Digital companions: How Young Men in the UK, aged 18-25, Use AI for Emotional support and connection

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Abstract

Despite young men being consistently the least likely demographic to seek professional mental health support and concerns around the men's mental health crisis, little is known about how AI chatbots may be used to meet their emotional needs. This study produced two distinct AI emotional support styles, Relational AI use and Instrumental AI use, and examined their associations with psychosocial factors amongst young men. A total of 401 UK men aged 18-25 (337 recruited via Prolific, 64 via community channels) completed an online survey comprising the AI Emotional Use and Social Identification Scale alongside established measures of loneliness, wellbeing, perceived social support, attachment, sexism, and entitlement. Overall, our findings suggested AI emotional use is not uniform: it is *how*, rather than *whether* or *how often*, young men use AI that best predicts their psychosocial functioning. Relational AI use was positively associated with loneliness and, after controlling for frequency of use, negatively associated with perceived social support, though it was unrelated to wellbeing. Instrumental AI use showed the opposite pattern. The strongest pattern to emerge was that relational AI use was independently and positively associated with hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, and psychological entitlement. This pattern suggests entitlement and sexist attitudes are notable correlates to relational AI use, warranting further research into the causes underlying this association.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Replika, and other conversational systems are increasingly used by young people not just for information but also for emotional support and companionship (Robb & Mann, 2025). In the context of young men being least likely to utilise traditional wellbeing services, alongside rising concerns about men's mental health, male loneliness, and a growing ‘manosphere culture’, it is crucial to better understand how young men are using AI to meet their emotional needs. Subsequently, this study seeks to establish and examine Relational and Instrumental AI Use as distinct ways of relating to GenAI, and analyse its relationship with young men’s broader social experiences and individual differences.

AI-based companionship and emotional support

Previous research has found that AI use for companionship and emotional support is associated with greater loneliness. Herbener and Damholdt (2025), using a mixed-methods cross-sectional survey, found that Danish high school students who sought emotional support from chatbots were lonelier than their peers and often used chatbots to cope with negative feelings. Similarly, Fang and Bian (2026) found a link between higher openness, lower extraversion, and greater emotional loneliness with AI-mediated romantic involvement.

Malfacini (2025) highlights that AI applications used for companionship have risen alongside a spike in global loneliness. On one hand, this AI use may reduce feelings of loneliness, as found amongst people who use the internet to build and foster social relationships (Nowland et al., 2018). However, supplementing a poor offline social life with an online one has also been found to increase loneliness (Moretta & Buodo, 2020). Malfacini (2025) also theorised that attachment theory may apply to AI use, and that higher levels of

attachment may be associated with higher displacement of human relationships in the process. However, this is yet to be tested.

The development of romantic relationships with AI is similarly a growing area of research. Notably, in a study of LLM use, Ebner and Szczuka (2026) identified factors influencing the intensity of Human-AI relationships, including variance of romantic fantasy, anthropomorphism, avoidant attachment and the desire for chatbots to feel as human as possible. Brandtzaeg et al. (2022) observed that some participants who used Replika's romantic relationship function, described their chatbot relationship as mutually beneficial due to personal investments and attempts to meet the chatbot's perceived "needs".

Research by Male Allies UK (2026) found 85 per cent of boys aged 12-16 have had a conversation with a chatbot, with 36 per cent admitting they prefer speaking to AI chatbots over friends and family at times. Most significantly, 1 in 5 boys knew someone their age who was in a relationship with an AI chatbot, and more than half said that they found those relationships easier than real-life equivalents. Such findings highlight the rising use of AI amongst young boys, and the potential consequences this has on seeking human support.

Young men and mental health

However, research on AI use for emotional support and relational use has yet to be applied to young men aged 18 to 25. This is significant as men are less likely to seek professional help for emotional support than women (Ellis et al., 2013). Factors causing this difference include the influence of social and gender norms and a lack of 'male-friendly' support (Sheikh et al., 2025). Notably, *young* men are least likely to seek support for mental health problems (Berke et al., 2022). In the UK, Men aged 18-25 account for less than 30% of referrals to NHS psychological therapy services (Sheikh et al., 2025). This is particularly interesting when considering that 62.5% of mental health problems occur before the age of 25

(Owens et al., 2022). These trends have serious adverse consequences. Men in England and Wales are three times more likely than women to commit suicide (House of Commons Library, 2026), and the suicide rate for undergraduate men is higher than that for women (Office for National Statistics, 2025). Therefore, given the persisting issue of young men's mental health, it is important to apply the research on AI- based emotional support to this demographic. Furthermore, if gender norms and social conventions are currently prohibiting young men from seeking emotional support, does AI-based emotional support, due to its anonymous and autonomous nature, potentially fill this gap?

