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Motivating Sustainable Behaviors: The Role of Religiosity in a Cross-cultural Context

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Background

- Environmental problems (e.g., pollution, climate change) represent major concerns in the public arena (Royne, Marian, and Martinez; Royne et al., 2011; Seegebarth et al., 2016; Onel and Mukherjee, 2017).
- Marketers, government authorities, and policymakers devote increasing time and effort to finding ways to encourage sustainable behavior (Curtin, 2018).
- However, there is still much more to research and learn about the connection between consumers' attitudes and behaviors.

Background cont...

- Prior research shows that differences in cultural values can influence the intention to engage in sustainable behaviors (e.g., Maya et al., 2011; Minton et al., 2018b).
- Culture has been shown as a major agent of influence in various contexts.



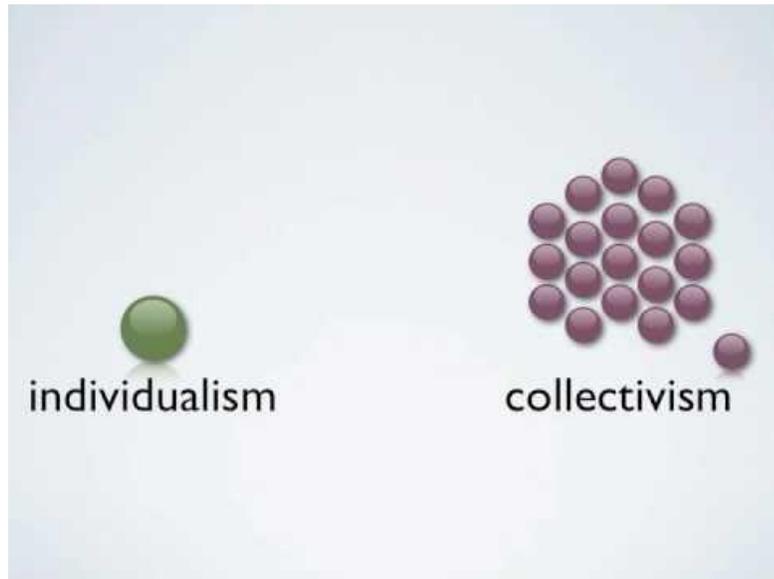
Culture

Hofstede (1980)

- ✓ has captured and explained national cultural differences and their consequences on societies.
- ✓ suggested that cultural dimensions should be observed and studied between societies not between individuals.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Prior research shows that these two dimensions highly influence environmental and green consumption behavior.



United States & Turkey

- Americans are classified as:
 - ✓ Individualistic
 - ✓ Self-oriented
 - ✓ Putting more emphasis on personal rather than group benefits
 - ✓ Short-term oriented
- Turkish people are classified as:
 - ✓ Collectivist
 - ✓ Interdependent
 - ✓ Favoring in-group decisions and group-oriented goals, and preferring cooperation
 - ✓ Long-term oriented

Religiosity

Religiosity:

“the degree to which the members of a religion accept the major beliefs of their religion” .

- Prior research suggests that religiosity can be affected by:
 - ✓ Culture
 - ✓ Religion
 - ✓ Social Environment

Religiosity and Sustainable Behavior

- Prior research suggests conflicting findings:
 - ✓ Religiosity has a weak but positive relationship with environmentally friendly behavior and attitudes (Kanagy and Willits 1993).
 - ✓ People who are high in religiosity are more likely to purchase socially responsible products (i.e fair trade coffee, organic meat) compared to non-religious ones (Graafland 2015).
 - ✓ People that are high in religiosity tend to practice less environmentally friendly behavior (Eckberg and Blocker 1996).

Hypotheses

- **H1:** In collectivist and long-term oriented (vs. individualist and short-term oriented) cultures, religiosity influences (vs. does not influence) sustainable behavior whereby religious consumers are more likely to adopt (a) environmental attitudes and (b) engage in green consumption behaviors.
- **H2:** In collectivist and long-term oriented cultures, individuals' long-term orientation will mediate the relationship between religiosity and green consumption behaviors.

