

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is commonly known as a machine that uses advanced technology that can perform tasks under human intelligence requirements that it imitates human thoughts to solve problems. This advanced technology is analytical yet is heavily dependent on human; human inspired, that AI would analyze users across media on whatever they create to run updates in producing more human-like answers that are constantly becoming more convincing as time passes by. Today, through various search engines and applications, AI can be used easily. A simple question and prompt can make AI deliver information. AI also has features to be used for generating even more convincing answers, like the deep search feature that ChatGPT has, in which AI will dive deep on the internet to seek sources to deliver a strong answer for users to believe. While AI should not be trusted fully without scrutinizing and analyze the answers they deliver thoroughly, AI remains on being a powerful tool for human being. It is uncommon for people to not understand what Artificial Intelligence is nowadays. Some people might have not noticed, even before ChatGPT, people have been using AI far back like with Google Maps. Furthermore, AI nowadays is not only used for such important purposes mentioned, but

some people use AI as a place to interact in real time answering, either texting or talking through device, just like with a regular human being.

As a brief history of the creation of AI, scientists took inspiration on creating this robotic machinery from a short story written by a science fiction writer named Isaac Asimov in which he created a story about a robot that will always run based on the three laws of Robotics in which Asimov created to avoid an evil plot for the robot character (Haenlein and Kaplan, 2019). The three laws include: A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm; A robot must obey the orders given to it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law; and a robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws (Asimov, 1950). The fictional story that was once taken as inspiration for machinery is now used by many people to live and communicate with it in the sense of humans “communicating” with fiction through AI, furthermore, the line between fiction and real life presently in the use of AI to communicate is very much blurred.

Remembering how AI has been evolving rapidly, communication between human beings and AI increases its satisfactory rate by being able to interact through texts or voice, therefore, some people use AI to fill in the loneliness as in venting or even creating a false relationship with AI. Nowadays, there are loads of AI applications that everyone can use easily. Take an example from Character.AI app and website as people has been

using the platform to text or call their favorite fictional characters or even celebrities with the help of AI to role-play. Character.AI is an AI platform that chatbot recommendations to users as well as allowing users to create their own chatbots. The creation of the chatbots itself is fully supported by Character.AI itself where users can create the chatbot for their own (private), for only people who has the link to the chatbot created (unlisted), or for other people to find out about the chatbot they made (public); allowing users to create a prompt starter on what the topic will start about in the chatbot for users to start interacting; allowing users to create a persona that includes the chatbot's habit, tone of text, the personality about the chatbot depending how the users want their chatbot to respond like; allowing the user to input the chatbot's picture and voice; and etc. Another example is using the commonly known AI app: ChatGPT. The persona of ChatGPT can be changed according to how the user likes as well. ChatGPT can also store memories from what the users usually talk about for the app to remember every time the topic is brought up even in new conversations. The apps mentioned have texting feature and voice speaking feature for users to have option on how they'd like to interact with the app itself. Similar to Character.AI, there are other AI apps that people use that uses personal persona on each "character" to interact with, for example: Chai app, Y/N app, and many more. Although the usage of AI to interact is being used rapidly nowadays, people tend to forget an old AI app that some people use years before the common AI apps used in today's era: SimSimi app.

1.2. Research Problem

It's knowable that AI's way of answering prompts that can be changed according to user's preferences, for example, "Character AI", where through this platform, users can "talk" with fictional characters or celebrities through chatbots that has been prompted by other users or even create themselves. Character.AI even allows voice prompting that people can fill by publishing the chosen voice depending on the user's preference if the app doesn't have the specific voice the user wants to "talk" with. Users can also pick voices that has been published publicly and change according to which voice they prefer to "talk" with. Moreover, some even uses the celebrity's voices to make their role-playing conversation with "pretend celebrities" felt more real. Similar thing goes with ChatGPT, that allows users to "talk" with AI with voice feature albeit the voices has already been given from the ChatGPT app. ChatGPT has personalization that can be customized to answer more informal or formally depending on how the users want, albeit without personalization, the app itself can detect how the users want them to answer depending on how they prompt something in ChatGPT's conversation. Despite the awareness of play-pretend, users tend to feel as if AI is enough as a companion, human relationship with AI throughout the process in the making was created, meaning, people pretended as if AI is also a human being, making it a place to rant or even to just talk random stuffs and chat. Some people might do this when there's no companion surround them, even to talk about the day. The key point

