ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON NIGERIAN YOUTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT
The world advancement in the 21st century is highly commendable and aimed at making human endeavours very easy to achieve. The various advancements hinges on the technological development which has been revealed in various means and format which as a matter of emphasis have led to a crescendo which is the recent spread of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is aimed at setting ease for human endeavours, but a call for concern as aimed in this paper is the relevance of AI in the Nigerian context in light of various challenges among Youths in the contemporary time. Creating answer to the question of necessity and validity of AI in the Nigerian setting will go a long way to encourage or discourage the emphasis on adopting it hook, line and sinker. Studies on AI have mostly been channelled towards the positive effect on the society at large but this study strikes a new path of examining the usage among youths. Therefore, using evaluation research method which considers the AI phenomenon in Nigerian context, this work weighs the effect of AI on Nigerian youths and observes that it has more tendency of complicating poverty if not properly handled by the leaders of the country. As such, the study recommends that, proper education be made available for the usage, and less emphasis should be placed on the usage in industries where human services are needed.

Introduction

The field of computer science known as artificial intelligence (AI) focuses on creating intelligent computer systems that can recognize, interpret, and respond to inputs (Spector, 2006). Humans are widely regarded as the most sophisticated and intelligent species on the planet. The attributes that have enabled them to win this title include their capacity for independent thought, reasoning, logic application, and understanding of complexity.

The inception of Artificial intelligence is a very advance form of usage and function of a computer system and this goes on to give credibility to the source of the idea. Therefore, in an attempt to develop a "man-made

homosapien" species, they attempted to make use of artificial intelligence (AI), which is a concept that relates to the world of computers and is defined as "man-made and intelligent" (Ghosh and Thirugnanam, 2021). The motive or notion behind AI tend to be in the bid to alleviate some tasks which are to be carried out by men and this is seen to even do it better than the way man might have executed same task. This is because of the accuracy and perfection that the AI will most likely adopt in making the task properly executed.

But as good as the idea is, situating in the context of Africa and Nigeria in specific focus of this paper, the spread of the usage of AI appear to pose some major challenges and questions in light of the hardship, economic imbalance, unemployment, social vices among other situations in Nigeria. Some of these questions are; can the country adopt the usage in full understanding of the intention? Is the country really in need of AI based on current realities? Does the usage in other American or European countries justifies the innovation of the idea into the Nigerian setting as well? These among many other questions are what this paper seeks to create answers to even as the subject matter is vividly examined in light of the social implication on the citizens of Nigeria.

Contextual Clarification of Terms

Artificial Intelligence: The area of computer science known as artificial intelligence (AI) develops machines that can simulate human behaviour in order to help people perform better in the fields of science and technology.

Nigerian Youth: This refers to young individuals who are agile and active in their daily activities as the fate of a society lies on them. The age bracket used for this study is eighteen to forty years (18-40 years).

Artificial Intelligence: An Overview

From the coinage of the term informing the words, Artificial Intelligence, it could be depicted that it refers to intellectual prowess originated by man, this assessment is further advanced by Bhbosale, Pujari, and Multan (2020) where they purported that, Artificial intelligence can be defined as the branch of computer science that allows us to create intelligent machines that can behave like humans, think like humans, and make decisions based on a logic program stored in memory. The words artificial and intelligence are interchangeable, with artificial meaning manmade and intelligence meaning the capacity for thought.

AI is seen as means through which human efforts are reduced and substituted. It is a highly technological advance aid for human endeavours in modern times. The attributes that have contributed to their achievement in this regard are their capacity for independent thought, reasoning, planning, and problem-solving to a greater degree; they can also think critically, apply logic, comprehend complexity, and make decisions. Since the inception of AI, it spread has been vast and almost an household tool for many, banking on its usefulness in almost every human field and being able to give answers to almost every questions posed by man.

According to Ghosh and Thirugnanam, (2021), Artificial intelligence is seen to be aimed at various types based on their functionality and their capabilities. Based on functionality types include; Reactive Machines, limited memory, theory of mind and self-awareness, these types are discussed briefly below;

Reactive machines: These are the devices that process data that is readily available as pre-defined datasets. It is devoid of the ability to store data from the past and future. It is entirely dependent upon the available data. Reactive machines include Google's AlphaGo, IBM's deep blue system, and the chess algorithm that beat world champion Garry Kasparov (Singh, 2017).

