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AI AND CONSUMERISM ARE EMBEDDED IN THE COMPETITION DISCOURSE PERSONALITY. AN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY MILIEU

A IA E O CONSUMISMO ESTÃO INCORPORADOS NA PERSONALIDADE DO DISCURSO COMPETITIVO. UM CONTEXTO DE FILOSOFIA AFRICANA

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Abstract
The new meaning and understanding of personality embedded in African philosophy is the cornerstone of African philosophy. However, the modern development and the ushering in of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and consumerism driven by globalisation have brought a new face to humanity. Thence, impacted communities have alluded to the need to develop new survival skills to better adapt to these developments. In addition, these technologies have westernised individual and consumerism as a means of showing strength and exploiting the poor without taking cognisance of their status quo. This a quite a problematic situation from an African thought which embraces that all people are equal and must be treated as such because Individuality is harnessed in the principle of consumerism. Thus, this results in soil fertile for competition, resulting in persona changes which play a role in the understanding of community and the direction taken in addressing the moral fibre of communities, which is quite problematic. In addressing the problem, the paper will seek to identify which factors have been influenced by the introduction of AI and how that has influenced consumerism. Further, it will seek to find which solutions can be used to address those shortcomings. A desktop research method will be used, relying on search engines like Google Scholar and other relevant material. From the findings, the paper will analyse in a way of finding a determination of the impact of AI and consumerism and how they can assist in enhancing personality and socialism in the African philosophy context.

Resumo
O novo significado e a compreensão da personalidade, inerentes à filosofia africana, constituem a pedra angular dessa filosofia. Contudo, o desenvolvimento moderno e a introdução da Inteligência Artificial (IA) e do consumismo impulsionados pela globalização trouxeram uma nova face à humanidade. Consequentemente, as comunidades impactadas têm apontado para a necessidade de desenvolver novas habilidades de sobrevivência para melhor se adaptarem a esses desenvolvimentos. Além disso, essas tecnologias ocidentalizaram o individualismo e o consumismo, transformando-os em meios de demonstrar força e explorar os mais pobres, sem levar em consideração seu status quo. Essa situação é bastante problemática para o pensamento africano, que preza pela igualdade entre todos e pela necessidade de tratamento igualitário, pois a individualidade é explorada no princípio do consumismo. Assim, cria-se um terreno fértil para a competição, resultando em mudanças de personalidade que influenciam a compreensão da comunidade e a direção tomada no que diz respeito à formação do caráter moral das comunidades, o que é bastante problemático. Para abordar esse problema, este artigo busca identificar quais fatores foram influenciados pela introdução da IA e como isso afetou o consumismo. Além disso, busca encontrar soluções que possam ser utilizadas para sanar essas deficiências. Será utilizada uma metodologia de pesquisa documental, com base em mecanismos de busca como o Google Acadêmico e outros materiais relevantes. A partir dos resultados, o artigo analisará, de forma a determinar, o impacto da IA e do

Keywords: AI, Consumerism, African Philosophy, Competition, Milieu.

consumismo e como estes podem contribuir para o aprimoramento da personalidade e do socialismo no contexto da filosofia africana.

Palavras-chave: *Inteligência Artificial, Consumismo, Filosofia Africana, Competição,* Milieu.

1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

According to Sheikh, Prins & Schrijers (2023), the history of AI is remarkable as it started long ago and developed through stages to where it is today. It went through the stages that are important in the history of humanity, like the Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, etc.

> Its conception in the laboratory is often dated to 1956, during a summer school at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, USA. AI did not come out of the blue, however. The technology already had a long history before it was first seriously investigated as a scientific discipline. This history can be divided roughly into three phases: early mythical representations of artificial forms of life and intelligence; speculations about thinking machines during the Enlightenment; and the establishment of the theoretical foundation for the computer. The latter was the springboard for the development of AI as a separate discipline. We now discuss these three phases in turn, but bearing in mind that in practice they have never been mutually exclusive. Myths have always existed, and there has always been creative speculation about the future in parallel with the theoretical research into AI. Nevertheless, the phases reveal how the nature and focus of AI thinking have changed over time.

