

The image construction of elderly video bloggers on social media from the perspective of post-figurative culture

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Abstract. From the perspective of postfigurative culture, this paper explores the image construction of elderly video bloggers on DouYin (Chinese TikTok). As short video platforms gain popularity, elderly users are playing an important role, with some emerging as "elderly internet celebrities" who challenge mainstream media stereotypes. Using netnography and thematic analysis of 100 short videos from the top ten most-followed elderly bloggers on DouYin in 2024-2025, this study reveals that the self-image construction of elderly bloggers is heavily influenced by postfigurative culture, primarily through personalization and stereotype-breaking strategies. Personalization includes diversification of roles, behavioral rejuvenation, trendy wording, and technological shooting techniques. Breaking stereotypes is primarily driven by intrinsic motivation and extrinsic factors. More importantly, elderly bloggers in China exhibit a hybrid self-construction model, demonstrating a fusion of independent and dependent self-construction. This reflects both the influence of collectivist social relationships and the emphasis on individuality in Western culture, thus forming a uniquely Chinese self-construction model in the new media era. Regarding emotional tendencies, coding analysis shows that neutral and positive emotions dominate the construction process, with personally initiated psychological changes contributing to positive affect. Analysis of young viewers' comments demonstrates significant reverse influence, providing life experience references and prompting behavioral reflection among younger generations.

Keywords: postfigurative culture, elderly bloggers, self-image construction, short video platforms, emotional tendency

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

With the development of social media, short videos, as a kind of user-generated online content, have gradually become popular through social media dissemination. In addition to the well-known YouTube, some emerging short video platforms such as TikTok have gradually entered people's lives and gained more and wider audiences.

According to QuestMobile data ¹, in the first quarter of 2022, the elderly group became one of the sources of DouYin (Chinese Tiktok) user growth, the group aged 51 and above increased by 1.6%. This also shows

that not only the young group has become the audience of the short video platform, but the elderly group has also begun to visit it, and even some elderly people who are skilled in using it have become the "elderly internet celebrities" of the short video platform.

By incorporating post-figurative culture (youth culture) in their videos on short-form video platforms, they have begun to break the stereotypes of older people in some mainstream media. They are trying to create a new image of older people by transforming the labels of "outdated" and "weak" into "trendy" and "energetic" [1]. After understanding this research background, this paper will put forward the research questions and research objectives about the image construction of elderly bloggers on this basis.

1.2. Explanation of concepts and theories

1.2.1. Self-construction theory

The self-construction theory was put forward by personality psychologist H. R. Markus and Kitayama [2], who divided people's relationship with others into two types, independent self-construction and dependent self-construction. These two different relationships will cause individuals to carry out different self-realization, self-knowledge psychology and behavior, such as showing personal ability, expressing personal emotions and so on. Independent self-construction tends to present individuals as separate entities with independent thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. Individuals emphasize personal goals, performance, and competition, and tend to pursue personal achievement. Dependent self-construction tends to show behavior influenced by cultural norms, social roles, and interpersonal relationships. Individuals emphasize coordination with others and are less likely to exhibit strong personal emotions, opinions, or needs. This study will discuss various self-construction patterns among elderly bloggers based on this theory. Notably, emotional expression is frequently mentioned in self-construction theory; therefore, the emotional tendencies of the target group are an important research question in this study.

1.2.2. The post-figurative cultural perspective

The post-figurative cultural perspective mentioned in this paper was proposed by American anthropologist Margaret Mead in "Culture and Commitment" [3].

The main point is to emphasize the process of transferring knowledge and culture from young people to their elders due to the rapid development of mass media and inter-generational differences.

1.2.3. Elderly people

According to different historical periods and cultural classifications, the definition of the elderly group is also different. The now generally accepted age range was proposed by the World Health Organization in 1982, which defined people over the age of 60 as the elderly, which is more suitable for the national conditions of developing countries. This article will take the age of over 60 as the screening criteria for the samples of the elderly population.

1.3. Research significance

Van Dijk argues that the media plays an important role in the reproduction of ideologies, because they reinterpret [4], reconstruct and re-present viewpoints, so analyzing media content is important for the self-constructed innovation of older groups.

