

Evaluation of Front-Line Staff e Bike Use Initiative at Nottingham City Council

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Strategy:

Nottingham Local Transport Plan: Implementation Plan 2018 to 2022 (Nottingham City Council, 2019)

Policy:

C3: *"Promotion and support for cycling through work with health, voluntary and other sectors"*

Initiative:

Encourage front-line staff e-bike use

Context:

Adult Social Care (ASC) group.

- Supporting the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged community members
- Monitored trial of ride-to-work plus day-to-day operational use as an alternative to driving, walking and taking the bus
- Home visits caseload clients



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"In order to better understand the impact of e-bikes, comprehensive studies are needed to quantify the influence of e-bikes on travel behaviour." (Fishman and Cherry, 2016, p. 88)

Current e-bike research

- **Dangers of e-bike riding:** Hertach et al (2018); Huertas-Leyva, Dozza & Baldanzini (2018); Langford (2015); Schleinitz et al (2016); Wang et al (2018); Weber et al (2014); Yang et al (2018)
- **Ease of e-bike riding:** Leger et al (2019); Plazier et al (2017); Vlakveld (2015)
- **Intention to buy e-bikes:** Kroesen (2017); Simsekoglu & Klöckner (2019)
- **Our focus:**
 - 1) influence of e-bikes on willingness to cycle
 - 2) the social role/impact of e-bikesSee also Behrendt (2016); Fyhri & Fearnley (2015)

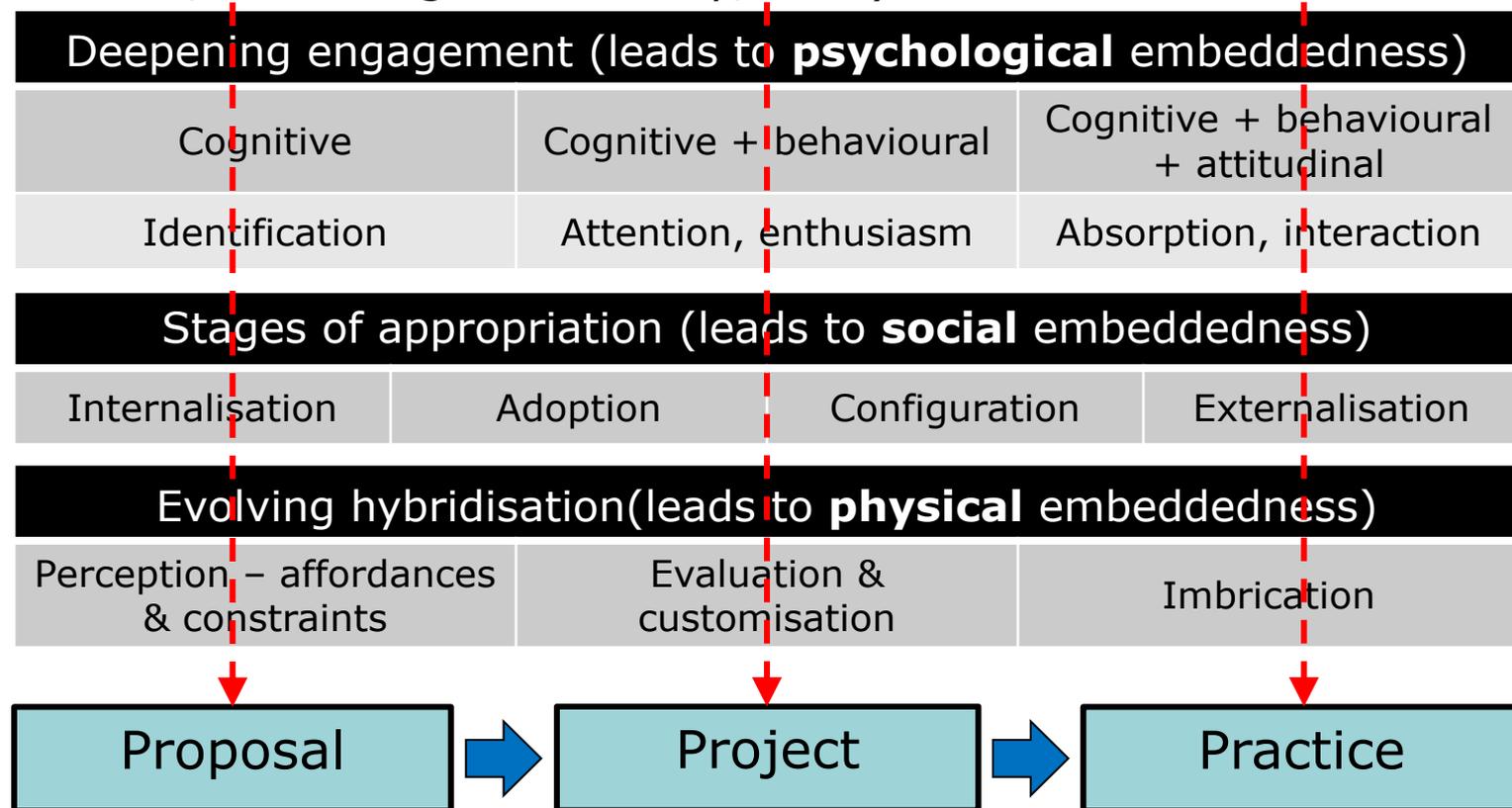
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Method

