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The Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence Utilization and Human Capital Development Among Pastors' Kids at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) utilization and perceived human capital development among pastors' kids at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB). A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used. Questionnaires were distributed to all 130 members of the target population, and 101 completed questionnaires were returned. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson's product–moment correlation, and a thematic summary of open-ended responses. The mean score for AI utilization was 1.92 (SD = 0.64), while the mean score for perceived human capital development was 2.13 (SD = 0.70). Participants also identified benefits related to information access, learning, research, productivity, and career preparation, alongside concerns about access, over dependence, ethical use, and employment changes. The study recommends clear institutional guidance, AI-literacy training, equitable access, and learning activities that continue to develop students' independent thinking.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Human capital development, Pastors' kids.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly becoming part of education, communication, research, and the world of work. Its growing use in education is closely connected to human capital development, which refers to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies that individuals acquire through education, training, and experience. These capabilities contribute to personal growth, productivity, and preparation for future employment (Crompton & Burke, 2023). AI can support human capital development by providing learners with additional opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop skills, solve problems, and apply what they have learned in practical situations.

Globally, AI tools are increasingly being used in higher education to explain difficult concepts, summarize information, generate ideas, support research, provide feedback, and assist students with academic tasks. These applications can make learning resources more accessible and provide students with additional ways to understand course content. However, the benefits depend on how learners use the technology and whether they critically evaluate the information it provides. UNESCO (2023) emphasizes that generative AI offers opportunities for education and research but requires appropriate institutional guidance, ethical safeguards, and respect for human judgement. Similarly, Almasri (2024) discusses the potential of AI to support teaching and learning while highlighting the importance of considering how the technology is used in educational settings. Therefore, AI should complement students' learning efforts rather than replace independent thinking, creativity, and personal responsibility.

In Africa, the growing use of AI in universities presents opportunities to improve teaching, learning, and students' preparation for employment. Higher education institutions are expected to prepare graduates who can respond to changing social, economic, and technological demands. As digital technologies become increasingly important in education and the workplace, students need opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required to use these technologies effectively. However, the benefits of AI may depend on students'

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access to digital resources, their level of AI literacy, and the guidance they receive from lecturers and their institutions. Bond et al. (2024) highlight the importance of ethical practices, collaboration, and research quality in the integration of AI into higher education. This suggests that universities need to encourage responsible AI use while continuing to develop students' independent thinking, communication, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills.

Human capital development involves more than acquiring academic knowledge. It also includes developing critical thinking, creativity, communication, teamwork, leadership, digital competence, and problem-solving abilities. These competencies help university students prepare for employment and contribute meaningfully to their communities. AI may support the development of some of these skills by helping students access information, explore different ideas, and practise solving problems. However, using AI does not automatically lead to improved skills or professional competence. Wang et al. (2024) reviewed research on AI in education and highlighted the importance of understanding its applications within different educational contexts. Consequently, it is necessary to examine not only whether students use AI but also how they perceive its relationship with their learning and personal development.

The University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB), provides a relevant setting for examining the relationship between AI utilization and human capital development. Pastors' kids studying at the university are preparing for future academic, professional, and community responsibilities in a world where digital competence and ethical decision-making are increasingly important. Although AI offers opportunities to support learning and career preparation, there is a need for context-specific evidence on its relationship with students' perceived development of knowledge, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, productivity, and career readiness. Understanding this relationship may help lecturers and university administrators develop appropriate strategies for integrating AI into teaching and learning.

Therefore, this study examined the relationship between artificial intelligence utilization and perceived human capital development among pastors' kids at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton. The study focused on students' reported use of AI for academic purposes and their perceptions of its contribution to learning, skills development, productivity, and preparation for future career demands. The findings may help inform responsible AI integration in higher education while emphasizing the continued importance of independent thinking, ethical responsibility, and human-centred learning.

