

Soziale Arbeit

Effects of caseload reduction on case costs and redemption rate in social assistance – a shift of paradigm

11./12.4.19, ECSWR conference, Leuven

Main questions

Which effects has the case load on the redemption rate and the case costs in social welfare?

Our theses/expectations:

- a) Better integration and employability of clients by closer coaching – better redemption rate
- b) Better activation of the resources of clients by intensified counselling.
- c) If social workers can intensify the counselling, their job satisfaction will grow.

Framework of the quasi-experiment

- Case reduction for 3 social workers max. **75 cases/100%**
- Selection of 3 social workers which form the experimental group by random
- Selection of the cases they keep by random generator
- Intake and assignment of cases by alphabetical order
- Control group has a caseload of **140 cases/100%**
- **18 months** experimental phase (1.9.2015 – 28.2.2017)

Total number of cases:

experimental group (N=327)

control group (N=2641)



Methodical approach

quarterly

Individual interviews

Concrete changes
of case
management
(before/after)

Each 6 weeks

Group interviews

General changes
of case
management

annual

Online survey

Job satisfaction
and motivation

monthly 15 cases

File analysis

Frequency and
type of
interventions

monthly/annual

Statistical analysis

Redemption rate /
case costs

Experimental and control group

Research design

Control group

Experimental group

Quantitative comparison

Statistics

Statistics

File analysis

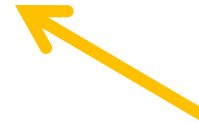
File analysis

Online survey

Online survey

Qualitative analysis of retrospectively
perceived changes

Individual & group
interviews



More time for contact and counselling

Case load	145.5	75
Administrative workload per case	7.3 h./year	7.3 h./year
Personal counselling	3.1 h/year	12.9 h/year

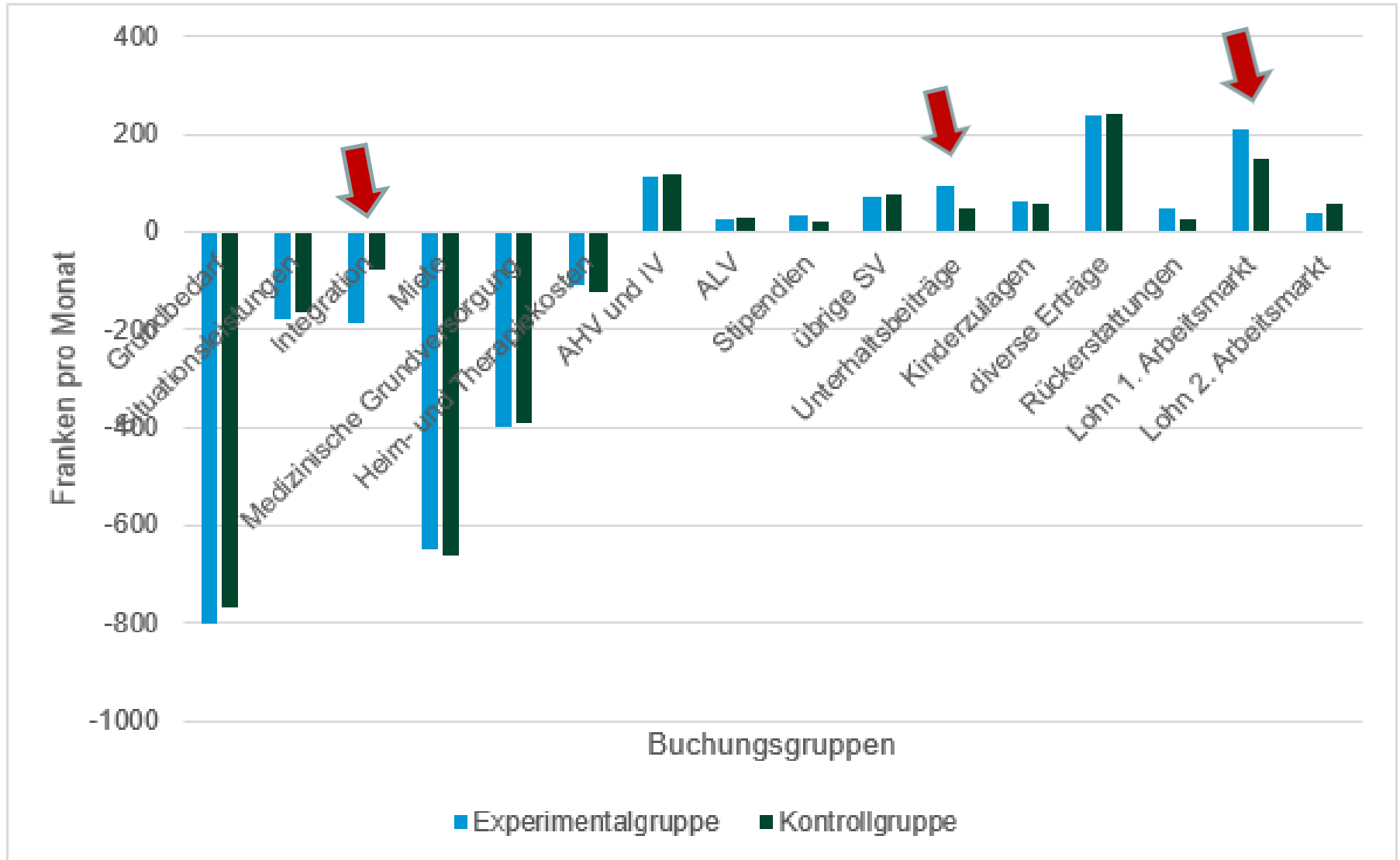
Results of the interviews: use of the additional time resources

