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Perceptions of Creativity and Authorship in AI-Generated Literature Among Indian Young Adults

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Abstract

AI is changing how literature is written, read, shared, and judged by making it possible to create poetry, fiction, blogs, scripts, essays, and other forms of writing within seconds. This paper examines the perceptions of Indian young adults regarding creativity and authorship in AI-generated literature. The study also explores whether AI-generated literary works are perceived as original, authentic, emotionally resonant, and ethical. A qualitative exploratory research approach was adopted among Indian young adults aged 18–25 years using open-ended questions. The responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring concepts and underlying meanings. The findings suggest that participants generally accept AI-generated literature as a useful writing tool for idea generation, language development, editing, and content creation. However, they distinguish technical creativity from human creativity, which they associate with emotion, intent, memory, culture, and personal experience. Participants also report that authorship becomes unclear when AI is used in writing, raising concerns regarding ownership, responsibility, copyright, plagiarism, academic integrity, and disclosure. Overall, the findings indicate that AI is changing how literature is created and authored, but it is not a replacement for human creativity. Indian young adults view AI as a writing support tool while maintaining that humans provide the intent, emotion, judgment, and ethical reasoning necessary for writing.

Keywords: AI-generated literature, creativity, authorship, Indian young adults, thematic analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a common part of the writing process for emails, poems, short stories, social media captions, scripts, essays, and blogs. Previously, literature was primarily perceived as a human activity. A text is created by a writer through the use of memory, emotion, culture, imagination, and language. This simple idea has been transformed with the help of Generative

AI. A user can provide an artificial intelligence program with a prompt and receive a poem or story within seconds. This changes how writing is viewed and raises questions about creativity, authorship, and copyright.

The perceptions of creativity and authorship in AI-generated literature among Indian young adults are the focus of this study. Young adults are among the most active users of digital technologies. They read and create digital content, study using digital tools, and increasingly use AI to generate written material. According to the Internet in India 2024 report, India had 886 million internet users in 2024 who spent an average of approximately 90 minutes online each day (IAMAI & Kantar, 2026). This indicates that digital writing and reading are no longer confined to a select few.

Generative AI is a type of AI technology that generates new content in response to user input. Large Language Models (LLMs) are one type of generative AI capable of producing coherent and high-quality text, raising questions about authenticity, originality, and copyright. UNESCO has indicated that educational policies and regulations are struggling to keep pace with the rapid growth of generative AI, meaning that students and young writers often gain access to these tools before clear guidelines are established.

According to the Stanford AI Index, almost 53% of people started using Generative AI within just three years (Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI, 2026). In addition, 44% of Indian internet users use AI-based applications such as voice search, image search, and chatbots (Internet & Mobile Association of India & Kantar, 2026). Among respondents aged 15–24 years, 57% reported using AI-based applications, while 52% of those aged 25–44 years also reported using them. These statistics demonstrate that the population examined in this study already exists within an AI-driven digital environment.

Recent research suggests that AI has become more than a grammar or editing tool. It is increasingly used to generate ideas, develop plotlines, create characters, draft poetry, write dialogue, and improve style and tone, making the writing process more collaborative between humans and AI. Doshi and Hauser (2024) found that authors who used AI-generated ideas while writing short stories received higher ratings for creativity, quality, and enjoyment than authors who wrote without AI assistance. However, they also found that stories created with AI assistance became more similar to one another, suggesting that while AI may improve individual creativity, it may reduce the overall diversity of literary expression.

The growing use of AI has also renewed debates regarding creativity and authorship. Creativity has traditionally been associated with originality, imagination, emotion, and lived experience (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Although recent evidence suggests that generative AI can produce outputs comparable to those created by humans in certain creative tasks (Holzner et al., 2025), critics argue that AI generates language through learned patterns rather than conscious intention or personal experience (Bender et al., 2021). Consequently, AI-generated writing raises questions about whether creativity should be judged solely by the final product or also by the process through which it is created.

Similarly, authorship has become increasingly difficult to define in AI-assisted writing. Previous research indicates that perceptions of authorship depend largely on the degree of human involvement rather than simply whether AI was used (Formosa et al., 2025). Legal discussions have also reflected this position. The U.S. Copyright Office (2025) states that copyright protection depends on the extent of human creative contribution involved in producing AI-assisted works. These developments suggest that authorship, originality, and ownership have become increasingly complex in the context of generative AI.

Reader perceptions also play an important role in evaluating AI-generated literature. Studies have shown that many readers are unable to reliably distinguish AI-generated poetry from human-

written poetry, yet their evaluations often change once they learn that a text was produced by AI (Köbis & Mossink, 2021; Porter & Machery, 2024). Research further suggests that readers value authenticity, emotional connection, and transparency in addition to writing quality (Hwang et al., 2024). Ethical concerns surrounding plagiarism, disclosure, copyright, and academic integrity have therefore become central to discussions about AI-generated literature. Formosa et al. (2025) argue that the type and extent of AI involvement should be disclosed because perceptions of authorship and responsibility vary according to the level of AI assistance.