Artificial intelligence contributes to human capital development by supporting learners with more opportunities to applies theses competencies. Technology changes is closely connected to Human capital development. Human capital refers to knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies that individual acquire through education, training and experience. these capabilities contribute to personal growth (Crompton & Burke, 2023).

Globally AI is increasingly being used in education to clarify hard concepts, give a summary of information, create ideas, support research, give feedback and assist learners in finishing academic tasks. (UNESCO (2023) supports that Ai opportunities for learning and research, which requires institutional guidance. It is important to note that technology should support human llearning rather than replace human judgement.

In Africa, the use of AI in uviversities provides opportunities in higher education. Institutions are meant to prepare graduates who are able to handle changes in social economic and technology . as digital technologies is gradually becoming important to learning and employment, students require a chance to develop the kbowledge and skills neede in using these technologies effectively

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become part of everyday learning, communication, research, and work. In higher education, students may use AI-enabled tools to search for information, generate ideas, organize material, receive feedback, and explore explanations of difficult concepts. These uses may support learning, but they also raise questions about academic integrity, the quality of information, privacy, and students continued use of independent judgement (Almasri, 2024 .

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Human capital development refers to the growth of knowledge, skills, and abilities that help people contribute to their communities and prepare for work. In a university setting, these capabilities may include critical thinking, creativity, communication, problem-solving, teamwork, digital competence, leadership, and career readiness. AI may support some of these areas when students use it as a learning aid and evaluate its outputs carefully. However, access to AI alone does not guarantee that students will develop these capabilities.

UNESCO (2023) notes that generative AI creates opportunities for education and research but requires appropriate safeguards, guidance, and attention to human agency. Reviews of AI in education similarly describe potential learning benefits while identifying concerns about ethics, research quality, and responsible implementation ; Bond et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). These concerns make it important to examine not only whether students use AI, but also how they perceive its relationship with their learning and development.

The rationale for conducting this study comes from a critical empirical deficit in African higher education contexts, specifically in Kenya. While international literature extensively documents AI's potential in Western and Asian institutions (Almasri, 2024; Bond et al., 2024), there is a lack of context-specific evidence examining how undergraduate students in faith-based Kenyan universities interact with AI to build human capital. Without empirical data, university administrators and educators operate on unverified assumptions, leading either to overly restrictive AI bans or unguided adoption. This study bridges that gap by systematically quantifying student AI utilization and its statistical association with self-reported human capital growth.

The conceptual link between AI utilization and human capital development is grounded in cognitive scaffolding and skill acquisition mechanisms. AI tools do not merely automate tasks; when engaged intentionally, they function as cognitive amplifiers. Students utilize AI to decompose complex academic concepts, conduct comprehensive information searches, receive real-time feedback on writing, and simulate real-world problem-solving scenarios (Matere, 2024; Wainaina & Sun, 2025). This active engagement enhances student productivity, expands domain knowledge, and fosters digital self-efficacy, which constitutes core pillars of modern human capital. The University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB) provides a relevant setting for this inquiry. Pastors' kids studying at the university are preparing for academic, professional, and community roles in a context where digital skills and ethical responsibility are increasingly important. However, the extent to which AI utilization is associated with their perceived human capital development requires context-specific evidence. This study therefore examined AI utilization and its relationship with perceived human capital development among pastors' kids at UEAB.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study was:

- To examine the relationship between AI utilization and perceived human capital development among pastors' kids at UEAB.
- To determine the extent to which pastors' kids use AI tools for academic purposes at UEAB.
- To examine the relationship between AI utilization and students' perceived knowledge, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills.
- To assess students' perceptions of AI's contribution to academic productivity and preparation for future career demands.
- To identify challenges associated with AI utilization for human capital development among pastors' kids at UEAB.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Capital Theory

The study was guided by Human Capital Theory, associated with Becker (1964). The theory views education, training, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills as investments that can improve people's capabilities, productivity, and employment opportunities.

