

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). It is a model of purposeful human behavior. According to TPB, the best predictor of an individual’s behavior is their intention to perform the behavior. TPB hypothesizes that intentions are influenced by three factors, 1) attitudes toward the behavior, 2) social normative perceptions associated with the behavior, and 3) perceived control over the behavior. Generally, the stronger the intention to perform the behavior, the more likely the behavior will be performed. The ability of TPB to successfully explain an individual’s behavior depends on the degree to which a particular behavior is under the individual’s volitional control (that is, they can exercise a large degree of control over the behavior).

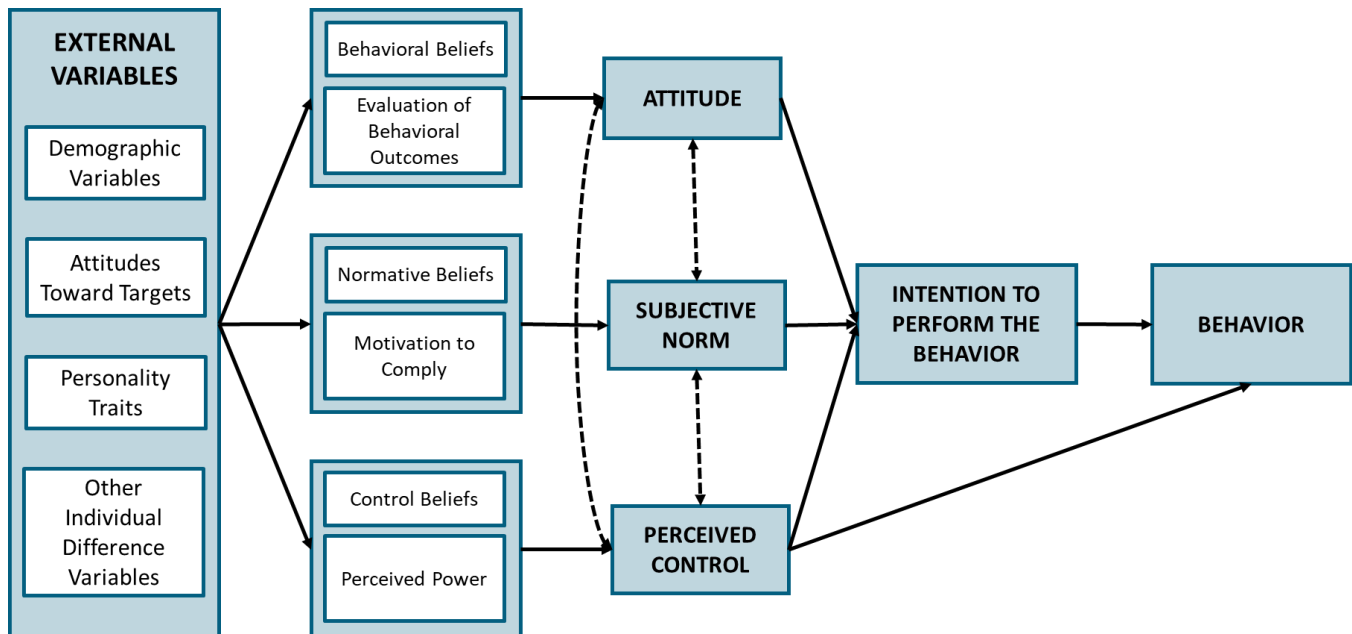
In TPB, the hypothesized causal relationships among the theoretical components are clearly specified, as are their measurement and estimation. Other factors, including demographic and environmental characteristics, are assumed to operate through theoretical constructs and are not thought to independently contribute to or explain the likelihood of performing a behavior.

Developer

Icek Ajzen, 1991

Graphical Representation of Theory and Constructs

(Adapted from Montaño & Kasprzyk, 2015)



Attitude – Overall evaluation of the behavior on a scale from positive to negative.

- **Behavioral beliefs** – Belief that behavioral performance is associated with a certain outcome or experience.
- **Evaluation of behavioral outcomes** – Value attached to a behavioral outcome or attribute.

Subjective norm – Perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in the behavior.

- **Normative beliefs** – Belief about whether others approve or disapprove of the behavior or are likely to perform the behavior themselves.
- **Motivation to comply** – Motivation to do what others think is right.

Perceived control – Overall measure of perceived control over the behavior.

- **Control beliefs** – Perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behavior.
- **Perceived power** – Perceived effect of each condition/control factor in making behavioral performance difficult or easy.