Methodology

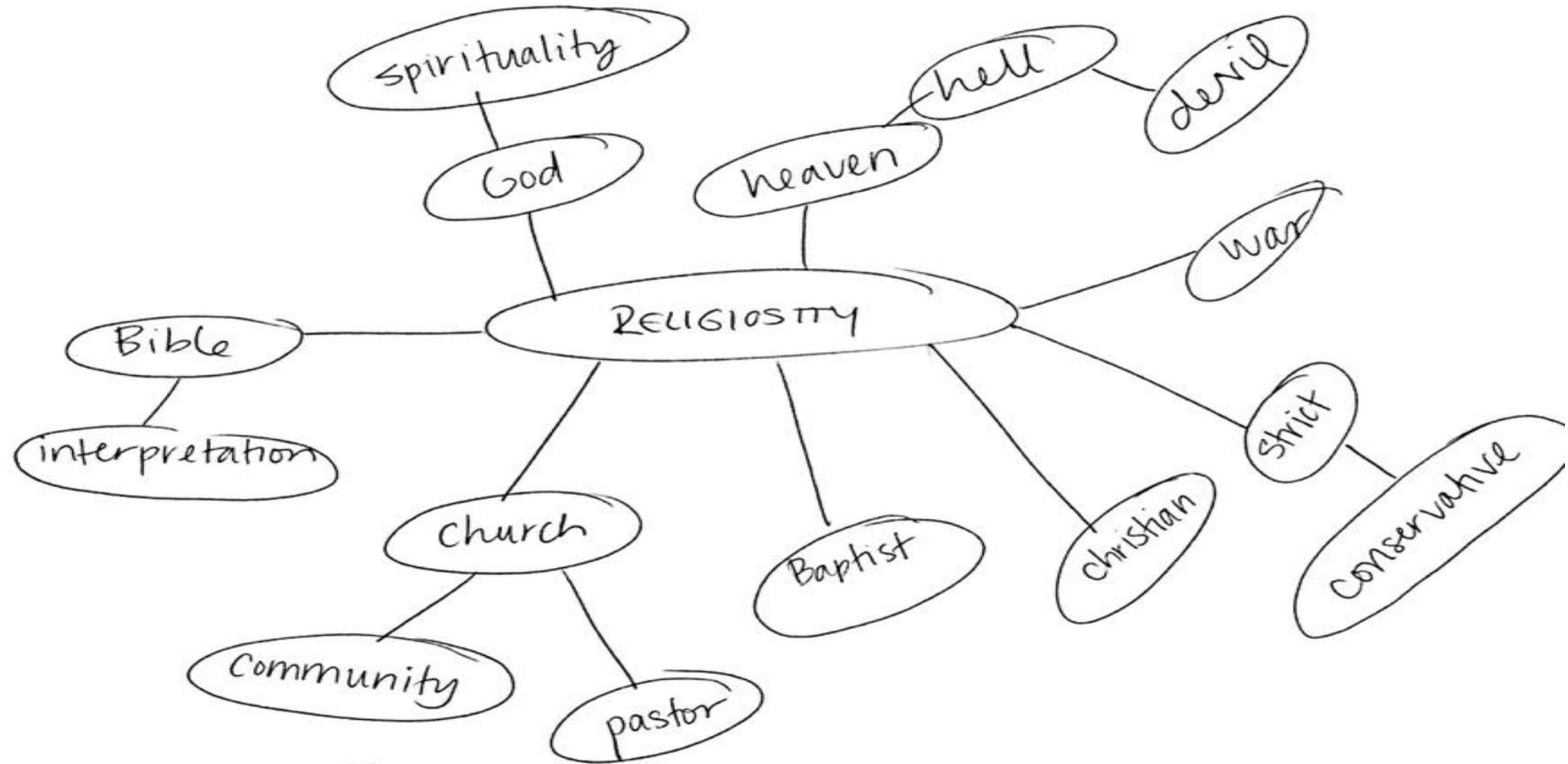
- **Study 1:** Unstructured in-depth interviews in the US and Turkey for the purpose of developing concept maps around religiosity and sustainable behavior.
- **Study 2:** Surveys conducted, in the US and Turkey, to generalize our findings and estimate the magnitude of the effect.
- **Study 3:** Surveys conducted in three different countries (the United States, Turkey, and Greece) in order to generalize our findings from Study 2 in a broader context.