The target social media for this study is TikTok, a well-known short video platform. TikTok is a popular video platform in the world. In addition to video sharing, it also has social functions among users, so it records the creative self-expression of users of all ages. It can be revealed that old Internet celebrity bloggers influenced by Chinese or Western culture may have different self-image constructions on the same short video platform [5, 6].

The main research group of this paper is the elderly Internet celebrity group. The importance of research on this group is that they are newly formed groups influenced by young culture in the era of social media, and they are the embodiment of post-figurative culture in real life.

In addition, the generation of the old Internet celebrity group is inseparable from the personal image construction [7]. This paper analyzes the image construction of the old internet celebrity group and the influence of post-figurative culture and conducts research in this field. It can provide a reference for understanding the future trend of the use of new media by the elderly and their satisfaction with media needs and psychology.

1.4. Research gap

In the field of social media research, there has been a lot of research on the use of text-based and picture-based social media by elderly [8]. However, when it is refined to the emerging short video-based social media, researchers are more likely to target the younger age group, the main audience for short videos, and rarely the older age group.

In addition, the research of this paper on the elderly group can also provide a reference for other researchers to conduct such research on other types of groups, and make some supplements for the self-construction of the audience from the perspective of new media.

1.5. Research questions

Based on the research background and research gaps, this paper proposes the following research questions:

RQ1: Under the influence of post-figurative culture, how do elderly video bloggers construct new self-images through short video works?

RQ2: What are the emotional tendencies of elderly bloggers in the process of self-image construction?

RQ3: How do the self-image construction videos created by elderly bloggers have a reverse impact on young audiences?

1.6. Research objectives

This study aims to explore the unique ways in which elderly bloggers construct their self-image on TikTok in the context of a post-figurative culture, the emotional biases in the construction process, and the reverse impact of older bloggers' image construction on younger audiences.

2. Literature review

2.1. Stereotypes of the elderly group on the internet and the difficulties in breaking the stereotypes

On the whole, the online stereotype of the elderly is still relatively negative, but with the development of new media and the awakening of the elder's online awareness, they have begun to break the stereotype and build a positive self-image. This trend is reflected in both Chinese and Western articles. In response to this trend, Chinese and Western scholars have put forward many commonalities and differences based on the different cultural backgrounds and ideologies of China and the West.

Focusing first on the Chinese cultural context, Li examines the stereotypical media images of older people in China. He mentions that although in traditional Chinese society the elderly were considered to be the wealth

of the family and society due to the influence of "filial piety" ², as society changes, the image of the elderly is gradually tilted in a negative direction, being perceived as "warm but incompetent, weak and dependent" [9].

In addition, many mainstream media in China maintain stereotypes and stigmatization of the elderly, and use a few cases, such as seat robbers or making noise, to arouse public resentment against the elderly [10]. In fact, on most social media, the elderly group is underrepresented and lacks the right to speak [11].

Stereotypes of older groups are also prevalent in Western societies, and different from those in Eastern societies, Western societies are more inclined to portray older groups in terms of loss of independence and mobility [12]. For example, the elderly are considered to have low social status but heavy social values in the commercial market and media narratives, and are even considered difficult to resonate with business or media narratives. Therefore, some articles also describe the elderly as "Passers-by" [13].

There has also been a lot of academic discussion about the difficulties of older people breaking such stereotypes in the new media environment.

Chou used questionnaires and interviews to study the use of Facebook among elderly groups in Taiwan, China [14], and found that elderly groups would encounter physical and mental difficulties when using Facebook to express themselves. Physically, their hand-eye coordination is degraded, and it is difficult to control the smaller buttons on the mobile terminal. Psychologically, due to social exclusion, the elderly sometimes have low confidence in social media learning, and their media usage habits are different from young people. It is difficult for them to get used to self-expression at any time, and even feel anxious about the security of information on the Internet.

On the Internet in the West, the discussion on the difficulty of constructing the image of the elderly has never stopped. Similar to the conclusion of Chou [14], Bossio and McCosker share the same attitude [15]. They used the research method of focus group to analyze the "selfies" of the elderly on social media, and concluded that there are still great psychological barriers for the elderly to construct and share their self-image on social media. Although most of the participants possessed online communication skills, they were not well suited to the intimate context of self-expression on social media, especially among older groups who felt that posting social content that included faces made them feel nervous about being exposed, and believed that it is "boring" and "orchestrated" [16]. In addition, many elderly people are influenced by social stereotypes, thinking that compared with young people, they lack the ability to use new technologies, lack confidence and guidance. They worry that the display of their self-image on social media will expose their "outdated" flaws to the younger generation.

