Collaborative registered replication of Griskevicius et al (2010): Can pro-environmental behavior be promoted by inducing status competition?

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Introduction

The Collaborative Replications and Education Project (Wagge et al., 2019b), or CREP, is one of several initiatives seeking to improve undergraduate training in research methods. CREP's role includes selecting studies to be closely replicated by students, structuring the methods for the replication, reviewing projects both before and after data collection, and facilitating the publication of a pooled analysis (such as the present paper). While CREP has primarily a pedagogical mission, we hope to also advance science by providing additional evidence for the boundaries of published effects.

CREP participants are students and instructors at institutions around the world. We offer CREP as one alternative to the traditional undergraduate research project; while different models may work better for some instructors, institutions, and students, the CREP offers some benefits that other models may not. First, students learn methods by directly replicating the work of scholars in the field. Second, students get to participate in authentic research (Grahe, CITE) that may eventually be published in a pooled analysis and will also be available on the Open Science Framework (osf.io) to meta-analytic researchers in the future. Third, students learn the importance of many key open science practices and issues such as preregistration, replication, open methods, and open data (Kidwell et al., 2016). Fourth, students engage with reviewers (CREP team members) external to their institution. Until now, several CREP studies have been published (e.g., Ghelfi et al., 2020; Leighton et al., 2018; Wagge et al., 2019a) and others have been included in meta-analyses (Lehman et al., 2018), which testifies to the quality of the project.

The present report documents a pooled analysis of data collected by teams who signed up to replicate one of CREP's earliest selections for replication: Experiment 1 from Griskevicius et al. (2010).

The original study: Status competition and pro-environmental behavior

Can pro-environmental behavior be promoted by inducing status competition? Griskevicius and colleagues (2010) tried to give an answer to this question and reported the results of three experiments suggesting that status competition can be used to promote pro-environmental behavior. Namely, the authors of the original study showed that activating status motives incites people to choose green products over more luxurious non-green products. In other words, Griskevicius and his associates claimed that green purchases are motivated by competitive altruism, that is the notion that people are trying to appear more altruistic when competing for status. Showing publicly pro-environmental behavior suggests people care, these altruistic tendencies are positively valued by others and it gives people prestige and status. These authors claimed that people are even more motivated to shop for green products when they are costly, and not when these products are cheaper than luxurious products. To conclude, the original study suggested that status competition can promote pro-environmental behavior.

In CREP, the first experiment from the Griskevicius et al (2010) study was selected. Experiment 1 investigated how activating a motive for status influenced respondents to choose between relatively luxurious non-green and less-luxurious pro-environmental products. Importantly, the prices of both groups of products were equal. The experiment included three conditions, i.e., condition activating status motives and two control motive conditions. Non-green products were selected so they are more desirable than their green counterparts. In the experimental condition, participants read a cover "status" story that elicited "a desire for social status", and it was predicted that it will increase the likelihood of choosing prosocial, green products. In the first control condition, participants read a story that elicited similar levels of affect, but did not elicit status motives. It was predicted that participants will select non-green products more frequently in the control motive condition. The second control condition did not include a cover story, and participants simply selected among products. In the original paper, using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the product composite found a large effect of status prime (d=0.47). To summarize, the first experiment of Griskevicius et al (2010) suggested that activating status motives inclines people towards choosing pro-environmental products over more luxurious nongreen products that might signal prosocial, self-sacrificing behavior.

Method

CREP Procedures

The selection process for the studies that will be replicated in CREP was outlined by Wagge and colleagues (2019). Briefly, in 2013, CREP volunteers located citations for the most-cited 2010 papers from the flagship empirical journals in psychology and its subdisciplines. In this way, CREP was able to narrow down the pool for selection while also guaranteeing that the paper we selected was both recent and high-interest. The goal was not to find the best paper for replication in terms of the field's specific needs, but rather to find a set of recent, high-interest papers, that is, good candidates for replication. Once the pool of citations had been gathered, CREP coders read the Method section for each paper and indicated whether it was feasible for student teams to replicate in a semester on a scale of 1 (low) -5 (high) and also whether they thought it would be interesting to students, again, on a scale of 1 (low) - 5(high). The feasibility ratings were used to narrow down a final pool, while the interest ratings were used in the final decision-making process if all other factors were weighted equally. Documentation of the coding process can be found here: https://osf.io/9kzje/wiki/home/. Once a final pool of papers was narrowed down, CREP recruited psychology professors to look again at the feasibility and interest to narrow it down more, and then the CREP leadership team engaged in internal conversation to select the study or studies that would be selected that year. The process in 2014 resulted in several selected studies, including Experiment 1 from Griskevicius and colleagues.

