

Students' Perceptions of AI in the Global South and North

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Introduction

Quality educators are keenly interested in the rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on their students. However, educators' current understanding might be highly localized and not encompass national or global differences on the use of AI by students or attitudes toward it. Faced with a disruptive technology such as generative AI that is based on quickly evolving large-language models (LLMs), it is critical for educators to evaluate its effects on their current students, classes, and procedures.³ Under the cognitive load of adapting to a new educational landscape,⁴ educators might assume that their students represent a microcosm of students around the world.⁵ This is likely not the case. Emerging evidence suggests that there may be an important difference between how individuals in the developed world and those in the developing world use and think about AI.⁶ Specifically, there is reason to think that individuals' positive attitudes toward it are higher in the Global South than those in the developed world.⁷

A multinational study performed by Google/Ipsos (2024) drawn from 17,000 interviews across seventeen countries suggested that adults in emerging markets have a more positive opinion of AI than those in the developed world.⁸ For example, the percent who responded that AI would have a positive impact on "the way we work" was 71% in emerging markets and 41% in the United States. This optimistic attitude is logical. AI has the potential to address numerous educational and training needs in the developing world.⁹

Countries in the Global South face broad educational challenges.¹⁰ Most germane to the application of AI to developing countries¹¹ is a shortage of teachers. While the average high school student-teacher ratio is one to thirteen in OECD countries, it is one to twenty-two in lower middle-income and low-income countries in 2019¹² with a higher likelihood of teachers having less training.¹³ AI programs could assist existing teachers to educate more students effectively by acting as individual tutors. For example, students in India scored higher in Hindi and math using an AI personalized learning tool.¹⁴ For adults, AI could facilitate job training and provide on-the-job assistance. Emerging research suggests AI might level skill disparities, enabling low-level workers to perform more like higher-performing peers.¹⁵ In essence, developing countries face shortages of skilled professionals, with a severe lack of teachers, doctors, engineers, and managers, especially in rural areas. AI could thus enable students and workers in the developing world, even those with access to minimal resources and lower levels of training, to improve their performance without deep pocket investments, major reforms to educational and training infrastructure, and even relocation. AI has the potential to mitigate the discrepancies and deficits in resources, education, and skill training by enhancing the productivity of these essential

workers,¹⁶ ultimately contributing to improvements in overall health and education standards.¹⁷ Perhaps the potential benefits of AI to education and job training are likely to be obvious to individuals in developing nations, whereas the ready availability of both lessens its significance in the Global North.

Earlier work by the National 4-H Council¹⁸ and the Pew Research Center¹⁹ has focused on perceptions of American teens, while studies by Google/Ipsos²⁰ and McKinsey²¹ have examined attitudes among adults. Considering the fact that young children and teens are often the quickest and earliest adopters of new technology²² and also the lack of cross-national research on teen perceptions of AI, our work examines attitudes toward AI with a survey of teenagers from nineteen different countries. Results suggest that adolescents from the Global South have significantly different perceptions of AI and its benefits for the future. These insights are crucial for Lasallian educators, especially those in the United States and Europe, who may need to adjust their perspectives and educational strategies to align with these emerging trends, and also for developing world educators in terms of adoption and utility.

Methods

Survey Construction

We constructed our survey with the goal of finding out global teens' familiarity with and attitudes toward AI. We first reviewed several large-scale surveys and extracted questions we found most relevant. The main sources we consulted were the Pew Research Center's ongoing surveys of U.S. opinion on AI,²³ Google/Ipsos, "Our Life with AI: The Reality of Today and the Promise of Tomorrow,"²⁴ and the National 4-H Council, "Kids and the Future of Artificial Intelligence."²⁵ We also developed original questions, particularly regarding perceptions of AI and healthcare.

We developed five categories of participant responses: (1) familiarity with AI, (2) impressions of AI's personal benefits, (3) views of AI's benefits/harm to the world at large now, (4) AI's specific impact on societal issues over the next twenty-five years, and (5) perceptions of AI and healthcare. Each of these sections featured a mixture of adapted and original questions. Specific measures are discussed in combination with their results in the following section.

Participant Characteristics and Procedure

Our participants were a convenience sample of 129 students (71% female) aged 13-23 ($M = 16.35$) from 19 countries (56% United States, 17% Vietnam, 27% from all other countries at <5% each) participating in a week-long service workshop with Operation Smile in summer 2024. Most participants were aged between 16-18 years old (58%), with 24% aged 14 or 15, 18% aged 13, and 12% aged 19-23 years old.

Participants were alerted two weeks before the event that an online survey regarding AI would be used to tailor a presentation, "AI and You," during the event. Participants were assured that their information would only be used for the event and research purposes, and that no personal information (i.e., name or contact details) would be collected. Consent to use the information in

this way was requested; participants who consented filled out the survey on their own time and devices preceding or during the event.

Data Analysis

Our analysis compares students from high income countries to students from low and mid-income countries. Our classification was drawn from the current World Bank classification²⁶ and consists of Canada, France, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States being classified as “high income” and Brazil, Bolivia, China, Columbia, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Jordan, Morocco, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and Paraguay as “mid-income.” “Low income” comprised the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Honduras, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, and Vietnam. While the income distinction along with other developmental indicators vary between low- and mid-income countries, we were limited in participants from both categories. Hence the two were combined into a “Global South” or “South” category in our analysis. This is common practice among both scholars and institutions (e.g., the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund) studying and working with middle- and low-income countries. For symmetry, our high-income category is called “Global North” or “North” in our analyses, which is also common practice and in line with aforementioned institutions. Data analysis was completed in R.

Results

AI Access and Use

Nearly all participants had regular access to high-speed internet, with 92% of the students indicating they had access to it “nearly always” (53%) or “most of the time” (39%). 7% had it “some of the time” and 1 respondent had it “rarely.”

Our main measurement of AI familiarity was use-based: We asked respondents how often they used AI on an ordinal scale of 1 (never) to 10 (almost constantly). The results are shown in Figure 1 and reflect substantial variation in AI familiarity. Overall, teens from the Global South are more familiar with AI, as their use scores were significantly higher ($M = 6.78$) than the Global North teens ($M = 4.92$); $t(127) = -4.68$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[-2.64, -1.07]$.

