Explaining Consumer Preferences for AI- and Human-Authored Books: An Explanatory Experimental Study

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Abstract: Books—both fiction and nonfiction—are among the first consumer goods that artificial intelligence (AI) can fully generate at a quality indistinguishable from that created by humans. While prior research in domains such as art and music documents a preference bias against AI-created works, the transferability of these findings to typical consumption contexts—and whether such biases persist amid rapid AI diffusion—remains unclear. This study examines the effect of authorship disclosure on consumer preferences for AI- versus human-authored books, while also exploring psychological and economic mechanisms that may explain these differences. It further investigates heterogeneity of this effect by factors such as familiarity with AI to anticipate future states of AI adoption. For empirical evaluation of the effects, we conducted an online experiment that systematically manipulated authorship of books from multiple literary genres, using a representative sample of approximately 1,500 U.S. adults. Results showed a consistent preference bias against AI-generated books across genres. Among the potential explanatory mechanisms, perceived author effort, emotional attachment, and perceived proximity to the author emerged as the most influential. Heterogeneity analysis among early adopters and AI welcomers revealed that these effects are weakened but remained persistent. The findings indicate that consumers' reluctance towards AI-created books arises not only from assessments of product utility but also from psychological factors. Although technological advances may alleviate consumer quality concerns, persistent social and emotional attachments are likely to result in separate market segments for AI- versus human-created works.

Keywords: AI-generated content, Consumer preferences, Adoption, Psychological barriers

1. Introduction

The rapid rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming many industries by enabling the faster, cheaper and more scalable production of digital and physical products. One sector already undergoing this transformation is publishing. Its core product can be digitally created and offered, so the book market serves as an early blueprint for the upcoming transformations in other consumer markets. With minimal production costs and rapid content generation, AI-written books have the potential to flood the market—raising important practical and theoretical questions.

From a practical perspective on the supply side, publishers and sellers face the problem of decreasing production prices and the expansion of offerings by self-publishing services. They have introduced countermeasures like their own guidelines requiring authors to disclose their degree of AI use. Authors try to defend their intellectual rights and differentiating positions in the market. The Authors Guild in the United States have recently launched the 'Human Authored' label, which should '*provide authors a way to distinguish their work in an increasingly AI-saturated market*' (Authors Guild, 2025). On the demand side, book buyers feel uncertain and desire more transparency about the origin of the content they read (Marsden, 2023), as research shows that, in many cases, they can no longer distinguish between AI- and human-written texts (Gunser et al., 2021; Hakam et al., 2024). Transparency about authorship also seems to be a main hope for policymakers who are about to introduce obligatory labelling for AI-generated content, as planned by the EU AI Act for 2026 (European Union, 2024). Whether these hopes and efforts about transparency will just slow down the ongoing market disruption or lead to emergence of new segments or separation in the market, however, depends primarily on consumers' reaction to this transparency.

These practical demands raise several questions in academic research. Are consumers' valuations and attitudes towards AI-written versus human-written books inherently different? Will consumer behaviour change with the disclosure of authorship? Which attitudes and perceptions can explain the potential differences in preference and behaviour? Will these differences remain transient until AI and AI-authored books are widespread in the market and there is greater consumer familiarity with them?

To approach these questions, we conducted an experimental study exploring consumer reactions to AI- versus human-written books, along with a variety of underlying explanations and moderating mechanisms collected from related literature. The aim of this exploratory study is to provide broad empirical evidence on the questions raised, focusing more on implications rather than specific theories.

2. Research Background

Rapid development in the capabilities of AI have catalysed research investigating humans' perceptions and valuations of works created by artificial agents (Epstein et al., 2020). Especially considering that in many areas AI outputs have reached a level of quality indistinguishable from that created by humans (Köbis and Mossink, 2021), the question arises whether the same work would induce different attitudes and preferences if it were made by AI versus a human. Some recent research investigating such a question has focused mainly on the evaluation of art and creativity (Demmer et al., 2023; Millet et al., 2023). In this context the findings predominantly indicate a devaluation of AI-created works, often called *bias against AI* (Horton Jr et al., 2023; Tubadji et al., 2021) or the *word-of-machine effect* (Longoni and Cian, 2022).