Once this study was selected, the CREP leadership team sent an email to Dr. Griskevicius as the corresponding author of the original work. The CREP team communicated our process and goals and asked for input on

possible extension hypotheses and guidance for replication teams. The key parts of the correspondence from Dr. Griskevicius are available here: https://osf.io/vdo0i/wiki/home/. Two key points from this correspondence were the following: first, Dr. Griskevicius noted that the effect may not replicate if participants didn't equate "green" choices with prosocial behavior; second, Dr. Griskevicius noted that the connection between "green" choices and status was unique to politically liberal groups. The first note will provide us with a lens through which we will interpret our results, while the second provides some context for why many student teams included political ideology in extension hypotheses.

CREP Project Process

Groups signed up for the project and prepared OSF project pages for pre-data collection review. Prepared pre-data collection project pages had to include materials, analytical strategy, video of the procedure, and IRB approval. The project pages were reviewed by two reviewers and the executive reviewer. After revisions, project pages were reviewed again and after obtaining positive feedback, groups were cleared for data collection. Groups had to pre-register project pages before data collection. After data collection was completed, project pages were reviewed again by two reviewers and the executive reviewer. At this stage, project pages were revised to include the dataset, a short report about the obtained results, and a completion pledge. Following a positive review, replication was considered successful and the project was completed.

Datasets included in the study

Since 2013, 49 groups from nine different countries expressed interest in conducting CREP Griskevicius et al (2010). Eleven groups did not provide their data and one group did not provide the codebook with us, five groups did not complete data collection, three groups did not create the OSF page, four groups dropped out before data collection, and one group did not follow the CREP procedure. The final sample of completed projects included data collected by 24 groups from 6 different countries: USA, UK, Germany, Canada, Netherlands, and Iceland. The overview of groups participating in this project is provided in Table S1 in Supplementary materials (https://osf.io/vc5rh/). Over the years, this particular project included about 30 reviewers, 3 CREP assistants, and 3 executive reviewers.

Target sample size The sample size for each group was set to 82 respondents. In CREP, for each project, the sample size was determined to be at least half of the original N. For this study, the targeted sample size was set to 84, but unfortunately, in the documentation file, there was a typo (N=82). However, with multiple groups collecting data, and in this particular case with 3774 participants, we have adequate statistical power to detect a very small focal effect.

Differences from the original study The original study was conducted in a lab, where participants were tested in small groups. Replications were conducted both in the lab and online. Some groups conducted direct replication and some groups included extension variables. Characteristics of the replications are given in Table S2 in Supplementary materials (https://osf.io/7zybp/).

Disclosures

Preregistrations Each lab preregistered its materials, protocol, and analytical strategy on Open Science Framework (OSF) before data collection. Additionally, this meta-analysis was pre-registered: https://osf.io/ach3n.

Data, Materials and Resources The authors of the original study provided materials for replications. All groups who completed data collection, uploaded data, analysis, and a short description of results to their OSF project page. All datasets, materials, analytical scripts, and other materials can be found on the

central project OSF page (https://osf.io/rh2nw/). The complete codebook for the dataset is available at https://osf.io/7nkhq/.

Reporting We report how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions, all manipulations, and all measures in the study.

Ethical approval Data were collected in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. This research was approved under an "umbrella" ethics proposal at the University of Belgrade, Serbia. Overarching IRB approval was obtained from the IRB of the Department of Psychology, University of Belgrade, Serbia (https://osf.io/pcwhg/). In addition, all groups obtained local IRB approvals which are available on our OSF project page: https://osf.io/4bfwu/

Sample

Data were collected by student groups in USA, UK, Germany, Canada, Netherlands, and Iceland who participated in the CREP project. In total, the merged data set contained data collected from 3774 participants. We use datasets collected by 24 groups. All individual data sets are available here: https://osf.io/vc5rh/. All groups collected at least 82 respondents, except for one that collected 70 participants. Nine groups did not collect data on at least one of the following: age, gender, or race/ethnicity. Details about the missing data are available here: https://osf.io/vc5rh. The complete, anonymized dataset is available here: https://osf.io/3xrdf.

