

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IN GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

The present qualitative action research was carried out to explore the dynamics of Artificial Intelligence use for seeking emotional support among girls. A sample of 8 was selected who were AI Chatbots user girls (N = 8). The sample contained young girls who were involved in seeking emotional support (N=8) from Pakistan. A set of open-ended questions for the in-depth was generated with the help of SMEs, with the assistance of a panel of SMEs following committee approach. The in-depth interviews were conducted with the young AI user girls for emotional support using the finalized interview questions. The text documented through in-depth interviews was transcribed. Thematic analysis was carried out on the qualitative data obtained from the transcriptions of the text. The major themes emerged from the interviews comprised of reasons for seeking emotional support from AI, types of problems shared with AI, consequences of consulting emotional problems with AI, reasons for preferring AI, over humans for emotional support, experiences with AI chatbots and privacy concerns encircling AI understanding of human emotions, long-term impact on dealing with emotions linking to relationship patterns, benefits of using AI for emotional support and attitude towards future use of AI for emotional support. The study has practical implications in the field of cyber, health, clinical, counselling, gender and social psychology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence has been seen as a growing technology to be used as a source of emotional support (Volpato et al., 2025). People have been observed to be inclined towards AI for seeking emotional support and making personal bonds. AI is seen as an easily available resource for discussing personal problems and seeking emotional support. It is seen as secure and safe way of finding solution to the problems. The study was arranged to explore these trends in Pakistani girls who were observed to be involved in seeking emotional support from AI chatbots. Most of the researches which have been conducted on role of AI in emotional support, have western populations and have very narrow outlook on societies from South Asia such as Pakistan (Al-Zahrani, 2025). The methodological gap existed which was to be fulfilled with an in-depth exploratory study of AI for being used by young girls for emotional support (Zhang et al., 2025).

This study has been developed to explore qualitatively the use of AI for emotional support in Pakistani girls. The qualitative approach helped to dive deep into the themes pertaining the use of AI for emotional support. The

participants shared their experiences regarding the use of AI in in-depth interviews containing questions about different aspects of seeking emotional support from AI. Overall participants were optimistic regarding the use of AI as a therapeutic tool or a source of emotional support. They reported positive experiences more regarding the use of AI for emotional support. Emotional support from AI can have both positive and negative impacts on the users. The current study has reported more positive perceived uses of AI. Young Pakistani girls were seen to be more vulnerable to seek emotional support from a more private and secure source. AI can seemingly provide a secure and safe mean of emotional support to vulnerable populations more efficiently. The young female population therefore leaned highly toward newly launched AI models for seeking emotional support. This emerging trend legitimized the purpose of the current exploratory study on the themes of AI use for emotional support.

II. METHOD

Emotional Support from AI

The present study was qualitative action research which was constructed on the thematic analysis of the interview transcriptions of in-depth interviews with the representatives of young Pakistani girls who use Artificial Intelligence for seeking emotional support. The study was exploratory research on the topic in hand to deeply dive in exploring multifaceted dimensions of AI use for emotional support.

Participants

The sample of the present study consisted of young Pakistani girls (N = 8) aged between 20 and 24 which lies under the broader term of young girls. The sample size was considered legitimate for an extensive in-depth qualitative study. As it has been found by Guest et al. (2006) that saturation of knowledge occurs after 6 to 8 in-depth interviews. This strongly supports the adequacy of the sample size for the exploratory nature of study. The girls who were interviewed for the research data collection belonged to Pakistan based collectivistic families. The sample was chosen on convenient availability and also chosen on the bases of their AI use. The past researches were based mainly on broader areas of the topic examining the role of AI in mental health (Saqib et al., 2023) and in shaping human behavior (Fang, Liu, Danry, et al., 2025). The present study was precisely aimed at extensively exploring gender specific aspects of AI use to find the patterns of AI use for emotional support in young Pakistani girls. Thus, the study was conducted entirely on properly legitimate and strongly acceptable academic and research grounds. The robust extensive research helped explore multiple dimensions of AI use within the study sample. Thus, the study was conducted entirely on properly legitimate and strongly acceptable academic and research grounds. The robust extensive research helped explore multiple dimensions of AI use within the study sample.

