

# Blessing or Curse: The Paradoxical Impact of Mobile Health Applications on the Consumer

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Cite as:

Blazevic Vera, Klintwort Lisa (2019), Blessing or Curse: The Paradoxical Impact of Mobile Health Applications on the Consumer. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 48th, (10166)

Paper presented at the 48th Annual EMAC Conference, Hamburg, May 24-27, 2019.



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## Abstract

Smart devices, such as mobile health apps, have become increasingly popular. Users try to increase their self-control via the help of technology to achieve goals, such as sporting and healthy eating. However, the question remains whether the usage of these apps unequivocally results in consumer well-being, as there might also be negative consequences. Hence, the aim of this article is to identify the paradoxical tensions elicited by mHealth apps and their impact on consumers. We conducted a qualitative research in form of a diary study, the sentence completion method and semi-structured interviews. As a result, three different phases of mHealth use were identified. First, respondents were initially motivated to use mHealth apps to gain support by receiving factual self-tracking information. Second, five predominant paradoxes were identified, resulting in the tensions of privacy concerns, obsession and ambivalence. Paradoxical tensions often elicited negative conflicting emotions. Thus, users applied coping strategies in order to manage these tensions. Overall, we provide a more balanced view on the impact of smart devices on consumer well-being.

**Keywords:** *digital consumer experience; paradox theory; coping strategies*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media