Despite the rapid growth of research on generative AI, creative writing, authorship, and AI adoption, important gaps remain. Existing studies have largely focused on Western populations, educational settings, or general AI use. There is limited qualitative research examining how Indian young adults perceive creativity, authorship, originality, emotional authenticity, and ethical issues in AI-generated literature. Understanding these perceptions is particularly important because young adults are among the most active users of AI technologies and are likely to influence future attitudes towards AI-assisted writing.

The present study therefore explores the perceptions of Indian young adults regarding creativity and authorship in AI-generated literature. Specifically, it examines how they understand creativity and authorship in AI-assisted writing, whether they perceive AI-generated literature as original, authentic, and emotionally meaningful, and the ethical concerns they associate with the use of AI in literary creation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The methodology for this study was qualitative exploratory research. The aim of the research was to investigate people's opinions, beliefs, meanings, and interpretations regarding AI-generated literary works.

An exploratory approach was considered suitable for this research, given the early stage of the field and the rapid evolution of generative AI tools and social norms surrounding the use of AI to create texts. Exploratory research is particularly useful when there is limited knowledge about the topic being researched and when categories are not yet well defined (Saunders et al., 2019). This is supported by the fact that there is still limited research on AI creativity and readers' ability to recognize AI-generated works.

The study used exploratory qualitative research that encouraged participants to provide in-depth responses, which were then analyzed for emerging themes. Information was collected and organized to provide further insight into participants' perceptions of AI-generated literary works and what these perceptions ultimately mean for creativity, authorship, authenticity, and ethics in writing.

Participants

The research was carried out on Indian young adults aged 18–25 years. This age range represents an important period of emerging adulthood characterized by identity exploration, career decision-making, and the exploration of future possibilities (Arnett, 2000).

The study included 20 participants. Interviews were conducted until no new themes emerged from participants' responses, indicating that thematic saturation had been achieved. Participants were selected to include a variety of educational backgrounds, gender identities, and levels of awareness of artificial intelligence.

A purposive sampling method was used to identify participants whose experiences aligned with the study objectives. Participants were recruited through student networks, social media platforms, and personal connections.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. This method provided a set of questions while allowing participants to discuss their ideas and experiences in depth. The interview questions focused on creativity, authorship, originality, authenticity, emotional value, ownership, and ethical concerns associated with AI-generated literary works. Participants were also presented with example scenarios involving AI-generated poetry and written works to encourage reflection on creativity and authorship.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyze the data. The researcher read the interview transcripts multiple times to become familiar with the data and develop initial codes. Related codes were then grouped together to identify themes concerning creativity, authorship, originality, emotional value, and the ethical implications of AI-generated literature. The analysis was primarily inductive, allowing themes to emerge from the interview data while remaining guided by the research questions.

RESULTS

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Six major themes emerged from the participants' responses regarding creativity, authorship, originality, emotional connection, the role of AI in writing, and ethical concerns associated with AI-generated literature.

AI Literature Is Creative but Not Fully Human

Many participants responded positively to the idea that artificial intelligence could create works of creative writing. Many said they found AI-written poetry, short fiction, scripts, and captions fluent, well-structured, and, in many cases, aesthetically appealing. However, they were not ready to call this creativity truly human. The main concern mentioned was the lack of memory, pain, culture, family experience, social struggle, and personal intention in AI. This resulted in a distinction between creative form and creative depth.

P1 remarked: *"Yes, the poem may look nice when AI writes it, but I do not feel that someone has lived that emotion."*

P5 similarly stated: *"It can put words together in an orderly manner, but it has no knowledge of heartbreak or fear."*

P18, a creative writer, observed: *"AI can replicate the form of creativity, but it cannot bear the burden of a story."*

The responses show that participants did not consider literature only from a grammatical or structural perspective. Rather, they linked literature with the inner life, experiences, and intentions of the author. Participants viewed creativity as involving both the process and the product of creation. While AI-generated writing was acknowledged for its structure, style, and language proficiency, participants associated human creativity with meaning, emotion, and lived experience.

This finding is consistent with existing literature. Generative AI can produce realistic-sounding material because it has been trained on large amounts of data. However, this does not mean that it possesses human consciousness or intention. Formosa et al. (2025) similarly found that readers and writers distinguish between machine fluency and human authorship. The present findings support this view by showing that participants valued the technical capabilities of AI but did not regard them as sufficient for genuine literary creativity.

