

Financial Incentives And Corporate Culture As Motivations For Pro-environmental Behavior At Work

Introduction

Climate change is a problem that is more relevant today than ever before (Ruiz-Benito et al., 2020). To address this topic, it is important to understand what motivates a person to promote pro-environmental behavior (PEB). In this regard, self-determination theory (SDT) has already been used to elaborate on environmentally friendly behavior (Pelletier et al., 2011; Pelletier & Lavergne, 2016). The different types of behavioral regulation proposed by SDT (autonomy, social involvement, competence) are correlated with various categories of PEB (Pelletier et al., 1998). Behavior in the work context also depends on the specific cultural conditions (Graham et al., 2017), which is why we focus our work on the influence of corporate culture on pro-environmental behavior. There is also a positive relationship between green corporate culture and corporate sustainability (CS) (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010; Tseng et al., 2017). In addition, financial incentives may serve as indicators of desired behavior (Lindberg & Steg, 2007; Schwartz et al., 2019). If they are set by a higher authority, they convey responsibilities and implicit norms about what behavior is right, important, as well as goal-directed (Thøgersen, 2003).

Instruments

Scale	Source	Items	α	Example (as used in survey)
Self-determined motivation	Pelletier et al. (1998)	12	.91	<i>Ich habe Freude daran, zu einer besseren Umwelt beizutragen.</i>
Subscales: identified, integrated & intrinsic regulation = Autonomous motivation				
Subscales: introjected & external regulation = Controlled motivation				
Corporate Culture	Denison et al., 2006	18	.90	<i>Versuche, Veränderungen zu schaffen, stoßen meist auf Widerstand.</i>
Pro-Environmental Intention (PEI)	Blok et al. (2015) & adopted PEB-items from Blok et al. (2015)	11	.81	<i>Ich werde meinen Computer/Notebook ausschalten, wenn ich nach Hause gehe.</i>
Pro-Environmental Behavior (PEB)	Blok et al. (2015)	12	.82	<i>Ich kopiere und drucke Beidseitig.</i>

Hypotheses

H1a: PEI mediates the relation between Autonomous Motivation and PEB.

H1b: PEI mediates the relation between Controlled Motivation and PEB.

H2: Material incentives have a positive effect on the motivation to behave sustainably at work.

H3: Material incentives in the form of a lottery moderate the link between corporate culture and PEI as they increase the effect.

H4: PEI mediates the relation between Corporate Culture and PEB.

H5: PEI is positively correlated with PEB.

Sample

N= 66 (♂= 42.4% | ♀= 57.6%)

Age: 21-66 (M=35.8, SD= 13.3)

Inclusion criteria: Person working at least 20 h/week, Android user

Survey: Four online questionnaires in German over four weeks, app usage between the second and the fourth questionnaire

Method: Multiple Regression and Correlation via IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software; Mediation and Moderation analyses via PROCESS Macro v3.4 (Hayes, 2018)

