

Insights from Heuristic Evaluation of A Kid's Mental Health App

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ABSTRACT

A not-for-profit organization dedicated to global children's mental health has developed an app revolutionizing therapy through dance. The app merges dance therapy with cutting-edge technology, offering interactive sessions designed by board-certified psychiatrists. Accessible nationwide, the app aims to transform therapy into enjoyable online entertainment. The app's motion capture software enables children to engage in therapeutic dances using just an iPhone camera. Through choreographed animations, children manage anxiety and depression through deliberate movements, unaware of the underlying therapeutic science.

The app employs introjection and mirroring tools to aid children in managing body movements subconsciously and consciously. Clinical research supports these activities in balancing anxiety and depression baselines, mitigating mental health distress. The app measures improvement potential and baseline scores for recommended body movements, facilitating personalized therapy experiences.

This study presents a heuristic analysis of the app using Jakob Nielsen's established heuristics. Over a three-day trial, usability experts evaluated the app's usability, identifying key issues and proposing actionable recommendations. The app represents a paradigm shift in children's mental health care, offering accessible and engaging therapy through dance. This heuristic analysis highlights areas for improvement, ensuring continued enhancement of the app's usability and effectiveness in promoting optimal mental health among children.

OBJECTIVES

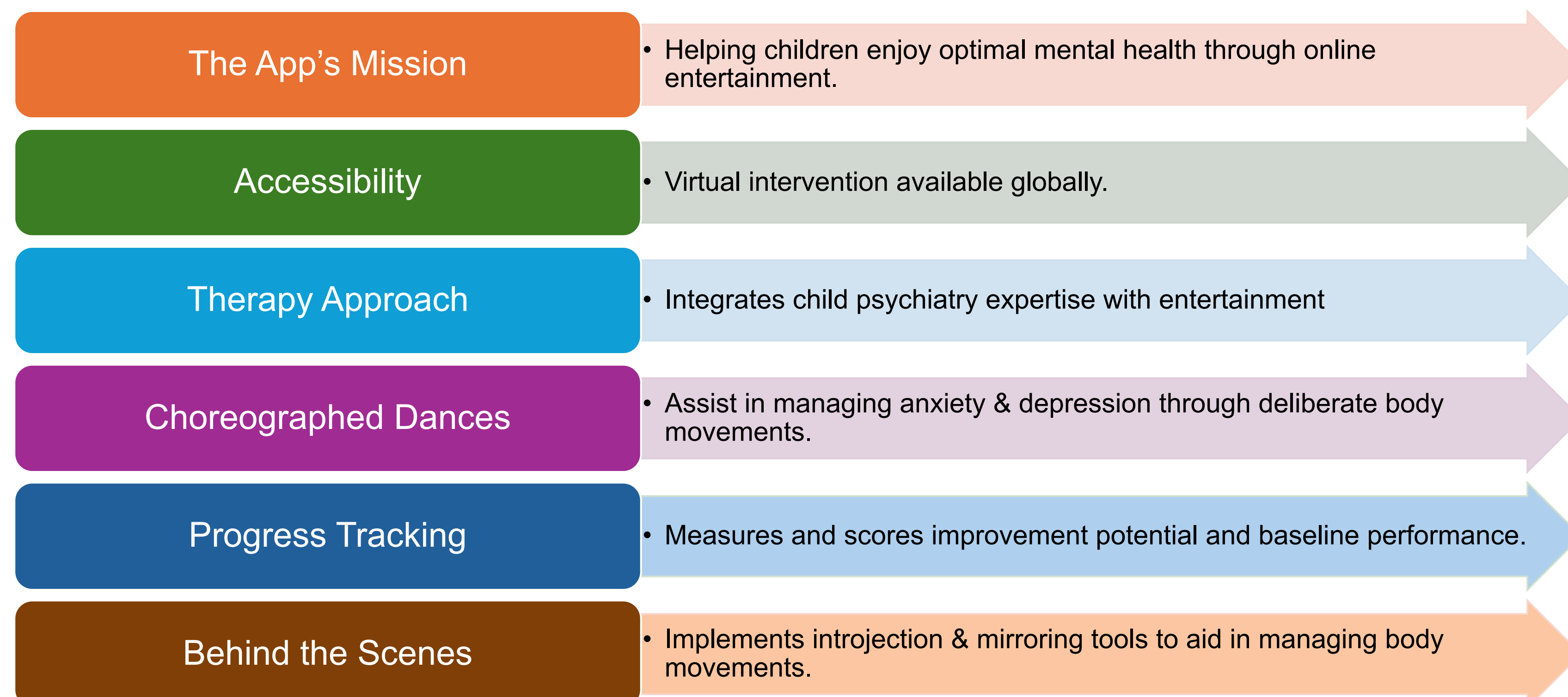
- Evaluate the app based on Jakob Nielsen's ten established heuristics
- Identify usability issues and specific challenges arising from user interactions and evaluate the platform's alignment with the existing clinical workflows.
- Derive actionable insights to refine the app's interfaces, with the aim of enhancing user experience.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

