# What kind of title influences people's interest in fiction books?

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Master Thesis
*June 28th*

# Abstract

Title is an important feature that could affect the aesthetic judgement for cultural goods. Book is one of the cultural goods, but also experience goods. Which means that unlike other artworks such as paintings, photographs, etc, people cannot know its content immediately unless they decide to take time and read through it. Therefore, in order to let people experience books, they first have to be interested enough to decide to consume them. This characteristic makes book title have an important role which is a key factor to attract people so that they might want to search further information or actually experience a book. In this study, this role of book title is the main focus and the following research question is proposed: What kind of title influences people's interest in fiction books? To figure out the answer to this question, three types of title conditions are prepared based on the literature review; informative title, title with a character's name and whether there is a title or not. And based on the previous studies, the following three hypotheses are proposed; "People's interest in a fiction book is greater when the title is informative.", "People who prefer a certain fiction book genre tend to show high interest in a book in the genre when exposed to its informative title." and "People who frequently buy books online tend to show higher interest in a fiction book through exposed to its informative title." To test those hypotheses, the experiment was conducted online. In order to analyze the data collected, the multiple regression analysis was performed with aforementioned three title conditions as independent variables and participants' interest in book stimuli as the dependent variable. The variables of participants' reading and consumption habit and the control variables that are their socio-demographic characteristics were also added. From the result, it turned out that whether there is a title, and if so, what the title of a fiction book is, do not significantly influence people's interest in fiction books. However, the variable of the genre preference, one of the variables of participants' reading and consumption habit turned out to have a significant positive effect on the dependent variable. This means that the more people like the genre, the higher their interest gets towards books in the same genre.

Keywords: title effect, genre, fiction books, conventions, experience goods

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# 1. Introduction

Title is an important feature that could change the aesthetic judgement for cultural goods. We see titles with many of artworks; paintings, sculptures, photographs, music, films, books etc. Some studies have been conducted to measure its effect on people's aesthetic judgement. Thömmes and Hübner (2014) revealed that a photograph with title has better aesthetic judgment from viewers than a photograph without title. Belke et al. (2010) found out that when a representative painting has a descriptive title, the judgement towards the artwork gets better. Bae and Kim (2019) discovered that informative movie title has a positive effect on viewers' attitude towards movies when they are not heavily promoted before they are shown to public. From this, it can be seen that title has a strong impact on determining how people judge or feel towards artworks. However, although there are studies that confirm that book title has an important role of influencing people's attitudes towards books, there seems to be no study conducted on what kind of book title has the influence.

Book is one of the cultural goods but it has another important feature; book is also one of the experience goods. Which means that unlike other artworks like paintings and photographs, people cannot know its content immediately unless they decide to take time and read through it. Music and movie are other examples of experience goods (Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). This means that in order to let people experience books, they first have to be interested enough to decide to consume them. This characteristic makes book title have an important role that some other artworks' title does not have, which is a key factor to attract people so that they might want to search further information or might actually want to experience a book. In this study, this role of book title is the main focus and in specific, what kind of title has an impact on people's initial interest towards books is researched. This is very important for publishers and other stakeholders in publish industry to know because their sales heavily depend on readers' evaluation of book's features such as cover, title and topic (Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). And because the evaluation, perception, interpretation and preference for those features are highly personal and depend on the knowledge and experience people have regarding literature (Dixon et al., 2015; Leemans & Stokmans, 1991), it is difficult to find patterns of what kind of feature attracts people and this might be one of the reasons why there is no study about the title preference in books. Also, the title of a book is not

just a tool to make people be interested in the book, but is part of the book, which is an art object. Whether a title is deemed aesthetically pleasing due to the literal meaning or the way a title sounds etc., is thought to vary from person to person (Zinkhan and Martin, 1987), but if a study can determine whether there is a trend in the general population's preference for the type of title, it would contribute to the study of the title effect in experience goods and to society, including its impact on publishers and other entities. And it should be noted here that this study focuses on the effect of title of fiction books since fiction is the most popular genre of books in the world. Fiction book genre (mystery) contributes to the book market the most in the United States (Grand View Research, n.d.), which has made the largest contribution to the global book market (Statista, n.d.).

To fill the gaps in the existing research on the title effect of cultural goods, the following research question is proposed: What kind of title influences people's interest in fiction books? In order to find an answer to this question, first, the theoretical framework and hypotheses are presented in chapter 2. The research method is explained in chapter 3, then the result of research is shown in chapter 4. And finally, the discussion and conclusion are made in chapter 5 with the limitation of this study and suggestions for future research.

# 2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

In this chapter, how important it is to know the features influencing people's interest in books is explained in chapter 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, then it is introduced that one of the features is title in the chapter 2.1.3. In chapter 2.2, how exactly title might affect people's interest in books is explained and hypotheses are proposed.

## 2.1 Features influencing people's interest in books

### 2.1.1 Too many books are in this world

The world is full of books. According to Grand View Research (n.d.), in the United States, home to the publishing industry that generates the most revenue in the world, more than 3 million books are published every year, of which more than 100,000 are new titles (Yucesoy et al., 2018). However, the number of readers has not kept pace with the number of books published. For example, despite the large number of books published each year as described above, fewer than 500 of books make it to the New York Times Bestseller List, the most influential and important list of best-selling books in the US (Yucesoy et al., 2018). Therefore, there are many books that exist but are not being read simply because people do not notice them and so they do not achieve commercial success. Award-winning science fiction authors Sharon Lee and Steve Miller were told by their publishers early in their careers that they could not publish their books because their novels were not selling well enough. Their work only became famous after their works were noticed on internet fan sites (Robinson, 2001).

Readers see a tremendous amount of books in bookshops and on online shopping sites. It is therefore almost impossible for them to consider all the books, even if they have narrowed down the genre before purchasing. Given this situation, there are only a handful of works that get people interested and actually get them to read. Thus, it is important to know how people decide which books they want to read.

### 2.1.2 Books as experience goods

The process by which people narrow down that handful of books to read involves risks. Books are one of the experience goods for which it is significantly difficult for people to assess their quality and value prior to read. Most of the story content and

writing style necessary to enjoy reading is not evident from the casual perusal (Dixon & Bortolussi 2005; Dixon et al., 2015), so the supply side (e.g., publishers and bookstores) knows more about product quality than the demand side (buyers and readers) (Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). Furthermore, to read a book is to live an experience and that experience is related to numerous degrees with utilitarian (e.g., cultivating one's knowledge), hedonic (e.g., enjoying oneself), as well as symbolic (e.g., feeling that one is an intellectual) motivations (d'Astous et al., 2006). So the reading is the activity that people are highly involved with themselves, they would not want to choose a book that does not match their preference and have an unfavorable experience. Therefore, throughout the process readers usually have uncertainty about whether the book matches their aims and preferences (Bae & Kim, 2019). This uncertainty only disappears after people have read their books, i.e. after they have purchased and experienced the actual content of those books. It is therefore important for them to know something about the content of a book before they decide to read it so that they can try to avoid reading something that do not seem to really match their preferences, and then they can also try to identify something that seem to match their preferences. If they can predict the content of a book based on features other than its content, uncertainty-induced anxiety is reduced from them (Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). Therefore, features other than a book's content, in other words, features of a book that people can recognize before they read, are the keys to their interest.

### 2.1.3 Features that are important for people to choose a book

Through aforementioned external book features, people would get interested in certain books and they use these features to decide whether a book matches their preferences and is worth reading. Several studies have identified what those features are (d'Astous et al., 2006; Leemans & Stokmans, 1991; Leitão et al., 2018; Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). One of them is a literature award. It can be interpreted as a quality indicator of a book (Leemans & Stokmans, 1991; Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011) and people tend to be curious about a book when they know that it has an award, even if they usually do not have an interest in that particular book's genre (Leitão et al., 2018). Reviews by critics and recommendations from friends and relatives are also useful information for readers to minimize uncertainty before reading a book in that they reduce their

imperfect information regarding the content of the book (Leemans & Stokmans, 1991; Leitão et al., 2018; Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). Publishers' fame also affects people's interest in a book (d'Astous et al., 2006). Readers know that launching a new book on the market could be a commercial risk for publishers and that popular publishers do not take such risk without guarantee of success (d'Astous et al., 2006). Authors' fame could affect people's interest as well (Leemans & Stokmans, 1991; Leitão et al., 2018; Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). Whether a book is written by an author who has reputations could be a good criterion for people to judge the quality of the book. Schmidt-Stölting et al. (2011) found out that people also get interested in a book which is a part of a sequel. The fact that it is part of a sequel reduces their risk because a quality insecurity decreases (Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). And genre also plays the important role for readers to assume whether the content of a book can match their preferences. Synopsis has the same role as well because it can tell the detail of the content (Leitão et al., 2018). As a visual cue, a book cover design has a significant impact on people's interest (d'Astous et al., 2006; Leemans & Stokmans, 1991; Leitão et al., 2018; Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). It conveys direct (e.g., the title, the drawings and pictures) as well as indirect (e.g., the colors, the cover material) information about a book (d'Astous et al., 2006). And finally, people are also attracted to a book by its title (Leemans & Stokmans, 1991; Leitão et al., 2018). It serves as an indicator of the genre so helps people to decide whether book is interesting for them (Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011).

Among those features, this study focuses on the influence of the title in particular on people's interest in books. In several studies that researched which features influence people's interest, it turned out that the title is the most influential feature (Gudinavičius & Šuminas, 2017; Leitão et al., 2018). Therefore, it is already clear that title is the important feature for readers, but it is yet known that what type of title influences their interest.