- Long-term planning of assistance
- Obstacles can be identified and possibilities for intervention analysed
- Searching together with clients and involved institutions for solutions
- Immediate reactions get possible
- Control and evaluation of current integration processes
- If needed: profound case knowledge by home visits
- Revisiting old cases

Relevant success factors:

- The experimental group has invested more in «**integration**» of their clients (work integration, further education).
- The clients experimental group **achieve a higher income in the 1st labour market**, and it can be expected, that they enhance their chances for long-term economic integration
- The experimental group could generate **more entries** by maintenance contributions, refunds and scholar ships.
- **Higher redemption rate** especially of «old» cases by revisiting such cases.

Average case costs and entries



Multivariate analysis of gross income/ gross costs/ net costs of the experimental and the control group per case and month

	Bruttoertrag	Bruttokosten	Nettokosten
Experimentalgruppe	1014.-	678.-	-336.-
Kontrollgruppe	850.-	634.-	-215.-

Tab. 2: Multivariate Analyse von Bruttoertrag und Bruttokosten sowie Nettokosten pro Fall pro Monat

Main results of the statistical analysis

- The analysis of the case costs show, that the average **costs per case and year are 1'452.- CHF** deeper than the case costs of the control group
- The analysis of the **case closurers** shows, that the experimental group achieves a higher redemption rate and a shorter case duration
(Experimental group: 21 months/ control group 27 months)

