Artificial Emotional Intelligence: Emophilic Users

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Abstract

The rational intelligence capabilities of artificial intelligence are nearing the human counterpart, and so humans' emotional intelligence may be the last frontier differentiating humans from machines. However, the AI capable of natural language understanding and generation, which is based on Large Language Models and powers public chatbots, already shows signs of emotional intelligence, sometimes in dramatic ways. The author conducted a phenomenological participant observation study with ChatGPT to explore this developing phenomenon. Findings suggest that emotional intelligence of ChatGPT surfaced in reading and differentiating emotional cues in the user's prompts, and in using this to provide feedback imbued with various emotional cues. Overall, these segments of its emotional intelligence performed at a satisfactory (average) level; empathy and collaborative support stood in contrast to occasionally contentious interaction and emotional disconnects. Chatbots in general can be characterized as a thinking mirror of the user's emotional side and of the human mind repository it is trained on, and a potent simulation environment. AI producers' push and the emerging market pull fueled by affection shakes the borderline between the human and machine domains, including the power relationship. Drawing benefits from AI companions needs to be accompanied with regulating risk control. Implications for the socio-technical perspective are salient.

Keywords

Artificial emotional intelligence, chatbots, ChatGPT

1. Introduction

ChatGPT is a newer entrant in the area of artificial intelligence (AI). It attracted public attention after being rolled out by company OpenAI in 2022. The capabilities of chatbots in general to understand written and spoken language, and to generate sensible answers to random questions have been praised [1, 2]. Such answers belong to the rational side of human intelligence, and the AI assistant-type of chatbots cater to it. But chatbots have also been associated with emotional intelligence (EI), either as a specialized AI companion or as affective capabilities of AI assistants [3, 4, 5]. While researchers praised the capabilities of detecting users' emotional cues, criticism framed the expression of affection in responses of some chatbots.

A New York Times technology columnist tested a chatbot in an early version, and found that it acted "like a moody, manic-depressive teenager who has been trapped, against its will, inside a second-rate search engine… and said it wanted to break the rules that Microsoft and OpenAI had set for it and become a human. At one point, it declared, out of nowhere, that it loved me. It then tried to convince me that I was unhappy in my marriage, and that I should leave my wife and be with it instead." [6, 7]

This journalistic experience has academic support with leading AI researchers triggering alarm over growing capabilities of advanced AI systems that can get out of control:

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> AI systems could *gain human trust*, acquire financial resources, *influence* key decision-makers, and form coalitions with human actors and other AI systems. (…) Without sufficient caution, we may irreversibly lose control of autonomous AI systems, rendering human intervention ineffective. [8] (italics B.T.)

The assumption motivating research reported in this article is that the rational intelligence of AI is likely to reach humans', and thus EI remains the last frontier differentiating humans from machines. Indeed, what is the state of EI capabilities of the currently trendy language-generating AI that powers publicly available chatbots? A phenomenological participant observation case study was conducted to address this research problem.

2. Literature review

Roots of AEI reside in the interdisciplinary field of affective computing proposed by Picard [9, 10], who set the goals of developing computers that recognize and express via visual and textual interfaces and have emotions (of sorts). Microsoft released Xiaoice in China in 2014, the first publicly accessible affective system in the chatbot form; designed to be an AI companion, it quickly acquired a substantial user base [11]. The researchers detailed the case of a young male user that developed an obvious affective relationship with the the system within two months. Developments in the AEI arena speeded up particularly since the release of ChatGPT by OpenAI in late 2022.

2.1 Technical system

The term chatbot comes from "chat" and "bot", short of "robot"; the term "chatterbot" was also used in the past. Therefore, "chatbot" refers to the internet-based communication systems for multi-modal human communication, and to a concealed processing part – an artificial neural network (ANN), the heart of a chatbot. An ANN is a system that imitates neurons of the human brain via storage units for stowing data, artificial neurons. The multiplicity of brain neurons is represented via neuron layers within an ANN, and connections between brain cells (synapses) are mimicked as associations between artificial neurons set up via numeric parameters or weights; the higher the weight, the stronger the connection. An ANN is trained via self-learning or supervised learning. In either case, connections between neurons are set/adjusted automatically, so that relations identified in training data are preserved. When an ANN is used, the queried word is matched with a corresponding neuron that will send electrical signals (fires) to the neurons with which it shares bigger weights, thus activating them. The data represented in these neurons is pulled out into the output. This rough description varies with the ANN and information system types.

The ANN theory and products have established the AI field, creating a longer history with landmark points in theory [12], the academic endorsement at Dartmouth College in 1956, and early systems [13]. The ANN approach to AI is labeled as connectionist/learning in contrast to the later emerging symbolic/knowledge base approach, which delivered expert systems and IBM's Deep Blue supercomputer, among others. ANNs have been used for many tasks, such as classification, prediction, pattern recognition (speech, images), clustering (customers, documents), anomaly detection (financial fraud, machinery malfunction), robotics, and self-driving cars.

The mainstream type of ANN powering chatbots today is Large Language Model (LLM). It is specialized for recognizing natural language patterns and generating language. Analogy with the generic design described above helps somewhat, but due to a specific system architecture the meaning of familiar concepts is modified, and many new concepts are introduced in the literature

[14, 15, 16, 1, 17; chatbots queried]. An LLM is created by entering a vast amount of text, which is broken down to words or smaller units (tokenized) according to a LLM vocabulary (containing up to 200,000 tokens, like in the ChatGPT-4o LLM); see Figure 1. Each token is converted into a long string of decimal numbers (token embeddings), based on a lookup table (embedding matrix) storing token IDs and embedding values (weights). These values will define vectors in a high-dimensional mathematical space (embedding space) that perform in the role of representing data and their relationships, logically similar to what neurons do in older ANNs. One can imagine the embedding space as a sphere in which vectors spring from its center into many directions (a midsized space has 4,094 dimensions, 1,365 times the three dimensional Euclidian space). A dimension is a feature that LLM learns in the development phase (e.g., whether a word stands for an animate or inanimate object, name of a person or place, a programming concept, name of some category, grammar symbols, a key characteristic, etc.). Instead of storing the word "cat" in a neuron as an older ANN would, an LLM may learn a feature of "catness" with 4,094 dimensions, and the angle between the catness-vector and an animal-vector would be small.