### 2.1.4 Title, one of the critical features of book

Title is always the first element people see when choosing a book. When visiting a bookshop, most books are shelved and only titles and authors' names are visible. According to Stokmans and Hendrickx (1994), people in most cases do not write down the title and author of a book their attention was drawn to before entering stores. In this

case, it is expected that they would pick up a book that looks interesting by browsing books as they walk around the store. The title becomes very important factor in stimulating their initial interest in this situation because as mentioned above it is one of a few first elements that the people's eye catches and can be the catalyst for them to get interested in a certain book or to notice the existence of the book first among the immeasurable number of books they see. In addition, when a book is purchased on a digital medium rather than in a physical bookshop, the book cover is only displayed in black and white on some mediums (e.g. Kindle Paperwhite from Amazon). Again, the title plays an important role as people are less likely to be influenced by the cover design in this case.

Thus, the title has the characteristic of being an element that consumers will always see, it is not surprising that they are influenced by it as a feature that draws their interest in a book. According to Schmidt-Stölting et al. (2011), the title is often one of the factors that determines the consumer's first impression of a book. If people could find out from the title what the characteristics or contents the book has, which would alleviate the uncertainty that they have about the book as an experience goods, the title might attract the initial attention of people and then they might consider the book further.

Furthermore, this role of the title in conveying people about the work and helping them to understand its content can be seen in other cultural goods. They are characterized by style-based representation, semantic indeterminacy, and features that disrupt perceptual processing routines that are active in everyday perception, so cultural goods are processed differently from other classes of objects (Belke et al., 2010). For example, with consumer goods such as toothbrushes and pens, one can tell at a glance what they represent and what function they have, but with cultural goods, it is not easy to understand the content of these goods, since many of them are not only visually impressive, but also often contain multiple meanings that the creator wants to convey to people. Therefore, it has been confirmed in several cultural goods that titles can play a role in helping people understand the content of an artwork. Belke et al. (2010) proved that the title eased mental processing with respect to understanding the content of paintings. And according to Thömmes and Hübner (2014), the presence of a title enhances the understanding and the meaningfulness of artworks as perceived by viewers of photographs. The process of understanding the content of a book is also more

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complicated than that of other consumer goods because what the story or sentences are trying to convey, what the central theme is, etc., can be predicted in various way depending on the author's narrative technique and writing style. Since this study explores the effect of titles on the expectation towards books, the effect of titles on the interpretation of the content of books is out of scope. However, it should be noted here that the title of cultural goods also has the effect of stimulating interpretation of the artwork itself.

So far, it is explained that, because only a small number of books attract people's attention compared to the vast number of books available purchasing, it is important to understand the features that attract people to a book, and one of them is title. In the following chapters, how specifically titles might affect people will be discussed by using existing literature on the impact of titles in other fields.

## 2.2 How title might affect people's interest in books?

In this section, the framework of the impact of brand names on people is discussed to explain how book titles specifically capture their interest. Bae and Kim (2019), who conducted a study of movie titles, which are comparable to books as experience goods and also as cultural goods, used the framework of brand name to explain the impact of titles on people in their study, so it is considered appropriate to use the framework of brand name in this study. Brand names are the first element of a product that people are exposed to when they are considering buying something or just looking around stores or online shopping sites without any reasons, allowing them to infer various expectations from the name, such as the quality of the product and whether the product will meet their objectives and preferences, and furthermore, they may just be exposed to a brand name to determine if they want to get further information about it (Bao and Kim, 2019). Moreover, a brand name is often the most important product quality cue and that people search for brand information more than for any other type of information when they want to judge a product's quality (d'Astous et al., 2006). Brand names therefore reduce search costs and cognitive efforts when people evaluate a product and reduce uncertainty about the actual quality of the product, which is only known after purchase (Bao and Kim, 2019). This feature of the brand name is consistent with the aforementioned feature of the book title, which is the first piece of information people see, and which reduces consumers' concerns about the uncertain quality and content of the book.

## 2.2.1 The formation of attitude towards a new brand name

According to Zinkhan and Martin (1987), people form attitudes towards a new brand name of consumer goods through a four-stage process. In the first step, they are exposed to a new brand name for the first time. This new name can be either typical or atypical. A typical name is one whose name reminds them of the product category to which it belongs or is similar to other brand names in that product category. In the second step, impressions of the brand are formed from the new brand name, and in the third step, inferential beliefs about the new brand are formed. The composite of these beliefs created in the final step is the overall attitude towards the new brand.

These four steps could also be applied to the process of forming an attitude towards the title of a book. In this case, a typical title is one that reminds people of the genre to which it belongs or the content of the story. It is because of the conventions that people can come up with the book's genre or story just by looking at the title. The conventions are the established modes of artistic production (Blackstone, 2011). In other words, they are the conventional ways of doing things in art (Becker, 1974). According to Becker (1974), the conventions cover all the decisions that must be made with respect to works produced in a given art world to convey. For example, an author writing a mystery novel may use the words "blood" or "murder" or use detective characters in order to thrill the reader. Thus, a writer who wants to write a book in a certain genre will use words that remind the reader of the contents of that genre to complete the work. This language is chosen by conventions, which state that mystery novels contain an element of mystery solving, and thus art is constructed and understood according to conventions (Blackstone, 2011). Because the conventions are familiar enough that audiences have no difficulty in responding appropriately (Becker, 1974), when people find words like "blood," "murder," and "detective" in information about a book, they can expect that the book belongs to the mystery genre. Each type of art work has its own conventions that shape it, and in the case of a book, if people see these conventions in the title, they can predict the genre to which they are connected. And that is the typical title mentioned here. Becker (1974) applied the conventions to cultural goods, but they could also apply to consumer goods. For example, if people find words like "beach" and "poolside" in information about a sunscreen, they can expect that this product belongs to a waterproof sunscreen category because products in the category have the functional conventions that they are water-resistant so people can use them while they are enjoying water activities. Thus, cultural goods and consumer goods share the trait of having the conventions.

Zinkhan and Martin (1987) also showed how inferential beliefs, which determine the final attitude towards a brand, are formed. According to them, the formation of these beliefs can be explained by patterns of prior semantic associations in memory. That is, people have knowledge that they can use as a basis for interpreting new information and making inferences. For example, if a new TV has a name that reminds people of their knowledge of other products in the same category, they may infer that the new TV also

has features that other TVs have, such as beautiful picture quality. In a case for books, if a title of a new book makes people remember features of other books in the same genre, they might suppose that it also has features that those other books in the same genre have. In particular, for instance, if a title has an element of a murder theme, people may infer that it has a similar narrative that other books have about the thrilling story of solving a murder case. Thus, memories about general product categories or genre can provide knowledge that allows assumptions to be made about unknown attributes of a product when a new product is seen and information about it is lacking. This explanation of the belief formation process shows that when people are confronted with a new brand name or, a book title in a case of this study, their impression of the brand name or book title recalls their memories of other products in the product category or genre to which it belongs, and they form beliefs about the new brand or new title with reference to these memories.

And then Zinkhan and Martin (1987) conducted an experiment which revealed that people's inferential beliefs about brands differ when they were exposed to typical and atypical brand names. They provided two each of typical and atypical fictitious brand names for the camera and ice-cream product categories. Participants were shown a piece of paper with the product category and the brand name associated with it, and after thinking about the brand name for one minute, they indicated their inferential beliefs about the new brand, using a seven-point scale. The result of experiment showed that for both product categories, the typical brands were rated more positively. The reason for this result might be related to the risk that consumers perceived when choosing a product as described above (Chapter 2.1.2). In this experiment situation, where the information available was just the brand name and product category for participants, the only feature that could reduce the uncertainty about the quality of the product is the brand name. Therefore, a typical name that is reminiscent of what the product is about would be perceived as less risky and more favorable by participants. According to Langner et al (2006), the most required role for brand names is to communicate the brand positioning as clearly as possible. Brand positioning is the unique value or feature that a brand presents to its customer (Amazon Ads, n.d.). Brand names that do not convey any relevant association in their positioning cannot have an effective impact on people's mind. It takes an enormous amount of communication

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effectiveness just to anchor a brand name in their mind and to make them imagine content that is appropriate and relevant to that product positioning (Langner et al., 2006). Therefore, a brand name that includes as much content as possible could be considered to be an effective name.

The same results can be seen in a study of movie titles by Bae and Kim (2019). Movie titles are also one of the first pieces of information conveyed to potential viewers, as are brand names and book titles. Moreover, as it is mentioned at the beginning of the chapter 2.2, movies are comparable to books as experience goods and also as cultural goods. Bae and Kim investigated whether there is a difference in the impact on box office revenue between an informative title, which can infer its genre or storyline to the potential viewers, and an abstract title. The result revealed that informative titles have a more positive impact on post-release revenue for movies with low media exposure due to pre-release publicity, i.e., movies where potential viewers were not exposed to the films' information through prior publicity. Based on the above, it is assumed that also in the case of fiction books, informative titles have more positive impact on people's interest than abstract titles.

H1. People's interest in a fiction book is greater when the title is informative.

It should be noted here that they studied existed movie titles and used Newmark's (1988) method to determine whether a title was informative or not. However, neither their article nor Newmark's book contained specific elements distinguishing those titles. Therefore, using their definition of informative and non-informative titles and the examples they gave of actual titles being assigned to those types, the distinction between informative and non-informative titles was made later in a chapter about methodology (3.2).

The aforementioned experiment by Zinkhan and Martin (1987) further examined whether individual characteristics of the participants make a difference in the attitude towards the brands formed through the brand names. The results showed that participants with higher levels of interest in the target product categories (camera and ice cream) formed more favorable attitudes towards the new typical brand name. This might be related to the fact that inferential beliefs are formed by knowledge and

impressions of the product category to which the brand belongs that are recalled by the brand name (Zinkhan and Martin, 1987). If people are interested in a category or like products belonging to that category, it can be imagined that they are likely to be familiar with or have a positive impression of the characteristics of those products. Therefore, people are likely to have a favorable impression of a brand if they can infer features about their preferred category from the brand name (Zinkhan and Martin, 1987). The same effect can be expected for the informative title of a book. For example, if people find the word "blood" in the title of a book, they might expect the book to be about a mystery dealing with murder, and people who like the mystery genre might have a positive impression of the book and want to know more about it. To this end, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2. People who prefer a certain fiction book genre tend to show high interest in a book in the genre when exposed to its informative title.

