

Who's the Fairest of them all? How AI beauty filter use drops with age among influencers across markets

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Abstract

As AI beauty filters grow in popularity, reshaping beauty standards, academic research remains focused on young women in Western societies, overlooking older adults, men, and non-Western markets. The study addresses these gaps, examining the effects of age, gender, and market orientation (Western vs. non-Western) on AI filter use among 3 364 Instagram influencers using content analysis and binary logistic regression. Results show a significant age effect in Western markets: filter use drops with age, with older influencers relying least on visual enhancement—a trend consistent across genders. In line with objectification theory, aging reduces appearance-centred self-presentation. This effect is absent in non-Western markets, where usage is consistent across age groups, highlighting cultural influences. Women use filters more than men. Follower count had no significant effect. The findings emphasize the central role of psychological and cultural factors in digital self-presentation.

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