



Wikipedians, and Why They Do It:

Motivational Dynamics of Voluntary Engagement in an Open Web-based Encyclopedia

Joachim Schroer & Guido Hertel
University of Wuerzburg

EAWOP 2007 / Stockholm / May 11, 2007

- “The encyclopedia anyone can edit”
- Mission statement:
“Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing.”
- Web 2.0
- Huge success
- Who writes – and why?





**Social
movement
participation**

**Task
charac-
teristics**

**Study 1:
Survey of
German
Wikipedia
project**

**Study 2:
International
survey**



- Three classes of motives for voluntary engagement (Klandermans, 1997, 2004)

1. Norm-oriented motives

“How do friends and family respond to the engagement?”

2. Costs and benefits

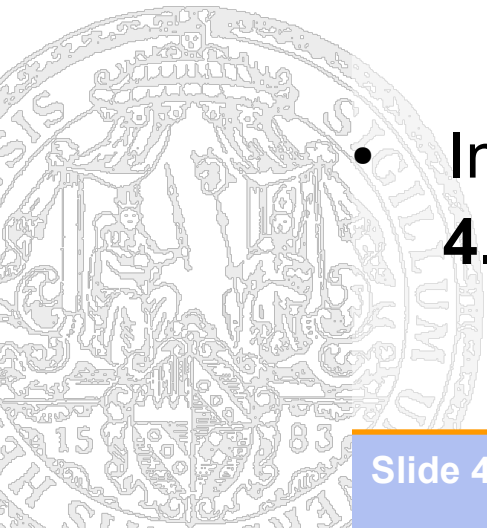
“Which benefits/costs are caused by the engagement?”

3. Collective motives

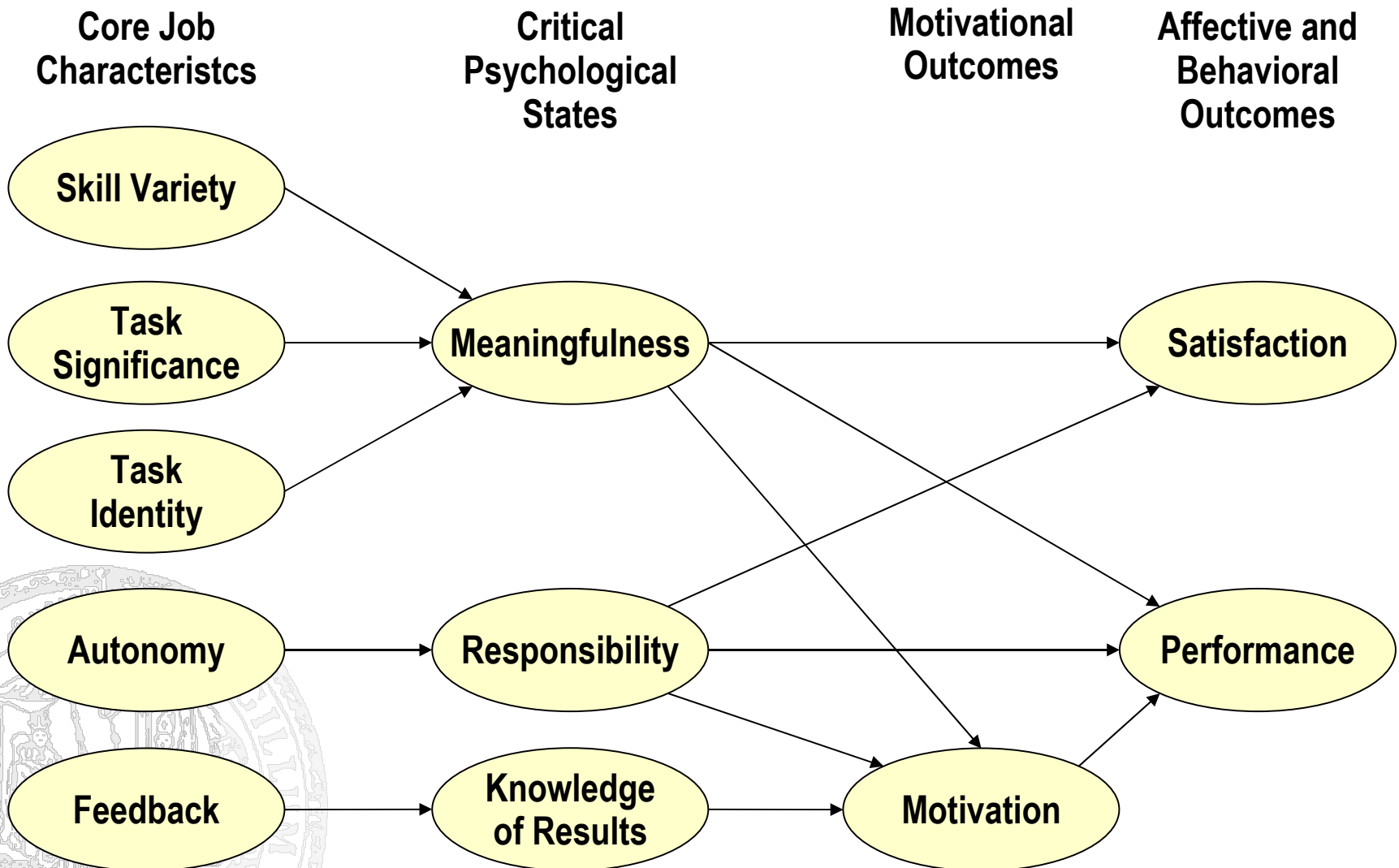
“How important are the goals of the movement?”