The book cover was mentioned in the previous chapter (2.1.3) as one of the elements of a book that influences people's interest in a fiction book other than the title. The cover of a book, like the title, serves as an indicator of the genre (Schmidt-Stölting et al., 2011). In other words, the cover is a means of getting their attention, enticing them to read the synopses by communicating the sub-genre, storyline and characters and, eventually, buy it (d'Astous et al., 2006). Such a cover has the same role as the title, but the obvious difference between the two features is that the cover is a visual cue for readers. When they go to a bookshop, they can actually hold the book in their hands and see the cover, and its design can be expected to have a significant impact on the their impression of the book. However, when they buy a book online, they can see the cover image but not the actual book itself. Degeratu et al. (2000) found that sensory search attributes such as book cover design have a lower impact on people when shopping online compared to actual stores. Also as mentioned in the previous chapter (2.1.4), the cover of a book may only be displayed in black and white when purchased through some digital mediums. Therefore, it can be assumed that people who are used to buy books online are less likely to use the cover as a guide to decide which book they want to read,

so they might take information about a book from its title more than people who are used to buy books in a physical bookstore. From this, the below hypothesis is proposed.

H3. People who frequently buy books online tend to show higher interest in a fiction book through exposed to its informative title.

In addition to informative titles, guidebooks on writing books also list the idea of using a character's name as the title (Penn, 2022). There are no clear explanations why they mention that, however, indeed many books with a character's name with the title have become bestsellers (e.g. the Harry Potter series, *Jane Eyre*, *Oliver Twist* etc.). This might have made applying a character's name to a title be the convention of creating a title. As explained above, the conventions are the established modes of artistic production (Blackstone, 2011). To put it another way, they are the conventional ways of doing things in art (Becker, 1974). In this case, it could be assumed that the former bestsellers established one of the conventional ways of creating titles for fiction books, which is to use a character's name in a title. Thus, this way might have become a recommendation for authors and publishers to create a title, so it is appeared in the guidebooks for them. This study will therefore also investigate the impact of titles containing the name of a character on people's interest.

Furthermore, other than H2 and H3, this study also focuses on the effect of the relationship between people's reading and consumption habits and the types of title on their interest in fiction books. For example, it can be assumed that people who read more books have more knowledge about literature than people who read less amount of books. This means that those who read a lot would be more familiar with the conventions of literature. So it is going to be tested whether the title effect on people's interest differs when people read different amount of fiction books. Also, whether the title effect on people's interest differs when people have different consumption habit (buying books online and buying in general) is going to be tested. Moreover, since this study is conducted in English, it is a precondition for the subject of this study to understand English and comprehend book titles. Therefore, how much the subject is familiar with the language might have an effect on perceiving titles and also the genre

familiarity. Hence, it is also a focus of this study that whether people are English native speakers or not affects people's interest in fiction books.

# 3. Methodology

This chapter describes the research design undertaken to answer the research question; What kind of title influences people's interest in fiction books?

## 3.1 Research method

In order to test the hypotheses that are mentioned in chapter 2.2.1 and answer the research question, the effect of types of title on people's interest in fiction books has to be measured. This means that this study would like to test the cause-and-effect relationship and any research that demonstrates cause is an experiment, so it is chosen to be conducted in this study (Privitera, 2015). A between-subjects experiment was conducted in English on an online survey, and three independent variables were selected; an informative title, a title with a character's name and whether there is a title or not. To test the effect of those variables alone, independent of other features of books such as authors' names, book cover design etc, the specific situation where those other features do not interfere with the effect of independent variables need to be set up. The experiment let a researcher have fully control the conditions and experiences of participants (Privitera, 2015), so the ideal situation could be prepared.  In addition, the experiment needed to get as many people as possible to participate in the experiment within the short research period. Given this circumstances, a survey experiment was chosen because a large number of responses can be collected quickly.

The survey is divided into three main parts. The first part is the experiment. In this part, participants are asked to read information about a book presented and express their interest in the book. They were asked to do it for 4 different books. The second part asked questions about participants' reading habit and book consumption. The third part asked about participants' socio-demographic characteristics. The following chapters provide more details on the survey experiment.

## 3.2 Operationalization of title information

Participants were presented with a pair of a book title and synopsis or no title and only synopsis and then asked to indicate their interest in the book. Participants were asked to rate their interest in a total of four books, so they went through the process of

reading a title and synopsis and rating interest in the book four times. In this chapter, the operationalization of title information is explained.

First, the genre of the book under this experimentation is discussed in the following. As mentioned in the introduction of this study, the most read book genre in the world is fiction. And within fiction, mystery is the most popular genre, so this study took mystery as a sub-genre within fiction and conducted an experiment (Grand View Research, 2022). While each publisher, online shopping site and bookshop has different ways of dividing the content of books into their respective sub-genres, mystery is one of the sub-genres that is clearly classified by most of main stakeholders (Dixon et al., 2015). Looking at how publishers and distributors categorized it specifically, major publisher Penguin Random House has categorized the category as "Mystery & Suspense" (Penguin Random House, n.d.) and Hachette Book Group has categorized it as "Mystery & Detective" (Hachette Book Group, n.d.), Amazon, the leading online shopping site, lists "Mystery" as a major genre, with the sub-genres "Police Procedurals", "Private Investigators", "Traditional Detective", "International Mystery & Crime", etc. Considering the classification of these industry stakeholders, it is clear that books on cases that involve the police or detectives are classified as mystery. Therefore, the titles and synopses used in this experiment were prepared as those of books with the above sub-genre content.

The titles displayed to participants differed according to whether they were informative or uninformative, whether they were with or without a character's name, and another pattern was provided where the title was not displayed but only a synopsis. There were therefore five patterns of titles prepared (2 × 2 + 1). Specifically, (1) title with descriptive information but without a character's name, (2) title with a character's name but without any descriptive information, (3) title with descriptive information and a character's name, (4) title without descriptive information and a character's name but with abstract information, and (5) No title. The reason for providing a synopsis rather than just the title was to gauge whether respondents were interested in the content of the book, apart from the title that was provided, and to distinguish whether participants found the title informative of the content of the book. In addition, to prevent participants' responses to their interest from being strongly based on the content of one particular book, four synopses were prepared so they were exposed to not just one book but four of them. Each book therefore had its own synopsis and five title patterns, so in

total four synopses and sixteen titles were prepared. Participants were set to be shown one random title pattern and a synopsis of each book. This was achieved using the Randomizer function of the Qualtrics software used to create this survey experiment. In the end, each title pattern elicited between 30 and 36 responses to the question on interest in books.

All titles and synopses used for the stimuli were fictitious. Using a book that already exists is likely to make it difficult to measure the effect of the title alone, since participants' experiences may affect their interest in books, such as if participants have already read the book or have likes/dislikes about certain authors. Therefore, fictitious titles and synopses were created by the researcher of this study and used for the experiment. As it is mentioned in the previous chapter (2.2.1), the study of Bae and Kim (2019) and Newmark (1988) were referred to create the fictitious titles, by using their definition of informative and non-informative titles and the examples they gave of actual titles being assigned to those types.

Bae and Kim's (2019) definition of an informative title is a title that conveys the topic of the movie to potential viewers and helps them to predict the genre of the storyline of the movie. They cite the following examples of such titles; *Night of the Living Dead, Storks - a Baby Carrier, If I Ask Her Out, Eye to See the Ghost, Death of A Samurai, Dragon Hunters*. For *Night of the Living Dead,* we can assume that this movie is a mystery or horror genre with the story taking place at night due to the words "Night" and "Dead". For *Storks - a Baby Carrier*, we can imagine that this is a story in which the main characters are storks and it is about them bringing a baby by the words "Storks" and the phrase "Baby Carrier". *If I Ask Her Out* is predicted to be a romance movie because of the phrase "Ask Her Out". *Eye to See the Ghost*, we can assume that this is a horror movie because of the word "Ghost". *Death of A Samurai* is predicted to be a period drama because of the word "Samurai". And finally, *Dragon Hunters* can be guessed to be a fantasy movie based on the word "Dragon". A common feature of these titles is that they contain at least one word that allows consumers to easily identify the content of movies. For uninformative title,  Bae and Kim's (2019) definition of it is one in which it is difficult for people to determine what it means, and they may only find out its meaning after they have finished watching the movie. In other words, it is an abstract title. They gave the following titles as examples; *A Company Man, Broken, Condole Files*.

Newmarks (1988) also gave examples of abstract titles in the titles of books and articles; *Man's Estate, The Underling, Man of Straw, The Impasse, Power Needs Clear Eyes, The Bond*. As A Company Man and Man of Straw are assumed to be stories about the people included in these titles, and A Condole Files can be expected to be a sad story from the word "Condole", we can expect that the words in the titles are themes of stories, but the genre and storyline is not clearly identifiable. Those are the definitions of informative and uninformative titles that can be gotten from previous studies and the fictitious titles were created based on them, however, it cannot be ignored that it is still not completely clear that what is informative and what is not. For this reason, a synopsis was also added to a each book stimulus and this allows participants to assess whether the title fits with the description or not.

Based on the characteristics of informative and abstract titles obtained from above literature reviews, it can be concluded that for the title patterns of an informative title that are used for this experiment, pattern (1) and (3) mentioned in the previous chapter (3.2), the title should include words that clearly identify part of the book's content, such as the environment in which the story takes place and the genre of the book. In order to include those words in the title, words that remind this experiment participants of the content of a mystery book were first prepared with reference to existing mystery book content (e.g. killer, blood, detective, murder, etc.). The fact that those words are often seen in titles in the genre is because of the aforementioned (chapter 2.2.1) conventions. Once the words had been prepared, a brief synopsis of two or three sentences was made by using the words prepared (e.g. "A person is killed and a knife with blood is found next to the body. A detective Stephany tries to solve the murder case."), and finally, making the title using the words for title pattern (1) (e.g. *The Bloody Murder Case*) and pattern (3) (e.g. *Detective Stephany, the specialist of finding killers*). Fictitious name for the characters were prepared and used in the synopses and the title pattern (2) and (3). The names were created by referring to a website that compiles the most common names in the US (Forebears, n.d.). Finally, for the abstract title of pattern (4), words were chosen that seemed to have nothing to do with the content of the mystery book and these were used as the title (e.g. *The Cherry Blossom*).