Study 1

- Qualitative approach
- 10 participants from each country (US & Turkey)

- ✓ Interviews conducted through “mapping technique”
 - gives the ability to get rich information from participants without imposing a structured interview (Cassell and Symon 2004)
 - helps to visualize participants’ inner world views (Zweifel and Wezemaal 2012)

Result of a religiosity map



Summary of Our Findings (Study 1)

- Main themes emerged;
 - ✓ The effects of short-term vs. long-term orientation on green consumption
 - ✓ Environmental stewardship
 - ✓ Rules and religious sayings
- Subsidiary theme;
 - ✓ Education

Study 2

- The purpose of this study is not just to reestablish the influence of religiosity on pro-environmental attitude (H1a) and green consumption behavior (H1b) but also to develop a path model of that relationship in two different cultures.
- 396 participants in total from US and Turkey
- Participants were asked to answer questions about their **religiosity** (Martin and Bateman, 2014), **environmental attitudes** (Iyer and Kashyap, 2009), and **green consumption behavior** (adapted from Kim, 2011).
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Study 2 results (H1a)

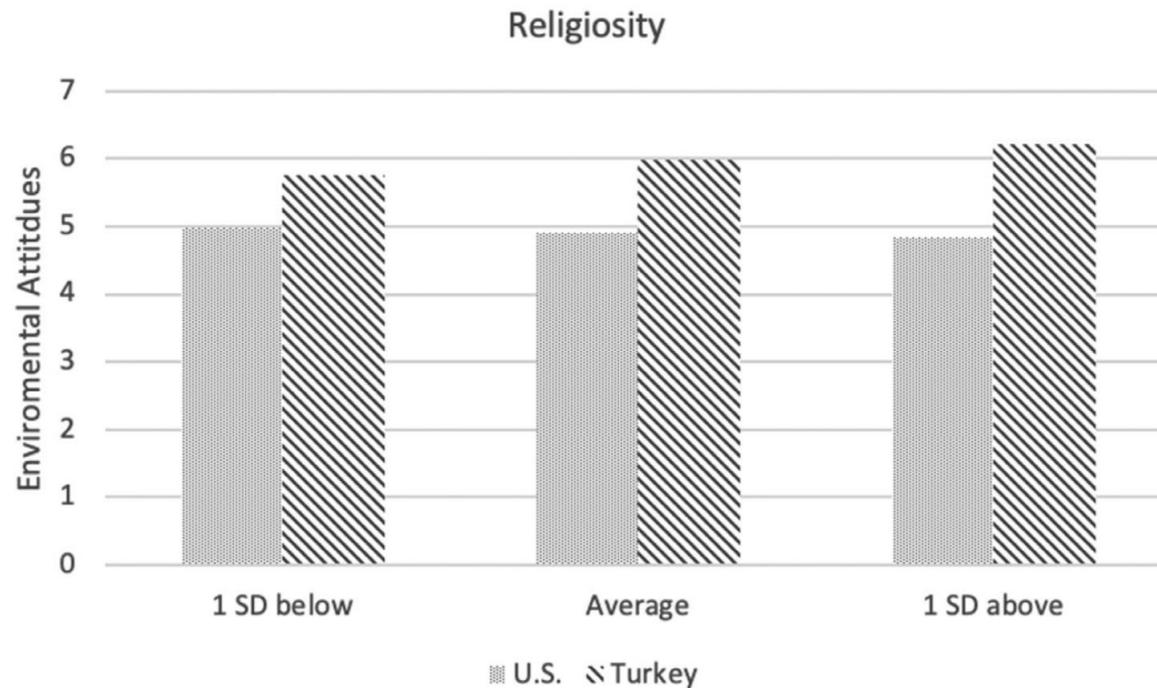
Turkey

- Religiosity significantly predicted consumers' environmental attitudes, $b = .094$, $t(182) = 2.117$, $p < .05$.
- Religiosity explained a significant proportion of variance in Turkish participants' environmental attitudes, $R^2 = .16$, $F(1, 182) = 4.481$, $p < .05$.