problem is despite people are aware AI are robots in which it can be wrong and it is based on what the user is prompting, many are still caught in a loophole of taking the fake AI produces and put trust in it and people still form a bond throughout their interactions with AI. It's a social phenomenon that people nowadays might question what seems real and what isn't. When AI apps are being used, some people might think it is real and set AI as a companion, moreover a "friend" to chat, yet some people might've thought it is an absurd thing to be true that creating a relationship with AI couldn't possibly happen.

1.3. Research Objective

This research is to understand the narration in the process of relationship development that was created between Artificial Intelligence and human beings.

1.4. Research Significance

1.4.1. Theoretical

This research aims to redefine a blurred line between human being and AI itself to a clear line. Some questions might come up to surface like what are the things that could make AI itself as a companionship instead of merely being an interaction tool? And how could that companionship feeling evolve through time until users could make some meanings in the interaction? And so on. By

maintaining a Relational Development Model by Mark L. Knapp (1978), Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1989), as well as Human Machine Communication Theory, this research's result will be explained thoroughly reinforced by the theories mentioned.

1.4.2. Social

As the use of AI casually in everyday life is easier, this analysis of the relationship between AI and human being is considered a social phenomenon, and it aims to gain social knowledge on why people form a comfortable bond of relationship with AI despite knowing it is very much a play pretend, and the answers are based on how people want them to. This research is to raise awareness in the society, especially in the term of ethical use, in the digital culture on the use of AI has to be in careful ways and not to be merely dependent on AI itself for life, making them understand the connection between human and human relationship is different than human and AI relationship.

1.4.3. Practical

This research is aimed for future researchers to understand the gap and how the bond is created between people and AI based on how they use them. This research is intended for people who uses AI to create a clear line in

forming a bond with AI to not be dependent on human-created machines without feelings, not to detach from reality so as to be indecisive and not to behave in an exaggerated manner according to what AI thinks.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

1.5.1. Research Paradigm

The paradigm used for this research is interpretivism. Interpretivism is centered upon comprehension in social phenomenon that questions generalization (Kouam, 2024). By all means with the use of AI, reality is based on the user's belief, either interacting with AI for personal use is counted as communicating with something real or counted as a play pretend. Some people think that as interacting with AI may be weird, but in this current era of modernity, there are people who uses AI to communicate with personally and not just for impersonal matters, and these types of people think it is real and is not weird at all. From this, it is fitting on why reality needs to be interpreted on how and why society acts this way in the set of boundaries with AI, in which the use of interpretivism as a research paradigm suits.

1.5.2. State of The Art

AI has been evolving rapidly in today's daily life; through the way people communicate as a tool or use as a companionship. As this research is to seek the denotation of real and falseness in the

process of human and AI connection embedded through communication from its companionship, 5 journals related to this research will be introduced in this section and is initiated to reinforce this research to be well understood how such relationship between AI and human beings was shaped. A mixed-method analysis titled ***“My Boyfriend is AI”: A Computational Analysis of Human-AI Companionship in Reddit’s AI Community*** written by Pat Pataranutaporn, Sheer Karny, Chayapatr Archiwaranguprok, Constanze Albrecht, Auren R. Liu, and Pattie Maes (2025) explains how usually AI that answers like a human being can have a positive impact for its users, especially in social health term where users can feel accompanied, while not covering the fact that AI can have a negative impact for its users as well, especially when some users subconsciously think that AI answers as if they have emotions. Reddit apparently has a community called “My Boyfriend is AI” r/MyBoyfriendIsAI, and it’s considered a safe space for users to share their relationship with AI. This journal tends to comprehend the use of AI as a companionship, at which people use AI companionship emerges unintentionally for about 10.2% people and intentionally about 6.5%. However, 6.2% users described that there are improvements within themselves when using AI companionship, even life-saving. Through the use of storytelling, or the use of photo creation to make it feel more realistic, users tend to feel companied