Only a small amount of research has focused on such effects in the context of consumer goods, resulting in mixed findings. Thus, Granulo, Fuchs and Puntoni (2021) report reduced purchase intentions and preferences for AI-designed posters, eyeglasses or tattoos, whereas Zhang, Bai and Ma (2022) find a higher willingness-to-pay for AI-designed than for human-designed T-shirts or mugs.

In our study on books as a consumer good, which can be generated by AI without a significant human contribution, we aim to investigate the differences not only in preferences but also in perceptions and attitudes. Thus, we focus on consumer preferences as central outcome variables in the form of *reading consideration* and the monetary valuations of books captured by *expected prices* and *willingness-to-pay* (WTP). Additionally, aligned with the findings reported for artwork, we also investigate whether there are perceptional differences between AI- versus human-written books with regard to *utilitarian and hedonic value* (Longoni and Cian, 2022), *creativity* (Millet et al., 2023), *uniqueness* (Granulo et al., 2021), *expected quality* (Bellaiche et al., 2023), *proximity to the author* (Tubadji et al., 2021), *perceived effort* (Horton Jr et al., 2023) or *emotional attachment* (Demmer et al., 2023). We selected these constructs as they have been reported as potential explanation mechanisms for the preference differences.

Hence, we first address the following two research questions (RQ):

RQ1: Do consumers have different perceptions and preferences for AI- versus human-created books?

RQ2: To what extent can the identified perceptional differences explain the differences in preferences?

An evident problem relating to the research findings about attitudes towards AI technology lies in its rapid proliferation and the corresponding transformations in society and markets that make these findings quickly outdated (Daly et al., 2025). For this reason, we explore the heterogeneity in findings from RQ1 and RQ2 regarding the factors that allow approximative mid-term predictions of how persistent these findings are. For this purpose, we identified such factors as *attitudes towards AI*, *AI literacy*, *consumer innovativeness* and *experience with AI books*. The key idea relies on the concept of the classical innovation diffusion models (Bass, 1969) that describe consumers in different stages of ongoing transformation. Hence, refining the findings of RQ1 and RQ2 for '*welcomers*' or '*early adopters*' of AI technologies, we strive to interpolate the future state, i.e., the persistence of these findings:

RQ3: To what extent do the identified differences in perception and preference differ for consumers who are early adopters and welcomers of AI technologies?

Figure 1 presents the postulated research questions in the research model, which we investigated in an experimental study manipulating the disclosure of authorship.