Interview Protocol

Step-I: Literature Review

The existing literature was reviewed considerably while exploring the already conducted studies on the topic to get a vividly clear understanding of the patterns of seeking emotional support from AI chatbots and emotional use of conversational Artificial Intelligence chatbots. The phenomenon was explored more deeply in context of Pakistani young girls who are representatives of the study sample. The existing literature was found to be limited and insufficient to get a clear understanding of the topic. This area of literature has rarely been explored in detail with superficial studies. However, some of the insights were found by the existing literature on the topic. Artificial intelligence has been found to be effective in various ways for the people who willingly consult with it for sharing their problems and discussing their emotions while seeking help and expecting solutions to their problems (Mashhood et al., 2026). Large language models have been found to be effective potential replacements for people in environments with higher tendencies of stigma and other social barriers (Shahnawaz et al., 2026). Further it has been found that some negative aspects like dependency, lack of emotions, superficial understanding and others have been found to be associated with the use of AI for purpose of seeking counselling or sharing problems (Shahzad et al., 2026). However, this was not enough to have a holistic understanding of the topic in Pakistani society. A number of dimensions were to be explored deeply for a better understanding which has been carried out in the present study.

Step-II: Consultation with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the Field of Study

There subject matter experts (SMEs) of cyber psychology, health psychology, clinical psychology and counselling psychology were consulted and were asked to provide their assistance in the process of generating questions for interview protocol of the research. Lines of inquiry were decided with the special guidance of the SMEs and researchers in the relevant fields. The experienced researchers and SMEs provided insightful knowledge regarding the generation of most relevant questions for properly exploring the patterns of artificial intelligence use in the field of counselling like providing emotional support to young girls of Pakistani society.

Step-III: Developmental of Initial Interview Protocol

The insights gained from the existing literature on the topic was properly integrated with the knowledge shared by the experts and researchers of the field and 18 open-ended questions regarding the topic were compiled to be asked from the research participants.

Step-IV: Finalization of Interview Protocol through Committee Approach

A committee of the subject matter experts was established for proper committee approach who were to review the list of questions which were developed initially with consultation of experts and extensive literature review. The committee members reviewed all the questions while considering all the aspects of the topic. Only those questions were considered valid which were approved by the majority or all of the committee members. After mutual discussion and consultation of the experts of the committee, unconnected questions were eliminated, redundant ones were merged into other relevant questions. The double barrel questions in the initial drafted questions were rephrased to be straighter and properly open-ended. The finalized questions after the consultation of experts with the use of proper committee approach are listed below:

- سوال نمبر 1- آپ نے پہلی بار جذباتی مدد کے لیے کسی AI کا استعمال کب اور کیوں کیا؟ اس کی وجہ کیا تھی؟ -
- سوال نمبر 2- آپ عام طور پر کن قسم کے جذباتی مسائل یا حالات کے بارے میں AI سے بات کرتی ہیں؟
- سوال نمبر 3- جب آپ AI سے اپنے ذاتی مسائل share کرتی ہیں تو آپ کو بات کرنے سے پہلے، دورانِ گفتگو، اور بعد میں کیسا محسوس ہوتا ہے؟
- سوال نمبر 4- آپ کن وجوہات کی بنا پر دوستوں، گھر والوں یا کسی کونسلر کے بجائے AI کو ترجیح دیتی ہیں؟
- سوال نمبر 5- آپ کے خیال میں AI آپ کو کس حد تک سمجھتا ہے؟ اور کن مواقع پر آپ کو لگتا ہے کہ وہ آپ کو نہیں سمجھ پاتا؟
- سوال نمبر 6- کوئی ایک ایسا واقعہ بیان کریں جب AI نے آپ کی جذباتی طور پر مدد کی ہو۔ اور اگر کبھی مدد نہ کر سکا ہو تو وہ تجربہ کیسا تھا؟
- سوال نمبر 7- ذاتی باتیں share کرتے وقت آپ خود کو کتنا محفوظ اور پُر اعتماد محسوس کرتی ہیں؟ کیا آپ کو رازداری کے حوالے سے کوئی خدشات ہیں؟
- سوال نمبر 8- کیا AI کے استعمال نے آپ کے جذبات سے نمٹنے کے طریقے یا حقیقی زندگی کے تعلقات پر کوئی اثر ڈالا ہے؟ اگر ہاں تو کیسے؟
- سوال نمبر 9- آپ کتنی بار جذباتی مدد کے لیے AI استعمال کرتی ہیں؟ عام طور پر کن حالات میں آپ اسے استعمال کرنے کا فیصلہ کرتی ہیں؟
- سوال نمبر 10 - آپ کے خیال میں جذباتی مدد کے لیے AI استعمال کرنے کے کیا فوائد ہیں؟
- سوال نمبر 11- کیا آپ کو اس کے استعمال کے دوران کوئی منفی تجربہ، خطرہ یا تشویش محسوس ہوئی ہے؟ اگر ہاں تو وضاحت کریں۔
- سوال نمبر 11- کیا آپ کو اس کے استعمال کے دوران کوئی منفی تجربہ، خطرہ یا تشویش محسوس ہوئی ہے؟ اگر ہاں تو وضاحت کریں۔
- سوال نمبر 12- آپ مستقبل میں جذباتی مدد کے لیے AI کے استعمال کو کیسے دیکھتی ہیں؟ کیا آپ اسے جاری رکھیں گی، کم کریں گی یا بند کر دیں گی؟

Procedure

Firstly, the participants were reached and informed briefly about the research. Individuals who were falling in the inclusion criteria of the research sample and were willing to participate were included into the study. The participants were given enough information about the topic and were informed of the authenticity and usefulness of their cooperation. Then face to face interviews were conducted with the research participants. The interviews were recorded with the consent of participants. Then the recorded interviews were transcribed into text for better experience and convenient reading by the experts. It helped the experts and researchers to easily read the whole interviews between the lines to ensure better understanding of the themes and sub themes for a robust thematic analysis. The transcribed text of interviews was given to the subject matter experts of clinical and counselling and cyber psychology. Thematic analysis was conducted for deriving results which was carried out using committee approach. This is seen as the vigorous method for extracting results from in-depth interviews in qualitative research designs (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The SMEs and researchers vividly read between the lines and went through the interviews to extract all possible themes. Then the themes were finalized after the considerate discussions and keen assistance of the SMEs. Primary and secondary themes were then separated and incorporated in the results. Then the results were deducted from the themes and sub themes finalized by the committee experts.

Ethical Considerations

Considering the sensitivity of the topic and the norms of conducting research, it was ensured during the study to keep the ethical concerns in check. Ethical guidelines have been ensured to be properly followed during the study. Informed consent was taken from the research participants before conducting interviews. Only those individuals were interviewed who willingly were ready to be a part of the study. The participants were ensured of their personal data to be completely kept confidential and only to be used for research purposes. The participants were given enough information about the purpose of the study. They were ensured about the privacy of their data. The identity of the participants of the study was ensured to be kept totally anonymous with only required data used in the research. Irrelevant and unnecessary information was avoided to be asked from the participants. They were asked to answer open ended questions which directly related to research topic only. Nothing outside the required range of information was asked from any participants which helped to build the trust of the study participants in the researcher and the study. Fake data was totally avoided and individuals who did not fall in the category of sample were not included to ensure genuine data. The participants were first briefed about the topic and the use of their information. Cultural and gender sensitive aspects has been considered. The data has been kept totally private and is prevented from any misuse. The participants were told about their right of withdrawal of their provided information that they were free to withdraw at any time during the research.