- Heuristic evaluation is a usability inspection method for evaluating the usability of a system, website, or application.
- During this evaluation, usability experts use a predetermined set of evaluation criteria or qualitative guidelines, known as heuristics, to identify usability issues.
- The experts evaluate the digital tool from the user's viewpoint to identify potential usability challenges.
- The framework for this review is based on the Heuristics established by Jakob Nielsen.
- This report documents findings from a three-day trial of the app.
- The findings are reported along with actionable recommendations.

WHAT IS THIS KID'S MENTAL HEALTH APP ABOUT?

The app addresses rising childhood anxiety and depression by utilizing choreographed movement and entertainment to combat the crisis. The app provides users with insights into their movement and mental health progress over time, available for free on the Apple App Store, with ongoing development focused on introducing new restorative dances and engaging characters.



RESULTS

	Strength	Recommendation
Login Page	Registration features user-friendly login, "show password," "forgot password," and clear error messages.	Consider adding a "remember me" option for login convenience.
Home Page	Quickly access deals, rewards, earnings, daily limits, link account, profile.	To avoid confusion for new users, consider adding info tooltips to clarify the meaning of pending, in progress, and completed rewards displayed on the summary section.
Informative Pop-Ups	Clear, sourced pop-ups on idle screens, minimizing disruption, with thoughtful design.	Consider numbering the fun facts in the order they appear in front of a user.
Link Bank Account	A streamlined bank account linking interface gathers necessary details and employs validation and OTP verification for accuracy and security.	Consider validating bank names to prevent errors (e.g., cross-referencing with a database or using a dropdown menu).
Add New Profile	Efficient profile setup with email validation, required details, and optional picture upload for customization.	Zip code validation improves user data accuracy, while confirmation emails verify ownership and deter misuse for new email additions.
Profile Page	The page features clear earnings and points, an intuitive "Play now" button, easy navigation, and profile section exploration.	The screen prompts to activate ACE-2; Provide functionality details and activation instructions via tooltip or clickable section about what is ACE-2.
Play Now Option	Easy selection of animation characters and dance types. Highly fun & engaging characters.	Include a prompt allowing users to edit selections and consider expanding character and dance options offering a teaser of upcoming additions.
Daily Report	The email sets a positive tone, while the report summarizes rewards, provides detailed feedback on body moves, and uses color-coded scores for exercise performance.	Email subject must clearly show the app's daily report with dance move recommendations, simplified terms, and mental well-being tracking.

How does the app stand out from other kid's mental health apps

- Built on patented technology
- Focus on Fun and Entertainment, uses gamified approach for engaging kids.
- Affordability: Covered by insurance but also available for people without insurance.
- Offers scores & monetary rewards
- Very convenient, requires minimal equipment, can be done at home at user's pace.
- Easy to use. The app is clear, intuitive, and directive. Kids can operate with minimal guidance.
- Tracks progress and provides scores to measure improvement over time.
- Screen Time with a Purpose: Provides a more positive screen time experience with potential mental health benefits.
- Strived to be globally accessible to achieve mental health equity.
- Preventative approach as it may help manage early signs of anxiety and depression among kids.
- Improve overall health outcomes by encouraging kids to exercise, improve mood, and thus lower undesirable symptoms and improve overall wellbeing

CONCLUSIONS

- The app uses the power of high-quality entertainment integrated with motion tracking and AI to help kids develop cognitive skills and thrive.
- The app offers a promising approach to children's mental health through gamified dance therapy.
- The app excels in usability, featuring uncluttered interfaces, informative pop-ups, error prevention, intuitive design, and easy navigation.
- Key strengths include progress tracking, engaging dance sessions with animated characters, and motivational prompts.
- Improvement opportunities lie in clarifying certain features like camera indicators and complex terms in reports, as well as validating input data for accuracy.
- The app lays a solid groundwork for children's well-being; addressing minor usability issues can enhance impact and user satisfaction.