

Computational
Social Science

SSH Workshop

Building a Theoretical Framework for your Project

CSSci Team

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UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Hypotheses

What is a theoretical framework?

One answer: a lens



Your theoretical framework is a **lens** through which we can analyse your problem and approach behavioural change

Another answer: a foundation

- ▶ Your work needs to be **grounded** in **established knowledge**
- ▶ If your foundations are solid, then your building won't fall over
- ▶ Your theoretical framework is the foundations on which you are building
- ▶ Stand on the shoulders of giants; use what has been done before

What do you need to do? SSH

The student is able to ...

- ▶ present theory on planned behaviour, persuasion models, and the innovation diffusion; and apply these to propose digital interventions
- ▶ provide an overview of individual-level interventions, classify these along various dimensions, know in general terms their advantages and disadvantages
- ▶ apply theories of motivation and (self-regulated) learning to develop interventions aiming at change of attitudes and behaviour and the promotion of critical thinking
- ▶ reproduce the ideas behind technology enhanced learning and apply these to propose digital interventions
- ▶ explain the ways in which interventions may shape individual and collective behaviour and yield empowerment as well as their biases and limits impacting the development and diffusion of such interventions

How do we do that?

Four approaches today:

1. Koc et al. (2015): the article and the appendix – on Canvas
2. The BCT Taxonomy (Crane et al. 2024): next slide
3. Google Scholar
4. Recursive bibliography searches: look at the bibliography, identify key works, look those up, then look at their bibliographies, and repeat

The BCT Taxonomy (Crane et al. 2024)

From Dr Eline Smit's lecture:

Behaviour change techniques

App store

Google Play

Extra study
material



How you're going to do this today

By answering the following questions. Once you have this, you have your theoretical framework.

1. What specific behaviour are we trying to change?
2. Whose behaviour are we trying to change?
3. Which theory/ theories best explain(s) why people behave the way they do?
4. Which theory/ theories best explain(s) how to make our behavioural change?
5. What barriers exist? How does our intervention address them?
6. How does our website play a role in influencing behaviour?
7. How do we define success? How do we know if our project has worked?
8. What evidence (existing research) supports our approach?

And once you're done...

... present to the group!