We removed 21 participants prior to posting the public compiled dataset because they reported ages of 16 (n = 3) or 17 (n = 18), for a total final dataset with 3774 participants. The final sample included 2302 women and 973 men with 18 participants reporting a gender of gender variant/non-conforming, "other," "prefer not to say," or transgender/non-binary. An additional 481 participants did not indicate their gender, either by choice or because the survey they completed did not request this information. The mean reported age for participants was 23.98 years (SD = 10.21), while for 956 age was not reported.

Information about participant race/ethnicity was reported by some sites and not others, and within each site, the question could vary in how it was asked. We, therefore, recoded the original race information to include the following categories: White $(n=1339,\,71.34\%)$, Black $(n=129,\,6.93\%)$, Asian $(n=131,\,6.98\%)$, Hispanic/Latino $(n=151,\,8.04\%)$, Middle Eastern $(n=28,\,1.49\%)$, Multiracial $(n=8,\,0.43\%)$, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander $(n=5,\,0.27\%)$, and "other" $(n=71,\,3.78\%)$. These reported percentages do not include the participants who either did not report their race/ethnicity or were not asked this question $(n=1897,\,50.26\%)$ of the total).

Procedure

Data were collected in the lab, or online. Each group documented the type of data collection. Respondents were recruited from the student or general population. Each group underwent a pre-data-collection review procedure by CREP reviewers and executive reviewers and made preregistration of their project. After data collection was completed, project pages were again reviewed (post-data-collection review) by the executive reviewer and CREP reviewers. Descriptions of individual datasets, along with all deviations are available in Table XX in Supplementary materials (https://osf.io/vc5rh/).

Treatment of missing data, data preparation, and data analysis

We excluded participants without responses for the dependent variables. To create a merged dataset, we accessed all individual datasets through each team's OSF page when this was available, and contacted teams directly for their data when it was not. When necessary, we also contacted groups to obtain information on whether the dataset was raw or transformed and to obtain codebooks. We left missing data as missing. The merged dataset is available on the OSF project page (https://osf.io/3xrdf). A codebook for our merged data

set with all variables collected as part of the project is available on https://osf.io/7nkhq/. This link includes number of participants, country, institution, race, gender, conditions, and any extension variables added by each team.

We conducted the same analyses as the original paper: for each product (car, soap, and dishwater) we reported percentages by condition, Chi-square tests, and Phi coefficients. We also computed a composite green score and run ANOVA across conditions (story, no story, and control story) and report effect size and posthoc comparisons using the LSD test.

We also performed several exploratory analyses. First, the original study conducted data collection in a computer lab and tested participants in small groups; therefore, we used ANOVA to explore differences between settings (online/lab, testing in-group/testing individually). Second, we tested the moderating role of political orientation. We also run 2 x 2 factorial ANOVAs to determine whether political orientation (liberal/conservative) or political party (democrat/republican) interacts with the condition in its association with the composite green score. Third, we explored whether the main effects replicated in other countries in which we collected data, and tested potential differences between US and other countries. Fourth, long-lasting nature of our project enabled testing if the effect differs across time. Lastly, original authors stated that if would be worth testing for potential gender differences, thus, as part of our exploratory analyses we studies gender differences in status motives by running a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA (gender: female or male; condition: control vs. status).

Results

Confirmatory Analyses

Composite Green Score Despite low internal consistency of the three items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.38), we followed the procedure used in the original study and computed a composite green score by assigning the value "1" to all "green" selections and a score of "0" to all non-"green" selections. Because participants had three dichotomous choices for three products, scores ranged from 0 (no "green" products) to 3 (all "green" products). The mean composite score was 1.64 (SD = 0.996). A distribution of composite scores can be seen in Figure 1.

The original paper by Griskevicius and colleagues reported a significant effect of status on the composite score when the status prime condition was compared to both control conditions (control story and no story) together, F(1, 166) = 8.53, p = .004, d = 0.47. The same test using our data did not reveal a significant effect, F(1, 3, 718) = 1.16, p = .282, $\eta^2 = .000$. However, when we examined our three conditions (control story, status story, and no story), a small effect was found, F(2, 3, 717) = 3.21, p = .040, $\eta^2 = .002$. Post-hoc testing using Tukey's HSD correction for multiple pairwise comparisons resulted in no pairwise comparisons with a p < .05 (no story/control = 0.06, status story/control = 0.97, status story/no story = 0.09).

