Harshit Katoch

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Professional Summary

Final-year PhD candidate in Psychology specializing in Human-Centered Research (HCR) and HCI, focused on the human-chatbot relationship and conversational AI; UX Researcher delivering end-to-end mixed-methods studies that drive product, safety, and ethics decisions. Skilled in interviews, surveys, diary and task studies, moderated and unmoderated usability testing, thematic analysis, regression and moderation analysis, experiment design, heuristic reviews, and conversation design; translate evidence into personas, JTBD, journey maps, and prioritized requirements. Built Dialogflow and OpenAI API prototypes and a research website; established research ops and IRB workflows; ran A/B testing and analytics; strong stakeholder communication.

Experience

PhD Researcher: UX Research (Psychology & HCI, HCR) | Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab, India (2021–Present)

- Built a conversational chatbot (Google Dialogflow + OpenAI API); designed flows and safety checks; ran remote usability testing.
- Led mixed-methods studies (interviews, surveys, & task studies); completed thematic analysis with a clear codebook and inter-rater checks.
- Ran quant analysis of validated scales and task metrics; performed moderation analysis to test effects of empathy/safety messages on disclosure and help-seeking.
- Developed a data-collection website for recruitment, consent, randomization, analytics, and anonymized storage; turned results into personas, journey maps, and actionable UX requirements.

Lead Research Psychologist (Vibe AI │ XAI Technologies Pvt Ltd)   Remote
(July 2025 – September 2025)

- Chatbot conversation flow and design
- Led end-to-end UX studies (interviews, surveys, usability tests) and translated insights into product upgrades.
- Mined behavioural + emotional data to humanise chatbot replies and enhance psychological safety.
- Partnered with AI, design, and engineering to embed findings in real time, boosting user satisfaction.

Research Intern (Author Amish Tripathi│Kaaljayi media LLP)   Remote
(March 2025 – June 2025)

- Conduct thorough research on various topics, ensuring proper references and citations.
- Participate in brainstorming sessions with the team to develop creative concepts and strategies.

Co-founder and CEO (CognifAI Health Pvt Ltd)   Kharar, Punjab
(April 2023 – December 2024)

- Founded and led an AI-driven mental health platform, enhancing counselling and therapy accessibility for adolescents and adults; hosted the CognifAI Studios podcast to promote awareness.
- Secured Startup India registration and AIIA membership, boosting credibility, industry collaboration, and government support.
- Built and managed a cross-functional team of mental health professionals, AI developers, and UI/UX designers to deliver an intuitive, user-centered mental health experience; conducted research on AI chatbot interaction and its psychological impact.

Skills

• UX research • User interviews • Surveys • Usability testing (moderated/unmoderated) • Heuristic evaluation • Journey mapping • Diary studies • HCI • Conversation design (chatbots) • Thematic analysis • Inter-rater reliability • Statistics (t-tests, ANOVA, regression) • SPSS • NVivo • R • MS Office/Excel • Research ethics/IRB • CBT basics • Writing & reporting

Education

Punjabi University, Patiala, India
Ph.D. in psychology. 9.0 CGPA   2021-(Pursuing)
Thesis: Artificial Intelligence Powered Chatbot Interaction: Impact on Loneliness and Psychological Well-being in Adolescents. Supervisor: Dr. Damanjit Sandhu (Professor) (HOD, Psychology Department and Dean, Directorate of International affairs).

University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

Student exchange program of Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology (TIET), Patiala, Punjab, India
Cross-cultural clinical psychology   29 April – 28 June 2021
Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology (TIET), Patiala, Punjab
Masters in psychology. 7.62 SGPA   2018-2020
Thesis: Role of aerobic fitness and personality
Supervisor: Dr. Naveen (Assistant professor)
DAVC 10, Chandigarh, India
Bachelors of Arts   2015-2018
Psychology honors

Certifications/Courses

- Introduction to User Experience Principles and Processes | University of Michigan
- Conduct UX Research and Test Early Concepts **|** Google
- Foundations of User Experience (UX) Design **|** Google
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Workshops | University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Qualification

- **University Grants Commission National Eligibility Test (UGC NET):** Qualified for admission to Ph.D. only
- **GATE 2025 Psychology (XH-C5):** Qualified

Researches and Conferences

- Springer Nature Book Chapter | Balancing Cognition & Emotion in VR-Based Language Learning: Ethical Design of Emotion-Aware Metaverse Environments | *Metaverse and English Language Teaching*
  (Abstract Approved)
- Elsevier Book Chapter: Therapeutic LLMs in Mental Health: Evidence, Alignment Engineering, and SAFEE-Based Governance | *LLM's in Practice: Real World Applications, Challenges & Success Stories*
  (Chapter Approved)
- From Perceived Usefulness to Parasocial Bonding: Integrating TAM & PSR in Adolescent AI Companions |
  International Conference on Psychology and Psychiatry, Dubai, UAE
  (Abstract Approved)
- IGI Global Book Chapter: Synthetic Empathy and the Influence Trap: Ethical Implications of Emotion AI in Customer Support Environments | *Harnessing Emotion AI for Customer Support and Employee Wellbeing*
  DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-3658-9.ch004
- Elsevier Book Chapter: The Dangers of AI Friendship Adolescent Mental Health and Ethical Oversight | *Intelligent Systems for Neurocognition and Human-Robot-Computer Interaction*
  ISBN: 9780443416606
- Ethical AI in Marketing: Safeguarding Consumer Well-Being Through the SAFEE Framework | Presented in International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation: Unlocking New Business Insights | *Artificial intelligence and digital transformation: Unlocking new business insights*
  ISBN: 978-93-6729-132-0
- From Algorithms to Empathy: Navigating Ethics, Efficacy and User Trust | *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Psychology*
  IJIAP ISSN: 2584-0142 Volume 3, Issue 3 March, 2025.
- Role of Aerobic Fitness and Personality on Attentional Network Task Performance and Task Load Perception | *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Psychology*
  IJIAP ISSN: 2584-0142 Volume 3, Issue 3 March, 2025.
- Role of Aerobic fitness and Personality on Attentional Network Task Performance and Task Load Perception | *National Conference on Outcome based Education | TIET, Patiala, Punjab, India*

Volunteer Work

Volunteered for Har-Haath-Kalam as a counsellor for poor and unprivileged kids

References available upon request