

Functionality or Enjoyment? The Role of Online Review Framing in Mobile Health Apps Use

Miriam Alzate

Universidad Publica de Navarra

♦Ivaro Saavedra

Public University of Navarre

Paula Vidaurreta-Apesteguía

Universidad de Granada

Acknowledgements:

This work was supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (grant number: TED2021-129513B-C21) and by the Public University of Navarre (grant number: PJUPNA2023-11395).

Cite as:

Alzate Miriam, Saavedra ♦Ivaro, Vidaurreta-Apesteguía Paula (2026), Functionality or Enjoyment? The Role of Online Review Framing in Mobile Health Apps Use. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (134051)

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



Functionality or Enjoyment? The Role of Online Review Framing in Mobile Health Apps Use

Abstract

This research examines how utilitarian versus hedonic information, together with review sentiment, shapes evaluations of mHealth apps across adoption stages. Study 1 analyses 622,718 real online reviews and shows that hedonic content is less likely to appear in 1-star ratings but more likely to appear in 5-stars ratings, suggesting that among existing users hedonic features drive delight once basic utilitarian performance is accepted. Study 2 uses an online experiment in a pre-adoption scenario and reveals a significant interaction between review orientation and tone: under negative tone, utilitarian reviews reduce intention to use more than hedonic reviews, whereas under positive tone they increase intention to use more than hedonic ones. Thus, utilitarian information is pivotal for initial choice, while hedonic benefits dominate post-adoption enthusiasm.

Track: Public Sector and Non-Profit Marketing