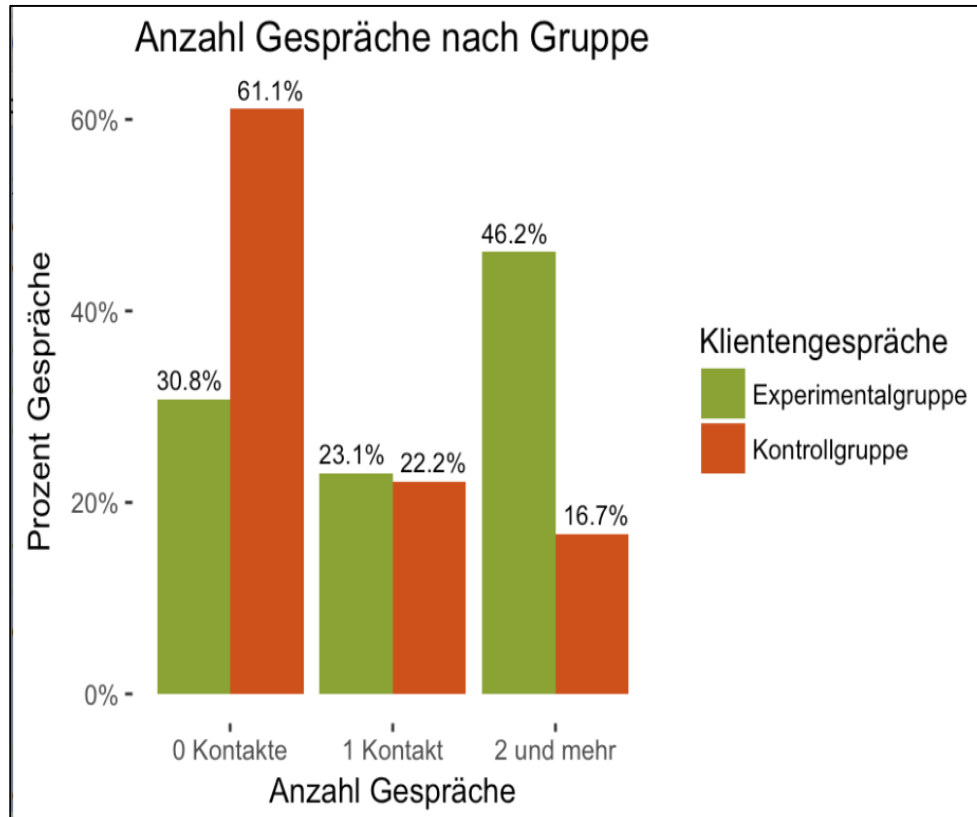
Case closures/ redemption rate

Gruppe	Experimentalgruppe	Non Matchgruppe	Matchgruppe
Fallabschluss nein	222	955	911
Fallabschluss ja	104	343	368
Abschlussquote	31.90%	26.43%	28.77%
Koeffizient	0.0000	-0.2657	-0.1482
p-Wert	-	0.0482	0.2685

Tab. 1: Fallabschlüsse und Fallabschlussquoten in den Vergleichsgruppen

Quantitativ file analysis of contact with clients

- Analysis 4 months after case start (4-7. month)
- more contact (meetings and phone calls) of experimental group
- No differences for letters and mails



Success factor: Management of human resources

Experimental group transfers cases without need for counsellings consequently and promptly to administrative case management