The rest of our analyses combine the "control story" and "no story" conditions into one control group.

Green car The original paper found that the green car selection was higher in the status condition (54.5%) than in the control condition (37.2%), $\chi^2(1, N = 168) = 4.56$, p = .033, $\phi = .165$. In our sample, 55.5% of control participants selected the green car, compared to 54.83% of the status participants. We were unable to detect an effect of condition on green selection, $\chi^2(1, N = 3726) = 0.13$, p = 0.72, $\phi = -0.006$.

Green cleaner Similarly, the original paper found that participants in the status condition selected the green cleaner more frequently than participants in the control condition (41.8% and 25.7%, respectively), $\chi^2(1, N = 168) = 4.52, p = .034, \phi = .164$. In our sample, 56.75% of the control and 54.95% of the status participants selected the green cleaner. As with the "car" selection, we were unable to detect an effect of condition on choice of cleaner, $\chi^2(1, N = 3725) = 1.06, p = 0.3, \phi = -0.018$.

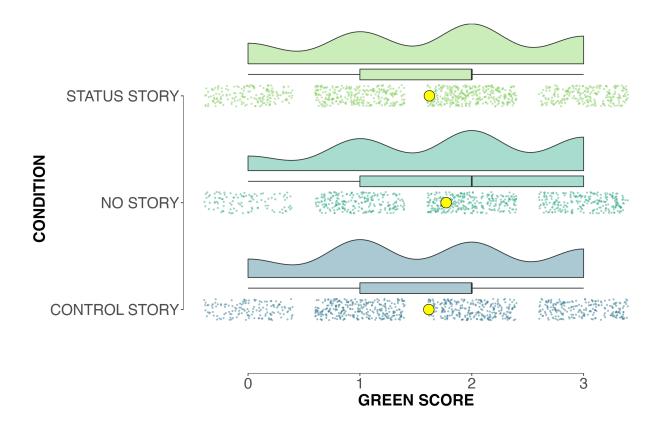


Figure 1: **Figure 1.** The rain cloud diagram shows the distribution of responses under different conditions. Yellow dots represent mean values surrounded by individual data points with jitter. Vertical lines in the centers of the boxplots indicate the medians. Shaded areas around them correspond to interquartile ranges, and whiskers encompass 1.5 times the interquartile ranges. The shaded areas above the boxplots indicate the density of the data.

Green dishwasher Finally, the original paper also greater that selection of the green dishwasher was more likely in the status condition than the control condition (49.1% and 34.5%, respectively), $\chi^2(1, N = 168) = 3.30$, p = .069, $\phi = .140$, while we found no such effect when comparing the 52.9% of control participants who selected the green dishwasher to the 51.65% of status prime participants who did the same, $\chi^2(1, N = 3729) = 0.49$, p = 0.48, $\phi = -0.012$.

Exploratory Analyses

Lab vs. Online. To determine if there were differences in setting type, we first collapsed all reported lab settings (group, individual, and just "lab") into one variable level, and then conducted chi-square tests of independence using a dichotomous setting variable (lab versus online). We found no relationship between green choice and setting type for all three types of product (ps of .24, .11, and .63 for the green car, soap, and dishwasher).

When the CREP team first contacted the original authors about the replication, they recommended examining political orientation as a possible extension variable. Therefore, many groups decided to add a question about political orientation (liberal/conservative) and others added a question about political party (Republican/Democrat/Independent); some groups added both questions, and some groups added questions with responses that were more fitting to their particular country (e.g., Canada). We decided to use this data to compare liberal/conservative on green selections. Some institutions measured this with a scale (from very liberal to very conservative, for example), while others measured it with categorical response types (e.g., liberal, conservative, neutral). We collapsed over these responses to create a variable with one category for "liberal" that included all responses indicating any degree of being liberal, another category for "conservative" that included any response indicating being conservative, and excluded any "neutral" or "other" responses from this variable.

Using this method of collapsing data, we found that n = 551 participants identified as conservative, while n = 744 participants identified as liberal.