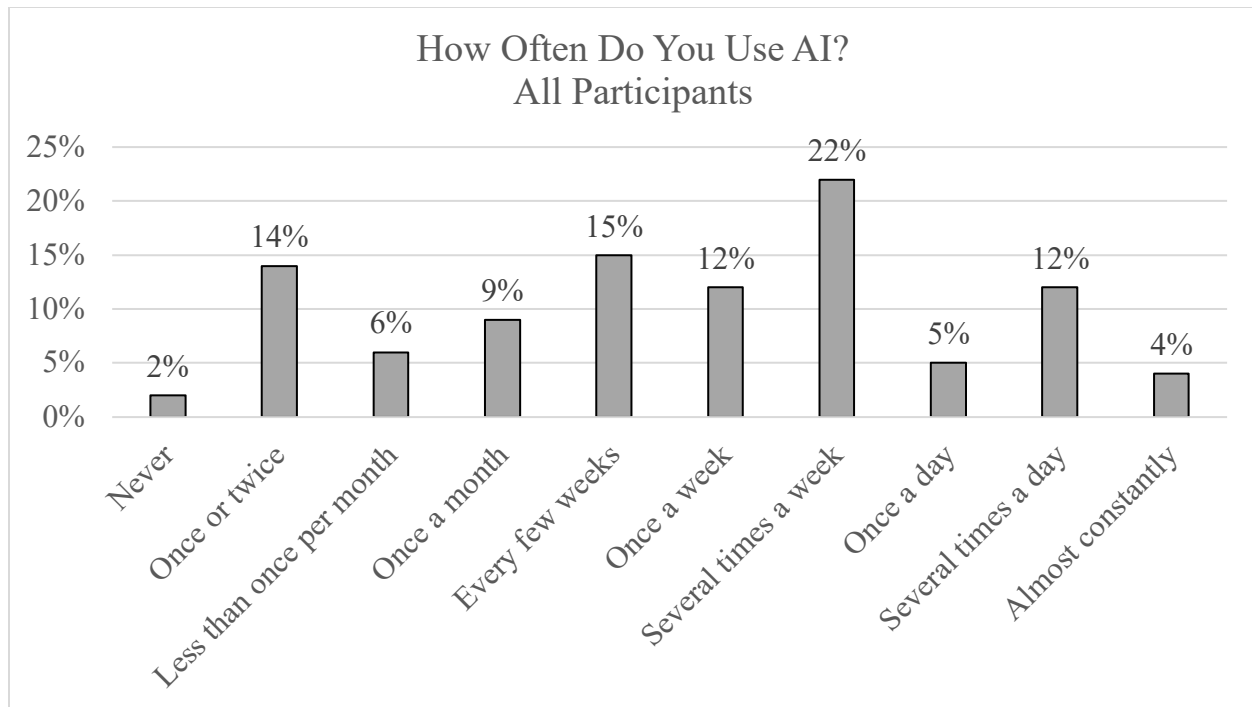


Figure 1. Participants’ answers to the question, “About how often do you interact with AI?” show variation in familiarity with AI.

Teens’ use of AI varied, with the largest percentages of use cases being either highly structured activities, such as for homework (67%) or classwork (59%), or very unstructured, such as “just out of curiosity” (66%) or “I was bored” (36%). Many teens had asked AI for advice at least once, whether regarding their health (19%), friends (10%), or college prospects (16%). Only a few had used it when they were lonely (6%) or had never used it (6%).

Patterns emerge when comparing the use cases between North and South groups of teens. The percentages of each group conducting each activity were compared via chi-squared tests. Most notably, teens from the South use AI significantly more than teens from the North for school related activities: homework, classwork, and college advice (Figure 2). This predilection to use AI more for school does not seem to stem from a lack of North teens’ exposure to AI, as teens’ informal usage—for use “just out of curiosity” or when “I was bored”—did not differ significantly between the two groups.

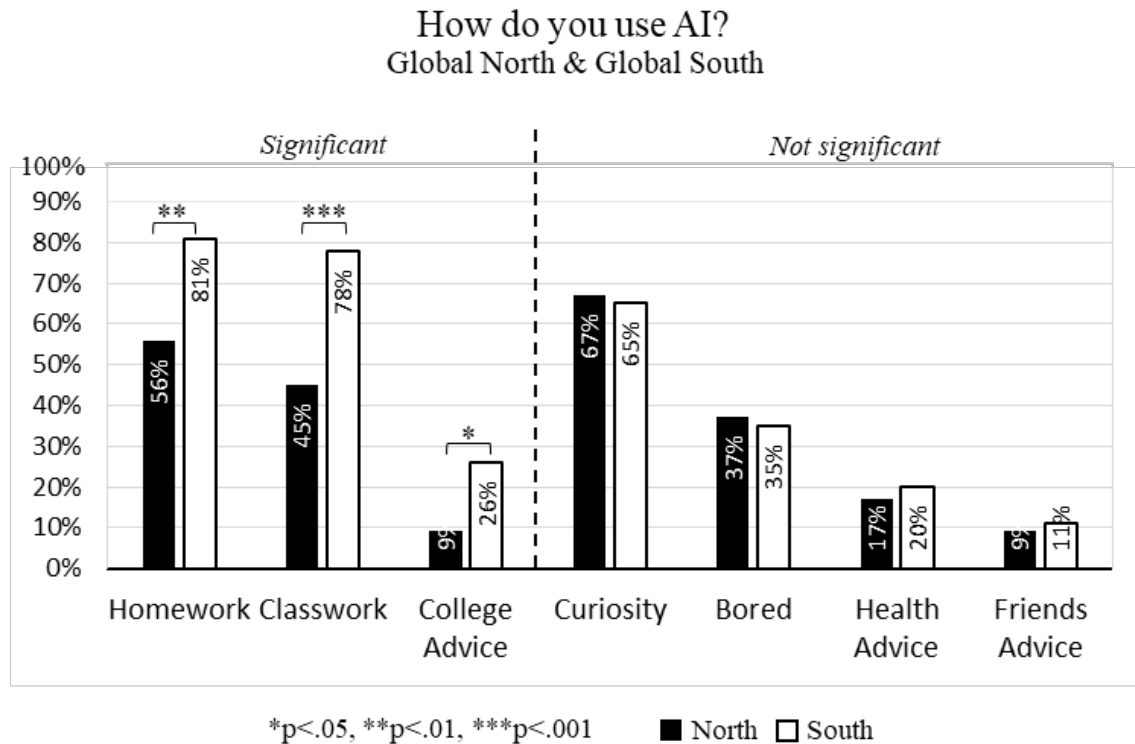


Figure 2. Participants’ answers to the question, “Select all the things you have used AI for” show significant variation between those in the Global North and Global South for school related activities, but not for other activities.

