Chapter 3
Analyzing Perspectives on Lifestyle M–Health Apps:
User and Non–User Insights

Veronika Keller

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7759-7613
Széchenyi István University, Hungary

Ida Ercsey

Széchenyi István Egyetem, Hungary

ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to explore the theoretical background and experiences of using lifestyle (LS) applications from a user perspective. The objective is to identify the reasons for non-usage. To accomplish these research goals, four focus group interviews were conducted with students studying recreation management in the autumn of 2022. The focus group research findings indicated that sports and fitness apps were the participants' most favoured. The evaluation of LS applications identified usefulness, features, accessibility, and accuracy as the most significant factors. More students reported positive effects on their physical and mental health; however, they viewed the applications and smart devices as auxiliary tools. The main reasons for non-use included personal, technical, and usability issues, as discovered by the authors. This chapter provides an in-depth insight into alterations in health practices, incentives and encounters with mobile devices and LS apps, contributing to the field of service literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Overweight and obesity are an epidemic that appears in the developed countries of the world but also in developing countries. This phenomenon can be explained by inappropriate eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle. Based on statistical data, overweight and obesity is a serious problem among young people, as the proportion of obese young people (below 35) is constantly increasing in the developed regions of the world. Considering the national health survey of KSH (Central Statistical Office) from

2019 (European Health Interview Survey, 2019). Generations Z and Y (18-34-year-old Hungarians) have an unhealthy lifestyle than older generations. The proportion of obese and overweight people among young people (aged 18-34) in 2019 was as follows: 46.2% for men and 32.3% for women, although the survey found that women underestimated their weight and overestimated their height, as the calculation of the body mass index was based on self-reporting. Underweight was more common among women (5.5%) than men (1.4%). Looking at trends, there has been a slight decrease among young men and a slight increase among young women over the course of the 21st century (European Health Interview Survey, 2019).

According to Alves et al. (2021), one of the most important social marketing themes is health and well-being and the promotion of healthy food consumption, especially the reduction of fat, sugar and sodium, and the promotion of physical activity and healthy habits. M-health apps can be defined as "*software embedded in smartphones to improve health outcomes, health research and health services*" (Nouri, et al., 2018). The use of different mobile devices for health purposes has become increasingly common (Müller et al., 2018; Nacinovich, 2013). More authors (Nouri, et al., 2018; Villinger et al., 2019) have explored that mobile app-based interventions are effective in improving diet-related health outcomes and reducing the risk of obesity (Tong et al., 2021; Vlahu-Gjorgievska et al., 2018). Furthermore, these interventions are more useful than traditional non-digital interventions (Alnasser et al., 2015, Lieffers et al., 2021). The most common health-related apps are lifestyle (LS) apps, which include fitness, nutrition and meditation apps. The use of fitness apps is the most popular and has increased significantly over the years. The use of fitness apps is highest in the EU Member States (12.49%), followed by Hungary (10.38%) and finally the international penetration rate (7.7%) (Statista, 2022). However, only a small part of the population uses diet apps (Ernsting et al., 2017; König et al., 2018), as people expect them to incorporate self-management techniques into their daily lives. In Hungary, the use of diet apps is less than four per cent. Globally, the use of meditation apps is not significant, only between two and three per cent. However, if we take the average of the countries of the European Union and Hungary, the proportion of people using meditation apps is between 8 and 10 per cent (Statista, 2022). Domestic data on the use of applications clearly show that Hungarians prefer free applications to paid ones, both in terms of fitness, meditation, and nutrition (Statista, 2022). In terms of statistics, the use of LS applications in Hungary (17.1%) is positive compared to the global penetration rate (11.06%), but lags behind the average of EU member states (21.29%).

M-health apps are an effective form of health promotion even by mental healthcare (Sawyer et al., 2023) and this topic has been widely researched by several disciplines (psychology, sociology, medicine, computer science) from theoretical and practical perspectives. Kellen and Saxena (2020) has already explored the motivations for and barriers to adoption and usage of meditation apps during times of crisis. They interviewed 17 college students who had full time jobs and found that job-related factors, changing lifestyles, psychological conditions and worries, perceived outcomes were motivators, and price was a barrier. This paper analyses lifestyle apps from a marketing perspective. There is little research in the international (Sabbir et al., 2021; Sawyer et al., 2023) and national literature on how to disseminate their use (Meskó et al., 2017; Kovács & Várallyai, 2021; Szűcs, 2021). Intention to use, attitude, and motivation to use mobile health apps have already been studied among Hungarian young adults based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology model (Kovács & Várallyai, 2021). The UTAUT 2 model was developed by Venkatesh et al. (2012) as an extension of the original UTAUT model for the consumer market. This model took into consideration both utilitarian and hedonic aspects of technology use, as well as considering factors like habit and price value. Therefore, the primary objective of this

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