Human Input Still Matters in Authorship

Participants differed in their opinions on how much human involvement was required for authorship. When someone types in a prompt and uses the content verbatim from the output, participants were less inclined to view that individual as the writer. However, when there was an involved human writer who developed the idea, guided the structure, selected the best portions of the content, edited the words, and took responsibility for the result, participants identified the human as the writer to a greater degree.

P2 stated: *"If I write 'make me a story' and copy it, I can't say that I have written it."*

P6 explained: *"A person becomes the author when they create the idea and edit the result."*

P13 added: *"AI can create the draft, but the final author is the person who makes the creative decisions."*

These responses indicate that authorship was linked to control, effort, and decision-making rather than simply entering a prompt. Participants generally considered the person providing the main direction and creative purpose to be the principal author.

This finding reflects current legal and ethical discussions surrounding AI-generated content. According to the U.S. Copyright Office (2025), the extent of human participation plays a major role in determining copyright protection for AI-assisted works, while WIPO (2025) has highlighted the growing need for copyright systems to respond to generative AI. Although participants did not use legal terminology, they expressed similar views by linking authorship with human creativity, responsibility, and accountability.

Overall, participants regarded AI as a writing tool rather than an author. Human authorship was strengthened when meaningful creative direction, editing, and responsibility remained with the writer, whereas minimal human involvement reduced perceptions of authorship.

Confusion About Originality and Ownership

Many participants expressed uncertainty regarding the originality and ownership of AI-generated literary works. Participants recognized that AI systems are trained on large amounts of data but were unsure how this training influences the content produced. As a result, they questioned whether AI-generated writing was truly original or simply a combination of existing patterns.

P3 commented: *"I don't know whether AI is producing something new or blending something that is already written."*

P9 stated: *"As a content writer, I'm concerned that AI sounds like many writers all at once."*

P16 added: *"Originality is not obvious because the source is concealed."*

These responses indicate that participants were concerned not only with plagiarism but also with the hidden sources of AI-generated content. The uncertainty surrounding the origin of AI-generated text appeared to influence their trust in its originality.

This finding reflects the ongoing debate regarding copyright and ownership of AI-generated content. Gaidartzi (2025) notes that the copyright status of AI-generated works remains uncertain because most legal systems continue to be based on the concept of human authorship. Participants similarly expressed uncertainty regarding ownership of AI-generated literature and the extent to which human contribution determines originality.

Overall, participants did not consider all AI-generated writing to be plagiarized. However, they were hesitant to regard AI-generated literature as fully original when the creative process and the degree of human involvement were unclear.

Emotional Connection Is Weaker in AI Writing

Participants consistently reported that while AI-generated text may be grammatically correct, it does not have the same emotional complexity as text produced by a human author. Some participants described AI-generated writing as "flat," "cold," "generic," and "polished." However, they also recognized that AI can produce emotional content. Their concern was that the emotion did not seem to be based on lived experience.

P4 stated: *"AI can tell you about sadness, but it is not sad."*

P12 explained: *"I don't know whether it's a real person or not when I read an AI poem, but when I read a human poem, I imagine a real person behind it."*

P19 added: *"I might enjoy the lines, but I don't feel the same trust."*

The responses suggest that participants associated emotional connection not only with the words themselves but also with the belief that the author had experienced the emotions being expressed. When participants believed that a text had been created by a human writer, they associated it with effort, memory, experience, and intention. This was less likely when the text was perceived to have been generated by AI.

These findings support Reader-Response Theory by suggesting that readers' interpretations are influenced not only by the text itself but also by their perceptions of the author. Participants generally agreed that AI could imitate emotion but questioned whether imitation alone was sufficient for literature. They continued to associate literary value with human feelings, lived experience, and emotional authenticity.

AI as a Writing Assistant, Not a Replacement

Most participants perceived AI as a valuable writing assistant rather than a replacement for human writers. They considered AI useful for brainstorming ideas, correcting spelling and grammatical errors, developing storylines, translating text, and providing title suggestions. Participants generally believed that the human writer should retain creative control over the final intent, meaning, and artistic vision of a piece of writing.

P6 stated: *"AI assists me when I get stuck, but I don't want it to make decisions for me."*

P15 explained: *"AI can provide structure for scripts, but it's up to the human to give them a real voice."*

P20 added: *"If everyone uses AI without editing it, online content will start to look the same."*

Participants valued the efficiency of AI but also expressed concerns about standardization. They believed that AI could produce polished writing but that excessive reliance on AI might reduce individuality and result in similar forms of expression.

The findings indicate that participants preferred an augmentation approach in which AI supports rather than replaces human creativity. They considered this approach more acceptable because it preserves human intention, judgment, and individual style. At the same time, participants emphasized that AI should be used responsibly and that the human writer should retain ultimate responsibility for the final work. This finding is consistent with Bittle (2025), who argues that generative AI presents both opportunities and challenges for creativity and academic integrity.

