Target User Research: Exploring the landscape of children's mental health through personas, empathy, and customer experience mapping

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ABSTRACT

In the United States, the prevalence of mental health disorders among youth is alarmingly high, with one in six aged 6-17 experiencing such challenges annually. Shockingly, half of these affected youth do not receive the treatment they urgently need, contributing to the grim statistics of suicide, which claims a life every 11 minutes and sees a suicide attempt every 26 seconds. Addressing this crisis, a non-profit organization has developed a fun and entertaining app aimed at empowering children's mental health through the transformative power of dance therapy.

The app stands out for its focus on enhancing both cognitive skills and physical activity, utilizing patented motion-tracking technology to offer interactive sessions. Moreover, the app's content is carefully curated by board-certified psychiatrists, ensuring its pedagogical effectiveness and therapeutic value.

This poster presents the results of user research conducted by HITLAB for the app, employing methodologies including user persona creation, empathy mapping, and customer journey mapping. Through this comprehensive approach, we gained profound insights into the diverse needs, emotions, and experiences of the app's target audience. By synthesizing these findings, we have refined our strategies to enhance every facet of the customer journey, ultimately aiming to provide meaningful support and intervention for youth struggling with mental health challenges.

STUDY OBJECTIVE

- To comprehensively understand the characteristics, needs, and preferences of the app's target customers through the analysis of user personas, empathy mapping, and customer journey mapping.
- Analysis of results to uncover valuable insights and preferences to inform strategies for customer engagement, satisfaction, and market penetration based on the results.

METHODOLOGY

1. User Persona Research:
Demographic and psychographic data were gathered through online research and literature reviews. Fictional personas were developed based on the collected data to represent typical users of the app.

2. Empathy Mapping:
Secondary research was conducted to gain insights into users' experiences, feelings, and perspectives. Create Empathy Maps: Visual maps were constructed to compile users' goals, motivations, and behaviors.

3. Customer Journey Mapping:
All stages of interaction between users and the app were mapped using data collected from online sources, reports, and competitor reviews. This facilitated the visualization of the user's journey, illustrating their actions, emotions, and interactions with the app, providing a comprehensive understanding of their experience.

4. Integration and Synthesis:
Insights from user research, empathy mapping, and customer journey mapping were compared and findings were condensed into actionable insights for refining the app. Recommendations were developed to optimize customer experience.

