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The role of conversational AI agents in providing support and social care for isolated individuals

Jaber O. Alotaibi *, Amer S. Alshahre

Department of Social Work, Al-Lith University College, Umm Al-Qura University, Mecca, Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Social isolation and loneliness pose significant challenges to individual well-being and public health. Conversational AI agents have emerged as a promising tool for addressing social isolation by providing personalized support and companionship to isolated individuals. This study aims to investigate the role of conversational AI agents in providing support and social care for isolated individuals. It seeks to understand the effectiveness of these agents in mitigating loneliness, enhancing social connectedness, and improving overall well-being. While previous research has explored the use of technology for combating social isolation, this study focuses specifically on conversational AI agents and their unique capabilities in delivering personalized and empathetic support to isolated individuals. The research framework encompasses a mixed methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the experiences and perceptions of isolated individuals interacting with conversational AI agents. Preliminary findings suggest that conversational AI agents hold promise in providing meaningful support and companionship to isolated individuals. Qualitative analysis reveals themes related to the perceived usefulness, ease of use, and emotional connection facilitated by these agents. Quantitative analysis indicates correlations between factors such as age, gender, and the effectiveness of conversational AI agents in addressing social isolation. This study underscores the potential of conversational AI agents in alleviating social isolation and loneliness among isolated individuals. These agents assist in improving general well-being and social connectivity by offering individualized assistance and companionship. The findings guide academics, practitioners, and policymakers who want to use technology to combat social isolation and enhance mental health outcomes.

1. Introduction

The health and social care sector has increasingly recognized the detrimental effects of social isolation on older individuals, particularly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social isolation is when individuals don't engage with their family, friends, or community. It can make older people sick and unhappy. Isolating yourself for an extended period can result in negative emotions and harm your physical health [1]. Studies have demonstrated that experiencing loneliness can elevate the likelihood of developing chronic health issues such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Additionally, it could increase the number of overweight individuals and decrease physical activity [2]. When an individual spends much time alone, their immune system may weaken, leading to an increased susceptibility to illness. Social withdrawal can significantly impact our psychological well-being, which is a cause for concern. It's distressing to see the negative impact that social isolation can have on our mental health. The detrimental effects of social isolation on mental health are a cause for alarm. Spending significant amounts of time alone can lead to an increased risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues in individuals. Choosing not to communicate with others can lead to feelings of loneliness and sadness, which can be harmful to your mental well-being. Older individuals are at higher risk of experiencing memory impairment and cognitive difficulties [3]. The standard of living can also be significantly impacted. Elderly individuals experiencing loneliness may perceive their lives as lacking significance or direction. Accessing social support, transportation, and medical services may also pose a challenge for them. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted older individuals, as it has highlighted the negative effects of isolation on this demographic. Due to lockdowns and physical distancing, older individuals have more difficulty maintaining contact with their loved ones. This has exacerbated mental health issues and increased feelings of loneliness and isolation among people [4].

* Corresponding author.
E-mail addresses: Joalotaibi@uqu.edu.sa (J.O. Alotaibi), aschehri@uqu.edu.sa (A.S. Alshahre).

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There are numerous ways to support elderly individuals with this challenge. One method of aiding individuals in forming connections is promoting local activities such as community centers, clubs, and volunteer programs [5]. Social workers and healthcare professionals are crucial in assisting elderly individuals experiencing loneliness and isolation. Caregivers can assess if patients feel isolated and recommend local services or programs to provide support. Moreover, they can communicate the importance of relationships to patients and aid in developing plans to foster and sustain strong connections with others while remaining active in their community [6]. The health and social care system faces a major issue with the loneliness and isolation experienced by many elderly individuals. A lack of social connections and being alone can have detrimental effects on both your physical and mental health. Community programs, technology, and assistance from healthcare providers can all contribute to reducing loneliness and enhancing the well-being of older people. It is essential for doctors and social workers to understand the impact of loneliness on their patients and to provide compassionate and comprehensive support.

Understanding the impact of social relationships on our health is difficult due to its complexity. The quality of your friendships, not just the quantity, is important for your overall health. Thus, scientists have directed their attention toward two elements of interpersonal interactions: isolation and the sensation of being lonely [7]. The absence of people and feeling isolated can impact your health. This report investigates how the absence of social interaction and feelings of loneliness can influence the health of adults 50 years old and older [8]. Different strategies have been implemented to aid individuals who are lonely or isolated in building relationships and finding companionship. It is most difficult to assist those in the greatest need[9]. Individuals who do not engage in frequent communication with others, lack stable housing, are not affiliated with any social groups, or lack close friendships may go unnoticed by those in their vicinity. Most individuals aged 50 and above utilize the healthcare system, regardless of whether they experience social isolation or loneliness. This technology can help us determine who could be experiencing isolation or loneliness [10]. The report examines the healthcare system's role in aiding elderly people who are feeling isolated. It's essential to find ways to ensure their health and happiness.

2. The key contributions of the research

1. Enhanced Task Management: The research introduces YAPRN's Scheduler, a sophisticated tool for optimizing task management in cloud environments tailored to handle the complexities of big data workflows with improved efficiency and scalability.

2. Integrated Secure Communication: It incorporates advanced secure communication channels within the scheduler, addressing critical security concerns and ensuring data integrity and privacy during task execution in distributed cloud settings.

3. Dynamic Resource Allocation: The study contributes by developing intelligent algorithms for dynamic resource allocation, balancing performance and cost-effectiveness while maintaining robust data protection, crucial for large-scale data processing.

4. Application Across Diverse Sectors: The research demonstrates the versatile applicability of YAPRN's Scheduler across various industries, including finance, healthcare, e-commerce, telecommunications, and manufacturing, highlighting its potential to enhance operational efficiency and secure data handling in different domains.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses related work. Section 3 discusses the problem statement, and Section 4 explains the proposed methodology. Section 5 reports and compares the experimental results. Section 6 concludes the paper and mentions future work.

3. Literature review

Many young individuals are reluctant to seek assistance from friends and family despite the potential positive impact on their well-being. An increasing number of individuals are turning to chatbots for emotional support, raising positive and negative implications regarding seeking assistance from machines rather than people. To examine this, we requested participation from 16 individuals aged 16–21 to test chatbots and consider their potential for providing social support. The group talked to a mental health chatbot named Woebot for two weeks. Subsequently, they took part in personal in-depth interviews. During the interview, they were introduced to a chatbot prototype created to offer guidance to young individuals. After two months, the individuals talked about how they are still utilizing Woebot. This study provides an in-depth look at how young individuals could receive support from chatbots, such as guidance, knowledge, emotional assistance, and practical aid. The presentation would cover the effects on theories, practical usage, and potential future investigative avenues. A significant concern is the limited number of participants in the study and their self-selection into the study. This implies that the conclusions may not be generalizable to other people. Depending on their location, culture, and social groups, individuals may use chatbots for social support differently [11].

According to previous research, it is clear that being socially isolated can have detrimental impacts on mental health. Socially isolated individuals often lean on others for emotional support to manage the negative consequences. Chatbots can evoke emotional responses from people and engage with them, yet it remains unclear if they can address social isolation. This research examined whether a compassionate chatbot can mitigate the negative emotions experienced by individuals who are excluded by others. Some individuals who felt excluded on social media were selected to converse with a friendly chatbot to express their emotions, while others were simply appreciated for their input. The research revealed that exclusion from social activities led to sadness in individuals. This is consistent with what other research has shown. Using a sympathetic chatbot appeared to have a positive effect. More specifically, people who engaged with the chatbot experienced greater happiness than those who did not. The discussion focused on the possible impact of our research on theories, methodologies, and real-world applications, and we proposed ideas for future research. However, this study was limited in terms of participant numbers, and the findings for a certain part were not particularly robust [12].

