Qeios

Peer Review

Review of: "Human Artistic Discernment as an Evaluative Criterion in the Age of Artificial Intelligence"

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1. **The simulated data.** Statistics computed on invented numbers do not constitute evidence for anything. The reported numbers of alpha, W, and so on are just consequences of the author's choice and tell us nothing about anything except how the numerical summaries relate to the invented numbers. Moreover, running CFA on this data is virtually meaningless. It would not help to reframe the section as illustrative, since the paper claims there should be agreement in human discernment. I could have invented some other numbers and reached the opposite conclusion, creating numbers with maximal disagreement, saying "look, humans disagree tremendously on artistic evaluations, artistic discernment doesn't exist!", which would be just as bad.
2. **Assertions.** The paper repeatedly claims that AI cannot interpret meaning, determine value, engage in ethical reflection, or even take context into account. All of this without evidence or argument. These claims are hotly contested in cognitive science, and the paper must either argue their case or substantially weaken the claims. I would contest almost every single sentence in sections 1 - 3. Either because there are strong reasons not to believe them ("While AI systems are capable of enumerating facts, they are unable to interpret meaning."), irrelevant even if true ("The authenticity, originality, and scholarly or artistic contribution of a paper or artwork cannot be readily reduced to numerical indicators."), or vague verbal posturing ("Algorithmic systems assess according to predefined parameters, whereas artistic discernment involves the capacity to question the adequacy of those very parameters.")
3. **Coherence.** The paper wants discernment to be unquantifiable (see quote above) and quantifiable at the same time (the agreement matrix), a tension it never addresses. If the music experts have high agreement, it means there is *something out there* that humans can reliably grasp and place a number

doi.org/10.32388/S3967Y

on. And presumably, according to the author, it's impossible for an AI to do that! But the paper doesn't engage with the evidence for this strong (and, in my view, highly unlikely) claim at all. Here it would be possible to do something interesting, such as comparing agreement between AI evaluations of art and human evaluations of art in one way or another. That would at the very least give us some understanding of the start of the art in AI art evaluations. Anyway, in the end, it's not exactly clear what the paper is contributing except a short literature summary (heavily tilted towards a certain stance where the ability to evaluate art is postulated to be uniquely human) plus a demonstration of known methods on a matrix of invented numbers.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.