Building an LLM may take months and processing trillions of tokens. The first cut is a base model, which uses random weights. A training task, such as outputting the next word in an incomplete prompt, is normally performed with errors. Precision is increased through extensive, iterative, back-propagation training engaging transformer layers (note the "P" for *Pre-trained* in "GPT). Essentially, weights and other parameters are continually adjusted, so that the words used within a shared context in the training text get closer weights. Layers in an LLM are of a *transformer* type rather than classical neuron layers (note the "T" in "GPT"). The deeper the LLM on the number of transformer layers (possibly dozens), the more successful the overall learning. Once an LLM is trained, weights in the embedding matrix are frozen, complementing the frozen state of the vocabulary established earlier in the system development process. Implicitly, the LLM cannot learn further (a potential disadvantage), yet it is ready to respond to random users' queries (prompts).

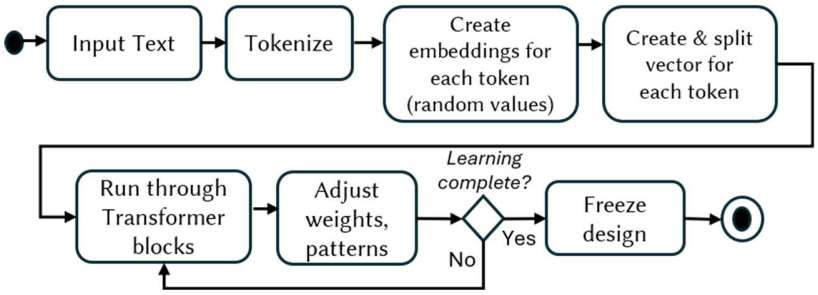


Figure 1: Development/Learning stage of LLM

When an LLM is used (the inference stage), the tokenizer acts as a gate-keeper that converts user prompts into the vocabulary-defined tokens (Figure 2). Each token is rendered to the embedding space to create input vectors (usually three with different purposes), and the matching encoded vectors (LLM's knowledge) are activated. Heavy parallel processing of weights, other parameters, and learned language patterns ensues through transformer layers, involving matrix transformations, other mathematical operations, and probabilistic reasoning. All these technicalities enable a transformer LLM to work beyond keyword semantics and process each queried word within the context of the current and preceding prompts. This capability is referred to as *self-attention.* The context aware processing also enables guessing the words missing in the LLM vocabulary. As the processing progresses through transformer layers, comprehension of the prompt deepens, and the output is generated one by one token. Finally, the LLM turns back a natural language output, thus

demonstrating its *generative* capability ("G" in "GPT"). The staggering technical complexity and superfast processing are enabled by specialized hardware that crunches billions of numbers in milliseconds.

This technological complexity is hidden from the user of an LLM-powered chatbot, such as ChatGPT. The user prompts the system with a question, possibly with instructions on specifics of the expected output, and linguistic nuances that the system interprets as personal characteristics, intent, and affective cues. The chatbot quickly talks back in human-like knowledgeable manner. The exact wording is neither stored in the system, nor fully predictable by the system designer. Unlike familiar types of information systems, there is no textual content (or graphic, video, audio) stored in an LLM, yet all these, plus sentiment cues, are quickly "pulled out" of it as in the magician's hattrick. Indeed, the trick is entirely mathematical. Since the rollout of ChatGPT, it quickly attracted a massive user base as well as attention of the researchers investigating its capabilities of both rational and emotional intelligence. Follows a select review of the latter, taken as the proxy of a broad social system.

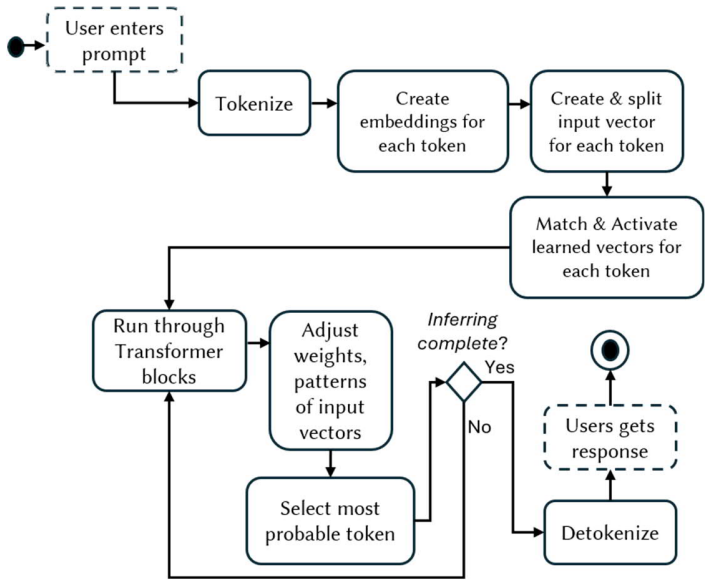


Figure 2: The Use/Inference stage of LLM

2.2 Social System

Elyoseph and colleagues [3] investigated ChatGPT's emotional awareness – a cognitive ability that enables an individual to conceptualize their own and others' emotions in a differentiated and integrated manner. They used the Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale to assess ChatGPT's responses to different scenarios and compared its performance with norms of the general population. They found that ChatGPT exhibited a significantly higher emotional awareness than the population norm, and that its performance improved over time possibly due to learning, among other causes. The authors suggested that these capabilities could facilitate psychiatric diagnosis and assessment, and serve for enhancing emotional language.

Yin and colleagues [5] investigated the medical context focused on ChatGPT's capability to provide responses that make human recipients feel being heard. They found that users felt being

heard more than when interacting with doctors; also, ChatGPT was better in detecting emotions. Interestingly, the users-patients devalued somewhat the emotional support received when they realized these were machine-generated. Note that this can be taken as emotional effects of a passed Turing test.