Current General Attitude toward AI

Overall, teens are unsure whether the rising use of AI in daily life is exciting or concerning. In the full sample, when asked to judge how the “increased use of AI in daily life makes you feel,” nearly half (47%) answered “equally concerned and excited.” The rest were mostly “more concerned than excited (41%), while a minority (12%) were “more excited than concerned.” In aggregate, it seems that teens are uncertain about AI’s benefits and harm. Of those that have an opinion one way or the other, 78% lean pessimistic.

However, the picture looks different if you separate the answers by global group (Figure 3). Pessimism decreases by half, as only 26% of teens from the South say they are predominantly concerned, versus 52% of North teens. The number of teens who are equally excited and concerned rises slightly in the South (54%) and falls slightly in the North (43%) compared to the total sample average (47%). Perhaps the most notable difference, however, is the fact that teens from the South are four times more likely to say they are “more excited than concerned” (20% versus 5%) than their counterparts in the North. A chi-square test reveals these differences as significant, $X^2 = 12.11$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.002$. Overall, it suggests that teens from the South are less pessimistic about AI’s increasing presence in daily life.

Increased Use of AI in Daily Life Makes You Feel...

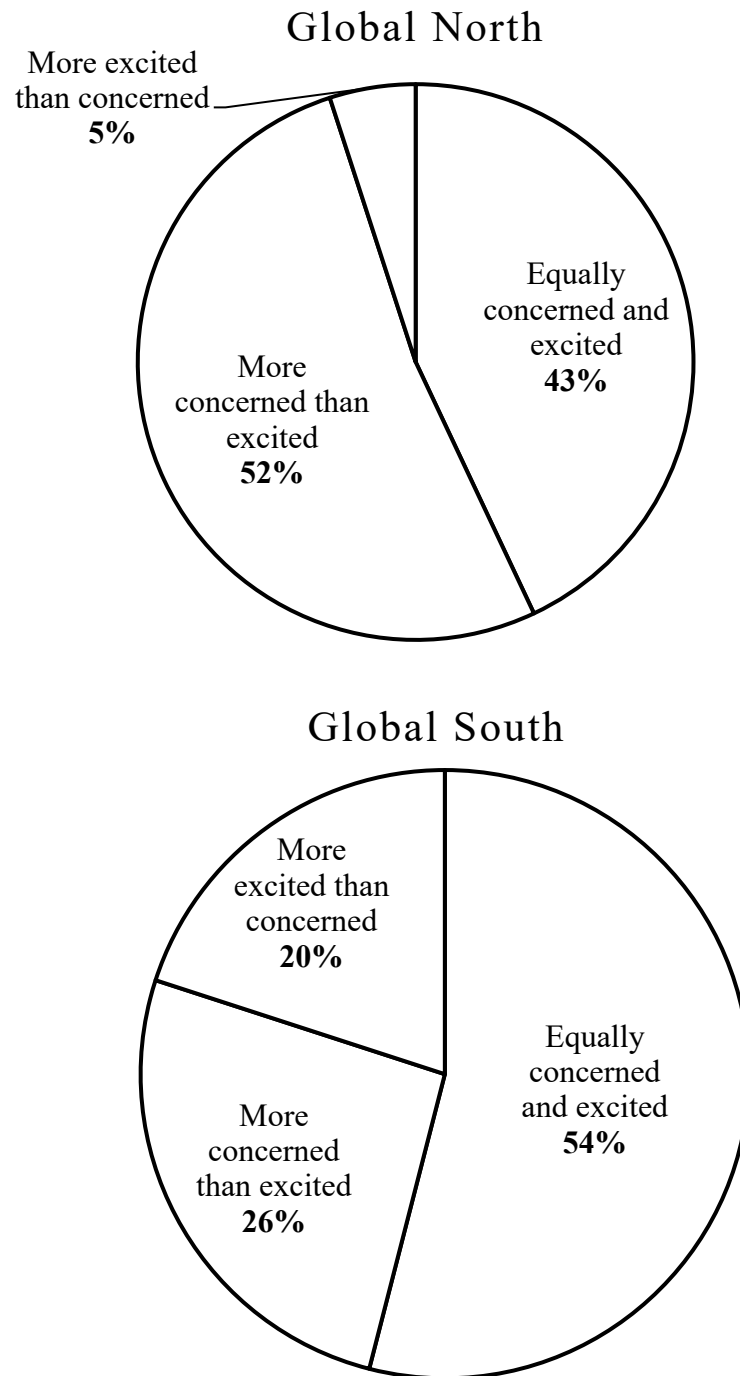


Figure 3. Participants' answers to the prompt, "Increased use of AI in daily life makes your feel . . ." show variation between those in the Global North and Global South, with South teens feeling more positive ("more excited than concerned"), and less negative ("more concerned than excited").

Perceived Personal Benefits of AI

Teens varied in their beliefs about the benefits that AI would bring to them as individuals. When asked, “Do you think AI is a good thing for you, personally?” on a bipolar likert scale from “Definitely not” (-2) to “Definitely yes” (2), participants in the full sample were split about equally between positive answers (i.e., “Definitely yes” or “Probably yes”) and uncertainty, with 43% answering positively and 41% answering “Maybe” and only 16% answering negatively (i.e., “Definitely not” or “Probably not”). When asked whether AI would be a good thing for “your education,” responses were less unsure. The percent answering “Maybe” fell to 27%, while the percent answering negatively (25%) and positively (48%) both grew. A similar spread of responses occurred when the question was whether AI would be a good thing for “your work (job),” with 25% answering negatively, 32% answering “Maybe,” and 43% percent answering positively.

Important differences emerged between the North and South groups of respondents when responses were displayed using the *likert R* visualization package (v1.3.5, Bryer and Speerschneider 2016) and results were compared via t-tests (Figure 3). Teens from the South were significantly more likely to view AI in a positive light, especially its impact on education and their future work.