Liberal/conservative We conducted a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA (political orientation: liberal vs. conservative; condition: control vs. experimental) to determine whether political orientation interacted with condition in its association with the composite green score. As predicted, we did find a main effect of political orientation such that participants who identified as liberal selected significantly more green products on average (M=1.87, SD=0.98) than participants who identified as conservative $(M=1.25, SD=0.97), F(1,1,287)=130.73, p < .001, <math>\eta^2=.092$. As we found earlier, there was also no main effect of condition; the mean scores for participants in the grouped control condition (M=1.65, SD=0.99) did not differ from those in the status condition $(M=1.61, SD=1), F(1,1,287)=0.41, p=.522, \eta^2=.000$. There was also no interaction between the two variables, $F(1,1,287)=0.28, p=.597, \eta^2=.000$.

We found a similar pattern of results when the control conditions (no story and control story) were ungrouped: a main effect of liberal/conservative ($F(1,1,285)=130.85,\ p<.001,\ \eta^2=.092$), no main effect of ungrouped condition ($F(2,1,285)=1.44,\ p=.238,\ \eta^2=.002$), and no interaction between the variables ($F(2,1,285)=0.52,\ p=.598,\ \eta^2=.001$).

Democrat/republican Similarly, for political party ("Democrat" or "Republican"), we conducted a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA (political party: Democrat vs. Republican; condition: control vs. status). When we grouped participants into "Republican" (n=182) and "Democrat" (n=332) categories, we did find a main effect of political party such that participants who identified as Democrat selected significantly more green products ($M=1.77,\ SD=1.03$) than participants who identified as Republican ($M=1.12,\ SD=0.86$), $F(1,505)=51.95,\ p<.001,\ \eta^2=0.09$. We were unable to detect an interaction between political party and condition, $F(1,505)=0.14,\ p=.709,\ \eta^2=0$, and as reported in the "Liberal/Conservative" subsection above, we found no main effect of condition (control: $M=1.65,\ SD=0.99$); status: $M=1.61,\ SD=1$), $F(1,505)=0.80,\ p=.370,\ \eta^2=0$.

Importantly, we did not have adequate power to detect any interaction effects. Using the Superpower package in r, we determined that we would need at least 418 participants *per cell* to detect an interaction effect between political party and condition. In our four cells created by the two variables political party (Republican or Democrat) and condition (status or control), our cell sizes were 209, 113, 123, and 69, respectively.

US vs. others. Because the original study was conducted only with individuals in the United States, we conducted an exploratory test of the data to determine whether there was an association between condition and green choice for only US-based participants. For US-based participants, we found no association between condition (two levels: control and status) and green car selection $(\chi^2(1, N = 1940)) = 2.58$, p = 0.11, $\phi = 0.04$, green cleaner selection $(\chi^2(1, N = 1939)) = 1.02$, p = 0.31, $\phi = 0.02$), or green dishwasher $(\chi^2(1, N = 1943)) = 0.01$, p = 0.92, $\phi = 0$) selection.

Stability of effect over time. To see if there was an effect that differed across time, we examined effects across projects from different years, as determined by their project codes assigned at the time they signed up for the study (e.g. project #14-3 was initiated in 2014). For each project year, we examined whether we could detect any differences in composite green scores across conditions (control and status). As demonstrated by Figure 2, there doesn't appear to be any meaningful change in effect size over time, such that an effect could be detected at an early point in time but not later or vice versa.

Gender differences. In their original paper, Griskevicius stated that exploring gender differences would be relevant in future studies. They hypothesized that man could be more likely to engage in proenvironmental "show-off" behavior than women, since man could be more concerned about status motive. Their findings suggested that in both man and women status motives influenced product selection similarly, but suggested that this should be explored further. Since our study is high-powered we sought to test these differences and as part of our exploratory analyses we examine potential gender differences.

We conducted a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA (gender: female or male; condition: control vs. status). We did find a main effect of gender such that participants who identified as female selected significantly more green products ($M=1.69,\ SD=0.99$) than participants who identified as male ($M=1.46,\ SD=1.01$), $F(1,3,263)=36.22,\ p<.001,\ \eta^2=0.01$. We were unable to detect an interaction between gender and condition, $F(1,3,263)=0.00,\ p=.964,\ \eta^2=0$.

Discussion

Original study conducted by Griskevicius et al (2010) concluded that proenvironmental behavior can be promoted using status competition. Griskevicius and his associates took competitive altruism hypothesis, that proposes a link between altruistic behavior and public good (Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006) as a starting point. That is, earning a good reputation via prosocial and proenvironmental behavior and action can increase an individual's status in a group. Original study also showed that all selections of all three green-products (green car, green cleaner, green dishwasher) was higher in the status condition.