- Six volunteers initially
- One-hour focus group held at local adult care centre
- All participants were women – not fully representative of whole workforce profile (but key target group)
- Two members of research team (facilitator and note-taker)
- Meeting digitally recorded and notes taken
- Transcript typed up by third party organisation
- Initial “top-lines” summary report delivered to NCC
- Full report with recommendations delivered to NCC once typed transcripts were available – practitioner focus
- Academic focus being pursued in parallel (with approval of NCC)

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Monitoring framework: A composite model of sociomaterial success: proposal, project, practice, pause (adapted from Woodall, Rosborough and Harvey, 2018)



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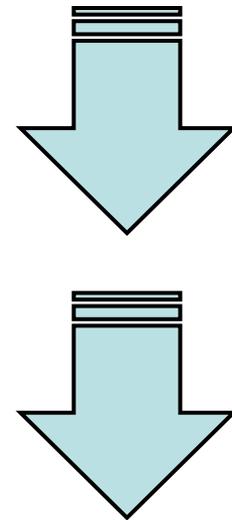
A composite model of sociomaterial success:

Psychological, social & physical embeddedness

□ **Proposal:** Awareness – identification; cognitive engagement; internalisation; perception of affordances and constraints

□ **Project:** Rehearsal – behavioural engagement; attention & enthusiasm; adoption and configuration; evaluation and customisation

□ **Practice:** Habituation – attitudinal engagement; absorption and interaction; externalisation; imbrication



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Sociomaterial failure: embeddedness (either psychological, social or physical) does not occur

Pause

Pause 1 Pause for thought	Pause 2 Temporary pause	Pause 3 Permanent pause	Pause 4 Practice without purpose
Lack of conviction or certainty	Occasional cessation	Permanent cessation	'Routine', at low levels of engagement

Monitoring Method

Focus group meeting with ASC group trialists at beginning ('proposal' stage) after 6 months (after 'project' stage) and after 12 months ('practice' or 'pause?'). Qualitative evaluation of evidence

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Results – Proposal

Identification: Awareness through e-mails, but neither well-targeted nor sufficiently clear. Communication improvements required

Internalisation: Volunteers keen to get started and to help NCC; feel 'special' (small 'select' group and cost + quality of bicycles); some cynicism regarding council motives

Perceived affordances: Presumed health benefits; cost-savings for motorists and bus riders. No comments regarding impact on service - focus mainly on selves

Perceived constraints: Weather/traffic; security of, and personal liability for, e-bikes; maintenance/breakdown support?; poor fit/comfort in some cases

Pause? No lack of conviction, but some uncertainty due to perceived constraints. Overall, at proposal stage, perceived benefits outweigh perceived sacrifices.

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