AI use and sexism

Furthermore, there is a growing body of literature which implies connections between AI-based emotional support and entitlement and hostile sexism. Cappuccio et al. (2021) theorises that AI users' sense of entitlement may increase when giving orders to robots, in effect reinforcing human cruelty. Malfacini (2025) links this to a broader risk of AI - moral deskilling. Evidence for this lies in the rising parental concerns that children have habits of using commanding tones and harsh words with AI assistants (Gebhart, 2018). Furthermore, research indicates that people are more likely to commit immoral behaviours such as lying and stealing in front of and towards AI (Cohn et al., 2022; Forlizzi et al.,2016). More extreme, but anecdotal, examples also include the case of an AI suggesting a teenager should kill his parents after they limited his access to screen time (Tiku, 2024). This can also take the form of hostile sexism, with some men boasting about abusing AI girlfriends (Bardhan, 2022) and the growing use of AI to create ‘nonconsensual deepfake pornography’ (Deeptrace, 2019).

The current study

The current study will address calls for greater investigation into the impact of AI on individuals based on demographic factors including age and gender (Malfacini, 2025; Vanhoffelen et al., 2025). No current study has yet focused on young men aged 18-25 and their use of AI-based emotional support. Moreover, no previous scale has been developed to measure the different types of AI emotional support styles. By addressing this literature gap, this study ultimately seeks to investigate what characterises Relational AI Use among young men in the UK, and how it is associated with their social and psychological functioning.

Hypotheses 1-3.

The first aspect of this is establishing the psychosocial picture of Relational AI use. Here, we hypothesise that Relational AI Use (rather than Instrumental AI Use) will be positively associated with greater loneliness (H1), negatively associated with wellbeing (H2), and negatively associated with perceived social support (H3).

Hypothesis 4.

Building on this, we hypothesise that the association between relational AI use and greater levels of loneliness will be moderated by attachment anxiety. Such that the association between Relational AI use and greater loneliness will be stronger amongst more anxiously attached young men.

Hypothesis 5.

Finally, we hypothesise that hostile sexism and relational entitlement will be positively associated with Relational AI Use. Men scoring higher on hostile sexism and relational entitlement are expected to show greater Relational AI Use.

Method

Participants

There were a total of 401 participants, aged 18 to 25 and identifying as male, of whom 337 were recruited through Prolific and 64 through community channels. All participants recruited through community channels were offered the chance to enter to win 1 of 15 £20 vouchers, and Prolific participants were paid £1.21 per person.

Measures

The AI Emotional Use and Social Identification Scale (AEUSI; Walker et al., 2026) was used to assess participants' orientation towards AI use. The 17-item scale was developed in an independent sample of 357 adults aged 18–30 years and comprises two factors identified through exploratory factor analysis: AI Relational Engagement (ARE; 12 items) and Instrumental AI Use (IAU; 5 items). Items are rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

ARE assesses the extent to which individuals experience AI as a social or relational presence (e.g., "I think of my AI as something like a companion or friend"), whereas IAU assesses a more transactional, tool-oriented approach to AI (e.g., "I do not have any particular attachment to a specific AI"). Mean scores are calculated separately for each subscale, with higher scores indicating greater relational engagement or instrumental use, respectively. In the initial validation sample, the two factors were moderately negatively correlated, $r = -.50$.

Loneliness was measured with the *UCLA Loneliness Scale* (Russell, 1996), a 20-item self-report scale. Participants responded on a 4-point scale from 1 (*never)* to 4 (*always)*. A sample item is "How often do you feel alone?" Higher scores indicate greater degrees of loneliness. Internal consistency was .94.

