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IMPACT OF CONVERSATIONAL AI ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN NILGIRI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to investigate the impact of conversational AI on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among college students in Nilgiri District. This study targets college students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs, with a sample of 200 participants selected through stratified random sampling. Data collection was carried out using a sociodemographic data sheet, Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), the Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 1991), and a 10-item scale developed by the researchers to assess the usage of conversational AI. This study highlights that while conversational AI is frequently used by students for academic support and companionship, it does not significantly impact their emotional intelligence or life satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: *Conversational AI, Emotional Intelligence, Life Satisfaction, College Students.*

INTRODUCTION

The integration of conversational artificial intelligence (AI) into education has sparked considerable interest in its influence on students' psychological and emotional well-being. Conversational AI, which encompasses virtual assistants and chatbots designed to simulate human-like interactions, is increasingly utilized by students to enhance learning experiences, facilitate communication, and manage academic tasks. While the functional advantages of these tools are evident, their broader psychological impact—particularly on constructs like emotional intelligence (EI) and life satisfaction—remains underexplored. This study examines these relationships among college students in the Nilgiri District.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. Feldman (2011, p. 285) describes EI as a skill set that underpins effective social functioning and emotional regulation, which allows individuals to navigate interpersonal dynamics adeptly. High EI is often linked to personal and professional success, as it enables individuals to respond adaptively to challenges and opportunities in various contexts. The role of conversational AI in supporting or impeding emotional intelligence development is a critical area of inquiry.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a key component of subjective well-being, reflecting individuals' overall evaluation of their quality of life. Diener et al. (1985) define it as an enduring state influenced by personal achievements, emotional stability, and social relationships. In the context of education, life satisfaction is shaped by students' ability to manage academic demands and maintain emotional balance. The use of conversational AI may contribute positively by alleviating stress and enhancing productivity, but its long-term effects on broader life satisfaction require careful examination.

College students represent an ideal demographic for studying these variables, given their frequent use of conversational AI tools and their developmental stage, which is crucial for emotional and social growth. While such tools can simplify learning processes and provide emotional support, overreliance may affect critical thinking and interpersonal relationships. The diverse cultural and educational contexts of students in the Nilgiri District provide an opportunity to explore the nuanced effects of conversational AI adoption on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.

Rationale

The rapid integration of conversational AI into education has revolutionized how students interact with technology, offering tools that enhance learning, communication, and productivity. However, its psychological implications, particularly on emotional intelligence (EI) and life satisfaction, remain underexplored. Emotional intelligence, essential for navigating interpersonal relationships and managing emotions, plays a critical role in academic and personal success. Similarly, life satisfaction, a key determinant of overall well-being, is influenced by various factors, including academic achievements and emotional stability.

College students, being frequent users of conversational AI, are at a pivotal stage of emotional and psychological development. The Nilgiri District, with its diverse student population, provides a unique context to study the socio-cultural dimensions of AI adoption. By examining the relationship between conversational AI usage, EI, and life satisfaction, this study seeks to bridge a critical research gap, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers to optimize AI integration in education.

Review of Literature

Nurtayeva1 et al., (2023) developed a study on "The influence of ChatGPT and AI Tools on the Academic Performance". This review paper examines the existing research on the influence of ChatGPT and AI tools on academic performance, with an emphasis on both the potential benefits and challenges of these AI tools. The literature review indicates that while ChatGPT and other AI tools have the potential to enhance personalized learning, feedback and assessment, and interaction, they also encounter challenges such as moral concerns, lack of human interaction, and possible biases.

Dwivedi K. Y. et al., (2023) conducted a study on Multidisciplinary perspectives on opportunities, challenges and implications of generative conversational AI for research, practice and policy. This article compiles insights from 43 experts across diverse fields, highlighting ChatGPT's potential to enhance productivity in industries like banking, IT, and hospitality, as well as in business functions such as management and marketing. Despite its advantages, challenges like biases, misuse, privacy risks, and misinformation are noted, with differing views on whether its use should be regulated. The article outlines key research areas, including understanding AI biases, determining optimal human-AI collaboration, evaluating generative AI accuracy, and addressing ethical and legal issues in its application.

Statement of Problem

The increasing integration of conversational AI in daily life, particularly among college students, has raised questions about its impact on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. The digital ecosystem is growing, students frequently interact with AI-driven tools for academic, personal, and social purposes. While these technologies offer convenience and personalized experiences, their influence on critical aspects of human well-being, such as the ability to understand and manage emotions and overall satisfaction with life, remains underexplored. This study seeks to investigate the relationship between the use of

conversational AI and the development of emotional intelligence, as well as its implications for life satisfaction among college students in this unique geographical and cultural context.

Objectives of the Study

1. Assess the relationship between the use of conversational AI technologies and the development of emotional intelligence among college students.
2. Investigate the impact of conversational AI on students' overall life satisfaction.

Research Methodology

Aim

To examine the impact of conversational AI on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among college students in the Nilgiri District.

Research Design

This study follows an Explanatory Research Design, which aims to explore the cause-and-effect relationship between the usage of conversational AI and its impact on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among college students. The explanatory design will allow the investigation of how and why conversational AI usage influences these psychological variables.

Sampling Design and Description

A stratified random sampling technique will be used to select a representative sample of college students from Nilgiri District. The population will be stratified by factors such as academic discipline (e.g., arts, science, commerce) and type of institution (e.g., urban and semi-urban). Within each stratum, a random sample of students will be selected to ensure that all groups are adequately represented in the final sample. This method helps increase the generalizability of the findings and ensures that important subgroups are not underrepresented.