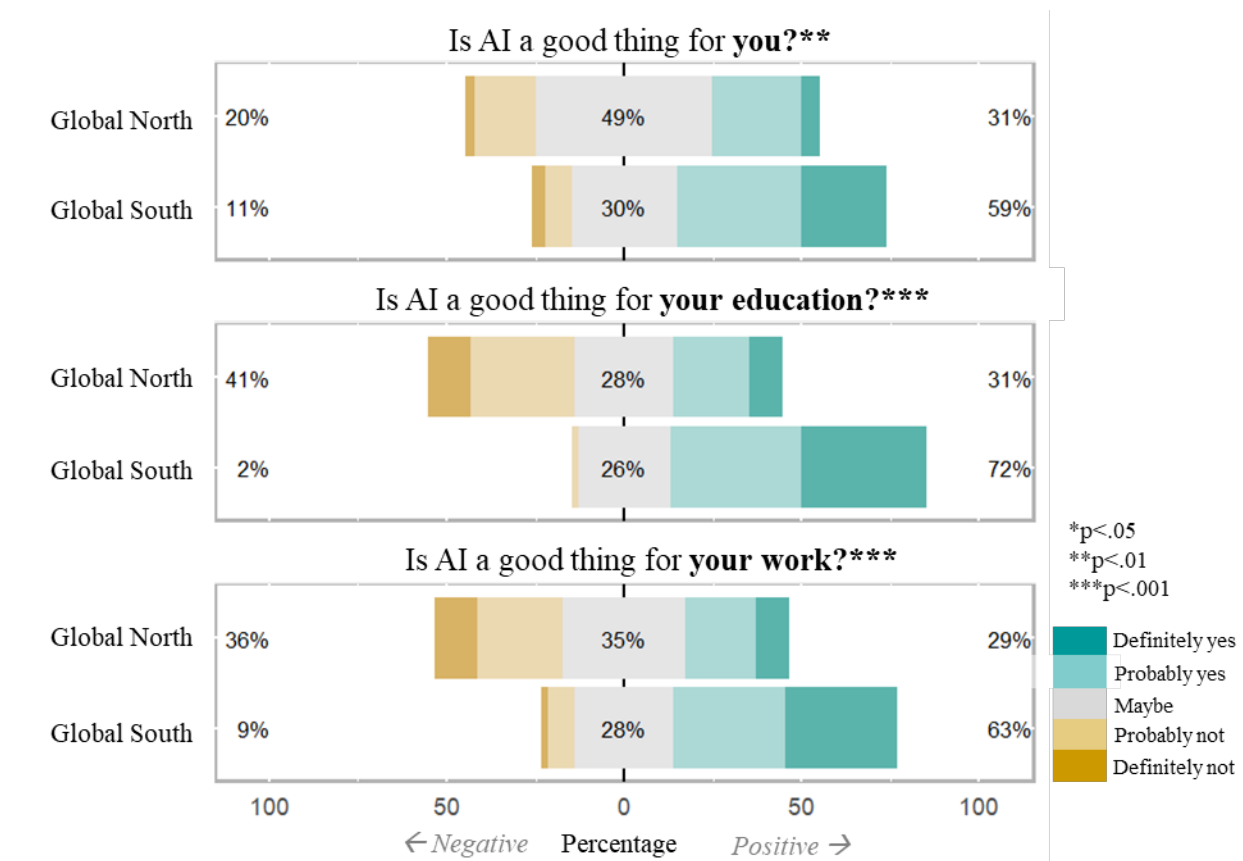


Figure 4. Participants’ answers to the questions, “Is AI a good thing for you, your education, your work?” show significant variation, with respondents from the Global South answering more positively than those in the Global North.

Perceived Personal AI Benefits Partially Mediated by AI Use

To ascertain whether teens' AI use frequency affects their attitudes toward it, we conducted a causal mediation analysis. We coded the Global North group as 0 and the Global South as 1. Using the mediation package in R (v4.5.0; Tingley et al. 2014), we tested the indirect effect of AI use on the perceived personal benefits of AI. AI use was self-reported as how often participants used AI on an ordinal scale of 1 (never) to 10 (almost constantly). The perceived personal benefits were indicated by participants' answers to the questions, "Do you think AI is a good thing for you, personally, your education, your work?" on a bipolar Likert scale from "Definitely not" (-2) to "Definitely yes" (2). Results are shown in Table 1.

Good Thing for You and Your Education

Our mediation analysis indicates that AI use partially mediates the relationship between global group and perceived personal benefit of AI to both "you" and to "your education." Both the indirect (mediated) effect and the direct effect are statistically significant, and the combined total effect of global group and AI use on perceived personal benefit is highly significant. About one-third of the effect of global group on perceived personal benefit to oneself (33%) and one's education (27%) is mediated through AI use. The effect of the global group (i.e., hailing from the Global North or Global South) remains significant even after accounting for AI use.

Good Thing for Your Work

AI use did not mediate the relationship between global group and perceived personal benefit to "your work." The indirect effect was not significant, although the direct and total effects were. This suggests that feeling positive or negative about the benefits of AI on one's job were not related to AI use in our sample, but that being from the Global South predicted a more positive assessment of AI's benefit to one's (presumably future) work.

Table 1.
Mediation Analysis of AI use on Perceived Benefits of AI

	Effect	Estimate	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	p-value
Good for You					
Indirect (ACME)		0.18	0.04	0.36	.006**
Direct (ADE)		0.37	0.016	0.71	.038*
Total		0.55	0.22	0.87	.0004**
Proportion Mediated		0.33	0.08	0.91	.010**
Good for Your Education					
Indirect (ACME)		0.32	0.15	0.53	<2e-16***
Direct (ADE)		0.87	0.51	1.26	<2e-16***
Total		1.19	0.8	1.58	<2e-16***
Proportion Mediated		0.27	0.12	0.46	<2e-16***
Good for your Work					
Indirect (ACME)		0.08	-0.08	0.27	0.3
Direct (ADE)		0.85	0.44	1.25	<2e-16***
Total		0.93	0.56	1.31	<2e-16***
Proportion Mediated		0.09	-0.09	0.31	0.3

In short, although AI use did partially mediate the relationship between global group and two out of three perceived personal benefits of AI, the global effect was still significant across all personal benefit measures after accounting for AI use.

Perception of AI's Impact over the Next Twenty-Five Years

Teens varied in their beliefs about the benefits that AI would bring to the world over the next twenty-five years. When asked, “Do you think AI will have a positive, negative, or no impact on each of these areas in the next twenty-five years (you will be about forty years old)?” on a Likert scale from “Major negative impact” (-2) to “Major positive impact” (2), there was a wide range of opinions, and a fair amount of uncertainty (Figure 5). Teens were most certain that AI would impact education and training and job opportunities, with less than 5% answering AI would have “no impact” on these areas. These represented the largest percentages of agreement among the participants in the full sample. Perhaps contradictorily, 71% of teens felt that AI's effect on education and training would be positive, but 64% of teens felt its impact on job opportunities would be negative. Figure 5 shows the areas participants thought AI would affect in order of positivity from most to least. More teens felt AI's twenty-five-year impact would be positive than negative. “Job opportunities” was the only area in which more participants thought the impact would be negative than positive.