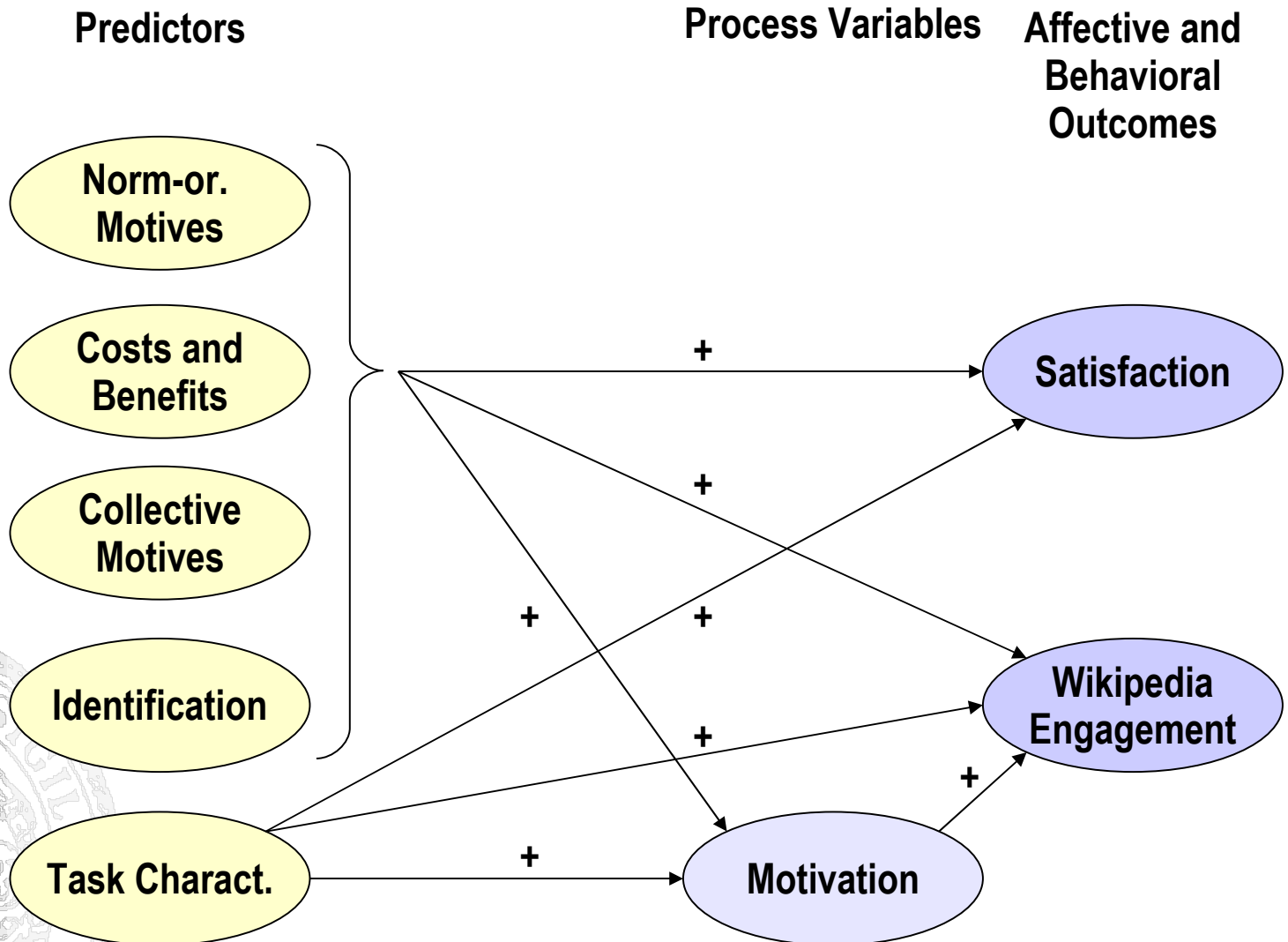
- Independent pathway (Simon et al., 1998)