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The theory is relevant because AI may provide students with additional ways to access information, explore ideas, practice problem-solving, and complete academic tasks. If students use these tools thoughtfully, they may strengthen knowledge and skills that are useful in further study and future employment. In this study, AI utilization is treated as the independent variable, while perceived human capital development is the dependent variable. The latter includes students' reported learning, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, productivity, and career readiness.

Human Capital Theory does not mean that AI use automatically produces development. Students still need to assess the accuracy of AI-generated information, apply their own judgement, and take responsibility for their work. Overdependence may reduce opportunities to practice independent reasoning. The theory therefore supports examining the relationship between AI use and perceived development while recognizing that responsible use and active learning matter.

While Becker's classic theory assumes a linear relationship between educational investment and skill accumulation, Pastors' Kids Sample analyzed that AI utilization does not automatically yield human capital development. If students engage in passive copying or uncritical acceptance of AI-generated outputs, technological reliance leads to cognitive weakening rather than skill expansion. Therefore, I extend Becker's framework by asserting that technological capital investment yields positive human capital returns only when moderated by active student agency, critical verification, and ethical self-regulation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study proposes that AI utilization may be associated with perceived human capital development. AI utilization includes use for academic tasks, information searching, research, assignment support, and problem-solving. Perceived human capital development includes knowledge and learning, critical thinking, creativity and innovation, productivity, and career readiness. Access to technology, AI literacy, and the university learning environment may influence this relationship.

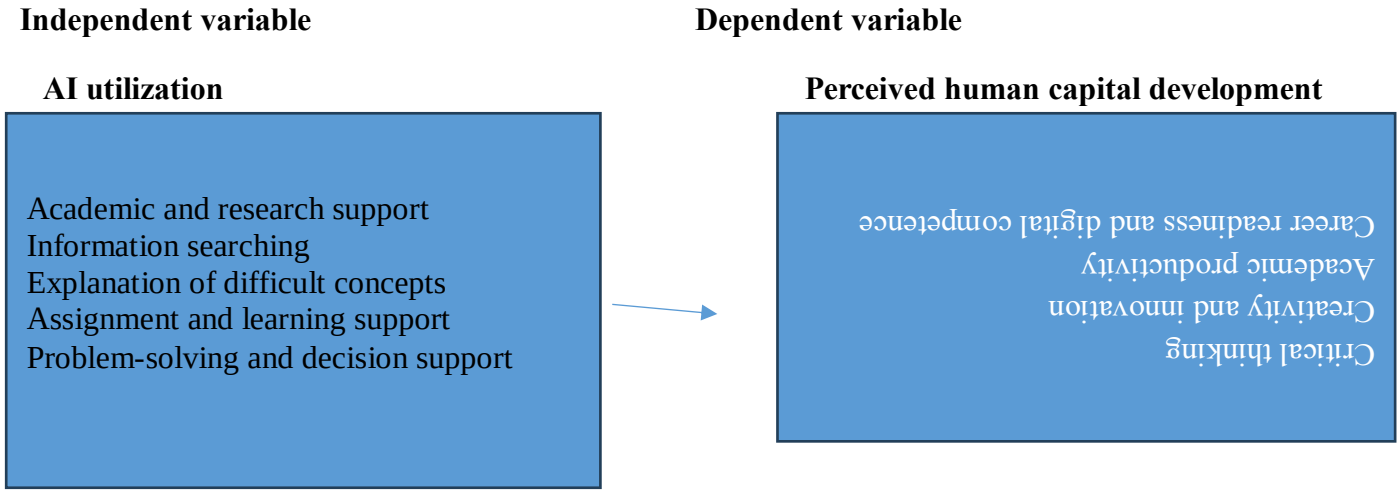


Figure 1. Conceptual framework linking AI utilization with perceived human capital development.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Artificial Intelligence Utilization in Higher Education

AI refers to computer-based systems that perform tasks commonly associated with human abilities, including analyzing information, recognizing patterns, generating text, and supporting problem-solving. In higher education, students may use AI tools to clarify concepts, obtain feedback, organize ideas, and support research. These uses can make learning assistance more readily available, although the usefulness of an output depends on the quality of the prompt, the tool's limitations, and the student's ability to check the response.

