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MIS

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EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

‘EXAMINING IDENTIFICATION WITH WEARABLE ACTIVITY TRACKERS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTINUED AND DISCONTINUED USE’

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ABSTRACT

Wearable activity trackers are electronic devices that help users in monitoring health-related information. They do so by generating feedback about users’ performance and providing normative information about the performance of users’ social contacts. While such information can have significant value in facilitating self-regulated health behavior, abandoning activity trackers after a short-term use remains a key challenge, which mitigates their positive health effects. In this paper, drawing from identity theory, we examine how identification with activity trackers, i.e., individuals’ sense of oneness with technology, influences whether individuals continue or discontinue their usage and how feedback – i.e., perceived praise and criticism, and comparison of own performance with friends – from activity trackers shapes identification with them. We do so through quantitative data collected from 640 Fitbit users (323 current users and 317 past users). Our study contributes to past literature by demonstrating that identification with activity trackers can explain whether one continues or quits using the tracker and that perceived praise, social comparison as well as perceived criticism positively shape identification with trackers.

Keywords: IT continuance, IT discontinuance, IT identity, Feedback from technology, wearable activity tracker