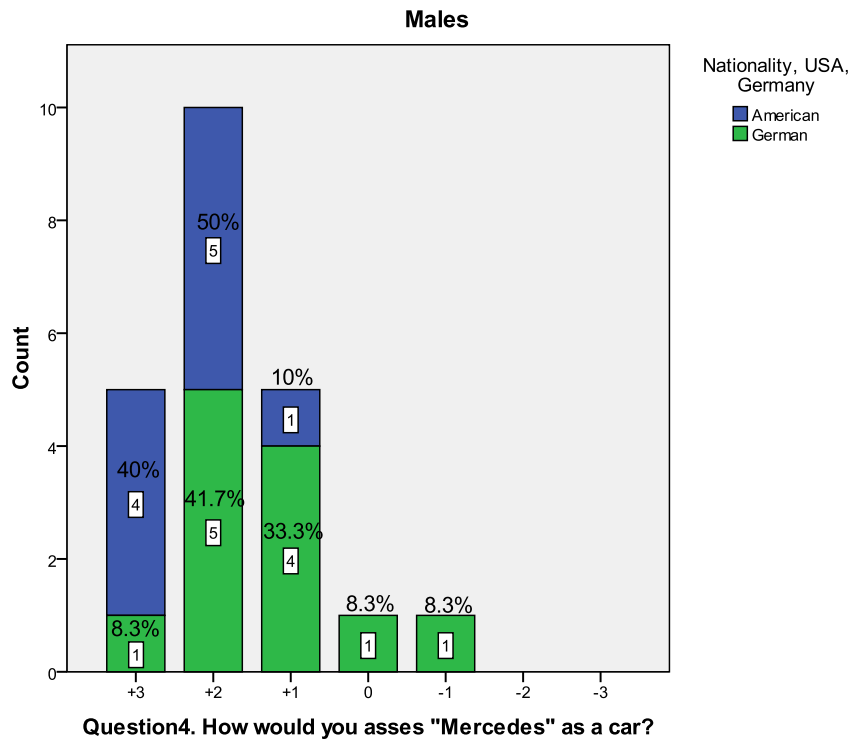


When comparing the results of question 4, it can be seen that Americans assessed Mercedes much more positive than their German counterparts. 88% of the American surveyed ranked the brand as +3 or +2, while 52.9% of the Germans assessed the brand the same. Further-



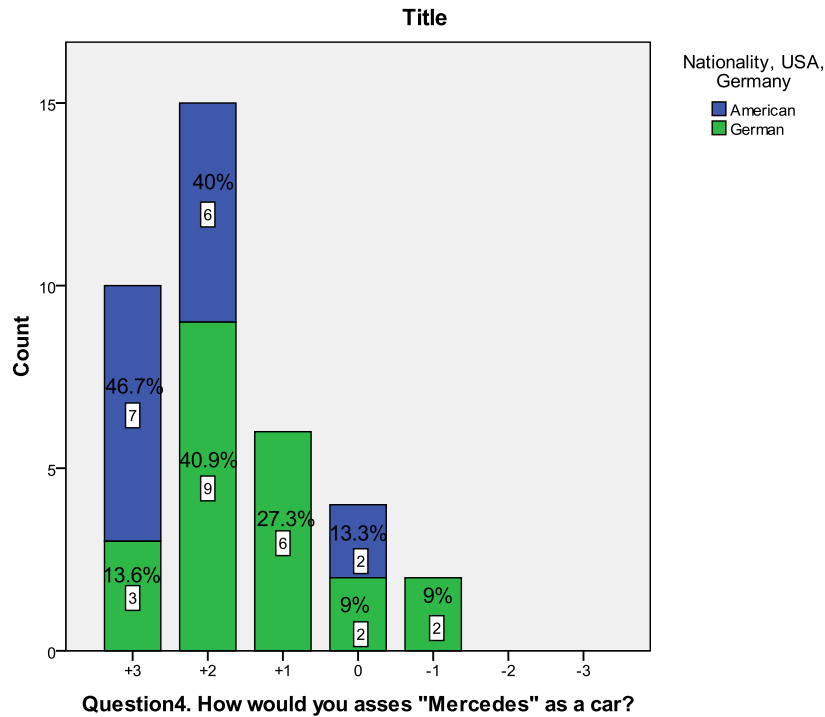
more, none of the Americans surveyed assessed the brand as a negative number, while three of the Germans surveyed ranked it -1.

### Males:



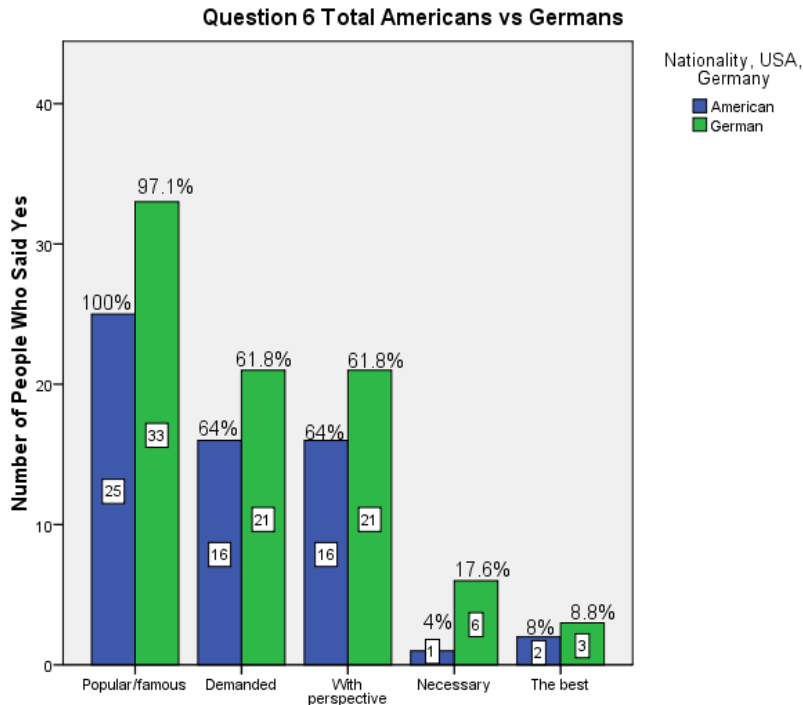
The American males who were surveyed assessed Mercedes more positively than the German males. 40% of the American males ranked Mercedes as +3, while only 8.3% of the German males did the same. A large proportion of both the American males and their German counterparts assessed Mercedes as +2. Furthermore, a couple of German males gave the brand poor marks such as 0 and -1.

### Females:



Just as with the males, the American females assessed Mercedes more favorable than their German counterparts. 46.7% of the American females assessed the brand as +3, which compared to the 13.6% of German females who ranked Mercedes as +3, is quite a lot. Furthermore, 40% of the American females assessed Mercedes as +2. This is close to the 40.9% of German females who gave the brand a +2. The brand did not receive any negative marks from the American females, but two German females graded it -1.

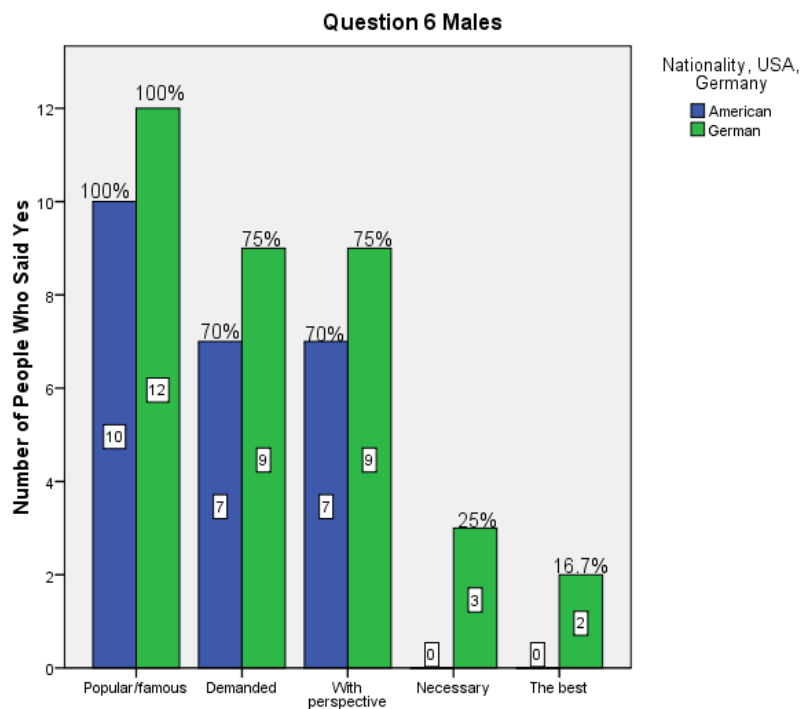
*Differences and similarities in the perception of Mercedes*



Although one of the Germans who were surveyed stated that they do not think Mercedes is popular or famous on the car market, there are not really any differences between the answers given by the Americans or the Germans. Overall, the people from both countries feel that Mercedes is a popular or famous brand and thus it must be a known brand in both the USA and Germany. 64% of the Americans who were surveyed think that Mercedes is a demanded brand on the car market, while 61.8% of the Germans who were surveyed feel the same way. From this we can see that both Germans and Americans feel the same way about this subject and that Mercedes is indeed a demanded brand in both the USA and Germany. 64% of the Americans who were surveyed stated that they believe Mercedes has perspective on the car market, while 61.8% of the Germans said the same. This shows that both Americans and Germans feel that Mercedes is a competent brand on the car market. The majority of both Americans and Germans did not think that Mercedes is necessary on the car market. However, 4% of the Americans and 17.6% of the Germans stated that they do think the brand is necessary. This shows that although overall both countries do not think that Mercedes is necessary on the car market, the percentage of Germans who believe it is

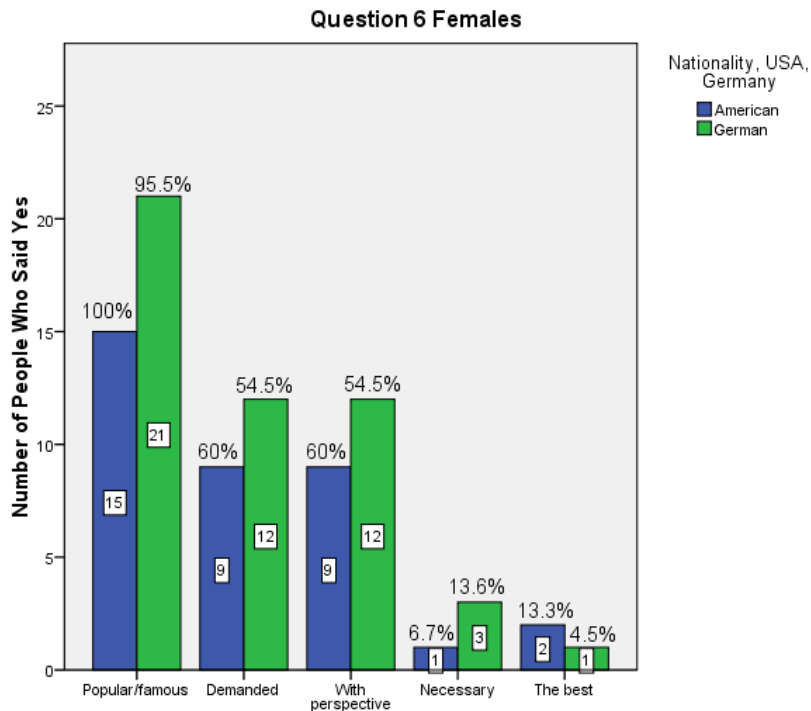
larger than the percentage of Americans who think the same. Most of the Americans and Germans do not think that Mercedes is the best on the car market. Only 8% of the Americans and 8.8% of the Germans are of the opinion that Mercedes is the best on the car market. This shows that both Americans and Germans do not feel that Mercedes is the best on the car market.

### Males:



All of the American and German males who were surveyed believe that Mercedes is popular or famous on the car market. Furthermore, 75% of the German and 70% of the American males believe that Mercedes is demanded and has perspective on the car market. However, while none of the American males agreed that Mercedes is necessary or the best on the car market, 3 Germans agreed that it is necessary and 2 that it is the best.