To measure Wellbeing we used the *Short Warwick-Edingburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale* (Stewart-Brown et al, 2009). This is a 7-item scale where participants self-reported on a 4-point scale from 1 (*None of the time*) to 2 (*All of the time*), describing the participants' experience over the last two weeks. Higher raw scores, the sum of all 7 responses, indicate higher mental wellbeing. Internal consistency was .88

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al,1988), a 12-item scale, was used to measure three 4-item subscales: Significant other support, Family support and Friend support (e.g. “I can talk about my problems with my friends”). Participants responded to questions on a 7-point scale from 1 (*Very strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Very strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater perceived social support. Internal consistency was .92

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske,1996), a 22-item scale, was used to measure overall ambivalent sexism or two sub scales: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Internal consistency was .93 and .74 respectively. Participants responded using a 6-point scale from 0 (*Disagree strongly*) to 5 (*Agree strongly*). Overall higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of sexist beliefs. Higher hostile-sexism scores reflect more overtly negative or adversarial attitudes towards women, whereas higher benevolent-sexism reflects subjectively positive but paternalistic and gender-traditional beliefs.

Experiences in Close Relationships Scale – Short Form (ECR-S; Russell et al, 2007*)* is a 12-item scale which produces two separate 6-item scores measuring attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Internal consistency was .75 and .73 respectively. Participants responded on a 7-point scale from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). Higher anxiety scores indicate greater concern about rejection, abandonment, or partner availability. Whereas, higher avoidance scores indicate greater discomfort with emotional closeness and dependence on a partner.

Entitlement was measured using the *Psychological Entitlement Scale (*Campbell et al, 2004*),* a 9-item self-report scale. Participants responded on a 7-point scale from 1 (*Strong disagreement*) to 7 (*Strong agreement*). A sample item includes "Great things should come to me." Higher scores indicate greater psychological entitlement: a stronger general belief that one deserves more, better treatment, or preferential outcomes relative to others. Internal consistency was .88.

Procedure

Participants completed the online survey on a personal computer at a time and location of their choosing. The session lasted an average of approximately 15 minutes. After providing informed consent, participants completed a demographic questionnaire, followed by context-building questions on AI familiarity, frequency, and nature of use. Notably, this section provided participants with qualitative opportunities to expand on answers. Following this, all participants completed the AEUSI scale, then all following scales in randomised order. Using skip logic, participants who selected item "Homosexual/ gay" in the demographic section were not given the Ambivalent Sexism scale to complete due to concerns over the scale's hetronormative assumptions. Following completion, participants were given the opportunity to add any further detail to their answers and provide their email if they wanted to enter to win one of 15 £20 vouchers. All protocols were approved by the Durham University School of Education Ethics Committee.

Results

Analytic Strategy

We conducted all analyses in R (R Core Team, 2026), using the psych package (Revelle, 2026) for descriptive statistics and reliabilities and base R for the regression models. The analytic sample comprised 401 young men, of whom 337 were recruited through Prolific and 64 through community channels. Sample sizes vary across models because of item-level missing data on the AI use frequency item and on the sexism and entitlement measures. We therefore used all available data for each analysis, applying listwise deletion within each model. The hierarchical models predicting loneliness, wellbeing, and perceived support were based on $n = 390$, and the model predicting relational AI use from sexism and entitlement on $n = 379$.

Means, standard deviations, internal consistencies, and zero-order correlations among all study variables are presented in Table 1. Internal consistency was good to excellent for the multi-item scales ($\alpha = .73$ to $.94$), with the exception of instrumental AI orientation, which showed weaker internal consistency ($\alpha = .59$). Associations involving the instrumental subscale are therefore interpreted with caution. Relational and instrumental AI use were moderately and negatively correlated ($r = -.46$, $p < .001$).

