A paradoxically negative age effect on AI beauty filters use among influencers

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Acknowledgements

Research presented in this paper was funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, under the OPUS call in the Weave programme, grant no. 2022/47/I/HS4/00032.

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As AI-based beauty filters grow in popularity, advertising practice often assumes that older endorsers (particularly women) must rely more heavily on visual enhancement to remain commercially attractive. Our research challenges this assumption. In Study 1, we analyzed 3 292 Instagram influencer accounts and found that AI beauty filter use decreases with influencers' age in Western markets (e.g., Europe and North America), but not in non-Western markets (e.g., Asia and South America). The trend was consistent across genders; follower count did not predict AI beauty filter use. Study 2 experimentally tested the mechanism behind the negative age effect in Western markets. Our findings show that older influencers in Western markets move away from AI beauty filters as their self-objectification declines, and this shift is unrelated to audience size. Elderly endorsers can therefore continue to represent valuable partners for brands and advertisers, even when they do not hide signs of aging.

Keywords: AI beauty filters, influencer marketing, aging, objectification, impression management, digital self-presentation