The Intersection between Artificial Intelligence, Interdisciplinary Collaboration and African History

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Abstract

This paper basically considered the effects of AI on African history, vis-à-vis interdisciplinary collaboration, either overtly or covertly. It posited that recent historical works embrace interdisciplinary perspective, thus, it was examined in light of the emergence of AI. Being a historical piece of work, historical methodology was adopted as secondary sources in this case, which consist of published and unpublished works. These formed the gamut of data collection used to prosecute and enrich this research. The paper sought to answer the following questions: what is the connection between artificial intelligence, interdisciplinary collaboration and African history? What are the effects of AI on African history as a specialization? The core of the paper is necessitated by the emergence of AI. As such, it was juxtaposed vis-a-vis African history and other related disciplines. On the whole, the study established or found out that artificial intelligence (AI), though with its negative impact, has enhanced and strengthened new trends and perspectives in African historical research vis-à-vis the relationships between History, Social and Natural Sciences; History, Sociology and Anthropology; History and Psychology; History, Economics and Demographic Studies; History and Literature; which was exhaustively explained in the paper. While the paper noted that AI, when used properly, could provide relevant information critical to historical studies. It also highlighted the challenges which stem from the use of artificial intelligence, which include: data bias and representation, contextual understanding, source reliability and verification, ethical considerations, complexity of interpretation, technical limitations, preservation of historical integrity, among others. The study concluded that historians generally,

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and African historians in particular exercised caution in the use of AI for comprehensive historical research.

Keywords: Intersection, Interdisciplinary Collaboration, Artificial Intelligence, African History

Introduction

The world of research is evolving, especially with new trends and approaches coupled with the advent of artificial intelligence. In the same vein, the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies is proliferating on the African continent, but policy responses are still at their early stages (Arthur, Erika, Nagla, Isaac & Jeremy, 2020, p. 1). Abejide and Chinedu (2023, p. 101-102) were of the opinion that in the current African society, AI is becoming more popular and seeking to cover all facets of human activity. They were explicit in their views that there is a general optimism that AI technologies will be the next wave of technologies to receive wide acceptance. Conversely, Emmanuel, Ziad, Femi and Farid (p.1) noted that the developments in artificial intelligence (AI) have the potential to disrupt and transform socio-economic activities across industries. While acknowledging that the coming of Generative AI is not only an interruptive process, but a threat to historical scholarship and teaching, countries and institutions are gradually coming to terms with the emergence of AI. It is believed that the diverse effects cannot be ignored, even by the African historian whose duty it is to construct or reconstruct history of different African societies. That is the core of this paper because the African historian cannot evade the effects of AI on African history as a whole. In order to promote and sustain global sustainability, interdisciplinary collaboration is being canvassed in recent times. Of a truth, research cannot be static and history as a discipline and historical research is currently moving in that direction. The trends and perspectives in the study of African History in the 21st century and with the advent of AI accommodate changes and any developments relevant to the projection and improvement in the study of the course and unfolding phenomenon. For instance, the continuous explosion of interest in African studies generally and African history and culture in particular, can be advanced and projected via the aforementioned platform, irrespective of the dangers associated with AI.

The notion prior to this period had been that science would one day revolutionize the study of history, thus history and science have been considered as important academic disciplines in their own right (Okpeh 2007, p. 13-14). This has been confirmed by the emergence of AI with its varied effects on the study of history and African history as a discipline. Stacey et al (2019, p. 1) considered historical timelines of research in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) where a sixty-year journey was unveiled. AI research has become of interest around the world and many of its activities have been undertaken in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Asia, and have spread to Africa, etc. Though AI began over sixty (60) years ago, it has been submitted that the field has witnessed accelerated growth and technological advances in recent

