

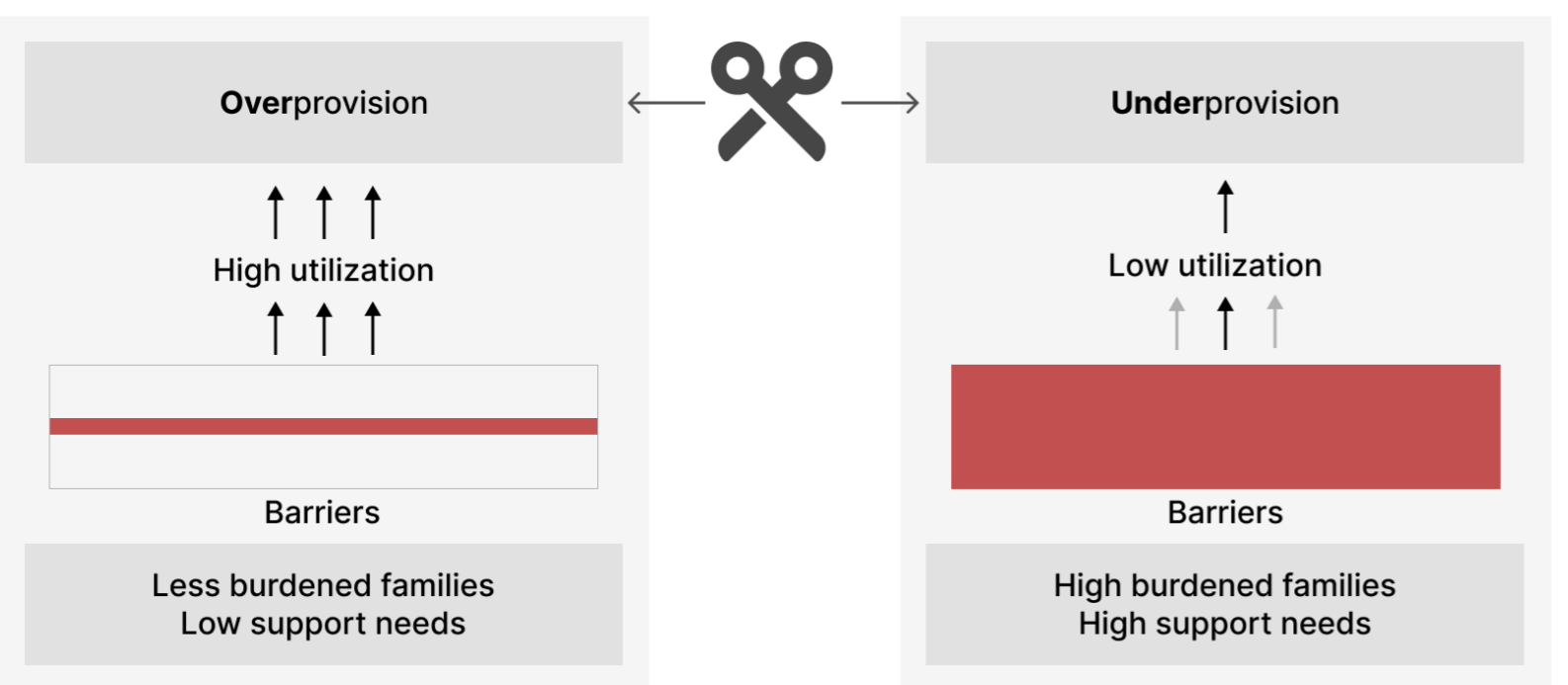
Overcoming the prevention dilemma – improving the accessibility of information of support services for families with a digital information platform

Thilo Hemmie, Daniel Wessel, Moreen Heine

Institute for Multimedia and Interactive Systems, University of Lübeck

1 Introduction

- preventive support services (e.g. family midwives or get-together for parents) are tools to prevent child abuse [1]
- problem: families who would benefit the most from these services use them less [2]



Graphical representation of the prevention dilemma [3].