In this multi-lab replication study we followed the analytical strategy as in the original study. As part of pre-registered confirmatory analysis we tested whether effect exists when green score is calculated as composite, and our results resulted in lack of statistically significant effect. We also analyzed separately if effect exists for each of the green vs non-green products. For all three products, we did not detect significant effect for none of the products. Overall, our findings do not support main conclusion of Griskevicius et al (2010). One strength of this study is that data were collected in 6 different countries, on a very large sample which gives additional support to our conclusions.

Per recommendation of original authors, exploratory analyses included testing if political orientation moderates significantly main effect. In this study, data on political orientation and/or political party were collected as extension variables. When political orientation was defined as liberal-conservative we detected a main effect of political orientation on selection of green products, but the main effect of condition was absent. When political party (Republican vs. Conservative) was tested as moderator, a main effect of political party was detected (i.e., people who identified as democrat more often select green products), but moderation effect of political party on product selection was absent again.

Effect of Condition (Control/Status) on Composite Green Score by Project Initation Year

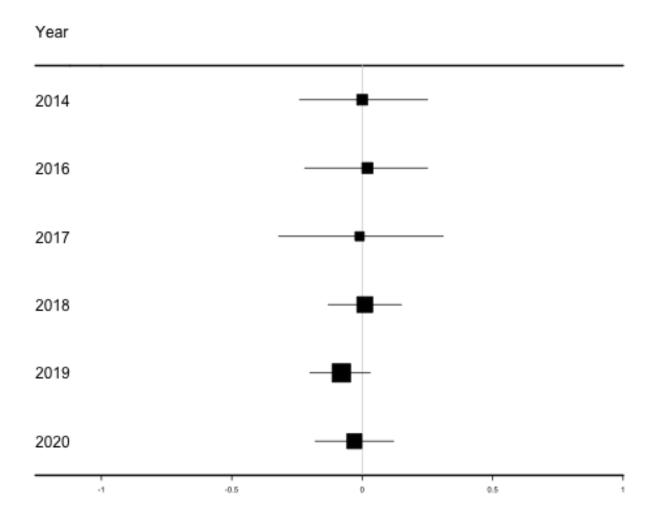


Figure 2: Figure 2. Forest plot caption stuff

We also explored whether test setting might have influenced the results. Different from original study which was condected in-lab, more than half of the groups participating in this project collected data online. This is not a surprise since online data collection has become increasingly popular and offers several advantages, like reducing cost and increasing effectiveness of the testing, generalizability of results to wider populations, automatization of the data collection process, etc. (Dandurand et al., 2008; Gosling et al., 2004). In addition, findings show that reliabilities of the studies where data are collected online are of equivalent quality as lab-studies (e.g., Riva et al., 2003). Thus, our finding that there were no differences between the datasets where data were collected online and in laboratory setting do not come as surprise and are in line with previous studies.

Original study was conducted in United States, while this multi-site replication study collected data in five other countries, i.e., Canada, Netherlands, UK, Germany and Iceland. Our findings showed no differences between the samples from different countries. Still, we believe this finding is expected as all countries belong to the group of the so-called WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Developed; Henrich et al., 2010).

Another quality feature of this multi-site replication study is that data collection lasted several years, which gave us the opportunity to explore if the effect sizes change over time. Our findings did not show substantial differences in effect sizes throughout time.

Finally, in their paper, Griskevicius and associates stated that gender differences in status motives would be worth exploring. Our findings suggest that women are more inclined toward green products, but moderation effect of gender on product preference was not obtained. Therefore, our finding corroborate with the results obtained in the original study.

Similar to what was done in the original study, we tested whether two control conditions differ, and found no differences between them.

Limitations of the study

Although this multi-site replication study was conducted on a very large sample, and in several countries, we should note some limitations. First, all countries in which the study was conducted in WEIRD countries. Our findings suggest that people overall are more inclined toward consuming pro-environmental products, but this was not related to the status that might be associated with it. In other words, their selection was not elicited by stus motives. It could be that participants from non-WEIRD countries which start to develop, implement and promote individual pro-environmental behaviors would be more sensitive to obtaining higher social status via prosocial and proenvironmental action.

Second, we tested moderation effects only for those variables that had sufficient power. Thus, most of the extension variables that were used by different groups could not be used in meta-analytical analyses.

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