The recent wave of change in the world sphere has introduced what is presently known as AI (Artificial Intelligence) has altered the pattern and understanding of our lives, understanding, worldview, and culture. If that was not enough, AI has culminated in ordering and shaping our habits and planning as humanity. The worldview has been tampered with, and what was seen as the habits and natural underpinnings has been altered, and a new direction has been introduced. Globalisation and the winds of change that embed AI have brought forth new meanings and perceptions to social life; the African philosophy was never left unscathed by this technological revolution.

On the other hand, African philosophy embeds personality and promotes self-actualisation as a product of the identification and enhancement of dignity. This notion

does not take away your dignity but ensures that humanity is instilled with that inner self that sees them as a subject that adds value to itself by doing other chores that are essential to their lives. For example, humanity is given the duty to be the steward of the environment and look after that and ensure that the environment is well productive and the survival of all who reside in it. It becomes a give-and-take and vice versa for all-inclusive animals.

The above can be drawn from Marumo (2026), who maintains that the earth is meant for humanity's stewardship, and that makes humanity a steward. This stewardship was given to humanity as a responsibility based on trust and is mandatory. From that understanding, humanity was given pride and identity as well as dignity, which makes humanity a whole being. Without these prime factors, humanity will be perceived as not worthy beings that are rendered not useful for survival.

Contrary to the development of AI, African philosophy has been the pivot of Africanism since the Stone Age. Its inherent self-actualisation has been there since the existence of African thought, which was the compass of how Africans should live and how they lived.

According to the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy[1]

> The development of African philosophy through the periods yields two vital conceptions for African philosophy, namely that African philosophy is a critical engagement of tradition and individual thinkers on the one hand, and on the other hand, it is also a critical construction of futurity. When individual African philosophers engage tradition critically to ascertain its logical coherence and universal validity, they are doing African philosophy. And when they employ the tools of African logic in doing this, they are doing African philosophy. On the second conception, when African philosophers study relationships and engage in critical conversations with one another and in the construction of new thoughts in matters that concern Africa but which are nonetheless universal and projected from African native thought systems, they are doing African philosophy. So, the authentic African philosophy is not just a future project; it can also continue from the past.

It must be noted that during this development, their focus was on the following: the four trends in the order in which they are discussed here are ethno-philosophy,

[1]. The Encyclopedia is a peer-reviewed academic resource produced by volunteer editors and authors with scholarly credentials, such as a doctorate in philosophy or a faculty position at a college or university. https://www.quora.com/Is-the-Internet-Encyclopedia-of-Philosophy-a-reliable-source-for-the-basics-of-philosophy

philosophic sagacity, nationalist/ideological philosophy, and professional philosophy. It can be assumed that the period of development, which was oral and documented as well as interpreted at a later stage, went through a robust change and editing, making the African philosophy a mixture of those who wrote it, interpreted it, and documented it. If the AI was documented and passed through certain stages as the African philosophy, then AI can be equated to African philosophy in historical documentation.

2 WHAT IS AI?

Generally, AI can be defined as a set of technologies that allow computers to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. AI systems can learn, reason, and make decisions. Some definitions describe AI even if they have some unclear meaning.

The 21st century is dominated by technological advancements that may be a threat to men. Artificial intelligence (AI) constitutes a large portion of technological advancement. According to Iqbal Sarker, Artificial Intelligence is a leading technology of the current age of the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0 or 4.I.R) with the capability of incorporating human behaviour and intelligence into machines and systems (Sarker, 2023). This phenomenon can have a positive and negative impact on humans and the world at large. Additionally, Hossein *et al* (2020) define Artificial Intelligence as a rapidly growing technological phenomenon that all industries wish to exploit and benefit from efficiency gains and cost reductions. The aforementioned definitions set out how broad the term is. This essay delves deeply into how AI can have an impact on mental health and society, the use of machine learning applications such as ChatGPT, and threats that may be posed to humans.