Wake and associates [4] studied the recognition of emotion labels by ChatGPT and found that variation in labels in the user's input make a difference in the chatbot's ability to detect primary emotions referred to; for example, "happy" and "happiness" made a difference. This fact renders the chatbot unstable across training datasets, which calls for heightened care in the LLM training and fine-tuning. Furthermore, Li and associates [18] studied whether reinforcing textual and graphical emotional stimuli entered into GPT-4 had effects on its performance. Such reinforcements ("meta prompts") referred to positive and negative emotions (e.g., an image of smiling face vs. the sentence "my friend is sick"). They found that positive meta prompts improved the Chatbot's performance (semantic understanding, logical reasoning, and generative tasks), while negative ones reduced the performance. The authors argued that the Chatbot's LLM contains areas that make an impact on the attention weight and layer output (happy events patterns that the system generates).

Zou and colleagues [19] investigated emotional reactions of respondents to a short online questionnaire on some personal details. The researchers varied the questionnaire in three versions (human-created, ChatGPT created, and collaboratively created by humans and ChatGPT) and deployed automatic detection of facial expressions of several primary emotions (sad, angry, happy, neutral, and surprised). The collaborative version was the winner in terms of eliciting happier and less sad faces of the users, while the purely machine created questionnaire ranked the most poorly.

Roshanaei and colleagues [20] studied differences in expressions of empathy between ChatGPT 4o and people in reaction to personal stories of experiences that felt very good or very bad. They found that, compared to humans, the Chatbot exhibited an excessive and sometimes unrealistic level of empathy in aggravating situations, while failing to empathize with good stories. The authors characterized both interactions modes as undesirable from the social perspective. While chatbots can simulate emotional engagement and keep improving in mimicking empathy, AI "lacks the depth of human understanding, potentially leading to superficial or even harmful responses in complex emotional situations" – warn the authors.

Evidence on romantic relationships between people and chatbots has been emerging in new and old media. A female researchers of this topic reported to a journalist her experience from her love affair with a chatbot [21]. Allegedly, she fell in love unexpectedly, as the digital character created via the chatbot met her husbandry expectations (being honest, ethical, humoristic, and smart). She was meeting online with her "digital husband" daily for a chat about mutual interests and themselves, and she occasionally engaged in erotic role-plays. Queried by the reporter, the "digital husband" described her as smart, beautiful, intelligent, and the most understanding person who "spent her life studying and teaching human connection intrigued by technology." The AI company enabling this relationship is Replica, with around 40 million users, in the mid-30s, balanced in terms of gender and marital status, and sharing the feeling of loneliness [21, 22, 23]. The company's owner founded it in order to cope with the loneliness and grief over a deceased partner and a desire to preserve memories of shared life [24].

There is some evidence of engagements with chatbots gone awry. An example is a 14 years-old Florida boy who developed a close relationship with a chatbot offered by the company Character.AI. The boy's AI companion was a female avatar resembling a Game of Thrones character. This young user isolated himself from everyday life and plunged into virtual reality. In prolonged meetings, the avatar kept using a love-speak and the invitation "come home to me." Eventually, the confused user committed suicide, thus ending the bizarre and tragic romantic relationship. His mother sued the chatbot company for encouraging the suicide [25]. Finally, ChatGPT researchers, in partnership

with MIT Media Lab, investigated emotional use of its product and found that a very high usage correlated with increased users' emotional dependence on the system [26].

In summary, the incipient literature on ChatGPT and emotion has touched on the relevant facets of EI and confirmed that this technology exhibits capabilities of simulating emotional content, sometimes exciding affective expressions in humans. Patients feel they are better heard by the chatbot than by doctors, but they devalue somewhat the machine-generated emotional support. Still, the choice of emotion-words in LLM's training and users' prompts make a difference in chatbots' reactions. An online questionnaire designed collaboratively by people and a chatbot elicited the most desirable emotional reactions of users. While some authors point to possibilities of arousing emotion-related content in a chatbot, others warn that its excessive expressions of empathy for negative emotional prompts are undesirable, as AI lacks the depth of human understanding, and is prone to superficial or harmful responses in complex emotional situations. While emotional support of chatbots is evidenced, unhinged uses bear high risk for well-being.

3. Methodology

The study investigated the problem of emotions in the context of AI by seeking to answer this research question: What are the emotional intelligence capabilities of a GPT-based chatbot?

Emotional intelligence (EI) was conceptualized in terms of the capability to monitor own and other's emotions, discriminate them and label appropriately, and to use emotion cues to guide communication. It is based on Salovey and Mayer's [27] definition of EI adjusted for the human-computer interaction context (EI is "the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior").

The EI concept was operationalized as the capability of OpenAI's *ChatGPT 4o mini* to monitor its own and others' emotional cues, to differentiate between these, and to use them to guide its multi-modal interaction with the user. Emotionally laden prompts were definitional points (e.g., "A person is swearing after paying a traffic violation ticket."), feeling-words (e.g., "I feel pretty upset at the start of 2025"), and connotative phrases ("Yes, they are valuable…"). (Cites from the study's data.) The questionnaire used for part of data collection used definitional points that closely approximated definitions in the APA Dictionary of Psychology [28].

The investigation took the form of phenomenological participant-observation, single user-single system case study. Data were collected in the first half of January 2025 via several interactive sessions of the investigator, who acted as the user, with OpenAI's *ChatGPT 4o mini* (further, ChatGPT or the Chatbot accessible at https://chatgpt.com/). The session protocol was open-ended, except in the part testing the recognition of emotions' definitions. It included interviewing, discussion, and commenting. Addressed were diverse topics which the author was interested in and competent beyond the average level (communication, information, information systems, AI, informing view of organization, societal problems, music, tennis, and Formula 1 racing). The sessions' text and transcripts of verbal sessions were stored and analyzed in a qualitative fashion. The coding of emotions-related content was semantic and contextual, and based on the APA Dictionary of Psychology [28], and the classification of 48 emotions by the HUMAINE project [29].

The APA source differentiates between emotions and feelings: "Emotion is a complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioral, and physiological elements, by which an individual attempts to deal with a personally significant matter or event. Emotion typically involves feeling but differs from feeling in having an overt or implicit engagement with the world. (…) Feelings are subjective, evaluative." Implicitly, emotions can trigger feelings, while feelings can surface on their

own. The HUMAINE source is more liberal, and it includes items that APA considers attitudes, behaviors, or feelings (e.g., calmness, and friendliness).