→ prevention dilemma: more burdened families use support services less due to higher barriers [3]

→ goal: develop an app to reduce these barriers (case: family centers of Ostholstein, Germany)

2 Analysis

Literature Research

Workshops

Interviews

14 mothers of young children
3 employees of family centers

Questionnaires

83 parents of young children
11 employees of family centers

7 employees of family centers

→ 11 Barriers to Utilization

Barrier	Explanation	Requirements
Need-Service Mismatch	Found/selected services do not fit the parents needs.	List available services and clarify their target group.
Effort > Resources	Insufficient time to search for and use suitable services, incl. scheduling conflicts.	Communicate expected effort for a service. The application should have a good usability.
Lack of Information	Insufficient knowledge about what is offered by the family centers or even what the family centers are.	Improved information about the organization and services.
Costs	Insufficient knowledge that the services are free of charge.	Clear and easy accessible communication of costs.
Negative Experience	(Shared) negative experiences among parents has a chilling effect on their use.	Promote sharing of positive experience and disentangle the service from a (possibly negatively associated) organization.
Perceived Threat	The assumption that using support services could threaten their family, e.g., by taking the children away.	Focus on services, not on organizations.
Stigmatization as bad Parent	Support services are seen as only acceptable for truly serious problems, otherwise it indicates weakness (which is devastating for prevention efforts that try to intervene when the problem is still small).	Enable communication among parents to destigmatize parenting difficulties.
Lack of Interest	Some parents simply have no interest or desire to participate.	Provide motivational images (esp. those more burdened families can identify with) and be welcoming.
Insufficient expected Control Competence	"Steuerungskompetenzerwartung": Parents need to have the competence in expecting that their problems are solvable by utilizing services, but people with low competence are more burdened	Communicate that the utilization of support services can improve the situation of the parents.
Distrust of the Competence of Social Service Workers	Fear of the parents that the workers do not understand one's parenting methods or their own situation.	Empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the services and providing information in multiple languages to strengthen trust in the competence.
Blind Optimism	Belief of many parents that 'things will somehow work out'.	Provide information that services are suitable for every situation in life and make a difference.