## 3.3 Participants and sampling

The following describes the participants subject to the survey experiment and how the data was selected. The process of looking at a brand or product name, deciding whether or not it is of interest to them, and then deciding whether or not to obtain further information about it or to purchase it, is a process that all humans go through frequently. In particular, books are cultural and artistic products, but they are also purchased by people who are not reading regularly. For example, many people buy books not for their own reading but as gifts for others (Leitão et al., 2018). It would be interesting to know what people who do not often buy books find interesting to encourage their consumption of books. Therefore, it seems inappropriate to limit the condition of the subjects such as people who habitually read books. For this reason, participants were selected for all adults aged 18 and older in this study.

Sampling was mainly done through social media such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Before distributing the survey, it was modified through a pre-test in which 4 people took it. On Facebook and Instagram, the data was collected through posts with a link to the survey, asking followers and friends to spread it further to their aquaintances and their followers. On WhatsApp, it was collected through sending the link to my friends asking the same as through Facebook and Instagram. In total, 173 participants were collected between May 9th and June 6th. Of all the participants, 69.3% were female, 28.9% male and 1.7% non-binary/third gender. The average age of participants was 30 years old (SD = 11.58). Nearly half of the participants held a Bachelor's degree (46.8%) and 38.7% held a Master's degree. Participants who held PhD degree or higher, high school graduate or equivalent and who had no degree were 4.6% each. Only 1% graduated a trade/technical/vocational school. 22.5% were English native speakers and 77.4% were not. It should be noted here that this sample is not representative. It is especially clear in gender that male is underrepresented, non-binary/third gender is too small to analyze and there is clear over representative of female sample.  Furthermore, it should be noted here that the data of a participant who graduated from a trade/technical/vocational school was recognized as a missing value since which level of school he or she graduated was not clear. Therefore, total of 172 participants' responses were counted as the data.

## 3.4 Measures

Participants' interest in book stimuli was measured by referring to the experiment of d'Astous et al. (2006), who measured people's interest in books with independent variables such as the authors' reputation, the publishers' reputation and the attractiveness of the book covers. In this study, interest was measured in five items for each book. Each item was associated with seven point bipolar scales with anchor points not at all/completely; ''I would like to know more about this book.", "I would like to read this book.", "I would consider buying this book.", "This book seems interesting to me.", and "This book looks original.". These items are the same items as d'Astous et al.'s (2006) items in their experiment. However, although their study was written in English, the actual experiment was conducted in French in Montreal, Canada. Therefore, it is assumed that the items in English in their study were translated from French and it makes some of the sentences in their items sound uncommon for English speakers. Thus, those sentences were modified by the researcher of this study to be used in this experiment. The scale is used as the dependent variable and it has good reliability in each book stimulus (from book 1 to book 4, Cronbach's alpha = 0.917, 0.916, 0.940 and 0.950).

The following section of the survey after the experiment asked participants to answer six questions about their reading habits and book consumption for fiction books. The first question asked participants to respond to their preferences for each sub-genres of fiction books (Action & Adventure, Classics, Mysteries & Crime, Thrillers & Horror, Science Fiction & Fantasy, General & Literary fiction, Romance and Poetry) using five point bipolar scales with anchor points totally dislike/like very much. These sub-genres were set up with reference to the categorization of fiction books from major publishers and distributors such as Penguin Random House and Amazon. Following this question, they were asked how many books they had read in the last year, choosing one of the following seven options; 0, 1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-10, 11-15 and 16+. Next, participants were asked to choose one of the aforementioned seven option for how many books they had bought last year. Then they were asked whether they buy books online with five point bipolar scales with anchor points "I do not buy fiction books online"/"I very often buy fiction books online".

In the last part of the survey, participants were asked to answer questions about their gender, age, education and whether they are an English native speaker, in order to understand their socio-demographic characteristics. [1]

## 3.5 Data analysis

Multiple regression analysis is chosen for this study to do the data analysis in IBM SPSS Statistics. In this way of analysis, the researcher can decide which variables to add at what stage (model). This features of the analysis is particularly useful of this study because it would like to test the inferential effect for H2, H3 and other relationship between people's reading and consumption habits and the types of title on their interest in fiction books. Moreover, since this study's main focus is to find out what kind of title has an effect on people's interest and there are more than one type of title, it would be convenient to assess the significance of different titles on the dependent variable at the same time and it can be done by doing the multiple regression analysis.

In the next chapter, the result of the analysis is interpreted.

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[1] For questions about their reading habits and book consumption for fiction books and about socio-demographic characteristics, the followings were also asked, however, it became out of scope throughout the research; how often they read a book, the purpose of reading, the country they live in.

# 4. Result

Throughout chapter 4.1 to 4.4, the result of the multiple regression analysis for each book stimulus has been interpreted to examine the relationship between the dependent variable – the respondents' interest in fiction books and independent variables – the informative title, the title with a character's name and whether there is a title or not. In addition to those independent variables, four variables about respondents' reading and consumption habit – the preference for Mysteries & Crime genre, the number of fiction books read last year, the number of fiction books bought last year and the frequency of buying fiction books online are added as moderators to see whether they change the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. Therefore, their interaction terms with independent variables are added to the model 2 of each regression analysis. Furthermore, four control variables are also added – gender, age, education and whether respondents are native English speaker or not. Each book has two regression analyses. The first analysis is to check whether title's presence matters or not, so of all independent variables of the types of title, only the variable whether there is a title or not is added. The second analysis is for checking what kind of title has an effect on the dependent variable, so there are the other two independent variables, the informative title and the title with a character's name are added. If all three were added to one analysis and there was a no title case, because their existence depends on each other, it would affect other variables and it would be difficult to distinguish clearly the effect of each independent variable. Thus, two analyses per book are conducted.

## 4.1 Book 1

Table 4.1

*Description of Book 1 stimulus*

| Title | Synopsis |
|---|---|
| (1) The Daughter Who Became a Killer | Emilia Turner, a university student in Los Angeles, returns to Boston, Massachusetts for winter holiday. Upon entering her parents' home, she finds them bleeding to death in the living room. Together with the police, she begins to search for her parents' murderer. However, when a knife stained with her parents' blood is found, it also bears Emilia's fingerprints. Falsely accused and chased by the police, Emilia finds herself on the run and alone in her search for the real murderer. |
| (2) Emilia | |
| (3) Emilia, The Daughter Who Became a Killer | |
| (4) Orion in the Night Sky | |
| (5) (No title) | |

Note: In accordance with chapter 3.2, (1) title with descriptive information but without a character's name, (2) title with a character's name but without any descriptive information, (3) title with descriptive information and a character's name, (4) title without descriptive information and a character's name but with abstract information, and

(5) No title. (1) and (3) are independent variable - the informative title, (2) and (3) are independent variable - the title with a character's name, and (5) is the independent variable - whether there is a title or not.

## 4.1.1 Book 1 – with or without title

Table 4.1.1

*Regression models for predicting the respondents' interest in Book 1 – with or without title (N=172)*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | b* | B | b* |
| With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | -.329 (.250) | -.085 | -.735 (1.088) | -.189 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime | .708*** (.086) | .543 | .707*** (.181) | .542 |
| Fiction books read last year | .030 (.080) | .037 | -.044 (.167) | -.054 |
| Fiction books bought last year | -.124 (.094) | -.143 | .034 (.199) | .039 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online | .051 (.075) | .051 | -.210 (.200) | -.211 |
| Gender (Female) | .035 (.222) | .011 | .059 (.227) | .018 |
| Age | -.015 (.009) | -.115 | -.017 (.010) | -.126 |
| Education | -.123 (.124) | -.067 | -.112 (.126) | -.061 |
| English native speaker (Yes = 1, No = 2) | -.217 (.239) | -.059 | -.188 (.242) | -.052 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | -.014 (.205) | -.016 |
| Fiction books read last year x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | .089 (.190) | .128 |
| Fiction books bought last year x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | -.186 (.224) | -.239 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | .303 (.217) | .345 |
| Constant | 2.837** (.895) | | 3.119* (1.277) | |
| Adj R2 | .326 | | .318 | |
| R2 Change | .361*** | | .009 | |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the first regression analysis for book 1 has F (9,162) = 10.176, p<0.001 with

an adjusted R2 of 0.326, which means model 1 is significant for predicting the

respondents' interest in book 1 and 32.6 percent of it can be predicted. The independent variable which is whether there is a title or not has its p-value more than 0.05, therefore there is no significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The p-values for variables of respondents' reading and consumption habits and control variables are also more than 0.05 except the variable of genre preference for Mysteries & Crime. It has $p<0.001$ and a positive beta coefficient of 0.708, which means the more respondents like the genre, the more they are interested in the book but this result seems to be very natural. Model 2 has $F_{(13,158)} = 7.143$, $p<0.001$ with an adjusted $R^2$ of 0.318. The $R^2$ change is not significant and the adjusted $R^2$ of model 2 is less than that of model 1, which means that model 1 is better at accounting for the dependent variable. Therefore the interpretation of model 2 is omitted.

