

Qualitative analysis of a consumer-focused mindfulness-based intervention – a comparison of methods

Pascal Frank¹, Laura Stanzus², Daniel Fischer¹, Tina Böhme²

1 Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Institute for Environmental and Sustainability Communication (INFU), Scharnhorststr. 1, 21335 Lüneburg, Germany

2 Technical University Berlin, Institute for Vocational Education and Work Studies, Marchstraße 23, 10587 Berlin, Germany

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In this paper we compare the application of different qualitative analytical methods for investigating the effects of a consumer-focused, mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) on consumption practices. MBIs have received rapidly growing attention during the last decades. A few scholars have also started to reflect upon MBIs' potential to stimulate changes in participants' consumption practices towards more sustainable ones. Inspired by these theoretical works, the TU Berlin in cooperation with the Leuphana University in Germany launched the BiNKA-project.

BiNKA is the first empirical study investigating the effects of a consumer-focused MBI on individuals' consumer practices. It enquires whether the attendance of an eight-week long consumer-focused MBI results in more sustainable consumption patterns with regards to food and clothing. Specifically, the study looks at MBIs' potential to reduce the attitude-behaviour-gap by aligning participants' intentions to act more sustainably with their actual consumption practices. BiNKA is predicated upon a mixed methods design. The study foresees pre- and post-questionnaires in order to quantitatively analyse the effects of the intervention on mindfulness, consumption practices and mediating constructs such as connectedness to nature, material values etc.

However, researchers have expressed scepticism concerning purely quantitative approaches toward mindfulness. Therefore and because the relation between mindfulness and consumption practices remains largely unexplored, the quantitative part is complemented by a qualitative investigation. Given the pioneering character of the project within this research field, a methodological orientation of how to appropriately enquire the effects of the MBI on participants' consumption practices was missing. The research team turned this gap into a separate study. By applying different methodologies (Content Analysis, Grounded Theory, Interpretative-Phenomenological Analysis, hermeneutic approaches and finally self-reflexive analyses) over a period of 4 months, a systematic comparison of these approaches was undertaken. We conclude that a *most appropriate* method for investigating the link between MBIs and peoples' consumption practices does not exist. Each method rather provides different perspectives on the topic, coming along with specific advantages, challenges and blind spots.