

# Rakesh Patibanda (PhD)

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## SUMMARY

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Senior researcher with over 10 years driving actionable behavioral insights across technology, healthcare, and consumer products in the Asia-Pacific region and globally. Proven track record leading mixed-methods research programs at scale, spanning teams of 10+, multi-million-dollar funded initiatives, and studies encompassing 100,000+ participants, translating complex qualitative and quantitative data into strategic recommendations that increased user engagement by up to 50% and directly informed product roadmaps and market expansion, including successful entry into Southeast Asia.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

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- Involved in research programs that secured €6.5M in competitive funding for strategic technology initiatives.
- Secured \$425K in seed funding from VCs and angel investors to launch two flagship mobile titles.
- Drove market entry into Southeast Asia, establishing the region as the second-largest revenue source.
- Boosted user engagement by 50% and increased Daily Active Users by 22% through research-backed features.
- Saved 1,000+ faculty hours annually by leading a cross-departmental process standardization initiative.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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Monash University

Dec 2024 – Present

### Postdoctoral Researcher

Melbourne, Australia

- Contributed to competitive research funding totaling **\$500K+ AUD (ARC Discovery)** and **€6.5M (UKRI Somabotics)**, aligning interdisciplinary programs with national innovation priorities and institutional strategy.
- Spearheaded multi-year, mixed-methods research programs on human–computer integration, architecting end-to-end experimental lifecycles, from opportunity framing and ethics approval through to evidence translation, across **3 concurrent project streams**.
- Mentored and supervised **3 PhD candidates, 2 MSc students, 4 Honours students, and 8 undergraduate research assistants**, building institutional capability in experimental design, rapid prototyping, and ethical research conduct.
- Synthesized vast qualitative and quantitative datasets from longitudinal human-subject studies, generating nuanced behavioral insights that informed the design of more intuitive, empathetic AI-enabled and wearable systems.
- Produced an internationally recognized body of **65+ peer-reviewed publications** (CHI, DIS, TEI, CHI PLAY), earning **1,250+ citations** and an **H-index of 20**, including **2× Best Paper Awards at ACM CHI**.
- Established AI-driven research and analysis pipelines that accelerated behavioral insight generation and evidence synthesis, reducing concept-to-prototype timelines for wearable devices across multidisciplinary teams.
- Facilitated design-thinking workshops for industry partners to identify new market opportunities for wearable technology in enterprise and healthcare sectors, translating deep consumer insights into scalable service innovations.
- Presented complex research findings to global audiences, including the International Astronautical Congress and universities (Cambridge, UCL, Nottingham, Waterloo), advocating for human-centered design in emerging technology.
- Pioneered “in-the-wild” experimental methodologies for testing wearable systems in real-world environments, moving consumer research beyond controlled lab settings to capture authentic behavioral data.
- Managed **100% compliance** with Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) governance, risk management protocols, and institutional reporting obligations across all active research programs.

RMIT University

Feb 2017 – Nov 2020

### Senior UX Researcher/Designer

Melbourne, Australia

- Drove a **12% increase in student satisfaction** by spearheading qualitative synthesis of Course Experience Survey data

- from **100,000 students**, translating friction-point insights into targeted curriculum interventions across multiple faculties.
- Led a cross-functional team of **10** to overhaul the Education Portfolio’s web presence, executing a content audit of **300,000 legacy pages** and distilling them into a streamlined, high-converting **350-page information architecture** within Adobe Experience Manager (AEM).
- Architected the end-to-end service redesign of the “Cred Finder” digital credentialing platform, mapping complex business processes to **reduce system-wide errors by 40%** and slash credential creation time from **2 days to under 3 hours**.
- Championed standardization of **6 core learning templates across 5 faculties**, securing cross-faculty stakeholder buy-in to save **1,000+ annual faculty hours** and improve student UX consistency by **18%**.
- Engineered a high-fidelity AR/VR learning interface through rigorous A/B testing and usability trials, delivering a **15% increase in student engagement time** and **8% improvement in knowledge retention** across STEM cohorts.
- Navigated complex institutional governance to build consensus for the “Emble” design templates, ensuring consistent UI/UX across **500+ courses** and aligning diverse academic requirements with a unified student experience strategy.
- Executed advanced evaluative research using Wizard of Oz testing with student cohorts to simulate complex gamified interactions, enabling rapid iteration and risk mitigation before committing significant engineering resources.
- Directed the accessibility strategy for all new learning tools, ensuring prototypes and templates met **WCAG 2.1 AA** standards to provide equitable access for students with disabilities.
- Conducted end-to-end journey mapping sessions to understand the student experience from admission inquiry through alumni status, identifying critical “moments of truth” for digital intervention and service innovation.
- Tailored digital support pages and Canvas blueprints for RMIT’s **global campus network (including Vietnam)**, ensuring localized resource accessibility while maintaining core brand integrity.