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UNESCO (2023) emphasizes that generative AI should be introduced with attention to privacy, equity, human agency, and educational purposes. This guidance is important because AI tools can produce inaccurate or misleading material and may create concerns about authorship and academic integrity. Bond et al. (2024), in a review of reviews on AI in higher education, also call for greater attention to ethics, collaboration, and research quality. Together, these sources suggest that institutions should provide guidance rather than assume that students will automatically know how to use AI appropriately.

Systematic reviews also identify possible benefits of AI-supported teaching and learning. Almasri (2024) reviewed empirical research on AI in science teaching and learning, while Wang et al. (2024) reviewed the broader literature on AI in education. These reviews provide a basis for considering AI's potential to support learning, but they do not establish that every student or setting will experience the same outcomes. The relationship between AI use and learning depends on the activity, context, and way the technology is used. To navigate this transformation effectively, global policy framework guides emphasize that technical integration must be paired with clear ethical oversight and governance.

Miao and Holmes (2023) highlight the indispensable role of comprehensive policy directives in safeguarding human capacity, ethical conduct, user privacy, and institutional integrity within education and research sectors. At the empirical level, a growing body of literature specifically examines how these global dynamics manifest within higher education institutions across Kenya.

Matere (2024) investigated the practical efficacy of AI applications, including intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive learning platforms, virtual teaching assistants, automated grading platforms, and learning analytics—within Kenyan universities. Matere's findings demonstrated that while experienced users report tangible benefits in personalized instruction, assessment efficiency, and rapid feedback delivery, systemic barriers such as limited professional training, inadequate technology infrastructure, and weak curricular integration continue to impede optimal adoption.

Complementing this baseline, research by Wainaina and Sun (2025) explored educators' perceptions of generative AI and their baseline willingness to integrate these technologies into teaching and scholarly research. Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), their survey of faculty members revealed that while perceived pedagogical and research benefits significantly drive educator adoption, profound concerns surrounding academic integrity and ethical misuse persist. The role of educators remains crucial because their guidance directly dictates whether students engage with AI as a cognitive scaffold to deepen knowledge or merely as a shortcut for assignment completion. Expanding the scope beyond conventional classroom settings.

Aditya and Otermans (2025) examined the potential of AI-driven platforms to facilitate teacher training, personalized instruction, and youth upskilling throughout Kenya. Combining mixed-method evidence and stakeholder feedback, their research demonstrated encouraging trends in learner engagement and skill acquisition, emphasizing AI's potential to bridge resource and connectivity gaps in underserved communities when paired with localized implementation strategies.

Human Capital Development

Human capital development involves building knowledge, abilities, and competencies that people can use in education, employment, and community life. For university students, relevant capabilities include communication, critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving. These competencies are developed through learning, practice, feedback, and opportunities to apply knowledge.

AI may contribute to this process by helping students locate information, compare explanations, generate possible approaches, and practice tasks. For example, a student might ask an AI tool to explain a concept and then compare that explanation with course readings. This kind of use can support learning when the student remains actively involved. In contrast, copying AI-generated answers without checking them may limit understanding and reduce opportunities to develop independent judgement.

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Within broader organizational settings, Riany (2025) established significant positive associations between strategic AI adoption factors and institutional innovation within Kenyan public research bodies, illustrating that human capital development and technological adoption are mutually reinforcing drivers of national capacity. However, a notable synthesis gap persists in the existing local literature. While foundational studies such as Wainaina and Sun (2025) offer valuable insights into faculty readiness, they center primarily on educator perspectives rather than the holistic human capital development of students themselves and completely overlook unique student demographics, such as the distinct socioeconomic and developmental experiences of pastors' children. The present study directly addresses this empirical divide by centering the perspectives of students and evaluating their perceived acquisition of knowledge, functional skills, and core competencies in direct relation to their AI utilization habits.