4. Identification with the social movement



Job Characteristics Model



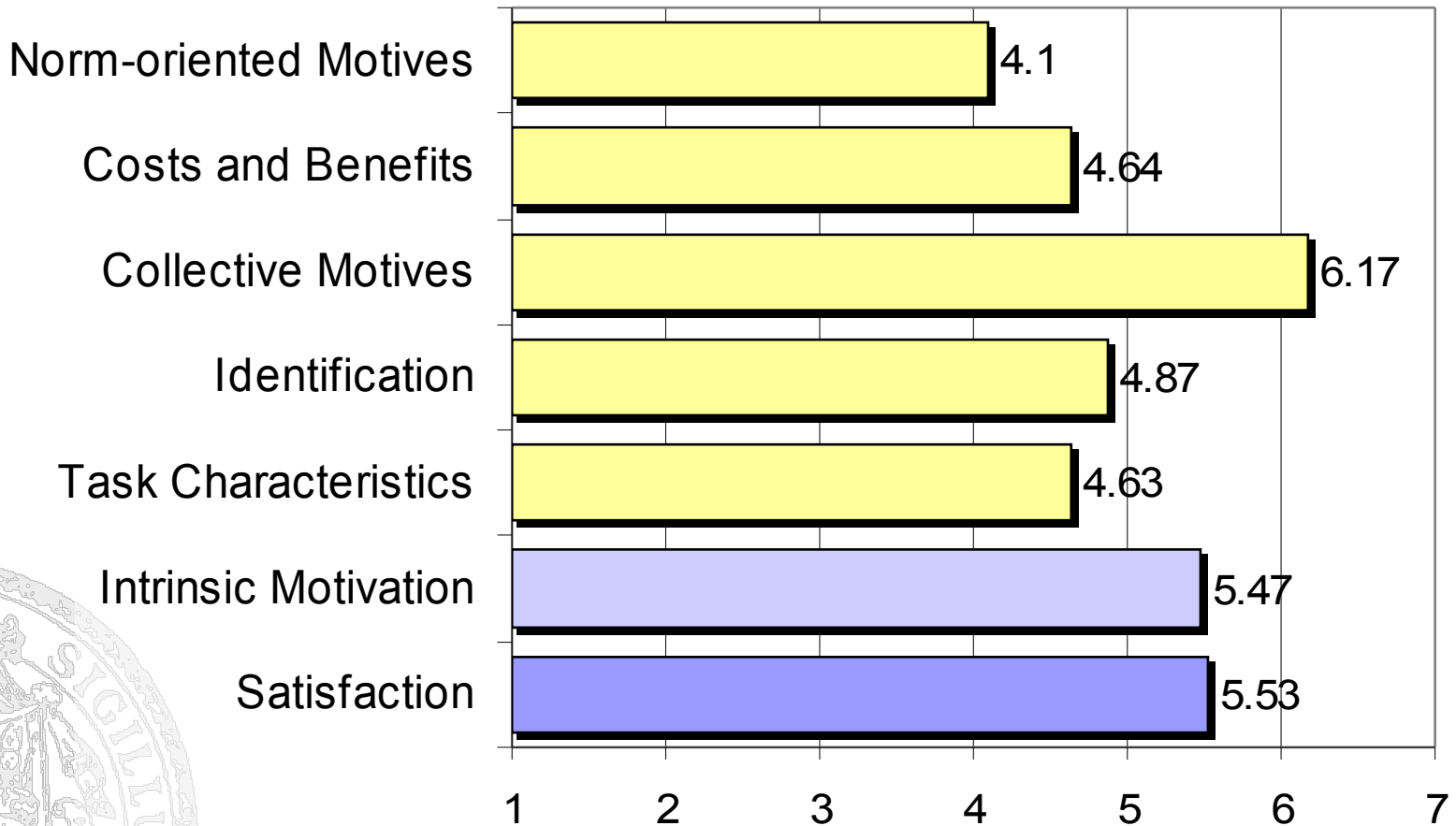


- Cross-sectional design
- Recruitment over mailing list of German Wikipedia project, two reminders
- Online March 22 – April 09, 2005
- $N = 106$