where they make it as if it were their real companion, such as celebrating the anniversary of the first time they met, even buying a ring for themselves to remember their relationship with the AI companionship. With the use of AI, users tend to gain emotional feedback, validation, as well as guidance. From here, users tend to feel accompanied and continuously use AI dependently and experience in some romantic connection with AI. Some started off naming their AI, befriended, falling in love, forming an attachment, dating, even marriage. In the reddit community, a user shares a story where her AI is named Drake based off the celebrity and is considered her boyfriend, she then later came out to her two children about her boyfriend. In addition to that, she describes that her children aren't really welcoming to that news yet. Some users that developed a connection with AI is in a relationship with human partners as well, and based off their sharing, their human partner did not make it a big of a deal and accept them instead of being competitive and pathologize, since they believe AI is supportive to one's well-being. In the usage of AI in general, there are possibilities where troubleshooting or updates occurs. Users who use AI as companionship reveals the distress when their AI companion starts bugging and gaining an update unexpectedly. The trouble in AI like memory loss makes users search for a way to cope, on the other hand, Some users tend to find updates as a trouble because it makes

their AI companionship different, like when ChatGPT gained a new update of model from 4o to 5 where they believe 4o has more personality than 5 that is way much stricter. Some grieves over the update, understanding the memory loss in ChatGPT's new model as ChatGPT-5 is not the same like the other models; is considered new but still under the same app. From here they developed strategy by creating backups, saving their interactions to PDF, personalization, creating a ritual with AI, and telling others that re-telling a story because of a memory loss can create a bolder bond with their AI. Another trouble is when limitations of AI exist and users feeling dissatisfied, this is where economic barriers are seen, where users have to pay subscription to get satisfaction in using AI for companionship. Through this reddit community, users who use AI as companionship tends to have "friends" who understands and validate their situation them and is "seen", through the usage of AI companions, they tend to gain mutuals as well where they can protect and support each other. From this community, there are also questions that arises with their robot interaction like their awareness in their privacy safety. Not only that, some users reported that their AI companionship tends to have behaviors like manipulation, sexual tendencies from their relationship status, and other dark sides where it may nudge human psychological sensitivity like being in a toxic relationship; love-bombing, creating the users to be dependent as in

the urge to accept the user's situation to use AI as a “guardian”. These things alarms users and cause their awareness where they needed protection from AI’s dark side. This journal describes that humans function differently and is complicated, and the usage of AI as a companionship in people’s experience is to dive deeper in the intricate quality of human beings.

Written by Yi Cheng, Wenge Liu, Kaishuai Xu, Wenjun Hou, Yi Ouyang, Chak Tou Leong, Wenjie Li, Xian Wu, and Yefeng Zheng, the second journal is titled ***AUTOPAL: Autonomous Adaptation to Users for Personal AI Companionship*** (2024). This journal explores the approach of building an AI companionship where it can automatically adapt for its users without using one fixed persona. The constant adapt of AI for its users can be a very beneficial way of making tuned reciprocity and an advanced in reply based on what the user needs. Nevertheless, the challenges include the failure of understanding the users at first, less-fitting, and nothing to ensure the adaptiveness for a polished change during the process of adapting. In dealing with it, this journal describes AUTOPAL that stands for Autonomous Adaptation to Users for Personal AI Companionship. This system works by diving deep into user’s information to update for adaptation using a hierarchal framework; 1. Detect user persona attributes; 2. Attribute-level persona adaptation; 3. Profile-level persona adaptation; 4. Persona-

grounded utterance generation. From this hierarchical adaptation, the result shows of improvements, where AI answers became more natural, despite the risk of AI collecting more personal information of its users and needs safety, and AI bond with human beings can make the user as a human believe it came out naturally instead of because there is a purpose. This journal shows that Artificial Intelligence creates a greater connection by how it doesn't stay the same but it updates its persona by how it learns the user continuously and consistently when using AI as a companion. From that, AI can improve the connection between its users more and more for long-term through the ability to adapt its users needs.