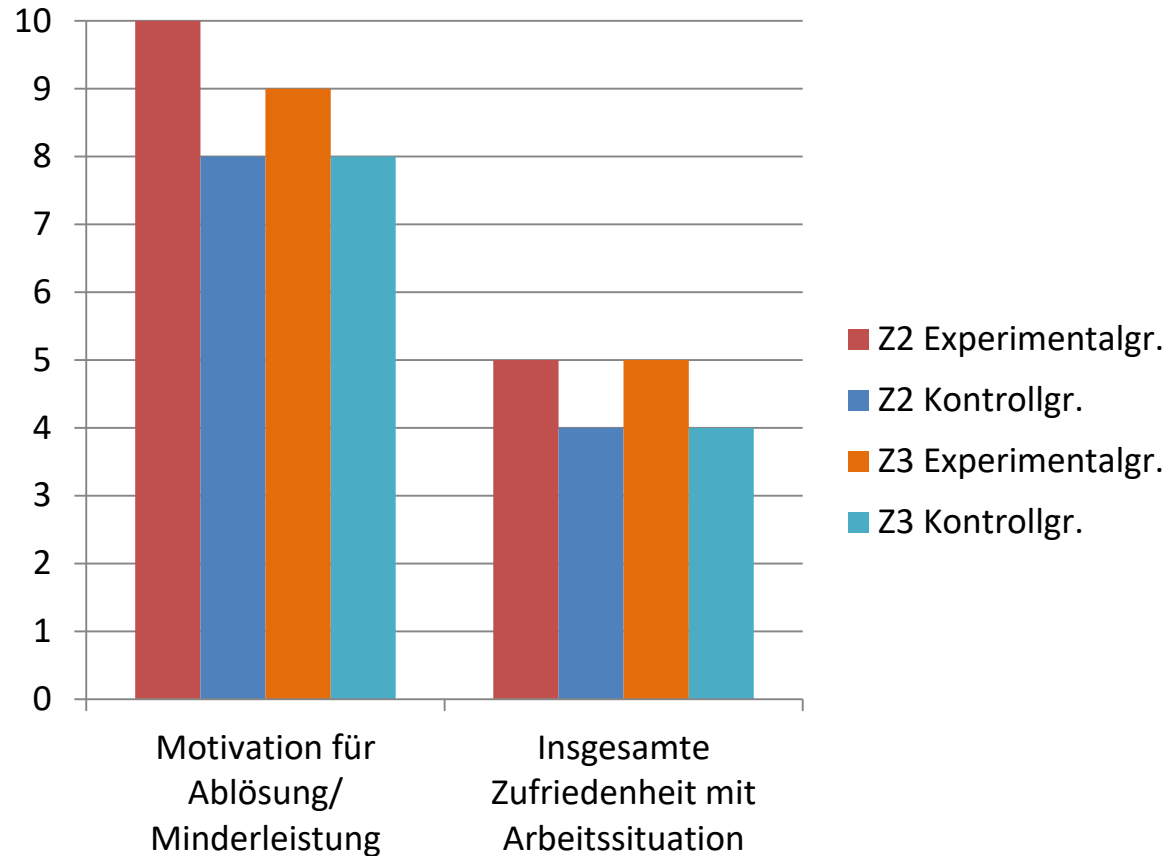
- The deeper case load provides incentives to work exclusively with cases in need of counselling
- Enough time resources to handover cases to the administrative case management



Relevant risks of high case load

- High case load enhances fluctuation and illness
- Less time for counselling and appropriate case management
- Continuous «fire exercises» keep the social workers busy and carry them to exhaustion
- Administrative work dominates and limits the contact with clients
- Pending issues, clarifications, written applications be left undone (including case closures!)
- More misunderstandings and sanctions of clients due to their lack of appropriate information

Online survey: Motivation and job satisfaction



Professional and experienced social workers keep case costs low

- Revalorisation of the professional role and intrinsic motivation of social workers
- Professional competences can be applied, if there is enough time for contact and case management
- Effective interventions due to better case knowledge and prompt interventions in cooperation with special units
- More job satisfaction and intentions to stay permanently



