

IDEAL AFRICANISM AND AI: BUILDING POLITICO-ETHICAL BRIDGE AGAINST CORRUPTION IN AFRICA(NIGERIA)

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Abstract

This paper examines how ideal africanism and Artificial intelligence (AI) can contribute in building a politico-ethical bridge against corruption in African society and Nigeria in particular. The phrase “a politico-ethical bridge” as used in this context is simply providing good governance based on the application of the basic political and ethical principles of ideal africanism in removing pathways for corruption. Ideal africanism is a politico-ethical construct within African socio-political, economic and academic environment, while Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a technological mechanism, which has contributed so much in the affairs of humans in diverse areas. Although its ethical justifications have been continuously questioned too. Ideal africanism is antithetical to corruption, and the precise structure of AI remains undoubtable. Considering the level of corruption in African, this paper also examines the potentials of AI in the fight against corruption in African. Applying thematic discourse analysis, the researcher analyzes the concept of ideal africanism as an emerging ethical ideology in African society. The study gives a conceptual framework of the ideology with the structure of AI mechanism, and also discusses the term, ideal africanism in relation to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its mechanisms. The researcher argues that looking at the potentials of AI in building a viable economic and political precisions, ideal africanism, as a politico-ethical construct, stands the chance of utilizing the potentials of AI within African social, political and economic framework to address the issues of corruption.

Keywords: *Ideal africanism, politico-ethical construct, ethical bridge, corruption, and Africa*

Introduction

In this paper, Nigeria's vision on the establishment of the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (NAIS, 2024) is used as a paradigm for other African nations. Nigeria, as a nation, has its peculiar problems regarding her corruption indexes amongst other African nations and across the globe. Looking at the Corruption Perception Index, according to the Transparency International (2024), Nigeria has a score of 25/100 in this 2024 thereby ranking 145 out of 180 countries; other African nations are not exempted

from the same corruption challenges. Be that as it may, Nigeria's overgrowing population and economic potentials among African nations and the world at large cannot be ignored. The underlying issue in this paper is whether the politico-ethical ideology, *ideal africanism* and Artificial Intelligence(AI) can contribute in curbing corruption in Africa. Or put differently, can *ide alaffricanism* and AI build an ethical bridge against corruption in Africa?I will embark on thematic discourse analysis of the terms employed such as: *Ideal africanism*, politico-ethical bridge, corruption and Artificial Intelligence (AI)". I will engage on literature review highlighting on the potentials of AI on economic and social development. AI and its mechanism will also be discussed. I will further investigate on how *ideal africanism* and AI can eradicate or reduce corruption to its barest minimum. Finally, I will end with conclusion and recommendation.

Conceptual Clarification

The term, *ideal africanism* is derived from two concepts, namely; “ideal” and “Africa-anism”. It is an *Afri-politico-ethical* ideology (Obijekwu, 2024). It is antithetical to unethical conducts, behaviours or actions in Africa, and could be generalized based on its ethical principles which are universally accepted and acknowledged. It is articulated within the conceptual framework of African political and ethical attitudes, actions, behaviours and/or conducts. Fundamentally, the basic ethical principles of ideal africanism is that; First: I am a human person with basic rights(being a human person is a universal principle); Second: I must do good; I must avoid evil(doen good; avoiding evil is a societal and general human desire for a better society and a peaceful world); and third; Collective Responsibility: My actions, conducts or behaviour must promote collective responsibility (the individual goodness contributes to a collective healthiness or communal good).

So, the term “ideal” in its daily or literarily usage simply means “perfect”, spotless, “incorruptible” or “absolute”. For instance, “ideal world” as Plato used it means a “perfect world” or an “ideal society” as Aristotle used it means perfect society. “Is there anything like an ideal world or an ideal society?” has been a question over time, and has continuously been echoing by most political scientists and scholars from other fields of studies since Plato and Aristotle said of it. Well, this research is not concerned with proving or disproving such maxims.

From the concept, *ideal africanism*, is also a term “Africa” which of course is a geographical location of a group of people with different cultures, languages, destinies, experiences, etc. Therefore, a person born within the geographical location of African continent, and outside the shores of African continent by African parents, is an African. The place of birth or residence does not matter in identifying who is an African person, and who is “an ideal Africa” insofar as the person has African origin. Hence, “an African,” be it a man or a woman, male or female, young or aged, is one, who is guided and lived within the tenets of the political and ethical principles of *ideal africanism*, and is the same as the one, who is known and described as an ideal African.