The literature therefore points to a balanced position: AI can be a useful learning aid, but it should not replace the learner's own effort, professional judgement, or interaction with lecturers and peers. Responsible use requires AI literacy, verification of information, respect for privacy, and compliance with institutional academic-integrity expectations.

The literature describes potential benefits and risks of AI in higher education, but general reviews do not answer every question about particular student groups or institutional settings. This study addresses a local evidence gap by examining the association between AI utilization and perceived human capital development among pastors' kids at UEAB. Because the study uses self-reported questionnaire data collected at one point in time, it provides evidence about students' perceptions and the relationship between the two measured constructs, rather than proof of a causal effect.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participants' characteristics and responses. Pearson's product–moment correlation was used to examine the association between AI utilization and perceived human capital development.

Population and Sampling Procedure

Pastors' kids (PKs) at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton represent a unique sub-population (N = 130 total census target) characterized by distinct socio-cultural, ethical, and psychological dynamics within a faith-based institution. As children of clergy within the Seventh-day Adventist educational network, PKs are subject to heightened community visibility, moral expectations, and scrutiny regarding academic integrity, ethical stewardship, and leadership (Riany, 2025). Examining PKs provides crucial baseline evidence on how students under strong ethical accountability balance technological efficiency (e.g., AI assistance) with personal academic integrity and critical self-reliance. Rather than generalizing across a heterogeneous student body where ethical orientation varies widely, studying PKs illuminates how high-expectation cohorts navigate AI adoption without sacrificing academic honesty.

Questionnaires were distributed to all 130 members of the target population, making the approach a census or total population invitation. A total of 101 complete questionnaires were returned and included in the dataset.

Research Instrument

Data was collected using an online structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included demographic questions on gender, age, year of study, and the duration of the parent's or guardian's pastoral ministry. The Likert-type section included ten statements on AI utilization and nine statements on perceived human capital development. An open-ended question invited respondents to comment on opportunities, challenges, and recommendations. Responses to the Likert items were coded as 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, and 4 = Strongly Disagree. With this coding, lower mean scores indicate stronger agreement.

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Validity and Reliability

Content and face validity were considered by aligning questionnaire items with the study objectives, the constructs in the conceptual framework, and the Human Capital Theory perspective. The manuscript reports that a pilot test was conducted with pastors' kids who had recently completed their coursework and that the pilot produced a Cronbach's alpha of .90. In the main dataset, Cronbach's alpha was .934 for the ten-item AI-utilization scale, .943 for the nine-item human-capital-development scale, and .962 for all 19 items. These values indicate high internal consistency.

Data Collection

Questionnaire responses were collected electronically. Participation should be voluntary and based on informed consent. Respondents' identities and information should be kept confidential, data should be stored securely, and participants should be free to decline or stop participating without penalty.

Data Analysis

The dataset contained 103 submissions. Composite scores were calculated as the mean of the ten AI-utilization items and the nine human-capital-development items using available item responses. The correlation analysis included 101 respondents with usable scores on both constructs. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson's correlation, and a summary of open-ended responses were used. The open-ended responses were summarized by common topics; this was not presented as a formal qualitative coding reliability analysis. Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance

Permission was obtained from the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (UEAB). Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents before they completed the survey. To safeguard participant rights, respondents were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Data confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with all collected information used exclusively for the purposes of this research.

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Participants' Characteristics

The number of valid responses differed across demographic questions. Percentages below are based on the valid responses reported for each item, so the totals may not equal 101 in every table.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	54	54.0%
Female	46	46.0%
Total valid responses	100	100.0%

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
20–24 years	**65**	**64.4%**
25–29 years	**25**	**24.8%**
Below 20 years	**7**	**6.9%**
30 years and above	**4**	**4.0%**
Total valid responses	**101**	**100.1%***
Year of study	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Fourth year	30	30.3%
Postgraduate	22	22.2%

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Third year	22	22.2%
Second year	16	16.2%
First year	9	9.1%
Total valid responses	99	100.0%

