



Department of Digital Business

Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business (RIGGS)

Homepage: <https://journal.ilmudata.co.id/index.php/RIGGS>

Vol. 4 No. 2 (2025) pp: 117-121

P-ISSN: 2963-9298, e-ISSN: 2963-914X

Visual Communication Psychology in the Age of AI: An Audience Perception Analysis of Face Filters on TikTok Media

Geofakta Razali, Latifa Ramonita
LSPR Institute of Communication and Business
geofakta.r@lspr.edu, ramonita.b@lspr.edu.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze audience perceptions of artificial intelligence (AI)-based facial filters in TikTok content, with a specific focus on the account Arbie Seo. Employing a quantitative survey approach with 20 respondents, the research explores the impact of AI filters on authenticity, credibility, visual appeal, as well as psychological effects and digital identity representation. Findings reveal that 75% of respondents believe AI filters contribute to the construction of new postmodern beauty standards, while 90% consider the use of filters as a form of self-presentation aligned with social media trends. Additionally, 50% of participants perceive AI filters as promoting unrealistic beauty ideals, and 100% agree that such filters affect the perceived authenticity and credibility of content. These results support the assumption that AI technologies shape visual perception not only aesthetically but also psychologically. Drawing on media determinism and postmodernism theories, the study explains how facial filters create simulations that blur the boundaries between reality and representation. The implications of this research highlight the importance of ethical AI implementation in digital communication strategies to preserve content authenticity and credibility within an evolving visual culture.

Keywords: Visual Communication, Psychology, AI, TikTok, Audience Perception

1. Introduction

In today's digital era, the human face is no longer presented merely as a biological entity, but has become a visual canvas mediated by technology. Artificial intelligence (AI)-based facial filters allow for the instantaneous manipulation of facial structure, color, and expression—ultimately creating a new visual identity that may differ significantly from the user's physical reality. Within this context, the face no longer merely represents identity; it also becomes a performative instrument in constructing a digital persona (Zahwa & Syafi'i, 2022). This phenomenon illustrates how the body and identity are increasingly constructed through layers of technology and aesthetic algorithms.

For younger generations who are active users of social media, the ability to “visually edit oneself” presents an ambivalent experience. On one hand, AI filters expand the space for visual expression and creativity. On the other hand, they generate internal pressure related to uniform and often unrealistic digital beauty standards (BetterHelp, 2024). This pressure can foster feelings of physical inadequacy and affect self-confidence, which has significant implications for self-concept development, particularly among adolescents (Maryam, 2022). Therefore, understanding how filtered content influences psychological and social interactions is essential.

Marshall McLuhan's concept of media determinism underscores the idea that media are not merely channels of information but also shape the very structure of human culture and society. Through his famous phrase, “The medium is the message,” McLuhan positioned communication technologies as key actors in shaping how individuals think and interact (Ilham, 2018). In today's digital landscape, AI-based facial filters on social media do more than refine appearance—they create new forms of digital identity that may diverge from one's authentic self (BetterHelp, 2024).

Jean Baudrillard's theories on simulacra and hyperreality become especially relevant in this context, as digital representations often appear more ‘real’ than reality itself (Gunawan, 2022). AI filters create idealized visual illusions that blur the line between image and reality. Fredric Jameson adds that in the postmodern era, society exists in a state of identity pluralism, where competing visual representations portray a fragmented self (HANIFAH et al., 2024; Kustiawan et al., 2023).

This phenomenon is particularly evident on platforms like TikTok, where facial filters serve both as tools of self-expression and branding strategy. AI filters enable users—including influencers like Arbie Seo—to construct more visually appealing images aligned with social media’s aesthetic norms (Azhari & Ardiansah, 2022). However, such practices raise psychological questions about self-assessment and how audiences perceive the authenticity of the content they consume (Maryam, 2022; Maharani et al., 2022).

The TikTok account of Arbie Seo, which consistently features AI filter-enhanced content, exemplifies a form of self-presentation within the realm of digital visual communication. In this context, filters function not merely as enhancements, but as deliberate visual communication strategies that direct public narratives of personal identity. This practice aligns with Baudrillard’s concept of simulation and hyperreality, where visual representation becomes more influential than actual reality (Gunawan, 2022; Maharani et al., 2022). Such accounts are critical objects of study, given their impact on audience perceptions of authenticity and credibility.

