

Navigating Behavior Change: Insights From the OptiRoutS Project



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This research was done within the context of the OptiRoutS project and delves into the intricate dynamics of behavior change in travel planning and route selection. The ultimate goal was to unravel the underlying factors that influence individuals' decisions. Through a detailed literature review, 12 factors were identified that might significantly impact people to change their behavior. The methodology consisted of two focus groups, with six participants each. Participants engaged in detailed discussions exploring these identified factors such as environmental concerns, convenience, cost-effectiveness, and social influences. These discussions provided valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the decision-making process related to travel behavior. The conclusion drawn from this research underscores the complexity inherent to behavior change. The feasibility of change hinges on numerous factors and context-dependent influences. Nonetheless, social influence emerged as a significant driver, highlighting the importance of social validation and acceptance. To guarantee widespread adoption certain socially desirable behaviors, it is crucial to identify and empower early adopters. By emphasizing emotional appeal, personal benefits, and convenience, it is possible to enhance receptivity among empathic users. Furthermore, highlighting the positive impact behavioral change can have on people's surroundings reinforces the sense of accomplishment and community contribution. These findings hold considerable implications for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to promote environmentally conscious and socially responsible mobility practices.

Biography:

Mirte Brouwers is a researcher at Imec-SMIT, Free University of Brussels. Her research centers mostly around the nudging of prosocial (travel) behavior. Before starting at Imec-SMIT, she obtained her master's degree in communication sciences at Free University of Brussels magna cum laude, where her thesis focused on how greenwashing practices and the awareness of these practices interfered with consumer's perceptions of soft drink brands. She is mainly interested in user research and does most of her research within the context of building a more sustainable future.