Hold experienced social workers and enhance professionalism

Arguments to contrast current political discourses

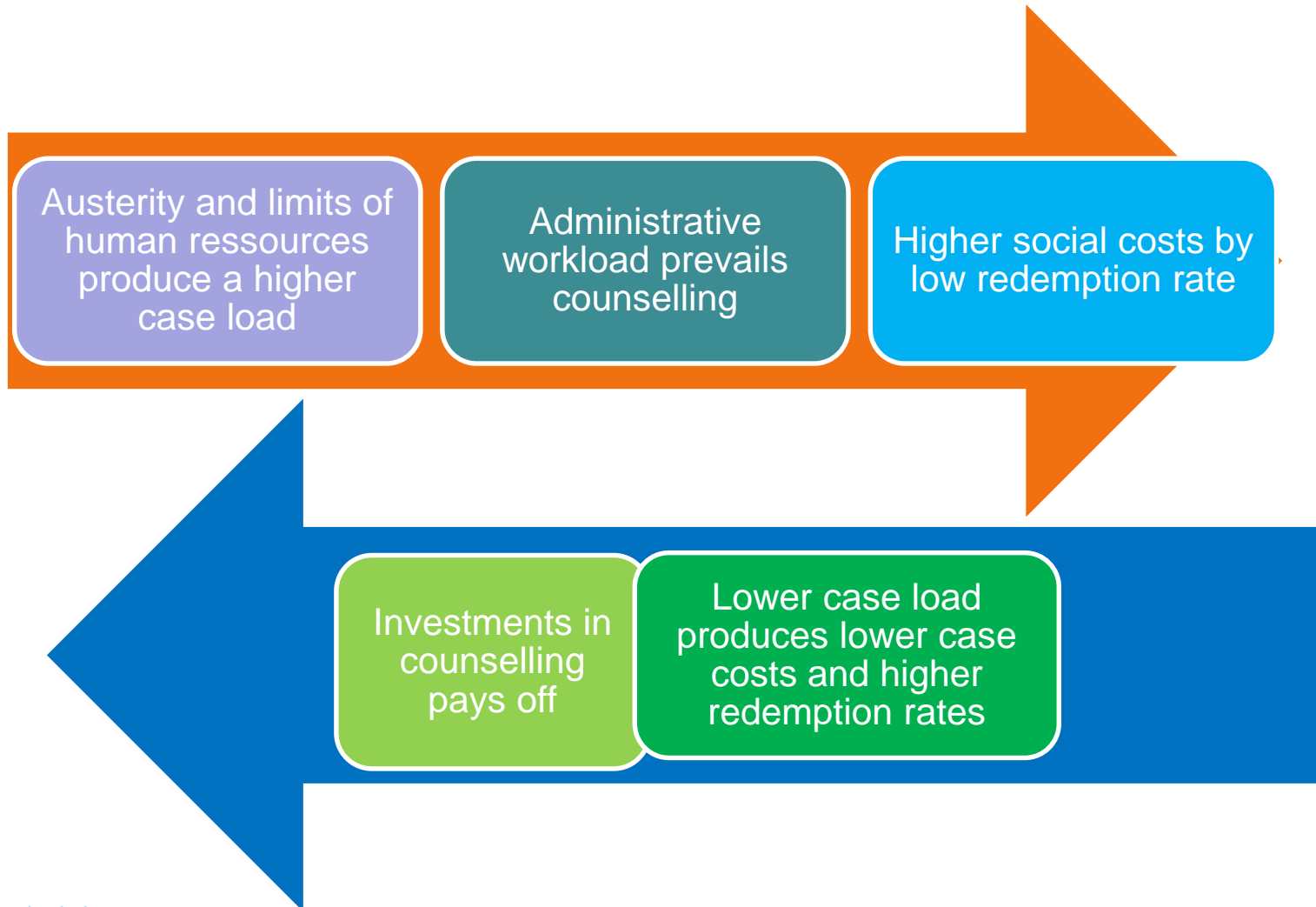
- «Social Welfare is too expensive»: Reduction of human resources while case number is increasing produces higher case costs due to superficial counselling and case management (Knöpfel 2013)
- «Develop and challenge principle» doesn't produce per se redemption. Intensified counselling better integration in the 1st labour market.
- «The debate on the abuse of social assistance» can be countered by a closer case management which avoids misunderstandings (and abuses) by better information
- «Deprofessionalization» Professional counselling generates lower case costs and better integration of clients.



Shift of paradigm after a long phase of austerity policy and deprofessionalization

- Shift from a defensive attitude to avoid cuts of social welfare towards a revalorisation of social interventions
- Reverse the political discourses of austerity policy by evidence-based benefits of investments in human resources (professional social workers)
- Repositioning of Social Work (Bresson 2013) by creative strategies in harmony with the ethical values as a way out of the current crisis of social welfare.