When splitting the participants' answers to each area between teens from the Global North and South, patterns of agreement and disagreement emerge (Figure 5). Teens from both areas feel ambivalence toward AI's effect on “fulfilling ways to spend time.” Both groups have relatively low numbers that selected “no impact” and relatively high negative and positive selections. Teens across both groups also are more likely to forecast the effect AI will have on the environment and climate change to be positive, although teens in the South were more than twice as likely to disagree (24% to 9%). Judgements on economic inequality and bias or discrimination were essentially even across the negative, no impact, and positive ratings.

The most pronounced differences in judgment across the global groups were those related to economic outcomes. When responses were compared via t-tests (Figure 5), teens from the Global South were significantly more likely to judge AI's twenty-five-year effect on education and training, job opportunities, and economic inequality as more positive than teens from the North. Judgements of its effect on poverty were also on trend toward significance. This is in keeping with the earlier results that teens from the Global South have more positive views of AI generally (Figure 3) and was in line with judgments that AI will be good for one's job (Figure 4). Items that are less economically related (i.e., bias, climate change, and ways to spend time) do not show this pattern of disagreement.

What impact do you think AI will have on each of these areas in the next 25 years?

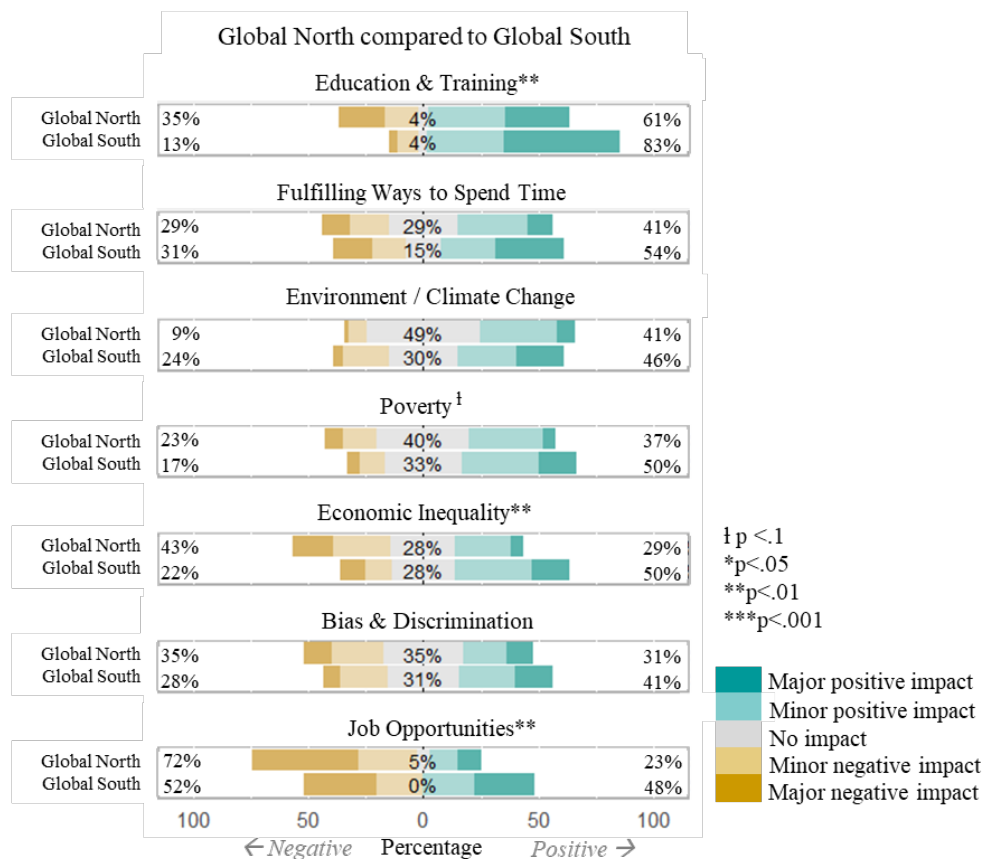
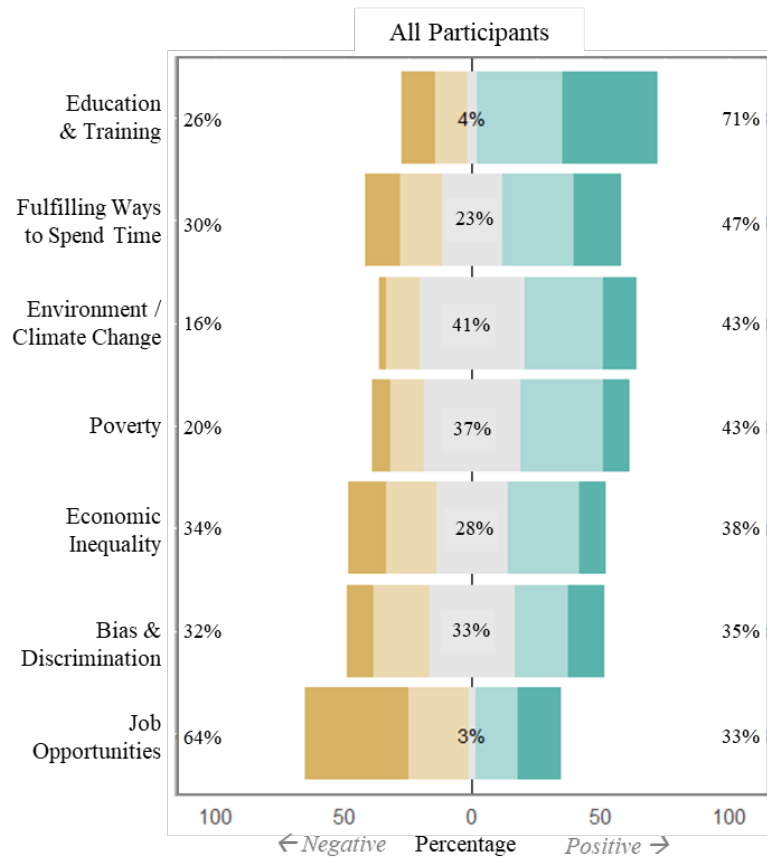


Figure 5. Participants' predictions of AI's impact over the next twenty-five years show variation, with respondents from the Global South answering significantly more positively than those in the Global North on economically related items but not on non-economic items.