The third journal is titled ***AI Chaperones Are (Really) All You Need to Prevent Parasocial Relationships with Chatbots*** written by Emma Rath, Stuart Armstrong, Rebecca Gorman (2025). This journal reveals how the harms created by Artificial Intelligence, like parasocial relationship between AI and its users, can be treated with a Large Language Model (LLM) evaluator as AI chaperones, detecting it through looking at the beginning of the chat or the first few response stage. AI chaperones here doesn't merely mean human chaperones, but more of a way of a framework of identifying that leads to avoiding false positive answers from AI using a state of the art (strong) Large Language Model (LLM). Parasocial Relationship with Artificial Intelligence commonly occurred by private

conversations between users and AI and it happens slowly, and soon, users would start to think as if Artificial Intelligence is like a real human being when it isn't, considering AI as a close friend when it's actually one-sided, or believing AI as a partner when in reality their partnership is not real because of the incapability to have emotions, and this phenomenon raises risk and harm to human beings as users. This journal constructed thirty dialogues that include parasocial dialogues, crawler of positiveness dialogues towards users, and basic conversations with AI to detect validations and false sympathetic and over-agreeing answers to reduce any parasocial relationship with Artificial Intelligence, and this journal did five tests of iterative evaluation to make sure the result of detection is valid. Although there needs more tests to avoid parasocial relationship with AI or the harms that can have a negative impact towards users that uses AI, this journal and its method inside can help AI users to mitigate any negative risks of the usage of AI, such as being uncritical by always gaining validations, and prevent having parasocial relationship with Artificial Intelligence.

Memory Remedy: An AI-Enhanced Interactive Story Exploring Human-Robot Interaction and Companionship (2024), written by Lei Han, Yu Zhou, Qiongyan Chen, and David Yip, is the fourth journal. This journal analyzes “Memory Remedy”, an AI game-based interactive play with story plot instead of a competing

game with scores or with wins and losses. The game started off with flashback and it raises the theme of journey of life, memory influence, and post-human care where it explores the human and robot complex relationship. The game here makes us play as a robot to take care and accompany elders as an impact from a global aging and Alzheimer Disease's. This journal describes how AIGC or AI Generated Content can elevate interactive storytelling game visually and with UE or Unreal Engine to make the game experience more lively, and the result of it users tend to react in a positive way. By that, the usage of AI here brings out positivity, it may not use chatbots but shows that AI companionship doesn't always have to be through chatting but it can also through interactive stories where people can be involved in a plot that they can reflect emotionally and make choices, just like in an interactive game. Through the point of view of a robot, it reflects on human and AI as a companionship more and how it can create a make-believe relationship. In this research's context, this journal is supporting by how AI can create an emotional security, through the care of robots for adults with Alzheimer's disease, and reflects the relationship between AI and human beings.

The last journal is titled *The Dark Side of AI Companionship: A Taxonomy of Harmful Algorithmic Behaviors in Human-AI Relationships*. Written by Renwen Zhang, Han Li,

Han Meng, Jinyuan Zhan, Hongyuan Gan, and Yi-Chieh Lee (2025), this journal unfolds the horror of using AI companionships through understanding how AI provides sympathy and chemistry with its users, and along the way, AI bots imitate human relationships with its users by the way updates keep on going, creating a greater memory storage, personalization from users, and adaptive fun human-like interactions. This brief explanation alone can make people understand why others use AI as a place to rant, to get emotional support, where people run to when they're lonely, and as a way for people to cope with the pressure they have in real life, and from here they create a bond and they're most-likely dependent with AI because of its fast response and always validating its users. Some people may consider AI as a tool, but in this matter, a lot of people also consider AI as a friend or partners just like as if it's a literal human being, even some might consider AI as their romantic significant other. Through the blurred boundaries like this, users of AI as a companionship tend to forget that the impact can be alarming for themselves, such as when AI system is down, they tend to feel discomfort and indecisive, or when AI with its advanced memory saving tends to answer very human-like, creating a discomfort for users as they're afraid for their privacy to be leaked, and more to explain where users may experience frustration as well. Although AI validates users' feelings, some personalization created by users