Sheikh, Prins & Schrijvers (2023) argue that defining AI is not easy; in fact, there is no generally accepted definition of the concept. Numerous different ones are used, and this can easily lead to confusion. It is therefore important to clarify our use of the term. We start by discussing various definitions of AI and then explain which we have settled on. The sheer variety of definitions in circulation is not due to carelessness, but inherent in the phenomenon of AI itself.

They further add that in its broadest definition, AI is equated with algorithms. However, this is not an especially useful approach for our analysis. Algorithms predate AI and have been widely used outside this field. The term ‘algorithm’ is derived from the

name of the ninth-century Persian mathematician Mohammed ibn Musa al-Kharizmi and refers to a specific instruction for solving a problem or performing a calculation. If we were to define AI simply as the use of algorithms, it would include many other activities, such as the operations of a pocket calculator or even the instructions in a cookbook.

After their arguments, they define AI as a common definition of AI is that it is a technology that enables machines to imitate various complex human skills. This, however, does not give us much to go on. It does no more than render the term 'artificial intelligence' in different words. As long as those 'complex human skills' are not specified, it remains unclear exactly what AI is. The same applies to the definition of AI as the performance by computers of complex tasks in complex environments.

According to Professor Emeritus of Computer Science at Stanford University, John McCarthy[2] (1989),

> "After WWII, some people independently started to work on intelligent machines. The English mathematician Alan Turing may have been the first. He gave a lecture on it in 1947. He also may have been the first to decide that AI was best researched by programming computers rather than by building machines. By the late 1950s, there were many researchers on AI, and most of them were basing their work on programming computers."

The above idea was to replace humanity with machinery and find ways for effective ways that machines could be utilised to have an impact and change the world order, which was humanity's domain, and bring forth new entrants like machines to 'compete' with machines as better products. From this understanding, it is clear that machines have competed since after WWII (World War 2), and it looks like they were on a winning spree. The ultimate effort is to make computer programs that can solve problems and achieve goals in the world just as humans can. However, many people involved in particular research areas are much less ambitious.

Coursera Staff[3] (2024), "Artificial intelligence (AI) is the theory and development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that historically required human

[2] Prof John MacCathy has been a Professor of Computer Science at Stanford University since 1962. His research is mainly in artificial intelligence. Long ago he originated the Lisp programming language and the initial research on general-purpose time-sharing computer systems.

[3] Coursera's editorial team is comprised of highly experienced professional editors, writers, and fact-checkers. Our articles are deeply researched and thoroughly reviewed to ensure we are providing trustworthy information and advice for any topic. We understand that taking the next step in your education

intelligence, such as recognizing speech, making decisions, and identifying patterns. AI is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide variety of technologies, including machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing (NLP)."

The staff adds that "et, despite the many philosophical disagreements over whether "true" intelligent machines exist, when most people use the term AI today, they're referring to a suite of machine learning-powered technologies, such as Chat GPT or computer vision, that enable machines to perform tasks that previously only humans can do like generating written content, steering a car, or analyzing data."

From the above understanding, the highlight of their knowledge or understanding is based on a machine-operated facsimile that can replace human ability and is substituted by machines, which are seen as effective and can perform better. What the paper perceives is that AI becomes an enemy number one of the human race, takes over what they are doing, and deprives them of their dignity. In doing that, humanity becomes non-identity creatures that are powerless to claim what is rightfully theirs.

Despite these shortcomings, the Coursera Staff highlights the following advantage that comes with AI, which can assist humanity to exist for the coming generation and make them competitive with others and add value to their economic standards.

Generative AI can be used in a wide range of industries and to address many different challenges. The technology enables creators to work exponentially faster and can increase productivity. At the same time, generative AI raises ethical concerns about copyright and the biases hidden in the AI's training data.