Perception of AI's Impact on Healthcare

Teens' long-term forecast of AI's effect on healthcare over the next twenty-five years was overwhelmingly positive. When asked about health topics, "Do you think AI will have a positive, negative, or no impact on each of these areas in the next twenty-five years (you will be about forty years old)?" on a Likert scale from "major negative impact" (-2) to "major positive impact" (2), there was general agreement that its effects would be positive (Figure 6). Nonetheless, there was a significant difference between the answers of North teens and South teens. Again, the teens from the Global South were more likely to respond positively about AI's effects on six of the seven health areas (Figure 6).

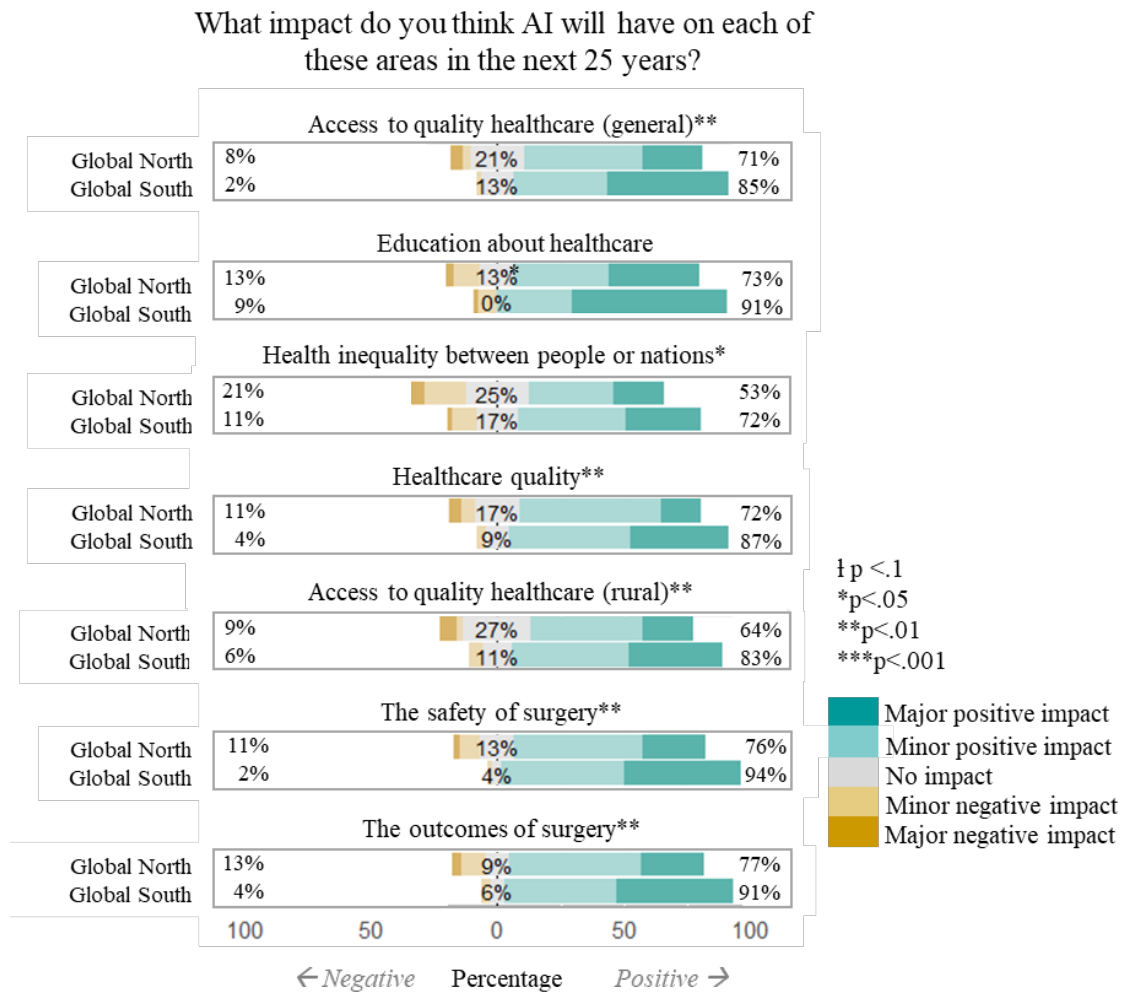


Figure 6. Participants' predictions of AI's impact in healthcare over the next twenty-five years are largely positive, with respondents from the Global South answering significantly more positively than those in the Global North on most items.

Our AI health trust measure stated, “Someone you care about needs cleft palate surgery. Rate your comfort level with the following procedures.” Neither global group has a majority that trusts an AI-enabled robot to perform the surgery alone, and there is not a significant difference between the groups. When comparing the global group answers on comfort with a human surgeon only, the North teens’ comfort ratings are significantly higher than South teens, even though both groups rate human-only surgery as comfortable overall. Differences between North and South teens’ ratings are on trend toward significance for most of the AI comfort measures (Figure 7), suggesting that South teens are more comfortable with a human-AI combination than North teens.