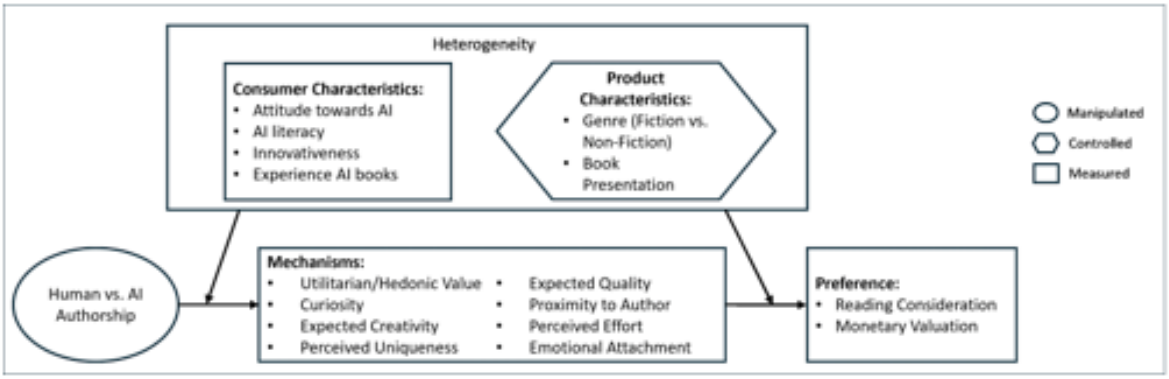

Figure 1: Research model

3. Method

3.1 Experimental Setup

To investigate the proposed research questions, we conducted an online survey-based experiment following a between-subjects design. After an introduction and screening for book-purchasing behaviour in general, the experiment began by surveying subjects with standard demographic questions. To increase personal relevance and involvement, participants then had to choose their most preferred book category from a pre-defined selection of 10 genres. The selection consisted of five fiction genres (romance; crime & thriller; fantasy & science fiction; mystery & horror; historical fiction) and five nonfiction genres (biographies, memoirs & historical nonfiction; self-help & personal development; health, fitness & wellness; cookbooks; business, investing & personal finance). We then presented participants with mock websites of a book from the selected category mimicking typical presentations in online bookstores.

Each stimulus consisted of a display of the cover and a short teaser text, along with key facts like title, author, publication date, number of pages and book size (Figure 2). To avoid interference with existing books, all materials other than author names were generated from scratch by a GenAI tool. Two fictive author names were thoroughly selected, and it was verified that there are no (well-known) authors with these names on major selling platforms. The experimental manipulation consisted of varying the author's name both on the cover and in the description for each book, whereas no further explicit instructions about authorship were given to the participants to avoid priming. Thus, half the participants were randomly selected and presented with a book supposedly written and published by a human author. To keep the presentation realistic, another half were shown a book written by AI but solely published by a human.

After the presentation of the book, the participants were immediately surveyed on the outcome variables and the potential mediators. Finally, a set of potential moderating and control variables was surveyed.

3.2 Data Collection

The used stimuli and measurement scales were first pretested at the beginning of February 2025 with a sample of 400 U.S. consumers, who were collected representatively of the adult U.S. population (18+) in terms of age and gender via the research panel provider Prolific. After minor adjustments of the stimuli to improve the recognisability of authorship, the main study was conducted in mid-February 2025. Aligning to RQ1 to determine the required sample size, we assumed an (average) effect size of d = 0.20, alpha = 0.05 and power = 0.95 for the main study, resulting in n = 650 for each (between-subjects) group (Zhang and Yuan, 2018). Anticipating from the pretest that not all respondents would correctly recognise the intended manipulation of authorship, we collected a sample of n = 1500 representative of the adult U.S. population in terms of gender, age and ethnicity that was evenly randomised between both experimental groups. The respondents completed the experiment in about 9–33 minutes and received fixed participation compensation of 2.50 GBP. After screening out non-buyers of books (n = 95) as well as respondents failing to answer correctly an attention-check question (n = 72) or one manipulation check question (n = 232), the final dataset consisted of n = 1101 total.