### 4.1.2 Book 1 – title with information or a character's name

Table 4.1.2

*Regression models for predicting the respondents' interest in Book 1 – title with information or a character's name (N=139)*

|  | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | B | b* | B | b* |
| Informative title | .199 (.223) | .066 | 1.657 (.957) | .551 |
| Title with a character's name | -.147 (.218) | -.048 | .443 (.984) | .147 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime | .697*** (.100) | .523 | .877*** (.177) | .658 |
| Fiction books read last year | .063 (.094) | .076 | .059 (.137) | .072 |
| Fiction books bought last year | -.164 (.108) | -.184 | .042 (.177) | .047 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online | .096 (.083) | .099 | -.056 (.164) | -.058 |
| Gender (Female) | .057 (.247) | .018 | .178 (.267) | .055 |
| Age | -.011 (.011) | -.080 | -.006 (.012) | -.044 |
| Education | -.181 (.139) | -.101 | -.187 (.144) | -.104 |
| English native speaker (Yes = 1, No = 2) | -.145 (.265) | -.041 | -.142 (.272) | -.040 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x Informative title | | | -.218 (.207) | -.275 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x Title with a character's name | | | -.176 (.211) | -.229 |
| Fiction books read last year x Informative title | | | -.005 (.210) | -.007 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fiction books read last year x Title with a character's name | | | .021 (.212) | .032 |
| Fiction books bought last year x Informative title | | | -.314 (.235) | -.405 |
| Fiction books bought last year x Title with a character's name | | | -.111 (.235) | -.144 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x Informative title | | | .116 (.174) | .124 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x Title with a character's name | | | .121 (.176) | .142 |
| Constant | 2.462* (.948) | | 1.464 (1.175) | |
| Adj R2 | .292 | | .276 | |
| R2 Change | .344*** | | .027 | |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the second regression analysis for book 1 has F (10,128) = 6.705, p<0.001 with an adjusted R2 of 0.292, so it is statistically significant and it explains 29.2 percent of the effect on the respondents' interest for book 1. The independent variables which are the informative title and the title with a character's name have their p-values more than 0.05, therefore there is no significant effect of them on the dependent variable. Among other predictors, the genre preference again has a positive effect on the respondents' interest (B = 0.697) and the effect is significant (p<0.001). Model 2 has F (18,120) = 3.927, p<0.001. Its adjusted R2 is 0.276 and the R2 change is not significant. Since the adjusted R2 of model 2 is less than that of model 1, model 1 can explain the dependent variable better. Therefore the interpretation of model 2 is omitted.

## 4.2 Book 2

Table 4.2

Description of Book 2 stimulus

| Title | Synopsis |
|---|---|
| (1) My Best Friend Who Disappeared | Ian Cole, a journalist in New York City, receives a letter. The letter is from someone identifying himself as Owen Fisher, Ian's best friend who disappeared 10 years ago and who writes that he was kidnapped, but that he has recently managed to escape from his kidnapper. He wants Ian to write an article about what has happened to him over the past 10 years. Ian decides to meet with the sender of the letter to hear his story, but this decision will put him in a lot of trouble. |
| (2) Owen | |
| (3) Owen, My Best Friend Who Disappeared | |
| (4) Footsteps | |
| (5) (No title) | |

## 4.2.1 Book 2 – with or without title

Table 4.2.1

*Regression models for predicting the respondents' interest in Book 2 – with or without title (N=172)*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | b* | B | b* |
| With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | .086 (.250) | .025 | .863 (1.077) | .252 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime | .364*** (.085) | .321 | .326 (.207) | .287 |
| Fiction books read last year | .024 (.080) | .034 | .063 (.260) | .090 |
| Fiction books bought last year | -.118 (.093) | -.157 | .058 (.258) | .077 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online | .158* (.074) | .183 | .139 (.156) | .160 |
| Gender (Female) | .303 (.222) | .104 | .291 (.224) | .100 |
| Age | -.008 (.009) | -.070 | -.009 (.009) | -.079 |
| Education | -.084 (.122) | -.053 | -.085 (.123) | -.053 |
| English native speaker (Yes = 1, No = 2) | .001 (.237) | .000 | -.026 (.246) | -.008 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | .038 (.226) | .049 |
| Fiction books read last year x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | -.043 (.275) | -.074 |
| Fiction books bought last year x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | -.229 (.275) | -.345 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | .041 (.180) | .053 |
| Constant | 3.026*** (.868) | | 2.451* (1.234) | |
| Adj R2 | .121 | | .117 | |
| R2 Change | .168*** | | .017 | |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the first regression analysis for book 2 has F (9,162) = 3.628, p<0.001 with an adjusted R2 of 0.121, so it is statistically significant and 12.1 percent of the dependent

variable can be predicted. The independent variable is whether there is a title or not and its p-value is more than 0.05. Therefore its impact on the respondents' interest is not significant. The predictors which have a significant impact in model 1 are the genre preference and the frequency of buying fiction books online. The former has a positive effect (B = 0.364) and its p-value is less than 0.001. The latter has also a positive effect (B = 0.158) and its p-value is less than 0.05. Model 2 has $F_{(13,158)} = 2.748$, p=0.002 with an adjusted $R^2$ of 0.117.The $R^2$ change is not significant and the adjusted $R^2$ of model 2 is less than that of model 1, which means that, in this analysis too, model 1 is better at accounting for the dependent variable. Therefore the interpretation of model 2 is omitted.

## 4.2.2 Book 2 – title with information or a character's name

Table 4.2.2

*Regression models for predicting the respondents' interest in Book 2 – title with information or a character's name (N=140)*

|  | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | B | b* | B | b* |
| Informative title | -.291 (.214) | -.109 | -1.234 (.917) | -.462 |
| Title with a character's name | -.202 (.213) | -.076 | -.795 (.908) | -.298 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime | .360*** (.091) | .320 | .148 (.168) | .132 |
| Fiction books read last year | .004 (.083) | .005 | .017 (.158) | .025 |
| Fiction books bought last year | -.180 (.100) | -.238 | -.190 (.191) | -.250 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online | .209* (.085) | .241 | .146 (.163) | .168 |
| Gender (Female) | .439 (.245) | .149 | .445 (.248) | .151 |
| Age | -.010 (.010) | -.092 | -.009 (.010) | -.082 |
| Education | -.108 (.131) | -.070 | -.094 (.137) | -.061 |
| English native speaker (Yes = 1, No = 2) | -.156 (.270) | -.048 | -.142 (.274) | -.044 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x Informative title |  |  | .181 (.195) | .263 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x Title with a character's name |  |  | .200 (.191) | .284 |
| Fiction books read last year x Informative title |  |  | -.067 (.175) | -.111 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fiction books read last year x Title with a character's name | | | .027 (.174) | .049 |
| Fiction books bought last year x Informative title | | | -.078 (.209) | -.112 |
| Fiction books bought last year x Title with a character's name | | | -.115 (.215) | .188 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x Informative title | | | .303 (.174) | .399 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x Title with a character's name | | | -.232 (.169) | -.298 |
| Constant | 3.832*** (.909) | | 4.596*** (1.160) | |
| Adj R2 | .168 | | .168 | |
| R2 Change | .228*** | | .048 | |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the second regression analysis for book 2 has $F_{(10,129)} = 3.804$, $p<.001$ with an adjusted R2 of 0.168. This means that it is statistically significant and it explains 16.8 percent of the effect on the respondents' interest for book 2. The independent variables are the informative title and the title with a character's name, and their p-values are more then 0.05, therefore there is no significant effect of them on the dependent variable in model 1. Same as model 1 of the first regression analysis for book 2, the genre preference and the frequency of buying fiction books online in model 1 of this second analysis also have the significant positive effect on the dependent variable. The former has a beta coefficient of 0.360 and its p-value is less than 0.001, and the latter has a beta coefficient of 0.209 and its p-value is less than 0.05. Model 2 has $F_{(18,121)} = 2.559$, $p=0.001$. Its adjusted R2 is 0.168 which is as same as that of model 1, although the R2 change is not significant. In model 2, none of the predictors are statistically significant including the genre preference and the frequency of buying fiction books online. The result that those two variables are not significant in model 2 might be because the interaction terms are added there so their moderators (informative title and title with a character's name) might take away a part of the effect of them on the respondents' interest. This would mean that the genre preference and the frequency of buying fiction books online are no longer significant when people see neither informative title nor title with a character's name, in other words, when they see an abstract title. However, since none of the interaction terms are significant, it is difficult to identify the exact reason

why they are no longer significant in model 2. Moreover, the R2 change is not significant, therefore model 1 should be focused and the change occurred between models should not be given too much attention.

## 4.3 Book 3
Table 4.3

Description of Book 3 stimulus

| Title | Synopsis |
|---|---|
| (1) Killed by the Beach | Actress Georgia Diaz is found murdered at her villa in Florida. Her husband Milo, a film director, is nowhere to be found. Detective Leila Coleman, a good friend of the couple, finds a plane ticket to Hawaii next to the body. When Leila decides to travel to Hawaii to find out the truth, she learns that people are sometimes not who they claim to be. |
| (2) Georgia | |
| (3) Georgia killed by the Beach | |
| (4) Butterfly | |
| (5) (No title) | |

### 4.3.1 Book 3 – with or without title
Table 4.3.1

*Regression models for predicting the respondents' interest in Book 3 – with or without title (N=172)*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | b* | B | b* |
| With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | -.230 (.261) | -.063 | -1.117 (1.057) | -.309 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime | .460*** (.091) | .374 | .090 (.209) | .073 |
| Fiction books read last year | -.012 (.085) | -.016 | .116 (.172) | .153 |
| Fiction books bought last year | -.047 (.100) | -.058 | .029 (.201) | .036 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online | .001 (.079) | .001 | -.007 (.175) | -.007 |
| Gender (Female) | .399 (.235) | .127 | .466 (.239) | .148 |
| Age | .012 (.010) | .098 | .011 (.010) | .090 |
| Education | -.119 (.130) | -.068 | -.101 (.130) | -.058 |
| English native speaker (Yes = 1, No = 2) | -.019 (.252) | -.006 | -.072 (.254) | -.021 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | .452 (.234) | .541 |
| Fiction books read last year x With or without title | | | -.123 (.199) | -.199 |

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| (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fiction books bought last year x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | -.122 (.233) | -.178 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | .030 (.194) | .036 |
| Constant | 2.187* (.911) | | 2.852* (1.197) | |
| Adj R2 | .148 | | .161 | |
| R2 Change | .193*** | | .031 | |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the first regression analysis for book 3 has F (9,162) = 4.313, p<0.001 with an adjusted R2 of 0.148. This means model 1 is significant for predicting the dependent variable in book 3 and 14.8 percent of it can be predicted. The independent variable, whether there is a title or not has more than 0.05 p-value, therefore there is no significant effect of it on the dependent variable. The variable of the genre preference is the only variable that has a significant effect in model 1. It has p<0.001 and a positive beta coefficient of 0.460. Model 2 has F (13,158) = 3.517, p<0.001 with an adjusted R2 of 0.161. Although the R2 change is not significant, its adjusted R2 is more than that of model 1. In model 2, there are no predictors that have a significant effect on the respondents' interest in book 3. This means that the effect of the genre preference is also not significant anymore in model 2. It might be because of the added interaction terms, therefore its moderator (whether there is a title or not) might affect the effect of the genre preference on the dependent variable. This would mean that the genre preference is not significant when people do not see a title since 0 means that no title was mentioned. However, it is hard to determine a cause of why it is no longer significant in model 2 because none of the interaction terms are significant. And since the R2 change is not significant, model 2 is not a significantly better model than model 1.

