Sahand Sabour

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EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy in Computer Science and Technology *September 2022 - Present*
Tsinghua University, Beijing, China
Advised by Dr. Minlie Huang
GPA: 4.00 | Top 1%

Master of Science in Computer Science and Technology *September 2020 - July 2022*
Tsinghua University, Beijing, China
Advised by Dr. Minlie Huang
GPA: 3.90 | Top 1% | Outstanding Graduate Student and Thesis

Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science and Technology *September 2016 - July 2020*
Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University, Suzhou, China
Supervised by Dr. Ming Xu
GPA: 3.89 | Top 5%

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Summer Research Intern *June 2022 - September 2022*
Beijing Lingxin Intelligent Technology, Beijing, China
- Collaborated on creating a chatbot for emotional support (Emohaa).
- Designed and conducted a two-week mental health support intervention using Emohaa.
- Supervised the data collection process and analyzed the obtained results.
- Achieved valuable hands-on experience with user studies, experimental design, and data analysis.

Graduate Research Assistant *September 2020 - Present*
Conversational AI Lab, Beijing, China
- Collaborated on developing novel text-based datasets for emotional and empathetic dialogue systems.
- Developed a novel design for leveraging commonsense knowledge in generating empathetic responses.
- Supervised and participated in the collection of a large-scale mental health support dataset.
- Obtained valuable experience with deep learning frameworks, libraries, and models.
- Successfully published several papers in top-tier conferences.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Papers

- **Sahand Sabour**, Wen Zhang, Xiyao Xiao, Yuwei Zhang, Yinhe Zheng, Jiaxin Wen, Jialu Zhao, and Minlie Huang. *Chatbots for Mental Health Support: Exploring the Impact of Emohaa on Reducing Mental Distress in China*. Journal of Frontiers in Digital Health, Volume 5, 2023.
- Jiale Cheng*, **Sahand Sabour***, Hao Sun, Zhuang Chen, and Minlie Huang. *PAL: Persona-Augmented Emotional Support Conversation Generation*. In Proceedings of the 61st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2023 Findings).
- Chujie Zheng, **Sahand Sabour**, Jiaxin Wang, Zhang Zheng, and Minlie Huang. *AugESC: A Large-scale Machine-Augmented Dataset for Emotional Support Conversation*. In Proceedings of the 61st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2023 Findings).
- Jincenzi Wu, Zhuang Chen, Jiawen Deng, **Sahand Sabour**, and Minlie Huang. *COKE: A Cognitive Knowledge Graph for Machine Theory of Mind*. In Proceedings of the 61st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2023 Findings).

· Siyang Liu*, **Sahand Sabour***, Yinhe Zheng, Pei Ke, Xiaoyan Zhu, and Minlie Huang. *Rethinking and Refining the Distinct Metric*. In Proceedings of the 60th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2022 Main).

· **Sahand Sabour**, Chujie Zheng, and Minlie Huang. *CEM: Commonsense-aware Empathetic Response Generation*. In Proceedings of the 36th Annual Meeting of Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2021).

· Siyang Liu, Chujie Zheng, Orianna Demasi, **Sahand Sabour**, Yu Li, Zhou Yu, Yong Jiang, and Minlie Huang. *Towards Emotional Support Dialog Systems*. In Proceedings of the 59th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2021 Main).

* indicates equal contribution.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Empathetic Dialogue Systems' Paper List *September 2020 - Present*

· Collected a comprehensive list of papers related to emotion, empathy, and mental health support.

· Leveraged this list to provide insightful resources on emotional, empathetic, and supportive dialogue systems to assist and encourage research on these topics.

· Monitored the recent publications on the topic and frequently edited the list.

Multi-Camera Pedestrian Localization *October 2019 - May 2020*

Final-year project as a major part of undergraduate thesis

· Constructed a framework that utilizes the information from multiple cameras to establish common ground between the different views and localize pedestrians within this area.

· Proposed and developed a novel algorithm that displays a bounding box around each pedestrian, with the height of the box matching the pedestrian's estimated height.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

· Xinghua Scholarship (PhD) *2022 - 2026*

· Chinese Goverment Scholarship (PhD) *2022 - 2026*

· Outstanding Graduate Student Award *2022*

· Outstanding Graduate Thesis Award *2022*

· Chinese Goverment Scholarship (Master's) *2020 - 2022*

· Jiangsu Jasmine Scholarship *2016 - 2020*

· Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University Academic Achievement Award *2018*

· Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University Academic Excellence Award *2017*

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

CEM: Commonsense-aware Empathetic Response Generation

· Jan 2021. Beijing Institute of Artificial Intelligence (BAAI)

· Feb 2021. Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI 2022)

SOCIAL SERVICES

Reviewer

· The Annual Meeting of Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI)

· The Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL)

SKILLS AND INTERESTS

Research Interests	Cognitive Science, Natural Language Processing, Text-based Emotion and Empathy, Emotional and Mental Health Support, Commonsense Knowledge and Reasoning, Open-domain Dialogue Systems
Programming Languages	Python, C++, Java, JavaScript, SQL
Frameworks	PyTorch, React, Django
Libraries/Frameworks	NumPy, Pandas, Matplotlib, Huggingface, Gensim, Spacy
Version Control/Operating System	Git, Linux