

Final Reflection CDR

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Within Constructive Design Research (CDR) we researched the effect of information framing on charitable behavior. To research the relation between these specific variables we used the lab methodology. Next to getting acquainted with this, to me new, methodology, I was introduced to field and showroom. By collectively reflecting on these different methodologies I learned about the differences in both approach and objective. For future design research I imagine myself combining elements from lab and field.

Lab Methodology

By conducting lab research I was able to apply my gained knowledge from 'Elementary Statistics'. After we collected data, I was able to use statistical analyses to distinguish relations between variables. I really like how these analyses help me to make something abstract more concrete, and therefore comparable. Furthermore I was both enthused and frustrated by how accurate and exact everything had to be. Every single step, every variable and every word needed to be discussed and determined. Within lab every detail matters, since you need 'clean' data in order to analyze what you're looking for. What I did not like about lab is that it only allows you to research one specific element or the relation between two elements. As a designer (and potential researcher) I feel especially triggered by how design (or the design way of thinking) can influence the context/ experience of users.

Comparing Methodologies

I see myself as an analytical and user-centred designer. Therefore I like to research the design, the user(s) and the context as a whole, while taking into account all possible relations and effects. Since this is not possible within lab, I would like to get further acquainted with field research. Different than in lab, field research allows you to define your research question (and framing) on-the-go, based on observation and inquiries. It allows you to approach your research more open-minded (without expectations) and get a broader picture. However, it does not allow you to distinguish a universal hard-cut conclusion, which is possible within lab.

Personally I do not feel attracted to showroom as a research method. Partially because I am very down-to-earth, I like my research findings to be concrete and applicable, which is hard to establish within showroom. Furthermore I love to connect with people and try to understand them (or their behaviour), rather than provoking them. What I do like about showroom is that you can use design to trigger discussions, which otherwise might not take place. It allows you to be more critical and artistic, but more importantly you can research 'what can be' instead of 'what is'.

Future Research

Since both lab and field align with my professional identity, I would like to combine elements of both methodologies in the future. However I do not see myself as a potential researcher (through design). I would rather be a designer (through research). I do believe research allows you to gain new knowledge, which can add value to society (and fellow designers). However I noticed research is a never ending process and therefore quite unsatisfying to me. No matter how equipped you are and how well you frame your research, every conclusion will raise new questions and new research potential. A design process allows me to concretize gained knowledge into a design, which allows me to create value for involved users.

In the future I do want to use more in-context research (which is typical for field), especially in the beginning of my design process. Since I believe this will allow me to get a better understanding of both the user(s) and the context. Later in the process I would like to do analyses with repeated measurements in a between-subject test (which is typical for lab), to validate specific design choices. Overall, I do think the skills and knowledge I gained will help me to become a better analytical and user-centred designer.