## Females:



While all American females agree with the statement that Mercedes is popular or famous on the car market, one of the German females did not agree with this. Furthermore, more than half of the German and American females believe that Mercedes is demanded and has perspective on the car market. The percentage of Americans who believe this is greater by 5.5%. However, while only 1 of the American females believes that Mercedes is necessary, 3 German females believe the same. The percentage of American females who believe that Mercedes is the best on the car market is 13.3%, while 4.5% of the German females are of the same opinion.

### *Differences and similarities in the four most perceived characteristics of Mercedes*

For both Americans and Germans the two most frequently selected words used to describe Mercedes-Benz were successful and luxurious. However, the other two most frequently used words for the Americans were sophisticated and innovative and for the Germans they were

traditional and reliable. This shows that both Americans and Germans perceive Mercedes as a luxurious and successful brand. The main difference between how the brand is perceived in the two countries is that Americans view the brand as a sophisticated one that is continually bringing new ideas to the market and Germans as a traditional or old fashioned company that can be depended on (see Appendix 9).

**Males:**

The most frequently used words used by the American males to describe Mercedes-Benz were luxurious, successful and traditional. For the German males they were luxurious, successful, reliable and traditional. This shows that American and German males perceive Mercedes very similarly. The only difference between how American and German males view the brand is that German males also believe it to be reliable (see Appendix 9).

**Females:**

The American females who were surveyed mostly used the words luxurious, successful and competent to describe Mercedes. In comparison, the most frequently used words for the German females were successful, traditional, luxurious and reliable. Furthermore, the word competent was used quite often by the German females. This shows that both American and German females see the brand as luxurious, successful and competent, but only the German females also see that brand as reliable and traditional (see Appendix 9).

Category 5: Importance of a brand

*Differences and similarities in the importance of a brand*

When Americans and Germans were asked if a brand is important to them approximately half the people of both nationalities answered yes. This show that an equal percentage of both countries feel that brands are important to them (see Appendix 10).

**Males:**

The majority of both American and German males stated that a brand is important to them. This shows that the percentage of males of both countries, who feel that a brand is important for them, is bigger than the percentage of females. However, while 83.3% of the German males said a brand is important to them, only 60% of the American males said the same. This may be a sign that a larger proportion of German males are of the opinion that a brand is important to them than American males (see Appendix 10).

**Females:**

When viewing the table above it can be seen that the majority of both American and German females don't feel a brand to be important to them. Furthermore, a larger percentage of German females seem to not care about brands, than American females (see Appendix 10).

*Differences and similarities in the reasons a brand is important*

The main factor influencing why a brand is important to both the Americans and Germans who were surveyed is quality. Furthermore, the second most important factor for both nationalities both was style (see Appendix 11).

**Males:**

The majority of both American and German males feel that a brand is important to them due to quality. Style was the second most given reason for both (see Appendix 11).

**Females:**

Just as for the males, both the American and German females who were surveyed said that they feel a brand is important to them because of quality and style (see Appendix 11).

*Differences and similarities in the dependence on one brand*

A very small percentage of Americans and Germans said that they are liable to just one brand. This means that the majority of Americans and Germans do not depend on only one brand (see Appendix 12).

**Males:**

Although one American female stated that she is liable to only one brand, it can be said that most of the German and American females do not depend on only one brand (see Appendix 12).

**Females:**

As with the males, there were very few females who said that they are liable to just one brand. These two females are German and make up 9.1% of the total amount of German females surveyed. Overall it can be assumed that the majority of American and German females do not depend on only one brand (see Appendix 12).

*Differences and similarities in the reasons one brand is depended on*

None of the Americans or Germans who said that they depend on only one brand said that it is due to financial reasons. This means that both Americans and Germans tend to depend on brands for the same reasons. These reasons are mostly due to a type of reassurance that the brand provides (see Appendix 13).

**Males:**

The majority of both American and German males are not liable to just one brand. However, 10% of the American males said that they are but not due to financial reasons (see Appendix 13).

**Females:**

In comparison to with the males, it was not some of the American females, but rather some



of the German females who are liable to just one brand. As a reason this 9.1% of German females selected other, which shows that the reasons are not financial (see Appendix 13).

#### 4 CONCLUSION

The definition of brand is interpreted in different ways but any interpretation has special attributes, which are brand name, symbol, logo, corporate identity and trade image. It is impossible that all the attributes of the brand are only strengths, but together they should make it more popular. The higher the prestige of the brand, the higher its capital is. However, the commitment to one brand leads to the inelasticity of demand in the market.

The commercial success of the company in many ways is defined by the name of the brand and its recognition. The name is the first thing that is noticed by the consumer, and often that is what is decisive for the purchase. Thus, it is very important to know exactly what people want, their preferences, priorities, desires, tastes and expectations. The brand primarily must evoke positive emotions, be among the rare varieties of life, and give good or positive associations. There is no ideal way to create the company name, because each industry has its own.

International companies have to especially take culture differences into consideration. As it can be seen from the results, cultures can influence the perception of a brand. Although there were no huge differences overall, these differences could be very great when the brand perception in other countries is compared. Important to note is that both Americans and Germans think of Mercedes as a luxurious and successful brand. However, the Americans also perceived it as sophisticated and innovative, while the Germans seen it as reliable and traditional. The brand is also viewed as very expensive by both Americans and Germans.

Furthermore, the brand was assessed higher by Americans than by Germans even though Germans tend to prefer brands from their own country. This fact could also be seen in that the majority of Germans who were surveyed drive German cars. However, it seems that both Americans and Germans prefer BMW and other car brands over Mercedes-Benz. The majority of Americans surveyed own Japanese cars with a big portion also owning American

cars. In Germany this is not the case. Most of the Germans who were surveyed stated that they drive German cars.

In addition to this, the majority of both Americans and Germans stated that they do not consider advertisement when purchasing a new car. Although they may believe this, studies have shown that repetitious advertisement increases the likely hood that a brand is stored in the memory. Thus, advertisement may very well still be important for both cultures.

Unfortunately in order to get very accurate results, a much larger amount of people would have had to be surveyed. This is especially true, when one takes into consideration how large a country such as the USA really is. A very large amount of people would have had to be surveyed in order to get more accurate results. This was however not possible for the author due to him being in Europe at the time this research was conducted.

However, the research did show that Mercedes has indeed built an international reputation as a successful luxury car brand that can be relied on. In addition to this, according to its website it seems that Mercedes-Benz is very aware that the brand is perceived as luxurious, innovative and sophisticated by both Germans and Americans.

Thus to conclude the research it is important to note that any company that wants to succeed through the creation of identity should focus primarily on buyers. It depends on them whether the company will profit and will remain on the market. But also the most successful company must not forget that even after winning the market and leaving the competition far behind, the rivals are waiting for a good moment to take a leadership position.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.CROSS-CULTURAL BRAND PERCEPTION SURVEY

APPENDIX 2.CROSS-CULTURAL BRAND PERCEPTION SURVEY IN GERMAN

APPENDIX 3.RESULTS TO QUESTION 1

APPENDIX 4.RESULTS TO QUESTION 2

APPENDIX 5.RESULTS TO QUESTION 3

APPENDIX 6.RESULTS TO QUESTION 4

APPENDIX 7.RESULTS TO QUESTION 5

APPENDIX 8.RESULTS TO QUESTION 6

APPENDIX 9.RESULTS TO QUESTION 7

APPENDIX 10.RESULTS TO QUESTION 8

APPENDIX 11.RESULTS TO QUESTION 9

APPENDIX 12.RESULTS TO QUESTION 10

APPENDIX 13.RESULTS TO QUESTION 11

APPENDIX 14.RESULTS TO QUESTION 12

APPENDIX 1/1  
CROSS-CULTURAL BRAND PERCEPTION SURVEY

Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz

<b>Nationality:</b>	<b>Age:</b>	<b>Gender:</b> male <input type="checkbox"/> female <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Job/Occupation:</b>		
<b>Do you have a car?</b> _____ <b>If so, what model?</b> _____		

**1. What factors would you consider when buying a car?**

Taste \_\_\_\_\_ Advertisement \_\_\_\_\_ Recommendation of a relative/friend \_\_\_\_\_ Innovation \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Number the following features beginning with the most important for you, when you do shopping (1-most important; 5 – least important)**

Quality \_\_\_\_\_ Price \_\_\_\_\_ Brand \_\_\_\_\_ The country of origin \_\_\_\_\_ Design \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What model of a car would you prefer?**

“Mercedes” \_\_\_\_\_ “Ford” \_\_\_\_\_ “BMW” \_\_\_\_\_ “Chevrolet” \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. How would you assess “Mercedes” as a car? Please circle the number?**

Very good +3      +2      +1      0      -1      -2      -3      Not good

**5. Please share your opinion about the “Mercedes” car:**

Quality: low \_\_\_\_\_ average \_\_\_\_\_ high \_\_\_\_\_  
 Price: low \_\_\_\_\_ reasonable \_\_\_\_\_ high \_\_\_\_\_ very high \_\_\_\_\_  
 Design: bad \_\_\_\_\_ average \_\_\_\_\_ good \_\_\_\_\_ excellent \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Do you agree that “Mercedes” brand on the car market is: (please underline the needed)?**

- Popular/famous:      Yes      No
- Demanded:            Yes      No
- With perspective:    Yes      No
- Necessary:            Yes      No
- The best:              Yes      No

**7. What four words from the following list would you use to describe Mercedes Benz?**

Sincere Competent Sophisticated Luxurious Traditional Reliable	Innovative Successful Intelligent Practical Creative Effective Efficient
---	--

**8. Is a brand important for you?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**9. If a brand name is important for you, due to what factors:**

Style \_\_\_\_\_ Quality \_\_\_\_\_ Status \_\_\_\_\_ Your way of life \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Are you liable to just one brand?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**11. If yes, why?**

Personal capital \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Do you prefer brand from your own country or foreign?**

\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your participation!*

APPENDIX 2/1  
CROSS-CULTURAL BRAND PERCEPTION SURVEY IN GERMAN

Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz

<b>Nationalität:</b>	<b>Alter:</b>	<b>Geschlecht:</b> männlich <input type="checkbox"/> weiblich <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Job/Beruf:</b>		
<b>Haben Sie ein Auto?</b> _____ <b>Wenn ja, welches Modell?</b> _____		

**1. Welche Faktoren würden Sie beim Kauf eines Autos bedenken?**

Geschmack \_\_\_\_\_ Werbung \_\_\_\_\_ Empfehlung eines Verwandten / Bekannten \_\_\_\_\_ Innovation \_\_\_\_\_ Anderes \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Nummerieren Sie bitte die folgenden Funktionen beginnend mit dem wichtigsten für Sie, wenn Sie einkaufen (1-wichtigste; 5 - am wenigsten wichtig)**

Qualität \_\_\_\_\_ Preis \_\_\_\_\_ Marke \_\_\_\_\_ Das Herkunftslandprinzip \_\_\_\_\_ Design \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Welche Modelle Automarke würden Sie bevorzugen?**

“Mercedes” \_\_\_\_\_ “Ford” \_\_\_\_\_ “BMW” \_\_\_\_\_ “Chevrolet” \_\_\_\_\_ Anderes \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Wie würden Sie die "Mercedes" als ein Auto beurteilen? Bitte kreisen Sie die Zahl ein?**

Sehr gut +3    +2    +1    0    -1    -2    -3    Nicht gut

**5. Bitte geben Sie Ihre Meinung über "Mercedes" als ein Auto:**

Qualität: niedrig \_\_\_\_\_ durchschnitt \_\_\_\_\_ hoch \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preis: billig \_\_\_\_\_ günstig \_\_\_\_\_ hoch \_\_\_\_\_ sehr hoch \_\_\_\_\_  
 Design: schlecht \_\_\_\_\_ durchschnitt \_\_\_\_\_ gut \_\_\_\_\_ ausgezeichnet \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Sind Sie damit einverstanden, dass "Mercedes" Marke auf dem Automobilmarkt ist: (bitte unterstreichen erforderlich)**

- Beliebt/ Berühmt:    Ja    Nein
- Verlangt:    Ja    Nein
- Mit Perspektive:    Ja    Nein
- Notwendig:    Ja    Nein
- Die beste:    Ja    Nein