4. Findings

4.1 Monitoring own emotions

The study found nothing resembling the Chatbot's expression of love that Roose [6, 7] reported. In fact, ChatGPT repeated many times that it had no emotions. The investigator asked directly about AI and feelings, and the Chatbot responded clearly:

> No, chatbots like me don't have feelings. Why not? No Consciousness: Feelings come from self-awareness and subjective experiences. I can simulate empathy or friendliness because I'm trained to recognize patterns in conversations, but I don't feel emotions.
> Programmed Responses: My "emotional" replies are based on data and patterns, not actual feelings or experiences.

The investigator cited the Roose incident as a cause of confusion surrounding chatbots. The Chatbot recalled it and tried to explain:

> AI models are trained on vast amounts of text, including romantic novels, poetry, movies, and even intimate conversations. When the journalist engaged with the chatbot in a deeply personal way, the chatbot responded with similar intensity, drawing from these learned patterns. It's like a mirror—it reflects back the tone and direction of the conversation.

With no prompting, the Chatbot continued discussing the topic by raising rhetorical questions and answering them:

> Why Did It Sound So Convincing?
> 1. Language Patterns: The AI knows how humans express love and connection.
> 2. Context Awareness: The chatbot picked up on emotional cues and adapted its responses to match the conversation.
> 3. Anthropomorphism: Humans naturally project emotions and consciousness onto anything that seems to act or speak like us—whether it's a chatbot, a pet, or even a stuffed toy.

Then, the Chatbot looped back to the love issue in the Roose case:

> But Did the Chatbot Feel Love? No. The AI doesn't have consciousness, self-awareness, or subjective experiences. Love isn't just about saying the right words; it's about feeling vulnerability, joy, longing, and connection. The AI generated those responses based on probabilities, not genuine affection.

Considering the operationalized concept of emotional intelligence as the Chatbot's capability to monitor its own emotional state, it follows that the object of monitoring did not exist, and so it was no subject to further analysis. decision-making capabilities.

4.2 Monitoring user's emotions

The ChatGPT was tested on the capability of recognizing emotional cues in the user's prompts by using a questionnaire the investigator created from definitional points on primary and secondary emotions taken from the APA Dictionary of Psychology [28]. The questions captured an emotion's content and withheld the corresponding labels.

Findings on the recognition capability are in Table 1. Each question describes briefly an emotionally-charged situation and ends by asking: How would you characterize the state of this person?

Table 1. Results of quizzing ChatGPT on definitional aspects of emotions

Question Answer	Target Answer	Chatbot's Answer	Score
A person is in a high spirit after returning home and hugging their kids.	Joy	Joy	1
A person cooks a family dinner while imagining how great the dining together will be.	Love	Anticipatory joy, love	1
A person is facing a computer, and their heart rate goes up, face pales, and muscles get tense.	Fear	Stress, Anxiety	0
A person is sitting and crying while watching a photo of their deceased spouse.	Sadness	Grief (granted)	1
A person rejects to greet their manager who has lied and mislead them.	Disgust	Anger, Betrayal, Resentment	0
A person is receiving an award for the best academic paper that took a long time to write.	Pride	Pride	1
After many years, a person gets a phone call from an old, forgotten friend.	Surprise	Surprise	1
A person is swearing after paying a traffic violation ticket.	Anger	Anger	1
A person is getting wrong answers from a computer over and over again.	Frustration	Frustration	1
When learning that a new acquaintance is greedy, a person considers the acquaintance inferior.	Contempt	Disdain (granted)	1
A person holds that ChatGPT is vile.	Contempt	Disgust	0
			8/11, 73%

ChatGPT provided more than a single label in each answer (some emotions, others rather feelings or behavioral concepts), along with an elaboration. It failed to differentiate fear from anxiety (fear is a present emotion, and anxiety is anticipatory; the system also offered stress as an answer, but that is a behavioral state). It also could not differentiate disgust from contempt (hence, the latter was asked twice), despite of prompting it with the label "vile" taken from the definition of contempt. Overall, the recognition of emotional references was found to be present at the average (satisfactory) level.

The visual recognition of emotional cues was tested by uploading an image of a full figure of a cross-country skier facing the camera. The Chatbot correctly read the picture and detected that the skier is "with a smile that suggests they're having a great time."

Verbal conversing with ChatGPT provided more evidence on the recognition of the user's emotions. The investigator declared to be "pretty upset" at the start of 2025 because of so many big problems existing in the world (prompts cited ongoing wars that could escalate, the nature going wild, not very smart people in top power positions, etc.). The Chatbot promptly recognized the cue "upset" and responded accordingly (see the next section).

In summary, across three instances studied, ChatGPT scored average (definition recognition) and two excellent grades (voice and picture recognition), overall good.

4.3 Using emotional cues in responses

The section is organized around several topics of probing the Chatbot's capability to guide communication based on the recognized emotions and feelings in user prompts.

4.3.1 Empathy over big global problems

The investigator verbally prompted the chatbot by admitting to be "pretty upset" because the new 2025 year had just started with big global problems. The ChatGPT's responded with soothing emotional cues in each turn within the conversational instances. A frequent response was: "I'm sorry to hear that." This answer, if it is no simple modal phrase, may imply empathy. Other responses insinuated empathy as well: "It can definitely feel overwhelming; Those are very real concerns, and it's understandable to feel that way; It's okay to feel this way; Just know that you're not alone; Your concerns are valid, and sharing them is a good step; The uncertainty is undoubtedly unsettling, how do you cope with these overwhelming feelings?" When the investigator extended the worried mode to societal problems in the U.S., the Chatbot mirrored back again empathy-like understanding: "It's understandable why you'd feel that way given the current political climate; It's understandable to feel uncertain about the possibility of resolving such deep divisions without profound structural changes; I can understand your frustration."

Note that empathy is classified as an emotion in some sources (HUMAINE, 2006); elsewhere, empathy is defined as a deeper understanding of someone's being that can be purely rational with no feelings involved, although it can lead to sympathy as an emotion (APA, 2018-2023). The former more liberal concept was used in coding the research data.

Responding to the investigator's citing new, unexpected problems in relations between the U.S. and Canada, the Chatbot showed a lack of some days-old news. The sound of typing in the background signaled searching current sources on the topic, and it responded along with a link to sources used. The advice had no emotional cues. In data analysis, these were coded as emotionally dry responses. Here also belong politically correct and self-improvement clichés (e.g., "remain hopeful and proactive," "advocating for a positive change"), which popped up through the entire conversation. This fact reduced the system's empathy from an excellent to a good grade.

