Theory of Planned Behavior

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What is Theory of Planned Behavior?

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) predicts an individual's intention to engage in a behavior at a specific time and place. It posits that individual behavior is driven by behavior intentions, where behavior intentions are a function of three determinants: an individual's attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

Key Concepts and Dimensions

Behavioral Intention

This is a proxy measure for behavior. It represents a person's motivation in the sense of her or his conscious plan or decision to perform certain behavior (Conner & Armitage, 1998). Generally, the strong the intention is, the more likely the behavior will be performed.

Attitude toward Behavior

This refers to the degree to which a person has positive or negative feelings of the behavior of interest. It entails a consideration of the outcomes of performing the behavior.

Subjective Norm

This refers to the belief about whether significant others think he or she will perform the
behavior. It relates to a person’s perception of the social environment surrounding the behavior.

**Perceived Behavioral Control**

This refers to the individual’s perception of the extent to which performance of the behavior is easy or difficult (Ajzen, 1991). It increases when individuals perceive they have more resources and confidence (Ajzen, 1985; Hartwick & Barki, 1994; Lee & Kozar, 2005).

Adapted from (Ajzen, 1991)

**Measurements**

Developing a measure utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior is highly dependent upon the topic being considered. Measures should assess all main components of the theory: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intention. Typical
measures follow a Likert-style format and can range in length from a few succinct questions to much longer and more comprehensive surveys.

The article below describes how to construct a TPB questionnaire:


Two specific examples of the TPB questionnaire are presented below:

- In their study, Davis et. al. (2002) developed a questionnaire to predict high-school completion among African Americans. This instrument assessed major constructs of TPB, as well as several sections dealing with such issues as general and racial self-esteem, academic self-efficacy, neighborhood living conditions, and after-school activities.

- The second paper described a conceptual model, based on the TPB, which explained how college students’ beliefs influence their intention to adopt mobile devices in their coursework. The questionnaire used in this research contained 30 items and measured the participants’ perceptions with a 7-point Likert scales. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A of the paper (Cheon et. al., 2012).

References

