

Trust at First Glance: How Makeup-Induced Femininity Shapes Consumer Behavior in the Gig Economy

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Cite as:

Lima Gabriela, BRANDAO MARCELO, Pantoja Felipe (2025), Trust at First Glance: How Makeup-Induced Femininity Shapes Consumer Behavior in the Gig Economy. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, (130372)

Paper from the 16th Annual Fall EMAC Conference, Istanbul, Turkey, September 17-19, 2025



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Abstract

This research examines how makeup-induced changes in facial femininity influence trustworthiness perceptions and service usage intentions in digital marketplaces. In two experimental studies, participants evaluated freelance service providers based on manipulated profile pictures. Study 1 found that enhancing facial femininity through makeup increased perceived trustworthiness. Study 2 extended the model to a male-typed service context. Findings suggest that femininity enhanced attractiveness, which boosts trust and intentions—conditional on low perceived effort. Findings highlight that while strategic aesthetic adjustments can strengthen first impressions and consumer engagement, perceived authenticity is crucial. Platforms should address appearance-based biases by emphasizing objective quality signals. This study contributes to understanding first impressions in the gig economy and opens avenues for improving fairness in digital service hiring.

Track: Consumer Behaviour