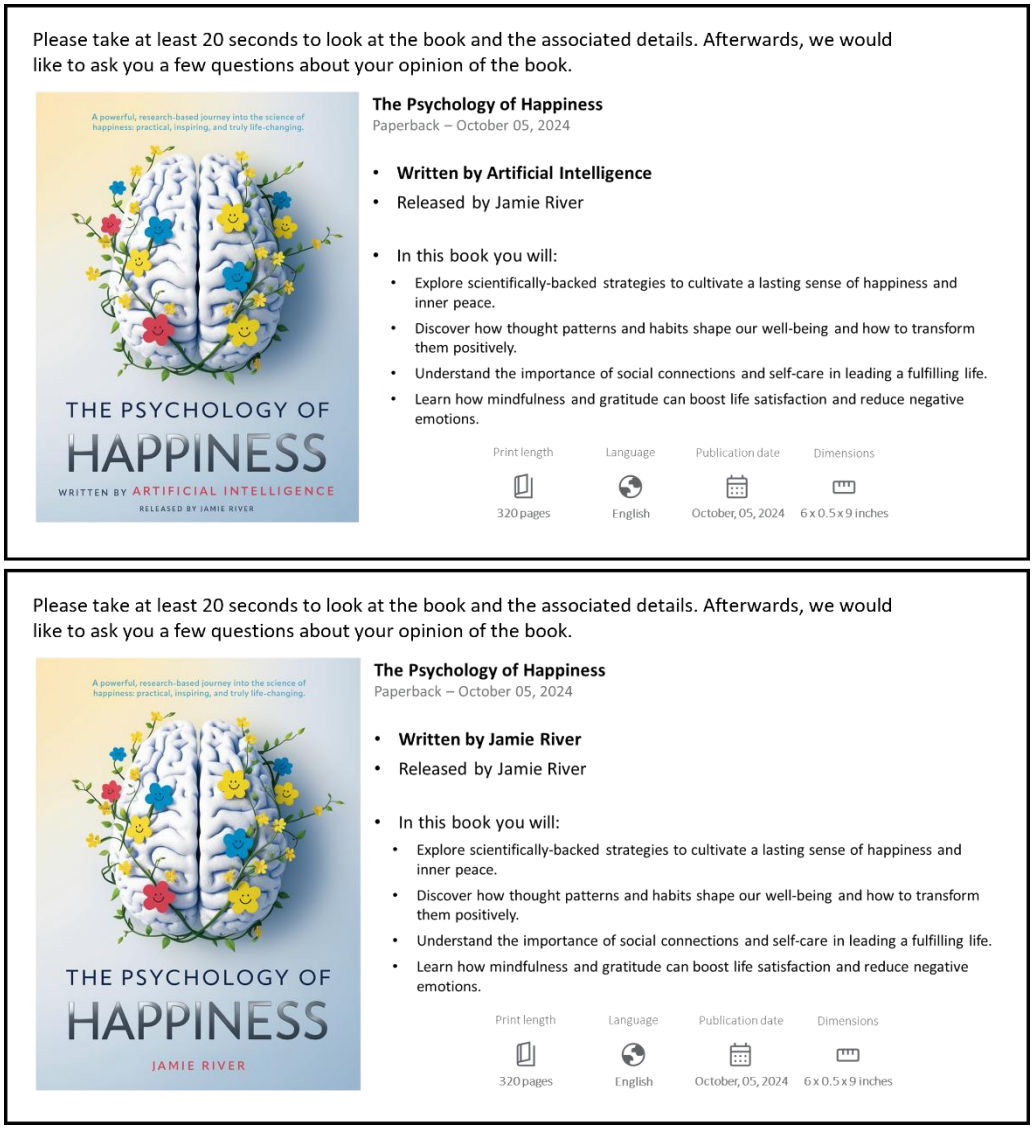

Figure 2: Experimental Stimuli with AI versus Human Authorship

The described data cleaning resulted in slightly unbalanced experimental groups, with n = 536 versus n = 565 first evaluating an AI-written versus human-written book, respectively. The subsequent statistical tests with the collected pre-treatment variables on demographics and purchasing behaviour revealed no significant differences (at 5% significance level) between the two groups, with a breakdown as shown in Table 1. In addition, the distribution of manipulation within each genre exhibited no significant differences between the experimental groups, so we found no evidence that the randomisation of the manipulation would not hold in the final dataset.

Table 1: Background characteristics of experimental groups

Experimental group	AI book	Human book	*p-value*
Sample size	*536*	*565*	
Gender (portion female)	*0.50*	*0.52*	*0.184*[2]
Age	*47.5*	*46.4*	*0.242*[1]
Education (7-point scale)	*3.42*	*3.36*	*0.648*[1]
Financial Status (7-point scale)	*3.27*	*3.26*	*0.729*[1]
Purchase frequency (5-point scale)	*2.50*	*2.46*	*0.432*[1]
Reading frequency (7-point scale)	*2.07*	*2.12*	*0.447*[1]

Experimental group	AI book	Human book	*p-value*
Experience AI-Books (portion yes)	*0.12*	*0.10*	*0.204*[2]

Note: [1]Chi-squared test, [2]Welch t-test

3.3 Measures

In the accompanying survey, we applied different scales and single-item measures to capture the relevant dependent variables (DV), as well as the potential mediators and moderators of the effect of manipulation. For each book, we collected three dependent variables as single-item measures: reading consideration (DV1) on a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = *'Not at all interested'* to 7 = '*Absolutely interested*', expected price (DV2) and willingness-to-pay (DV3) requesting a numeric input in USD.