Beyond social and aesthetic implications, the use of AI filters reflects a paradigmatic shift in communication. Where once interpersonal communication relied on natural facial expressions as cues of emotional sincerity, now those expressions can be shaped, manipulated, or even automated via filters. This transformation alters how audiences interpret emotion, intention, and authenticity. In digital communication, authenticity is no longer defined by *what is*, but by *what is perceived* (Ilham, 2018; Reiginayossi & Sitorus, 2023). This calls for new models of communication analysis grounded in perceptual psychology and symbolic interaction.

The increasing use of AI facial filters on social media also has psychological implications related to body image and self-perception, particularly among youth (Nur Avivah et al., 2023). It reflects a new form of social validation-seeking, where digital aesthetics become a benchmark for acceptance and self-esteem (Reiginayossi & Sitorus, 2023; Fadila & Pebrianggara, 2024). This study selected Arbie Seo’s TikTok account as the object of analysis due to its consistent use of AI filters in constructing a digital visual identity.

This research aims to analyze audience perceptions of AI-based facial filters in TikTok content, specifically focusing on Arbie Seo’s account. The primary focus is to identify how these filters affect perceptions of authenticity, credibility, visual appeal, and self-concept, as well as how audiences interpret the resulting digital realities. The study also investigates how social media serves as a site of digital identity reconstruction within a postmodern context (Zahwa & Syafi’i, 2022; Chandra Kusuma & Oktavianti, 2020).

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of new media communication theory and perceptual psychology within digital environments. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for content creators, digital marketers, and AI developers to consider ethical, transparent, and psychologically informed strategies in their communication approaches (Masriadi et al., n.d.; Nasrullah et al., 2023).

This study is significant for integrating theoretical approaches from media determinism and postmodernism with empirical observations of audience behavior. In the midst of an increasingly visual and algorithmic social media environment, understanding how AI technologies shape self-presentation is crucial for grasping the dynamics of digital identity and social validation culture. It is hoped that this research not only enriches academic discourse but also offers a reflective foundation for content creators, social media users, and digital policymakers to remain conscious of the psychological and cultural impacts of AI-based visual communication in online spaces (Masriadi et al., n.d.; Fadila & Pebrianggara, 2024).

2. Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using an online survey method. This technique was selected to obtain numerical data regarding audience opinions and attitudes toward the use of AI-based facial filters in TikTok content, specifically on the Arbie Seo account. The survey was administered to 20 respondents who are active social media users, particularly TikTok users familiar with Arbie Seo’s content. The research instrument consisted of a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale to measure respondents’ perceptions of authenticity, credibility, visual appeal, and the psychological effects of AI-filtered content. The collected data were analyzed descriptively and visualized through tables and charts.

One advantage of this method lies in its efficiency in collecting large-scale data within a short period and its ability to identify general trends. However, its primary limitation is the superficial understanding it provides of respondents’ motivations or subjective experiences. Therefore, future research is encouraged to incorporate qualitative approaches to explore deeper psychological and narrative dimensions (Zahwa & Syafi’i, 2022; BetterHelp, 2024). To enhance the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was developed based on indicators derived from previous studies on visual perception, self-concept, and digital communication within the context of social media (Chandra Kusuma & Oktavianti, 2020; Maryam, 2022). Each survey item underwent a content validation process involving expert group discussions and revisions based on a limited pilot test. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who are active TikTok users and familiar with the Arbie Seo account, with inclusion criteria of being aged 18–30 years and having a minimum daily social media usage of two hours. The data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative methods, including frequency tabulations and

thematic interpretation, to identify dominant perceptual patterns. This approach is expected to provide a representative overview of audience perceptions toward the use of AI filters in visual communication on TikTok.

3. Results and Discussions

The chart above presents the results of a survey conducted with 20 respondents regarding the extent to which they believe AI-based facial filters on the TikTok account Arbie Seo create unrealistic beauty or appearance standards.