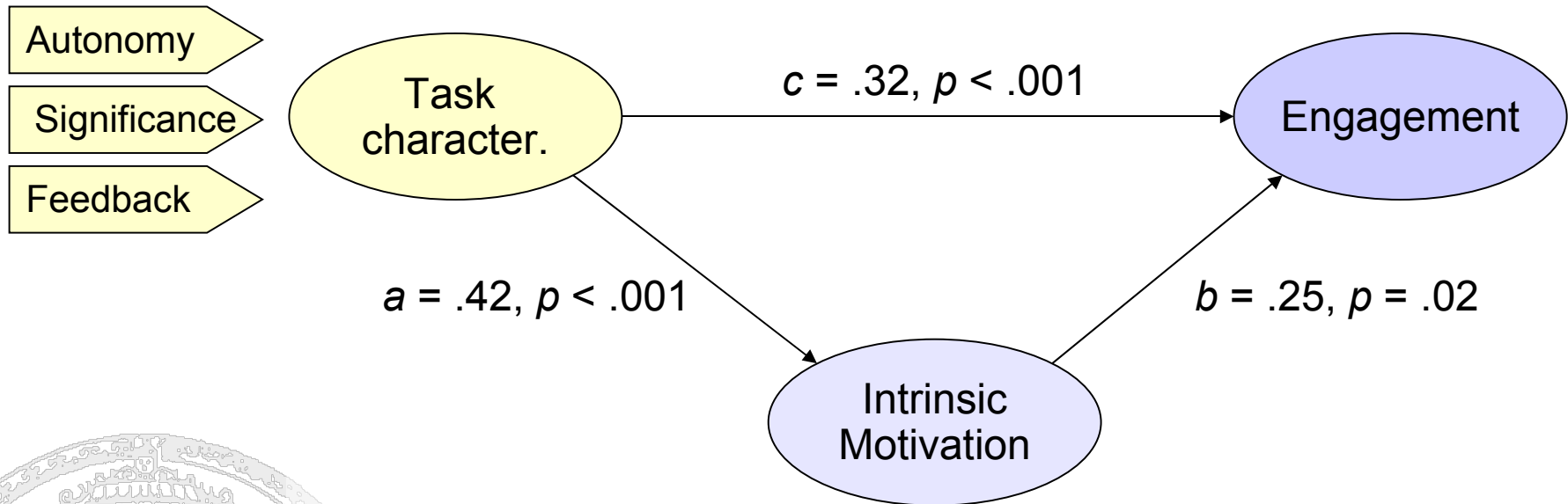
- Predictors
 - Norm-oriented motives, costs/benefits, collective motives
 - Identification
 - Perceived task characteristics (JDS)
- Process variables
 - Intrinsic motivation
 - Task enjoyment
 - Experienced competence
 - “Flow”
- Outcomes
 - Satisfaction
 - Engagement
 - Time invested in engagement (work/leisure)
 - Articles on “watchlist”

Weighted Means (N = 106)

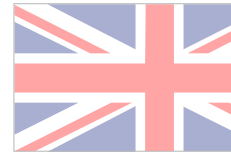
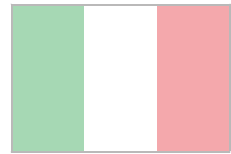
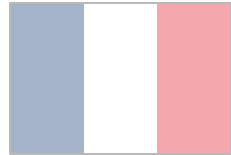
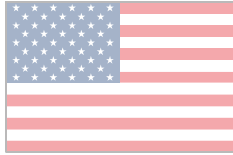


Regression Model ($N = 106$)