Procedure

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online to college students across Nilgiri District. Participants will be informed about the study's purpose and will be required to provide consent before completing the questionnaire. The data collection process will involve gathering sociodemographic information, emotional intelligence scores,

life satisfaction scores, and conversational AI usage patterns through the four main tools. The study will ensure anonymity and confidentiality throughout the process.

Tools and Techniques

- **Sociodemographic Data Sheet**: This tool will gather essential demographic information such as age, academic discipline, and frequency of conversational AI usage. This data will help in categorizing participants and controlling for potential confounding variables in the analysis.
- **Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS) (Huebner, 1991):** The SLSS is a 7-item scale designed to assess students' overall life satisfaction in various domains (academic, social, personal life). Responses are measured on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The SLSS has been shown to have good internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha of 0.87) and construct validity, with significant correlations to other measures of well-being.
- **Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS):** This 16-item scale measures four dimensions of emotional intelligence: Self-emotion appraisal, Others' emotion appraisal, Use of emotion, and Regulation of emotion. Responses are recorded on a 7-point Likert scale. The WLEIS has demonstrated excellent reliability (Cronbach's alpha of 0.90) and validity in measuring emotional intelligence across diverse populations.
- **Conversational AI Usage Scale:** This newly developed 10-item scale will assess the frequency, purpose, and perceived effectiveness of conversational AI tools like ChatGPT, Meta AI, Google Gemini, and others. Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from never (1) to always (5)

Statistical Analysis

Data will be analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, frequencies) will summarise demographic information and usage patterns. Inferential statistics will include Pearson's correlation to explore the relationships between conversational AI usage, emotional intelligence, and life satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis will be conducted to assess the predictive power of conversational AI usage on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, controlling for demographic variables. Additionally, independent t-tests will be used to compare life satisfaction and emotional intelligence scores between frequent and non-users of conversational AI tools.

Findings

Table 1: Showing the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among college students using conversational AI frequently.

SL	*Variable*	*Significance*
1	EI	
2	LS	0.76

Table 2: Showing the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among college students not using conversational AI frequently.

SL	*Variable*	*Significance*
1	*EI*	
2	*LS*	*0.867*

SUGGESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The present study explored the effects of conversational AI, such as ChatGPT and Meta-based AI, on student's emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. The findings suggest that while a significant number of students utilize these AI tools for various purposes, including academic support and personal interactions, their emotional intelligence and overall life satisfaction remain largely unaffected. This observation contributes to the growing discourse on the role of AI in human emotional and psychological development.

One of the key findings of this study is that students predominantly use conversational AI for academic purposes. This aligns with prior research indicating that AI-driven language models assist students in writing assignments, summarizing texts, and clarifying complex concepts (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Such engagement enhances cognitive efficiency but does not necessarily translate into changes in emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, as defined by Goleman (1995), involves self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These attributes typically develop through human interactions, experiential learning, and real-life problem-solving, rather than through AI-mediated interactions alone.

Furthermore, some students reported using AI as a digital companion to share personal thoughts and feelings. This reflects a broader trend observed in recent literature, where AI chatbots are employed as emotional support systems (Shum et al., 2018). However, despite frequent interactions, students did not exhibit significant changes in emotional intelligence. One possible explanation is that while AI can simulate empathetic responses, it lacks genuine emotional reciprocity, which is crucial for fostering deeper emotional growth (Fitzpatrick et al., 2017). Thus, while students may find comfort in AI conversations, these interactions do

not replace the richness of human connections necessary for developing emotional intelligence.

Moreover, the lack of correlation between EI and LS in both groups suggests that students' emotional intelligence does not necessarily dictate their perceived life satisfaction. This contradicts some earlier studies, such as those by Schutte et al. (1998), which proposed a positive relationship between EI and life satisfaction. However, in the context of this study, students may derive life satisfaction from diverse sources such as social relationships, achievements, or extracurricular activities, independent of their emotional intelligence levels.

In terms of life satisfaction, the study found no significant impact of AI usage. Life satisfaction is shaped by various factors, including social relationships, personal achievements, and emotional well-being (Diener et al., 1985). While AI can enhance convenience and provide instant responses, it does not fulfill the deeper psychological needs associated with human interactions. This aligns with previous findings that, although digital companionship can offer temporary relief from loneliness, it does not significantly contribute to long-term well-being (Kretzschmar et al., 2019).

Overall, these findings highlight that while conversational AI serves as a valuable tool for academic and personal use, it does not inherently modify emotional intelligence or life satisfaction. This suggests that while AI plays an instrumental role in facilitating learning and emotional expression, human interactions remain indispensable for psychological and emotional growth. Future research should explore the long-term effects of AI interactions on emotional well-being and investigate potential interventions that leverage AI while preserving the essence of human emotional development.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that while conversational AI is frequently used by students for academic support and companionship, it does not significantly impact their emotional intelligence or life satisfaction. The findings suggest that AI serves primarily as a functional tool rather than an emotional substitute. Although students engage with AI for various purposes, the lack of genuine emotional reciprocity prevents it from altering their EI or overall well-being. Future research should examine the evolving role of AI in emotional and social domains, especially as AI continues to become more advanced and human-like in interaction.

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