

Unlocking Aspirational Future Selves – Mental Simulation and its Affective-Cognitive Mechanisms towards Health-Conscious Behavior

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Abstract

In an era in which consumers routinely track their steps, monitor their sleep, and receive AI-driven health advice via their smart devices, digital health applications have become central to everyday self-regulation. Sustaining medium- and long-term commitment to goals, however, requires continuous reinforcement of motivation and behavioral intention. As digital health tools increasingly shape how individuals pursue and maintain health-related goals, understanding the psychological mechanisms that make such tools effective is more important than ever. Given this, our research investigates the extent to which the direction of prefactuals embedded in health-prevention apps can influence the intention to behave health-consciously. Moreover, we examine the affective and cognitive mechanisms through which these mental simulations shape users' intentions to engage in health-promoting actions. Based on the findings, user-centered applications can be designed.

Track: Innovation Management & New Product Development