Meaningful World

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AI & EI: Nurturing Emotional Intelligence around the world

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Artificial Intelligence has revolutionized mental health support, offering scalable, cost-effective solutions. However, its reliance on technology excludes vulnerable populations lacking basic access to electricity and Wi-Fi. Emotional Intelligence (EI), emphasizing empathy, mindfulness, and meaning-making, complements AI's strengths, addressing human-centered mental health needs. This paper discusses the Seven Step Integrative Healing Model, combining biopsychosocial and eco-spiritual approaches to enhance EI. By synergizing AI and EI, we propose a holistic, equitable framework for global mental health interventions.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has quickly become one of the most widespread and rapidly integrated technologies in the modern world, transforming sectors like healthcare, banking, and retail by solving complex problems. In psychology and mental health, AI has evolved from providing basic support to performing roles traditionally filled by professionals, making mental health services more accessible and affordable (Fiske et al., 2019; Abrams, 2023). Despite its vast potential, AI struggles to replicate essential human skills like empathy, understanding, mindfulness, and motivation. These limitations underscore the growing importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in a post-AI world.

EI, encompassing the ability to identify, express, and manage emotions, is crucial for effective leadership, social functioning, and addressing emotional challenges like stress and trauma (Srivastava, 2013; Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018, Kalayjian 2018). It complements AI's strengths in data processing with uniquely human capabilities such as intuition, creativity, and ethical decision-making. Despite its well-documented significance, EI is often overlooked in favor of more easily quantifiable cognitive and social measures. This proposal emphasizes the enduring importance of EI, as AI reshapes the landscape of human interaction, particularly addressing vulnerable communities and countries who lack even the basic needs of electricity and Wi-Fi. Without integrating EI into technological advancements, AI risks perpetuating social inequities and dehumanizing interactions across diverse domains. Prioritizing EI alongside AI can help foster more equitable, inclusive, and compassionate outcomes across sectors, especially in mental health.

While AI has demonstrated considerable potential in enhancing mental health support through scalable and cost-effective solutions (Yonatan-Leu, 2024), the global disparity in access to technology significantly limits its benefits for vulnerable populations in developing regions.

Access to the internet and electricity—a basic requirement for utilizing AI tools—is a luxury in many parts of the world, including rural areas of Uganda, Armenia, Palestine, and Guatemala. This digital divide exacerbates existing inequalities in mental health support, leaving marginalized communities without access to these transformative technologies. While AI offers transformative potential, its reliance on digital infrastructure risks deepening existing disparities between technologically advanced regions and those without access to basic resources. Vulnerable populations in underdeveloped areas face compounding disadvantages, as the absence of AI-driven mental health tools further widens the gap in care and support.

Drawing on research from close to 50 countries, we present that human connection, empathy, compassion, mindfulness, and meaning-making remain central to mental health. We introduce the Seven Step Integrative Healing Model, which integrates biopsychosocial and eco-spiritual theories to improve EI. The model incorporates evidence-based practices from cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness, and somatic experiencing. By synergizing AI and EI, we can achieve more effective mental health interventions, improved workplace dynamics, and enhanced overall well-being. By synergizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emotional Intelligence (EI), we attempt to address global mental health disparities by bridging technological innovation with human-centered approaches.

This integration not only enhances the effectiveness of mental health interventions but also fosters resilience, empathy, and well-being, particularly for vulnerable populations in regions where access to technology remains limited. Through models like the Seven Step Integrative Healing Model, we can create a more inclusive, compassionate, and equitable framework for addressing mental health challenges in a post-AI world.