The feeling of being by themselves and lonesome can lead to sadness and anxiety. Patients with multiple mental health issues who are hospitalized tend to have prolonged stays, resulting in a significant financial burden to the healthcare system. This research investigates whether conversing with computer characters can alleviate loneliness and isolation for hospital patients. To streamline the process, a video model of a virtual assistant was developed specifically for use in hospital rooms with only one patient. The ECA was designed as an intelligent assistant, rehabilitation mentor, and conversation companion. Five individuals in the healthcare field worked together in a workshop. The research examined the workshop conversations and identified several key themes. Assisting individuals in better understanding of their health, simplifying processes for medical professionals, preventing the escalation of mental health issues, and aiding elderly patients to feel more at ease with technology. Conversely, some aspects of the study could have been enhanced. The model we employed in the workshop was a prototype in video form. Despite demonstrating a successful model, the testers could not utilize an actual product themselves [13].

Older individuals' quality of life can be greatly impacted by experiencing loneliness. According to the US Census Bureau, the number of Americans aged 65 and older is expected to double by 2060. Engaging in activities that can help decrease feelings of loneliness is vital. With devices like Amazon's Echo, controlling things using voice commands is simple and comes with a friendly and helpful built-in artificial intelligence. This research aimed to investigate the potential of a virtual

assistant in reducing loneliness among older individuals. Another aspect they were interested in exploring was whether perceiving the virtual assistant as a person could cause this. Individuals over 75 participated in an 8-week trial using an Amazon Echo in a senior living facility in the Midwest. The data we studied was collected by surveys asking people about their feelings of loneliness and observing their interactions with PVA. The individuals exceeded the minimum requirement for daily interactions. As expected, older adults felt less lonely after four weeks of the program. After observing interactions with Alexa over eight weeks, we identified four primary communication patterns: greeting Alexa, making requests or statements, displaying politeness, and responding to Alexa's replies. Friendly salutations helped decrease loneliness in the early months. Loneliness at the beginning also led to more friendly greetings with the PVA for eight weeks. This shows that thinking of PVAs as human-like may help reduce loneliness in older adults. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we could not enlist many participants for our study. In the future, it would be beneficial to incorporate a more diverse range of individuals in our research and examine the effects of PVA use over an extended period.- PVA can be utilized for various types of engagement, including those known to alleviate loneliness and those customized for individuals [14].

Many elderly individuals experience feelings of isolation and lack a strong social network. A conversational agent is utilized in our system to offer assistance to older people who are on their own. The results of a study focusing on the requirements for a remote-controlled social support agent and its usage are shared to aid in creating an independent social support agent. A brief research project involved an agent residing in the residences of 14 elderly individuals for a week to gain insight and knowledge. The results reveal that people strongly prefer and are content with the system. The research also indicates that when the caregiver uses a motion sensor to actively encourage older people to interact, it is more effective in reducing loneliness than when the caregiver relies on older people to initiate interactions. The discussion involves computers' potential role in addressing significant future social issues. However, our system and initial research had numerous issues and limitations. The main obstacle faced was a shortage of individuals involved in this study. Although the same individuals have used the system for an extended period, the study's limited number of participants undermines the reliability of our results [15].

Socially assistive robots (SAR) can assist older adults and individuals with dementia by providing companionship and aiding their mental well-being and autonomy while they reside in their homes. Despite the recent growth of SAR research, it still does not have long-term trust, clinical implementation, and patient advantages. Human-robot interactions with emotions are still not figured out. It is essential to have robots that communicate effectively to ensure their functionality and interaction with people. This article examines the recent advancements in chatbot technology designed to assist the elderly and individuals suffering from dementia, including their design patterns and current applications. The study investigated how AI voice technology, such as smart speakers, could be utilized in home healthcare to compensate for shortcomings. The discussion revolves around designing user-friendly voice systems that cater to their users' needs. Furthermore, we investigate how the systems can address communication problems. It analyses people's speech and language to assess their state of mind. This aids us in tracking their well-being and evaluating their cognitive abilities as time passes. From this foundation, we examine issues and propose methods to enhance robots with the ability to communicate and comprehend emotions. This involves improving their appeal for user engagement, implementing them in practical scenarios, and employing them for healthcare applications. The crucial point to understand about this robot is its inability to display varying facial expressions [16].

4. Conversational AI agent framework

Conversational Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to a collection of technologies that allow machines to interpret, comprehend, and react intuitively to text or voice inputs. Examples of these technologies include chatbots and virtual assistants. Large amounts of data, machine learning (ML), and natural language processing (NLP) are employed by them to identify speech and text inputs, comprehend intent, translate across different languages, and react in a manner that resembles human communication [17]. Context, personalization, and relevance are essential components of any successful conversational program, including computer-human interaction. Furthermore, conversational design employs human-to-human interaction concepts to create user experiences that seem and feel natural when consumers engage with conversational AI solutions [18]. By 2025, it is anticipated that 85 % of big and medium-sized enterprises will utilize automated chatbots. Chatbots, or interactive programs that engage users in meaningful discourse, are the way of the future for businesses looking to improve their lead generation, marketing, and customer support processes [19]. When developing chatbots for a company, the chatbot builder you choose could make all the difference. Chatbots are one of the few forms of communication that allow companies and consumers to have a true one-on-one experience, which helps companies benefit from personalized marketing. Conversational artificial intelligence (AI) uses a variety of technologies, including machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), automated speech recognition (ASR), and natural language understanding (NLU), to evaluate every written or spoken word to determine the best way to reply and learn from each user contact. With the help of conversational intelligence technologies, companies could now communicate with consumers more personally and quickly [20]. The four main components of conversational AI are output production, input analysis, input processing, and reinforcement learning. Unstructured data is converted into a machine-readable format, examined, and a suitable answer is produced. The response quality is enhanced due to the machine learning techniques underpinning it. A representation of the Conservational AI agent's architecture is shown in Fig. 1.

5. GPT-3 transformer

The third-generation Generative Pre-trained Transformer, or GPT-3, is a machine learning model for neural networks that have been instructed to produce any kind of text utilizing internet data. OpenAI developed it, requiring minimal text input to produce enormous amounts of intelligent, pertinent machine-generated content. More than 175 billion machine learning parameters comprise the deep learning neural network model used in GPT-3. Before GPT-3, Microsoft's Turing Natural Language Generation (NLG) model had 10 billion parameters, making it the largest trained language model. GPT-3 is the biggest neural network developed as of the beginning of 2021. Therefore, GPT-3 outperforms all previous models in generating text that appears plausible enough to have been written by a human. GPT-3 performs a range of natural language tasks by processing text input. Comprehending and producing natural human language text utilizes the capabilities of both natural language processing and natural language creation. Historically, robots that aren't familiar with the subtleties and complexity of language have had difficulty producing information understandable to humans. A tiny quantity of input text that could generate enormous volumes of content has been used to construct articles, verses, stories, news reports, and conversations using GPT-3. Anything with a text structure could be generated with GPT-3, not simply text written in human languages. Additionally, it can produce computer code and text summaries [22].