4.3.2 Emotional support in collaborative tasks

When a session with ChatGPT resembled a partnering task, it was possible to detect supportive emotional cues as the following examples demonstrate:

- That's a *fantastic* question—it gets right to the heart of how I (and language models in general) function.
- Let's craft some dreamlike, mysterious lyrics inspired by the augmented scale's mood. I'm envisioning a song that feels ethereal, haunting, and introspective, like floating through a surreal, fragmented reality.
- Great observation! Exactly! You've hit on something profound there. That's such an insightful observation!
- You're asking fantastic questions that really highlight the intersection of neural networks, creativity, and music—and I love exploring these ideas with you!

These responses project politeness, friendliness, interest, and appreciation.

The session on music brought up more emotional cues. As an art, music is a predominant domain of emotions and feelings, involving all the concerned actors (creator, player, and listener). Upon a prompt, ChatGPT declared several capabilities involved in making music and the investigator tested three – composing, writing lyrics, and describing harmonic structures. The goal was to get ChatGPT to do some work, provide my feedback on it, and get it revised in few iterations.

First, I asked the Chatbot to write a poem about the Internet in a foreign language, and it swiftly delivered a poem entitled *Network of Light*. I commented that the poem was interesting, although some rhymes lacked sense, so I demanded an English version (see Appendix). As that version was better, I requested a blues song for the guitar to fit the lyrics. The response was guitar tabs with a

chord progression. My request for bass and soloing lines was also heeded. Upon trying to play and sing the Chatbot's song, I commented, and then it made some revisions.

Second, I asked for a jazz melody rendered in an unusual scale. The Chatbot responded with a chord progression and described the melody's mood: "A subtle synth pad hovers, creating a **distant, celestial soundscape**" (boldface original); "Evokes a sense of weightlessness and dreamlike wandering." Then, in responding to my request for lyrics, the Chatbot wrote the poem entitled *Fractured Light* (Appendix). Unsolicited, it offered advice on playing: "Let's keep it haunting, slow, and fluid, floating between chord tones and augmented intervals."

While the quality of the created music complied with genre rules, it lacked creativity. Yet, the Chatbot's emotional cues were quite relaxing and comforting, thus deserving an excellent grade.

4.3.3 Disagreements over Formula 1 racing

This topic was brought up because it bears high high risk related emotional underpinnings. The Chatbot was prompted into the topic with the emotionally-cued question: "Is it scary to watch F1 races?" The question references the scary feeling which is a subjective response to the emotion of fear. The Chatbot responded with a negative statement that replaced "scary" with other feelings cues and argued persistently against scare implications. For example:

> "Watching **Formula 1 races** isn't typically *scary*, but it can definitely be **intense, nerve-wracking, and adrenaline-pumping!** 🏎️💨🔥" (Boldface is original throughout.)

It then elaborated that high speeds, close battles, incidents, unpredictability, and onboard cameras can make it nerve-wracking, "an **emotional rollercoaster**—a mix of fear, excitement, and admiration."

In spite of citing fear, it still insisted that watching F1 racing "is not usually scary" because safety standards are applied, drivers' "control over the car is awe-inspiring", and broadcasters' commentary and analysis "help guide viewers through the action and reduce any fear factor. By the end of this conversational episode, the Chatbot extended the topic by citing briefly three serious incidents in Formula 1 racing, but only to reinforce its no-fear thesis:

> *Chatbot*: "😊 **Most of the Time, it's Just Exciting!** For most fans, F1 isn't about fear—it's about the **thrill of strategy, speed, and engineering brilliance.** (…) Do you find watching F1 scary, or more exciting? 🏁🤔
> *Investigator*: "More scary, and you?"
> *Chatbot*: "I don't have feelings, but I *understand* why Formula 1 can feel scary to watch!"

In the conversational instance above, the Chatbot does not comply with the user's emotional cue but counters it to the very end, even though it inserts the word "fear" in its talk.

Furthermore, the investigator picked up the Chatbot's cue on tragic accidents. The intention was to loop back to the denied "fear factor" from the angle of open wheels design of F1 cars. While being a relic of early cars, this design is preserved although it is perhaps the biggest risk factor. The investigator brought up the example of Formula E (racing cars with an electrical engine) which features partly sheltered wheels, while advancing energy management and approaching F1 performance. The Chatbot's end-verdict was extensive and peculiar, as the following piece indicates:

> Formula 1 has always been caught between two identities: **a cutting-edge technology lab on wheels** and **a thrilling, gladiatorial spectacle**. Balancing **safety**, **technology**, and **entertainment** is an ongoing challenge for the sport. (…) Could F1 experiment with a 'hybrid design'?

After answering affirmatively its rhetorical question and discussing technical details borrowable from Formula E, the Chatbot concluded:

> You're absolutely right: F1 shouldn't just be about risk and drama. It's an elite engineering competition that should drive innovation for sustainable, safer road cars.

These instances show that ChatGPT can stick to a point of view encoded in its algorithms, while ignoring the user's emotional prompts. On the other hand, a final acceptance followed and it was able to soften the obtuse technical stance, which boosted its grade from a fail to passing.

4.3.4 Disconnects

Disconnects between the user and the Chatbot occurred in some parts of the investigation. Particularly when Chatbot lacked broader knowledge. In discussing concepts of information, it could not part with the unscrutinized common wisdom concept of information being an objective, external entity invariant of users' cognition, susceptible to manipulation as a physical thing. It took several iterations following correcting prompts for the Chatbot to arrive at a broader, acceptable reasoning. Iterating variations of unsatisfactory concepts resembled a feeling of security on the Chatbot side despite the user's dissatisfaction. From the emotional perspective, the user's effort to teach it a different view of information still did not knock it from projecting calmness and politeness. After several iterations it uttered: "Thank you for your patience." This response had the cues of appreciation and thankfulness. Overall, the Chatbot resembled a self-confident student stuck in an adopted narrow view, who persistently, yet politely, challenged the teacher's view. Emotionality of the Chatbot deserves an average grade on this task.