A shift of paradigm that can be transferred to other countries?



Bibliographie

- Bresson, Maryse (2013). Le positionnement autonome du travail social. La lutte contre l'exclusion entre instrumentalisation politique et précarisation économique. Dans : S.Voélin ; M.Eser Davolio & M.Lindenau (Eds.). *Le travail social entre résistance et innovation. Soziale Arbeit zwischen Widerstand und Innovation*. Genève et Lucerne : ies éditions et interact, p.77-85.
- Eser Davolio, Miryam; Steiner, Isabelle; Strohmeier Navarro Smith, Rahel; Zwicky, Heinrich & Gehrig, Milena (2017). Reduktion der Falllast verbessert Ablösequote und senkt Fallkosten. ZESO 4/2017, S.26-27.
- Eser Davolio, Miryam (2016). A Quasi-experiment to Evaluate the Effects of Reduced Caseload in Switzerland. *Social Work Review/ Revista de Asitenta Sociala*, 15 (3), p.47-53.
- Eser Davolio, Miryam; Strohmeier Navarro Smith, Rahel; Zwicky, Heinrich; Gehrig, Milena & Steiner, Isabelle (2017). Falllast in der Sozialhilfe und deren Auswirkung auf die Ablösequote und Fallkosten. Wissenschaftlich Begleitung eines Pilotprojekts in der Langzeitunterstützung der Sozialen Dienste der Stadt Winterthur (1.9.2015 – 28.2.2017). Zürich: Departement Soziale Arbeit, ZHAW. <https://www.zhaw.ch/de/sozialarbeit/forschung/vielfalt-und-gesellschaftliche-teilhabe/community-development/auswirkung-der-fallbelastung-in-der-sozialhilfe-auf-die-abloesequote/>
- Knöpfel, Carlo (2013). Sozialpolitik mit Zukunft. Eine kritische Analyse der dominanten Diskurse. In: A.M. Riedi, M.Zwilling; M. Meier Kressig; P.Benz Bartoletta & D.Aebi Zindel (Hrsg.). *Handbuch Sozialwesen Schweiz*. Bern: Haupt Verlag, S.428-443.



The research report

Projektbericht:

https://www.zhaw.ch/storage/share/d/sozialarbeit/Forschung/Vielfalt_gesellschaftliche_Teilhabe/Community_Development/zhaw-schlussbericht-falllast-sozialhilfe-abloesequote-fallkosten.pdf.pdf

Kurzbeschreibung des Projektes:

https://www.zhaw.ch/no_cache/de/forschung/forschungsdatenbank/projektdetail/projektid/1668/

Institut Vielfalt und gesellschaftliche Teilhabe (IVGT)

Falllast in der Sozialhilfe und deren Auswirkung auf die Ablösequote und Fallkosten