Data collection: 11th October until 10th December 2021

Method

App

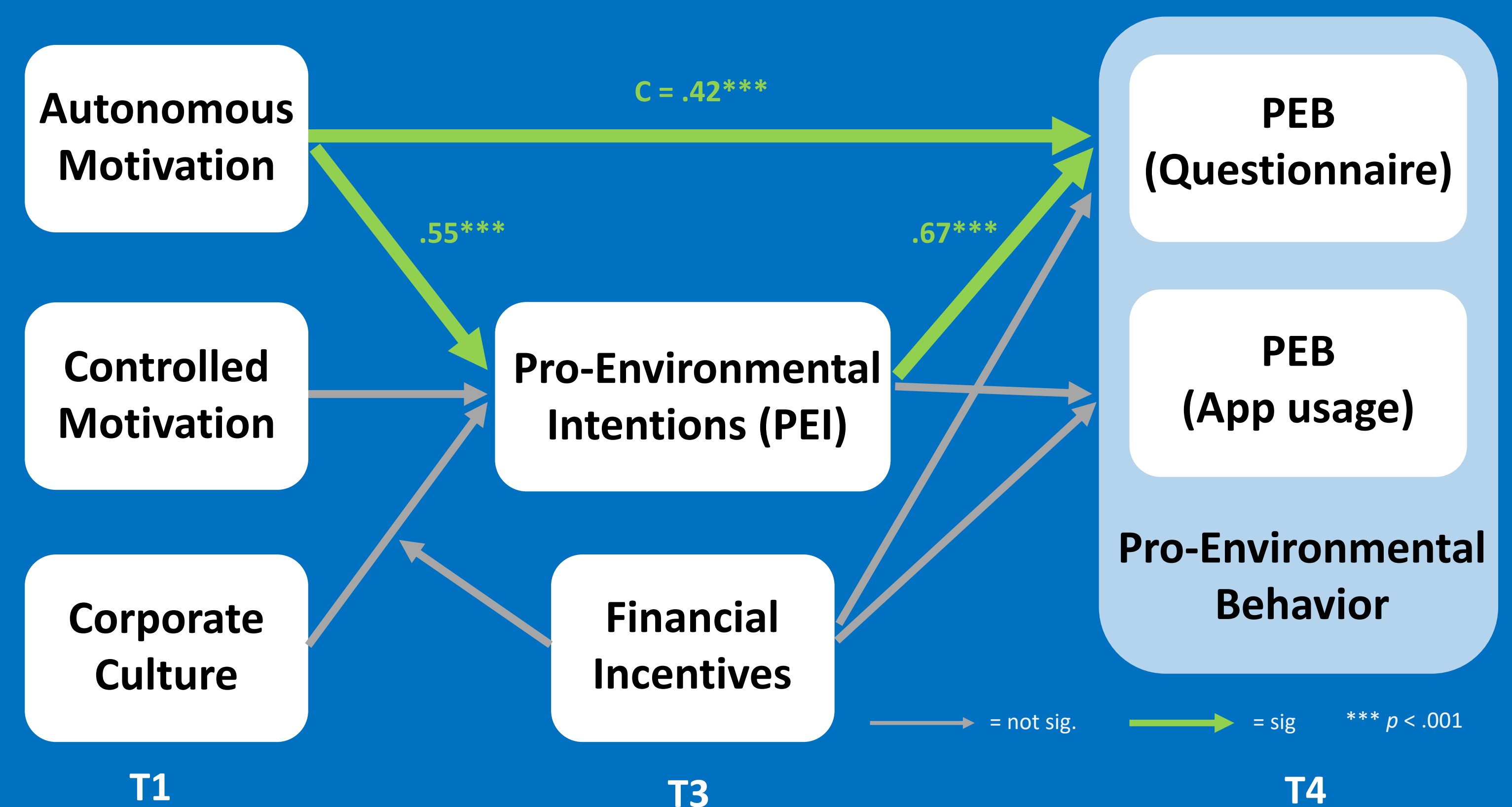
Apart from the questionnaire, PEB was assessed through a specially designed app called „Grüne Challenge“, which was programmed by Amin Atitallah. The participants were invited to take part in as many of the 45 challenges implemented within the app as they were willing to. These challenges targeted various pro-environmental behaviors.

Financial incentives

To incentivize app usage half of the participants were informed about the opportunity of winning a cash prize if they were amongst those completing the most challenges.



Results and Research Model



Discussion

Contrary to our expectations, financial incentives had no influence on the sustainable behavior shown. Yet, these results may corroborate previous findings that showed monetary incentives to either strengthen or undermine autonomous motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1999). Furthermore, there was no significant positive relationship between Corporate Culture and app use/PEB. While motivation also did not significantly influence app usage, there was a significant positive relationship between autonomous motivation and PEB via PEI. Foremost, the results indicate a strong discrepancy between self-reported and actual behavior, known as the intention-behavior-gap. Similar observations were made in other, comparable studies (e. g. Grimmer & Miles, 2017).

Limitations

The app used limits the results in several aspects. The requirement to download the app and the additional focus on Android users could have led to distortions in the sample. Furthermore, the challenges presented within the app relate to very specific sustainable practices which could be detrimental to accurate measurement of pro-environmental behavior at work. Due to technical constraints, it was not possible to distinguish between times of app usage between T2 and T3 and T3 and T4. Therefore, the exact effect of financial incentives on PEB, which were presented at T3 could not be measured but had to be derived from the data indirectly.