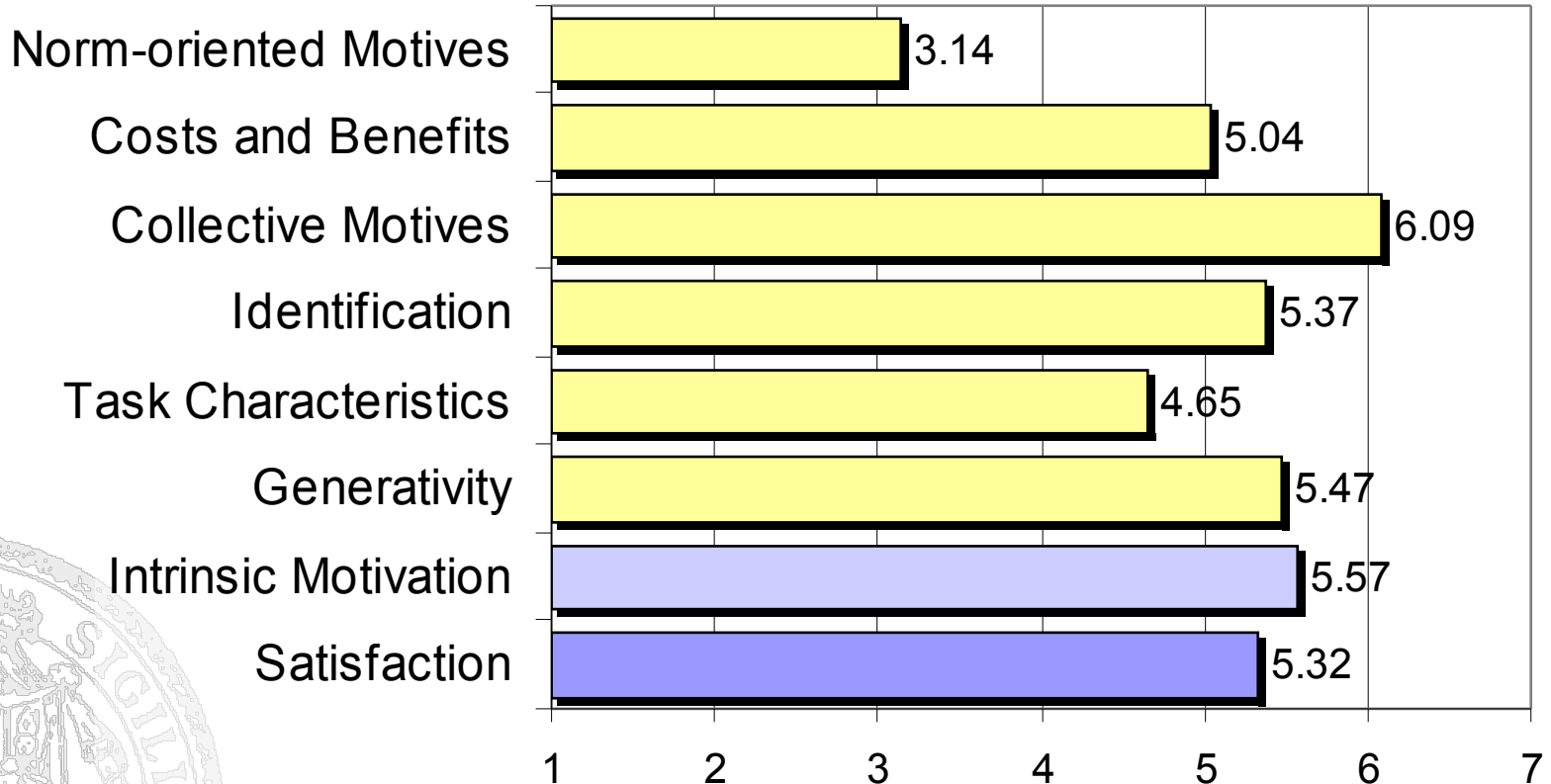
	Satisfaction	Engagement
Norm-oriented Motives	.12 * (dir.)	.08
Costs and Benefits	.26 *	-.31 *
Collective Motives	.11	-.10
Identification	.19 *	.12
Task Characteristics	.52 ***	.22
Intrinsic Motivation	.01	.23 * (dir.)
R^2	.62	.28



- Integration of “Generativity”
- Recruitment
 1. Mailing lists of the largest Wikipedia projects (two reminders)
 2. Community websites und blogs
 3. Front page of English Wikipedia
 4. Open Source portal “NewsForge”
- Online July 11 – August 15, 2005
- $N = 354$