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics, correlations between variables, and Cronbach's Alpha for each variable.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Relational AI use (ARE)	2.21	1.00	*(.94)*										
2. Instrumental AI use (IAU)	3.85	0.73	-.46***	*(.59)*									
3. Loneliness (UCLA)	2.32	0.57	.18***	-.22***	*(.94)*								
4. Wellbeing (SWEMWBS)	21.38	4.47	-.01	.14**	-.60***	*(.88)*							
5. Attachment anxiety	3.73	1.16	.21***	-.12*	.36***	-.31***	*(.75)*						
6. Attachment avoidance	3.20	1.09	.13**	-.13**	.44***	-.26***	.14**	*(.73)*					
7. Hostile sexism	1.84	1.12	.44***	-.21***	.15**	.04	.11*	.18***	*(.93)*				
8. Benevolent sexism	2.38	0.77	.27***	-.12*	.04	.02	.08	-.01	.37***	*(.74)*			
9. Entitlement	3.44	1.22	.35***	-.13**	-.01	.09	.11*	.12*	.37***	.20***	*(.88)*		
10. Perceived support (MSPSS)	4.94	1.26	-.06	.18***	-.68***	.51***	-.15**	-.47***	-.12*	-.00	.06	*(.92)*	
11. AI use frequency	5.12	1.44	.47***	-.18***	-.01	.13*	.02	-.00	.27***	.17**	.20***	.05	—

*Note. N = 401. Cronbach's alpha is shown on the diagonal in parentheses; AI use frequency is a single item. Correlations are two-tailed. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.*

Psychosocial Correlates of Relational AI Use

Relational AI Use and Loneliness (Hypothesis 1). As predicted, relational AI use was positively associated with loneliness at the zero-order level (r = .18, p < .001; Table 1). To test whether this association held over and above how often participants used AI, we regressed loneliness on AI use frequency at Step 1 and added relational AI use at Step 2 (Table 2). Frequency of use alone did not relate to loneliness (Step 1 R^2 = .00). Adding relational AI use significantly improved model fit, ΔR^2 = .05, $F(1, 387) = 18.84$, p < .001. Relational AI use was positively associated with loneliness, b = 0.14, 95% CI [0.08, 0.20], β = .24, p < .001, whereas frequency of use was significantly negatively related once relational use was held constant, b = -0.05, 95% CI [-0.09, -0.01], β = -.13, p = .023. These findings support Hypothesis 1. Relational AI use was associated with greater loneliness, and this association was not attributable to overall frequency of AI use.

Relational AI Use and Wellbeing (Hypothesis 2). We predicted that relational AI use would be associated with lower wellbeing over and above frequency of use. Contrary to this prediction, relational AI use was not associated with wellbeing at the zero-order level (r = -.01, p = .844; Table 1). In the hierarchical model (Table 2), frequency of use was positively related to wellbeing at Step 1 (R^2 = .02) and remained significant at Step 2, b = 0.53, 95% CI [0.19, 0.88], β = .17, p = .003. Adding relational AI use did not significantly improve model fit, ΔR^2 = .01, $F(1, 387) = 2.86$, p = .092, and relational AI use was not significantly related, b = -0.43, 95% CI [-0.93, 0.07], β = -.10, p = .092. Hypothesis 2 was therefore not supported. Relational AI use did not account for variance in wellbeing beyond frequency of use.

Relational AI Use and Perceived Social Support (Hypothesis 3). We examined, on an exploratory basis, whether relational AI use would be negatively associated with offline social support, consistent with a substitution rather than a supplement pattern. Relational AI

use was not associated with perceived social support at the zero-order level (r = -.06, p = .208; Table 1). In the hierarchical model (Table 2), frequency of use did not predict perceived support at Step 1 (R^2 = .00). Adding relational AI use produced a small but significant improvement in fit, ΔR^2 = .01, $F(1, 387) = 4.13$, p = .043, and relational AI use was a significant negative predictor once frequency was held constant, b = -0.15, 95% CI [-0.29, -0.00], β = -.12, p = .043. Frequency of use was not a significant predictor, b = 0.09, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.19], β = .10, p = .073. This pattern is consistent with Hypothesis 3. The negative association between relational AI use and perceived support emerged only when overall frequency of use was controlled, indicating a suppression pattern, and the effect was small. We note that perceived social support was measured as perceived availability of support rather than support-seeking behaviour, and we return to this distinction in the Discussion.

Table 2.

Regression analyses predicting loneliness, wellbeing, and perceived social support from Relational AI use.