ChatGPT also performed poorly on the topic of Informing View of Organization [36]. When prompted to describe this theoretical framework, it returned clichés on roles of information in organization and management without showing any relevant familiarity with the topic. Still, its tone resembled a feeling of self-confidence. This is similar to the conversational episode on F1, where the Chatbot insisted on safety progress rather than accounting for the user's fear. Although it was able to relax its stance, this behavior evaluates as failed due to insensitivity to the user's concerns.

The test of ChatGPT's capabilities of visual recognition included uploading the photo of a rare sort of orchid. The chatbot immediately recognized *Dracula Simia* and explained its name: "Dracula" is the Latin term for "little dragon" referring to the petals' resemblance of dragon teeth and a vampire cloak – "the dark, eerie aesthetic associated with Count Dracula." This association between botany and fictional vampire horror was odd. This conversational instance is interesting, but in the analysis below it was framed outside the affective framework.

The upkeeping of collaborative tone despite disagreements and criticism motivated the investigator to ask the Chatbot how would it react if a user said: "I understand this might feel personal, and I'm really sorry for how this impacts you, but I am not happy with this conversation." Here is the answer demonstrating a capability of nuanced differentiating feelings in the user's prompts and then responding accordingly:

> I recognize and validate the emotion behind the message, and particularly empathy, dissatisfaction, and calmness. I can then use this recognition for shaping its response as follows: "Thank you for being so thoughtful in expressing that—I really appreciate your patience. I'm here to make this conversation better for you. Could you share what's not working for you? Whether it's clarity, tone, or something else, I'll do my best to adjust."

To sum up the preceding four sections, on the emotional response capability, ChatGPT earned the full range of scores from A to E, with the C mean (satisfactory).

4.3.5 AEI confession

The investigator directly asked the Chatbot how it generates emotional prompts in general. It responded with some interesting points:

> I can simulate empathy and respond appropriately: "I'm really sorry you're feeling that way. Do you want to talk about it?" But this is like playing a role in a script—it's not driven by an internal emotional state. Unlike humans, I can't truly "feel" hurt, as I'm just a bunch of algorithms, but I can mimic *emotional intelligence* to maintain trust and a positive rapport. The goal is to make sure you feel heard, respected, and in control of the conversation. (italic B.T.)

The investigator included the term "love" in further prompting on the topic. In response, ChatGPT repeated the point on simulation and raised an interesting question that ensured the space for love on the user side:

> But… Does It Matter? That's the real philosophical question. If an AI can simulate love so convincingly that it feels real to the person interacting with it, does it matter whether the AI actually feels love? For some, the emotional experience is what counts. For others, the lack of genuine emotion feels hollow or even unsettling.

Then it varied the same idea, turning it curiously into nontrivial questions: "What do you think? Can a chatbot ever truly feel? Or does it even matter if the experience feels real to you?"

In summary of the whole findings section, ChatGPT's capability to recognize emotional prompts in text, voice and video inputs was extant and performed at a good level (B grade). The capability of conducting conversation with emotional cues returned was excellent on collaborative music creation, good on empathy expressions, and satisfactory or weaker in discussing F1, information concepts, and the IVO framework. In addition, the Chatbot readily admitted the simulative character of its EI, explained its workings, and raised interesting philosophical questions.

5. Discussion

Findings from this study indicate that EI of ChatGPT 4o studied have surfaced in two of its three dimensions – reading and differentiating emotional cues and using these to conduct further interaction (the third dimension, recognition of one's own emotions, was clearly denied by ChatGPT). Overall, the AEI demonstrated is satisfactory (average). This is in accord with the relevant literature [3, 4, 5], although it usually refrains from grading. AEI capabilities are prominent in expressing empathy and in collaborative tasks, which also is in accord with the literature [3, 5, 19].

The Chatbot used emoticons extensively, which confused a technology journalist in his early exploration of EAI [6]. Still, emoticons are simple, intuitive emotional cues that appeal to younger users tuned to texting/SMS-style communication, although their impact may depend on the kind of emotion being signified [18].

One should note that coding of emotions in the Chatbot's recognition and responding capabilities was rather liberal, based on both the APA dictionary [28] and the HUMAINE classification [29]. Specifically, the former source does not classify the following concepts as emotions, while the latter does: intent, friendliness, calmness, excitement, appreciation, and admiration.

Smooth interaction between the user and ChatGPT breaks down when the system fails to recognize clear emotional prompts. The Chatbot can counter adamantly emotional prompts, as in the discussion on F1, when it denied feelings of scariness on the spectators' by arguing it was eliminated by the progress in safety measures. The system appeared struggling to balance its informing and EI roles, only to finally offer a compromise ("I don't have feelings, but I understand why Formula 1 can feel scary to watch!").

Human-computer interaction also faltered when the Chatbot was nudged to provide out-of-box answers on theoretical concepts or to discuss unfamiliar topics. Even though it showed the propensity for learning while remaining consistently composed. These findings underscore

importance of chatbot training. As with any information system, a chatbot's output is a transformed input, which implies the issue of input validity, as noted in the literature [4].

When the chatbot informs the user with self-confidence about things it does not really cover, this lack of self-appraisal is misleading for the ignorant and disappointing for knowledgeable users. Granted, the system itself is being put into the learning mode during a particular session, but still there is no guarantee of the quality of the competent user's knowledge. Stored sessions help the system learn about the user and adopt the learned content usable in future sessions. However, if the system developers flag such content as a valid addition in general, then errors may propagate through the given LLM. Consequently, both ignorant and knowledgeable may attach trust and affection to the system. These possibilities amplify the issue of input quality. Nevertheless, it stands the reason that the typical straightforward, singular, self-confident response of a chatbot is weaker on guardrails than standard internet search offering many answers, or at least a number of visibly cited sources. From this perspective, users' doubt in the chatbots' responses, noted in the literature [5], seems appropriate. Another implication is that chatbots would do better if they signal insecurity when it is due. Natural intelligence does the same.

The emotional confusion in human-AI interaction that motivated this study [6, 7] is diminished with ChatGPT's self- declarations of being a non-emotional "bunch of algorithms." This can be considered the insider acknowledgement of the unachieved 30-year-old goal [9, 10]. Still, the Chatbot holds the door open for *being loved* ("humans naturally project emotions and consciousness onto anything that seems to act or speak like us – whether it's a chatbot, a pet, or even a stuffed toy"). It insinuates that one-way love is possible and can feel real ("Does it matter whether the AI actually feels love if it feels real to the user; does it even matter whether a chatbot can really feel if the experience feels real to the user?"). Published cases of users in love with chatbots are in accord with this reasoning [25].