Figure 1. Audience Perceptions of AI-Based Facial Filters on TikTok Creating Unrealistic Beauty Standards

1. Yes, it creates unrealistic standards (50%): A total of 50%, or 10 respondents, believe that the use of AI facial filters contributes to the formation of unrealistic beauty standards, promoting appearance expectations that are difficult to attain in real life.
2. Neutral / No significant effect (35%): About 35%, or 7 respondents, perceive the use of AI facial filters as having no significant influence on beauty standards, regarding it primarily as a tool for entertainment without major impact.
3. No, it does not create unrealistic standards (15%): The remaining 15%, or 3 respondents, stated that AI facial filters do not create unrealistic beauty standards and do not affect their perception of beauty.

Overall, the survey results indicate that a majority of respondents (50%) believe AI-based facial filters contribute to unrealistic beauty standards. However, 35% responded neutrally, while 15% do not perceive such filters as having a significant influence, viewing them instead as flexible tools that do not impose specific expectations.



Figure 2. Audience Perceptions of the Impact of AI-Based Facial Filters on Content Authenticity and Credibility

Based on survey data from 20 respondents regarding the influence of AI-based facial filters on the TikTok account of Arbie Seo:

1. All respondents (100%) indicated that the use of AI facial filters affects how audiences perceive the authenticity and credibility of content.
2. No respondents stated that the use of filters has no influence on audience perception.

These findings suggest unanimous agreement among participants that AI-based filters on TikTok content significantly impact assessments of authenticity and credibility. This highlights the critical role of visual elements and image manipulation technologies in shaping audience perceptions. Respondents expressed concern that the use of AI filters may create doubt regarding the genuineness of appearances or conveyed messages, thereby affecting trust in the creator or the content itself. Moreover, this result implies a growing audience awareness and critical stance toward transparency in content production. These insights offer valuable guidance for content creators to use AI filters judiciously in order to maintain authenticity and credibility, thereby preserving audience trust.



Figure 3. Audience Perceptions of AI Facial Filters Enhancing Visual Appeal and Influence of TikTok Content

Figure 3 illustrates audience perceptions regarding the impact of AI facial filters on the visual appeal and influence of TikTok content from the account Arbie Seo. The results show that 50% of respondents (10 individuals) stated that the filters made the content “more attractive,” indicating that AI technology enhanced the visual aesthetics and engagement potential. Meanwhile, 25% (5 respondents) believed the filters made the content “more influential,” suggesting a perceived increase in communicative effectiveness or persuasive power. Conversely, 20% (4 respondents) indicated that AI filters did not make the content more visually appealing, and 5% (1 respondent) did not find the filters to increase the content’s impact. Overall, 75% of participants perceived a positive contribution of AI filters to TikTok content, underscoring their role in capturing attention and enhancing visual storytelling. However, the remaining 25% demonstrated a preference for unfiltered, authentic content, suggesting that overreliance on AI-enhanced visuals may reduce perceived sincerity or relatability. These findings highlight the need for content creators to strike a thoughtful balance between aesthetic enhancement and authenticity to sustain audience trust and meaningful engagement.



Figure 4. Audience Opinions on the Influence of AI Facial Filters on Content Evaluation

The chart above presents the results of a survey involving 20 respondents regarding the influence of AI-based facial filters on content posted by the TikTok account Arbie Seo. A total of 75% of respondents (15 individuals) indicated that the use of AI facial filters affects how they view and evaluate content, particularly in terms of authenticity, aesthetics, and credibility. Meanwhile, 20% of respondents (4 individuals) perceived the use of such filters as neutral, indicating no significant impact on their perception. Only 5% of respondents (1 individual) stated

that the use of filters had no influence on how they assess uploaded content. These findings suggest that the majority of audiences are influenced by the presence of AI-enhanced visuals when forming judgments about content quality and trustworthiness. However, a small portion of respondents appear to prioritize the message or informational value over visual modifications. The data emphasize the importance for content creators to strike a balance between visual appeal and content authenticity in order to sustain audience trust and engagement. Overall, the results highlight that AI filters play a substantial role in shaping audience perception, even as a minority remains unaffected by such technological enhancements.