From the three definitions, it is clear that there exists uncertainty on what AI can be classified as, and also, there exists a mind that replaces humanity with machines to be able to achieve what humanity cannot achieve. This inclines to bring the paper that it is what it is doing or intended to do, then AI does not add value to the community but ruffles away the good intentions of stewardship. If there is still going to be a process, then humanity is the guinea pigs of experiments and research.

or career can raise questions. We are here to provide actionable, reliable, and relevant answers so you can achieve your goals.

3 PROS OF AI

Hossein *et al* (2020) state that by knowing how to sensibly manipulate the environment, humans can improve situations, relations, or conditions to their advantage. Furthermore, it is stated that humans used their intelligence to improve the effectiveness of the phenomenon and its automated processes for their own convenience. On one hand, artificial intelligence has been employed in different institutions by different specialists for various reasons. A parallel case is extracted from an article written by Lee *et al*. (2020), which states that with a high rate of diseases and death in people with psychiatric disorders. Additionally, following the shortage of mental health care providers, there is a need for AI to aid in identifying high-risk individuals and provide medical intervention to prevent and treat mental disorders. In this case, humans have at advantage of using AIs to determine prevention and treatment of various diseases globally.

Artificial intelligence also plays a vital role in travel, tourism, and hospitality. It has helped people navigate through different routes during travel. It has also provided tourists with a better tourism experience (Gretzel, 2011; Tussyadia and Miller, 2019). An example, artificial intelligence in tourism may include voice assistants. They serve as a guide to travellers who are visiting places for the first time. It also enables individuals and businesses to find suitable hotels, places, and tourist sites that are best for them through personalisation systems (Bulchand-Giduma, 2022). Additionally, there are recommender systems. These are devices and approaches that offer travellers options that are suitable or match their interests (Ricci *et al*. 2015).

Similarly, AI is extremely fast in creativity and productivity. Generative AI can very quickly create large amounts of written text, design entire presentations, perform translations, generate code, or solve math problems. One of the most evident benefits of generative AI is that it can accomplish tasks much faster than humans with a reasonably high level of accuracy. One can use generative AI to create chatbots that can assist customers as readily as a human customer service agent. Unlike humans, generative AI is available 24/7 and scalable, so every customer can experience personalized service. Hence, AI can use generative AI to comb through company data and return insights you hadn’t considered before, such as potential new markets or ways to optimize your spending.

4 CONS AI

Generative AI's answers can sometimes provide insight into the biases hidden in the information engineers use to train it. For example, journalists found that when asking some generative AIs for a picture of a CEO, they were very likely to receive a picture of a white man. Another challenge from the information computer scientists use to train generative AI is who owns the copyright to such information. Some artists have raised legal challenges to generative AI that uses their copyrighted material as training data (Neendor, 2023).

Birsa (2023) conversely states that the use of AI also presents challenges and potential risks for mental wellness. Although humans utilize the phenomenon to suit their convenience to solve or determine possible solutions to problems that may seem impossible to solve, some potential risks and challenges may threaten their mental health. He further adds that the chatbots that are used to provide psychological support and to bridge the gap in access to mental health care professionals may lead to a negative impact on mental well-being since they may not be able to provide the same empathy and emotional support as offered by humans. This may lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression (Birsa, 2023). An example of the personal AI on WhatsApp and Facebook may provide feedback when an individual vents; however, there are instances where it will refer you to a mental health care specialist. It also suggests a list of solutions, and steps to take or activities to participate in; however, that may be frustrating to humans, especially those who have already implemented those steps suggested, which could lead to a decline in their mental wellness.

Correspondingly, Ahmed Banafa states further regarding the negative impacts AI can have on mental wellness. He mentions the five potential psychological impacts of AI, which are as follows: anxiety, addiction, self-isolation, depression, and paranoia. The use of AI may evoke emotions such as anxiety in those who are digital media users. The second psychological impact is addiction. The use of AI may be amusing or interesting, especially to Gen Z. They are compelled to constantly check their devices or the AI apps they recently discovered, which may hurt their academics or social relationships. The third psychological impact is social isolation, which may result from too much use of AI systems. This may lead to reduced interaction and poor social relationships. Artificial

intelligence, as defined it has the potential to fulfil or execute operations that require human input.

