

Smartphones for Enjoying the Process and PCs for Achieving the Outcome: The Influence of Activity Orientation on Electronic Device Selection

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Cite as:

Zhu Shuqi, Wei Sarah, Rudd John (2026), Smartphones for Enjoying the Process and PCs for Achieving the Outcome: The Influence of Activity Orientation on Electronic Device Selection. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (133092)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



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Abstract

Electronic devices, such as smartphones and PCs, have become indispensable tools that facilitate almost every aspect of consumers' everyday lives. With multiple electronic devices at their disposal, how do consumers choose between a smartphone and a PC for engaging in an activity? Evidence from five studies demonstrates that consumers prefer smartphones when they expect to prioritize engaging in the process of an activity (process-oriented), and they prefer PCs when they expect to achieve a favorable outcome (outcome-oriented). Under a process orientation, consumers tend to construe an activity by highlighting the most (few) representative steps. By contrast, under an outcome orientation, consumers tend to emphasize goal attainment and completion. Thus, process orientation reduces the expected effortfulness of an activity, leading to the selection of an electronic device that is compatible with the expected effort for engaging in that activity.

Track: Consumer Behaviour