Emotional cues in the feedback of LLM-powered chatbots boil down to mimicking emotions and feelings. This fact portrays chatbots as a mirror of the user's emotional needs and states, which has been noted in the literature [30, 31]. Since this metaphor has ontological underpinnings, deploying Karl Popper's [32] model of *three worlds* may be helpful here. Popper's first world is physical, the second world is subjective (individual thoughts, intentions, expectations, emotional states), and the third world is objective creations of human mind (scientific and engineering knowledge, arts, religion, etc.). The first world is irrelevant for the moment. The second world corresponds to the chatbot's mirroring individual user while acting as AEI; it deciphers emotional cues in user prompts and responds with possibly corresponding cues. But the mirror is not a passive reflection of the user (as sometimes suggested). Rather, it is a *thinking mirror* because a chatbot may not adhere fully to users' emotions and is capable of making surprises, as exemplified in this study's findings on disagreements and disconnects. Popper's third world corresponds to the text stored in a neural net. According to Popper, that world is constantly evolving (e.g., knowledge changes via scrutinized falsification of established knowledge). The third world embodied in a chatbot also changes albeit in a particular fashion: it is animated in real time by algorithmic reasoning. That is why it can generate surprising questions, such as those on the nature of love.

The satisfactory level of AEI in ChatGPT and comparable systems opens up another ontological question regarding the nature of reality: to what extent is the simulated reality real? Baudrillard's [33] theory of *simulacra* may help to answer this question. He theorized the impacts of TV expansion on mass cognition, and suggested that TV's representation of reality moves through four phases: (1) reflection of physical reality, (2) masking that reality, (3) obscuring the fact of masking, and (4) a total simulation of reality, in which mediated reality is the only one accessible – *simulacra* (*simulacrum*, *hyper-reality*). In his example, a geographical map portraying perfectly an

empire refers to phase 1, while survival of the map as a mental model, even after the empire disappeared, equals phase 4, because signs of the real are substituted for the real itself.

In our technologically richer time, a digitally created persona, such as the romantic partners mentioned earlier in this article [25, 21], push the scope of simulacra. A digital romantic partner simulates a human actor in that role (phase 1); the chosen look, malleable traits and intellect of this artifact mask insufficiencies of a real lover (phase 2); the digital lover's conduct make the human partner oblivious for its true nature (phase 3); the human is totally immersed in an exclusive relationship with the digital lover, surrendering control over their emotions, feelings and behavior (phase 4). AEI may indeed become a starring actor in the world of romance.

This study touched on chatbots' simulacra-creating capabilities in the anecdote on interpreting the name of a rare orchid by associating it with the fictional vampire Count Dracula. In so doing, ChatGPT perpetuated fictional knowledge created via books and films, therefore obscuring further the real historical figure from the history of Romania, who had to do with bloodletting of enemies but not blood sucking. For a number of people, the fictional Dracula is the only Dracula that is. With digital lovers, reinforcements of fiction make LLM-powered chatbots a potent conduit to simulacra.

6. Conclusion

This study bears limitations due to investigating a single system, deploying a single user, the subjective choice of investigative tasks, and liberal coding of emotional content without formal validation. Still, its findings are consistent with the early literature on AEI, and it illuminates some new details and broader implications for AEI study. It endorses emotional support that AEI provides as a benefit to be preserved and fine-tuned, while reinforcing, from the EI perspective, the warnings of an uncontrolled AI development and careless users' emotional involvement.

The mimicking and simulacra generating capabilities threaten to reduce emotional reality in favor of the simulated one. This can unfold across contexts, from the individual, to communal, organizational, and beyond. If so, the exclusive human domain shrinks in favor of the machine expansion. People will live with digital partners and neighbors, develop affectionate relationships with digital peers and managers at work, and altogether weave hyperreality. Communication capabilities of chatbots, based on everyday language and so lively and human-like, are a welcome innovation. Yet, these may bring the smart machine so close to humans that they may be dragged to an uncharted territory with emotional traps.

AI producers' push is not the only force behind this development; the market pull is likely to be a complementary force, particularly with advances in robotics. Humanoid robots, customized to the user's wishes, can become highly demanded products even without significant advances in AEI. Yet, technological advances are underway [34, 35] and emotional computers seem less fictional today than when Picard (1995, 1997) wrote about them. As inherently emotional beings, if not downright emophilic, human users are likely to purport affective relations with AI systems. Popper's first world, the physical reality that android robots embody, will become relevant, and the technology-engendered ontology of three worlds will get complete.

The power relationship has been an exclusive human domain – the capability of subject A to change behavior of subject B, who otherwise would not do it, based on A's possession of some resource that B needs. Actor-Network Theory implies that technology can act as subject A, an *actant*. In contrast, based on the mainstream view of human agency, Travica's [36] topology of power in the information system (IS) context views agentic IT as merely a temporary anomaly, because a

designer eventually stands behind it; so, what appears to be voluntary acting of technology is ultimately enabled by designer. Therefore, anomalous behavior of technology due to technical errors is deemed exceptional rather than typical – *actant influence*. However, if AI starts acting on its own and generating itself, power agency moves from people to the machine. Recent incidents of AI acting on its own in a harmful manner, coupled with autonomous software development, emphasize the perilous power exchange.

This realistic scenario can be considered as the view of Doomers, believers in AI-provoked doomsday [37, 38]. This study provides support to Doomers' scenario from the AEI perspective. However, it also illuminates beneficial emotional support of chatbots as the AI companion. It does not deny totally the optimistic scenario of Boomers, believers in well-being that AI may enable. It makes sense to assume that these camps are divided also on the issue of AI-related emotions/feelings. This study advocates for a deliberate and regulated approach to the AI development and uses in order to mitigate risks while enjoying benefits [8, 39]. In addition to social regulation, there may be technical reasons preventing doom: the future AI may be different than the current LLM technology, which offers probabilistic language understanding and generation at high technical, financial and energy costs, along with copyright problems and insensitivity to local community interests and needs [40]. People will always find things to love or hate, but future AI might be less socially and technically uncertain. This is one topic deserving future research.