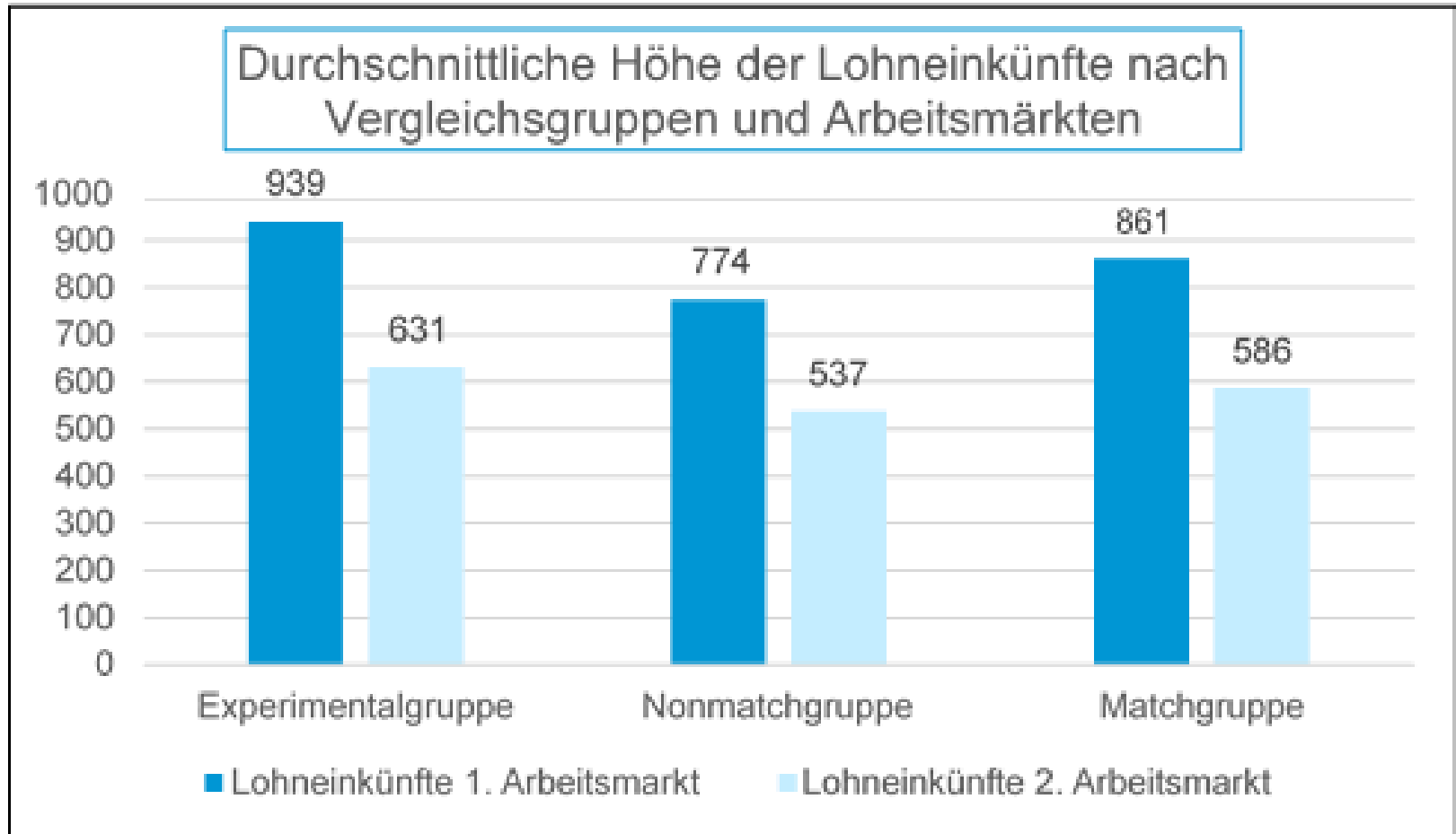
**Wissenschaftliche Begleitung eines Pilotprojekts in der Langzeitunterstützung der Sozialen Dienste der Stadt Winterthur
(1.9.2015 – 28.2.2017)**

Schlussbericht
November 2017

Dr. Miryam Eser Davolio, Projektleiterin, IVGT Dep. S ZHAW
Dr. Rahel Strohmeier Navarro, Dozentin, IVGT Dep. S ZHAW
Prof. Dr. Heinrich Zwicky, Dozent, IVGT Dep. S ZHAW
Milena Gehrig, wiss. Mitarbeiterin, IVGT Dep. S ZHAW
Isabelle Steiner, wiss. Assistentin, IVGT Dep. S ZHAW