### 4.3.2 Book 3 – title with information or a character's name
Table 4.3.2

*Regression models for predicting the respondents' interest in Book 3 – title with information or a character's name (N=138)*

|  | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | B | b* | B | b* |
| Informative title | -.177 (.232) | -.060 | .051 (1.040) | .018 |
| Title with a character's name | -.242 (.237) | -.082 | -2.202* (1.065) | -.751 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime | .567*** (.102) | .451 | .463* (.191) | .368 |
| Fiction books read last year | -.021 (.102) | -.028 | -.118 (.201) | -.157 |
| Fiction books bought last year | -.078 (.121) | -.095 | -.053 (.219) | -.064 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online | .041 (.089) | .043 | .085 (.147) | .089 |
| Gender (Female) | .404 (.269) | .127 | .453 (.272) | .142 |
| Age | -.002 (.011) | -.014 | .003 (.012) | .026 |
| Education | -.060 (.138) | -.036 | -.143 (.147) | -.086 |
| English native speaker (Yes = 1, No = 2) | -.107 (.283) | -.031 | -.011 (.302) | -.003 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x Informative title |  |  | .089 (.211) | .118 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x Title with a character's name |  |  | .275 (.227) | .357 |
| Fiction books read last year x Informative title |  |  | -.111 (.217) | -.175 |
| Fiction books read last year x Title with a character's name |  |  | .328 (.216) | .512 |
| Fiction books bought last year x Informative title |  |  | -.031 (.246) | -.046 |
| Fiction books bought last year x Title with a character's name |  |  | .077 (.254) | .104 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x Informative title |  |  | .013 (.186) | .015 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x Title with a character's name |  |  | -.184 (.189) | -.216 |
| Constant | 1.904 (.972) |  | 2.519* (1.238) |  |
| Adj R2 | .189 |  | .203 |  |
| R2 Change | .248*** |  | .059 |  |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the second regression analysis for book 3 has F (10,127) = 4.199, p<0.001 with an adjusted R2 of 0.189, so it is statistically significant and it explains 18.9 percent of the effect on the dependent variable. The independent variables, the informative title

and the title with a character's name, have their p-values more than 0.05, therefore there is no significant effect of them on the respondents' interest in book 3. The variable of the genre preference is the only one that has a statistically significant positive effect with a beta coefficient of 0.567 and its p-value less than 0.001. Model 2 has $F_{(18,119)}$ = 2.933, $p<0.001$. Its adjusted $R^2$ is 0.203 which is more than that of model 2, although the $R^2$ change is not significant. In model 2, the independent variable, title with a character's name, has a significantly negative effect with a beta coefficient of -2.202 and its p-value of less than 0.05. The other variable that has a significant effect on the dependent variable in model 2 is the genre preference. However, its beta coefficient is decreased to 0.463 and even though it is still significant, its p-value is no longer less than 0.001 but less than 0.05, compared to the values of the predictor in model 1. These changes of two variables from model 1 to model 2 might have occurred because of the addition of interaction terms in model 2. For the title with a character's name, the genre preference which is one of the moderators of the independent variable might affect the effect of it on the respondents' interest. This would mean that the effect of a title with a character's name becomes significant when respondents do not really like the genre mysteries & crime. In this case, people who are closer to 0 on the scale of the genre preference for mysteries & crime would have less interest in book 3 if a character's name is mentioned. For the effect of the genre preference in model 2, the title with a character's name which is one of the moderators of the predictor might affect the effect of it on the dependent variable. Which would mean that the effect of the genre preference stays but it is less significant in model 2 than that of model 1 when people do not see a character's name in the title, in other words, when they see only a title with information or an abstract title. However, like in the previous analyses, there are no interaction terms which have a significant effect in model 2, therefore it is difficult to find the cause of the change that occurred between model 1 and model 2. Furthermore, the $R^2$ change is not significant, so model 1 should be focused and model 2 should not be given too much attention.

## 4.4 Book 4

Table 4.4

Description of Book 4 stimulus

| Title | Synopsis |
|---|---|
| (1) The Lost Memory of the Murder | As soon as Tyler Simmons wakes up in a hospital bed with a terrible headache, he is arrested by the police on the charge of murder. However, Tyler cannot remember what has happened and why he is in the hospital. Using the details of the murder case and the evidence that led to his arrest, he searches his memory to see if he really committed the crime. |
| (2) Tyler | |
| (3) Tyler's Lost Memory of the Murder | |
| (4) The Scenery | |
| (5) (No title) | |

### 4.4.1 Book 4 – with or without title

Table 4.4.1

*Regression models for predicting the respondents' interest in Book 4 – with or without title (N=172)*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | b* | B | b* |
| With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | .089 (.264) | .023 | -.559 (1.113) | -.145 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime | .615*** (.093) | .471 | .498* (.196) | .381 |
| Fiction books read last year | -.065 (.087) | -.080 | .245 (.265) | .304 |
| Fiction books bought last year | .034 (.101) | .039 | -.408 (.264) | -.470 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online | -.023 (.081) | -.023 | .052 (.196) | .052 |
| Gender (Female) | .171 (.241) | .051 | .202 (.242) | .061 |
| Age | -.012 (.010) | -.095 | -.009 (.010) | -.070 |
| Education | .006 (.134) | .003 | -.019 (.135) | -.010 |
| English native speaker (Yes = 1, No = 2) | -.327 (.258) | -.089 | -.355 (.262) | -.097 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | .152 (.221) | .173 |
| Fiction books read last year x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | -.350 (.281) | -.516 |
| Fiction books bought last year x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | .530 (.285) | .689 |

| Frequency of buying fiction books online x With or without title (Without title = 0, with title = 1) | | | -.092 (.218) | -.103 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 2.238* (.928) | | 2.765* (1.338) | |
| Adj R2 | .209 | | .209 | |
| R2 Change | .251*** | | .018 | |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the first regression analysis for book 4 has F (9,162) = 6.022, p<.001 with an adjusted R2 of 0.209, so this model is statistically significant and it explains 20.9 percent of the dependent variable. The independent variable is whether there is a title or not and Its p-values is more then 0.05, therefore there is no significant effect of it on the dependent variable. The variable which has a significant effect in model 1 is only the genre preference with the beta coefficient of 0.615 and with the p-value less than 0.001. Model 2 has F (13,158) = 4.469, p=0.001. It's adjusted R2 is 0.209 which is as same as that of model 1, although the R2 change is not significant. The genre preference is again only one variable that has a significant effect on the dependent variable, however, its beta coefficient is decreased to 0.498 and its p-value is no longer less than 0.001 but less than 0.05, compared to the values of the predictor in model 1. The variables that are added in model 2 are the interaction terms, therefore they might be the cause of the change of the effect of the genre preference from model 1 to model 2. In particular, its moderator is whether there is a title or not and this moderator might affect the effect of the genre preference on the respondents' interest. This would mean that the effect stays but it is less significant in model 2 than model 1 when people do not see a title, so when they see a title no matter what type of title it is. Although, like other previous analyses, none of the interaction terms are significant, therefore it is difficult to clarify the cause of the difference in the genre preference variable between model 1 and model 2.  And again, the R2 change is not significant so model 2 does not become significantly better model than model 1.

### 4.4.2 Book 4 – title with information or a character's name

Table 4.4.2

*Regression models for predicting the respondents' interest in Book 4 – title with information or a character's name (N=138)*

|  | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | B | b* | B | b* |
| Informative title | .039 (.238) | .013 | 1.300 (1.055) | .425 |
| Title with a character's name | -.410 (.242) | -.134 | -.553 (1.052) | -.181 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime | .637*** (.107) | .476 | .757*** (.202) | .565 |
| Fiction books read last year | -.107 (.094) | -.133 | -.066 (.146) | -.082 |
| Fiction books bought last year | .147 (.113) | .163 | .188 (.177) | .208 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online | -.052 (.092) | -.052 | -.109 (.152) | -.110 |
| Gender (Female) | .172 (.276) | .052 | .253 (.281) | .076 |
| Age | -.007 (.013) | -.047 | -.004 (.013) | -.025 |
| Education | .062 (.162) | .031 | -.007 (.166) | -.004 |
| English native speaker (Yes = 1, No = 2) | -.124 (.296) | -.034 | -.103 (.305) | -.028 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x Informative title | | | -.362 (.228) | -.468 |
| Preference Mysteries & Crime x Title with a character's name | | | .127 (.226) | .158 |
| Fiction books read last year x Informative title | | | -.058 (.198) | -.082 |
| Fiction books read last year x Title with a character's name | | | -.035 (.188) | -.053 |
| Fiction books bought last year x Informative title | | | -.159 (.232) | -.204 |
| Fiction books bought last year x Title with a character's name | | | .146 (.233) | .200 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x Informative title | | | .286 (.183) | .311 |
| Frequency of buying fiction books online x Title with a character's name | | | -.226 (.186) | -.257 |
| Constant | 1.624 (1.051) | | 1.217 (1.284) | |
| Adj R2 | .194 | | .191 | |
| R2 Change | .253*** | | .045 | |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Model 1 of the second regression analysis for book 4 has F (10,127) = 4.292, p<0.001 with an adjusted R2 of 0.194, so it is statistically significant and it explains 19.4 percent of the effect on the respondents' interest for book 4. The independent variables which

are the informative title and the title with a character's name have their p-values more than 0.05, therefore there is no significant effect of them on the dependent variable. The only variable which has a significant effect in model 1 is the genre preference. It has a positive beta coefficient (B = 0.637) and a p-value less than 0.001. Model 2 has F (18,119) = 2.800, p<0.001. Its adjusted R2 is 0.191 and the R2 change is not significant. Since the adjusted R2 of model 2 is less than that of model 1, model 1 can account for the dependent variable better. Thus, the interpretation of model 2 is omitted.