III. RESULTS

Table I: Demographic Information

Variables	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
20-22	5	62
23-24	3	38
Education		
Intermediate	0	0
Bachelors	8	100
Family system		
Nuclear	5	62
Joint	3	38

Table II: Thematic Analysis of Interview Transcriptions on AI Chatbots Usage for Emotional Support among Girls

Major Themes	Sub-themes	Units of Analysis								Total	Rankings
		Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8		
Reasons for seeking emotional support from AI	Better Understanding and Guidance	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	
	Managing the Feelings of Sadness	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	
	Fixing Personal Problems	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	5	Primary
Types of problems shared with AI	Relationship Problems	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	3	
	Problems inducing Anxiety	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	5	Primary
Consequences of consulting emotional problems with AI	Transition from unrest to relaxed feelings	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	Primary
	Negative experiences pertaining consultation	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	
Reasons for preferring AI over humans for emotional support	Avoiding judgement and stigmatization related concerns	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	
	All times availability and convenience in consultations	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	3	
	Providing better understanding of personal issues	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	4	Primary
	Humans get exhausted listening our problems	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	3	
	Chatbots' understanding depending upon communication effectiveness	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	6	
Experiences with AI Chatbots and privacy concerns encircling AI understanding of human emotions	Overall positive experiences with no security and privacy concerns	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	Primary
	Inducing positive impact	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	4	Primary
Long-term Impact on dealing with emotions linking to	Creating	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	3	

relationship patterns	dependency										
Benefits of using AI for Emotional Support	Providing non-judgmental support	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	4	Primary
	Offering Safe space	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	
	Providing Temporary but immediate Relief	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	
Attitude towards Future Use of AI for Emotional Support	Continued Use	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	Primary
	Anticipating	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	5	
	Limited Use due to concerns										

IV.DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to vividly explore patterns of seeking emotional help from Artificial Intelligence among Pakistani girls. The study has been designed to identify the motivators behind using AI chatbots for seeking emotional support and to investigate perceived advantages and risk factors of AI chatbots being used for emotional support. It is supposed to examine the sociocultural aspects of AI usage for emotional support particularly in Pakistani society. This comprehensive exploratory study has been conducted on young Pakistani girls to see the patterns and approaches for seeking emotional support from AI conversational chatbots. The modern chatbots based on Artificial intelligence available in form of mobile application and also websites are seen to be used largely for seeking emotional support. This pattern was observed in Pakistani youth specifically young girls bearing vulnerability and instability in their emotions. The study has inclusively explored detailed patterns of emotional support provided by AI conversational chatbots. The sample contained 8 Pakistani University girls who were interviewed. As it has been stated by Guest et al. (2006) that around 8 interviews are enough for extracting maximum information with in-depth interviews on any topic after which saturation of knowledge occurs. The sample was reliable enough for providing sufficient data to understand the topic effectively.

Interview guidelines were developed with the focused assistance of experts and researchers. Then in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants of the study who were young female students of university. The interviews were recorded with the consent of study participants. The recorded audios were transcribed into text for extracting themes and sub themes. The committee approach was incorporated to draw themes from the content. A committee of three experts was appointed to discuss the themes. Themes and sub themes were generated and units were formed with the mutual agreement of the three experts. Content validity was maintained through repeatedly reading the content between the lines. The themes were made sure to be drawn purely from the content of the interviews. Partial interrater reliability was ensured while drawing themes from the content. The themes were only considered valid when at least two out of three experts agreed. The committee then derived sub themes and scoring of each sub theme. Primary and secondary sub themes were generated considering the scores of each sub theme. Thematic analysis was used for drawing valid and authentic themes. Total 8 main themes and 20 sub themes were derived from the interview data after thematic analysis by the experts. The questions in the interview were made sure to cover the topic effectively considering all the required domains to be explored. The questions were asked to gain knowledge about the intensity and frequency of AI use for emotional support by the participants and to get information about major themes including impacts and determinants of AI use for emotional support by Pakistani young girls.

