

RESEARCH DESIGN PROJECT

Who do you trust to pick your next book?

*The Influence of Recommendation Source on Book Purchase Intention
AI vs. Influencer vs. Friend*

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Buyer Behavior Class • Dr. Mujica

Agenda

01

Literature Review

What prior researchers did: manipulations, samples, findings (4 sources)

03

Hypotheses

H1, H2, variables, and the manipulation

05

Expected Results

Predicted pattern, grounded in the literature

02

Research Gap & Twist

Why books, and what no prior study has tested

04

Proposed Scale

A validated purchase-intention measure

06

References

APA citations with links

Four Sources, Four Building Blocks

SOURCE EFFECT

Aoki & Matsui (2025)

Computers in Human Behavior

Company vs. influencer vs. algorithm; 3×2×2 experiment, N = 1,600.
Algorithm recommendations raised purchase intention vs. influencers.

AI VS. INFLUENCER

Wang et al. (2025)

Journal of Electronic Commerce Research

AI vs. influencer vs. Both Combined;
3 lab experiments on a simulated JD.com store.
AI (and Combined) beat influencer recommendations.

WHEN AI WINS

Gerlich (2025)

AI (MDPI)

Survey of 478 UK consumers + interviews.
AI favored for objective categories;
Influencers hold emotional ones (fashion, beauty).

WHY BOOKS

Zhang & Peng (2026)

PLOS One

113,499 book reviews mined from Dangdang.com.
Book buying runs on aesthetics, social trust, and price.
Friends and teachers are key drivers.

Algorithms Can Out-Sell Influencers

WHAT THEY DID

- **3 × 2 × 2 online experiment in Japan**
- Manipulated message source: company ad vs. influencer vs. algorithm (mock social media posts)
- Also varied product type (smartphone vs. travel tour) and brand awareness (Apple vs. Vivo)
- Measured attitude toward the message & purchase intention on 7-point Likert scales

1,600

participants, 12 conditions

3.50 vs 3.19

purchase intention: algorithm vs. influencer ($p < .001$)

“

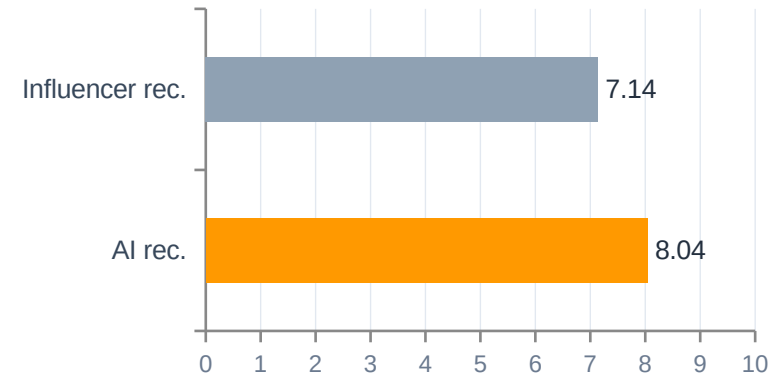
Regardless of the perceived trustworthiness of algorithmic messages, the fact that recommendations came from an algorithm led to an increase in purchase intention. (p. 1) — algorithms “show potential to replace influencers.”

AI Beats Influencer Recommendations

WHAT THEY DID

- **3 laboratory experiments simulating JD.com (samples: 107, 88, 91 students)**
- Manipulated recommendation type within-subjects: AI vs. influencer vs. combined (AI + influencer)
- Products: chocolate (hedonic) vs. desk lamp (utilitarian); brands removed, prices held constant
- Grounded in signaling theory & uniqueness theory; purchase intention on a 1–10 scale

Study 1: purchase intention (1–10)



$F(1, 106) = 18.338, p < .001$ — “both combined and AI recommendations are more effective than influencer recommendations” (p. 194)

When AI Wins — and Why Books Are Different

GERLICH (2025) — UK SURVEY, N = 478

- AI favored “in product categories where objectivity and precision are critical, such as electronics,” while influencers “remain influential in emotionally driven sectors like fashion and beauty” (p. 1)
- Younger consumers trust AI more ($r = -.31$); older consumers trust influencers more ($r = .29$)
- *“ChatGPT doesn’t care which brand I buy... It feels more honest.” (participant, p. 18)*

ZHANG & PENG (2026) — 113,499 REVIEWS

- Books follow “Motivation Triggering → Decision Implementation → Feedback Iteration” (p. 1)
- Decisions driven by “product aesthetics, social trust, and price perception” (p. 13)
- Friends, teachers & bestseller lists are documented purchase triggers — “the irreplaceable role of interpersonal networks” (p. 13)
- **Books are both rational AND emotional → the perfect test case for AI vs. human sources**