Limited Memory: These are the devices that have the capacity to temporarily preserve memories or prior experiences. An illustration of memory limitations AI is what makes self-driving cars possible since it can retain data like speed, distance, and speed limit that are necessary for the vehicle to navigate.

Theory of mind: These are the kinds of machines that are supposed to comprehend the mental and emotional processes of humans and function appropriately. Although these machines are yet only concepts, scientists are attempting to build them in the near future.

Self-Awareness: These devices are part of a theoretical notion that will be regarded as extremely intelligent machines capable of thinking, acting, and being self-aware since they

will share human consciousness and emotions. Such devices are being researched for potential use in artificial intelligence in the future.

While the types of AI based on capabilities include; weak or narrow AI, General AI, and Strong AI. They are discussed below;

Weak or Narrow AI: It is a kind of artificial intelligence that lacks the ability to reason and can only carry out a predetermined, limited set of commands. This is the form of AI that is most commonly employed worldwide. Several well-known instances of weak AI include IBM's Watson supercomputer, Apple's Siri, Alexa, Alpha Go, and Sophia, the humanoid (Singh, 2017).

General AI: It's the kind of AI that can carry out tasks that humans can. Up until now, no computer has been able to think or function exactly like a person, but this could change in the near future.

Strong AI: With this kind of AI, it is anticipated that a computer would be able to perform tasks that a human cannot. Though difficult, it is not insurmountable, and it will outperform humans in terms of performance. The time may come when it can be predicted that machines would rule the world and replace people. Scientists, including Stephen Hawking, have deemed it to be a serious threat to society.

The basic goals or target of AI could be summarised into three as stated by Copeland (2024) that, Artificial intelligence research aims to accomplish three objectives: cognitive simulation, applied AI, or artificial general intelligence (AGI).

The goal of AGI, often known as strong AI, is to create thinking machines. The ultimate goal of artificial general intelligence (AGI) is to create a machine with an intellectual capacity that is identical to that of a person. However, progress has been uneven to date; some researchers in AI's other two fields believe AGI is not worth pursuing, and even if large-language models have advanced, it is questionable whether AGI can arise from even more powerful models or if an entirely different technique is required (Copeland, 2024).

Second on the goal is the target of applied artificial intelligence, sometimes referred to as advanced information processing, is to create "smart" systems that can be sold, such as stock trading and "expert" medical diagnosis systems. Applied AI has had a great deal of success.

Lastly on the details by Copeland (2024) Computers are used in cognitive simulation to test ideas regarding the operation of the human mind, such as those pertaining to facial recognition and memory recall. In cognitive psychology and neuroscience, cognitive simulation is already an effective tool.

Advantages of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence can reduce the amount of work that humans do by replacing humans with machines so that people can perform other tasks. Some of the advantages as enumerated by Bhbosale, Pujari, and Multan (2020) include;

1. programming, writing, altering oneself, and so forth. The man feels burdened by these works.
2. Artificial intelligence can be compared to cheap labour; by utilising it, our task will be completed more quickly and profit will rise.
3. The use of artificial intelligence is simple.
4. Similar to humans, machines do not require breaks or refreshments.
5. Long periods of time without boredom or fatigue are possible for the machines to be reprogrammed for.
6. Because humans can create new robots but not human beings, the science of robotics and artificial intelligence can be used to the mining and other fuel exploration processes, thereby saving human lives.
7. Companies and sectors can use artificial intelligence.

The term "human error" originated from the fact that mistakes are made by people occasionally. But if computers are properly programmed, they don't make these errors. Using a specific set of algorithms, AI makes decisions based on information that has already been obtained. Because of the decrease in errors, there may be a potential of achieving accuracy with a higher level of precision.