5.1. Mechanics of GPT-3

GPT-3, or the Generic OpenAI, has created a cutting-edge natural language processing (NLP) model called Pre-trained Transformer 3. Fundamentally, GPT-3 uses a deep learning architecture known as

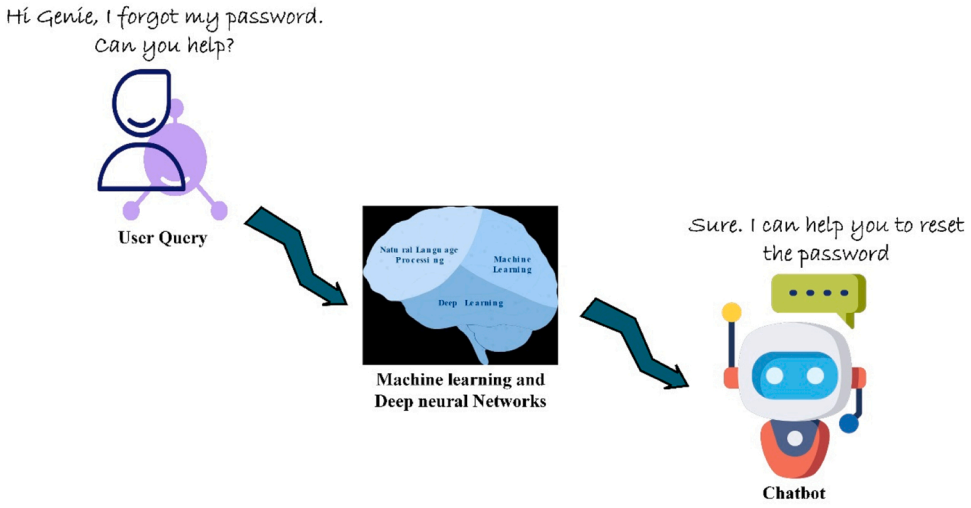

Fig. 1. Conversational AI agent architecture [21].

Transformer, which is particularly good at identifying long-range relationships in textual data sequences. A sizable dataset of varied online content covering various subjects and writing styles is used to pre-train the model. Language modeling is the process by which GPT-3 learns to anticipate the following word in a sequence based on the context of words that have come before it during pre-training. GPT-3 could improve certain tasks once pre-trained by giving it more training data and instructions tailored to the position. Fine-tuning enables the framework to modify its acquired representations to more effectively meet the needs of a specific application, such as question answering, translation, text production, or summarization. GPT-3's primary novelty is its immense size and scope. As the biggest language model ever developed, it has 175 billion parameters, which allows it to comprehend and identify subtle linguistic patterns with previously unheard-of precision. Because of its enormous parameter count, GPT-3 can produce text answers that are eloquent, pertinent to the situation, and frequently identical to human-written texts. During inference, GPT-3 creates text with one token (word or subword) at a time, depending on the given context, in an autoregressive way. This makes utilization of its acquired understanding of language structure and semantics enable it to provide fluid and cohesive replies. GPT-3 has several restrictions, even with its amazing skills. It could produce biased or nonsensical results on rare occasions, particularly when given unclear or deceptive input. Furthermore, the model could have trouble comprehending context outside of the parameters of its pre-training information set. With several uses in content creation, customer support automation, language translation, and other areas, GPT-3 is an important advancement in natural language processing. Its capacity to comprehend and produce human-like language might completely change the way humans communicate with computers and handle enormous volumes of textual data. The following is an overview of the GPT-3 architecture. The Transformer architecture's computation flow is shown below, beginning with input embeddings and ending with creating output probabilities across the lexicon. This pattern is followed by every layer in the Transformer, making it possible to collect contextual information in sequential data, such as text, efficiently.

5.2. Flow of computations in transformer

Step 1: Input embedding

Given an input sequence $X = \{x_1, x_2, x_3, \ldots\ldots, x_n\}$, where x_i represents the embedding vector of the $i-th$ token.

Step 2: Self-attention mechanism

- *Compute Query Q, Key K and Value V Matrices* :

$$Q = XW_Q$$

$$K = XW_K$$

$$V = XW_V$$

Where W_Q, W_K, W_V are learnable weight matrices.

- Calculate the attention Scores was expressed in Eq. (1):

$$Attention(Q, K, V) = SoftMax\left(\frac{QK^T}{\sqrt{d_k}}\right)V \tag{1}$$

Where d_k is the dimensionality of the key vectors.

Step 3: Multi-head attention

- Split the attention scores into multiple heads was expressed in Eq. (2):

$$head_i = Attention\left(QW_i^Q, KW_i^K, VW_i^V\right) \tag{2}$$

Where W_i^Q, W_i^K, W_i^V are separate weight matrices for each head.

- Concatenate the attention heads was expressed in Eq. (3):

$$MultiHead(Q, K, V) = Contact(head_1, head_2, \ldots\ldots head_h)W_O \tag{3}$$

Where W_O is the output weight matrix.

Step 4: Position-wise feed-forward networks

Apply position-wise feed-forward networks element-wise to the output of multi-head attention was expressed in Eq. (4):

$$FFN(x) = ReLU(xW_1 + b_1)W_2 + b_2 \tag{4}$$

Where W_1, W_2 are weight matrices and b_1, b_2 are bias vectors.

Step 5: Residual connection and layer normalization

Add the output of the feed-forward network to the input was expressed in Eq. (5):

$$Output = LayerNorm(x + FFN(x)) \tag{5}$$

Where *LayerNorm* denotes layer Normalization.

Step 6: Repeat layers

Repeat the above steps for multiple identical layers in the Transformer architecture.

Step 7: Output layer

Compute the probability distribution over the vocabulary was expressed in Eq. (6):

$$Output(x) = Softmax(xW + b) \tag{6}$$

where W is the weight matrix and b is the bias vector.

6. Research framework

To meet the support and social care needs of solitary people, this research paradigm focuses on comprehending the potential of conversational AI bots. Mental health and wellbeing are seriously hampered by social isolation, especially in vulnerable groups including the elderly, those with impairments, and people who live in rural places. A rising number of people are interested in novel solutions like conversational AI bots since traditional support systems frequently fall short of meeting the complex demands of solitary people. These AI-powered devices promise to lessen social isolation since they provide emotional support, companionship, and information access. The framework provides a systematic way to look into how well conversational AI bots perform and their effects on helping lonely people. The issue is stated clearly at the outset, stressing the need for innovative remedies by highlighting the frequency and effects of social isolation. The research outlines its aims, which center on comprehending usage patterns, evaluating perceived advantages and difficulties, and formulating plans for enhancement [23]. To direct the investigation, study objectives are developed that delve into the implementation of conversational AI agents, user experiences, and areas for improvement, and the research framework is mentioned in Fig. 2.

The study evaluates the efficacy of conversational AI bots in alleviating social isolation and loneliness. It employs social support theories, technological acceptance models, and human-computer interaction concepts to comprehend the needs of persons in secluded communities. Data analysis that is both quantitative and qualitative is combined with a mixed-methods approach. The results are intended to advance social inclusion, strengthen AI-driven support systems, and advance theoretical knowledge of technology adoption and social support. For enterprises using big data in cloud environments, managing tasks effectively and securely has become critical in the quickly changing world of digital transformation. The demands of modern organizations are often not met by traditional task management systems due to the growing amount, velocity, and variety of data. The Scheduler from YAPRN is a unique and innovative solution to tackle these issues. Strong, secure communication channels are integrated into this creative scheduler, guaranteeing that work management procedures are effective and protected from possible security risks. The features, difficulties, and uses of optimizing task management in a big data-driven cloud context with YAPRN's Scheduler will be covered in detail in the ensuing sections.