RESULTS

User Persona Research

- Through user persona research, we identified a spectrum of distinct user archetypes among parents and children.
- Parent personas included busy parents overwhelmed by the special needs of their child, parents grappling with confusion regarding their child's behavior, and others facing social stigma or cultural barriers.
- Children personas included cases such as a child diagnosed with anxiety disorder, an undiagnosed and untreated child, and even a child resistant to treatment.
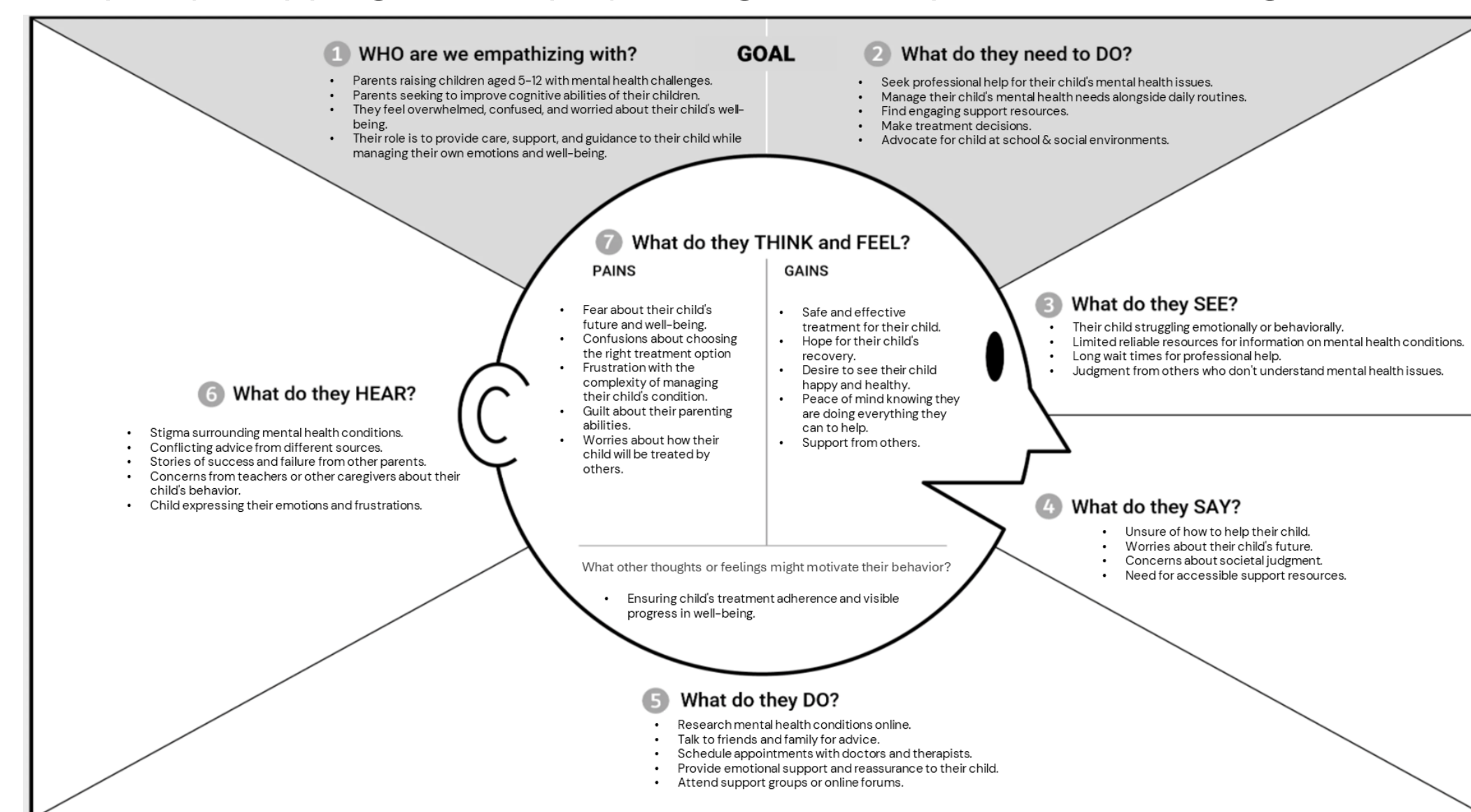

Insights Gained:

- **Parental Challenges:** Parents face diverse challenges, from overwhelming responsibilities to navigating social and cultural barriers, emphasizing the need for tailored support.
- **Children's Mental Health Needs:** Children exhibit varying mental health statuses, underscoring the importance of personalized interventions to address different cases effectively.
- **Barriers to Access:** Identification of parents lacking optimal care access highlights the importance of addressing socioeconomic and systemic barriers to ensure equitable mental health resource access for all families.

Empathy Map

Empathy mapping was employed to gain a deeper understanding of the user's goals and challenges.

Insights Gained:

Visualization of user thoughts and actions within their environment provided insight into how external factors shaped behaviors and decision-making.
Revealed the suggestions, judgments, and solutions parents and children likely encounter from their social circles and community.
Insights into children's coping strategies, such as seeking peer support or navigating treatment options, in response to external pressures or expectations.

Empowering Mental Wellness: App Developer's Vision & The App's Unique Approach


App Developer:
- A Non-profit organization dedicated to reducing global suicide rates.
- Advocates for mental health as a fundamental aspect of childcare.
- Focuses on early intervention to prevent adverse mental health outcomes in adulthood.

What Makes The App Unique:
- Accessible and affordable mental wellness app.
- Utilizes entertaining dance sessions and rewards for motivation.
- Fosters emotional resilience in children.
- Provides clear insights into child's response to dance sessions.
- Ensures a safe and secure app environment for children.
- Promotes improved physical and emotional well-being in children.