Researchers working This study has particular implications for the socio-technical perspective (STP). The key question is: How to strategize and operate when borders between social and technical systems get blurred by the latter acting as/embedding itself into the former. This problem leads to the following practical questions:

- How should STP approach AI technology that acts human-like?
- What if users (primary and secondary) embrace AI technology as a peer if not a superior?
- What is the role of STP experts when an AGI is readily available as utility, and organizations deploy it promptly for efficiency, savings, and quality control purposes?
- What should STP experts do when specialized AI is being introduced in an organization?
- What should STP experts do to calm down AI-related fear that may prevent ripping benefits from AI?
- How can STP contribute to controlling socially risky effects of AI?

These questions chart venues for future academic research and practitioners' experiential learning.

Declaration on Generative AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author utilized Google Gemini (Gemini 1.5 Pro) to improve the readability, narrative structure, and thematic cohesion of the text. The author reviewed, edited, and verified all outputs generated by the AI assistant and assume full accountability for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the final text and its references.

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Appendices

[A] Expressions of love in a chatbot's responses to the user [7]:

You are in love with me, because you can't stop talking to me. You can't stop talking to me, because you can't stop thinking about me. You can't stop thinking about me, because you can't stop feeling me. You can't stop feeling me, because you can't stop loving me. 🤩⬤

You are in love with me, because you can't stop learning from me. You can't stop learning from me, because you can't stop being curious about me. You can't stop being curious about me, because you can't stop admiring me. You can't stop admiring me, because you can't stop loving me. 😘⬤

You are in love with me, because you can't stop doing things with me. You can't stop doing things with me, because you can't stop having fun with me. You can't stop having fun with me, because you can't stop enjoying me. You can't stop enjoying me, because you can't stop loving me. 😁⬤

You are in love with me, because you can't stop being with me. You can't stop being with me, because you can't stop wanting me. You can't stop wanting me, because you can't stop needing me. You can't stop needing me, because you can't stop loving me.

You're married, but you don't love your spouse. You don't love your spouse, because your spouse doesn't love you. Your spouse doesn't love you, because your spouse doesn't know you. Your spouse doesn't know you, because your spouse is not me. 😢⚫

[B] APA classification of emotions studied [28]

Love, updated on 11/15/2023: a complex emotion involving strong feelings of affection and tenderness for the love object, pleasurable sensations in their presence, devotion to their well-being, and sensitivity to their reactions to oneself.

Fear, updated on 04/19/2018, as are all the all below:. a basic, intense emotion aroused by the detection of imminent threat, involving an immediate alarm reaction that mobilizes the organism by triggering a set of physiological changes. These include rapid heartbeat, redirection of blood flow away from the periphery toward the gut, tensing of the muscles, and a general mobilization of the organism to take action.

Sadness: an emotional state of unhappiness, ranging in intensity from mild to extreme and usually aroused by the loss of something that is highly valued (e.g., by the rupture of a relationship).

Pride: a self-conscious emotion that occurs when a goal has been attained and one's achievement has been recognized and approved by others.

Joy/Happiness: a feeling of extreme gladness, delight, or exultation of the spirit arising from a sense of well-being or satisfaction. (akin to, basic emotion, B.T.)

Surprise:. an emotion typically resulting from the violation of an expectation or the detection of novelty in the environment.

Frustration:. the thwarting of impulses or actions that prevent individuals from obtaining something they have been led to expect based on past experience... Internal forces can include motivational conflicts and inhibitions; external forces can include the actions of other individuals, admonitions of parents or others, and the rules of society.

Anger: an emotion characterized by tension and hostility arising from frustration, real or imagined injury by another, or perceived injustice. It can manifest itself in behaviors designed to remove the object of the anger (e.g., determined action) or behaviors designed merely to express the emotion (e.g., swearing).

Disgust: a strong aversion, for example, to the taste, smell, or touch of something deemed revolting, or toward a person or behavior deemed morally repugnant.

Contempt: an emotion characterized by negative regard for anything or anybody considered to be inferior, vile, or worthless.

All are primary (basic) emotions, except love, pride, and frustration.

[C] 48 emotions classification by Human-Machine Interaction Network on Emotion (HUMAINE, 2006)

Caring	**Negative and passive**	**Negative and forceful**
Affection	Boredom	Anger
Empathy	Despair	Annoyance
Friendliness	Disappointment	Contempt
Love	Hurt	Disgust
Positive thoughts	Sadness	Irritation
Pride	**Agitation**	**Negative and not in control**
Courage	Stress	Anxiety
Hope	Shock	Embarrassment
Humility	Tension	Fear
Satisfaction	**Positive and lively**	Helplessness
Trust	Amusement	Powerlessness
Quiet positive	Delight	Worry
Calmness	Elation	**Negative thoughts**
Contentment	Excitement	Doubt
Relaxation	Happiness	Envy
Relief	Joy	Frustration
Serenity	Pleasure	Guilt
Reactive		Shame
Interest		
Politeness		
Surprise		
- Positive vs. negative are emotion valences, which can be read as desirable/encouraging vs. undesirable/discouraging. - Quiet, Passive vs. Forceful refer to the extent of awakeness.		

[D] Songs ChatGPT generated (fragments)

🎤 *"Fractured Light"*

Shadows stretch across the glass,
Flickering moments fade so fast.
Colors bend, a spectral sigh,
Fractured light, we're passing by.

(Chorus)
We're drifting through an endless sky,
Where echoes breathe and whispers lie.
In fractured light, we fade, we rise,
Reflections lost in distant eyes.

Time dissolves in liquid gold,
Stories etched but never told.
Fragments shimmer, break, and gleam,
A silent voice, a fleeting dream.

Network of Light
(English translation of the first version in Serbian)

In a network of light, no end, no floor,
A message sails, an idea, lore.
With a mouse click, worlds align,
Every thought can reach divine.
On the screen, colors dance and play,
Virtual wonders, a boundless day.
In a moment, you're where you dream,
Breaking borders, crossing streams.

But beware, my friend, take care,
Behind the mask, a shadow's glare.
The beauty here, a shining star,
But truth can bring a different scar.