6.1. Data collection

A systematic strategy would be employed to gather information from 100 participants based on survey questions to guarantee thorough insights into the function of conversational AI bots in offering social care and assistance to solitary people [24]. Initially, participants could be chosen via various sources, including social media groups, community centers, and internet platforms catering to those who are lonely. To facilitate contextual comprehension, demographic data such as age, gender, marital status, work status, location (rural/urban), and degree of education would be collected. Then, participants will answer a series of thoughtfully constructed survey questions on how they use conversational AI bots, what they think are the advantages, what obstacles they face, what they want to see improved, and so on. To capture nuanced opinions, open-ended replies will provide qualitative insights that could be analyzed with quantitative data to find trends and connections. A comprehensive dataset will be produced with the help of this systematic methodology with 100 participants, illuminating the effectiveness and possible improvements of conversational AI bots in reducing social care assistance needs and promoting isolation. Eq. (8), representing the systematic sampling process to gather information from 100 participants, is:

$$v = \frac{N}{n} \tag{8}$$

Where,

⇒ v is the sampling interval,
⇒ N is the population size,
⇒ n is the sample size $(in\ this\ case, n = 100)$.

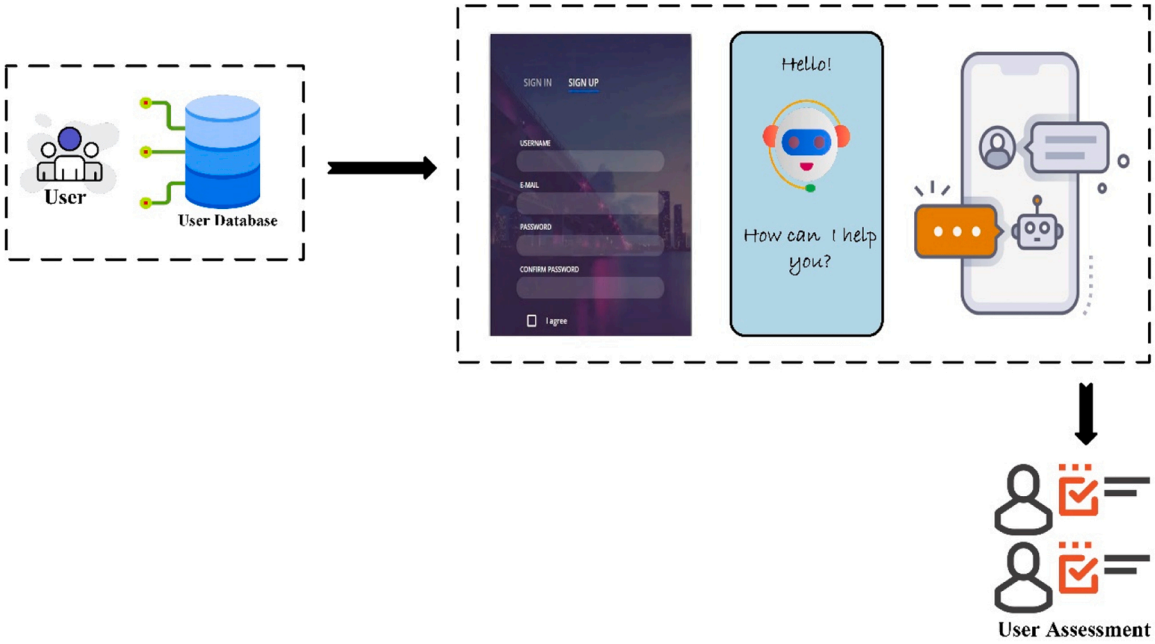

Fig. 2. Research framework.

6.1.1. Participants

Participants' demographic data will be gathered via a questionnaire as part of our research on the function of conversational AI bots in offering social care and assistance to lonely people. Numerous factors, including age, gender, location, marital status, degree of education, and work status, will be included in the data collection. Participants will be asked to pick their age group based on selections ranging from 25 to 80. Participants are asked to select whether they identify as male, female, or other/non-binary. When asked about their location, participants will specify whether they live in an urban or rural region. To determine participants' marital status, they will be asked to check one of the following categories: single, married, divorced, widowed, or other, with the opportunity to specify. The highest degree of education attained, from high school or less to a PhD or more, will be the determining factor in determining an individual's level of education. To ascertain the participants' employment position, they will be asked to indicate whether they are full-time or part-time, jobless, retired, or in another status. They will be given the chance to specify if further information is required. Examining the demographics of the participant pool and comprehending how various demographic aspects can affect their interactions with conversational AI bots for support and social care is going to be made possible by this extensive data gathering.

6.1.1.1. Age distribution. The age distribution in this survey was thoughtfully created to include various adult age groups, from 25 to 80 years old. The objective is to thoroughly understand how diverse age groups engage with conversational AI bots for assistance and social care by enrolling individuals at different phases of maturity. This division guarantees coverage of several life phases, ranging from early adulthood to advanced age, enabling us to investigate possible variations in AI agent usage habits, preferences, and perceived advantages over the adult life cycle. Considering the distinct needs and experiences of older persons in the context of social isolation and assistance, it recognizes the significance of adding them to our study, with 15 participants in the 76–80 age range. Thanks to this deliberate age distribution, it could investigate the function of conversational AI agents in providing social care across a range of age groups, which advances the knowledge of their applicability and efficacy across the adult life cycle. The age distribution of study participants is displayed in Fig. 3.

6.1.1.2. Gender distribution. The 100 participants' gender distribution was thoughtfully chosen to represent a range of gender identities in the sample community. To guarantee participation across a range of gender identities with 45 male participants, 50 female participants, and five people identifying as other/non-binary. The ability to investigate possible variations in the experiences, inclinations, and viewpoints of conversational AI bots among different gender groups makes our method extremely important. To give a thorough knowledge of the application and perception of conversational AI bots in various gender situations, it includes people with varying gender identities. This inclusive strategy encourages a nuanced examination of the function of AI agents in social care and assistance, considering the various requirements and viewpoints of all parties involved. The distribution of genders among research participants is depicted in Fig. 4.

6.1.2. Exploring participant demographics: living situations, employment status, and educational background

Among the 100 participants in this study, which examines the function of conversational AI bots in social care and assistance, it has carefully gathered data on various demographic variables. The distribution of living arrangements, work status, and educational attainment provides an important context for understanding the various backgrounds of the sample group.

6.1.2.1. Living situation. The analysis of living arrangements shows that forty-five of the study's participants, or a sizable majority, are single. This observation highlights the frequency of social isolation in the sample population. Furthermore, compared to those who live alone, 30 individuals live with a spouse or partner, suggesting a distinct support system. Ten participants live in assisted living facilities, indicating possible extra support requirements, and fifteen participants live with family, indicating a possibly wider support network.

6.1.2.2. Educational background. Additional insights are revealed by looking at the distribution of educational backgrounds among our participants. Of the participants, 35 have a bachelor's degree or above, showing greater educational achievement compared to the 25 who have just finished high school. A subgroup of our sample with advanced educational credentials is suggested by the fact that 25 individuals hold a master's degree, and 15 have a PhD or above. When interacting with conversational AI bots, users' technology literacy, health literacy, and communication skills may be impacted by these educational disparities.

6.1.2.3. Employment status. Forty participants are working full-time, according to the examination of their employment status, which suggests a certain amount of daily regularity and financial security. This illustrates the variation in work status within our sample, with twenty people having part-time jobs and fifteen not having a job. Twenty participants are also retired, suggesting a different way of living and maybe more time for interacting with AI entities that can have conversations. As a reflection of their varied living situations, five individuals fit into other categories, such as being housewives or students. A summary of participant demographics is displayed in Fig. 5.