For most potential mediators and moderators, we adapted different measurement scales from literature using 7-point Likert-scale items ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Based on the pretest, the original scales for the potential mediators were reduced to 2 or 3 items to reduce respondent fatigue. Thus, for mediators we used our own 3-item scales for *hedonic value* based on work of (Lee and de Villiers, 2025), *utilitarian value* (Merga and Mat Roni, 2018), *curiosity* (Yang et al., 2020), *perceived uniqueness* (Franke and Schreier, 2008), *expected quality* (Magni et al., 2024), *emotional attachment* (Thomson et al., 2005) and 2-item scales for *creativity* (Magni et al., 2024) and *proximity to the author* (Wu et al., 2020), as well as a single item for *perceived effort* (Bellaiche et al., 2023) ranging from 1 = '*No effort*' to 7 = '*The highest level of effort*'.

For the potential moderators collected at the end of the survey, we used the original scales from literature whenever it was meaningful regarding the context of the experiment, and the scale was confirmed as unidimensional in our pretest. Accordingly, we collected a 6-item scale for *positive attitudes towards AI* (Schepman and Rodway, 2020) and a 6-item scale for *consumer innovativeness* (Roehrich, 2004). For *AI literacy*, we collected a 9-item scale for *familiarity with AI* (Wang et al., 2023) and two of our own 2-item scales for frequency of (passive and active) *AI usage* and for *self-assessment of AI expertise*.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity of mediating constructs

Mediators	Min Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Explained	Max Shared Variance
Hedonic Value	*0.75*	*0.86*	*0.87*	*0.69*	*0.76*
Utilitarian Value	*0.85*	*0.90*	*0.90*	*0.75*	*0.69*
Curiosity	*0.90*	*0.95*	*0.96*	*0.88*	*0.71*
Expected Creativity	*0.85*	*0.83*	*0.84*	*0.73*	*0.76*
Perceived Uniqueness	*0.90*	*0.95*	*0.95*	*0.85*	*0.63*
Expected Quality	*0.86*	*0.94*	*0.94*	*0.84*	*0.71*
Proximity to Author	*0.93*	*0.93*	*0.94*	*0.89*	*0.54*
Emotional Attachment	*0.87*	*0.95*	*0.95*	*0.87*	*0.69*

Table 3: Reliability and Validity of moderating constructs

Moderators	Min Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Explained	Max Shared Variance
Attitude towards AI	*0.56*	*0.86*	*0.87*	*0.53*	*0.43*
Usage of AI	*0.78*	*0.76*	*0.76*	*0.61*	*0.46*
Familiarity with AI	*0.46*	*0.63*	*0.75*	*0.46*	*0.51*
Expertise about AI	*0.91*	*0.90*	*0.90*	*0.82*	*0.51*
Consumer innovativeness	*0.73*	*0.92*	*0.92*	*0.66*	*0.31*

The collected constructs underwent a comprehensive evaluation of their reliability and validity (Tables 2 and 3). The results show that the measured scales fulfil the required criteria (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2018). Solely deviating from our pretest, the mediator constructs for hedonic value and creativity failed to fulfil the discriminant validity criterion. Nevertheless, we used both constructs in the statistical analysis of the results, as they did not enter any test or model simultaneously. Verifying the discriminant validity of the collected dependent variables measured on single-item scales, their intercorrelations ranged from 0.27 between DV1 and DV2 up to 0.74 between DV2 and DV3.

3.4 Statistical Analysis

To address our RQ1 about perceptual or preference-related differences between AI- versus human-written books, we used standard two-sided *t*-tests and reported the corresponding mean differences, effect sizes (Cohen, 2013) and *p* values adjusted for family-wise error rates (Holm, 1979) for all DVs and all potential mediators. We verified the effects in a series of two-way ANOVAs in which, in addition to the manipulation of authorship, we also included the book presentations (i.e., cover and description) as a second factor for control. This allowed us also to control for the category (i.e., fiction versus nonfiction) and the genre selected by a respondent, as well as for the potential confounding effects of the (visual and textual) stimuli on the experimental manipulation of authorship.