As explained by Psychology Today, some facets of life where people may find contentment include curiosity, their ability to tolerate and take risks, and discover new passions (Psychology Today, 2023). Failure to accomplish their goals or understanding the AI systems may lead to depression, which is the fourth psychological impact. The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn, and work well, and contribute to their community (WHO, 2022). It further states that mental health is crucial, and it is also a basic human right that is needed by every individual to shape the world they live in. Subjection to adverse environmental or social conditions may also threaten an individual's mental health. In cases where individuals are exposed to unfavourable social conditions locally, it may pose a threat to the mental health of the individuals residing within the community. Furthermore, detrimental social conditions that may occur globally pose a hazard to the population's mental health (WHO, 2022). Examples may be poverty, emotional or physical abuse, and diseases that spread throughout the world, such as COVID-19. In this fast-paced world, individuals are exposed to artificial intelligence, which may be beneficial and detrimental to some.

As stated by Professor Iqbal Banafa, individuals may be prone to depression or a sense of helplessness when dealing with AI since they may prove to be more superior and knowledgeable than humans. The fifth one is paranoia, which results from concern regarding areas of safety and security of AI systems. These systems taking over and replacing human decision-making evokes fear within individuals.

5 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON BIAS AND NON-TRANSPARENCY ISSUES

Bias is the rating of something or someone that can be positive or negative, and implicit or unconscious bias is when that person is not aware of their ratings. On the contrary, explicit bias can be defined as when biased individuals are aware that they are being biased towards other individuals (Gopal *et al*, 2021). Biases are experienced worldwide almost every day. People may not be aware of biases that may arise from the AI systems; however, they do exist. The National Institute of Standards and Technology

(NIST) further adds that humans should reflect and look deeply at the sources of the biases (NIST, 2022).

Furthermore, NIST states that the manner in which AI systems are programmed may affect humans in aspects such as academics or finances. An example they determining whether individuals are worthy of acceptance into different schools, should they be granted loans, or should they be allowed to be rental applicants. In order for people to understand these biases, they should first understand human biases and systemic biases (Schatz, 2022). Systemic biases may arise from how institutions function, which may be in ways that disadvantage certain social groups. An example may be institutions that discriminate against people based on their race, gender, or ethnicity. Where else human biases may stem from is how people use data to fill in missing information. The NIST mentions an example of how a person's background may affect the judgment of authorities, such as when authorities judge people based on the neighbourhood they are from and conclude that they may be the crime suspect.

Artificial intelligence may be biased based on how it was programmed to operate, which also leads to injustices. A parallel case may occur when the AI systems are programmed to detect people who are too dark, tall, with scars, or with dilated pupils as crime suspects. In this case, they are being explicit about bias. People will be falsely accused based on their appearances that have no link to the crime. The people who programmed the AI system are at fault, and so is the AI system. Agbolade Omowole further attests that existing human biases are transferred to the AI systems. He further expands on his statement that artificial intelligence systems are neutral and may be faulty like the individuals who created them (Omowole, 2021).

Correspondingly, Civicus reveals that the more data AI models receive, the more intelligent they become. This is another way in which human biases are transferred. If the input of the person who is training the AI model is biased, then the output is likely to be more biased. Civicus further elaborates on the lack of transparency that may come with the AI models. It explains how they can trace the training data by using open-source AI models. It also highlights how anyone can check how they get a certain output and who trains the models. ''The training data is available, so anyone could check how we get a certain output.'' (Civicus, 2023). An example human being has resorted to the use of your personal AI on platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. They are feeding the model more data, which means it gets more intelligent with time. It has familiarised itself with

how humans think, how they tend to structure questions, or how they behave in moments of discomfort. The model is trained to give solutions and ask questions at the end of each sentence. There are some questions that the models cannot answer, for example, questions asked in the mother tongue.