US

- Religiosity was not a significant predictor of consumers' environmental attitudes, $b = .028$, $t(104) = .421$, $p > .7$.

Study 2 Moderation Analysis Results- Environmental Attitudes



- The overall model [$F(1, 278) = 34.4314, p < .001, R^2 = .2548$].
- The interaction between country/culture and religiosity [$b = .1465, t(278) = 2.3270, p < .05$].

Study 2 results (H1b)

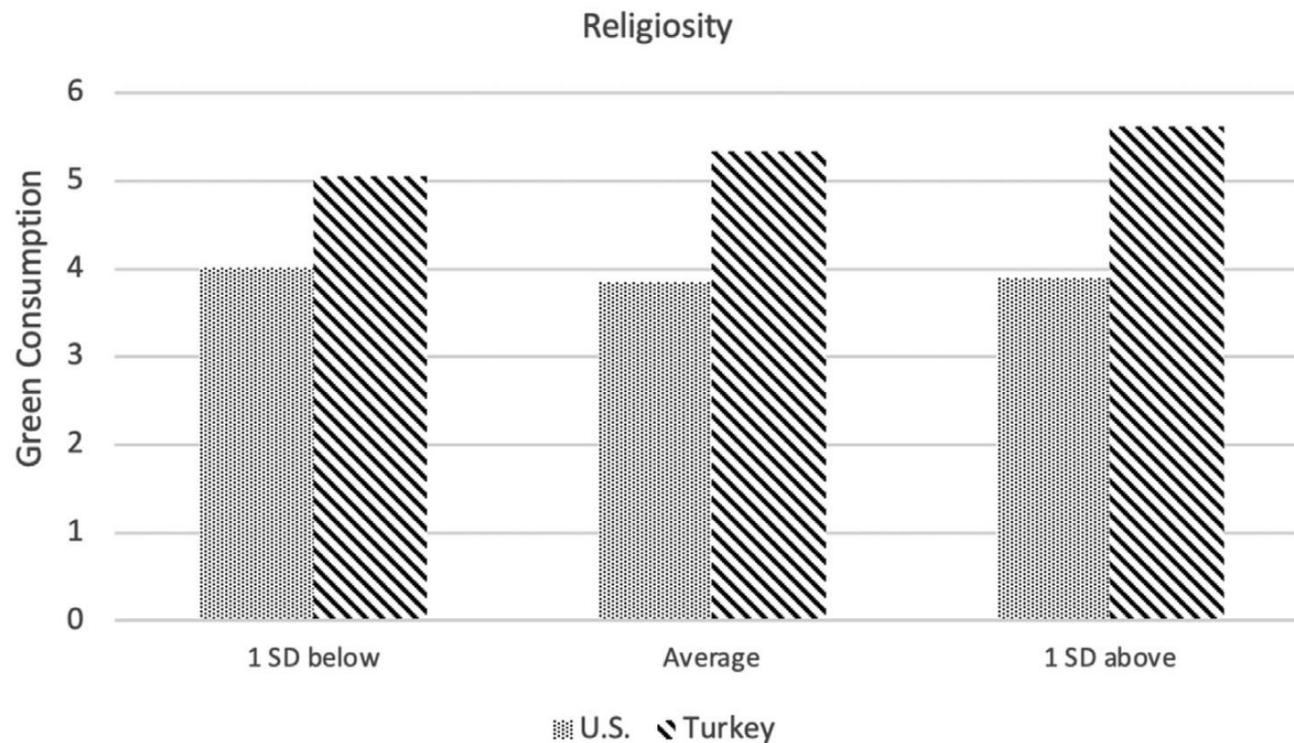
Turkey

- Religiosity significantly predicted consumers' green consumption, $b = .146$, $t(182) = 2.159$, $p < .05$.
- Religiosity explained a significant proportion of variance in Turkish participants' green consumption behavior, $R^2 = .158$, $F(1, 182) = 4.663$, $p < .05$.