Parent/guardian's duration in pastoral ministry	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
15 years and above	75	75.0%
11–15 years	15	15.0%
5–10 years	9	9.0%
Less than 5 years	1	1.0%
Total valid responses	100	100.0%

Table 1: Demographics

Descriptive Statistics for the Main Variables

Construct	**Number of items**	**Mean**	**Standard deviation**	**Interpretation**
AI utilization	10	1.92	0.64	General agreement
Perceived human capital development	9	2.13	0.70	General agreement

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

The descriptive results demonstrate that pastors' kids at UEAB report active AI utilization (M = 1.92, SD = 0.64) and high for Pastors' Kids SampleAI & Human Capital Development N = 130, n = 103 returned, n = 101 analyzed perceived human capital growth (M = 2.13, SD = 0.70). Item-level analysis revealed that agreement was highest for using AI to explain difficult concepts (M = 1.61, SD = 0.69) and search for academic information (M = 1.68, SD = 0.73).

The mean score for AI utilization was 1.92 (SD = 0.64), indicating general agreement with statements about using AI for academic purposes. The mean score for perceived human capital development was 2.13 (SD = 0.70), also indicating general agreement. Because lower values represent stronger agreement, the AI-utilization scale received a more favorable average rating than the human-capital-development scale. These results reflect respondents' perceptions. On the other hand, lower agreement was observed for AI's role in leadership development (M = 2.26, SD = 0.78) and teamwork (M = 2.27, SD = 0.81). To interpret this discrepancy to mean that while AI excels as an individual cognitive scaffold for information processing, it cannot substitute for interpersonal collaborative experiences required for holistic leadership development.

Item-Level Results

Questionnaire statement (shortened)	**Valid N**	**Mean**	**SD**
Frequently use AI for academic purposes	100	1.84	0.79
AI supports assignment completion	101	1.87	0.78
Use AI to search for academic information	101	1.68	0.73
AI helps explain difficult concepts	101	1.61	0.69
Use AI for research	101	1.89	0.80
Have adequate AI skills	101	1.88	0.79
AI enhances learner productivity	100	1.79	0.73
Use AI for problem-solving and decisions	101	2.24	0.90
AI promotes independent learning	101	2.09	0.81

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Confident using AI in studies	100	2.07	0.74
Use critical thinking while using AI	101	2.05	0.88
AI helps resolve problems	101	2.11	0.82
AI contributes to leadership skills	99	2.26	0.78
AI supports innovation in academic/social problems	100	1.97	0.74
AI supports skills for job readiness	100	2.11	0.84
AI supports communication	100	2.22	0.86
AI supports teamwork	99	2.27	0.81
AI helps prepare for future career demands	99	2.02	0.84
AI supports ethical behaviour	100	2.23	0.90

Table 3: Level results

The strongest agreement was recorded for using AI to explain difficult concepts (M = 1.61, SD = 0.69) and to search for academic information (M = 1.68, SD = 0.73). Respondents also generally agreed that AI supports assignment completion and productivity. Comparatively higher means were recorded for teamwork (M = 2.27, SD = 0.81), leadership skills (M = 2.26, SD = 0.78), and problem-solving and decision-making (M = 2.24, SD = 0.90). These results suggest that respondents saw AI as especially useful for information access and explanation, while their perceptions of its contribution to interpersonal and leadership capabilities were more moderate. All interpretations follow the scale coding, where lower means indicate stronger agreement.

Reliability Analysis

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
AI utilization	10	.934
Perceived human capital development	9	.943
Full instrument	19	.962

Table 4: Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha values indicate high internal consistency for both scales and the full instrument.

Relationship Between AI Utilization and Human Capital Development

Variables	N	Pearson's r	p value	Decision
AI utilization and perceived human capital development	101	.751	< .001	Reject H_0

Table 5: Pearsons's correlation

Pearson's correlation showed a strong positive association between AI utilization and perceived human capital development, r (99) = .751, p < .001, based on 101 respondents. The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level. Respondents who reported greater AI utilization also tended to report stronger human-capital-development outcomes.