Some studies on Facebook also expounded the above point of view. Levy et al. believe that Facebook is the hardest hit area for age stereotypes, and there are many words in Facebook groups that condemn the elderly [17]. Makita et al. also add to this, arguing that Facebook replicates and reinforces the discussion of stereotypes of the elderly [18].

2.2. Post-figurative culture and self-image update of the elderly

Contrary to the negative trend of online image of the elderly mentioned above, there are many articles explaining that under the influence of post-figurative culture, the elderly began to update their self-image construction with the help of YouTube, Facebook, etc.

Li conducted a text analysis of the content of a WeChat official account founded and run by the elderly to show how the elderly use social media to actively express themselves. The operator of the official account conveys to readers that self-care replaces health assistance, expects old age instead of complaining, and uses young culture to synchronize with society instead of being abandoned. He also pointed out that some older people have shown the potential of being digitally proficient as young people in the process of learning new

media operations. Therefore, he has a very positive attitude towards the reversal of the stereotype and the renewal of the image of the elderly.

Similar to this article on the elderly group in China, some articles targeting the elderly group in the West also expressed positive attitudes towards the changing image of the elderly group on social media. The media platforms studied by Oró-Piqueras and Marques are similar to this paper, and they all choose video platforms. They selected popular videos labeled "older" on YouTube for case analysis, and they pointed out that although some videos still show the negative image of the elderly "prone to verbal aggression", most of the video content, even an early video uploaded six years ago showed a more positive image of the elderly. For example, an original character competition for the elderly and high school students shows that under the influence of popular culture, the elderly have the same cultural understanding and creativity as the young. It is worth mentioning that the videos they studied also included discussions about the "sexuality" of the elderly, and they found that the elderly in the videos still had a sexually active image. They concluded that the stereotype of the elderly in the media is being replaced by a new concept of "popular" elderly, shifting from emphasizing the limitations of physical decline to presenting positive aging.

Guzman, who also chose YouTube as the research platform, used a relatively innovative method, qualitative sentiment analysis, analyzing the intensity of subjective expression from text, which is a very appropriate research method for self-image construction research. Based on his analysis of the comments on videos of seniors who participated in the Got Talent draft, he came up with a more critical conclusion, arguing that while older people's self-presentation on YouTube could trigger viewers' embarrassment for not living up to their viewing expectations, causing some negative attitudes, but still a lot of positive comments shows that such self-presentation is often more inspiring and worthy of appreciation. Others even develop vicarious pride³ [19], which makes older people rationally portrayed as "role models" or "experienced members of society."

On the basis of the positive attitude towards the self-expression of the elderly group, some scholars have discussed the mutual connection between the elderly and the young group through social media. This connection transcends home and place, creating a global social connection. Harley and Fitzpatrick focused on one of the elderly bloggers on YouTube for a case study [20], and they selected eight of the works of the elderly blogger, Geriatric, to analyze content, comments, and the interaction of content and comments. Different from the previous scholars who also study YouTube, he focuses on analyzing the significance of the intergenerational communication formed through the storytelling of the elderly to the development of individuals and the whole society. This connection transcends home and place, creating a global social connection. The audience's communication with Geriatric is not a scrutiny or sympathy for the elderly, but a kind of respect. The commonalities across age and cultural experiences shared by bloggers like Geriatric trigger audiences to relate to their own life stages. The article describes such a mutual social relationship through YouTube: the elderly group breaks social isolation, establishes intergenerational communication, and realizes self-worth through the technology shared by the young; the young audience was provoked to think about their own life stages through the storytelling and their need for life experiences was met. This provided new ideas for the study of healthy ageing, the self-construction of older people and the shared social creativity that older people develop with people of other ages.

However, other scholars are somewhat uncertain about the attitude of the elderly to use social media to construct self-image. For example, Xu studied the stereotypes of older people on Facebook in Sweden [21]. Unlike Levy and Makita, who were strongly negative, she proposed that in current Facebook content, the stereotypes of older people are very polarizing, especially in some visually dominant content. In a visual content analysis of 1,000 relevant posts on Facebook, she found that although they were also part of the older age group, the symbolic content posted on Facebook by people aged 60-79 and those aged 80+ were

interpreted differently, and were therefore classified as "third age" and "fourth age" [22, 23]. People in the third age (60-79) present symbols of autonomy and self-expression, while those in the fourth age (80+) are still not active. In addition, she considers the influence of the government on the construction of images of older people in the media, for example, the government may promote the image of active members of society in older age groups for the sake of some ageing-appropriate policies, but this idealized social construction may instead create some obstacles to the exploration of the real situation.