US

- Religiosity was not a significant predictor of consumers' green consumption, $b = .006$, $t(104) = .067$, $p > .9$.

Study 2 Moderation Analysis Results-Green Consumption



- The overall model [$F(1, 278) = 16.3217, p < .001, R^2 = .2$].
- The interaction between country/culture and religiosity [$b = .2502, t(278) = 2.0730, p < .05$].

Study 3

- The purpose of Study 3 was twofold;
 - First, we wanted to replicate our findings from Study 2, and second, we wanted to see if the dominant religion had any effect at all.
 - We chose Greece as the third country because it offered a nice contrast to Turkey and the United States.
 - Greece shared a dominant religion (Christianity) but was unlike the US on the two cultural dimensions, that is, collectivism/individualism and short-term/long-term.
 - On the other hand, Greece was collectivist and long-term oriented, values that were shared with Turkey even though their dominant religions (Christianity vs. Islam) were different.

Study 3 cont...

- 618 respondents recruited from 3 different countries (US, Turkey, Greece).
- In addition to the same scales, we used in Study 2, we also included questions aiming to test participants' long-term orientation—8-items at the individual level (Bearden et al., 2006).

Study 3 results (H1a)

Turkey

- Religiosity significantly predicted consumers' environmental attitudes [$b = .350$, $t(189) = 7.986$, $p < .001$].
- Religiosity explained a significant proportion of variance in Turkish participants' environmental attitudes [$R^2 = .25$, $F(1, 189) = 63.778$, $p < .001$].

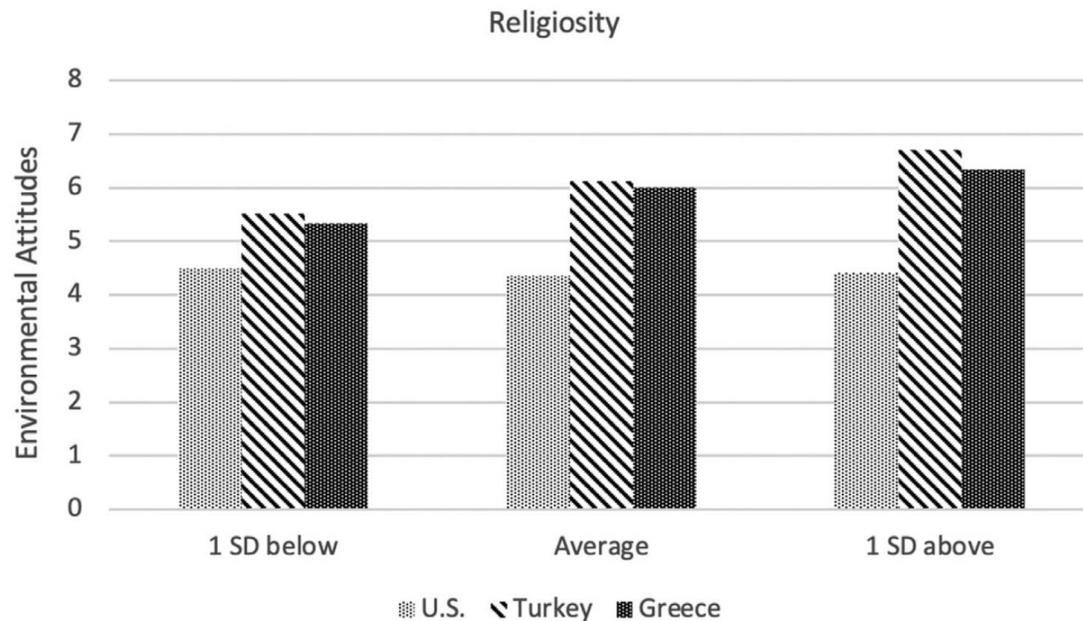
Greece

- Religiosity significantly predicted consumers' environmental attitudes, [$b = .092$, $t(122) = 2.361$, $p < .05$].
- Religiosity explained a significant proportion of variance in Greek participants' environmental attitudes, [$R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 122) = 4.323$, $p < .05$].