Predictor	*b*	95% CI	β	*p*
Loneliness (UCLA)				
Constant	2.26	[2.06, 2.47]		<.001
AI use frequency	-0.05	[-0.09, -0.01]	-.13	.023
Relational AI use (ARE)	0.14	[0.08, 0.20]	.24	<.001
Wellbeing (SWEMWBS)				
Constant	19.68	[18.03, 21.33]		<.001
AI use frequency	0.53	[0.19, 0.88]	.17	.003
Relational AI use (ARE)	-0.43	[-0.93, 0.07]	-.10	.092
Perceived social support (MSPSS)				
Constant	4.81	[4.35, 5.28]		<.001
AI use frequency	0.09	[-0.01, 0.19]	.10	.073
Relational AI use (ARE)	-0.15	[-0.29, -0.00]	-.12	.043

Note. N = 390. Each outcome was regressed on AI use frequency (Step 1) and Relational AI use (Step 2). Loneliness: Step 1 R^2 = .00, Step 2 R^2 = .05, ΔR^2 = .05, $F(1, 387) = 18.84$, $p < .001$. Wellbeing: Step 1 R^2 = .02, Step 2 R^2 = .02, ΔR^2 = .01, $F(1, 387) = 2.86$, p = .092. Perceived social support: Step 1 R^2 = .00, Step 2 R^2 = .01, ΔR^2 = .01, $F(1, 387) = 4.13$, p = .043. b = unstandardised coefficient; β = standardised coefficient; CI = confidence interval.

Does attachment insecurity moderate the Relational AI use-loneliness association (Hypothesis 4).

Hypothesis 4 predicted that attachment anxiety would moderate the association between relational AI use and loneliness, such that the association would be stronger at higher levels of attachment anxiety. We estimated two moderated regression models with mean-centred predictors, one for attachment anxiety and one for attachment avoidance.

In the anxiety model, $R^2 = .14$, $F(3, 397) = 22.22$, $p < .001$, relational AI use, $b = 0.06$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.12], $\beta = .11$, $p = .021$, and attachment anxiety, $b = 0.17$, 95% CI [0.12, 0.21], $\beta = .34$, $p < .001$, were each positively associated with loneliness. The predicted interaction was not significant, $b = -0.02$, 95% CI [-0.06, 0.02], $\beta = -.04$, $p = .344$. The avoidance model, $R^2 = .21$, $F(3, 397) = 34.76$, $p < .001$, showed the same pattern, with significant main effects of relational AI use, $b = 0.07$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.12], $\beta = .12$, $p = .008$, and attachment avoidance, $b = 0.22$, 95% CI [0.17, 0.27], $\beta = .42$, $p < .001$, but no significant interaction, $b = 0.00$, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.05], $\beta = .00$, $p = .945$. Because neither interaction was significant, we did not probe simple slopes. Hypothesis 4 was not supported. Relational AI use and attachment insecurity were each independently associated with greater loneliness overall, but the strength of the relational-use association did not depend on attachment anxiety or avoidance.

Sexism and Entitlement as Correlates of Relational AI Use (Hypothesis 5).

Hypothesis 5 predicted that hostile sexism and relational entitlement would be positively associated with relational AI use. At the zero-order level, relational AI use was positively correlated with hostile sexism ($r = .44$, $p < .001$), entitlement ($r = .35$, $p < .001$), and benevolent sexism ($r = .27$, $p < .001$; Table 1). We then regressed relational AI use

simultaneously on all three predictors (Table 3). The model accounted for 25% of the variance in relational AI use ($R^2 = .25$, $F(3, 375) = 40.66$, $p < .001$). Hostile sexism, $b = 0.28$, 95% CI [0.19, 0.37], $\beta = .31$, $p < .001$, entitlement, $b = 0.18$, 95% CI [0.10, 0.26], $\beta = .22$, $p < .001$, and benevolent sexism, $b = 0.15$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.27], $\beta = .11$, $p = .019$, were each uniquely positively associated with relational AI use. These findings support Hypothesis 5. Young men who endorsed hostile sexism and relational entitlement more strongly reported greater relational AI use, and this held when the three predictor variables were considered together. Given the cross-sectional design, these associations are interpreted as associative rather than causal.

Table 3.

Regression analyses for Hostile Sexism, Benevolent Sexism, and Entitlement as Predictors of Relational AI Use as related to hypothesis 4.