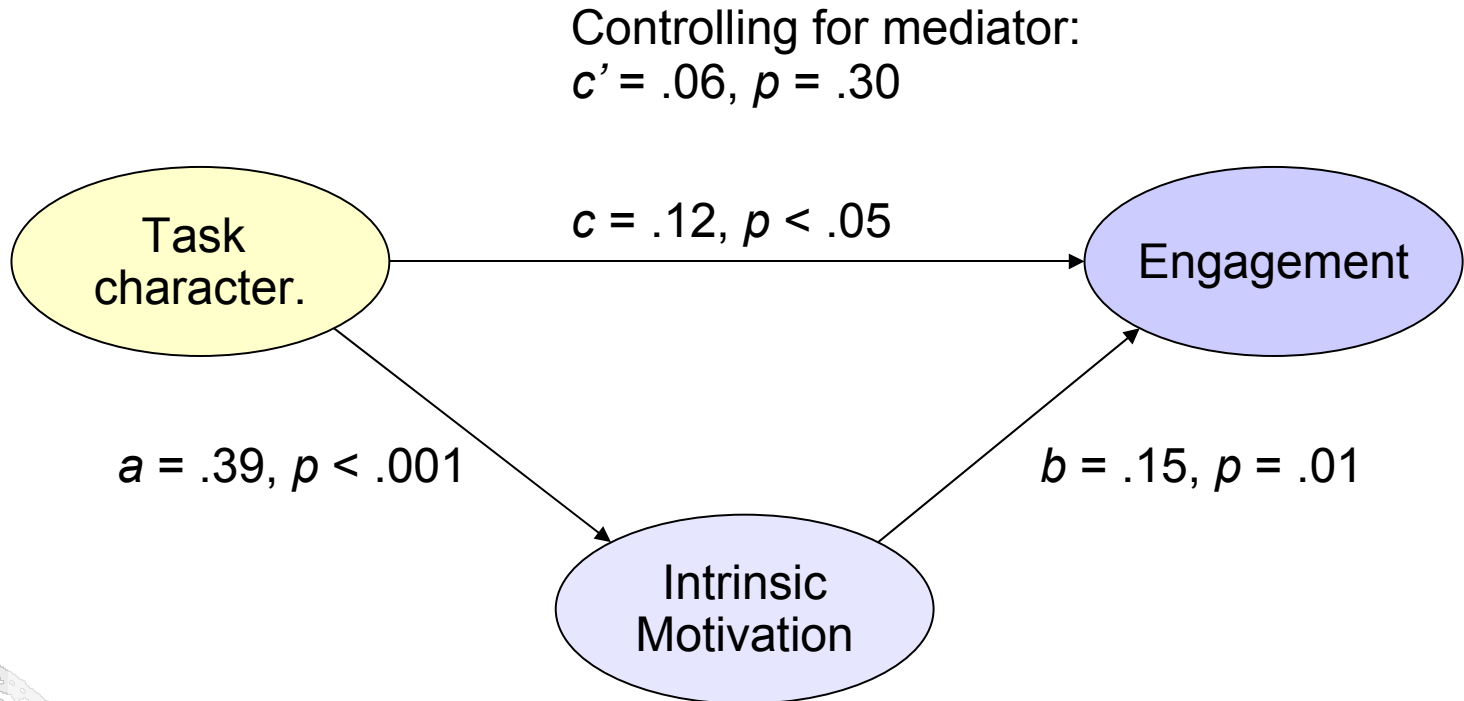


Weighted Means ($N = 354$)



Regression Model ($N = 354$)

	Satisfaction	Engagement
Norm-oriented Motives	.04	-.04
Costs and Benefits	.22 ***	-.21 **
Collective Motives	.00	-.05
Identification	.30 ***	.20 *
Generativity	.07	.00
Task Characteristics	.19 ***	.05
Intrinsic Motivation	.25 ***	.15 * (dir.)
R^2	.53	.10



Sobel test:
 $z = 2.43, p = .02$

Complete mediation

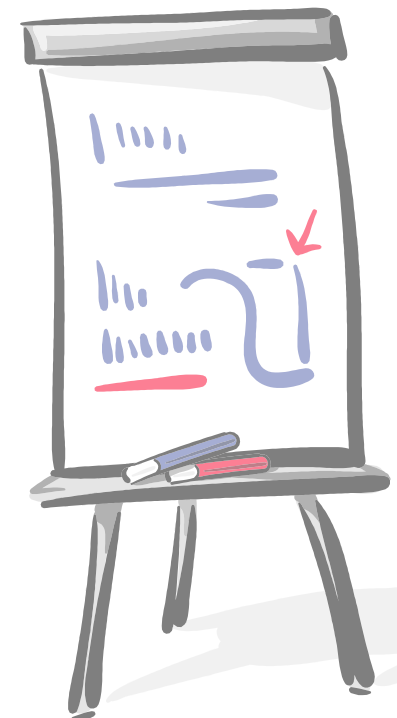
Summary of Results

- **Costs and Benefits**
 - Positive association with satisfaction
 - Negative association with engagement
- **Collective Motives / Generativity**
 - Considered import by Wikipedians
 - Not associated with satisfaction or engagement
- **Identification**
 - Positive association with satisfaction and engagement
- **Task Characteristics**
 - Important: autonomy, task significance, and feedback
 - Strong association with satisfaction
 - Effect on engagement mediated by intrinsic motivation

