

The Theory of Planned Behavior Reflection

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The Theory of Planned Behavior is a psychological framework that strongly focuses on behavioral intention and the idea that a person's behavior is largely impacted by their intentions to perform that behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that behavioral intention is determined by one's own personal attitude, subjective norms put in place by others in society, and one's own perceived behavioral control. Attitudes are explained as one's own positive or negative connotations relating to the performance of a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It can be said that an individual is more likely to engage in a behavior, if they believe that engagement will lead to some sort of positive outcome. Subjective norms are considered a social factor that relates to perceived pressure placed on the engagement in a behavior by others in society (Ajzen, 1991). For example, an individual is more likely to engage in a behavior if they feel that their family or friends expect them to. One's degree of perceived behavioral control relates to the perception of how easy or difficult an individual feels engaging in a certain behavior will be. Perceived behavioral control can reflect past experiences and is often based on other factors like resources, skills, timing, opportunity, etc. (Ajzen, 1991). Overall, one's behavioral intention is more likely to increase if a positive attitude, relative subjective norms, and a positive perception of the behavior are present.

While reading the Theory of Planned Behavior, I found myself relating the information to the new experience of working as a problem-based learning (PBL) group member. Going into PBL I had a positive attitude; I knew that my participation in this group would help me better understand course content and feel more prepared and confident as a future occupational therapist (OT). I also knew that I would be gaining different perspectives on how to handle certain situations and clients, which would inevitably be beneficial. However, there is also a level of societal pressure set in place by the PBL facilitator and other group members.

The subjective norms for the course are that you will complete all your readings, engage in meaningful conversations about the case study outside of class, use critical thinking to determine the best way of presenting and gaining information, ask thoughtful questions, engage in role plays, and provide meaningful feedback to other group members each week. There are expectations placed on each group member to complete these requirements, while I would follow the directions for the course without the social pressure of letting my peers down, it provides another reason and added pressure for me to engage in these behaviors.

My perceived behavioral control is wavering, as I feel that I am good at gathering information and working in a group setting, I know that I am not the best presenter. In order to increase my perceived behavioral control, I rehearse my presentation before class each week, making sure to time myself and not look directly at my note cards. I also ask my fellow group members and facilitator for feedback so that I can improve my presenting skills each week. Each week I continue to engage in these behaviors to the best of my abilities, knowing that the improved performance will not only better me, but also my career and clients in the future.

I think that the Theory of Planned Behavior will inform my future development as an OT practitioner, by giving me a lens through which I can view patients and their engagement in certain behaviors and better understand why they may be struggling or succeeding in certain areas, in order to better plan treatments.

References

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)