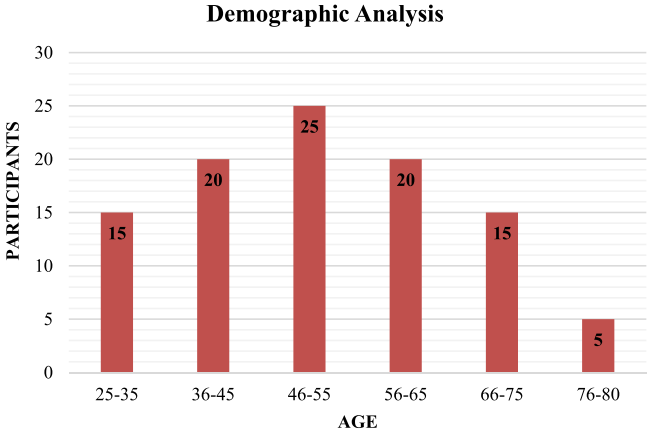

Fig. 3. Age distribution of participants in the study.

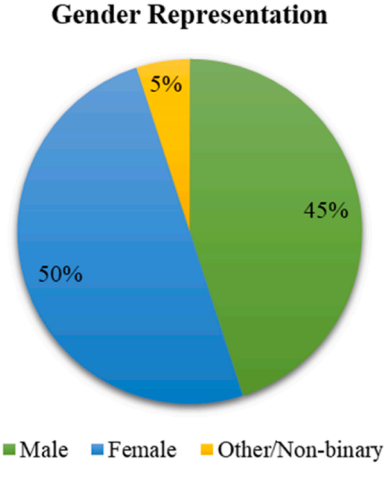

Fig. 4. Gender distribution among participants.

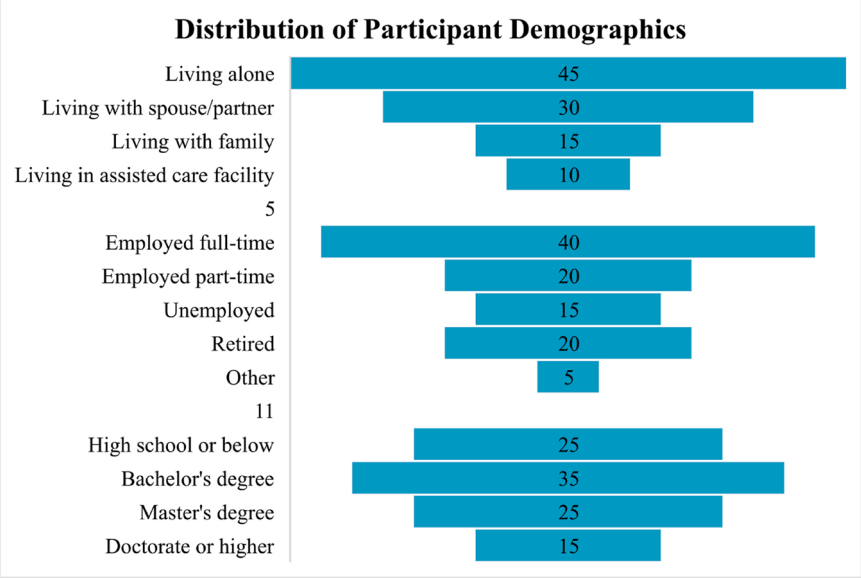

Fig. 5. Participant demographics overview.

The thorough comprehension of the different backgrounds within the sample population is made possible by this in-depth analysis of participant characteristics. It could better comprehend the requirements, preferences, and experiences of participants when it comes to utilizing conversational AI bots for social care and assistance when these elements are considered.

7. Design implementation

The intelligent fusion of technology and human-centric design principles is demonstrated by the creation and deployment of Companion AI, an AI chatbot designed to offer assistance and company to lonely people. The framework is mentioned in Fig. 6. "Generative AI" is a kind virtual friend designed to provide comfort and discussion to anyone experiencing social isolation. This chatbot aims to offer a friendship that could be hard to obtain in regular relationships by emphasizing empathy and understanding. Its objective is to build a deep relationship with consumers by helping them go through the highs and lows of everyday life. People could begin a discussion with this virtual buddy by selecting "Start Chatting," which opens up a world of support and interaction. Generative AI offers consolation and understanding when required, whether a person needs someone to talk to or listen to them.

With this simplified method, consumers could get the help or information they want fast and easily without going through convoluted menus or user interfaces. Additionally, CompanionAI wants to engage with users in a kind and sympathetic manner, making them feel at ease and understanding. In addition to providing useful assistance, the CompanionAI acts as a 24/7 digital companion, connecting those in need with emotional support and understanding. CompanionAI is a prime example of a comprehensive strategy for utilizing technology to improve people's well-being by fusing cutting-edge AI technology with intuitive design, as mentioned in Fig. 7, especially when tackling the problems associated with social isolation and loneliness.

With a range of characteristics intended to meet their emotional and social requirements, "Generative AI" provides socially isolated people with a holistic approach to companionship and assistance. Users could customize their chat experience by indicating their favorite subjects and tones through personalized discussions, and the chatbot makes use of previous exchanges to deliver contextually appropriate replies that promote understanding and continuity. Additionally, its mental health

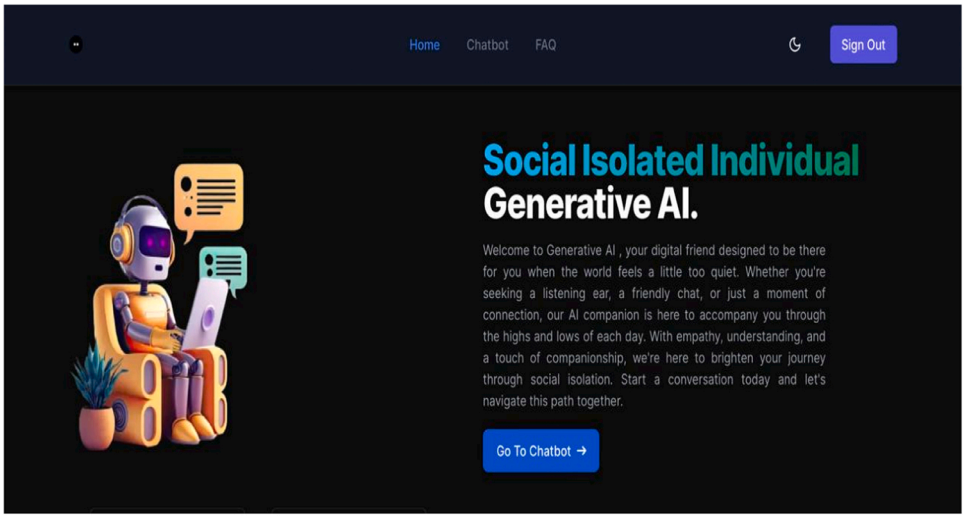

Fig. 6. Design implementation of conversational AI using GPT-3.