There are also articles highlighting the impact of other factors such as government intervention on the online image construction of older groups. For example, some advertising industries cater to older target audiences by portraying them as "successful people" and "perfect grandparents", while retaining negative images of older people when the target audience is not older [24-26].

However, this paper argues that in relation to the image construction of older people, it is more important to focus on the autonomous media content creation of older people than on the influence of objective factors on the image construction of older people. This is because an autonomous sense of older people's image construction is more in line with the logic of Uses and Gratifications theory [27], which allows for a better understanding of the needs of the target group and informs the development of the media.

In general, the literature involved in this section mainly describes the various stereotypes of the elderly on social media, the difficulties faced in breaking the stereotype and the different attitudes towards the establishment of a new self-image of the elderly, and expounds the different ways of construction, the influencing factors and their meanings.

In terms of research methods, more literature chooses qualitative research methods such as text analysis and case analysis. The research method of this paper will also follow the qualitative research method, because the image construction of the elderly group is closely related to some subjective psychological changes and activities, which is suitable for qualitative research. At the same time, quantitative content analysis will also be added to make the research more rigorous and comprehensive.

At the same time, the author found that the emerging media platform TikTok is rarely used as the research medium in the literature reviewed, while the research on video mostly uses YouTube as the research medium. This paper selects TikTok, which can be supplemented by adding a new research sample category of "shorter videos" compared to YouTube videos. And the previous literature on the influence of young culture on the construction process is often not the focus of research. Therefore, from the perspective of post-figurative culture, this paper will explore in more detail whether young culture, as an influencing factor, plays a more important role in the construction of the image of the elderly.

3. Methodology

The research question of this paper is related to the behaviors and psychology of people and groups, and for Internet bloggers, their behavior on the Internet is dynamic, and their personal styles are different, and they cannot be defined by a general rule, but to explore the dynamic nature through interpretation, so it is more fit for qualitative research method.

This research is under the environment of the emerging media platform "TikTok", focusing on the subjective differences of the research subjects, which is more suitable for forming a new conceptual framework. So this paper used netnography to collect data and use thematic analysis to elucidate the ways, influencing factors, and emotional tendencies of older adults' self-image construction on social media.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that refines concepts and dissects structure by precisely locating, examining, and documenting themes. A sufficient number (100 samples in this study) of short video

samples that can reflect the image construction process of elderly bloggers were selected on TikTok for topic analysis [28]. In addition to categorization and statistics of texts, topic analysis also describes explicit and implicit textual meanings [29]. The thematic analysis of this paper will segment and encode the text material of the short video, explain it, and extract the main methods of image construction.

For this study, the target platform for data collection in this paper is the Chinese version of TikTok. We used netnography to collect short videos from selected elderly bloggers as primary data and converted their content into text. Based on the statistics available on TikTok, we selected the top 10 older bloggers who showed the top heat (measured by the number of followers and total number of video likes), as shown in Table 1. As the algorithm of the TikTok platform's search engine displays video accounts based on what the account has previously viewed, the accounts for data collection were newly created accounts to avoid the impact of TikTok's personalised recommendations on data rigour.

Table 1. TikTok (China version) top 10 elderly bloggers

Number	Fans	Likes
1	36,308,000	700,000,000
2	32,059,000	320,000,000
3	14,416,000	150,000,000
4	13,546,000	68,660,000
5	7,016,000	140,000,000
6	6,428,000	120,000,000
7	5,317,000	72,225,000
8	4,667,000	66,353,000
9	4,230,000	10,674,000
10	3,105,000	12,067,000

The sample for the study was not randomly selected, but ten works by ten elder bloggers in 2024-2025 that better reflected the research questions were chosen for the video-to-text conversion. The total sample size was 100 videos.