To explore the potential explanation mechanisms for the found differences, we draw on causal mediation analysis (Imai et al., 2010; VanderWeele, 2015), applying the R-mediation software package (Tingley et al., 2014) as intended by our RQ2.

We use this approach to estimate a grid of independent single-mediator models for comparing explanatory strength of the evaluated mediators for each dependent variable. Thus, we calculated 27 mediation models: i.e., for each of nine potential mediators and each of three DVs. In these linear models, we also included the book presentations for control.

To address our RQ3 about the heterogeneity of the total and mediated effects with regard to the selected moderating factors, we applied a simple stratification approach. Thus, for each potential moderator on a continuous scale, we defined an upper quartile stratum (n = 275) of respondents with the most *positive attitudes towards AI*, the highest *familiarity with AI*, the highest *consumer innovativeness*, the highest *frequency of AI usage* or the highest *self-assessment of AI expertise*, respectively. The last potential moderator reflecting the subjects' *experience with AI books* was measured on a binary scale (yes/no), so we selected the stratum with such experience (n = 121) for analysis. We reran all previous mediation analyses run for RQ2 on the data for each moderator-specific quartile stratum and compared the estimates of the total and mediated effects from each stratum with the corresponding estimates from the total sample.

4. Results

4.1 Results for RQ1

The experimental manipulation of authorship had a statistically significant effect (at 5% significance level) on all dependent variables in favour of human authorship. The effect sizes are 0.55 for reading consideration (DV1), 0.27 for expected price (DV2) and 0.37 for WTP (DV3). Table 4 also shows statistically significant differences in the investigated potential mediators, revealing more favourable perceptions for human-written books.

We verified the reported results with a series of corresponding two-way ANOVAs controlling for book presentations. For all investigated DVs and mediators, the ANOVA results show significant main effects (at 5% significance level by Holm-adjusted *p* values) for both factors, but no significant interactions. As both factors are nearly orthogonal ($p = 0.997$ for $\chi^2(19) = 4.49$ test statistic) and there were no significant interactions, the reported sizes of the main effects for manipulation of authorship (Table 4) remains nearly unchanged after controlling for book presentations. The main effects for the latter factor indicate that nonfiction books exhibit slightly higher reading consideration (DV1) and higher monetary valuations (DV2 & DV3). However, the effect of manipulation is nearly stable in all genres, indicating comparable bias against AI for fiction and nonfiction books. The detailed results are not shown here for reasons of brevity but are available upon request.

In summary, our results for RQ1 confirm perceptual or preference-related differences between human- versus AI-written books—i.e., bias against AI—as reported in the literature from other domains.

Table 4: Preferences and Perceptions of AI- versus Human-books

	Mean AI book	Mean Human book	P value (Holm-adjusted)	Effect size with 95% Confidence Interval
DV1 – Reading Consideration	*2.84*	*3.78*	*<0.001*	*0.55 [0.42, 0.67]*
DV2 – Expected Price	*16.56*	*19.51*	*<0.001*	*0.27 [0.15, 0.39]*
DV3 – Willingness to Pay	*14.13*	*19.76*	*<0.001*	*0.37 [0.25, 0.49]*
Mediators				
Hedonic Value	*4.18*	*5.17*	*<0.001*	*0.68 [0.56, 0.80]*
Utilitarian Value	*4.11*	*4.76*	*<0.001*	*0.42 [0.30, 0.54]*
Curiosity	*4.55*	*5.22*	*<0.001*	*0.41 [0.29, 0.53]*
Expected Creativity	*3.74*	*4.72*	*<0.001*	*0.64 [0.52, 0.76]*
Perceived Uniqueness	*3.24*	*3.83*	*<0.001*	*0.37 [0.25, 0.49]*
Expected Quality	*4.03*	*5.19*	*<0.001*	*0.77 [0.64, 0.89]*
Proximity to Author	*2.12*	*3.45*	*<0.001*	*0.96 [0.84, 1.09]*
Emotional Attachment	*3.57*	*4.81*	*<0.001*	*0.82 [0.70, 0.94]*
Perceived Effort	*3.30*	*5.29*	*<0.001*	*1.73 [1.60, 1.87]*