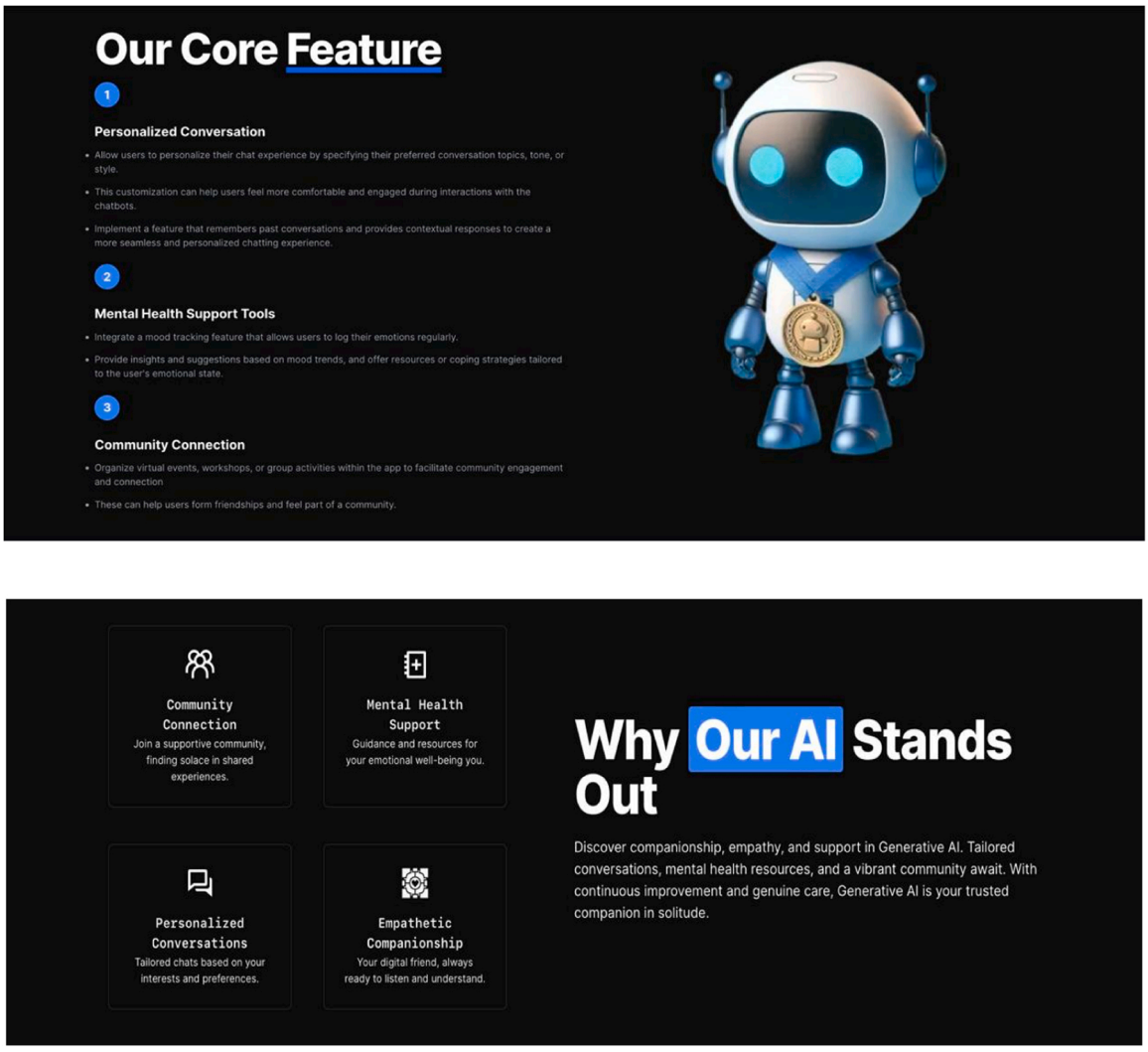

Fig. 7. Features of conversational AI.

support tools foster emotional resilience and self-awareness by enabling users to frequently assess their feelings and provide insights and coping mechanisms based on mood trends. Beyond one-on-one conversations, the platform promotes community connection through online gatherings, seminars, and group activities. Encouraging genuine interaction and connections among users eventually counteracts social isolation's widespread impacts.

With the GPT-3 structure at its core, conversational AI bots have become indispensable resources for offering social care and assistance to solitary people, especially during heightened social and physical diversion periods. These agents use GPT-3's sophisticated natural language processing powers to have meaningful discussions with those feeling lonely or isolated. It also gives companionship and emotional support. These AI bots can ease loneliness and isolation by providing encouraging words, simulating human-like interactions, and sympathetically answering users' questions through interactive conversations. Moreover, it could facilitate the user's access to beneficial resources like community organizations, mental health support services, or leisure pursuits, strengthening social relationships and improving general well-being. Conversational AI agents can significantly improve the social and emotional requirements of lonely people by utilizing GPT-3, contributing to a feeling of connection and belonging in a world that is becoming increasingly digital. For example, a GPT-3 framework-powered chatbot is a vital tool in post-knee surgery care as it helps patients navigate their recuperation process. The Chatbot provides a thorough response when asked about post-knee surgery care, highlighting important actions necessary for a speedy recovery. It starts by stressing the need for rest and elevation and suggests that users use pillows to elevate their legs to reduce edema. It also emphasizes how important it is to take prescription drugs as directed, emphasizing the persistence required for the best possible recovery. The chatbot also suggests using compression bandages and cold packs to lessen swelling and increase comfort. In addition, it highlights the need to perform exercises as directed to improve knee muscle strength and joint mobility, highlighting the critical function physical therapy has in the healing process. The Chatbot enables patients to successfully navigate their post-surgery care by offering clear and concise assistance customized to each patient's needs, resulting in a quicker and more successful healing process. Fig. 8 illustrates how conversational AI is designed and implemented.

These writing pieces cover a wide range of perspectives on the ubiquitous problem of loneliness. They explore the intricacies of loneliness, looking into its frequency, effects, and underlying mechanisms in various age groups and circumstances. From delving into the paradox of experiencing loneliness in the face of love to talking about the severe effects of loneliness on society and health, these articles provide insightful viewpoints and stimulate discussion on a subject that affects many people. These articles advance knowledge on loneliness and the significance of tackling it in our communities, whether reflecting on personal experiences or examining cultural patterns. The Design Implementation is displayed in Fig. 9.