In the thematic analysis section, this study did two independent coding of the short video texts through the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo, first selecting sentences related to the way the image of elder people was constructed for conceptualisation and categorising the concepts, further categoryisation, and further abstraction and naming of the categories. Afterwards, the codes were compared, those with repeated meanings were combined, and concepts with less than two occurrences were excluded.

Following open coding, spindle coding is used based on specific cues and relationships to establish higher-dimensional connections, constructing a framework for the image building of elderly bloggers. This summarizes the factors that prompt elderly bloggers to shape their image and break stereotypes, as well as their emotional tendencies in this process.

4. Results

4.1. Thematic analysis of old internet celebrity bloggers' self-construction styles

In the thematic analysis section, this study named and categorised similar events and situations in the textual material based on the open-ended to spindle coding process mentioned earlier. During the coding process, a

total of 135 original statements and concepts were generated, forming 18 themes. In the self-construction section, further master categories such as role diversity were formed. The final integration was divided into two core categories of self-constructed personalisation and stereotype breaking.

4.1.1. *The personalisation of self-construction*

The thematic analysis revealed that the self-image construction of the selected older bloggers is heavily influenced by post-figurative culture, also known as TikTok pop culture, with an overall trend towards rejuvenation and personalisation. In order to answer the research questions posed, several main ways of personalisation will be listed under this theme.

Table 2. Diversification of roles

Theme	Category	Codes	Number	Evidence
The personalisation of self-construction	Diversification of roles	Emotional Mentor	10	People who don't like it now. Do you think you'll love it after you get married?
		Food Blogger	13	"I can make coke too, so won't I be able to drink coke whenever I want? In a minute, Grandma will teach you how to make your own Coke at home."
		Fashion Blogger	13	Camping, what to wear. White bottoms are the first choice, vintage jeans are even more striking, and board shoes are comfortable and versatile.
		Debater	6	"I thought you weren't allowed to move" "Even flies can move, why can't I!"

Through analysis, It can be seen from Table 2 that the elderly bloggers mainly assume four roles: Emotional Mentor, Food Blogger, Fashion Blogger and Debater in the process of filming, the Emotional Mentor is often an elderly blogger who meets young people who are confused by love and gives them guidance. The Fashion Blogger is the one who dresses to create a visual impact that does not match his age, for example, 86-year-old Blogger 2 dresses more fashionably than his grandson in his twenties: "I'm 86 and I can still dress, why can't you?"

The Food Bloggers show their culinary talents and their attempts to create dishes that are popular with the younger crowd such as lava cakes. Their filming partners would often question, "Can you make this for dinner?" Then the bloggers would succeed in creating a meal that would leave them in awe. Debaters show the strong logic and eloquence of the elderly, such as the 91-year-old Blogger 6 who is referred to as a 'debater' by her granddaughter because she is always quick to rebut her granddaughter with logical and humorous language.

These characters are in contrast to the stereotypes of "useless", "old-fashioned" and "mentally retarded" elderly people that are presented in some traditional media. However, the author of this paper found that the characters portrayed by these elderly bloggers are basically popular ones that have already been portrayed by younger bloggers, and most of the elderly bloggers have not yet created image labels that are distinctive to the elderly and are still at the level of imitation.

Table 3. Behavioural rejuvenation

Theme	Category	Codes	Number	Examples
The personalisation of self-construction	Behavioural rejuvenation	Develop new interests	14	Street graffiti artist: "Give way, grandpa, the graffiti smells not good." Grandpa: "I want to try it too."
		Elderly bloggers interact with each other	2	"I'm going to see an old friend today and I'm going to get dressed up." "Isn't this Grandpa M (a screen name)?"
		Showing their love	5	"Give me a kiss. ""Kiss what? How old are you? We're so funny kissing each other." Eventually she accepted the kiss.
		Link network activities	7	Come and see how aware a 100-year-old grandmother is of anti-fraud #CombatAgingFraud
		Parody popular videos	5	If you want to be a celebrity, come on! A woman should be independent, like I am at 60 and I have my own luxury car, it's great to be financially independent. #Shanghai social climber
		Advertising placement	7	The people who washed the dishes with grass and wood ashes are gone now. It's okay, grandpa. In the past, my grandmother helped you wash the dishes, and now there is this Haier dishwasher for you.