Students who reported higher levels of structured AI utilization also reported significantly greater gains in knowledge acquisition, academic productivity, problem-solving confidence, and career readiness. This empirical finding supports the core premise of Human Capital Theory while reinforcing UNESCO's (2023) guidelines on technology-enhanced learning.

Summary of Open-Ended Responses

Theme	Summary of responses
Access and affordability	Respondents called for broader access to AI tools and features.
Learning and research	AI was described as useful for finding information, explaining concepts, and

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	supporting academic tasks.
Skills and career preparation	Responses connected AI use with digital competence and preparation for future work.
Ethical and critical use	Respondents emphasized responsible use and the importance of human judgement.
Sustainability	Some responses mentioned water and energy use and the need for environmentally responsible technology.
Employment concerns	Some respondents expressed concern that AI could replace or change jobs.

Table 6: Open ended responses

These themes summarize the types of comments provided in the open-ended responses.

DISCUSSION

The descriptive results suggest that respondents generally used AI for academic purposes and viewed it as helpful for finding information, understanding difficult concepts, completing assignments, and improving productivity. These perceptions are consistent with the potential educational applications described in UNESCO's (2023) guidance and reviews of AI in education (Almasri, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). At the same time, the results do not show that AI automatically improves learning; the study measured respondents' reported experiences and perceptions.

The strong positive correlation between AI utilization and perceived human capital development indicates that students who reported greater use of AI also tended to report stronger development related outcomes. This finding is consistent with the idea that technology may support opportunities to build knowledge and skills. However, the study was correlational and used self-report measures collected at one time. The relationship may partly reflect students' general attitudes toward technology, their access to digital resources, or other factors not measured in the study.

The item-level findings also suggest that respondents were more positive about AI's usefulness for information access and explanation than about its contribution to teamwork and leadership. This distinction matters because human capital includes interpersonal and professional competencies, not only the ability to find information or complete tasks. Universities should therefore combine AI-supported learning with group work, discussion, presentations, practical tasks, and opportunities for students to demonstrate their own reasoning.

The open-ended comments reinforce the need for responsible and equitable integration. Concerns about overdependence, ethical use, affordability, environmental costs, and possible job changes suggest that AI guidance should address both opportunities and risks. This is consistent with UNESCO's (2023) emphasis on human agency and appropriate safeguards and with Bond et al.'s (2024) call for stronger ethical and research practices in higher education.

CONCLUSION

The study examined AI utilization and perceived human capital development among pastors' kids at UEAB. Respondents generally agreed that they used AI for academic activities and that it supported several aspects of learning and preparation for work. The AI-utilization and human-capital-development scales showed high internal consistency. The correlation analysis identified a strong positive association between the two constructs ($r = .751$, $p < .001$). The findings support the conclusion that higher self-reported AI utilization was associated with stronger self-reported human-capital-development outcomes in this sample. AI is best understood as a support for learning rather than a replacement for independent thought, human interaction, or ethical responsibility.

1. Empirical Validation of AI Scaffolding. AI utilization serves as a statistically robust, positive scaffold

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for self-reported academic productivity, concept comprehension, and research execution among pastors' kids at UEAB.

2. Preservation of Cognitive Agency. While AI accelerates information retrieval and assignment completion, respondents recognize that over-dependence threatens critical thinking and original intellectual effort.
3. Need for Ethical Stewardship. High-expectation student cohorts require clear institutional boundaries that promote digital literacy without encouraging academic dishonesty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

University of Eastern Africa Baraton Administration to formulate an explicit institutional AI policy specifying acceptable disclosure, data privacy standards, and academic integrity boundaries.

Academic Faculty encourages to redesign course assessments to emphasize higher-order evaluation, oral defenses, and practical problem-solving that require critical verification of AI outputs. Lastly, students to practice self-regulated AI engagement by treating generative platforms as supplementary learning aids rather than primary authors.

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