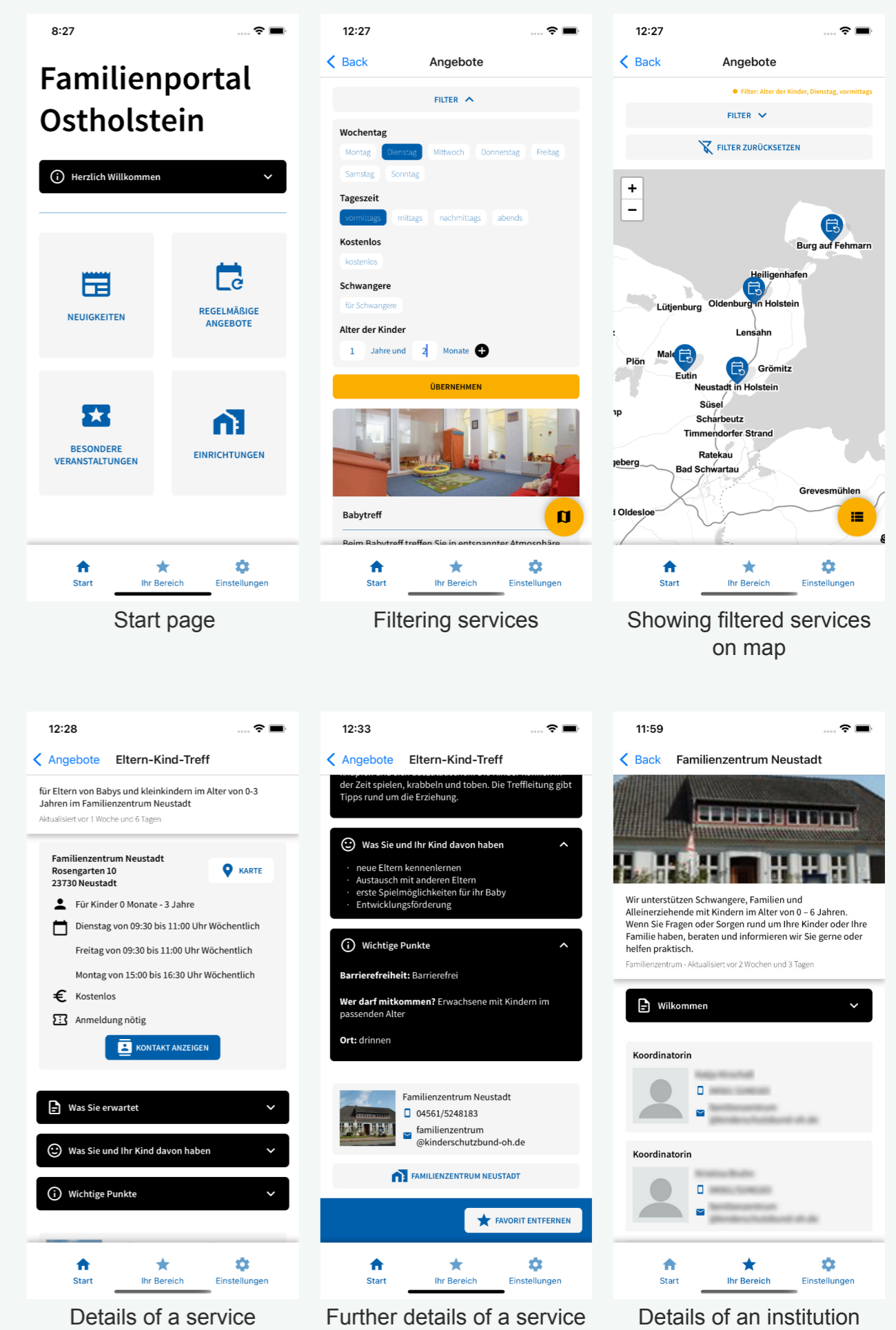
3 App Design

- formative evaluation of an interactive prototype with five mothers and one employee of the family centers → reduced visual „clutter“ for users, identified most relevant information for services
- implemented as native apps with React Native, added headless CMS through Strapi
- deployed CMS with Docker on servers of the university

PDF & More Information



link.jil.sh/muc2024



4 Evaluation

App:
participants: six mothers of young children
(age: 28 to 42, $M = 34.33$; $SD = 4.50$)

pre-post design:
measured barriers to utilization before and after interaction
→ calculated change of barriers over all participants

SUS-Score: 92.00
($N = 5$; $SD = 6.94$)

VisAWI-S: 5.95
($N = 5$; $SD = 1.54$)

Barrier	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total Change
Need-Service Mismatch	+0.50	0	0	-0.50	-0.50	-0.10
Effort > Resources	-0.50	-1	-1	-0.50	0	-0.60
Lack of Information	0	-2	-0.50	-1	-0.50	-0.80
Costs	0	-1	0	0	0	-0.20
Negative Experience	-0.50	0	-0.50	0	0	-0.20
Perceived Threat	0	-0.33	0	0	0	-0.07
Stigmatization as bad Parent	-0.67	-0.33	-0.33	0	0	-0.27
Lack of Interest	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insufficient expected Control Competence	-0.50	0	0	0	-1	-0.30
Distrust of the Competence of Social Service Workers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blind Optimism	-0.50	0	+0.50	0	0	0
Total Change Mother	-0.23	-0.41	-0.18	-0.18	-0.22	-0.24
Control Variables	0.00	-0.50	+0.50	0	0	0

CMS:
participants: six female employees
(age: 21 to 60, $N = 6$; $M = 42.00$; $SD = 13.88$)

usability test with subsequent interviews

→ interaction and completeness of information was rated positively

5 Conclusion

- 11 barriers were identified that hinder families from utilizing support services
- an information portal for families with young children in Ostholstein was developed as a native app
- evaluation indicated the potential for an app to reduce barriers for parents
- further studies with a larger sample could clarify the potential to overcome the prevention dilemma

[1] Kreis Ostholstein, 2019. Familienzentren mit den Frühen Hilfen im Kreis Ostholstein. Published as a printed booklet by the family centers in Ostholstein.

[2] Sabine Walper, 2016. Wie ist die Situation von belasteten Familien und ihren Kindern in Deutschland heute? https://www.fruehehilfen.de/leadadmin/user_upload/fruehehilfen.de/pdf/Kooperationstagung_2016_Folienpraesentation_Walper_und_NZFH.pdf.

[3] Mechthild Paul, 2019. Das Präventionsdilemma in den Frühen Hilfen. https://www.fruehehilfen.de/leadadmin/user_upload/fruehehilfen.de/pdf/Internationale-Tagung-Dornbirn-Das-Präventionsdilemma-in-den-FH-Vortrag-Mechthild-Paul_b.pdf.

Authors



Thilo Hemmie

Master student of Media Informatics

Dr. Daniel Wessel

Psychologist working at the intersection of psychology and technology.



Prof. Dr. Moreen Heine

Professor for E-Government and Open Data Ecosystems