

Empowering consumers through mental mobile health applications: antecedents and consequences

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Cite as:

Francois Julien, Audrain Anne Françoise, Boudhraâ Sana, Vial Stéphane (2023), Empowering consumers through mental mobile health applications: antecedents and consequences. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 52nd, (114065)

Paper from the 52nd Annual EMAC Conference, Odense/Denmark, May 23-26, 2023



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Abstract

With the rapid growth of mental mobile health applications (mHealth apps), it has been presumed that mental mHealth apps empower individuals with mental health disorders. In turn, empowerment gained through mHealth apps is expected to enhance patient trust toward the healthcare provider. Drawing on the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and relying on the marketing and the healthcare literatures, we propose an integrative model that relates the empowerment gained thanks to mHealth apps to the trust toward the healthcare provider and therapy compliance. To test our four hypotheses, we conducted a survey with 364 mental mHealth apps users and analysed the data with partial least squares structural equation modelling. Our findings reveal that empowerment positively impacts patient's trust, and that trust enhances therapy compliance. However, we find no direct effect of empowerment on therapy compliance, which indicates that trust is a full mediator between empowerment and therapy compliance.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Services*

Track: Consumer Behaviour