Ethical Concerns About Disclosure and Academic Honesty

Participants expressed concerns about the hidden use of AI, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, copyright, and reader deception. Their primary ethical concern was disclosure. Most participants believed that readers, teachers, publishers, and audiences should be informed when AI has played a

significant role in creating a literary text. However, they did not necessarily believe that every form of AI assistance, such as grammar checking, required disclosure.

P8 stated: "*If AI wrote most of the text, the reader should know.*"

P10 explained: "*Secretly using AI in college work feels like cheating.*"

P14 added: "*Even if a poem is good, it is dishonest if you do not mention that it was generated with AI.*"

These responses indicate that participants considered AI itself to be a useful writing tool but regarded its undisclosed use as unethical. They emphasized transparency and believed that clear disclosure could improve trust in AI-generated literature.

Participants also expressed concern that AI-generated content could make it more difficult for original writers to gain recognition. These concerns are consistent with global calls for stronger copyright protections and creative industry policies in response to generative AI (WIPO, 2025). Overall, participants viewed literature as a relationship built on trust, in which writers are expected to acknowledge significant AI involvement and remain responsible for the final work.

DISCUSSION

The findings imply a distinction between the appearance of creativity and the deeper conditions of creativity. This aligns with the work of Doshi and Hauser (2024), who demonstrated that individual creative writing can be improved with the help of AI, but it also builds on their work by revealing that young adults do not evaluate creative writing solely on the basis of quality. Emotional origin, intention, and cultural depth were also taken into account. In this sense, the findings suggest that AI-generated literature can be considered valuable and technically impressive, but it continues to be evaluated according to human-centered criteria related to meaning and lived experience.

The findings also support Reader-Response Theory by showing that participants' interpretations were influenced not only by the text itself but also by their perceptions of its author. This is consistent with Porter and Machery (2024), who found that readers may respond differently to the same poem once they learn that it was generated by AI. The present findings suggest that disclosure changes how readers interpret a text, influencing whether it is viewed as an authentic human expression or as AI-assisted writing.

The findings further contribute to discussions on authorship. Participants associated authorship not merely with producing words but with idea generation, editing, creative control, and responsibility. This is consistent with Formosa et al. (2025), who found that increasing AI involvement reduces perceptions of human authorship. The present study extends this understanding by showing that participants generally accepted AI-assisted writing when meaningful human contribution remained central and the use of AI was transparent.

The findings also have implications for education, publishing, and digital content creation. Rather than supporting a complete ban on AI, participants emphasized the importance of responsible use, transparency, and clear disclosure. These findings suggest that educators, publishers, and writers should encourage ethical AI use while preserving human creativity, originality, and accountability in literary production.

CONCLUSION

The present study explored the perceptions of Indian young adults regarding creativity and authorship in AI-generated literature. The findings indicate that participants generally held balanced views towards AI-generated writing. They recognized AI as a valuable writing assistant capable of supporting idea generation, language improvement, and creative writing. However, they did not consider AI-generated literature to be equivalent to literature created by humans.

Participants associated creativity with human qualities such as emotion, lived experience, memory, intention, and culture. Although AI-generated writing was considered creative in terms of structure, fluency, and organization, participants distinguished technical creativity from human creativity. Similarly, perceptions of authorship depended on meaningful human involvement, including idea generation, creative decision-making, editing, and responsibility for the final work.

The findings also highlight the importance of originality, emotional authenticity, transparency, and ethical responsibility in shaping perceptions of AI-generated literature. Participants were generally accepting of AI when its use was openly disclosed but expressed concerns regarding undisclosed AI use, plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and questions of ownership.

Overall, the findings suggest that Indian young adults view AI as a tool that should complement rather than replace human creativity. While AI has the potential to transform literary production, participants emphasized that human creativity, originality, emotional authenticity, and ethical responsibility remain central to literature.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. First, it included only Indian young adults aged 18–25 years; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other age groups or cultural contexts. Second, the study involved a relatively small qualitative sample of 20 participants. While this allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, the findings are not intended to be statistically generalizable. Third, the findings are based on participants' self-reported opinions and experiences, which may have been influenced by differences in their familiarity with AI tools. Finally, as generative AI technologies continue to evolve rapidly, perceptions of AI-generated literature may also change over time.

Future research could include larger and more diverse samples, adopt mixed-methods approaches combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys, and compare the perceptions of different stakeholder groups such as students, educators, professional writers, publishers, and content creators. Comparative studies across different languages, cultural contexts, and literary traditions within India may also provide deeper insights into perceptions of creativity, authorship, originality, and AI-generated literature.

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