4.2 Results for RQ2

The results of mediation analysis decomposing the (total) effects from the RQ1 into direct and indirect effects reveal that the explanatory strength of the investigated mediator variables is notably heterogeneous but largely consistent over all dependent variables (Table 5). For DV1, DV2 and DV3, the results suggest that the variables for *expected quality*, *proximity to the author*, *emotional attachment* and *perceived effort* can largely or fully explain the observed differences between AI- versus human-written books, as their indirect effects are statistically significant and render the corresponding direct effects to be comparatively low in magnitude, insignificant or even of the opposite sign to the corresponding total effect.

Table 5: Mediation analysis

	DV1		DV2		DV3	
Mediator	Indirect Effect (P value)	**Direct Effect (P value)**	**Indirect Effect (P value)**	**Direct Effect (P value)**	**Indirect Effect (P value)**	**Direct Effect (P value)**
Hedonic Value	*0.80 (<0.001)*	*0.13 (1.000)*	*1.56 (<0.001)*	*1.38 (1.000)*	*4.15 (<0.001)*	*1.37 (1.000)*
Utilitarian Value	*0.46 (<0.001)*	*0.46 (<0.001)*	*1.10 (<0.001)*	*1.84 (0.713)*	*2.79 (<0.001)*	*2.71 (0.039)*
Curiosity	*0.46 (<0.001)*	*0.46 (<0.001)*	*0.76 (<0.001)*	*2.18 (0.400)*	*2.40 (<0.001)*	*3.10 (<0.001)*
Expected Creativity	*0.65 (<0.001)*	*0.27 (0.072)*	*1.63 (<0.001)*	*1.29 (1.000)*	*3.93 (<0.001)*	*1.56 (1.000)*
Perceived Uniqueness	*0.37 (<0.001)*	*0.55 (<0.001)*	*1.12 (<0.001)*	*1.80 (0.713)*	*2.49 (<0.001)*	*3.02 (<0.001)*
Expected Quality	*0.88 (<0.001)*	*0.04 (1.000)*	*2.15 (<0.001)*	*0.79 (1.000)*	*5.25 (<0.001)*	*0.27 (1.000)*
Proximity to Author	*0.85 (<0.001)*	*0.07 (1.000)*	*2.48 (<0.001)*	*0.43 (1.000)*	*5.67 (<0.001)*	*-0.20 (1.000)*
Emotional Attachment	*0.96 (<0.001)*	*-0.03 (1.000)*	*2.09 (<0.001)*	*0.84 (1.000)*	*5.27 (<0.001)*	*0.22 (1.000)*
Perceived Effort	*1.35 (<0.001)*	*-0.43 (0.039)*	*5.17 (<0.001)*	*-2.22 (0.882)*	*9.64 (<0.001)*	*-4.15 (0.026)*

Across all the investigated DVs, the strongest mediation was observed for *perceived effort* variable. Its indirect effects even exceeded the corresponding total effects, indicating that the differences in this mediator induced by the manipulation of authorship are capable of causing differences in the DVs larger than the manipulation itself. This finding also suggests the existence of mechanisms alternative to perceived effort (e.g., creation costs) counteracting its effects. The variables for *perceived uniqueness*, *curiosity* and *utilitarian value* exhibited the weakest but still substantial mediation effects.

In summary, our results for RQ2 identified several core, possibly interrelated, explanation mechanisms for the effect of the disclosure of authorship.