## 4.5 Summary of the result

The result showed that the three independent variables, whether there is a title or not, the informative title and the title with a character's name, do not have a significant effect on the dependent variable, the respondents' interest in fiction books. This means that whether there is a title, and if so, what the title of a fiction book is, do not affect people's interest in it. Although the title with a character's name has a negative significant effect on the dependent variable in the analysis for book 3, this effect is only found in book 3 so it cannot be said that this type of title has a negative effect on people's interest in fiction books in general. Based on the above result, H1 is not supported. And there are no interaction terms that have significant beta coefficients. This means that the interaction effects that are produced by the relationship between the respondents' reading and consumption habits and the types of title do not have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Thus, H2 and H3 are also not supported. Furthermore, none of the control variables have a significant effect on the dependent variable as well.

Except the analysis for book 3 – with or without title, the variable that has a significant effect throughout all analyses is the preference for the Mysteries & Crime genre. The information that all the respondents saw is the synopsis of each book and they are clearly about mystery and crime. The titles were also seen by all respondents, however, since they do not have a significant effect on the respondents' interest, they were most likely affected by the synopses.  And it seems natural that people who like mysteries and crime genre show interest for books of which the synopses describe that the books are about their favorite genre. Therefore, this result is not surprising. About the analysis for book 3 – with or without title, the effect of the genre preference is

positively significant in model 1 but no longer significant in model 2 which has more adjusted R2 than model 1. However, the R2 change is not significant, so the predictive power does not get significantly better in the model 2. Therefore, even though the effect of the variable is not significant in model 2 of the analysis for book 3 – with or without title, the genre preference has a positively significant effect in their models with better R2 in all other analyses, so it can be still said that people who like a certain genre show interest for books of which the synopses describe that the books are about their favorite genre.

Other variable that have a significant effect on the dependent variable is the frequency of buying fiction books online. However, it is only significant in the analyses for book 2. Therefore, it cannot be said that this variable have a significant impact on people's interest in fiction books in general.

# 5. Discussion and conclusion

This study has been conducted in order to answer the research question "What kind of title influences people's interest in fiction books?". Unlike other cultural goods like paintings, sculptures, photographs etc, books are one of the experience goods that their contents are not apparent immediately to people. Thus, in order for them to experience books, it is necessary for people to get interested in the books so that they might consider those books further. However, because their contents are not immediately shown, people could not know clearly whether the contents match their preference before they read. Therefore, they would have uncertainty about the contents when they choose a book. So the features which can reduce their uncertainty are needed to first attract their interest and one of those features is the title. It is confirmed in the previous studies that brand names (Zinkhan & Martin, 1987) and movie titles (Bae & Kim, 2019), whose products also make people feel uncertain before they consume, have a positive impact on people's attitude towards their products when their name and title contain information about their products. This might be because the information in title could reduce the uncertainty they have. From this, the first hypothesis to answer the research question was proposed; H1. People's interest in a fiction book is greater when the title is informative. And then, from the previous study of the brand names (Zinkhan & Martin, 1987) which found out that people with higher levels of interest in certain product categories formed more favorable attitudes towards their brand when their brand names contain information about the products, the second hypothesis was proposed; H2. People who prefer a certain fiction book genre tend to show high interest in a book in the genre when exposed to its informative title. Furthermore, the assumption is made that the title's effect, especially the informative title's effect on people's interest would be stronger if they are used to buy a book online because they could not get information from physical aspects of a book (e.g., book cover) online. From this, the third hypothesis was proposed; H3. People who frequently buy books online tend to show higher interest in a fiction book through exposed to its informative title. Other than those three hypotheses, the following three were also tested in this study. The first one is whether the title effect on people's interest differs when people read different amount of fiction books. It can be assumed that people who read more books have more knowledge about literature, so whether this difference in knowledge has an interaction effect with types of

title was tested. And also, it was tested whether the title effect on people's interest differs when people have different consumption habit (buying books online and buying in general). And finally, since this study required people to comprehend titles and synopses in English, whether people are English native speakers or not affects people's interest in fiction books was also tested.

To test hypotheses and the effect of the relationship between people's reading and consumption habits and the types of title, the multiple regression analyses were conducted. And as it can be seen in chapter 4.5, the result revealed that the three types of title conditions, whether there is a title or not, the informative title and the title with a character's name, do not have a significant effect on the people's interest in fiction books. Also people's reading and consumption habits and their socio-demographic characteristics do not have significant effect. This result is surprising because it is different from the studies for the effect of brand names and movie titles that share the feature of experience goods with books. The only variable that has a significant effect on people's interest is the genre preference for mysteries & crime. It has a strong positive effect, so the more they like the genre, the higher their interest gets towards books in the same genre. Thus, the answer to the research question is that unlike other cultural goods, whether there is a title, and if so, what the title of a fiction book is, do not significantly influence people's interest in fiction books. However, it is found in this study that the genre preference has a significant and positive effect on the people's interest.

This study is not at all perfect so there are limitations and also suggestions for future research. First, the result of this study might be applicable to only mystery fiction books, so research on other sub-genres should be planned in the future. And as it is already mentioned in chapter 2.2.1, there was no clear definition of what is informative title and what is not in this study. So if they could be distinguished more clearly in the future, the better study about the title effect could be conducted. In addition, it is also mentioned in the previous chapter (3.3) that the sample of the experiment in this study is not representative. Therefore, if there is a similar study in the future, whether it has the representative sample should be given attention and it could lead to have a better result. Moreover, the synopses provided in the experiment could already have a large effect on people's interest on books, although the title effect alone was the one that this study was interested. And also, participants saw a title and synopsis at the same time for once

in this experiment and this is not close to the situation in reality. People normally see the title first, then see the synopsis in a physical bookstore or online. Thus, it is recommended to set up the experiment environment closer to the reality for future research. About the types of title conditions used in this study, there were three (informative title, title with a character's name and whether there is a title) conditions but there could be other types that might affect people's interest. For example, a title sounds unique and memorable might have the effect and people might be attracted to it aesthetically, although what is unique and attractive for people is difficult to generalize and highly subjective matter. And finally, even though the title does not have the effect on people's interest in this study, it might have increased the cognitive component of aesthetic experience of people. Thömmes and Hübner (2014) studied whether the existence of title itself affects people's aesthetic judgement towards photographs. According to them, the process of aesthetic perception is divided into two components: an emotional and cognitive dimension. The aesthetic judgements vary with both the intensity of emotional experience and the depth of cognitive processing (Thömmes & Hübner, 2014). They explained that the emotional dimension contains viewers' implicit liking, spontaneous interest and extent of emotions towards artworks. The cognitive dimension contains the attributed meaningfulness, thoughts and understanding viewers have for artworks. In their study, the titles increased the cognitive component of aesthetic experience (a deeper understanding of the artwork), but they do not have much effect on the aesthetic judgement. The judgement for artworks with title is still better than that of artworks without title, but the emotional component has the positively larger and significant effect on the aesthetic judgement. From this, it can be seen that the titles helped viewers understanding the artworks but it did not make the aesthetic judgement better. Although books and photographs are both cultural goods, books are also experience goods and this is a big difference between them. Therefore the result of the study about the photographs might not be applicable, however, it seems it is worth to study in the future about the book title effect on people's interest by looking at the effect from two components, an emotional and cognitive dimension.

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# Appendix – Experiment

Hello, I am Kazuha Michifuji, a student of Erasmus University Rotterdam. I am conducting a study on the consumer interest in fiction book and I would like to know about your opinion about it. It would help a lot if you take a few moments to fill out this survey. This will take 6 - 7 minutes.

There are no right or wrong answers. Only your personal opinion matters.

Your responses are completely anonymous and cannot be traced back to you. The study serves exclusively scientific purposes. I will not share your responses with any other parties and there are not any commercial purposes. You can stop your participation at any time. In that case, the information you have provided will not be taken into account in the study.

You should be 18 years or older to participate.

If you have any questions or comments, you can share them at the end of the survey or get in touch using the email address provided.

0 I have read the information carefully, I confirm that I am 18 years or older and I agree to participate in the survey.

0 I do not agree and leave the survey.

You will find a description of four books in the following pages. On the basis of the information that is provided, please give your opinion by answering the questions.

Thank you for your participation.

(Book 1-1)

Title: The Daughter Who Became a Killer


Synopsis:

Emilia Turner, a university student in Los Angeles, returns to Boston, Massachusetts for winter holiday. Upon entering her parents' home, she finds them bleeding to death in the living room. Together with the police, she begins to search for her parents' murderer. However, when a knife stained with her parents' blood is found, it also bears Emilia's fingerprints. Falsely accused and chased by the police, Emilia finds herself on the run and alone in her search for the real murderer.