A blogger who wants to change his image has to keep updating the subject matter of his work. In order to keep consolidating these new images mentioned earlier, trying out some unusual and youthful activities (Behavioural rejuvenation) is also a common way for older bloggers (see Table 3), such as developing new interests. More specifically, Blogger 2, who is in his 80s, saw street graffiti and bought the materials and equipment to paint a piece himself. There are also many older bloggers who have studied how to start a live stream and become an anchor, such as Blogger 1, who said: "Like when I first started making videos, I am trying to become a professional anchor."

A more innovative way for bloggers to change their image is to parody popular videos. For example, Blogger 5 remade a popular variety show "The Rap of China", and changed the very popular rap word "yo-yo-yo" into "medicine-medicine-medicine ⁴ⁿ", and you will have to take the medicine in less than ten minutes, or you will faint if you don't take the medicine." There was also the popular "Shanghai social climber" at the time, mocking the fact that many girls pooled money to buy luxury goods to show off, but emphasised economic independence. Blogger 5 used this popular word to create "Village social climber", "I have my own luxury car at the age of 60, and financial independence is cool." These remakes not only attract traffic, but also add elements of the life of the elderly.

It is also worth noting that some of the elderly bloggers also dare to show their love for others. For example, Blogger 4 shows her husband kissing her as she shares her daily life. This is a breakthrough in the

rejuvenation of elderly bloggers' behaviour. Whereas in previous media work it seemed disgusting for older people to show love, older bloggers are now making this behaviour normal and equally beautiful.

Additionally, by linking with online activities, the elderly bloggers can not only obtain new creative opportunities, but also use the traffic recommendation mechanism of official activities. For example, when the platform wants to promote "fighting against fraud against the elderly", it can shoot relevant videos to get recommendations. The placement of advertisements can not only obtain shooting funds, but also use the traffic provided by advertisers. Linking with other elderly internet celebrities can get traffic from fans on both sides. Among the selected videos, the videos cooperating with other elderly bloggers have higher likes, and this method also shows the collision of different styles among elderly bloggers, which can attract more attention.

In the traditional concept, it is difficult for the elderly to master the learning of this relatively advanced network operation method. However, in this study, it was found that elderly bloggers are very familiar with such novel operation methods. The design of video plots is very natural, and the placement of advertisements is not obtrusive. It can even combine advertisements with live broadcast to achieve the dual goals of image building and commercial value.

Table 4. Trendy wording


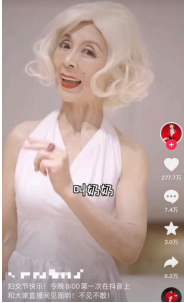

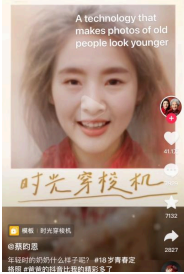
Theme	Category	Codes	Number	Evidence
The personalisation of self-construction	Trendy wording	Combining Chinese and English vocabulary	3	This is too appetising, you go get a bowl and "taste" it later
		Buzzword usage	9	Grandma misses grandpa to "emo"
		Use of personal labels	11	#Three Flowers Girl Group #Centenarian's vlog

As illustrated in Table 4, another obvious construct of personalisation is the "Trendy wording". Elderly bloggers break away from the traditional didactic approach to communication and replace it with trendy expressions that are more in tune with younger audiences. For example, elderly bloggers often include English words for emphasis, such as "This is so appetising, I'll 'taste' it later." Here the word "taste" is in English. There is also the use of some internet words. When Blogger 4's husband was in hospital, she said to her grandson, "Grandma misses your grandpa to 'emo'." "emo" is a buzzword now commonly used by young Chinese people to express sadness.

The personal hashtag is often found in the form of a "#" in the video description text, and it directly indicates the target image that the older blogger wants to construct, or the main theme of the video. This allows it to be pushed very precisely to fans who like the persona in question, and the more people who like it, the more successful their self-construction will be. Many of these tags use impactful word combinations to increase their appeal, such as "#Centenarian's vlog".

The image construction ability of these three codes is incremental, and the use of English words still remains in the inherent thinking of the Chinese elderly, "English is equal to the trend"; the use of Internet words is to really understand the popular things on the Internet and imitate; Personal tags are an innovation that combines their own characteristics and utilises network traffic. According to word frequency statistics (11 references in Table 4), most of the selected elderly bloggers can create personal tags very proficiently, which should be a big factor in them making the Top 10 Elderly Bloggers.