years and has had momentous impact on various facets of our daily lives. It has been advocated that national and regional policies reflected the importance of competitiveness in the field with calls for huge investments. Considering the ethical implications that AI would result into on the society and human life, there has always been a need to address it (Stacey et al 2007, p. 5). Reena and Rashmi (2023, p. 5441) stated that there are three types of artificial intelligence namely; artificial narrow, artificial general, and artificial super intelligence. These types of intelligence are targeted at increasing the scope of human activities, and nature of research. Helen and Ayo (2024, p. 269) were of the opinion that artificial intelligence (AI) and certain aspects of it, such as the use of robots and reliance on logic and probability, are deeply rooted in antiquity and some non-Western philosophies. They were able to provide a justification for the earlier existence of AI in an African (Yoruba) tradition. The aforementioned only reinforces issues regarding its impacts not only on tradition but African history gradually. This presupposes that not only has AI come to stay, but would revolutionize the course of man's activities.

The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Transforming Historical Research
Artificial intelligence is increasingly permeating public consciousness as it has gained more popularity in recent years, especially within the landscape of academia and libraries (Zoe 2024, p. 29). It has revolutionized historical research in different ways by ensuring that it works in synergy with other related disciplines in using the knowledge of the past for shaping the future. It has profoundly impacted the study of history, by improving avenues for data analysis, digitization, predictive modeling, and interdisciplinary collaboration. While African historians seek to address ethical considerations and challenges, they can as well harness the possibilities attached to AI. This can enable such historians to unearth new insights while deepening their understanding of the past. Suffice to state that while AI technology continues to evolve, which is the reality, this study is unequivocal that its role in historical research is likely to expand, and in the long run offer even more innovative approaches to the study of history. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has proven to be a revolutionary advancement. AI, with its powerful algorithms and data processing capabilities, has ushered in a new era for historians, providing an avenue to unravel the mysteries of the past in ways previously unimaginable (LinkedIn, 2023). It is important to examine ways AI continues to enhance historical research, in particular, African history. It does this by offering myriads of benefits, which include:

➢ **Access to Global Archives**: The advent of AI now provides African historians access to archives and collections from different parts of the world, as digital archives are transforming the humanities and the sciences (Lise 2022, p. 7). This, they can make use of to provide coherent, and comprehensive research. It is believed that the world is a global village and historians do not need to leave their abode or desks, as AI-powered search engines and databases make instant access to a myriad of historical resources available. This, they can use to advance their research, and the course of

local histories. In the 21ˢᵗ century, AI combined with other technologies have the potential to make digital archives more comprehensive, while guaranteeing the authenticity of records (Lisa 2022, p. 20).

➢ **Cross-Referencing and Collaboration**: Research on a wide scale can be taken by historians. Research platforms have enabled cross-referencing and data sharing, courtesy of AI. The latter has impacted positively on the quality and depth of historical research generally (LinkedIn 2023), to be specific, African history. Cross-referencing makes verification of facts easy, while ensuring accuracy, while AI makes connection with other historians, a possibility. Interdisciplinary collaboration (e.g., history, archaeology, linguistics) provides an avenue for comprehensive understanding. Generally, by leveraging the aforementioned, African historians can advance proper historical understanding, enhance, and sustain cultural preservations, challenge dominant narratives like the distorted European history of Africa, as well as foster inclusive, representative histories.

➢ **Contextualization of Events**: Generally, it is not easy for African historians to fully grasp the context in which events happened in the past, in essence, such knowledge was limited. The coming of AI provides avenues for the processing of vast datasets which aid historical context, and assist historians to draw connections between issues or events that might not be completely related and a truly historical narrative (LinkedIn 2023). For example, the African historian through AI can assist the society in a more comprehensive history, which was previously controversial.

➢ **Leveraging AI for Data Analysis**: The historian and in particular, the African historian can through AI, equipped with machine learning algorithms, sift vast amounts of data, ranging from archives, manuscripts, to digital records. Unlike in the past where access to historical documents was difficult, it can be accessed easily and with lesser stress. This ease makes African historians to channel their energy to interpretation and analysis, critical in historical researches. Arthur (2022, p. 151) succinctly puts it that machines have already shown glimmers of creativity when running algorithms. However, due to their limitations, most creative work is done in collaboration with humans, this is where the historian comes in.