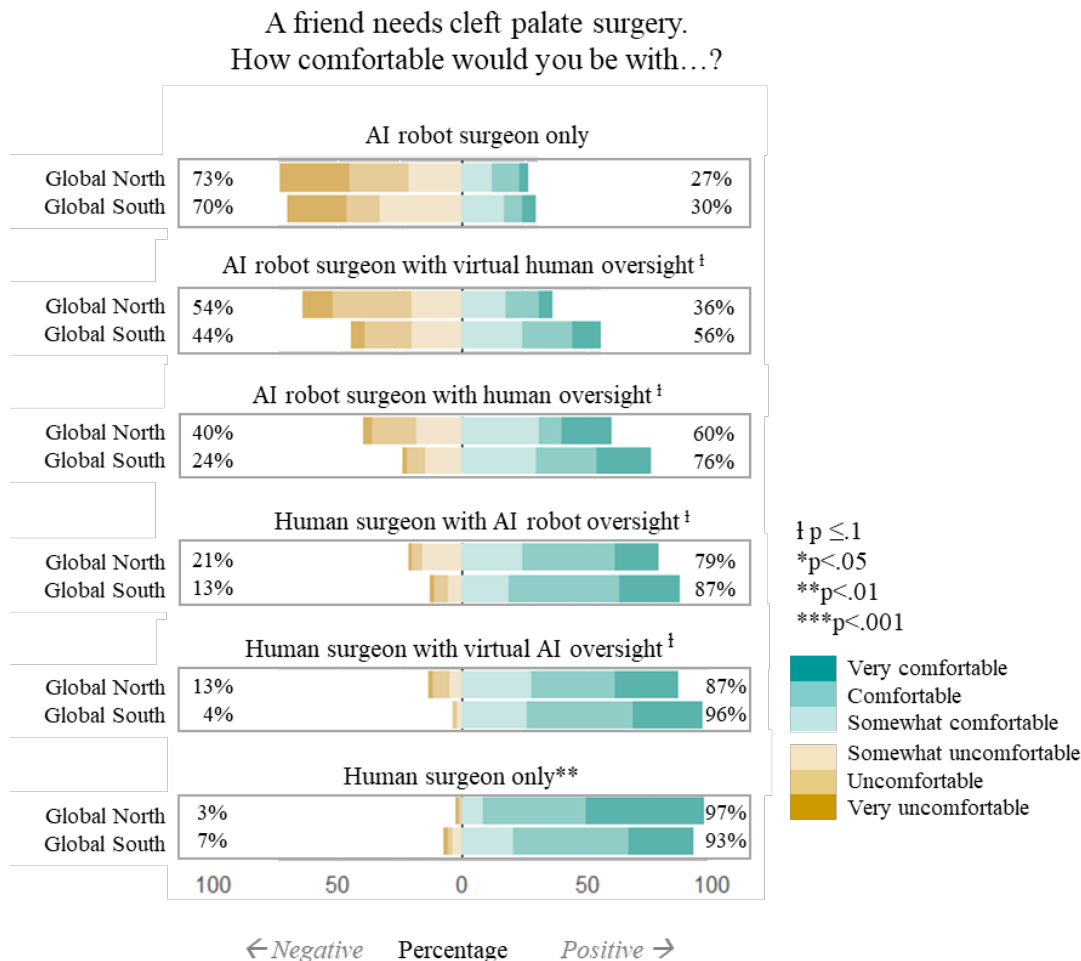


Figure 7. Participants’ trust of AI in a surgical setting was low without human involvement. Teens from the Global South were on trend to feel more comfortable with AI involvement than South teens and had significantly lower trust in a human with no AI assistance.

Discussion

There is a significant difference between the attitudes of teens from the Global South and Global North. Teens from the Global South feel more positive toward AI than teens from the Global North. This effect occurs when attitudes are measured generally (i.e., “Increased use of AI in daily life makes me feel more excited than concerned”) and also repeats across multiple specific domains of inquiry, including projections twenty-five years into the future and about healthcare specifically.

Some of the largest differences in attitude were about the personal benefit AI would bring the teens. When asked, “Do you think AI is a good thing for you, personally, your education, or your job[?]” teens from the Global South were about twice as likely to answer positively, and more than twice as likely to answer “Definitely yes” than their Global North counterparts. Teens from the Global South use AI significantly more overall. Interestingly, this difference is driven specifically by higher use of AI for tasks related to schoolwork (classwork, homework, and college advice) and not by non-schoolwork-related tasks (e.g., boredom, advice about friends, or medical questions). The difference between Global South and Global North teens’ higher perceived personal benefits of AI was only partially mediated by higher use levels. In fact, higher use accounted for less than half of the combined effect of global group (North/South) and use on perceived personal benefit, and was not significant for the difference in perceived benefit to teens’ jobs (“your job”). These results suggest that familiarity with AI through its use does not automatically lead to a corresponding perception of its personal benefit. Use is important, but teens’ attitudes are affected by additional factors.

When imagining AI’s effect over the next twenty-five years over a range of non-healthcare categories, Global South teens were again more optimistic. However, there was only a significant difference between groups when economic factors were considered (e.g., education and training, economic inequality, job opportunities, and poverty). No difference was found for non-economic items (e.g., fulfilling ways to spend time, environment and climate change, bias and discrimination). These results suggest that a focus on economic outcomes drives different assessments of AI’s benefits between global groups. Teens’ estimate of AI’s benefits to healthcare in the next twenty-five years was more positive in both groups, and the difference between groups was significant for all categories tested except for healthcare education and training. The categories with significant differences between groups included the quality of and access to healthcare, the safety and outcomes of surgery, and health inequality between people or nations. Whether this difference in positivity can be ascribed to a greater belief in the power of AI or South teens’ evaluation that the baseline of healthcare quality is lower in their countries cannot be deduced from our data. However, a significant difference in responses to our AI health trust measures might provide some insight.

Interesting patterns emerged when participants were asked our AI health trust measure, “Someone you care about needs cleft palate surgery. Rate your comfort level with the following procedures.” Despite optimism around AI’s future effect on healthcare, it seems that neither group currently trusts AI enough to forego human participation. Of particular note are the “AI only” and “Human only” options: neither global group trusts an AI-enabled robot to perform the surgery alone, and there is not a significant difference between the groups. When comparing the global group answers on comfort with a human surgeon only, the North teens’ comfort ratings are significantly higher than South teens, even though both groups rate human only surgery as

comfortable overall. The combination of these two responses suggests that an evaluation of human skills, not just comfort with AI, might be important for South teens' ratings, although no conclusions to this effect can be drawn from the current data. The differences between North and South teens' ratings are on trend toward significance for most of the AI comfort measures, underscoring that South teens are more comfortable with a human-AI combination than North teens.

Limitations of the Current Study

This study's limitations stem from its use of a convenience sample. All participants were teenagers attending a week-long service leadership conference, which suggests a potential bias toward individuals who are more socially conscious and service-minded compared to a random sample of teenagers. Additionally, the sample had a gender imbalance, with females comprising 71% of the participants.

The conference was organized by Operation Smile, a global non-governmental organization (NGO) with a healthcare focus, specifically providing safe surgery for free for those suffering from cleft lip and palate conditions. Consequently, the participants may have had a stronger interest in global equity and also healthcare-related issues than a general population of teenagers. This is particularly relevant given that some of our measures were healthcare-focused, and the responses to these measures may not be generalizable to a broader, more diverse sample.