Book Recommendation Purchase Psychology

Prior research	What's missing
Algorithm vs. influencer vs. company — smartphones & travel (Aoki & Matsui, 2025)	Books were never the product category
AI vs. influencer vs. combined — chocolate & desk lamps (Wang et al., 2025)	No friend / peer recommendation condition
AI vs. influencer trust by category — electronics vs. fashion (Gerlich, 2025)	Survey only; no experimental manipulation
Books driven by social trust & interpersonal networks (Zhang & Peng, 2026)	Descriptive review mining; sources never compared head-to-head

My study: an experiment comparing AI vs. influencer vs. friend recommendations for the same book.

Hypotheses, Variables & Manipulation

H1 Book purchase intention is higher when a book is recommended by an AI than by a social media influencer.

H2 A friend's recommendation produces book purchase intention equal to or higher than the AI's, because book buying is driven by interpersonal trust.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Recommendation source

3 levels, between-subjects: AI assistant • social media influencer • close friend

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Book purchase intention

Measured with a validated 5-item, 7-point purchase intention scale (Aoki & Matsui, 2025)

MANIPULATION

Same book, new source

Same fictitious novel & identical recommendation text; only the attributed source changes — avoids prior brand bias

Secondary (exploratory): life context (student / professional / manager) and frequency of AI use collected as participant variables analyzed for moderation without changing the design.

Proposed Scale: Purchase Intention

5 ITEMS — 7-POINT LIKERT SCALE

1. “I would consider purchasing this product.”
2. “I have no intention of purchasing this product.” (reverse scored)
3. “I might purchase this product.”
4. “Next time I buy a [book], I will purchase this [book].” (adapted)
5. “If necessary, I will purchase this product.”

How it works: each participant rates the 5 statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree); their purchase-intention score is the average of the 5 ratings.

$$\alpha = .927$$

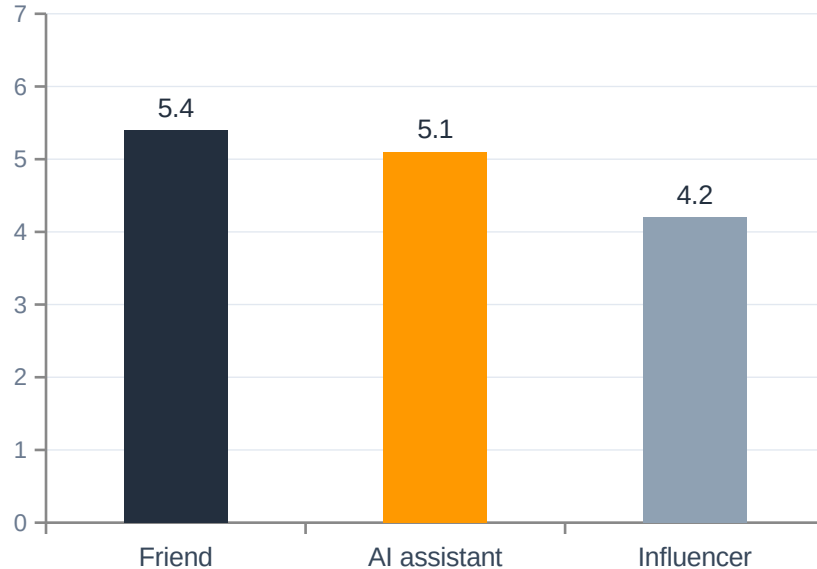
reliability reported by Aoki & Matsui (2025, p. 5) — well above the .70 threshold

WHY THIS SCALE

Validated in a recommendation-source experiment nearly identical to mine; items adapt cleanly from “product” to “book.” Items trace to Putrevu & Lord (1994) and Taylor & Baker (1994).

Predicted Pattern (Illustrative)

Predicted purchase intention (1–7)



Friend $\geq$ AI > Influencer

AI > influencer: found experimentally by both Wang et al. (2025; $M = 8.04$ vs. 7.14 , $p < .001$) and Aoki & Matsui (2025; $M = 3.50$ vs. 3.19).

Friend $\geq$ AI: books run on social trust — “recommendations from authorities or trusted individuals... act as key decision drivers” (Zhang & Peng, 2026, p. 13).

Open question: books mix objective and emotional value (Gerlich, 2025) — the AI–friend comparison is the new contribution.

References

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