Energy-efficient business travel: motivation in behavior intervention programs

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Introduction: The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a well-known theory explaining factors (attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control) influencing the intention to engage in various behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). Although TPB has proven useful to explain specific behaviors, the underlying factors differ in impact and is sometimes even non-significant (Eriksson & Forward, 2011). In general, intentions explain 30% of a behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001), which imply that there are other factors of importance. Thus, there is still a need to understand the processes underlying behavioral changes. A review of soft policy measures shows that in general they are effective in triggering a change. Yet, the variety of the results (5-15%) makes it difficult to infer why the measures are effective (Richter et al., 2011). A possible explanation is that people are prone to change depending on their degree of motivation. This study analyzes if and how intervention programs could be adopted to peoples’ degree of motivation, type of motivation, and motivational process. Theoretical background: An alternative to TPB is the Trans Theoretical Model (TTM; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983) claiming that changes occur in a process rather than in a one-step approach. TTM has its origin in health intervention research where it is successfully applied to explain smoking cessation, substance abuse, and sexual behavior, but it has also been applied in transport research (Bamberg, 2013) mainly with the aim to explain existing travel behavior. Few studies have so far been conducted to predict a travel behavior change.

Method: Three workplaces were included in this study. A survey was distributed at each workplace with the aim to identify travel habits and stage of change. In total 240 respondents participated in a baseline survey. During spring 2017 several interventions will be implemented with the aim to change travel habits to and from work and in business travel. Interventions implemented will be adjusted according to stage of change. Results: The result showed that 19% of the respondents are in the precontemplation stage (not ready), 25% in the contemplation stage (getting ready), 10% in the preparation stage (ready), 11% in the action stage, and 16% in the maintenance stage (strive to keep the behavior). The remaining 19% do not go by car. We use social and moral norms, attitude toward alternatives, and perceived behavioral control to explain stage of change. Conclusion: Employees have different degree of motivation for changing their commute and business travel as this study bear witness to. We show how stage of change are effected by different types of interventions which is of importance when designing future travel change programs.

References:
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Underlying motivations of individual’s involvement in environmental behavior

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