The Ideology, *ideal africanism*, as an *Afri-politico-ethical* revolutionary ideology, is a belief that it is only an ideal African who lives above corruption in all its ramifications, no matter the circumstances, can set African free from all political, economic, social, cultural, technological and any other form of subjugation, colonization, slavery, brutality, intimidation, dehumanization, and project it into its developmental and ethical trajectory so as to position it among its counterparts in the world(Objekwu, 2024).

We can retract from the above analysis that: a) *Idealafricanism* is an *Afri-politico-ethical* revolutionary ideology against unethical actions, behaviour or conduct; b) a person-centered political and ethical engagement; c) involves doing good; avoiding evil; and d) concerns with human collective responsibility and wellbeing in Africa, and globe by extension. Its African features or characteristics include: collaboration, community, togetherness, participation, caring for one another, intercollectivity, and humanness. Above all, *Idealafricanism* is all about one living above board in every facets of human-relational activities (Objekwu, 2024). Having said the above, let us examine AI and its mechanism.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Its Mechanism

I may pose the following questions here: What is AI? How does AI work? Artificial Intelligence(AI), as the name goes today, does not just happened. It has developed over time as further future changes are expected. As such, new definitions continue to emerge. Kaplan and Haenlein (2019) cited in Bartneck (2021) defined AI as “a system's ability to correctly interpret external data, to learn from such data, and to use those learnings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptation.” Poole and Mackworth (2010) define AI as “the field that studies the synthesis and analysis of computational agents that act intelligently.” Russell and Norvig (2010), showed the perspectives of four Schools of thought for AI as machines that “think like humans”, “act like humans”, “act rationally” and think rationally”.

AI is a metamorphosization of structural, systematic and operational computer evolution from analogue to digital evolution to modern sophisticated machines using human-like intelligence. As it were, computer is a machine programmed to automatically engage in sequences of arithmetic or logical operation or computation as obtainable in mathematical equation for problem-solving and the execution of computer algorithms. A machine is a physical system that uses power to apply forces and control movement to perform an action. Intelligence, as the concept goes, has no definite definition. But one can still generally understand intelligence as ability for abstraction, learning, reasoning, emotional knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, understanding, planning and/or problem-solving.

The above listed qualities could be said to be human person qualities. So intelligence can be seen as a capacity or ability to perceive or infer information, retain information and apply the information within an environment to solve human problems (Sharma, 2008). Russell and Norvig (2021) saw AI as a field of research in computer science that is concerned with developing and finding methods and software that would enable machines to perceive their

environment as to use learning and intelligence to engage in actions or activities that would maximise their chances of achieving definite goals.

This research is never concerned in going deeply into definition of intelligence as the concept is known to have different dimensions such emotional, cognitive, etc., and including artificial intelligence. The term, intelligence also has a long history of development from its Latin origin of "intelligentia" or "intellectual" which was derived from the word, "intelligere" meaning to comprehend or perceive". The use of the term, intelligence was used in reference to humans in the interpretation of some texts or Greek philosophical terminologies as seen in the Middle Ages in metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, sociology, etc till the contemporary period, which its application has taken a complicated format. This is the reason there are different applications of the term, intelligence in the modern time.

So as a generic terminology, intelligence is today being used for the machine, super-structural machines in human form or characteristics. Based on this, I define AI as nothing but human person acting outside himself in an automated form for complicated precisions. AI is human person recreating its only being in an automated super-structural form through garbage-in and garbage-out software application programming for accuracy and precision in judgement and commitment. AI is created within the purview of human mind which had the ability to perceive, reason, learning, interacting with the environment, problem-solving and creativity, which humans engaged in the state of consciousness. Another question is: "Is AI a conscious being?". This question calls for further research on the consciousness of AI. Though this is not my concern in this paper. The next discussion would be on corruption, ideal africanism and AI.

