AI and Mental Health: Can Chatbots Help Students Manage Stress?

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Abstract

This research explores how artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots can support students struggling with stress. Based on surveys and interviews with 40 students across Bangladesh, the study examines whether chatbots such as Wysa, Replika, and Youper effectively reduce stress or provide only temporary comfort. Results show that AI chatbots offer emotional relief and non-judgmental listening experiences but lack deep empathy and human understanding. The paper concludes that integrating AI tools with real emotional support systems could help build a healthier approach to student mental well-being.

Introduction

In Bangladesh, conversations around student mental health are still emerging. Academic pressure, limited counseling facilities, and social expectations contribute to anxiety and loneliness among students. Around the world, AI chatbots are being used to bridge this gap. This study aims to explore whether such tools can truly help students here or if human connection remains irreplaceable.

Methodology

This study followed a mixed-method approach involving both quantitative and qualitative data. A total of 40 students aged 15–18 participated from different schools across Bangladesh. The questionnaire included five key questions about stress level, coping habits, and chatbot experience. Respondents rated their daily stress on a 1–5 scale, while interviews captured personal experiences and emotional responses.

Findings and Discussion

Among the surveyed students, 60% were aware of AI chatbots, and 25% had used them. Users described the experience as comforting and judgment-free, though sometimes repetitive. They appreciated being able to talk freely but missed genuine empathy. The findings align with WHO (2024) research, which highlights AI as a growing support tool in youth mental health. While chatbots lack human understanding, they offer privacy and accessibility, particularly in areas with mental health stigma.

Group	Awareness (%)	Users (%)
Heard About Chatbots	60	—
Used Chatbots	—	25

Conclusion

AI chatbots can serve as an entry point for students seeking emotional relief but should complement—not replace—human support systems. Schools could include digital wellness programs to teach responsible technology use for mental health. Combining AI with real human empathy may create a more balanced and supportive approach to student well-being.

Recommendations

1. Encourage schools to provide digital literacy and wellness training.
2. Promote awareness about safe use of AI chatbots.
3. Integrate AI tools with counseling support rather than replacing them.
4. Conduct further research on the long-term effects of AI in student mental health.

References

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Author Bio

Marufa Akter is an Inter First Year student at Mongla Government College. She is passionate about mental health, youth empowerment, and the positive use of technology in education.