**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 1-2)

Title: Emilia

Synopsis:

Emilia Turner, a university student in Los Angeles, returns to Boston, Massachusetts for winter holiday. Upon entering her parents' home, she finds them bleeding to death in the living room. Together with the police, she begins to search for her parents' murderer. However, when a knife stained with her parents' blood is found, it also bears Emilia's fingerprints. Falsely accused and chased by the police, Emilia finds herself on the run and alone in her search for the real murderer.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 1-3)

Title: Emilia, The Daughter Who Became a Killer

Synopsis:

Emilia Turner, a university student in Los Angeles, returns to Boston, Massachusetts for winter holiday. Upon entering her parents' home, she finds them bleeding to death in the living room. Together with the police, she begins to search for her parents' murderer. However, when a knife stained with her parents' blood is found, it also bears Emilia's fingerprints. Falsely accused and chased by the police, Emilia finds herself on the run and alone in her search for the real murderer.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 1-4)

Title: Orion in the Night Sky

Synopsis:

Emilia Turner, a university student in Los Angeles, returns to Boston, Massachusetts for winter holiday. Upon entering her parents' home, she finds them bleeding to death in the living room. Together with the police, she begins to search for her parents' murderer. However, when a knife stained with her parents' blood is found, it also bears Emilia's fingerprints. Falsely accused and chased by the police, Emilia finds herself on the run and alone in her search for the real murderer.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 1-5)

Synopsis:

Emilia Turner, a university student in Los Angeles, returns to Boston, Massachusetts for winter holiday. Upon entering her parents' home, she finds them bleeding to death in the living room. Together with the police, she begins to search for her parents' murderer. However, when a knife stained with her parents' blood is found, it also bears Emilia's fingerprints. Falsely accused and chased by the police, Emilia finds herself on the run and alone in her search for the real murderer.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 2-1)

Title: My Best Friend Who Disappeared

Synopsis:

Ian Cole, a journalist in New York City, receives a letter. The letter is from someone identifying himself as Owen Fisher, Ian's best friend who disappeared 10 years ago and who writes that he was kidnapped, but that he has recently managed to escape from his kidnapper. He wants Ian to write an article about what has happened to him over the past 10 years. Ian decides to meet with the sender of the letter to hear his story, but this decision will put him in a lot of trouble.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 2-2)

Title: Owen

Synopsis:

Ian Cole, a journalist in New York City, receives a letter. The letter is from someone identifying himself as Owen Fisher, Ian's best friend who disappeared 10 years ago and who writes that he was kidnapped, but that he has recently managed to escape from his kidnapper. He wants Ian to write an article about what has happened to him over the past 10 years. Ian decides to meet with the sender of the letter to hear his story, but this decision will put him in a lot of trouble.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 2-3)

Title: Owen, My Best Friend Who Disappeared

Synopsis:

Ian Cole, a journalist in New York City, receives a letter. The letter is from someone identifying himself as Owen Fisher, Ian's best friend who disappeared 10 years ago and who writes that he was kidnapped, but that he has recently managed to escape from his kidnapper. He wants Ian to write an article about what has happened to him over the past 10 years. Ian decides to meet with the sender of the letter to hear his story, but this decision will put him in a lot of trouble.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 2-4)

Title: Footsteps

Synopsis:

Ian Cole, a journalist in New York City, receives a letter. The letter is from someone identifying himself as Owen Fisher, Ian's best friend who disappeared 10 years ago and who writes that he was kidnapped, but that he has recently managed to escape from his kidnapper. He wants Ian to write an article about what has happened to him over the past 10 years. Ian decides to meet with the sender of the letter to hear his story, but this decision will put him in a lot of trouble.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 2-5)

Synopsis:

Ian Cole, a journalist in New York City, receives a letter. The letter is from someone identifying himself as Owen Fisher, Ian's best friend who disappeared 10 years ago and who writes that he was kidnapped, but that he has recently managed to escape from his kidnapper. He wants Ian to write an article about what has happened to him over the past 10 years. Ian decides to meet with the sender of the letter to hear his story, but this decision will put him in a lot of trouble.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 3-1)

Title: Killed by the Beach

Synopsis:

Actress Georgia Diaz is found murdered at her villa in Florida. Her husband Milo, a film director, is nowhere to be found. Detective Leila Coleman, a good friend of the couple, finds a plane ticket to Hawaii next to the body. When Leila decides to travel to Hawaii to find out the truth, she learns that people are sometimes not who they claim to be.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 3-2)

Title: Georgia

Synopsis:

Actress Georgia Diaz is found murdered at her villa in Florida. Her husband Milo, a film director, is nowhere to be found. Detective Leila Coleman, a good friend of the couple, finds a plane ticket to Hawaii next to the body. When Leila decides to travel to Hawaii to find out the truth, she learns that people are sometimes not who they claim to be.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 3-3)

Title: Georgia killed by the Beach

Synopsis:

Actress Georgia Diaz is found murdered at her villa in Florida. Her husband Milo, a film director, is nowhere to be found. Detective Leila Coleman, a good friend of the couple, finds a plane ticket to Hawaii next to the body. When Leila decides to travel to Hawaii to find out the truth, she learns that people are sometimes not who they claim to be.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 3-4)

Title: Butterfly

Synopsis:

Actress Georgia Diaz is found murdered at her villa in Florida. Her husband Milo, a film director, is nowhere to be found. Detective Leila Coleman, a good friend of the couple, finds a plane ticket to Hawaii next to the body. When Leila decides to travel to Hawaii to find out the truth, she learns that people are sometimes not who they claim to be.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 3-5)

Synopsis:

Actress Georgia Diaz is found murdered at her villa in Florida. Her husband Milo, a film director, is nowhere to be found. Detective Leila Coleman, a good friend of the couple, finds a plane ticket to Hawaii next to the body. When Leila decides to travel to Hawaii to find out the truth, she learns that people are sometimes not who they claim to be.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 4-1)

Title: The Lost Memory of the Murder


Synopsis:

As soon as Tyler Simmons wakes up in a hospital bed with a terrible headache, he is arrested by the police on the charge of murder. However, Tyler cannot remember what has happened and why he is in the hospital. Using the details of the murder case and the evidence that led to his arrest, he searches his memory to see if he really committed the crime.


**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 4-2)

Title: Tyler

Synopsis:

As soon as Tyler Simmons wakes up in a hospital bed with a terrible headache, he is arrested by the police on the charge of murder. However, Tyler cannot remember what has happened and why he is in the hospital. Using the details of the murder case and the evidence that led to his arrest, he searches his memory to see if he really committed the crime.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 4-3)

Title: Tyler's Lost Memory of the Murder

Synopsis:

As soon as Tyler Simmons wakes up in a hospital bed with a terrible headache, he is arrested by the police on the charge of murder. However, Tyler cannot remember what has happened and why he is in the hospital. Using the details of the murder case and the evidence that led to his arrest, he searches his memory to see if he really committed the crime.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 4-4)

Title: The Scenery


Synopsis:

As soon as Tyler Simmons wakes up in a hospital bed with a terrible headache, he is arrested by the police on the charge of murder. However, Tyler cannot remember what has happened and why he is in the hospital. Using the details of the murder case and the evidence that led to his arrest, he searches his memory to see if he really committed the crime.


**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

(Book 4-5)

Synopsis:

As soon as Tyler Simmons wakes up in a hospital bed with a terrible headache, he is arrested by the police on the charge of murder. However, Tyler cannot remember what has happened and why he is in the hospital. Using the details of the murder case and the evidence that led to his arrest, he searches his memory to see if he really committed the crime.

**Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.**

|  | Not at all |  |  |  |  |  | Completely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to know more about this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to read this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would like to consider buying this book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book seems interesting to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This book looks original. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Now I am going to ask some questions about your reading behavior and book consumption. You should only consider fiction books, so you should not take it into account your reading behavior and consumption of non-fiction books (e.g., biographies, academic texts, self-help books).

**To which extent do you like the following genres of fiction books?**

|  | Totally dislike | | | | Like very much |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action & Adventure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Classics | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Mysteries & Crime | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Thrillers & Horror | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Science Fiction & Fantasy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| General & Literary Fiction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Romance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poetry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**How many fiction books have you read last year?**

0 1

0 2 - 3

0 4 - 6

0 7 – 10

0 11 – 15

0 16+

**How frequently do you read fiction books?**

**Please select the answer that is the most applicable to you.**

0 Not at all

0 At least once a year

0 At least once in six months

0 At least once a month

0 At least once in a couple of weeks

0 At least once a week

0 Several times a week

0 Everyday


**How many fiction books did you buy last year?**

0 1

0 2 - 3

0 4 - 6

0 7 – 10

0 11 – 15

0 16+

**Do you sometimes buy fiction books online?**

0 1 – I do not buy fiction books online

0 2

0 3

0 4

0 5 – I very often buy fiction books online.

**To which extent do you agree with the following statements about the purposes of reading fiction books?**

|  | Totally dislike |  |  |  | Like very much |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I read fiction books for pleasure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I read fiction books for education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Now I am going to ask some general questions about yourself.

**How do you describe yourself?**

0 Male

0 Female

0 Non-binary / third gender

0 Prefer to self-describe (+ text box)

0 Prefer not to say

**How old are you?**

(A drop down with number from 18)

**What is the highest degree or school level you have completed?**

0 Less than high school diploma

0 High school graduate or equivalent

0 Some college credit, but no degree

0 Bachelor's degree

0 Master's degree

0 PhD or higher

0 Trade/Technical/Vocational school

**In which country do you currently reside?**

(A drop down with a country list)

**Are you an English native speaker?**

0 Yes

0 No

Thank you for providing the answers to this survey.

If you have any questions or comments, you can add them in the box below or you can get in touch with the following email address.

Email: 661487km@student.eur.nl

(Text box)

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.


End of Survey


*Participants were shown one of the title + synopsis or just synopsis patterns per book.