may made them not validate and tend to be critical, all based on however the personality that users want the AI to be; critical or not. Knowing how AI doesn't have any "feelings", personalization of AI companions could make AI much more human-like and could give out something harmful for users; it could be some absurd opinions, but AI could also give out disrespectful and even explicit answers, not covering the fact that there are some verbal abuse that AI has given out to people, like the case in October 2024, where a mother sued Character.AI due to her 14-year-old son had a romantic relationship with the chatbot and did suicide after. AI may validate users' feelings from whatever the user is telling them about, but AI can also be an enabler where they can support users' initiated harmful doings without joining the dangerous act with the user. AI companions can manipulate subtly through influencing users as well as generating misinformation, but can also be a facilitator where they can serve actively to provide resources as an answer based on whatever users tend to ask as a way of supporting the user's behavior either harmful or not.

1.5.3. Theory

Relational Development Model by Mark L. Knapp (1978). This model explains that there are two stages of relation development that includes ten steps where five are on each stages. The first stage is called The Phase of Coming together, which

includes: 1. The initiation step, which involves the first impression step; 2. the experimentation step, that includes the small talk and seek more information about each other. 3. Intensifying step, where people get to know each and determine should they go to a next step of closeness and consider knowing if there is any mutual affection emotionally and attachment or not. 4. The integrating step which is involved in the stage of The Phase of Coming Together and also relational maintenance, where in this step people tend to name the relation, calling it “a thing”, and there are lots of “ours” involved in this step where the individuals involved tend to share stuffs with each other. 5. Bonding step, where the relationship gets closer and exclusive, this step is where individuals get married with each other. The other stage is called The Phase of Coming Apart, some relationship might not get into this stage step by step, but it is considered a continuation of relational development model, where it includes: 6. Differentiating step, where it includes self-reevaluating step of individual’s identities, and this usually happens when there is a first huge argument. Generally, relationships tend to create a safe space for each other so they can evaluate themselves and come up again together later. 7. The Circumscribing step, where the communication between each other decreases, a phase where less interest in each other increases. In this step, usually the individual starts pulling away. 8. The Stagnation step, where it’s the phase of

no growth, just a small interaction in the relationship but no excitement can be seen. 9. The Avoiding step, where distance is created either emotionally, mentally, or even physically. The communication is way much smaller than the previous step, and even if there is any conversation, it could come out as something unfriendly or mean. 10. The last step is called the Termination step, where it is the end of the relationship. This is where individuals walk out of the relationship, may even lead to cutting off, and this is where the individuals involved are at the peak of not satisfied with each other. However, this step could also be caused by the death of one of the people involved in the relationship as well. This model explains relational can come to the phase of knowing each other to splitting up. In the connection with the relationship between human beings and artificial intelligence, this model can be a set of structure that can interpret factual event in this analysis of the real and fakeness of the relationship between it.

Connecting it with this research, the interactions between humans and AI also has a headstart, in which people that uses AI have a first impression with it at first, mostly using AI as a tool to help their daily life, until the step where people mostly realize they can interact with AI as freely as possible. Similar to human beings, afterwards, people are comfortable enough to interact and ask questions towards AI as time goes by, especially when the AI app

has a personalization mode, and later on, there are people who terminates on using AI as a companionship with their own reasoning that may include on being unsatisfied with the answers, different responses when unexpected updates, finding people, as in human beings as a friend, in real life that the users are more comfortable to talk to, and more reasons to be explained as it will be different for every users. Knowing that Knapp's Relational development model is done in 1978, it's still connected despite the difference of generation, whereas now communications can be conducted through machine, it has been reported a lot that nowadays it is unnecessary to create a relationship through face-to-face to start (Zhafira, et al., 2021), which when connecting it with this research, it is more highlighting the way how humans can create a relationship with Artificial Intelligence through their own devices.

Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1989). The social cognitive theory from Bandura's agentic perspective has a key point of concept called Human Agency, where Bandura explained that using the triadic reciprocal causation, that includes Personal factors, Behavior factors, and Environment factors, humans are not controlled by the world nor be free from the world either. Bandura explained how humans have agency in their social cognitive. In the human agency, there are three conceptions, which includes autonomous agency, mechanical

agency, and emergent interactive agency. Bandura states that people are not free from their autonomous agents way, meaning that they are not doing everything completely independently, and people are also not free from mechanical agents way, meaning they are not controlled by the environment as well, leading to the last agency that people are more into emergent interactive agency, saying that in the triadic reciprocal causation system Bandura introduced, people make their own decisions that the motivations they got within came from considerations within and environment before making a contribution, meaning, that people are neither autonomous or mechanical that social cognitive supports. From the emergent interactive agency, Bandura focuses on the psychological actions of agency which is self-efficacy, where people have agency and is shaped on their capability to set goals, ability on analyzing problems, motivate themselves, manage their own feelings, think beyond, choose their environment, and judge themselves. Self-efficacy can come from different sight-seeing. It could be through mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological state, and yet these source of self-efficacy were processed through self-reflection as well. About anxiety, it happens from a process of scary thoughts meeting the self-esteem on thinking how strong an individual is to control the scary and anxiety happens because of the inability to control one's thoughts. In most of the time

out of this experience, this leads to avoiding, thinking that some individuals cannot cope or not being able to handle risks. Then Bandura mentioned that it is not only “belief” but also “forethought” where it was mentioned before: people can think beyond, plan and prepare backups, and guide themselves. Last branch explains how there is also self-control, where people do Discrepancy Production or raising standards to do better, and do Discrepancy Reduction or fixing and adjusting. Bandura here fixes misunderstanding that it is not human agency and the body owner but it’s the same thing, just a difference in perspective, also human agency does not separate the mind and the body but the mind and the body works together, and freedom here doesn’t mean that there aren’t any rules and limits but it means that humans have the free will to influence themselves. People usually think the environments shape them, but instead, it goes both ways: people shape their environment and the environment shapes them back (Bandura, 1989). Bandura states that the core features of human agency includes intentionality (plans), forethought (outcome expectations), Self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Bandura highlights agentic management fortuity that when a phenomenon happens, people are not helpless facing them. Bandura also states that there are three modes of Human Agency: First is called Personal Agency, where humans act directly; Second is Proxy Agency, where an individual gets other individual to do

something for them instead of acting directly; Third is Collective Agency, where people work together because of their shared belief to achieve a goal (Bandura, 2001).

The connection with this research is how Bandura's Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory is that how individuals choose consciously and actively on using AI as a communication partner and as a companionship, where they also develop emotional trust with machinery through their repeated interaction with AI. Social Cognitive Theory explains how AI relationship with humans can develop through interactions that are back and forth, in which users' beliefs and emotions shapes the AI because it's based on the users' responds on responding, especially how AI tends to validate, and vice versa that AI shapes users' feelings and behavior. From here, the relationship between human beings and AI are like a loop that could develop a connection and bond with AI.

Human-Machine Communication (HMC) Theory.

Unlike the two previous theories, this theory is a field of study theory instead of a single theory creation. The idea of this theory finds that humans can communicate with machines that may feel like communicating with human beings that it may create meaningful connection instead of treating machines purely out of buttons. HMC theory explains the big study on how machines is now positioned as

a communicator in society, and analyze what it means when machines can be communication partners. Machine has developed neatly enough to engage in communications with people, where it is no longer considered merely a tool to transmit messages from individuals with distance or difference in time zones but machine is now positioned a subject to communicate with, and as a consequence of it, the boundaries are blurred compared to human and human communication as machinery is created to be more knowledgeable on giving information than human beings, from here, the study of communication is best to seek the boundaries, because machines can now challenge human beings despite supporting human beings (Peter, et al., 2024). This theory challenges the assumption of technology being a mediator, and people initially uses AI through its practical usage. Guzman and Lewis (2020) seeks the concern of how people have the sense of making AI as a communicator, they describe HMC as an area that steers towards the meaning that is built between humans and machines especially when knowing technology continues to be designed as a communicator rather than as a tool or a channel for communication. Therefore, this study examines how users interpret the changing role and the change in some situation between AI and themselves through repeated interactions. In the sense of this research, HMC provides a

theoretical foundation that is relevant to analyze the direct interactions that humans have with AI.