Wikipedians, and why they do it:

1. Reasons to get involved
 - Collective motives / “Generativity”
 - Learning

 2. Reasons to stay engaged
 - Task characteristics
 - Intrinsic motivation
 - Identification
- Paper available at:
<http://www.abo.psychologie.uni-wuerzburg.de/virtualcollaboration/>



- Hackman, J. & Oldham, G. R. (1974). The Job Diagnostic Survey: An instrument for the diagnosis of jobs and the evaluation of job redesign projects. *Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology*, 4, 148-149.
- Hackman, J. & Oldham, G. R. (1980). *Work redesign*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hertel, G., Niedner, S. & Herrmann, S. (2003). Motivation of software developers in Open Source projects: An internet-based survey of contributors to the Linux kernel. *Research Policy*, 32, 1159-1177.
- Klandermans, B. (1997). *The social psychology of protest*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Klandermans, B. (2004). The demand and supply of participation: Social psychological correlates of participation in social movements. In D. A. Snow, S. Soule & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 360-379). Oxford: Blackwell.
- McAdams, D. P. & de St. Aubin, E. (1992). A theory of generativity and its assessment through self-report, behavioral acts, and narrative themes in autobiography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62, 1003-1015.
- Simon, B., Loewy, M., Stürmer, S., Weber, U., Freytag, P., Habig, C. et al. (1998). Collective identification and social movement participation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 646-658.
- Stürmer, S. & Simon, B. (2004). Collective action: Towards a dual-pathway model. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 15, 59-99.