Disadvantages of Artificial Intelligence

As highly credible as AI have been regarded, it also have some perceived disadvantages based on the usage and the availability. Some of the disadvantages as also posited by Bhbosale, Pujari, and Multan (2020) include;

1. It is difficult to develop machines since the necessary equipment is costly.

2. May be extremely expensive and time-consuming to build, reconstruct, and fix. Robotic repair can reduce the amount of time it takes and the need for human intervention, but it will require additional funding and resources.

3. Robots can lead to extreme unemployment by taking over tasks that AI cannot perform, unless humans can drastically alter the government to a communist one.

4. In the wrong hands, machines can readily cause havoc. That is, at the very least, a dread of different people.

5. Because AI programs automate most of the job, humans are becoming lazier. People have a propensity to become addicted to these technologies, which could harm coming generations.

6. Human intervention is decreasing as AI replaces most repetitive processes and other labour-intensive jobs with robots, which could pose a serious risk to utilisation standards. Every company wants to replace the least competent workers with AI robots that can complete comparable tasks more quickly.

7. Without a doubt, machines perform considerably better than humans when it comes to efficiency, but they cannot take the place of the interpersonal relationships that build a team. The ability to form bonds with people is something that machines cannot replicate, and this is crucial for team management.

8. Machines are limited to the jobs that they are intended or planned to do; if they are asked to do something beyond that, they frequently malfunction or produce results that are not relevant.

Artificial Intelligence versus Nigerian Youths

The crux of this study is to examine the effect of Artificial Intelligence on the Nigerian youths, having clearly established from the initial description that the youths are those in their working age and fill with agility to get involved in the working class of the country.

The phenomenon of AI is commendable and is clearly something to be enviable about, but realising the rampant usage and spread of the advanced form of AI in the modern Nigeria, it poses various challenge which is to be discussed in this section of the paper. This is essential because, the country, Nigeria is already laced with so many challenges ranging from poverty, sickness among other life-threatening situations, and as such, the advancement of AI in the country appear to be of greater threat to the people when closely examined than it is of an advantage. This situation can only be averted if there is a proper balance between the management of AI and the Nigerian youth population.

Based on recent statistics, the number of Youths in Nigeria is about 40% of the total population of the country (Teniola, 2023), while the number of jobs available for employment opportunity annually is not in correspondence with the Nigeria labour force every year. The unemployment rate according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2024) increased significantly in their last rating by 0.8% thereby making about one quarter of the Nigerian workforce (youths) to stay unemployed, while a about one-third of those categorised as employed are actually underemployed (NBS, 2024). A study of the chart and record of the NBS reveals that there has been successive increase in the number of unemployed or underemployed youths. Nigeria produces graduates across various fields and profession ranging from Universities, Polytechnics, colleges of Education, Monotechnic, among others. An examination of the available statistics attests that, the figure being employed is widely less than the number of graduates being produced and ready for employment opportunities in the country.

It is already an eye-saw that many youths and young adults are willing to leave the country (emigration), thereby coining a term for the act of leaving the country as *Japa.* The basis for this assessment is that, despite the number of youths that travel out of the country to various other countries of the world (Europe, America and even other continents of the world, including some African countries), there is still no sufficient job opportunities for the youths on ground. Based on this argument, an introduction of AI which is aimed at reducing workload on people will indirectly enter into a competition with the Nigeria Youths, "competing" or totally dominating the market opportunities where youths are supposed to work.

In the researcher's view, AI is well needed in advanced country where they are short of personnel and countries where they are able to manage the available persons rather than a system in Nigeria where the human resources are not well managed. An establishment of this argument will usher in the effect of AI on Nigerian Youths.

Effect of Artificial Intelligence on Nigerian Youths

Some of the perceived effect of AI on the Nigerian youths include but not limited to the areas as to be discussed below;

First effect to be considered is the lack of employment in the Nigerian society which is an obvious situation. The economy in the country over some few years has been dwindling and unstable with perceived pressure on the available resources by some group of individuals. The masses are obviously anguished with hunger in the land and the reward or wages for salary earners appears to be insufficient to cater for the basic needs of the people, aside other societal needs. With this persistent unemployment and underemployment in the country, introducing Artificial Intelligence into the system will only increase the percentage of youths who are either unemployed or underemployed. This is because, the AI will be preferred by so many business men, private institutions among others who are still in the business of dousing the pressure on the government of the country and across states.

