

Technological Affordances of a Mobile Fitness Application- A Role of Escapism and Social Outcome Expectation

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Abstract : The leading health risks threatening the world today are associated with a modern lifestyle characterized by sedentary behavior, stress, anxiety, and an obesogenic food environment. To counter this alarming trend, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have proffered Physical Activity guidelines to bolster physical engagement. Concurrently, the burgeon of smartphones and mobile applications has witnessed a proliferation of fitness applications aimed at invigorating exercise adherence and real-time activity monitoring. Grounded in the Uses and gratification theory, this study delves into the technological affordances of mobile fitness applications, discerning the mediating influences of escapism and social outcome expectations on attitudes and exercise intention. The theory explains how individuals employ distinct communication mediums to satiate their exigencies and desires. Technological affordances manifest as attributes of emerging technologies that galvanize personal engagement in physical activities. Several features of mobile fitness applications include affordances for goal setting, virtual rewards, peer support, and exercise information. Escapism, denoting the inclination to disengage from normal routines, has emerged as a salient motivator for the consumption of new media. This study postulates that individual's perceptions technological affordances within mobile fitness applications, can affect escapism and social outcome expectations, potentially influencing attitude, and behavior formation. Thus, the integrated model has been developed to empirically examine the interrelationships between technological affordances, escapism, social outcome expectations, and exercise intention. Structural Equation Modelling serves as the methodological tool, and a cohort of 400 Fitbit users shall be enlisted from the Prolific, data collection platform. A sequence of multivariate data analyses will scrutinize both the measurement and hypothesized structural models. By delving into the effects of mobile fitness applications, this study contributes to the growing of new media studies in sport management. Moreover, the novel integration of the uses and gratification theory, technological affordances, via the prism of escapism, illustrates the dynamics that underlies mobile fitness user's attitudes and behavioral intentions. Therefore, the findings from this study contribute to theoretical understanding and provide pragmatic insights to developers and practitioners in optimizing the impact of mobile fitness applications.

Keywords : technological affordances, uses and gratification, mobile fitness apps, escapism, physical activity

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