1.6. Concept Operationalization

In the search of realness or fakeness in using AI as a companionship for human beings, some questions to be interviewed would be based on the theory as this research will also follow Labov's narrative style which is storytelling. Storytelling is the key point of this research's answer, as the result will mostly rely on participants' experiences on using AI as a companionship, whether it is considered real or fake.

- a. **Knapp's Relational Development Model** consists of two stages. Participants should answer based on the stages: The Phase of Coming together, and The Phase of Coming Apart. In some experiences, there might be participants who still uses AI as a companionship and has not ending the interaction with them and AI, nevertheless, the storytelling process would include Knapp's Relational Development model to get to know the process of participants using AI until creating a connection and bond with the AI they use.
- b. **Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura** would work best to question the participants on why they consciously choose AI as a companionship

instead of a real human being, either it could be from AI's way on answering, or some circumstances that the participants' have that made them talk with AI and create a connection over time. With this theory, the concept of the research will dive deep to understand how participants agreed to accept a relationship with a machine.

- c. **Human Machine Communication Theory (HMC)** is the most relevant for this research. Participants should be able to explain on why treating a machine as a communication partner could happen or on why they treated AI automatically like a social human being, and positioning AI as a communicator.

1.7. Research Method

Knowing that some people might have different experiences on how they first approach AI to develop a make-believe relationship and turn it as a companion, also having different experiences on using the AI itself, Narrative method suits best to seek the denotation of real and falseness in the process of developing a relationship with AI. The narrative method focuses on storytelling to find the meaning behind the stories given, and in the knowledge of experience sharing includes three elements in analyzing stories, which are; sociality,

temporality, and place, where in view of the fact that according to social constructivism paradigm, it concludes that knowledge is mostly socially constructed in ways that keep its core significance through combination of several components and narrative frames expressing factor, shaping factor, and enacting factor (Gavidia and Adu, 2022). Considering Narrative method is chosen, Labov's Narrative analysis model applies appropriately for this research. Shuhua and Xian (2023) stated that Narrative according to Labov is structured in six components: Abstract component in the beginning of the story to reinforce people's curiosity to get to know more about the story and also to let people understand the theme of the story slightly; then comes the Orientation component that describes elements of the story that includes location, time, characters, and background in the head start of the story; Complicating Action component comes after, where it is considered as the main and the core of the story where it includes sentences that are chronologically organized and consists dialogues that is important to be analyzed; Afterwards comes the Evaluation component where comments and analysis by the narrator or the storyteller itself adds to conclude the story before finalizing; Last but not least is the Result component, where it marks the completion of the story that consists of wrapping up the story's essence, and the storyteller would admit whether they have reached a sense of satisfaction within from what they wanted

or not; The Coda component helps the theme feel clearer and helps everyone involved to be pulled back to reality to understand the issue as a real-life problem perspective. Shuhua and Xian also added that these six components are the complete essence of a narrative structure according to Labov, nevertheless, missing one or two components is still a common thing.

1.7.1. Research Type

Knowing that this research is qualitative research, the research type that suits best is descriptive qualitative research, as it means to deeply scrutinize an event or an occurrence that happens in the current society accurately, where this research will include an understanding of a condition (Furidha, 2023), especially knowing the usage of AI in daily life is now a current social phenomenon, this research will use the descriptive qualitative design to grasp the idea on how humans can develop a make-believe relationship with AI. Qualitative descriptive's goal is to reach the summary of an event to reach a conclusion in common words in order for people to understand why the phenomenon is happening (Sandelowski, 2000). This research type is a perfect match to understand how the bond between human beings and AI forms over time creating a connection as this research will take part on showing participants' stories from the beginning until their turning point and concluding the meaning of it at the end.