➢ **Digitization and Preservation**: One of the issues African historians have had over the years includes the preservation of historical documents. Over the years, we have had to use oral traditions, oral interviews, etc, to disprove European assertions, that Africa had no history, because there were no proper methods of storing information. However, through advanced imaging and scanning technologies, AI can digitize fragile and aging manuscripts, preserve them for subsequent uses as well as enhance the quality of the documents, while ensuring that the content is legible. Zoe (2024, p. 29) supported the aforementioned with the statement that in the past, libraries, archives,

and museums, had grappled with the challenge of preserving historical collection, while many of the traditional preservation methods are costly and involve a lot of manual (human) effort. The above author quite understood the significance of AI and the intersection between the latter and the digital preservation of historical records. This, he stated lies in the dual importance: safeguarding cultural heritage and recognizing the evolving landscape of archives/preservation departments. Jonathan (2024) buttressed the benefits of AI by stating, that in recent decades, archival institutions have digitized large quantity of material under the rubric of open access, including from colonial archives.

➢ **Predictive Analysis:** One of the characteristics generally of the historian is the ability to predict. Beyond normal prediction as a result of the knowledge of the past and the present, AI algorithms are known for the identification of trends and making predictions about future historical events (LinkedIn 2023). In essence, it makes African historians to make better judgments about the past, while shaping their perspectives about the future. African historians in particular, need these algorithms to gauge events.

➢ **Identification of Emotional Tones:** In this era of artificial intelligence, the African historian can comfortably unearth emotional tones within texts. These include expressions of happiness, sadness, anger, or neutrality. A succinct example entails texts which celebrate victories during battles, the aforementioned can be easily analyzed with AI algorithms (Attia 2024, p. 612). This will further enhance the ability of the African historian to properly situate, and contextualize the extent and the issues within a historical perspective, thus, reflecting the emotions of the historical characters, and the events.

➢ **Network Analysis:** The African historian through artificial intelligence can comfortably construct the social and political networks which existed in the past among the African empires (Attia 2024, p. 607). This would enable the researcher to achieve a better understanding of the structure of alliances and social frameworks within ancient societies like the Benin Empire. It must be stated that with this venture, providing a written relationship among African kingdoms and empires could be further enhanced, while a more comprehensive understanding is established without mere speculation.

Examples and initiatives where the above can be employed include:
i) The African Digital Heritage Network (ADHN)
ii) The Digital Humanities Africa (DHA) initiative
iii) The Collaborative Research in African History (CRAH) project
iv) The African History and Culture Online (AHCO) platform

The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Fostering Interdisciplinary Collaboration
Artificial intelligence has enhanced and sustained synergy between history and other disciplines in every way possible as historical researches would be incomplete without these disciplines. The relationship can be considered under the following areas:

History, Social and Natural Sciences
History in tandem with Social Science has widened the aspect of individual experience by teaching about human behaviour in relation to other men, the interaction of circumstances and conditions in their effects upon man and the society. Social sciences like Physics and Mathematics provide a far more rigorous training and set far more exacting standards of scientific precision, but that is not all that the historian has to offer, focusing on these could be frustrating (Bibiana 2007, p. 27-28). It is a wrong notion that AI is only associated with employment of sets of mathematical equations. Both natural and social sciences are partly products of humankind's logical thinking (Alice, Utku & Hakan 2017). Bibiana (2007, p. 28) further explained that the difference between historians, history and natural sciences are that scientists work in the laboratories while historians work in the libraries, scientists produce short papers in collaboration with several other scientists while historians produce long papers and sometimes books and they seldom have collaborators. Professional African historians spend much time in undergraduate teaching while professional scientists spend much time on their research with or without their graduate students. In the social sciences, it is revolutionizing the way researchers in African history collect, analyze, and interpret data. This transformative technology is not only accelerating the pace of discovery but also expanding the horizons of what is possible in understanding human behaviour, society, and culture. Historians make use of much data and AI's ability to process vast amounts of data with speed and precision is perhaps its most prominent feature. In the area of Natural Language Processing (NLP) algorithms, African historians can easily gauge public sentiment towards various issues, products, or policies. History scholars can track and analyze large volumes of text data, while they provide insights into the evolving opinions and emotions of individuals and groups (Priya 2023). Diego, and Carlos (2023, p. 1-2) noted that a remarkable parallel improvement has been Natural Language Processing (NLP), which has the ability to perform tasks such as text restoration. Furthermore, it consists of the development of computational mechanisms that boost communication between people and machines by means of language. As history interacts with the social sciences, it is important to indicate some applications of AI towards problem-solving which historians are involved in, and they are as follows: employment of intelligent techniques instead of current statistical approaches, running some effective approaches like classification or prediction, tracking objective objects, optimization, machine learning oriented solutions, and expert system support (Alice, Hakan & Utiku 2017, p. 2).

History, Sociology and Anthropology
The contribution of sociology and anthropology to African history cannot be overemphasised and sufficiently shows that they are closer to historical occupations. As we examine the relationship between History, Sociology and Anthropology, we notice society and technology are a complex, interdisciplinary task that demands different perspectives and methodologies, including elements of sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, and other disciplines. The risks of AI include the perspectives of social influences, structures, and interactions, the analysis of the social consequences of technological innovation, the study of user behaviour, and the examination of societal norms and values associated with technology (Roman & Petra 2024, p. 3). The duo averred that there is an interaction between technology, culture, tradition, and social identity. A basic difference is in the method, not the aim or subject matter. For the sociologist, the bulk of material to be correlated, complexity of relationships in contemporary society presuppose that the sociologist cannot produce meaningful results by gathering factual data in a descriptive narrative, he is forced to turn to other options or methods like polls, sampling, statistical analysis, among others. Invariably, the anthropologist examines the paucity or lack of conventional historical methods, and in the process devises alternative methods which involve collection of information in the field and interrogating living witnesses (Bibiana 2007, p. 29-30). Bibiana (2007, p. 31) submitted that sociology and anthropology have opened the way that was hidden beneath historicists undergrowth from individual to typical and from single to a chain of events. The importance of models, courtesy AI to African historians is the indication of relationships and pattern employed to interpret historical evidence. As the African historian interacts with the anthropologists, it must be stated that the rapid evolution of AI across diverse sectors has positioned us at the forefront of a transformative era in which Artificial Intelligence Technology has become an important research domain for anthropologists (Urte & Gokcen, 2024, p.1).

Consequently, African historians can synergize with anthropologists since both largely study human beings, from the earliest human societies to modern cultures, focusing on the diversity across the globe. Via AI, the anthropologist increases the depth of knowledge available to the African historian by examining various aspects of human life, including culture, society, history, behaviour, and biology. It is believed that AI will profoundly impact all branches of anthropology, including applied anthropology. As anthropology is integrated with archaeology, it will snowball in enhanced artifact analysis, reconstruction of ancient environments, and the identification of undiscovered sites. Undeniably, archaeology referred to is also an important aspect in the reconstruction of African history. With the assistance of AI, it has been stressed that anthropologists will be able to gain broader perspectives, leading to richer insights and increased problem-solving abilities. More so, AI-assisted ethnography will support researchers in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data at scale (Matt 2023). This, in the long run eases the work of the African historian involved in assembling data for his research. In relation with History, there are questions of AI and new technologies and the relationship between

anthropology and the future. All sorts of variants could arise henceforth: anthropology of AI, anthropology of the future, the future of anthropology and even artificial intelligence in the practice of anthropology. There is a huge role it plays in the effective mobilization of ethnographic methods, needed by the African historian for the 'alignment of automation with people's futures.' It increases remote-sensing, data collection and face recognition algorithms, among others, as it helps in the future we desire to build (Anthropology Today, 2022).