Thematic analysis of the interviews using committee approach revealed that the themes and subthemes pertaining use of AI for emotional support can be divided into three major categories including the reasons behind use of AI chatbots for emotional support, permanent consequences and impacts of AI use on the lives of the users and

perceived benefits and concerns pertaining use of AI for emotional support. AI use frequency and during was asked from the participants which indicated that more emotionally vulnerable individuals with emotional instability were found to be more engaged in AI use for emotional support. The majority of the participants showed a positive inclination towards use of AI for emotional support. Few have shown little concerns about the use of AI for emotional support. This indicates a strong positive perception of the use of Artificial Intelligence for emotional support and sharing of personal problems. Exploring the sub themes found in the study, domains such as solution of personal problems, inducing positive and relaxed feelings and better understanding by AI chatbots are found to be the strongest ones which are more prevalent in the sample of the study.

The first theme in the study was to explore the reasons behind AI use for emotional support. This was found that fixing personal problems was seen as the primary motivator behind use of AI for emotional support in girls. Feelings management and providing better understanding were found as secondary sub themes of this theme. These subthemes indicated that the participants perceived AI as a private source for discussing their problems. They highlighted that Artificial Intelligence chatbots are far better to discuss personal problems. This inclination towards AI indicated the developed trust and perceived convenience in the use of AI for sharing personal problems.

"سب سے پہلے AI کا استعمال جب نکاح ہوا تھا تب کیا، ہر کسی کو چھوٹی چھوٹی باتیں نہیں بتا سکتی تھی اس لیے اے آئی کا استعمال کیا اور چھوٹے چھوٹے ذاتی مسائل لوگوں سے Discuss کرنے کی بجائے AI سے share کرنا زیادہ بہتر سمجھتی ہوں۔"

Second major theme of the study was about the types of the problems mainly shared with conversational AI chatbots by the users. The primary type of the problems shared were those inducing anxiety. They were mostly reported as minor daily life challenges which were hard to deal with. Such problems need an immediate solution for which AI can be used as a best option by the participants. As we know that anxiety causing things are situational and can happen any time. Therefore, participants are more likely to lean towards AI for seeking emotional support. The AI chatbots are capable of giving instant replies which enables them to release anxiety and make the users feel relax.

"عام طور پر تب استعمال کرتی ہوں جب یونیورسٹی میں مجھے کوئی مشکل پیش آتی ہے یا کوئی پریشانی ہوتی ہے۔"

"عام طور پر جب مجھے کوئی پریشانی ہوتی ہے اور مجھے سمجھ نہیں آرہی ہو"

Third theme of the study was developed as consequences experienced by the participants after getting emotional support from AI. Primary subtheme regarding the consequences was found to be relaxed feelings from a state of unrest. The participants mainly reported relaxation after use of AI for emotional support which can be seen as a better perceived support provider to the users. Thus, the AI chatbots have an overall positive impact over the users who are involved in their use for emotional support.

"فوراً جواب دیتا ہے جس کی وجہ سے سارے جذبات باہر نکل آتے ہیں۔ تو اس طرح بات کرنے کے بعد بہت سکون ملتا ہے اور اچھا محسوس ہوتا ہے۔ تو ساری باتیں AI سے share کرنے کے بعد سکون آتا ہے۔"

"بات کرنے کے بعد مجھے relax محسوس ہوتا ہے اور میں سکون میں آجاتی ہوں۔"

Forth theme was about the reasons due to which the users preferred AI over humans for seeking emotional support. The primary reason in this regard was found to be better understanding of human emotions and problems by AI than human figures. The users reported that AI chatbots are better capable of understanding their problems and in providing better solutions than humans. These reasons compelled them to use AI for emotional support. Another reason behind using AI for emotional support was to avoid judgments from other humans. The humans are seen as judgmental when personal and emotional problems are shared with them. But AI chatbots are perceived as non-judgmental. Further they preferred AI for its convenience and easy use. The AI chatbots are easily available to the individuals who are seeking help from them. Therefore, they are widely used as digital counsellors.