Table 5. Technological shooting

Theme	Category	Codes	Number	Evidence
The personalisation of self-construction	Technological shooting	Cross-dressing	8	 
		composite video	5	 

It can be seen from Table 5 that elderly bloggers also use editing software or production templates on TikTok to make technological innovations in content in addition to the innovation in wording. Cross-dressing is often a way to create a visual impact by quickly switching between the plain and dressed-up versions of oneself through editing. For example, Blogger 1 transforms from a normal person into "Marilyn Monroe". The image after dressing up is generally exaggerated, but this can better reflect the determination of old bloggers to break through the stereotypes.

Even simpler are composite videos. According to the evidence in Table 5, one blogger fits the dancing prosthetic leg to the lower part of the video, and just moves with her hands to dance flexibly. It's worth noting that, despite being simpler to make, older bloggers' composite videos often hint at something in their hearts.

For example, in the dancing video just mentioned, flexible movement in the lower body is something that this elderly person clearly wishes for. There is also a video made by Blogger 3 where she shows a series of photos of herself changing from old to young, indicating feelings of nostalgia for her youth. Therefore, in addition to constructing self-images, composite videos have more functions that express the psychology of elderly bloggers.

4.1.2. Transformation of stereotypes

While the previous topic focused on listing the ways in which self-image is constructed, this one summarises the themes that break down stereotypes more effectively and clearly. The coding standard was to select events that obviously contributed to the construction of new images and the breaking of stereotypes.

Table 6. Intrinsic motivation

Theme	Category	Codes	Number	Examples
Transformation of stereotypes	intrinsic motivation	Joke stereotypes by themselves	10	I wanted to be an old bum, eat, drink and be taken care of - lie in a hospital bed - finally got it. When a 101-year-old man meets his 121-year-old aunt.
		Take advantage of generational and age differences	8	"You've taken good care of yourself. This is thermal underwear" "Thanks for nothing, wear it, it's so cold."
		Highlight the advantages of the elderly	13	It's not so easy to take advantage of the elderly, after all, the older, the wiser.

According to self-construction theory, individuals in individualistic cultures tend to construct an independent self, viewing themselves as independent individuals separate from others, thus forming self-cognition and building their consciousness, emotions, and behaviors into a system independent of others and the social context. Conversely, individuals in collectivist cultures tend to construct a dependent self, whose self-cognition depends on their relationships with others and their position within social relationships, aiming to maintain interpersonal connections. In this process, the expression of individual representation is suppressed.

However, in the results of stereotype-breaking coding, this study found that the behavior of elderly bloggers in China represents a fusion of independent and dependent self-construction. As shown in Table 6 and Table 7, their use of the internet to break stereotypes is driven by both internal personal consciousness and external social and familial environments. Regarding the internal personal driving force in the Table 6, the first is the "Joke stereotypes by themselves". Elderly bloggers no longer avoid negative stereotypes, but face and reproduce stereotypes in a humorous way, so that existing stereotypes can in turn help them construct new images. For example, Blogger 5, who prefers to make funny videos, watched a cute video "I want to be a little bum to be taken care of" by a young girl. So she also said: "I want to be an old bum to be taken care of." In the end, she was lying in a hospital bed, and she really did have to be taken care of by someone. When they make fun of these stereotypes, they can make a non-elderly audience understand the difficulties they encounter, such as physical challenges, and provide a good psychological foundation for them to break the stereotypes later. In other words, when they make a new image construction, these difficult presentations make the audience more aware of their efforts to construct the new image.

The "highlighting of the advantages of older people" is more obvious, directly pointing out that older people are more knowledgeable and psychologically mature than younger people; "The older, the wiser" as Blogger 1 said.

The display of inter-generational and age difference has two functions. One is to show the love of older people for younger people, using emotional methods to impress young people and reduce their preconceived discrimination against older people, such as 90-year-old Blogger 6 who attended her granddaughter's birthday and prepared a gift for her, saying "I may only be able to attend your birthday this time". It can be seen in the comments section moving most of the audience. Another emphasises the universality of generational change, as when the 100-year-old Blogger 3 goes to meet her 121-year-old relative, who likewise becomes the younger party. This dynamic relationship proves that it is possible to recognise the differences between the older and younger age groups, but it is highly inappropriate to use these differences to discriminate against the older age group, as everyone sooner or later becomes a member of the elderly group.