History and Psychology
There is a huge link between history and psychology as historians clearly examine continuously the rationale behind certain decisions or steps taken by people, in some cases, leaders, which have had dire consequences on the led. Though the African historian acts as a psychologist, the employment of psychology as a discipline provides a proper analysis of the motives and actions of men and societies. Historians have always proven through their researches that they possess the innate ability and intuitiveness necessary to understand the minds of men. No great biographical work is complete or comprehensive without a dispassionate look at the influence of psychology. Explaining recent trends, Sabrina, Reginald and Katharina (2021) opined that psychologists with their expertise in statistics and regarding human perception and behaviour can contribute to a large extent, valuable insights to the development of innovative and useful artificial intelligence (AI) systems. African historians can arouse interest and curiosity into attitude, social norm, perceived usefulness and knowledge. As a result of the interaction between history, psychology and AI, generalizations and predictions can be used, they serve as guides for decision-making behaviour. AI can only be adopted by history researchers in making findings and the understanding of people, but only acts based on the information it is fed with. As facts are used, AI can obtain more reliable impressions about an individual.

In buttressing the need to be wary when using it, Thiago, Sayonara and Carmen (2021, p. 30-31) stressed that while humans inevitably possess the necessary characteristics, artificial intelligences do not. When learning about a particular object, historical past, etc, the machine does not cultivate affection, guilt, or resentment, which makes it more conducive to understanding, objectively and factual. While the psychologist provides insights into rationales and effects of certain actions in the past, AI could provide probable reasons and cannot completely substitute the work of the psychologist which is critical to the work of the African historian. History and psychology are interconnected in different ways and enrich history, as well as historical past of man in the following ways: understanding human behaviour: in essence, Psychology provides African historians with a comprehensive understanding of the motivations, thoughts, and actions of historical figures and populations. It leads to contextualizing historical events, that is, deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and political contexts which continuously shape human behaviour. It also impacts positively on history as a discipline by exploring fundamental questions about human nature, emotions. It is important to submit that AI can facilitate collaborative research between historians and psychologists with the provision

of a common language and framework for analysis of human behaviour and historical events. Historians need AI to analyse large datasets from historical records and psychological studies, which to a large degree reveal patterns and correlations, thus, deepening our comprehension of human behaviour and historical events.

History, Economics and Demographic Setting
The historian is also an economist of some sort and artificial intelligence enables him or her to access relevant information regarding how humans conducted their economic activities in the past. In particular, there is an inextricable link between history, economics and demographic studies or settings. Economics and demographic settings provide precise and deliberate application of well-defined theories and they are important in understanding historical past. It is believed that at some point, the historian should be equipped with the necessary theoretical and statistical tools. Man's activities being examined by the historian are filled with economic matters, thus, the need to have some knowledge of economics (Bibiana 2007, p. 32-33). It is not surprising that there is a branch of history, known as economic history, where the historian and African historian to be specific studies economic phenomena in the past, with the combination of historical methods, statistical methods, and economic theory. African Historians get to understand how societies evolved over time, and how economic variables have shaped them, which include: technological change, political and legal institutions, social and cultural norms, international trade and investment, environmental factors, among others. There are some notable economic historians whose ideas have shaped the history of man, among whom are Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Milton Friedman, John Maynard Keynes. Some significant books used especially by economic historians include: "The Wealth of Nations" by Adam Smith, "Das Kapital" by Karl Marx. Bibiana (2007, p. 33) stated that the new school of historical demography employs the use of economic and demographic problems to explain economic growth. Since the historian in general examines the activities of man in the society, issues bordering on the relationship between population and economic growth, epidemics and famine, migration, among others, are taken into consideration. AI increases the knowledge of the African historian to understand the impact of social influences, structures, and interactions, and technological innovation on GDP growth, labour productivity, job creation, and competitiveness; analysis of investment in research and development, technology transfer, and technology trade (Roman & Petra 2024, p.3). The depth of knowledge available via AI enables the African historian to clearly provide a thorough analysis of economic issues beyond a general theoretical discussion.