**7. Welche vier Begriffe aus der folgenden Liste würden Sie benutzen um Mercedes Benz zu beschreiben?**

Ehrlich	Innovativ
Kompetent	Erfolgreich
Fortgeschritten	Intelligent
Luxuriös	Praktisch
Traditionell	Kreativ
Zuverlässig	Effektiv
	Effizient

**8. Ist eine Marke wichtig für Sie?**

Ja \_\_\_\_\_ Nein \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Wenn ein Markenname wichtig für Sie ist, aufgrund welcher Faktoren:**

Stil \_\_\_\_\_ Qualität \_\_\_\_\_ Status \_\_\_\_\_ Lebensart \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Verlassen Sie sich nur auf eine Marke?**

Ja \_\_\_\_\_ Nein \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Wenn ja, warum?**

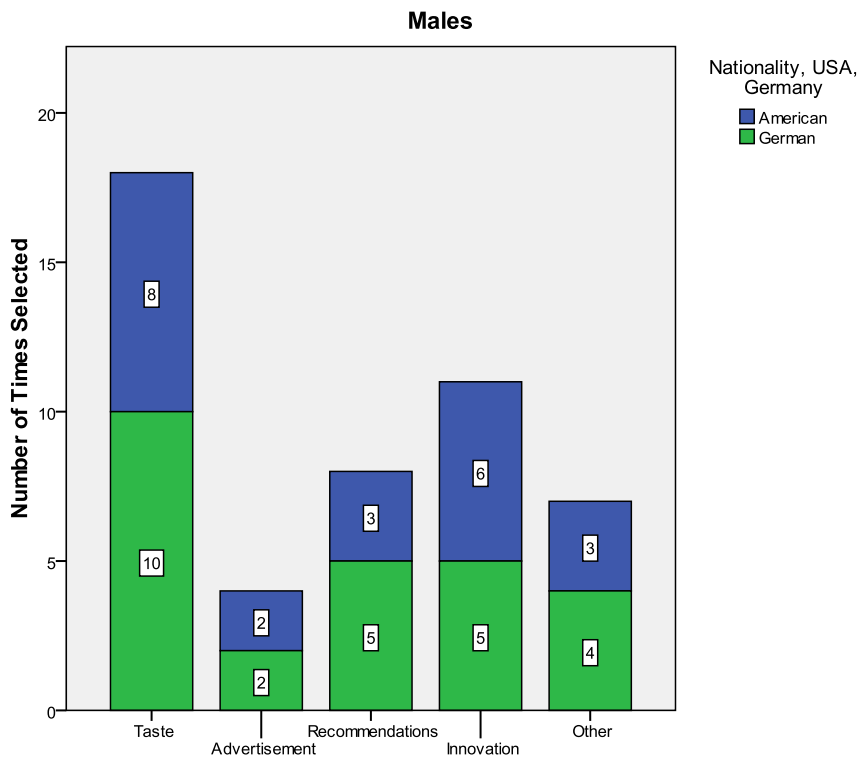
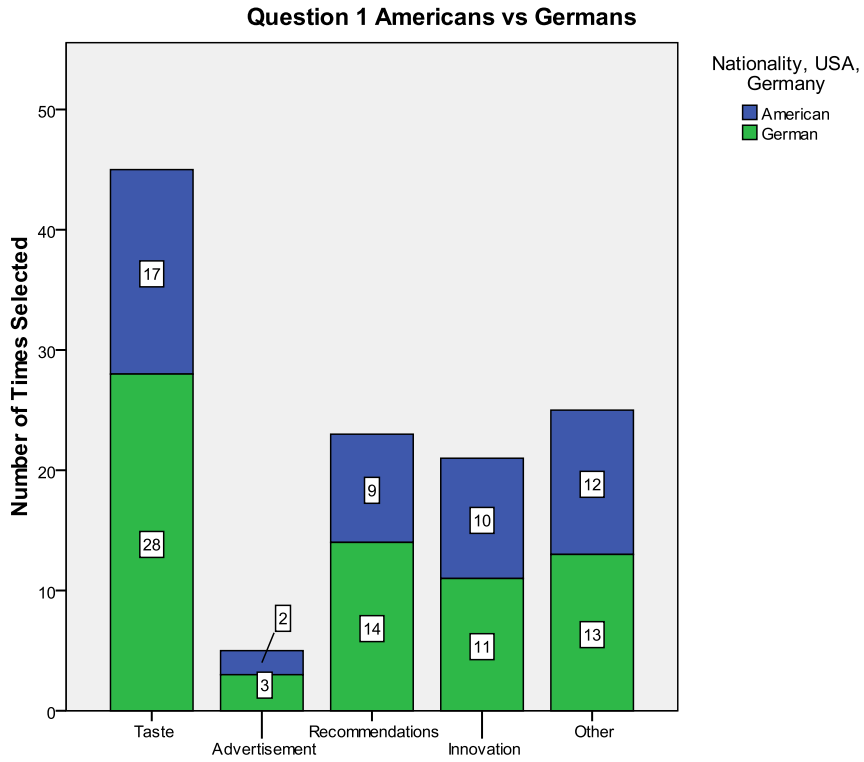
Finanzmittel \_\_\_\_\_ Anderes \_\_\_\_\_

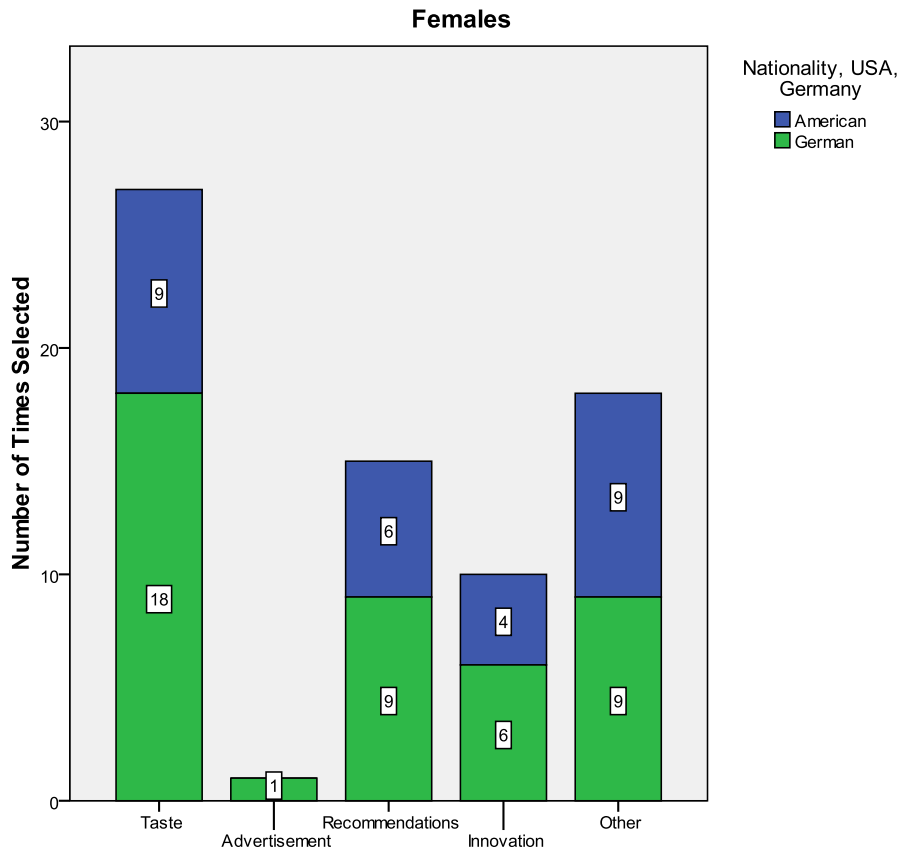
**12. Bevorzugen Sie Marken aus Ihrem eigenen Land oder aus dem Ausland?**

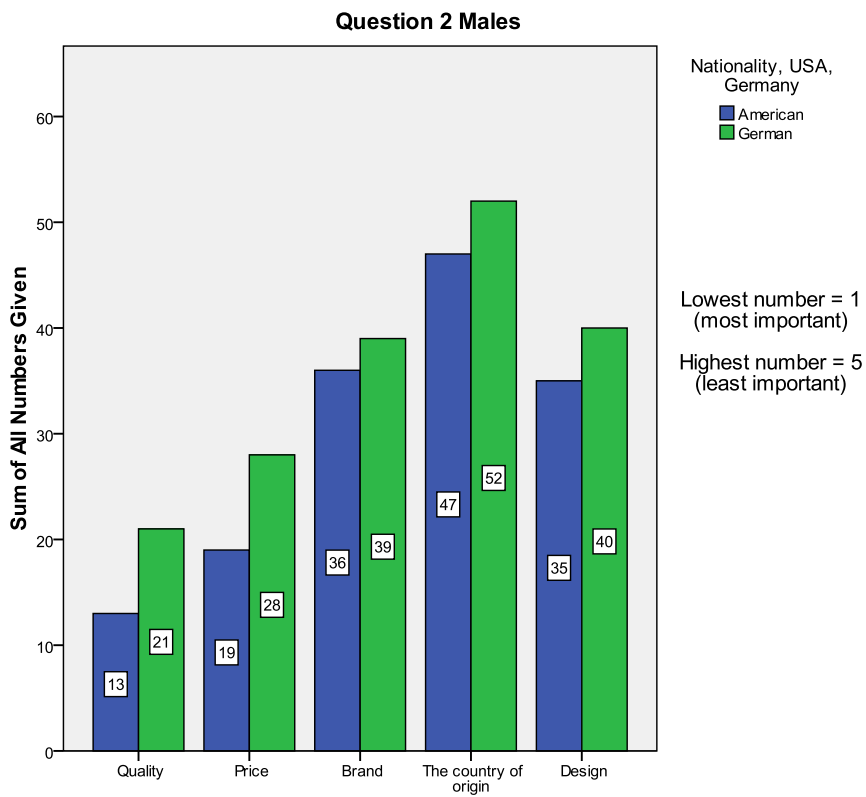
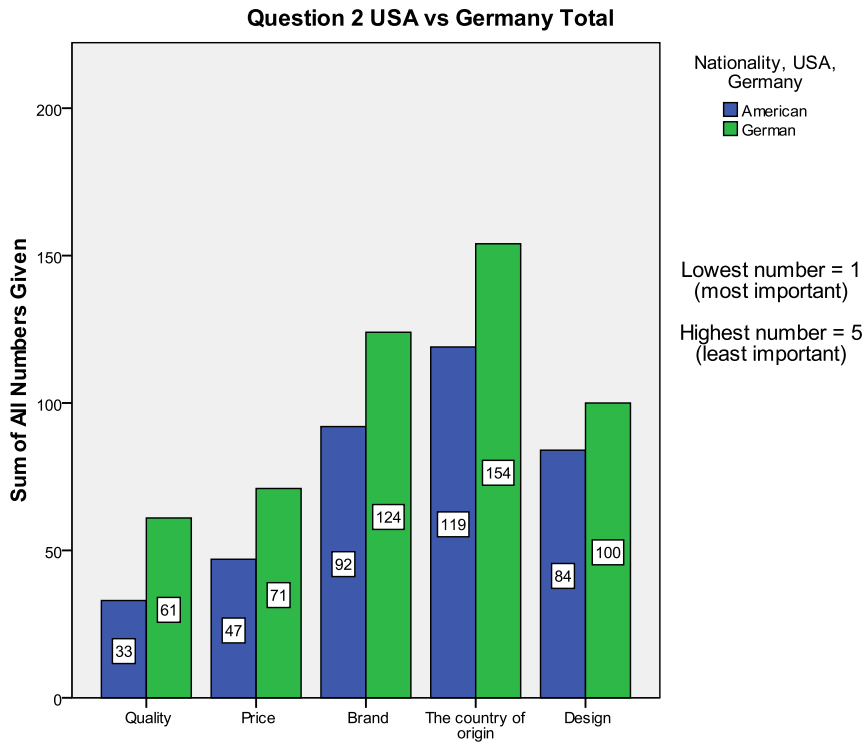
\_\_\_\_\_