Furthermore, Artificial Intelligence could be abused and brood laziness if mishandled by the Nigerian youths. The usage of AI is discovered to simplify task, a youth can decide to commit tasks he or she should do intentionally and closely for AI to execute. This is essential to be stated because, a AI is still a machine regardless of its great exploit and how versatile it can converse and fit in place of humans, a dominant use of it by an individual who is not well guided will submit such fellow to the risk of being nonchalant to situations that they should be serious towards. Therefore, Artificial intelligence is perceived to hold the tendency of encouraging laziness among Nigerian youths.

Lastly, it can be seen as a fact to hamper natural intelligence if not properly handled. The human brain appears to be something that needs to be engaged and exercised from time to time. As a matter of emphasis it is because of some set of people sought to maximise their brain and exercised it properly, they were able to come up with this great invention of human makings. Failure of Nigerian youths to exercise their brains and be sensitive in the usage of their intellectual prowess will render their rationality idle because they could simply feel that the AI can do all the thinking for them and as such, only wait on application.

Equilibrium for Artificial Intelligence and Nigerian Youths

In a bid to balance the usage of Artificial intelligence, the need to draw an equilibriumbecomes essential if properly checked within the Nigerian context. The popular Maxim expressed that "if the purpose of a thing is not known, abuse is inevitable", which if situated in the scheme of this paper, the purpose of AI should be well defined in the Nigerian system in order to avoid abuse of the advanced technological invention.

Artificial Intelligence should be a means of self-development in which youths are to adopt as a means of self-development and advancement thereby taking the challenge of also being creative rather than totally dependent on others for their survival and feat attainment. Nigerian youths are to see Artificial Intelligence as an invention of fellow humans like them and as such, seek to also utilise their God-given intelligence for maximal productivity to their country.

Unarguably and as earlier established in the course of this paper, artificial intelligence is the capacity of computers or computer systems to

emulate human intellect and carry out operations like learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making that normally call for human intelligence. Artificial Intelligence is to be utilised in the field of education to create cutting-edge instruments and technologies that have the power to revolutionise the established approaches to teaching and learning (Ibrahim, 2023). It should be approached as a means to improve the existing forms and means of teaching in education of the youths and young adults in the Nigerian society. An adoption of the system of advancement in the existing form should be canvassed rather than a potential substitution of the means of education.

On this note, this paper discourages the abuse of technology by youths in regards to adopting the negative side of the usage of AI. It is not unusual to establish that, AI can be used to perpetuate crimes of various degrees and various social vices in the country as such, Nigerian youths and the leadership of the country must sit up in utilising the technologically advancement of AI for development of education, agriculture, medicine among other advantages rather than utilising it for social vices.

Conclusion

The world is going through the fourth industrial revolution, and artificial intelligence and its related technologies—machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, etc.—have invaded it very strongly and had an incredible and efficient impact on almost every sector, from agriculture to education to space technology (Singh, 2017).

But in the midst of all of the advanced development which surrounds the 21st century world, Nigeria as a country appear to be on the weak side of the globe with various internal setbacks hindering correspondence with the pace at which the wider world is moving, as such, some of the innovations and inventions appear to be wrongly applied when adopted into the Nigerian system, the reason being that, there is no proper alliance of the mindset of the leadership and citizens of the country.

Therefore, this paper is strongly of the position that, the adoption of Artificial Intelligence, as good as it appears will have negative effect on the stability and progress of youths in the society as it will create room for the thriving of a minority and causing the depreciation of majority based on the realities of the system obtainable in the country. It is therefore a call to caution in the usage of Artificial intelligence to Nigerians, especially the Nigerian youths of the 21st century.

Recommendations

In view of the details discussed so far in this study, this paper recommends that;

1. The government should prioritise education of the people and create room for intentional reasoning and creativity by the Nigerian citizen

2. The leadership at various levels should initiate schemes or competition that can help in productive reasoning of her citizens. This will help in the control and utilisation of the human natural intelligence rather than given room for relegation of the human reasoning

3. The youths are to be engaged in regulating their dependence on AI for all things, rather the usage should be wisely adopted by the youths.

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