History and Literature
Literary expressions are sometimes products of experiences in the society and could enhance students' interest in comprehending and juxtaposing variety of geography, gender, class, ethnic and racial boundaries and boundary expressions, considered as part of history of our nation.

In buttressing historical issues or past, literature then becomes an important and effective vehicle for teaching point of view, and this is one of the most important facets of historical analysis. It is needful to stress that attention to language and style in literature provides students proper and clearer understanding of the importance of these factors in constructing interpretations of historical documents (Bibiana 2007, p. 35-36). Early literature tended to be either religious writings or epic tales of adventure by great heroes. In Iran, it was considered important where historical texts in terms of their writings styles are included in literary work category. Historians use the narrative method to explain events, thus, the structure of historical texts is closed to story style. It is also impossible to understand and analyse literary works without a historical understanding of the period in which they were written (Kohansal & Sheipari 2019, p. 77). It therefore presupposes, that, the more the African historian is capable of understanding literary texts, the better he can delve into and grasp the truth. A synergy between history and literature could arouse the interest of the public and provide a better perception of African history. It is now common knowledge that the historian who studies literary texts and is familiar with their concepts may easily interpret events or trending issues in the society. Take for example, the period up to the 19th century where history was a blend of fact and fiction, myth and reality, it was more an art than a science. In recent times, many theorists analyse the concept of history and bring it closer to the concept of fiction by pointing out striking similarities. Contrariwise, history and fiction share a common ground and history cannot be objective as it relies on narrative and on representation, which are both elements that distort reality through the consciousness of their author, creator. Since the past is too vast and one cannot claim to be completely knowledgeable about it, novels then serve as complementary sources for the 'official' versions of the past (Chirobocea 2017, p. 191, 192 & 198). The African historian can delve into these pasts as he or she clearly comprehends these texts in a bid to reconstruct history of societies.

The African historian now understands that there is an inextricable connection with literature as texts pass freely between both good literature from different sides to describe history. History as narrative, i.e literature shares the elements of constructive imagination, but depends on a core of facts. Moses (p. 2) in juxtaposing History and Literature posited that Africa is a place of rich historical background and from the slave trade to post independence era, people around the world were instrumental to the evolution of African history. When it was necessary for the African people to shift from orality to writing, the sufferings they underwent were carried out through literature. He went on to submit that in the production of literary works, writers have the liberty to choose from two classifications: fiction and non-fiction. Non-fiction deals with facts that happened in the real world and they include newspapers stories, editorials, personal accounts, journal articles, text books, legal documents, etc. Non-fiction deals with an imaginary world and includes novels, poems, short stories and plays. These classifications of literary works have assisted the historian in having a better picture of the situation as well as writing about the past of man in a narrative and descriptive manner. Edwin (2010, p. 59)