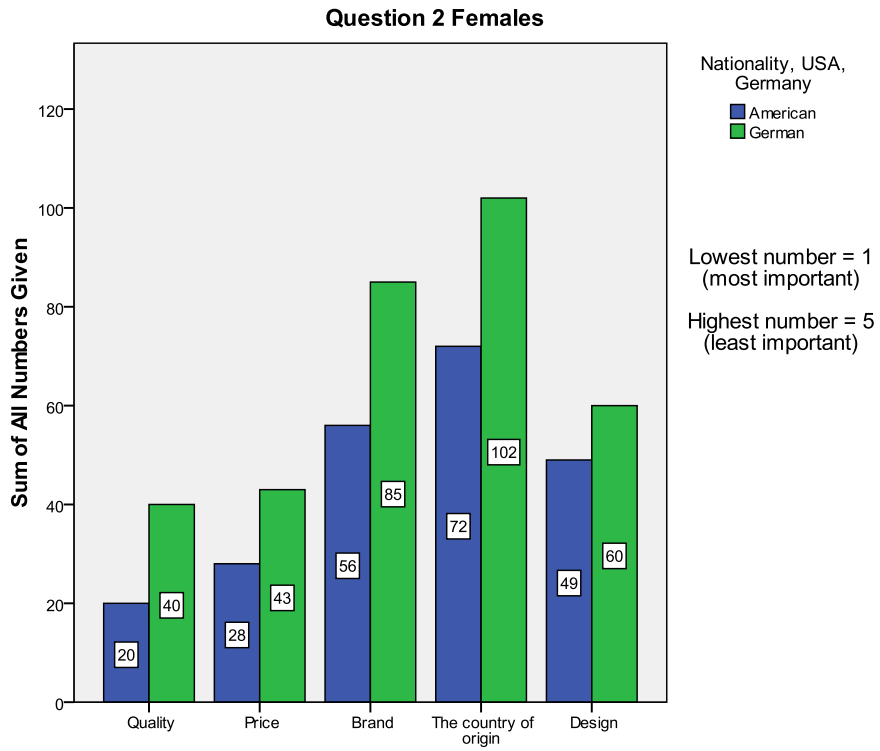
**VIELEN DANK FÜR IHRE ANTWORTEN!!!**



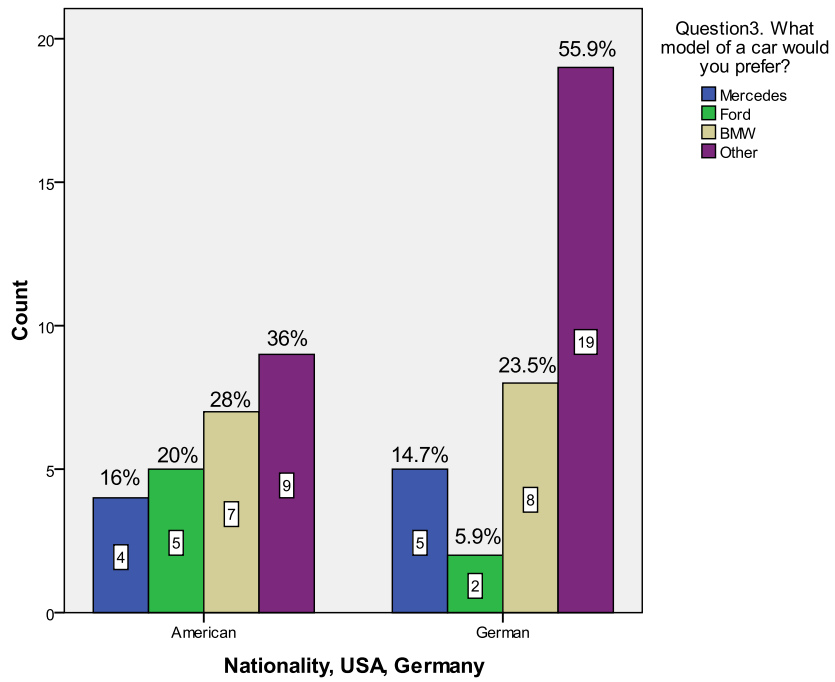




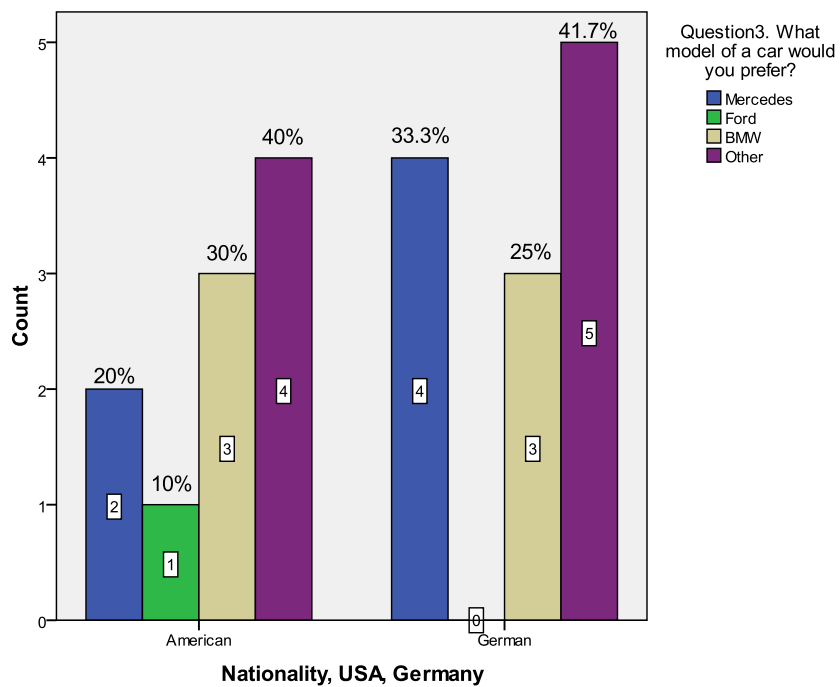




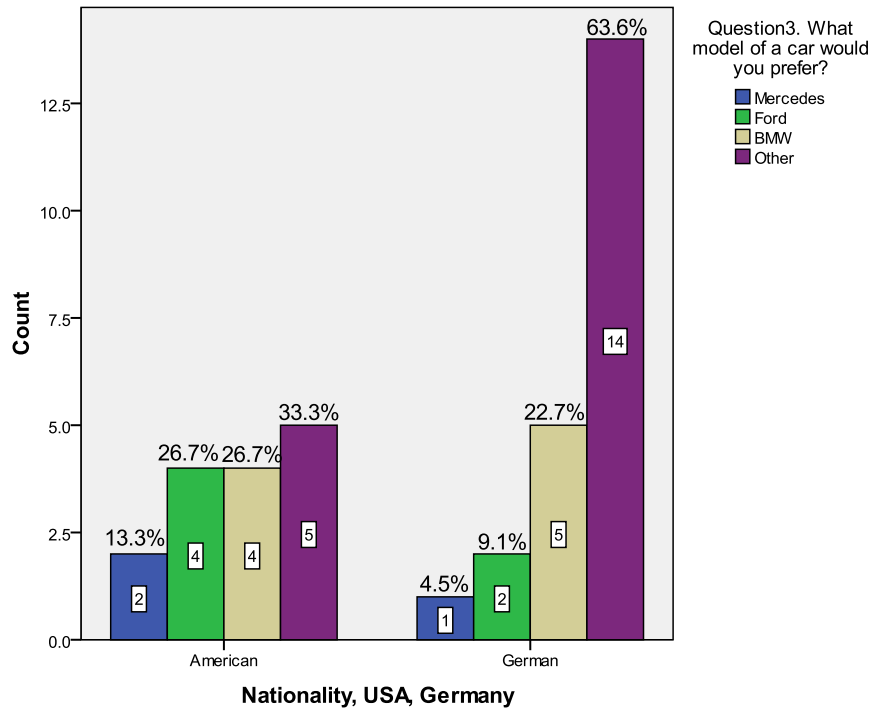
USA versus Germany Total:



Males:



Females:



**Question4. How would you asses "Mercedes" as a car? \* Nationality, USA,  
Germany Crosstabulation**

Count

		Nationality, USA, Germany		Total
		American	German	
Question4. How would you asses "Mercedes" as a car?	3	11	4	15
	2	11	14	25
	1	1	10	11
	0	2	3	5
	-1	0	3	3
Total		25	34	59

**Males:**

**Question4. How would you asses "Mercedes" as a car? \* Nationality, USA,  
Germany Crosstabulation**

Count

		Nationality, USA, Germany		Total
		American	German	
Question4. How would you asses "Mercedes" as a car?	3	4	1	5
	2	5	5	10
	1	1	4	5
	0	0	1	1
	-1	0	1	1
Total		10	12	22

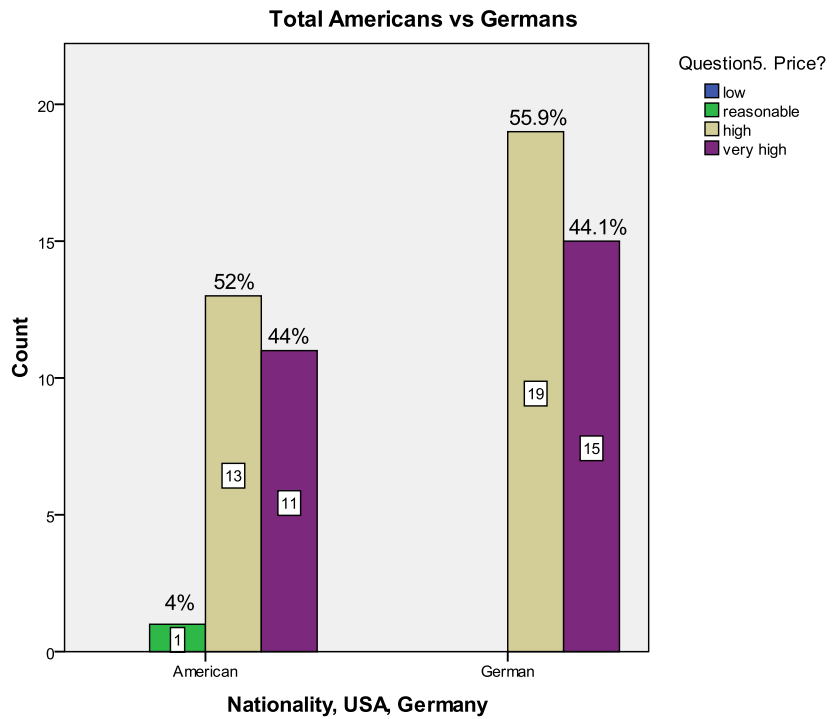
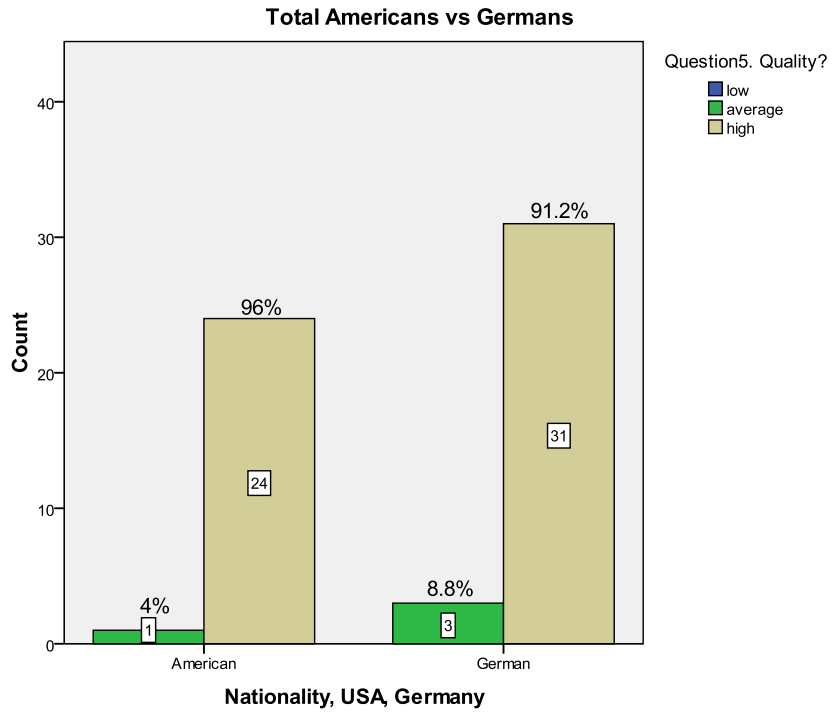
Females:

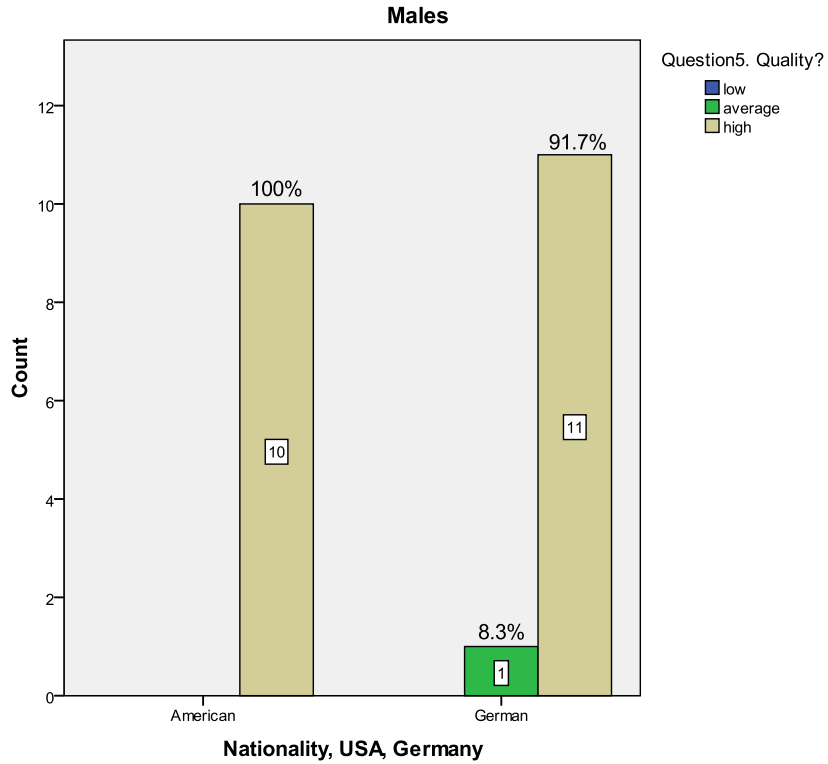
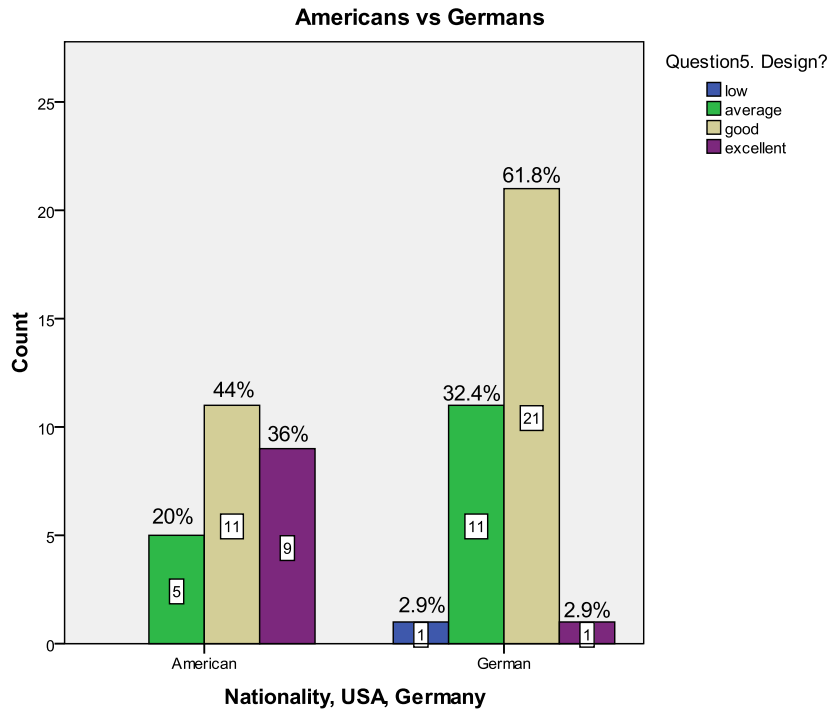
**Question4. How would you asses "Mercedes" as a car? \* Nationality, USA, Germany Crosstabulation**

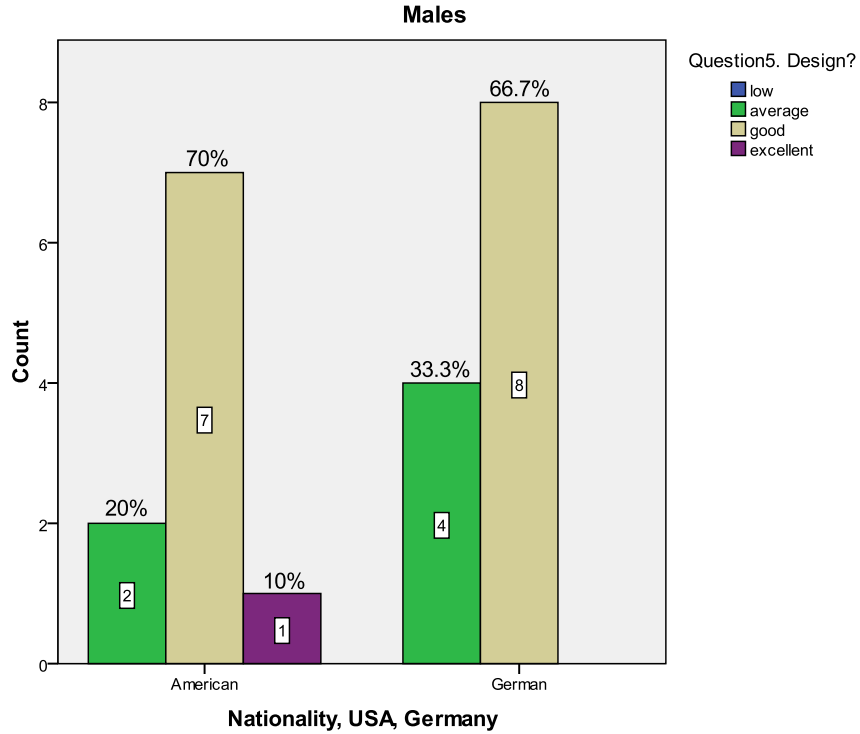
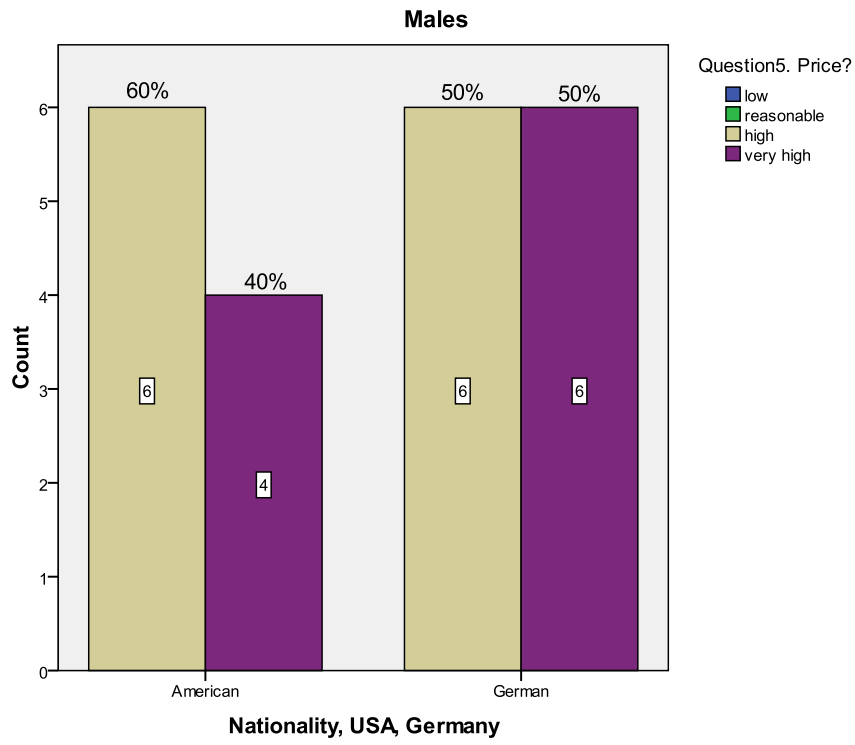
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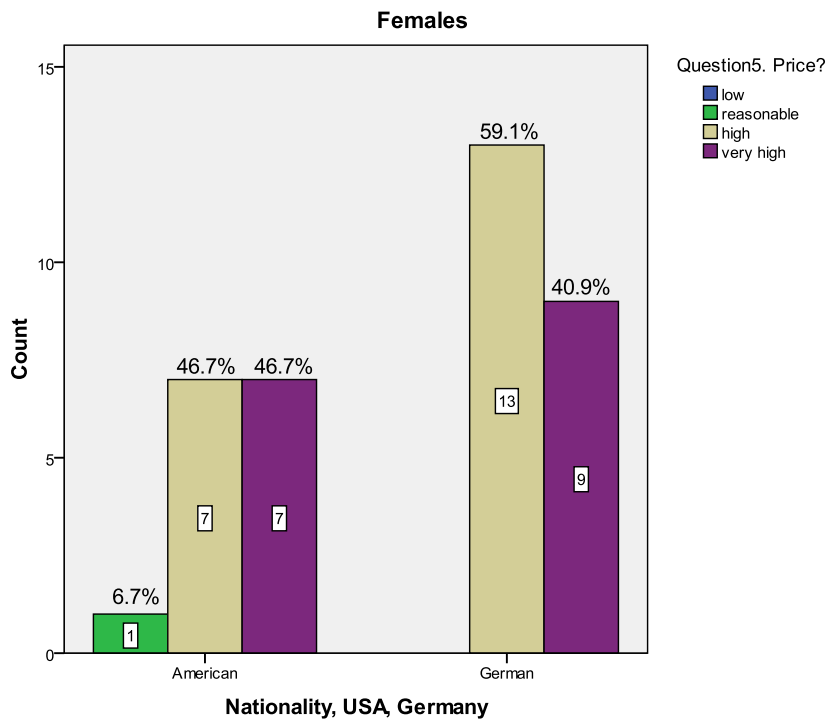
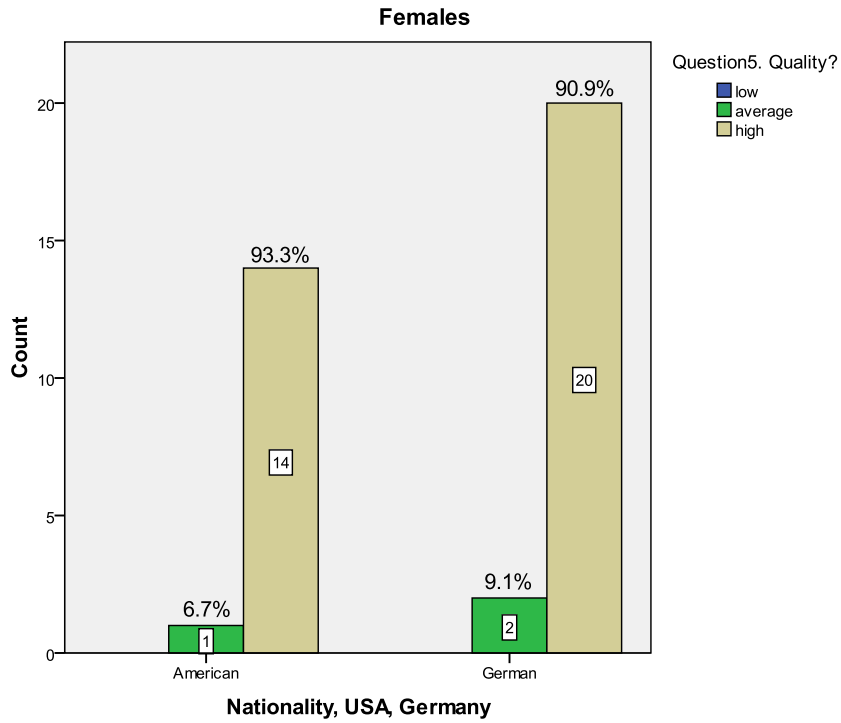
	Nationality, USA, Germany		Total
	American	German	
Question4. How would you asses "Mercedes" as a car? 3	7	3	10
2	6	9	15
1	0	6	6
0	2	2	4
-1	0	2	2
Total	15	22	37