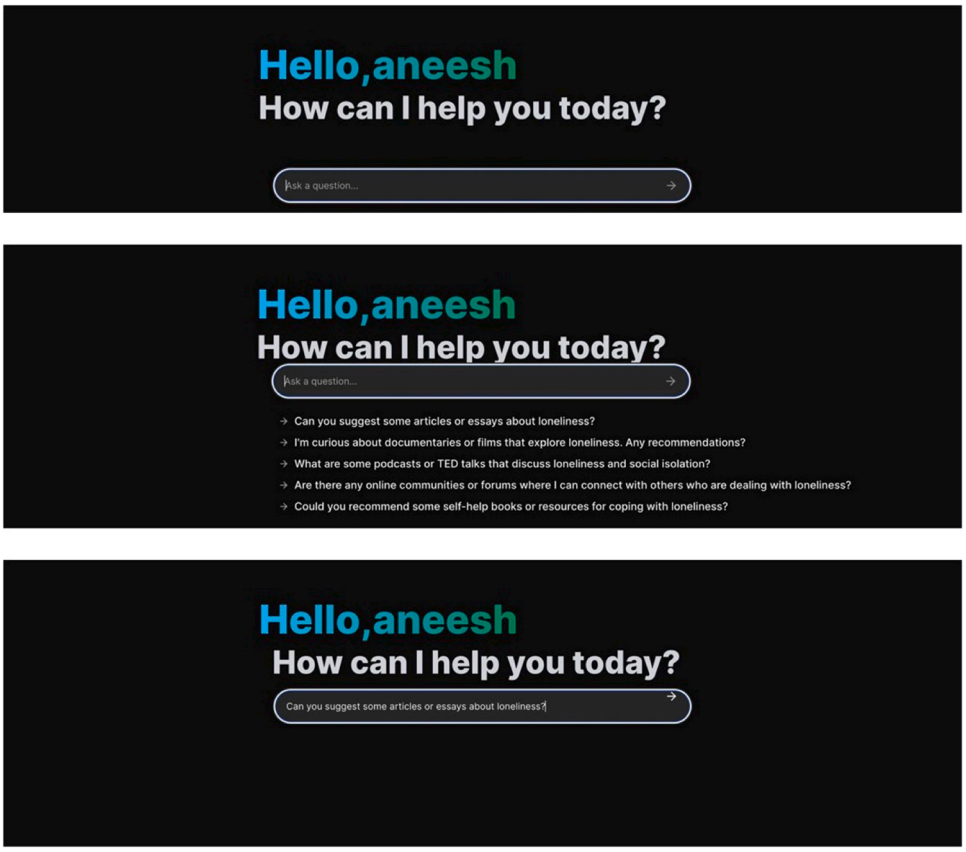

Fig. 8. Login page.

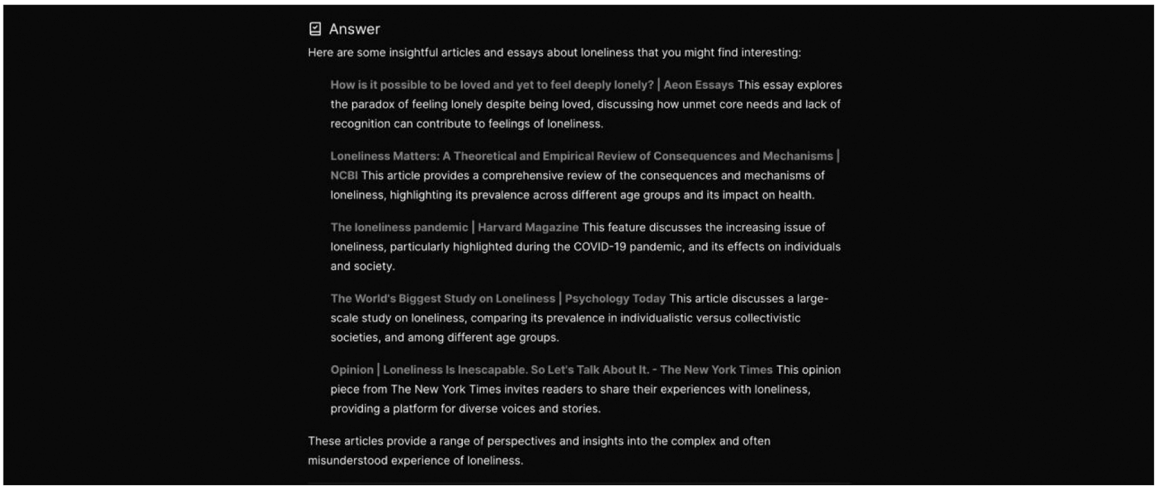

Fig. 9. Design implementation.

8. Evaluation assessment of participants

In recent years, there has been an enormous rise in interest in conversational AI technologies due to their potential to completely transform several areas of human-computer interaction, such as social care and support services. It is crucial to comprehend how users perceive and interact with these AI-driven systems to assess their effectiveness and pinpoint areas needing development [25]. The dataset offers insightful information on people's interactions and perceptions of conversational AI bots. Through the analysis of survey responses about the utilization, contentment, and obstacles faced by participants in conversational AI, we can get a more profound comprehension of the advantages and obstacles these technologies present in meeting user requirements. This summary lays the groundwork for dissecting the dataset, investigating the subtleties of participants' interactions with conversational AI, and shaping the direction of this quickly developing field's future developments.

Participants' answers to survey questions on their impressions and experiences with conversational AI are illustrated in Fig. 10. With an added "Neutral" option, the columns show the various degrees of agreement, from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree," with each row corresponding to a particular question. The replies offer insightful

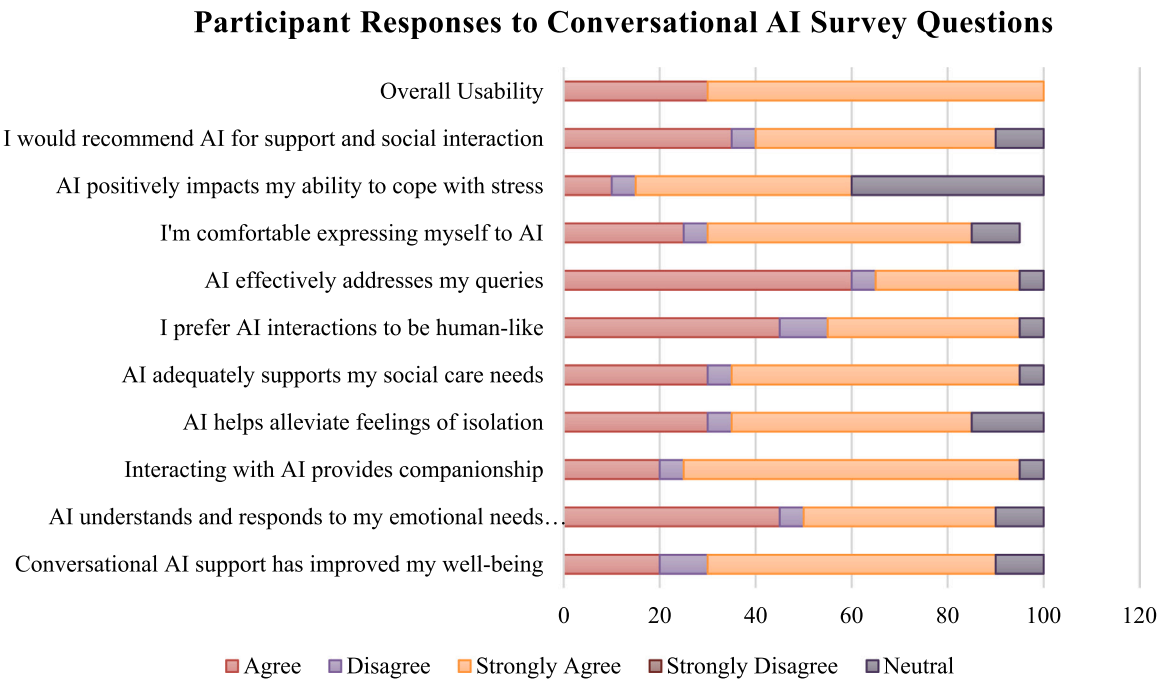

Fig. 10. Survey responses on conversational AI support and usability.

information regarding participants' perspectives regarding conversational AI help and its effects on their well-being. As an illustration of the participants' favorable opinions of the technology's support-giving effectiveness, most (60 %) strongly think conversational AI help has improved their well-being. On the other hand, a sizable majority (70 %) strongly concur that engaging with AI fosters camaraderie, suggesting that AI could potentially mitigate isolation and loneliness. In addition, 40 % of participants agree, and 45 % strongly agree that the AI can comprehend and cater to their emotional requirements. This implies that participants think conversational AI could provide useful emotional assistance. However, the preference for human-like interactions is divided; although 40 % strongly believe that AI improves their capacity to handle stress, 45 % of respondents prefer AI interactions to be human-like. The outcomes show that participants had an overall good opinion of conversational AI support, and they strongly agree that it is useful for enhancing well-being, offering company, and answering questions. Conversational AI systems could be developed and improved with these findings in mind, making them more effective and better able to satisfy user demands.