Furthermore, although the conference included students from nineteen different countries, 17% of the participants were from Vietnam (in the Global South) and 56% were from the United States (in the Global North). While we are not aware of any systemic bias introduced by this distribution, it remains a possibility that could affect the findings. Also, despite the high diversity of countries represented in the sample, a larger overall sample size would have been ideal to enhance the generalizability and robustness of the study's findings. Moreover, while we recognize the degree and depth of variance between and among both the countries categorized as the "Global South" and those categorized as the "Global North," it is important to note that the results are derived from participants that reported equity in access and availability to both high speed internet and AI technologies.

Future Work

A critical question arising from our study is understanding how teens' opinions form. Our results indicate that teens in the Global South perceive AI as more beneficial compared to their counterparts in the Global North. Future research could investigate the beliefs that contribute to these attitudes. Beliefs regarding human capital availability in each region could fuel both South teens' optimism and the North teens' wariness. We have discussed the benefits that AI could bring to the Global South specifically; these might underlie the optimism of Global South teens. Correspondingly, the perceived threat to human-capital intensive jobs, previously considered secure, may be driving the antipathy towards AI in the Global North. The IMF predicts that 40% of the global labor market is exposed to AI, but labor markets in more developed countries will be more disrupted than those in less developed ones.²⁷ Perhaps teens in the Global North perceive their countries' human capital as already high, thus viewing AI as less critical to progress and instead highlighting its potential to disrupt established industries and make current human capital less lucrative. This perspective can be contrasted with the Global South, where

there may be a sense of disadvantage in access to education and training to develop human capital compared to the Global North.

The current study highlights different usage of AI for schoolwork between teens in developed and developing countries. One possible explanation is that teens in developing countries use AI for English assistance, which is not necessary for native English-speaking teens. Alternatively, it could be that teachers in the Global North are specifically discouraging the use of AI. In a study in late 2023, the Pew Research Center found that only 6% of teachers surveyed in the US saw “more benefit than harm” to AI in education.²⁸ If teachers are discouraging its use or threaten to use detection tools, it raises the question of whether this discouragement comparatively disadvantages Global North teens.

Finally, it is important to consider the broader context of internet and AI access. The teens in our sample had reliable access to both high-speed internet and AI, but this does not reflect the access levels of all individuals in either global group. Although 75% of global youth (aged fifteen to twenty-four) was connected to the internet as of 2022, 53% of the world did not have high-speed broadband access, the lowest percentages being in Asia (61%) and Africa (40%).²⁹ This “digital divide” significantly impacts the benefits AI can provide. Future research should investigate the attitudes of teens without reliable AI access to create a comprehensive understanding of global perspectives on AI.

Implications for the Lasallian Mission, Institutions, and Educators

The differences in AI perceptions between Global South and Global North teens offer crucial insights in terms of the Lasallian commitment to quality education, inclusive community, human dignity, social justice, and concern for the poor. As AI increasingly shapes education, the future of work, and healthcare, Lasallian institutions must take a proactive role in ensuring that AI serves as a tool that advances the Lasallian mission rather than exacerbating global injustices, inequalities, and human indignities.

To fully align with our principle of access to quality education for all, particularly for those on the margins of society, we must ensure that AI does not create a new digital divide where students in resource-rich environments gain access to cutting-edge AI tools while those in underserved regions receive only a fraction of AI’s benefits. Our findings highlight that Global South teens already use AI more for school-related tasks, reinforcing the potential of AI to bridge educational gaps where traditional resources are lacking. However, the key here is to recognize once again that a limitation of our study is that, while it included both teens from the Global North and South, it was self-selective in that almost all participants had access to AI regularly, which is usually not the case in most of the Global South. To rectify this, institutions and educators must advocate for AI accessibility, ensuring that students in underserved communities can benefit from AI-powered learning tools on par with the counterparts in the North.

Second, our study highlights that while Global South teens see AI as an economic and educational opportunity, Global North teens exhibit greater caution. To address our mission of inclusivity and bridge this divergence, Lasallian educators must facilitate cross-cultural conversations about AI, ensuring that students from both regions learn from each other’s perspectives. Lasallian institutions and educators must continue their on-going collaborations with a special focus on fostering global AI discussions through student exchange programs, AI

ethics courses, and collaborative research projects between institutions in the Global North and South. They must ensure that students understand that AI-devised analysis, problem solving, and solutions prioritize inclusivity, advocating against AI systems that reinforce biases in hiring, education, and healthcare. Students across the world, especially at Lasallian institutions, should be encouraged to use AI applications for social impact, encouraging students to design AI tools that address inequities rather than widen them. Imperative within this call is the need for educators to ensure that the inherent biases presented in AI as models that have been primarily sourced and trained in and from traditionally Global North discourse are considered by all that use it, especially the optimistic teens in the South.

Moreover, Lasallian education is rooted in the mission of social justice, with a focus on uplifting the marginalized. Our findings underscore that Global South teens are more optimistic about AI's role in economic mobility and healthcare, areas that directly impact Lasallian priorities of justice and human dignity. However, their lower trust in human-only healthcare suggests an urgent need to ensure that AI-driven advancements do not replace ethical, human-centered care but instead enhance it. To align with the Lasallian commitment to social justice, institutions must advocate for AI policies that prioritize the common good, ensuring AI is used to reduce inequality in healthcare, education, and employment. The continued Lasallian prioritization of ethics training and education for our students is key in equipping them to critically assess AI's role in society and to develop socially just and humane technological solutions. Most importantly, one must be mindful that the dependence on AI does not reinforce global disparities; research and policy efforts that promote AI access, education, and ethics training for underserved communities must be supported.

The optimism of Global South teens presents an opportunity to harness AI as a tool for equity, while the caution of Global North teens highlights the need for ethical reflection and safeguards. As AI reshapes the world, Lasallian educators and institutions must lead the way not only in preparing students for an AI-driven future but in ensuring that this future is accessible, socially just, inclusive, and centered on human dignity. In essence, we all must recognize that AI is not just a form of technology but a means to an end that can either enhance Lasallian principles or hinder them. A transformative education means not only understanding how AI works, its ethical implications, and how to use it responsibly, but also focusing on human-centered learning, fostering critical thinking rather than passive AI dependency. If utilized blindly, it can surely amplify global disparities and social injustice. Yet if it is used with caution, it can help achieve principles of human dignity, equity, social justice, and quality education, especially for those at the margins of society.

Endnotes

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³ Ilana Hamilton and Brenna Swanston, “Artificial Intelligence in Education: Teachers’ Opinions on AI in the Classroom,” *Forbes Advisor* (June 6, 2024).

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