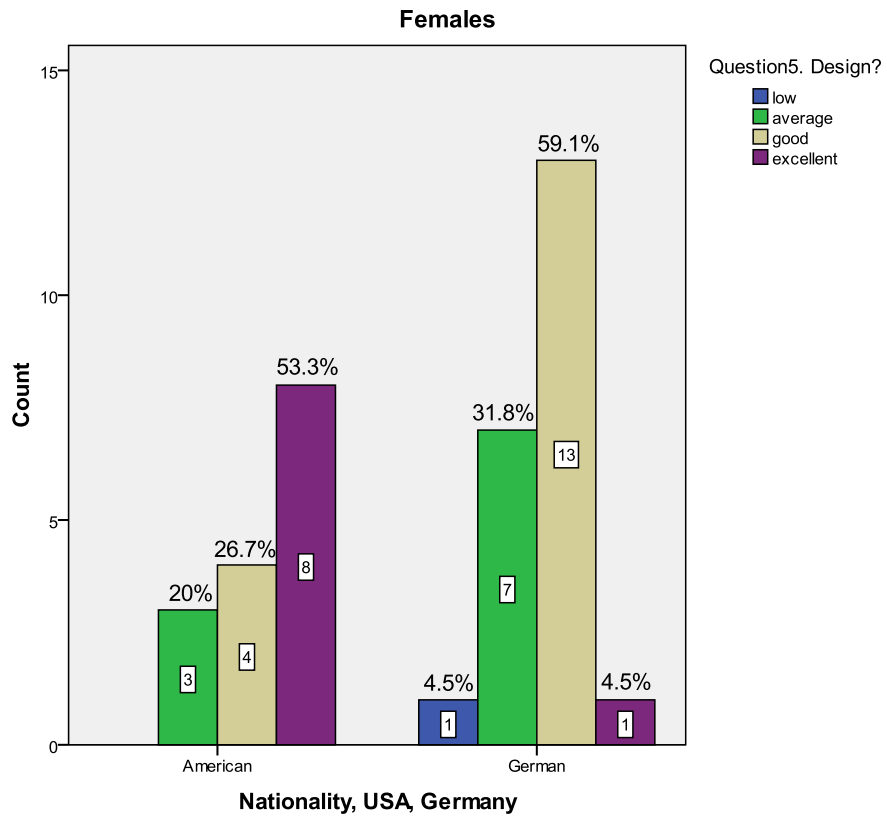


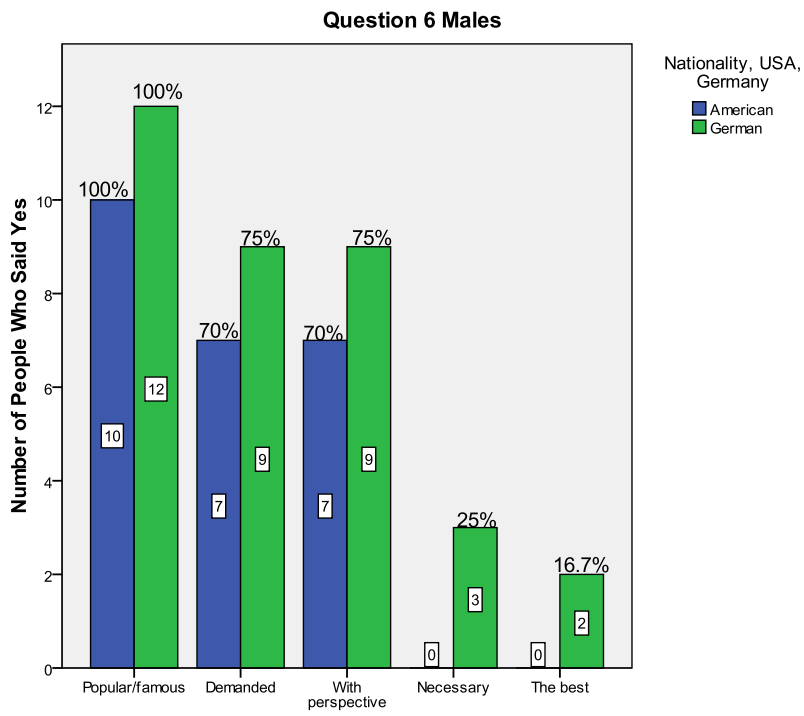
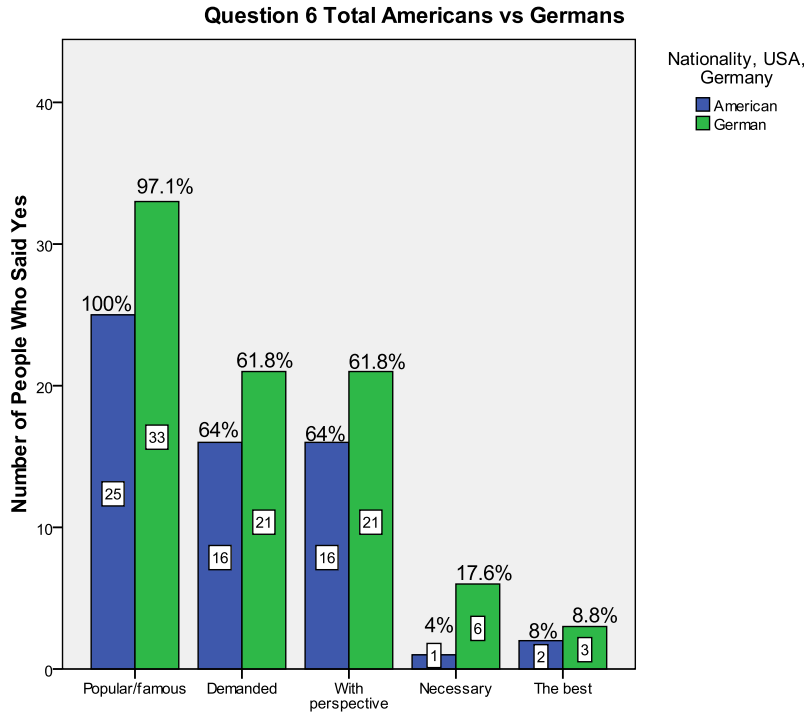


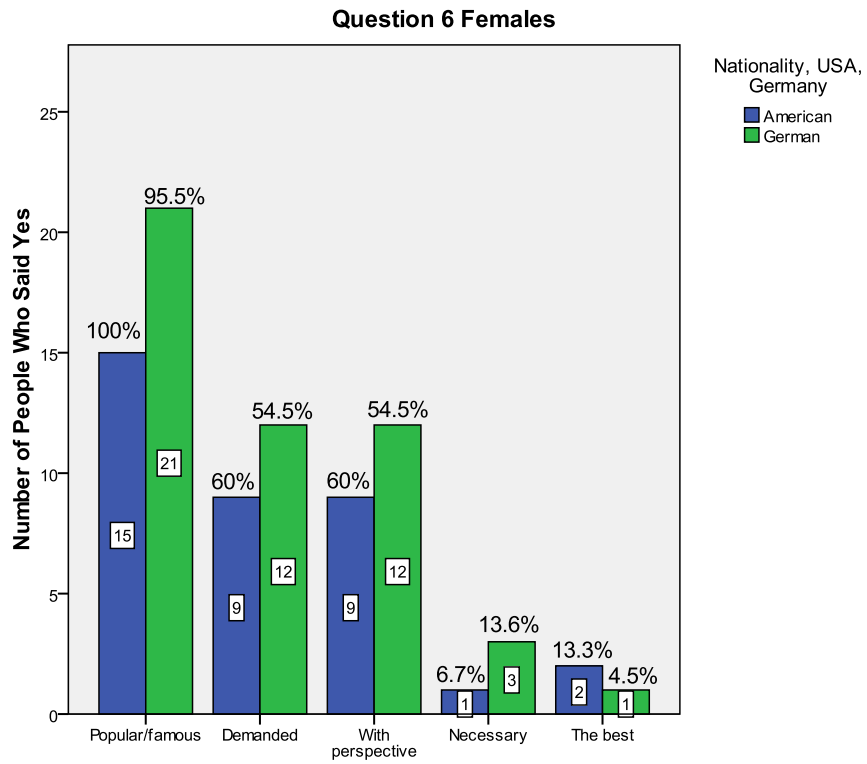


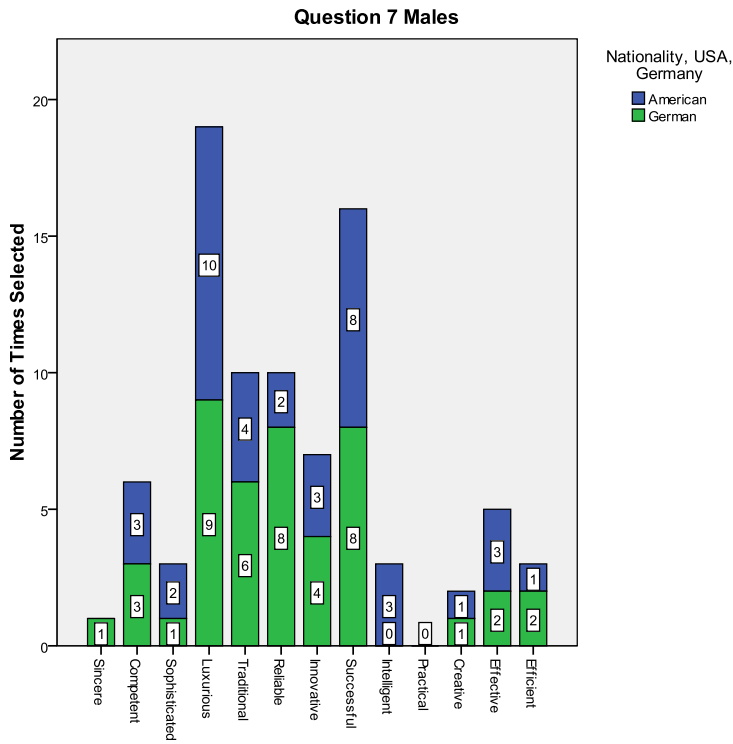
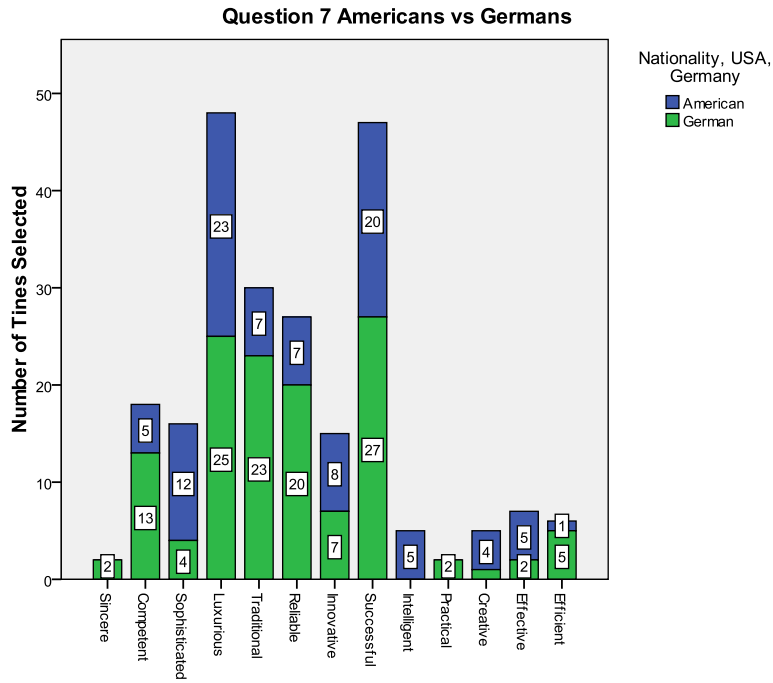