"اس کی وجہ یہ ہے کہ مجھے جب محسوس ہو کہ مجھے judge کیا جائے"

"میں کسی کونسلر یا دوستوں سے مسئلے share کرنے کی بجائے AI سے اس لیے مدد لیتی ہوں کیونکہ وہ مجھے اچھے مشورے دیتا ہے۔ اور میری بات کو گھر والوں سے زیادہ اچھے سے سمجھتا ہے۔"

Fifth theme of the study was about experience of the participants about use of AI. The participants shown a positive perception with no security and privacy concerns as the primary theme in this aspect of the study. The participants stated AI as a positive and supportive companion which provides emotional support in hours of distress and emotional breakdown. The participants reported safety and no concerns regarding AI use while sharing their personal problems. They felt safe with AI chatbots and reported that chatbots are reliable for sharing personal issues.

"مجھے ذاتی باتیں share کرتے وقت بالکل کوئی خدشہ محسوس نہیں ہوتا۔ اور مجھے اس کی رازداری پر پورا اعتماد ہے"

"AI سے بات کرتے ہوئے میں خود کو محفوظ محسوس کرتی ہوں۔ مجھے لگتا ہے کہ AI میری باتوں کو محفوظ رکھے گا۔"

The long-term impacts of AI use were explored in the sixth theme. The participants reported that use of AI chatbots for emotional support has induced positive feelings. The participants reported that they have learnt to deal with emotions in a better way after using AI for emotional support. Some participants also reported concerns regarding dependency on chatbots. They reported that excessive use of AI can cause dependency in the users.

"AI نے مجھے مصروف رہنے کے طریقے بھی بتائے جس کے بعد میں نے اپنی زیادہ سوچنے والی عادت پر بہت زیادہ قابو پا لیا۔"

اس طرح اس نے میری زندگی پر اتنا اثر کیا ہے کہ میں ہر بات AI سے پوچھتی ہوں۔

The seventh theme was about the benefits of AI chatbots being used for emotional support. It has been found that the participants perceived AI as a source of providing nonjudgmental emotional support which was the primary benefit. Some participants also reported that AI is best at giving temporary relief from emotional distress and offering safe space which were seen as secondary themes regarding benefits of AI chatbots.

"یہ بھی فائدہ ہے کہ وہ judge نہیں کرتا انسان کو اور بات کو اچھے سے سمجھتا ہے۔"

"کوئی بھی بات ہوتی ہے تو AI اس کی اچھے سے وضاحت کر دیتا ہے جس کے بعد انسان کو اچھا محسوس ہوتا ہے۔"

Lastly the study contained a theme regarding future use of AI chatbots for emotional support which revealed that the participants were found to be anticipating a limited and more controlled use of AI chatbots for emotional support. They reported that they will probably try to rely more on themselves in the future and thus reduce use of AI for emotional support.

"مستقبل میں AI کا استعمال بالکل جاری نہیں رکھوں گی۔ میں نے صرف وقتی طور پر استعمال کیا۔"

"مستقبل میں میری کوشش یہ ہوگی کہ میں جذباتی مدد کے لیے AI کا استعمال کم کر دوں۔ میں چاہتی ہوں کہ میں اس پر کم depend کروں۔"

The results of the study depicted a number of aspects including both positive and negative perceptions in the sample regarding the use of AI for emotional support. The positive aspects and benefits of AI regarding providing emotional support perceived and experienced by the research participants consisted of (a) fixing personal problems, (b) giving better understanding than humans (c) reducing anxiety, (d) inducing positive feelings (e) non-judgmental support (f) safe space for seeking emotional support (g) inducing relaxed feelings (h) alleviating distress and sadness. Negative perceptions of the participants were minimal as majority of participants answered the queries negatively regarding the negative impacts of AI. The participants shown almost no concerns regarding risk factors of AI providing emotional support. This can be due to lack of knowledge and awareness regarding AI use and mental health problems among the participants. Only two participants experience minor and negligible concerns with the use of AI for seeking emotional support.