To add on to the article by Civicus, Mirghaderi *et al* further attest that the AI models are proprietary, which means that it is produced under the exclusive legal right of the maker (Webster, 2000). Due to their proprietary traits, they lead to non-transparency issues. Furthermore, due to the proprietary nature of AI algorithms and lack of visibility to their decision-making approaches, algorithmic and dataset biases cannot be easily identified and addressed (Mirghaderi *et al*, 2023). It might happen that the AI system was programmed to make decisions based on locations, for instance, in places where non whites reside, the decision may differ from the one where whites reside. This process makes it hard for humans to overcome the biases that may be posed by AI models.

6 POTENTIAL THREATS POSED BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO HUMANS: AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY VIEW

According to Federspiel *et al* (2022), Artificial intelligence may also pose threats to human health. In the article, three main ways in which AI may pose threats to human health are mentioned. The three ways include the ability of AI models to manipulate and control humans. The most common cases may be when the AI systems or models gather data about individuals, which can be used to predict and influence a certain behaviour. The AI models are programmed to receive instructions concerning the collection of data and their decision-making processes. This is known as an AI algorithm. The models, as stated by Civicus, that when they receive more data the more intelligent, they become which means the more threat they pose to humans. In cases where the person who built the model wants individuals to behave in a certain manner, they may analyse their behaviour daily and manipulate or persuade them to behave in a manner that fits the programmer's interest. This may depend on how those individuals utilize the AI models.

In this century, many people believe in technology, and some may depend on the AI systems since they believe they are the future. Many people believe in these models in such a way that they may consume any information generated from them. There might be cases of deepfakes, and some would not be able to notice, while some may. Deepfakes

have proven to be a trend lately; as much as they have been used for entertainment, they also misinform the public. Meridith Somers defines deepfakes as instances where words are put into a person's mouth, or their voices are used unknowingly, using AI-generated videos (Somers, 2020). The second threat mentioned by Federspiel *et al*, AI models improve and dehumanise lethal weapon capacity. To expand on this, AI may lead to robots that do not require human input to kill. The third threat; they may replace human workers.

The rate of unemployment is already high, and the incorporation of AI systems in different institutions leaves many people jobless. It is already anticipated that in this decade, AI-driven automation will disproportionately impact low or middle-income countries by replacing lower-skilled jobs (Dafoe *et al*., 2018). Opportunities could be provided by the implementation of AI systems; nevertheless, people will have to acclimatize to a dynamic society. On the other hand, in low- and middle-income countries, they will be affected greatly by this era. These countries tend to have a higher number of low-skilled people. The job opportunities in this country may be the basic jobs that AI could replace. The lack of employment may contribute to the increasing number of depression and anxiety.

The government and other powerful authorities may use AI models to influence certain behaviours and manipulate people into making decisions that may turn out to be oppressive. It could lead to unethical election processes. A circulating deepfake video of a minister or a chairperson may tarnish their reputation or the political party they represent. Some people would not be able to recognise deepfakes, while else would. The government could also use the systems to create propaganda that will influence the population to respond or act in a manner that suits their political interests or goals. Additionally, the creators of the system may get richer where else the rest of the population gets poorer.

7 CONCLUSION

The article has discussed the impacts, the disadvantages, and the advantages of the use of Artificial intelligence. To conclude, the use of an artificial intelligence system may benefit countries largely in the future, concerning job opportunities, in eradicating poverty, and it Healthwise. Conversely, it can destroy countries based on the data they provide to the systems. Individuals need to monitor the type of content they consume

from the AI models, the time they spend using them, and they should also learn how to determine if the content provided is biased or not. They should also ensure that they keep a check on the information and data they provide to the chatbots, since they may be used against them in the future.

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Both authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

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All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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