US

- $b = .205$, $t(139) = 1.819$, $p > .06$.

Study 3 Moderation Analysis Results- Environmental Attitudes



- The overall model [$F(7, 448) = 26.6466, p < .001, R^2 = .2940$].
- The interaction between country/culture and religiosity [Turkey: $b = .4424, t[448] = 5.5194, p < .001$; Greece: $b = .1881, t[448] = 2.6553, p < .001$].

Study 3 results (H1b)

Turkey

- Religiosity significantly predicted consumers' green consumption behavior, [$b = .451$, $t(189) = 7.477$, $p < .001$].
- Religiosity explained a significant proportion of variance in Turkish participants' green consumption, [$R^2 = .23$, $F(1, 189) = 55.902$, $p < .001$].

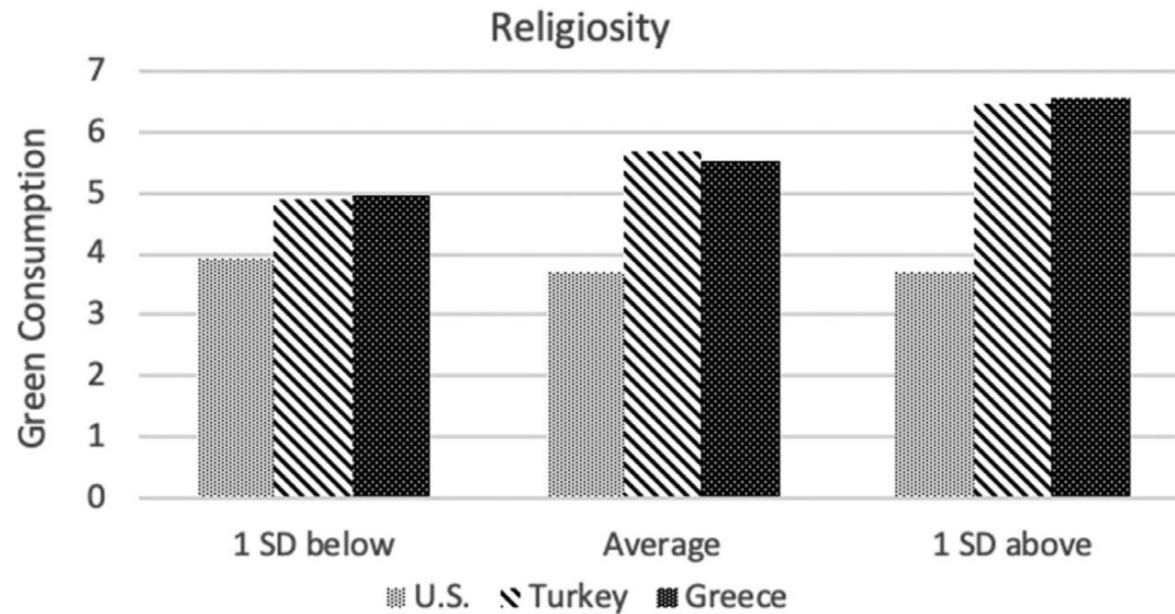
Greece

- Religiosity significantly predicted consumers' green consumption [$b = .078$, $t(122) = 2.375$, $p < .05$].
- Religiosity also explained a significant proportion of variance in Greek participants' green consumption behavior, [$R^2 = .10$, $F(1, 122) = 3.890$, $p < .05$].