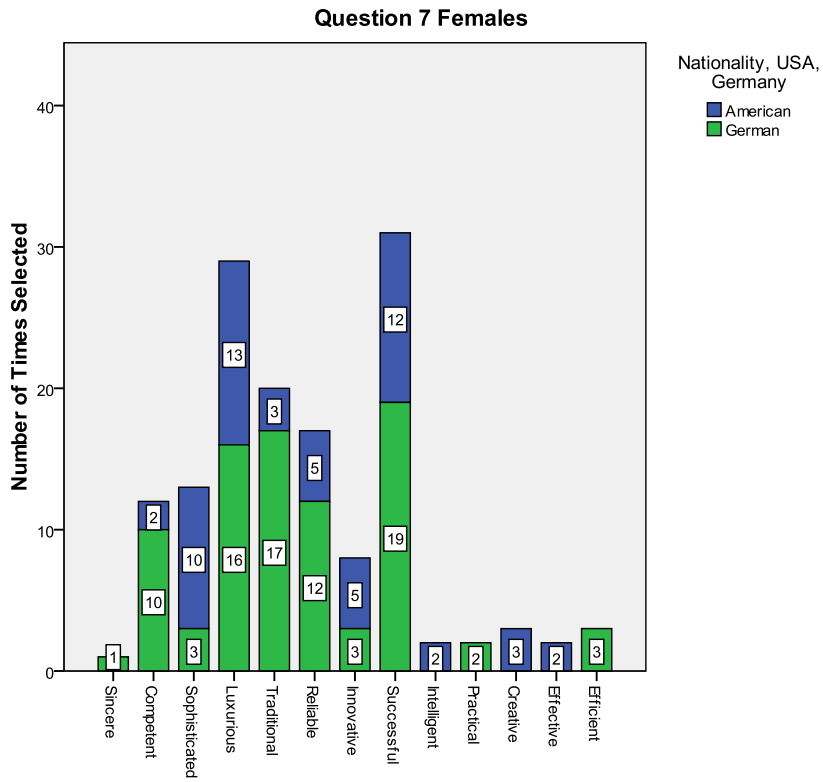


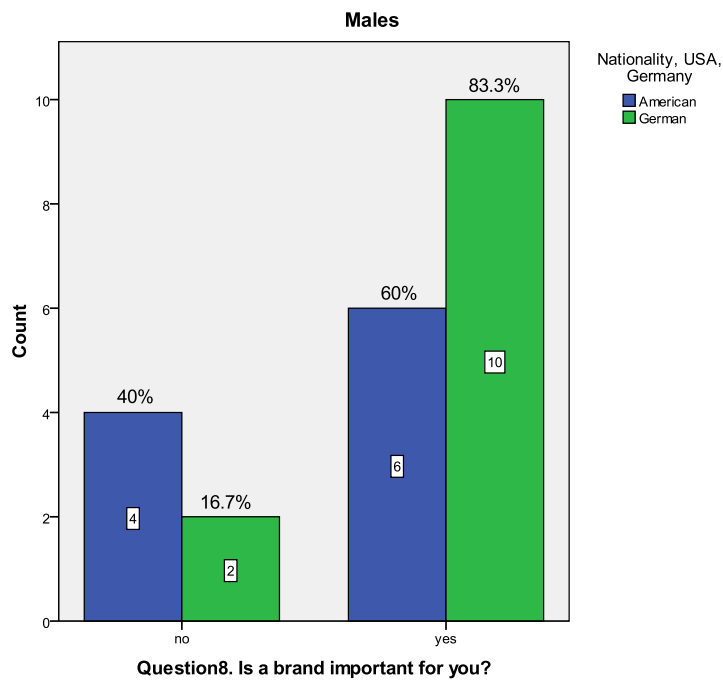
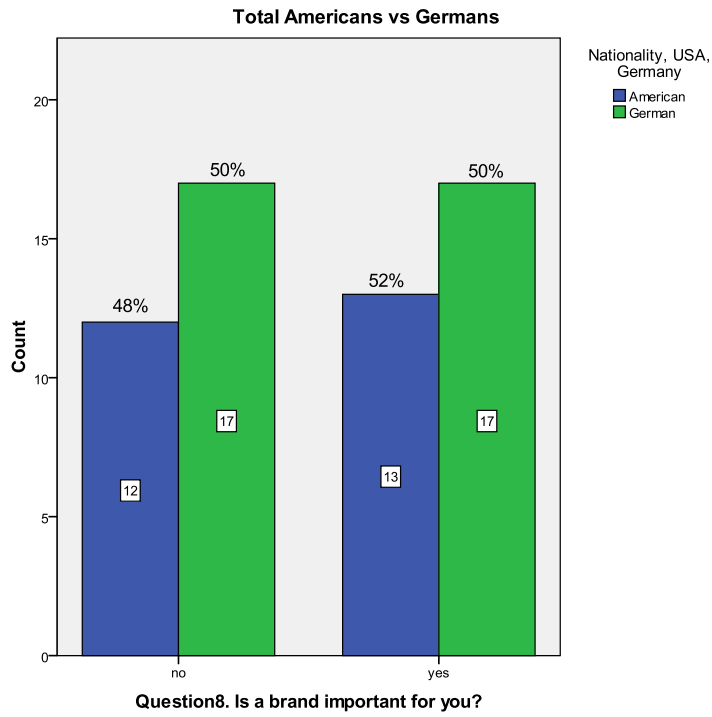


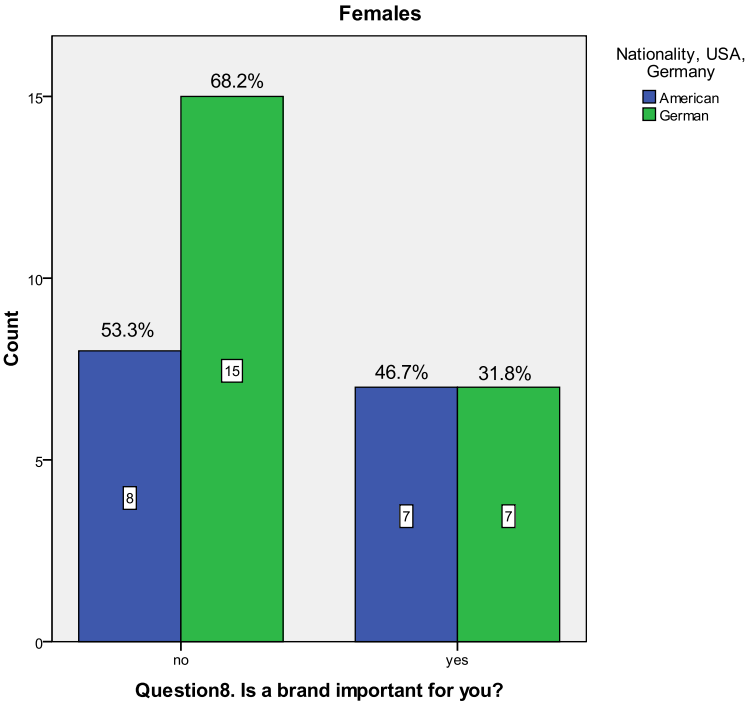


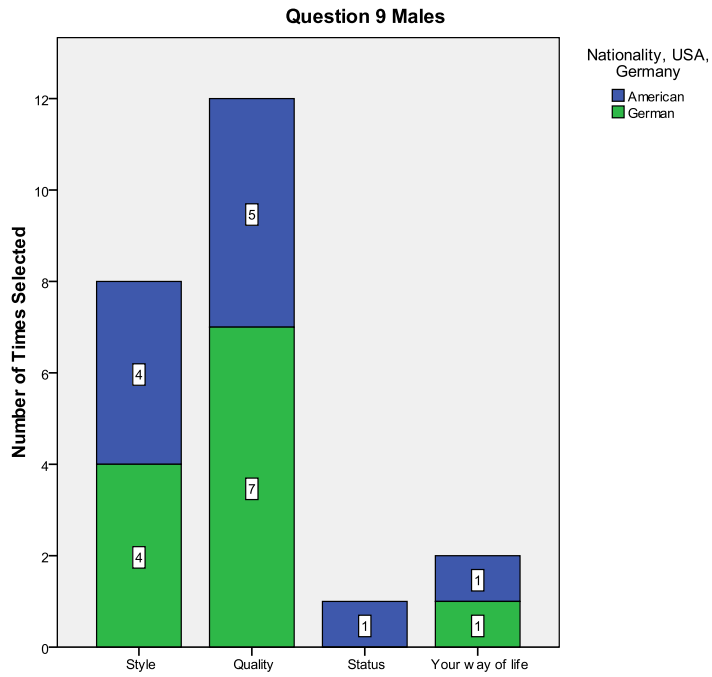
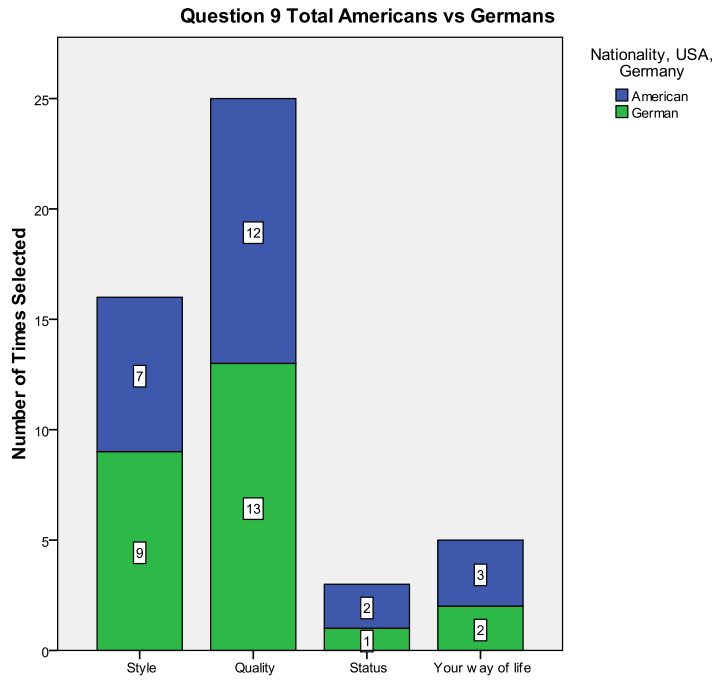