Corruption, Ideal africanism and AI

In this section, attempt is made to investigate how *ideal africanism* and AI can mitigate, or rather build a bridge against corruption in Africa. We know that amongst the African problems is corruption (both in the local and international levels), which has left Africa perpetually poor. Corruption is a bane of African development. Then, the question is, which role does *ideal africanism* and AI play in eradicating corruption in Africa? Where does AI come in this situation? The determinant factor in *ideal africanism* is a human person possessing human qualities as an ethical agent. Corruption is a human conduct, action or behaviour, which of course is unethical. AI is an automated machine with precisions and conformities to its operational principles. There is no doubt that AI can be negatively used. AI can be created using the ideals of *ideal africanism* in attacking corruption within and outside African continent. AI has been desired in Africa in the areas of economic development, education, healthcare, innovation, etc., which are life-wires of every society, and as well involved daily human interaction where character manifestations are witnessed, positively or negatively.

Nigeria, as one of the African countries, desired so much to be achieved through AI over the period of 2024-2028 (NAIS, 2024). According to its vision statement, which reads thus: "Our vision is to be a global leader in harnessing the transformative power of AI through

responsible, ethical and inclusive innovation, fostering sustainable development through collaborative efforts"(National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, 2024, p.24).

The document highlights some important themes with regard to the vision which also include: a) Responsible and ethical conduct: This involves commitment to responsible AI development and deployment that ensures a healthy societal impact and upholding ethical principles and values; b) Inclusive and shared property, which has to do with carrying everyone along no matter the gender, race, circumstances, background. It also meant to promote diversity, and healthily shared by all members of the society including the marginalized and vulnerable population; c) Innovation and adaptation: The document also made mention of innovation and adaptation, which involves cultural adaptation in the use of AI so as to embrace cultural diversity; d) Sustainability, which involves integrating AI into continuous and lasting development efforts, promoting environmental conservation so as to achieve long-term economic, social and environmental goals;e) collaboration; f) global leadership; g) transparency and accountability; I) human-centric; j) risk management and resilience; k) data ethics and agency, which involves adhering to good data management principles in the collection, use and sharing of data for AI(NAIS, 2024). This also involves the respect for privacy, consent, data minimisation and fairness in the use of the data. Other areas including making informed decisions, advocate for human rights and being involved in the meaningful shaping AI policies and practices (p. 24).

From the document, as explored above, the potentials of AI can never be overestimated, even in fighting against corruption. What is corruption if not extreme selfishness or self-interest, where personal interest overridden communal interest or general common good, or the highest level of corruption known as extreme nationalism – the root of colonialism, racism, slave trade, global conflict and wars. My personal understanding of corruption and its global effects was detailed in one of my articles titled, “*Discourse on corruption and the collapse of reason in human affairs: A philosophical solution*” published on the *EVAIA: International Journal of Ethics and Values*, Vol.3(Objiekwu, 2022).

To the issue at hand, if AI can assume so much responsibilities as spelt out in this National Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2024 document, it is obvious that issue of corruption in Africa can be a thing of the past. Corruption, if not completely eradicated, will be reduced to its barest minimum in African continent. If AI can achieve transparency and accountability in political, economic, legal, financial institution, etc. more than human beings, and being charged by an ideal African person, then, the challenges of corruption in leadership, financial institutions, education, healthcare delivery, etc., within and outside African continent, may lead to a progressive Africa. Corruption would be a thing of the past, or be reduced to a barest minimum in Africa, and Nigeria in particular.

Conclusion

AI, as said earlier, is simply humans extending their existential qualities to the society through the automated sophisticated machines. With AI, humans replicate the creation narratives in AI. AIs are not in themselves humans, but built through hardware, software and other operational mechanisms intended for precision and conformity to its principles

of application, involvement and commitment to achieve human goals. They are machines not human beings. This is the reason I once said that an ideal African person, as conceptualised in the Afri-politico-ethical ideology, is never an AI, but purely human person, who is central to the political and ethical principles of the *idealafricanism*, which include: a) I am a human person; b) I must do good; I must avoid evil; and c) whose actions, behaviours, and/or conducts contribute to collective responsibility.

Despite the fact that AI is not a human, but was built or implanted within it those important qualities of human persons such as criticality, comprehension, understanding as well as precision, accuracy and correctness; those qualities can be positively harness to fight unethical actions, behaviours and/or conducts for the development of African nations and entire African continent. An Ideal Africa making use of AI in policy making and implementation, financial institutions, education systems and in the international relations will benefit Africa more than corrupt human practices in Africa and the rest of the world. With an *idealafricanism-AI* interface, a corruption-free, progressive and better Nigeria, and extension, Africa continent, is assured.

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