examined the significant impact of literature and history which cannot be overemphasised and fortunately, the relationship among them has continued to attract critical attention. The study of the novel is the study of the society that produces it. For literature to remain a veritable tool and agent of social change, it must continue to reflect the conflicts and crises thrown up by the society, which history seeks to unearth. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) provides insights into history and literature while it enriches research and contributes to a deeper and nuanced understanding of historical and cultural contexts. Since scholars and researchers of African history delve into the past via collaboration with literature, AI algorithms provide valuable assistance in the form of analysis of texts to identify trends, themes, and patterns that might be quite difficult to discern through traditional avenues. Still providing the impact of AI on literature which the historian makes use of, Nasir (2023, p. 559) posited that in the current era, the integration of AI has permeated various aspects of modern life, profoundly impacting the way we operate and perceive the world. Literature as a conduit of human expression and cultural preservation, holds a unique place in the annals of human history. It captures the essence of societies, reflecting their beliefs, struggles, and aspirations across epochs. As African historians adopt literature as a discipline in their research, it is important to state that AI-driven tools enhance accessibility, making literary works available to a global audience by transcending linguistic barriers. It aids in translation, bridging language gaps and fostering cross-cultural communication.

The Role of the Humanities in Illuminating AI Discussions
This section generally addresses or brings to the fore the role of the humanities in shedding light on the use of artificial intelligence, and how the subject matter can either benefit from it or otherwise. History embraces digital humanities because it is not as corruptive and disruptive as AI. Obviously, digital humanities have become an integral aspect of historical discipline. Generally, History and African history in particular belong to the humanities and much has been said about artificial intelligence and how it affects the humanities. However, the humanities have the potential to offer unique perspectives and assistance to AI and ChatGPT in the present era by much emphasis on the importance of cultural specificities as well as the limitations of predictive language models. These language models, though proficient and with in-depth analysis, one must note the disadvantage, which stems from the lack of cultural context. There is also the failure to capture the complexities of language. The humanities can provide vistas of opportunities for African historians in particular, to have a deeper comprehension and be able to engage in more analytical and critical discussions about societal issues and the past (Toolify.ai). The implementation of AI offers enormous possibilities that are gradually being incorporated. The progressive development of AI revolutionises learning in the Humanities or Human Sciences. Most importantly, the application of AI in the humanities to which History and African history belong is not intended to replace the human task, rather, it is to act as a resource to allow research to be executed more quickly and efficiently (Diego and Carlos, 2023, p. 2). They

further stated that the most frequent procedure is for a specialist to review the task undertaken by AI to check it for mistakes, since one cannot vouch that AI provides 100% accuracy. The Cogut Institute for the Humanities (2023) submitted that whenever we think of humanities very broadly, we see that these new technologies and new ways of studying these technologies within a humanities align with our past ways of approaching texts and the human condition. It showed that we pivot, align with, accommodate, while we focus on what is technology. Quite important is the fact that the development in AI teaches us about academic inquiry and humanistic questions in particular, which the African historian is involved in. Artificial intelligence provides for a multidisciplinary approach to issues, as it produces output (predictions, recommendations or decisions) for a given set of objectives (Max and Emilia, 2022, p. 13). Those in the humanities cannot ignore or downplay the place of AI in pushing forward the boundaries of research, especially in the 21st century.

Challenges and Opportunities for the African Historian

The transformative role of AI in historical research is not without challenges. In reality, there is no need to be agitated with the advent of Artificial Intelligence or machine learning. While it is not to replace the place of humans in the historical process, the careful and cautious use of these tools would assist the African historian to improve performance generally and research in particular. Invariably, there are ethical considerations around data privacy, algorithmic bias, complexity of interpretation, preservation of historical integrity, among others. Generally, researchers in the field of history, and African historians whose objective in most cases is to reconstruct the past of African societies, must carefully consider these ethical dilemmas. In addition, they are to ensure that their scholarly works adhere to ethical standards and it does not culminate in negative representation of individuals or communities. Generally, researchers must exercise caution, critically evaluate AI-generated content or output. AI tools provide in every way possible the needed support, however, the place of human expertise and judgment cannot be overemphasised for a comprehensive African history. Reena and Rashmi (2023, p. 5441) were of the opinion that there is a higher chance of AI's infringement on human rights, and it is the concern of many intellectuals. They concluded that artificial intelligence is indeed the future of humanity, while it can turn the highest possible timeline and also can catapult us into worst timeline. It depends on how they would use it.

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