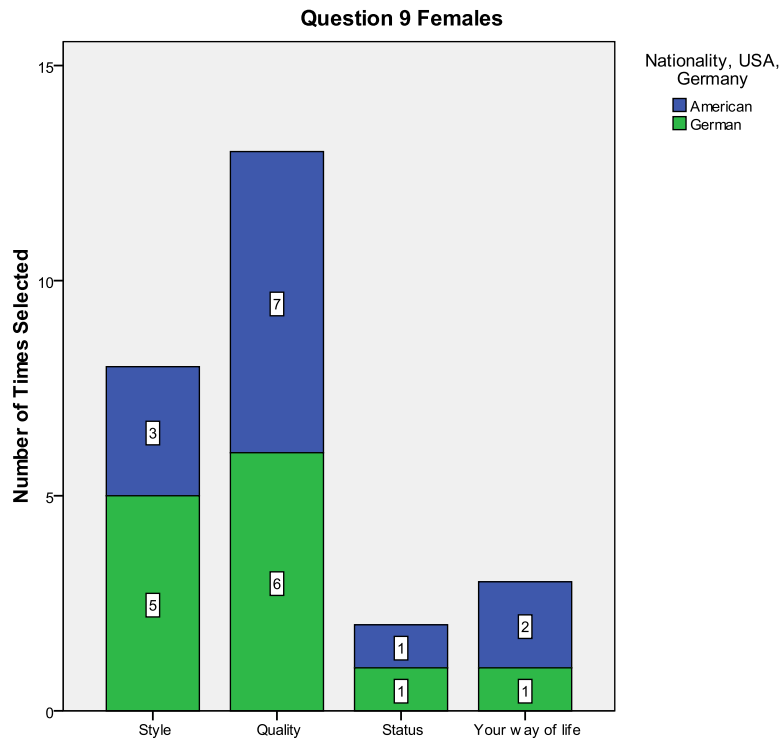


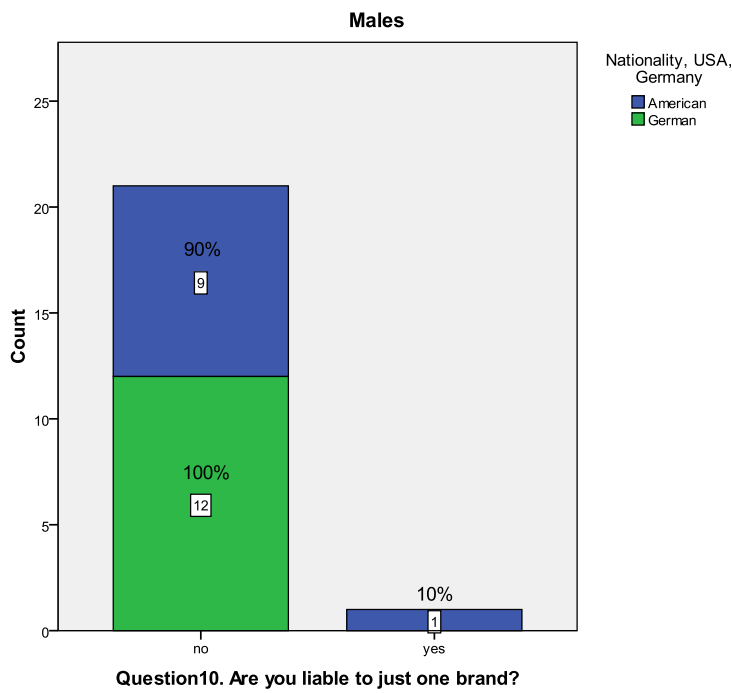
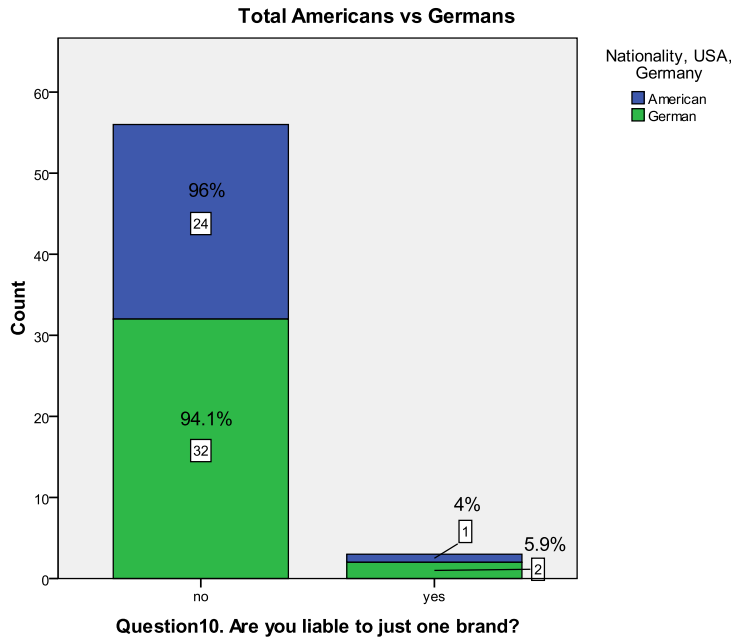


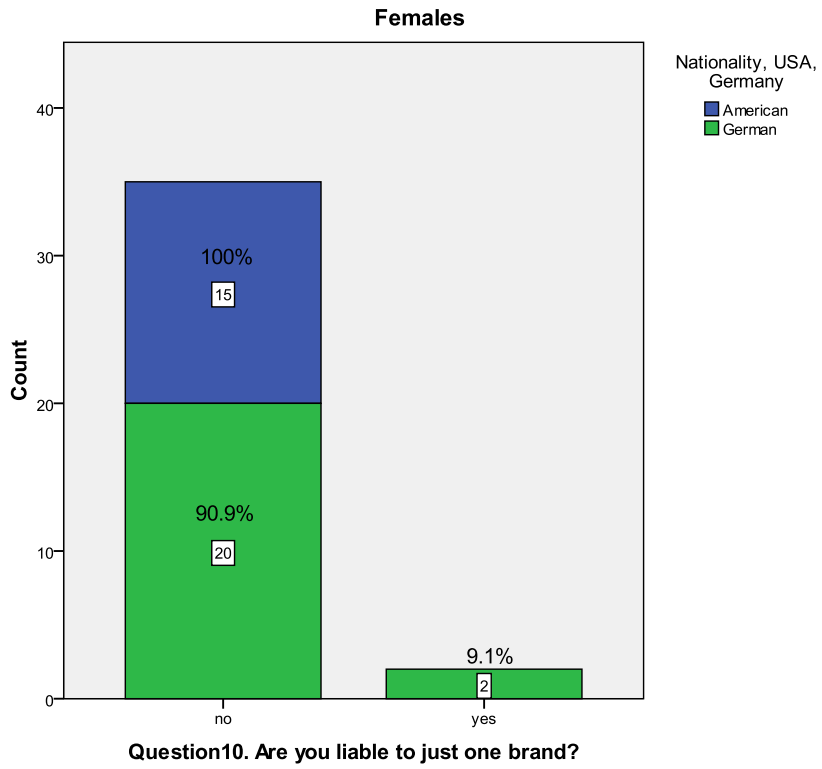


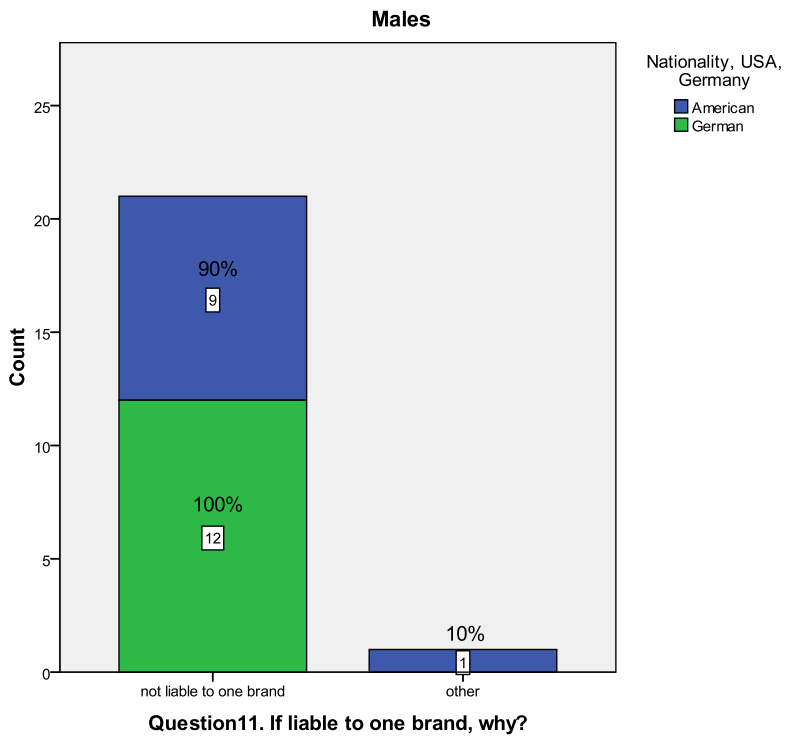
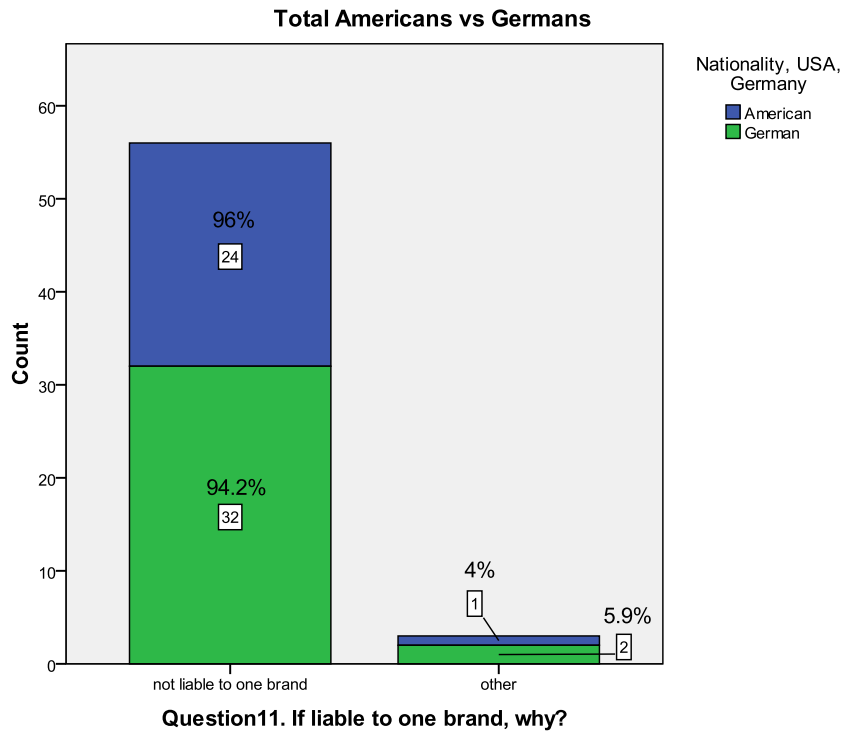




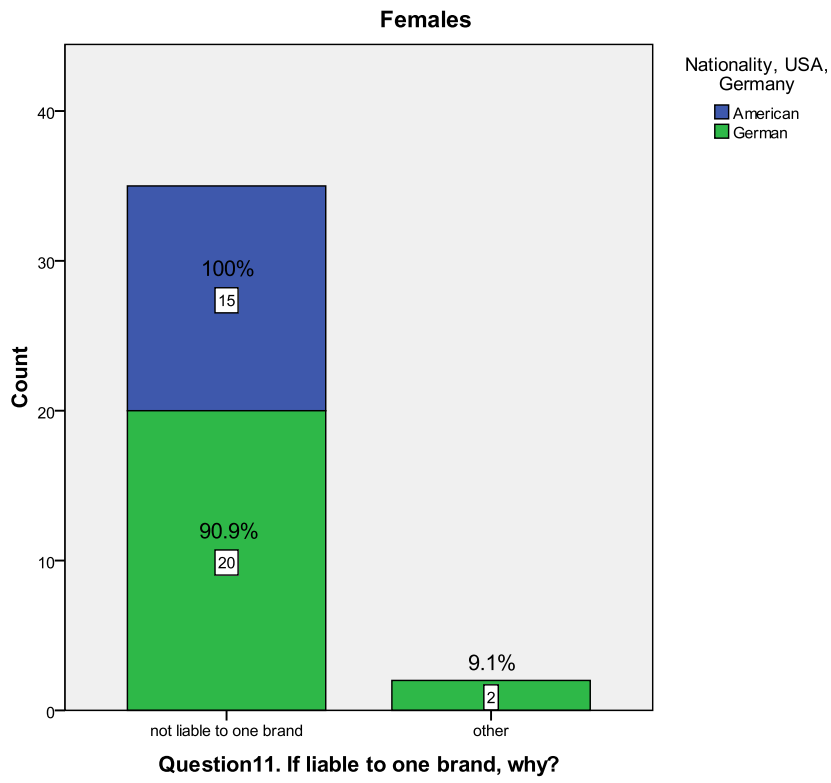












**Americans Question12. Do you prefer brands from your own country or foreign?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Per- cent
Valid	neither	18	72.0	72.0	72.0
	own country	3	12.0	12.0	84.0
	foreign	4	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

**Germans Question12. Do you prefer brands from your own country or foreign?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Per- cent
Valid	neither	13	38.2	38.2	38.2
	own country	21	61.8	61.8	100.0
	Total	34	100.0	100.0	

**American Males Question12. Do you prefer brands from your own country or foreign?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Per- cent
Valid	neither	8	80.0	80.0	80.0
	own country	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
	foreign	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

**German Males Question12. Do you prefer brands from your own country or foreign?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid neither	1	8.3	8.3	8.3
own country	11	91.7	91.7	100.0
Total	12	100.0	100.0	

**American Females Question12. Do you prefer brands from your own country or foreign?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid neither	10	66.7	66.7	66.7
own country	2	13.3	13.3	80.0
foreign	3	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

**German Females Question12. Do you prefer brands from your own country or foreign?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid neither	12	54.5	54.5	54.5
own country	10	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	22	100.0	100.0	