4.3 Results for RQ3

Rerunning mediation analysis for the sub-samples of the data defined by the selected moderators revealed their considerable role in the reported effects. Thus, restricting the data to the upper quartile with the most positive *attitude towards AI* shrinks the total effect (i.e., in the total sample, but after controlling for book presentation) for reading consideration (DV1) from 0.92 to 0.34, for expected price (DV2) from 2.93 to 1.18 and for WTP (DV3) from 5.50 to 1.79. For the upper quartile of respondents with the highest frequency of *AI usage*, this shrinkage is moderate, i.e., up to 0.60, 0.92 and 4.03 for DV1, DV2 and DV3, respectively. Furthermore, no considerable differences to total effects in the total sample were observed for the upper quartiles defined by *familiarity with AI* and *expertise about AI*, indicating minor role of AI literacy. For the respondents from the upper quartile with the highest *consumer innovativeness*, no such shrinkage is observed for reading consideration (DV1), but moderate effect shrinkages were observed for expected price (DV2) up to 2.53, and up to 3.85 for WTP (DV3). Finally, for the respondents who already had experience with AI-written books (n = 121), we observed moderate shrinkages in total effects for reading consideration (DV1) from 0.92 to 0.66 and WTP (DV3) from 5.50 to 4.55, but a considerable change in the total effects for expected price (DV2) from 2.93 to -0.34. This effect of -0.34 is not statistically significantly different from zero, indicating no significant difference in expected prices for AI- versus human-written books in this sub-sample, thus possibly reflecting better awareness of current market prices by these respondents.

To verify whether the explanation mechanisms identified in the RQ2 analysis remain effective for respondents who are early adopters or supporters of AI innovations, we restricted our investigation to those mediators that exhibited high explanatory strength in the total sample. Hence, we reran the mediation analysis on these subsamples with mediator variables for *expected quality*, *proximity to author*, *emotional attachment* and *perceived effort*. The results show that these variables provide almost full mediation for the described effects on all three DVs, indicating the effectiveness of these mechanisms for these subgroups as well. The detailed results are not shown here for reasons of brevity but are available upon request.

In summary, we see that the effects of authorship disclosure are weaker but not vanishing for the respondents who are early adopters or welcomers of AI innovations.

5. Discussion

Returning to the research questions posed, we can conclude that consumers show a similar bias against AI in books as they do in works of art (RQ1). We observed this finding in both preferences and perceptions of books. This aversion is comparable across the examined genres, which suggests that the book category, i.e., fiction versus nonfiction, does not play a significant role in this finding. By means of causal mediation analysis, we find empirical evidence for several (possibly interrelated) explanation mechanisms for this bias (RQ2). Some of these mechanisms, like *emotional attachment* and *proximity to the author*, have their origins in the emotional or psychological realm, while others, like *expected quality* or *perceived effort*, have a more rational or economic background. Furthermore, the results exploring the heterogeneity show that the identified aversion against AI also exists for early adopters and welcomers of AI innovations, albeit to a lesser extent, but the corresponding explanatory mechanisms remain effective (RQ3).

In practice, these findings suggest that with disclosure of authorship a devaluation of AI books can be expected. With the further spread of AI in markets and society, this devaluation will probably diminish but not disappear in the medium term. Thus, the quality concerns will probably lessen in the near future by advancements in AI technology. However, psychological factors influencing the valuation of AI, such as proximity to the author or emotional attachment, are likely to remain effective. In conjunction with the expectation that AI books will increasingly replace human works due to low production costs, the results nevertheless suggest that a market segment for human authors will continue to exist.

While our study provides some empirical evidence for the investigated academic and practical questions, several limitations and suggestions for future research must be acknowledged. In view of plenty of the estimated mediation models, we didn't discuss the assumptions needed for identification of the mediation effects, as it mostly needs some domain knowledge-based justification and sensitivity analysis (Imai et al., 2010) for each model. Furthermore, our experiment put respondents in a hypothetical scenario, and therefore results may be subject to hypothetical bias (Murphy et al., 2005). Therefore, it would be necessary to verify the results under more ecologically valid conditions.

Ethics Declarations: Ethical approval was not sought for the present study because it was conducted in accordance with institutional guidelines that do not require ethical approval for this type of research.

AI Declarations: The authors declare that they have not used generative artificial intelligence in the writing of this manuscript and creation of images, graphics, tables or their corresponding captions. Generative artificial intelligence (Leonardo.AI) was used to create the stimuli used for the survey as declared in the manuscript.

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