US

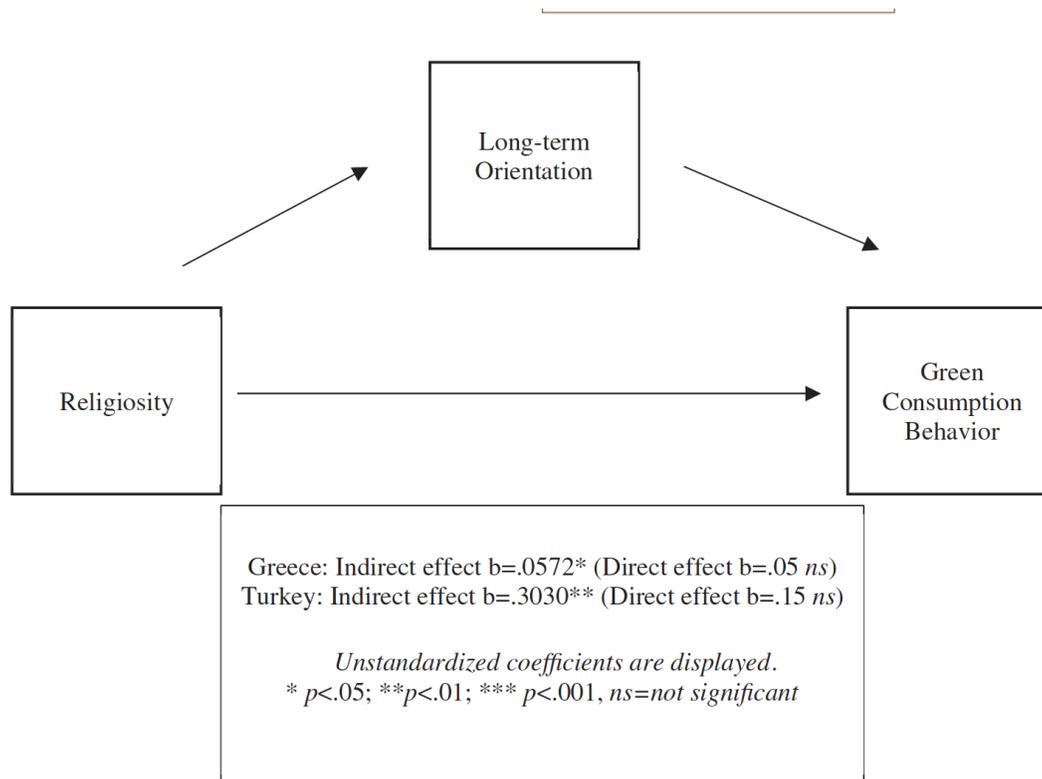
- $b = .125$, $t(139) = 1.147$, $p > .2$.

Study 3 Moderation Analysis Results-Green Consumption



- The overall model [$F(7, 448) = 27.1008, p < .001, R^2 = .2806$].
- The interaction between country/ culture and religiosity [Turkey: $b = .5108, t[448] = 5.2653, p < .001$; Greece: $b = .2618, t[448] = 3.0442, p < .001$].

Meditation Analysis (H2)



- Greece: (effect = .0572, 95% confidence interval: .0211 to .1217).
- Turkey: (effect = .3030, 95% confidence interval: .1694 to .4510).
- US [confidence interval: .1898 to .0219].

Theoretical Contributions

- This is the first study that empirically show the differential effects of religiosity in collectivist and long-term oriented cultures versus individualistic and short-term oriented cultures.
- Our research also makes a methodological contribution through the use of an exploratory mixed-method approach.
- One of the first studies that show the value of using mapping techniques, and by extension other qualitative methods, in consumer research, especially when researching abstract or sensitive concepts such as religiosity.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY INITIATIVES

- Policy makers and NGOs would be well-advised to take into account the level of religiosity, the degree of individualism or collectivism, and whether the time orientation is long- or short-term in their societies in the design of campaigns to promote sustainable behavior.
- In collectivist and long-term–oriented cultures, governments, policymakers, NGOs, and media should focus on religiosity and use religious themes to promote sustainable consumer behaviors.
- Additionally, green advertisements launched in countries that are collectivist and long-term oriented could benefit from including themes(e.g., language, figures, religious sayings, etc.) related to religiosity.

Thank you for attending my session!

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