Intention – Perceived likelihood of performing the behavior.

Application to the Precision Paradigm: Alignment of Theory Constructs with Mechanisms of Action Taxonomy

Mechanisms of Action (MoA), derived from theories of behavior, are the processes through which specific intervention techniques are expected to affect behavior. Interventions grounded in Theory of Planned Behavior might include techniques to achieve specific changes in behavior by acting through any of these MoAs.

Aspects of constructs in the **Theory of Planned Behavior** correspond to the [Mechanisms of Action taxonomy](#) as follows:

Theory Construct	Corresponding Mechanism(s) of Action
Attitude	Attitudes Towards the Behavior
Behavioral Beliefs	Beliefs about Consequences
Evaluation of Behavioral Outcomes	Beliefs about Consequences
Subjective Norm	Subjective Norms
Normative Beliefs	Subjective Norms
Motivation to Comply	Motivation Social Influences
Perceived Control	Beliefs about Capabilities General Attitudes/Beliefs
Intention	Intention

NOTE: Aspects of the graphical representation of this theory also correspond to other components of the [Precision Paradigm](#):

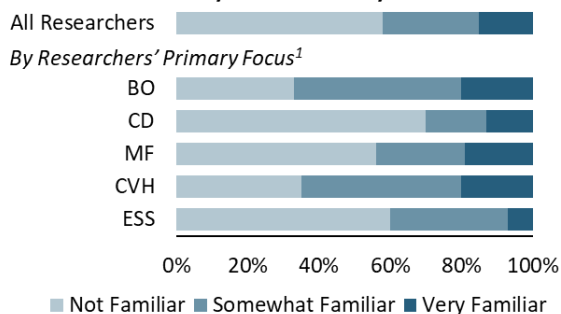
- *External variables* are part of the [context](#) and can act as moderators

Examples of Use of Theory in Intervention Development/Research

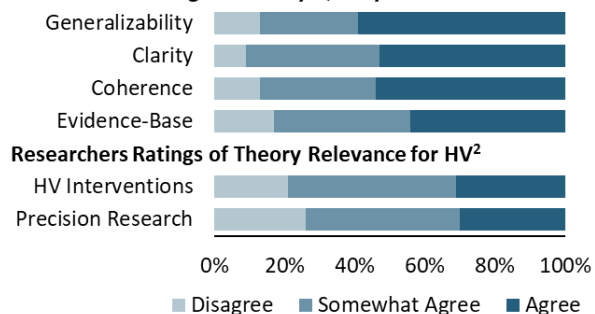
Wen, J., Yu, G., Kong, Y., Wei, H., Zhao, S., & Liu, F. (2021). Effects of a theory of planned behavior-based intervention on breastfeeding behaviors after cesarean section: A randomized controlled trial. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 8(2), 152-160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2021.03.012>

Key Results from Intervention Researcher Survey

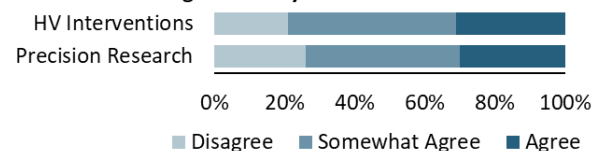
Researchers' Familiarity with the Theory



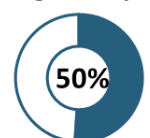
Researchers' Ratings of Theory Quality²



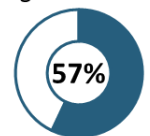
Researchers Ratings of Theory Relevance for HV²



High Quality³



High Relevance⁴



¹Intervention researchers' primary or secondary area of research; BO=Birth Outcomes; CD=Child Development; MF=Maternal Psychosocial Functioning; CVH=Cardiovascular Health; ESS=Family Economic Self-Sufficiency

²Of those who indicated they were familiar with the theory. Those answering 'Not Sure' to the quality and relevance items were excluded from the denominator.

³Percent of researchers answering agree/somewhat agree to all four quality items.

⁴Percent of researchers answering agree/somewhat agree to both relevance items.

Methods for the intervention researcher survey can be found [here](#).

Theory Citations

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)

Fishbein, M. (1967). *Readings in attitude theory and measurement*. Wiley.

Montaño, D. E. and Kasprzyk, D. (2015). Theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior, and the integrated behavioral model. In Glanz, K., Rimer, B. K., & Viswanath, K. (Eds.), *Health behavior: Theory, research, and practice* (5th ed., pp. 223-242). Jossey-Bass.