7 Cups

Feb 2015 – Jan 2017

### Lead UX Consultant

United States (Remote)

- Boosted user engagement by **50%** and extended session durations by **30%** by revitalizing the platform’s core gamification service through qualitative research synthesis from **2,000+ global users**.
- Influenced the global product roadmap with research-backed consumer insights to prioritize high-retention features, driving a **22% increase in Daily Active Users (DAU)** and significantly reducing churn.
- Partnered directly with the Founder and C-suite to translate complex behavioral research into strategic design improvements, ensuring alignment with the company’s long-term monetization and subscription model.
- Architected the “Tiered Growth Badge System”, mapping game mechanics to psychological mental health milestones to reward consistent user engagement and personal progress, directly increasing feature adoption.
- Leveraged Google Analytics to design custom funnel systems, identifying drop-off points and optimizing the user journey to increase conversion rates through iterative A/B testing on onboarding flows and landing pages.
- Conceptualized and launched “Journeys”, a structured mental health support feature set aligning product mechanics with clinical wellbeing goals, shifting the product from vanity metrics toward retention-focused **Lifetime Value (LTV)** optimization.
- Created detailed user personas for both “Seekers” and “Listeners”, ensuring gamified incentives were appropriately tailored to the distinct motivations of each user group and grounded in behavioral data.
- Led UX strategy in a fully distributed, remote environment across multiple time zones, collaborating with engineering and product teams to translate design concepts into actionable requirements for **two-week agile sprints**.
- Conducted competitive benchmarking against leading digital health apps (Headspace, Calm) and performed comprehensive heuristic audits of the legacy platform, prioritizing fixes with the highest ROI for user retention.
- Established recurring feedback loops between the community of listeners and the product team, ensuring frontline care providers had direct influence on the platform’s evolution and consumer experience.

GoLive Games

Jan 2011 – Jan 2015

### Co-Founder and Product Development Lead

Hyderabad, India

- Orchestrated a successful seed funding round, securing **\$425,000 from angel investors and early-stage VCs** to expand the development team and launch two flagship mobile titles.
- Directed strategic entry into the **Southeast Asian market**, leveraging localized UX research and competitive feature mapping to transform the region into the company's **\*\*second-largest revenue source\*\***.
- Grew the user base to **210,000 Monthly Active Users (MAU)** within six months by redesigning core gameplay loops based on longitudinal player behavior research and funnel analysis.
- Architected a sophisticated dual-currency economy (soft currency for progression, premium currency for time-saving), driving a **15% increase in In-App Purchases (IAP)** without compromising player sentiment.
- Customized GameSparks analytics to identify a critical **30% player drop-off** at early difficulty spikes; implemented a data-driven re-balancing fix that **reduced churn by 12%**.
- Led cross-functional teams of **art, engineering, QA, product management, and operations** through the full product lifecycle, from pre-production technical design documents through to production deployment and post-release stabilization.
- Launched seasonal co-op events informed by deep-dive competitive monetization analysis of top-tier mobile titles, **boosting revenue by 12%** during event periods.
- Managed the operational scale-up of the development team by **5 additional engineers and artists**, overseeing onboarding and culture-building within a high-growth startup environment.
- Conducted qualitative UX research sessions and engineered custom event tracking within the game engine to capture granular player interactions, providing the data foundation for all design iterations and a **5% increase in player satisfaction**.
- Participated in board-level discussions regarding the company's long-term exit strategy and strategic positioning, preparing transparent project status reports highlighting KPIs, technical risks, and milestone achievements for investors.

## EDUCATION

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<b>Monash University</b>	2020 – 2024
PhD (Human-Computer Interaction)	
<b>RMIT University</b>	2015 – 2017
Master of Design (By Research)	

## SKILLS

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- **Technical:** Mixed-Methods Research (Qualitative & Quantitative), Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) Strategy, Service Design & End-to-End Journey Mapping, Information Architecture (Large-Scale Systems), Gamification & Behavioral Design, Wearable Technology & Embodied Systems, AI-Driven Research & Data Synthesis, Advanced Prototyping (AR/VR, Wizard of Oz), Product & Web Analytics (Google Analytics, Funnel Analysis), Monetization Strategy (IAP, Subscription Models), Web Accessibility Compliance (WCAG 2.1 AA), Experimental Design (Longitudinal & In-the-Wild Studies), Product Lifecycle Management, Content Management Systems (Adobe Experience Manager)
- **Professional:** Strategic Planning & Product Roadmapping, Cross-Functional Team Leadership, Executive & C-Suite Communication, Stakeholder Management & Consensus Building, Grant Writing & Research Funding Acquisition, Mentorship & Talent Development, Cross-Sector Partnership Development, Public Speaking & Research Dissemination, Change Management & Process Standardization, Data-Driven Decision Making, Founder & Entrepreneurial Leadership, Vendor Evaluation & RFP Management, Regulatory Compliance & Research Governance (HREC)

## CERTIFICATIONS

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- Gamification, University of Pennsylvania.

## AWARDS

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- Vice-Chancellor's Commendation for Thesis Excellence | Monash University (2024)
- Recognition of Outstanding Graduate Research | RMIT University (2017)