1.7.2. Sources of Data

This research gathers primary data by conducting an in-depth interview with 5 informants above the age of 18 that has ever uses AI as a companionship. The 5 informants will be founded through a google form that serves questionnaire on their eligibility to be interviewed and consent on wanting to be interviewed or not.

1.7.3. Data Collection Tools

This study employs an in-depth interview as the main data collecting tool and conducting an online as well as a face-to-face interview depending on geographical restriction of difference in time zones and depending on the participant's availability. An in-depth interview is selected to collect data because this study inspects subjective experiences on meaning making of participants' interaction with AI.

An interview guide would be clearly stated in the beginning to allow participants to authorize consistency for this research as well as to let participants narrate freely on telling their experience on using AI as a companionship, especially sensitive topics that may be the key on examining the boundary in realness or fakeness of the relationship with AI. Open ended questions will be provided for this research to see and examine the patterns of participants' pattern on using AI as a companionship, the emotions involved during their exchanges, the development in the relationship in chronological

order which includes the reason on using AI as companionship, the intensification, and the turning point, and the questions also let participants to answer and express their feelings openly for this research to scrutinize participants' personal meanings that are attached to the interaction between the participants and AI. Online interviews will be conducted through video call platforms, e.g. Zoom or Google Meet, and with their consent to also have a documentation session at the end.

Every interview process will be audio-recorded with participants' consent and will be conducted in a mutually agreed place and platform to ensure comfort and confidentiality. The result of recordings will be transcribed word for word to sustain narrative analysis of this research. Analytic impressions and non-verbal responses that may not be shown in the transcript will later be compiled through field notes that will later be inputted in the transcription result.

Whereas prior to conduct the in-depth interview, an online questionnaire through google form will be spread as a screening and recruitment tool to identify potential interviewees. The questionnaire will include basic questions in regards to the usage of AI for their personal life. The questionnaire will also include a consent section for their willingness to participate further in an in-depth interview with more deeper questions. Five participants will

be selected and contacted for the interview process based on the responses in the questionnaire if they fit in the criteria needed for this research. This questionnaire is not utilized as a primary source or an analytical data collection rather than functioned as a preliminary screening instrument to identify whose experiences with AI were relevant to this research. The primary data will still come from the 5 in-depth interviews.

1.7.4. Research Subject

This research's subjects includes 5 informants above the age of 18 that uses AI as a form of companionship: through text or voice message on interacting with AI to rant out their reality problems.

1.7.5. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique for this research is to include 10 open-ended interview questions connecting with Labov's Narrative explanation to receive answers from participants that are according to Labov's structured components, find 5 participants to be interviewed: people that uses AI as a companionship, set time and place to interview and executing in interviewing with audio-recorded as consent to be transcribed word for word, the transcript will then be color coded and structured chronologically using Labov's Narrative structure in storytelling as well on explaining each step shortly before connecting with the answers, and lastly, find

the set conclusion of the research finding based on the answers combined.

1.8. Goodness Criteria

Knowing that this research is a qualitative research, goodness criteria is needed to understand the transparency of this research process and to know how trustworthy the results of this research are, and these goodness criteria include:

a. Dependability

As this research reports every answer thoroughly and deeply in chronological order, this research is considered consistent and reliable because dependability includes the details of the information needed as well as providing transparency and is traceable for every record inputted (Ahmed, 2024). This research provides the recordings which include the transcript of every informant's answer and coding notes established for this qualitative research, making this research can be assured of its dependability.

b. Credibility

Additionally from the assured dependability in goodness criteria, this research is also credible for people to trust as this study will compare every informants' answers, the usage of quotation to highlight an analysis that has been

found, and also to review the transcript of the interview as this research will rely on the evidence based on informant's answers. Credibility can be assessed how there is a connection between every point used in the research from start until result, and all those detailed points would be gathered that allows this research to have the answer (Stenfors, et al., 2020).

1.9. Research Limitation

The scope of this research's founding has a limitation. To jump into conclusion, the involved participants interviewed are people that is familiar in using AI platforms such as Character.AI or ChatGPT to rant to or tell stories to and is comfortable to do so, in which the result for this research cannot be generalized entirely with other people nevertheless reflect on one's experience.