

Nudging and Acceptance-commitment Therapy: Cognitive Aspects of a Mobile Application for Stress Management

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Abstract for Poster

The negative effects of stress at work in terms of emotional disorders and organisational difficulties have urged the need for new solutions and especially direct-to-user tools such as mobile applications. While new technology can support the architecture of such tools adaptive coping behaviours have also been identified as an important factor for promoting new strategies to cope effectively with stress at work. A study being reported in this paper investigates how technology has been used to influence adaptive coping behaviours and synthesises the key aspects into a conceptual model for creating a new mobile application. A literature review concerning coping behaviours and technology was conducted to gather evidence for the foundation of the conceptual model. The empirical findings of the research will be tested and verified against the theoretical framework consisting of the “Nudging theory” and the “Acceptance and Commitment Theory – ACT”. Particularly, ACT is an empirically-based psychological intervention that uses acceptance and mindfulness strategies mixed in different ways with commitment and behaviour-change strategies, to increase psychological flexibility. In our study, ACT resulted predominant to design the App’s solutions to cope with stress.

Other aspects used to design the mobile application were: the customisation to the user, the use of relevant and tailored information and feedback, the use of positive reinforcement, and indirect suggestions. The conceptual model provides further knowledge of key aspects to be considered when developing persuasive tools that aim to encourage more efficient ways of coping with stressful events.

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