User Journey Map
Opportunities to enhance the experience with the app
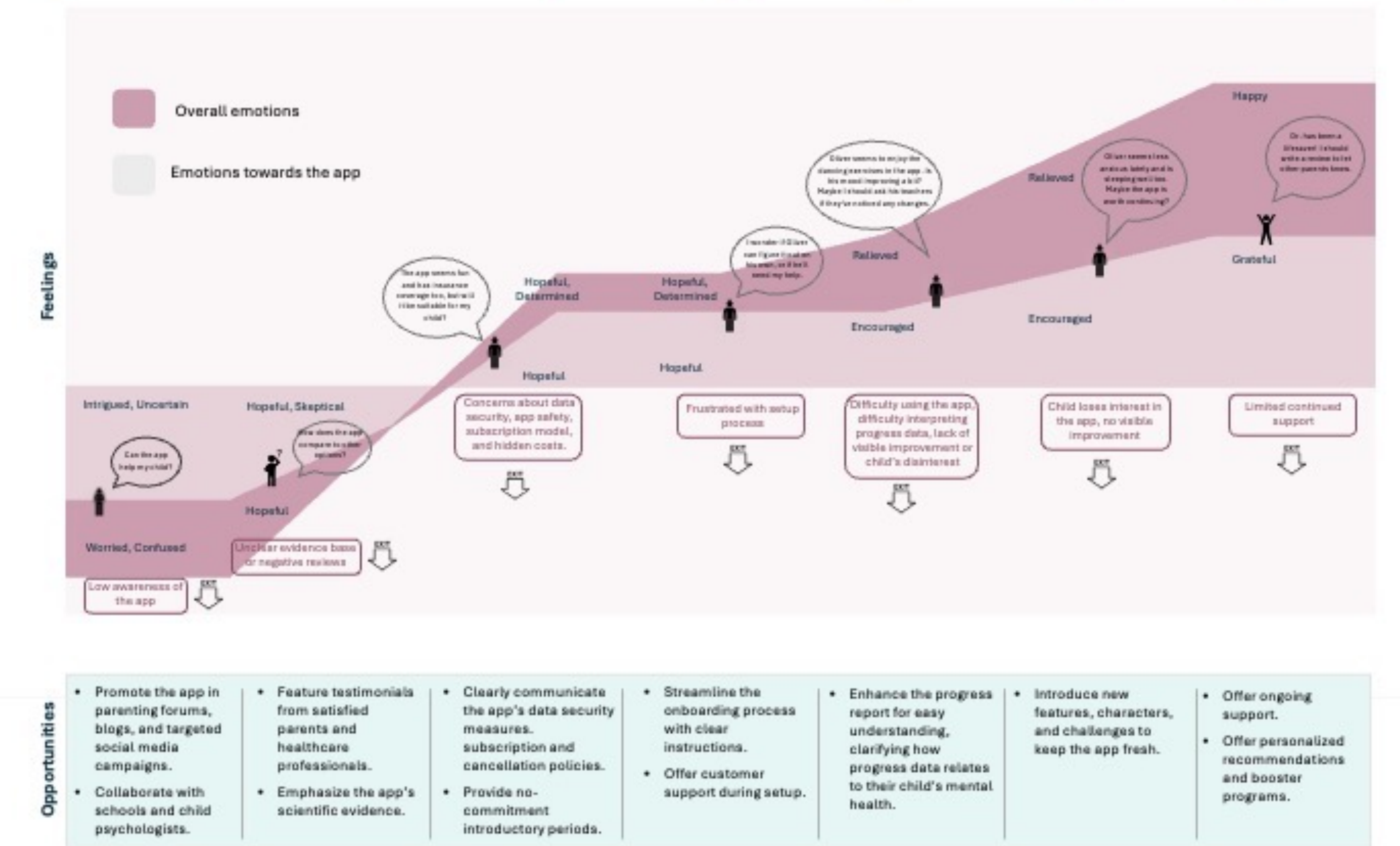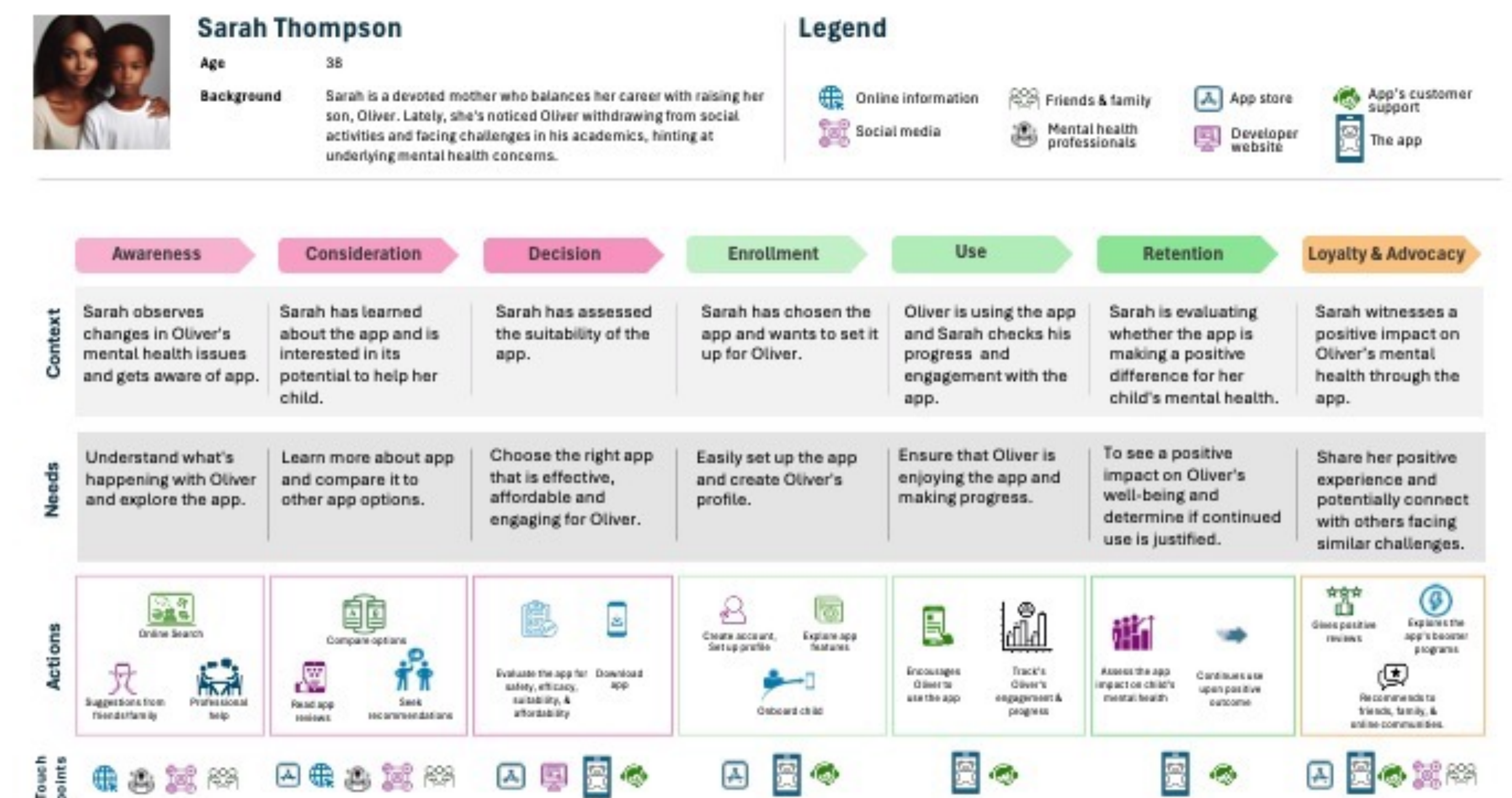
- The user journey map delineated specific touchpoints and pain points in the customer's interaction with the app, allowing for the identification of targeted strategies to streamline the awareness, decision making, onboarding, in-app navigation, and post-engagement support, thereby ensuring a seamless and satisfying user experience.

CONCLUSION

- Through our research utilizing user persona development, empathy mapping, and user journey mapping, we have gained invaluable insights into the complex needs and challenges of parents and children within the target demographic.
- By identifying diverse user archetypes, recognizing the impact of external factors on user experiences, and mapping out the user's journey, we unearthed key insights that have enabled us to devise targeted strategies for enhancing the customer experience, satisfaction, and market penetration of the app.