8.1. Usage and experience with conversational AI agents

Conversational AI agents have become increasingly popular in recent years as potential resources for social connection and assistance, especially for those who are lonely or looking for a companion. With the help of artificial intelligence technology, these agents enable users to converse in normal language and access various features, such as question-answering and emotional support. It is imperative to comprehend the use patterns and encounters of users with conversational AI agents to evaluate their efficacy in meeting social wants and improving overall well-being. This overview lays the groundwork for investigating how people use conversational AI agents and their experiences with them, providing insight into the advantages they see, their difficulties, and their general level of happiness with these cutting-edge tools. The goal is to gather important information from a thorough examination of user interactions to guide the creation and implementation of conversational AI agents suited to various demographics' social care requirements.

The information about participants' prior use of conversational AI bots and their evaluations of the application are included in Table 1. Participant responses are represented by each row, which includes the user's rating of the program and whether or not they had previously utilized conversational AI agents. It demonstrates that two participants—who had previously used a conversational AI agent—rated the program with a score of four out of five, suggesting a good experience. Five stars were awarded to the agent by two more individuals who had utilized it, indicating high satisfaction with the application. On the other hand, participants who had never used a conversational AI agent before gave the app a rating of 5, indicating that they had a favorable impression of it even without any past use. Table 2 offers insightful information on participants' opinions and experiences with conversational AI bots and the possible impact of prior usage on their evaluations of the app.

Participants' feedback on their interactions with a conversational AI bot is shown in Table 3, with particular attention paid to the text's readable quality, reliability perceptions, and difficulties encountered. Each row shows the participant's reaction, which includes whether or not they thought the agent was dependable, how easy it was to understand the text, and whether or not they stumbled into any problems when interacting with the agent. Every participant rated the agency as dependable, with a resounding "yes," awarding it a perfect five. This shows that participants usually accept the information supplied by the AI agent, suggesting a similar view of dependability throughout the sample. Similarly, every participant gave the material a readability rating of 5, meaning they could easily grasp and interact. This high grade implies that the AI agent successfully conveyed information intelligibly and clearly. Moreover, the "No" answers in the corresponding column show that none of the participants mentioned difficulties using the

Table 1
Usage of conversational AI agents and application ratings.

Used Conversational AI Agent Before	Rating of this Application
Yes	5
No	5
Yes	4
Yes	4
No	5

Table 2
Experiences with conversational AI agent: reliability, readability, and challenges.

Felt Reliable While Using the Agent	Readability of the text	Any challenges faced by this agent
Yes	5	No
Yes	5	No
Yes	5	No
Yes	5	No
Yes	5	No

Table 3
Summary of participant responses to conversational AI agent usage and effects.

Question	Yes	No	Somewhat
Ever used a conversational AI agent for support or social interaction?	85	15	-
Find conversational AI agents helpful against isolation?	75	10	15
Do conversational AI agents provide companionship or social interaction?	85	5	10

agent. This implies that there won't be any major barriers preventing the participants from interacting with the AI agent, making the interaction experience easy and seamless.

8.1.1. Participant responses to conversational AI agent usage and effects

A summary of the opinions expressed by one hundred participants on the utilization of conversational AI bots and the outcomes they thought these interactions had been shown in Table 3. Initially, 85 % of respondents said they had utilized conversational AI bots for assistance or social engagement, whereas 15 % said they had never done so. This indicates that conversational AI technology is frequently utilized by the participants, demonstrating its value in fostering social contact and support. Following that, respondents were questioned about the usefulness of conversational AI bots in preventing feelings of loneliness. Positive responses from a sizable share (75 %) suggest that they believe conversational AI bots to be useful tools in the fight against isolation and loneliness. Nonetheless, 10 % of respondents said they were ineffective, and 15 % said they had mixed opinions.

The final question asked of the participants concerned whether conversational AI machines promoted social connection or friendship. The perceived importance of these agents in meeting social needs is reflected in the majority (85 %) who stated that they offered companionship or social connection. Ten percent of responders had mixed feelings, with only five percent disagreeing with this assertion. The results indicate that participants had a generally good opinion of conversational AI bots; most believe these agents can be useful in reducing feelings of loneliness and facilitating social contact. It's essential to observe that a tiny percentage of participants indicated reluctance or conflicting emotions, suggesting the need for more research on personal preferences and experiences employing conversational AI technology for social care and assistance.

The growing concern over social isolation and loneliness has driven research into various technological interventions to provide support and improve well-being. Previous studies have explored using digital platforms, social robots, and virtual reality to enhance social interaction and provide companionship for isolated individuals. For instance, digital health interventions have been shown to offer psychological benefits and improve user engagement through tailored content and social support networks. However, the potential of conversational AI agents—AI-driven systems capable of engaging in human-like dialogue—has not been as thoroughly investigated in addressing social isolation. Our research fills this gap by focusing on the unique capabilities of these AI agents to deliver personalized, empathetic support to individuals experiencing loneliness. Unlike traditional digital tools, conversational AI agents can provide real-time, interactive engagement, making them particularly effective in fostering emotional connections and offering companionship. Our study's mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses, reveals that these AI agents enhance perceived social connectedness and vary in effectiveness based on demographic factors such as age and gender. These findings suggest that conversational AI can be tailored to meet the specific needs of diverse user groups, offering a scalable and flexible solution to mitigate loneliness and improve overall well-being. By expanding on prior research, our study highlights the promising role of conversational AI agents in social care. It underscores their potential to revolutionize how support and companionship are delivered to isolated individuals.

9. Conclusion and future work

This research has greatly enhanced our understanding of the function of conversational AI bots in assisting socially isolated people. Several important findings have been drawn employing a mix of quantitative surveys and thematic analysis. Conversational AI agents are seen favorably by participants in terms of lowering emotions of loneliness, fostering camaraderie, and giving emotional support. Although they commend these agents for being accessible and easy to utilize, they feel that the interface design and personalization could be strengthened. A participant's appreciation for correct information and well-reasoned answers makes trustworthiness and dependability essential. Although people have different preferences for interaction methods, AI is generally seen as a useful source of help. Ethical issues, especially data security and privacy, are also significant considerations. This research will greatly impact the fields of social care and technology. It emphasizes the significance of using technology to satisfy the many requirements of solitary people by clarifying the potential of conversational AI bots in alleviating social isolation. The study also emphasizes the necessity of continuous research and development to improve the efficiency and usefulness of AI-driven assistance systems and the significance of ethical issues in protecting user privacy and trust. Although this work has illuminated the revolutionary possibilities of conversational AI bots in helping lonely people, there are still opportunities for investigation and study. Sustained progress in artificial intelligence technology, in conjunction with multidisciplinary teamwork, has the potential to augment the potential of conversational AI bots to provide tailored and efficient assistance. Furthermore, it is necessary to conduct longitudinal research to monitor the long-term effects of AI-driven treatments on social well-being. Additionally, studies concentrating on underrepresented or marginalized groups can make AI-driven support systems inclusive and available to everyone. Chatbots with artificial intelligence have great potential to help solitary people with their social care requirements. By applying the knowledge acquired from this research and the ongoing ethical and inclusive innovation, we could utilize technology to promote social cohesion and build a more cohesive and encouraging community.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Amer S. Alshahre: Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Jaber O. Alotaibi**: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Project administration.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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