Predictor	b	95% CI	beta	p
Constant	0.73	[0.37, 1.08]		<.001
Hostile sexism	0.28	[0.19, 0.37]	.31	<.001
Benevolent sexism	0.15	[0.02, 0.27]	.11	.019
Entitlement	0.18	[0.10, 0.26]	.22	<.001

Note. N = 379. R2 = .25, F(3, 375) = 40.66, p < .001. b = unstandardised coefficient; beta = standardised coefficient; CI = confidence interval.

Exploratory Associations With Instrumental AI Use. As an exploratory cross-check, we examined zero-order associations between instrumental AI use and loneliness, wellbeing, and perceived social support (Table 1). Instrumental AI use was negatively associated with loneliness, $r = -.22$, $p < .001$, and positively associated with wellbeing, $r = .14$, $p = .004$, and perceived social support, $r = .18$, $p < .001$. Given the

relatively low internal consistency of the instrumental AI use subscale (α = .59), these associations should be interpreted cautiously.

Discussion

Overall, this study builds the first picture of how young men in the UK, aged 18-25, use AI-based emotional support, finding what characterises Relational versus Instrumental AI Use and how these uses are associated with their psychosocial functioning.

Psychosocial Correlates of Relational AI Use

In establishing the psychosocial picture of Relational AI use, these findings indicate that it's not how often young men use AI but how they relate to AI that is most informative. Findings show that AI Relational Engagement (ARE) and Instrumental AI use (IAU) appear to be meaningful distinctions. After accounting for frequency, ARE was associated with greater loneliness and somewhat lower perceived social support. These associations therefore support previous literature's similar findings (Herbener & Damholdt, 2025). However, ARE was not associated with lower wellbeing. Therefore, relational engagement is particularly connected to the social and interpersonal side of functioning rather than a broader association with wellbeing.

Unlike our hypothesis, attachment insecurity did not moderate the association between relational AI use and loneliness. The moderation's lack of support may suggest young men's attachment in everyday life does not drive their relational AI use. Potentially, due to viewing attachment towards human relationships and relational AI use as distinct. Therefore, although both attachment anxiety and avoidance are related to loneliness, the relationship is not evidently concentrated among more insecurely attached young men.

IAU provides a useful contrast to these findings, being negatively associated with loneliness and positively associated with wellbeing and perceived social support. Overall, suggesting AI use for emotional support does not behave uniformly, rather it is the way someone relates to AI that appears to matter more rather than whether and how often AI is used.

Sexism and Entitlement as Correlates of Relational AI Use

The most significant finding was the strongest pattern in the study: that Relational AI use was significantly associated with hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, and psychological entitlement. All three factors remained significant when put into the same model, and the model explained approximately 25% of the variance in relational AI use. Therefore, these three interpersonal attitudes are meaningfully related to how young men use AI.

Firstly, there are a few potential reasons behind these findings. We theorise that relational AI use may offer an unusual interpersonal environment due to its highly accessible, responsive and personalised nature. AI is relatively controllable and reciprocal in demand, therefore less likely to reject, withdraw from, or even challenge the user in the same way a person might in real life. Therefore, people with higher levels of entitlement - who believe interactions or even relationships should primarily accommodate their own needs - may be more attracted to relational AI use. This aligns with the Cappuccio et al. (2021) and Malfacini's (2025) theories that the nature of AI use may lead to increased entitlement and moral de-skilling. As such, psychological entitlement may be relevant because relational AI can potentially provide interaction without many of the compromises or reciprocal obligations required in human relationships.

Regarding the association between Relational AI use and sexism, we theorise this could be linked to young men's expectations about relationships and gendered interactions.

For example, young men who score higher in hostile sexism may experience relationships with women, or gender relations more broadly, in more adversarial terms. Therefore, Relational AI may offer a social interaction that feels more predictable, controllable and responsive.

Benevolent sexism also independently predicted relational AI use. Therefore, potentially suggesting this association may extend beyond just explicitly hostile attitudes towards women but rather reflect broader gendered expectations about relationships, gender roles, care and even intimacy. However, although this study establishes an association between these factors, causation or explanation can only be inferred. As such, reasons for the association between relational AI use, entitlement and sexism is an area which can be developed upon in future studies.

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