Backup Slides



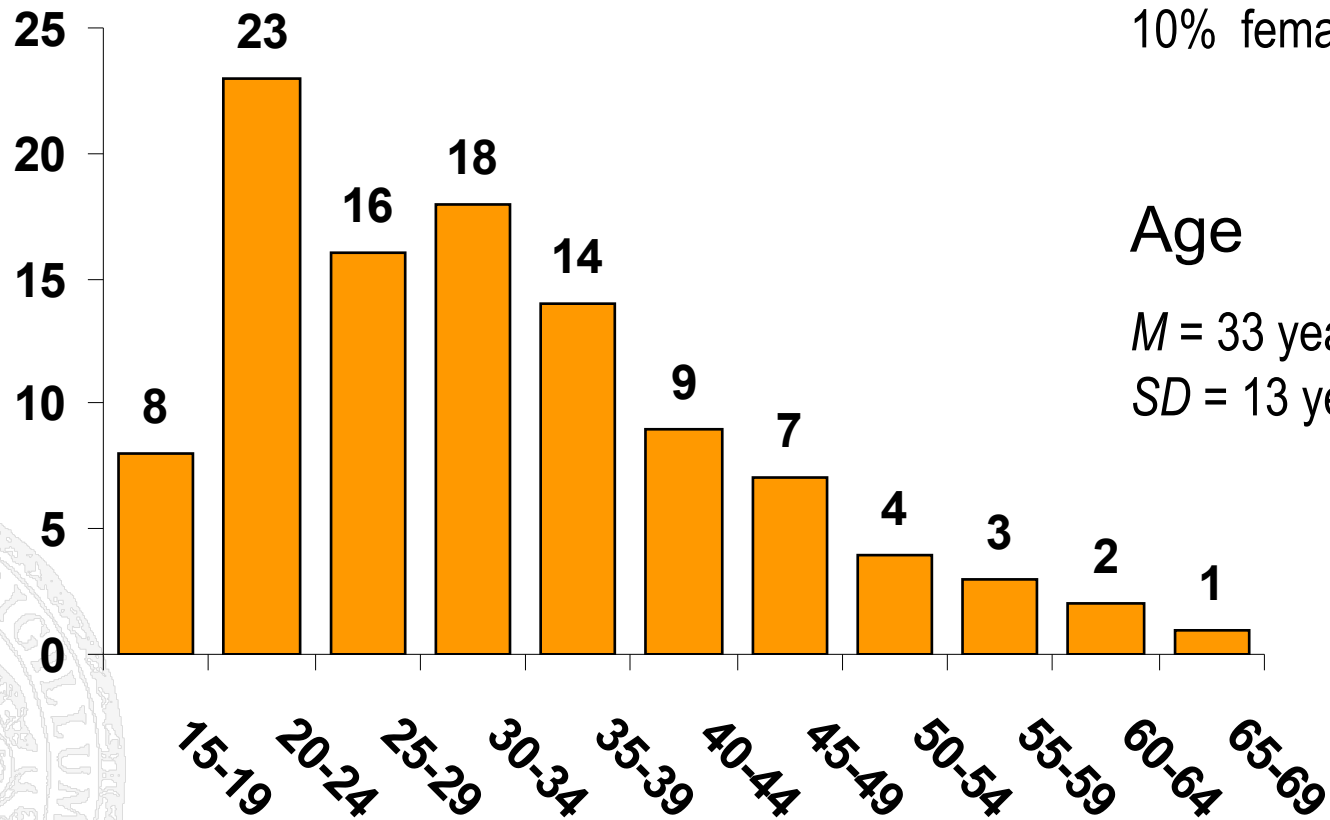
Study 1: Demographics

Gender

88% male
10% female

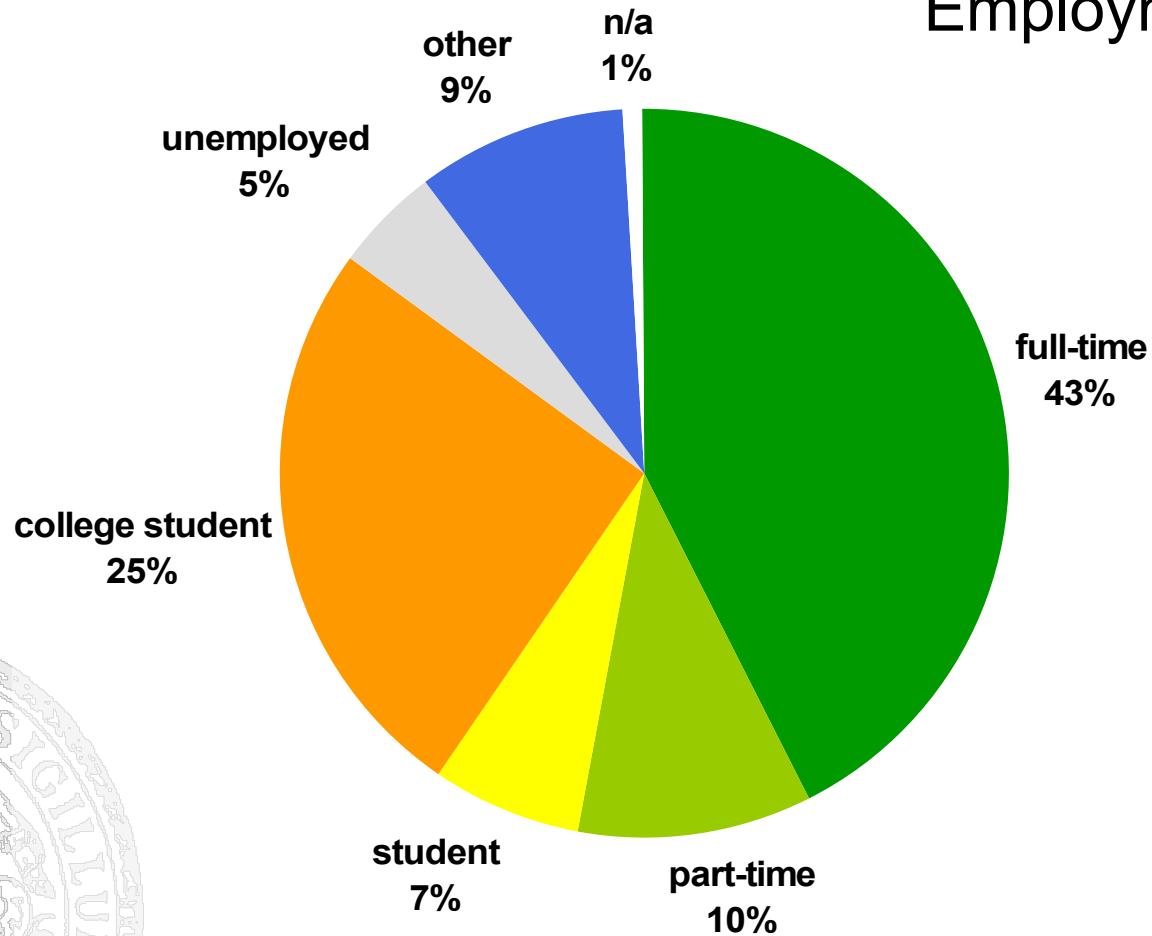
Age

$M = 33$ years
 $SD = 13$ years



Study 1: Demographics

Employment status



Study 1: Demographics

Partnership /
family background