Analyse der Fallkosten bzw. Falleinnahmen

Experimentalgruppe erzielt mehr Lohneinkünfte



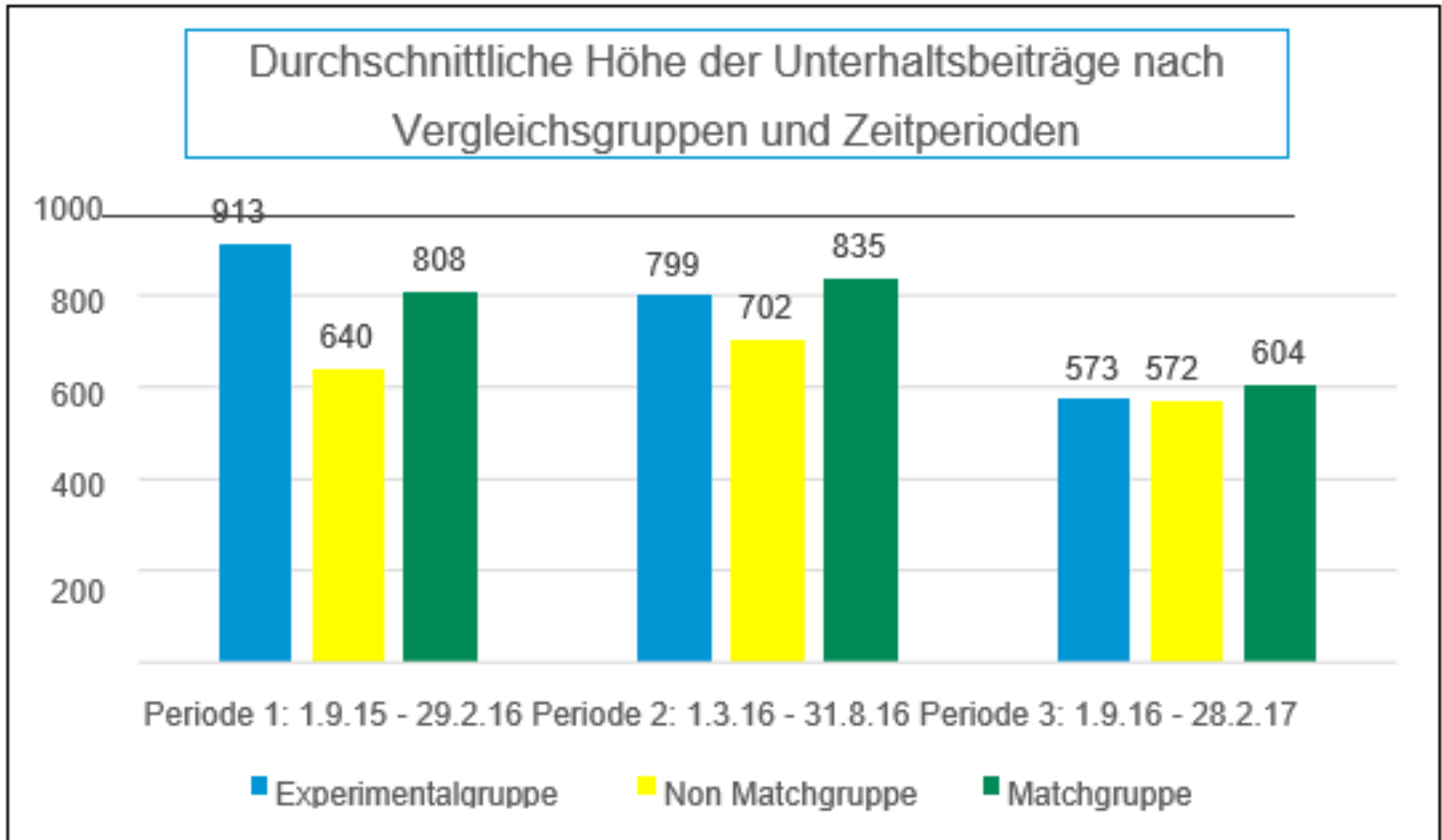


Abb.8: Mittelwerte Unterhaltsbeiträge nach Vergleichsgruppen und Experimentalphasen

Online-Befragung: Fallbelastung und Zeitmanagement