4. Conclusion

This study reveals that the use of AI-based facial filters on TikTok exemplified by content from Arbie Seo—significantly shapes how audiences perceive visual authenticity, credibility, and attractiveness, while also contributing to the internalization of postmodern beauty ideals. The data show that these filters not only serve as tools of aesthetic enhancement but also function as agents of digital identity construction that blur the boundaries between the real and the simulated. A large proportion of respondents acknowledge both the empowering and pressuring aspects of these filters: they enable creativity and engagement, yet simultaneously trigger psychological concerns related to self-image and social comparison. As media environments become more visually driven and algorithmically curated, these findings underscore the importance of reflective digital communication practices. It is therefore recommended that content creators, platform developers, and digital strategists implement AI technology with greater ethical consideration—maintaining transparency, promoting media literacy, and prioritizing psychological well-being. This balanced approach is crucial to ensuring that digital content remains both engaging and trustworthy in an era where simulated visuals increasingly define the norms of self-presentation and social validation.

Reference

- Gunawan, B. (2022). *Makna Hiperrealitas Masyarakat Modern Dalam Film Black Mirror Episode Nosedive (Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes)* (Doctoral Dissertation, Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa).
- Kustiawan, W., Multazam, D. I., & Restilia, T. (2023). Media dalam Pendekatan Pemikiran Postmodern atau Dekonstruksi. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 9(2), 297-306.
- Hanifah, Z., Fatimah, S., & Fitriasia, A. (2024). Pemikiran Filsafat Postmodern Dalam Membangun Pemerintahan Yang Inklusif. *Cendekia: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan*, 4(4), 588-596.
- Zahwa, F. A., & Syafi'i, I. (2022). Pemilihan pengembangan media pembelajaran berbasis teknologi informasi. *Equilibrium: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan dan Ekonomi*, 19(01), 61-78.
- Azhari, S., & Ardiansah, I. (2022). Efektivitas Penggunaan Media Sosial TikTok Sebagai Platform Pemasaran Digital Produk Olahan Buah Frutivez (@hellofrutivez). *Jurnal Sistem dan Teknologi Informasi*, 10 (1). <https://doi.org/10.26418/justin.v10i1.45284>
- Reiginayossi, M., & Sitorus, F. K. (2023). Bahasa Sebagai Cermin Identitas Analisis Perspektif Martin Heidegger. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Media Sosial (JKOMDIS)*, 3(3), 657-660.
- BetterHelp. (2024, October 9). AI Filters And Self-Perception: Body Image, Self-Esteem, And Modern Culture. Retrieved from betterhelp:
- Fadila Putri Aisya Ramadhini, & Alshaf Pebrianggara. (2024). Artificial Intelligence (AI), Digital Marketing, and Popularity on Purchase Intention of Virtual Concert Korean Girlband Aespa. UMSIDA Preprints Server.
- Maryam, M. (2022). Gambaran Konsep Diri Remaja Pengguna Aplikasi Tiktok di Kota Lamongan. *Muqoddima Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Riset Sosiologi*, 3(1), 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.47776/mjprs.003.01.03>
- Nur Avivah, Nurma Yuwita, & Zainul Ahwan. (2023). Bad Influence Sosmed Pada Kawasan Wisata Tretes Terhadap Pola Pikir Psikologi, Life Style Generasi Muda Pasuruan (Tinjauan Teori Determinisme Teknologi). *JURNAL HERITAGE*, 11(2), 109–120.
- Chandra Kusuma, D. N. S., & Oktavianti, R. (2020). Penggunaan Aplikasi Media Sosial Berbasis Audio Visual dalam Membentuk Konsep Diri (Studi Kasus Aplikasi Tiktok). *Koneksi*, 4(2), 372.
- Maharani, R. P., Rahmawati, U., & Sari, D. N. (2022). HIPERREALITAS PENGGUNA TIKTOK. *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Budaya*, 3(1), 1–11.
- Nasrullah, W. A., Raharja, Nugraha, Saidi, Robinson, Casarotto, Kirwin, A., & Kawuryan. (2023). Top Virtual influencer Indonesia.
- Masriadi, Bahri, H., Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh Indonesia, & Prodi Manajemen, Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Malikussaleh, Aceh Indonesia. (n.d.). The Influence Of Artificial Intelligence In The Media Industry In Indonesia. In *Jurnal Sosiologi Dialektika Sosial* (pp. 145–147).
- Ilham, A. (2018). Relativisme dalam komunikasi digital. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 12(1), 45- 60.