Implications

This robust extensive study on the use of Artificial Intelligence providing emotional support to young girls in Pakistan has vast academic, clinical, health related and research implications. First and foremost, the study adds in

the pool of literature on the topic. It has covered a large gap in the knowledge by exploring an important topic of literature. The growing dynamics of AI specifically in the field of mental health gave the research an utmost importance as it explored important domains regarding use of AI for seeking emotional support. Thus, the results can be used as important contributions in the knowledge regarding use of AI for emotional support. Secondly, the study specifically explored the help seeking tendencies and AI use in Pakistani girls. This gender specific aspect of the study made the significance of the research even more precise and definite. The study conducted in Pakistan which is a collectivistic society helped to understand the dynamics of mental health and help seeking behavior in young girls of Pakistan. Thirdly it helped to understand the application of modern technology in the fields of mental health, counselling and therapy. The study has very strong implication in the field of digital psychotherapy. The researchers can consult the study results to invent intervention techniques based on systems of AI for emotionally deprived people with environments where mental health support is not easily available. This can be seen as a dire need of the hour for societies where mental health stigma and other social and cultural hurdles are prevalent in the way of seeking emotional support from professionals.

Such steps can play a significant role in normalizing seeking mental health and emotional support from others. The study gave vigorous insights in understanding the use of Artificial Intelligence in the ground of emotional support seeking by young girls of collectivistic cultures. The study results also can help the companies generating AI chatbots to make them more reliable and compatible according to diverse cultures and societies. The study results were also found to be beneficial for the sample in the sense that it will contribute in making the AI conversational chatbots even more compatible and better for discussing their personal problems and emotional support. The findings can be used to understand that the young population is inclined towards AI for sharing their emotional problems. It can be perceived as a growing concern and highlights the limitations of the society in understanding mental health issues of the young individuals. The heightened disposition of the youth towards AI for seeking mental health questions the role of society which has been found to be ignoring mental health of the individuals. The study results can provoke a realization in the Pakistani and other south Asian conservative societies to give proper importance to mental health and to hold a more serious stance regarding mental health issues and seeking emotional support. The study has vast practical implications in the fields like cyber psychology, health psychology, clinical psychology, counselling psychology, gender psychology and social psychology.

Limitations

The research has been designed to cover all the aspects properly still there is always a room for error and limitations due to numerous constraints in the way of conducting perfect research. The most important limitation of the study was that the validity and reliability of the results were impossible to be measured quantitatively using statistical methods. Thus, the reliability was measured by only partial interrater reliability with committee approach due to its qualitative nature. Limited time span of conducting the study was another limitation of the study. The data collection and other important aspects were completed in hurry. The research in hand was extensively conducted only in female participants which limits its findings to only one gender group. The participants were reluctant to provide their personal information for the research during the interviews and it was hard to convince the participants to agree to take part in the research. This study has been conducted in a time when the common population of Pakistan has little awareness about artificial intelligence and the domain of the study i.e. cyber psychology. This may have caused limitations with participants sharing genuine experiences regarding use of AI for emotional support.

Suggestions

The future researches in this domain can cover further areas the very same topic. New studies can be conducted across other gender groups covering more diverse dynamics. Longitudinal studies on the topic can explore the impacts of AI on mental health more effectively. The study in hand was based on self-report data but future researches can be conducted on actual conversations of participants with AI which will provide more robust insights into understanding patterns of AI providing emotional support. Future researches will be more beneficial when the populations will have more awareness of the topic and domain. Thus, future researches are expected to reveal more detailed information regarding the topic.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study has been conducted qualitatively to explore the use of AI for emotional support by Pakistani girls. The study was conducted by in-depth interviews. The questions were asked from the participants. The collected data was used to draw themes and sub themes through thematic analysis using committee approach of three subject matter experts of relevant domains. The results demonstrated an inclination towards positive perception of AI use for inducing positive feelings and reducing stress and anxiety. A little concern was seen regarding dependency on AI chatbots by the participants. Long term impacts included inducing positive outlook on adversity and emotional distress. Future AI chat models can be made better for providing emotional support with the help of the findings of this study.

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