Table 7. Extrinsic motivation

Theme	Category	Codes	Number	Evidence
Transformation of stereotypes	extrinsic motivation	The demands of the times and technology	4	You want the convenience of online shopping, but then, because of the wrong button, mistakes are common. Once I bought a dozen extra pounds of potatoes, or I bought a dress size too big, and I didn't know how to return it.
		Family Synergy	10	"Grandma, I'll teach you the most popular word of the day", "Just what the internet celebrities say". "Yes."

Table 7 reveals that the breaking of stereotypes is also achieved through strong external motivations, primarily reflected in the technological demands of the times and the role of family collaboration. For example, the saying "You want the convenience of online shopping, but then, because of the wrong button, mistakes are common" clearly demonstrates that the breaking of stereotypes in the self-image construction of the elderly is not only due to proactive changes in their internal psychology, but also related to the social environment of China's rapid technological development. To maintain a stable daily life in the long term, the elderly are forced to passively accept new things.

The coding shows that the number of codes related to the role of family collaboration is greater than that related to the demands of the times, indicating that post-figurative culture (youth culture) has a greater influence on the self-construction of elderly bloggers on new media. The development of new media allows more knowledge to flow from young people to the elderly. Among the elderly bloggers we selected, their grandchildren or young friends showed a positive attitude towards imparting knowledge to them and supported and guided their image construction. For example, the grandson of blogger 4 said: "Grandma, I'll teach you the most popular word of the day".

This also confirms that even in a collectivist social environment, elderly bloggers still possess a dependent self-construction motivation and operational patterns—as they gradually withdraw from the modern workplace and have more contact with the family environment, while simultaneously maintaining normal life and adapting to and integrating into society, they can only accept technological updates and iterations. This makes their self-construction more influenced by the family environment and family roles, requiring the assistance of

other family members to accept and utilize technology in order to maintain the stability of family relationships and daily life.

However, the online self-construction of elderly bloggers in China also has its own characteristics. As can be seen from Table 6 and the analysis above, although the elderly population in China is in a collectivist society and their self-construction has a dependent characteristic, they do not excessively suppress their personality expression and personal emotions in order to maintain interpersonal relationships, as mentioned in traditional theories. Instead, they have independent thoughts, beliefs and feelings, emphasize personal goals, performance and competition, and tend to pursue personal achievements.

In general, the self-image construction of elderly bloggers in China is mainly carried out through the personalization of self-construction and the breaking of stereotypes. Although their self-image construction process is influenced by society and the times and has some passive changes, it is more of a shift from passive to active acceptance from within, combined with a personalized approach that takes into account the characteristics of the elderly population in China. They have formed a self-construction model with Chinese characteristics, which combines the dependent self-construction under the influence of collectivist society with the independent self-construction characteristics of the new media era that emphasize individual expression.

4.2. Emotional tendencies and reverse influences in the image building of elderly bloggers

In self-construction theory, the presence of independent emotional expression and the suppression of personal emotions are important factors in distinguishing between two different types of self-construction. Therefore, the different emotional tendencies of elderly bloggers in the process of creating self-image content are also included in the analysis of this paper. Furthermore, comments from younger audiences accompanying these videos indicated that the content had a certain impact on their cognition. Therefore, from a psychological perspective, despite the increasing number of elderly bloggers creating video content, are their emotional tendencies positive or negative during this process? How does this video production have a reverse impact on younger audiences?

This paper continues to explore this question through thematic analysis. Through Nvivo's emotion coding, the author found that in the selected text content, among the total 449 references, 177 reflect neutral emotions, 128 reflect positive emotions, 87 reflect mixed emotions and 57 of them reflect negative emotions (see Table 8).

Table 8. Emotion encoding statistics

Emotion	Number	Examples
Neutral	177	This is your ideal old-age version of eating, drinking and playing, come and get the life tips of a hundred-year-old grandma.
Positive	128	One should be happy, a smile can make you ten years younger.
Mixed	87	My grandmother said, "I'm over ninety and I'm not afraid to die..." She cried after we went out.
Negative	57	Even if you give me 10,000 yuan, I won't eat this (lobster), I'm scared to look at it, it's the first time I've seen this in my 90s.



Figure 1. Emotional tendencies distribution

As summarized in Table 8 and Figure 1, most of the older bloggers' self-image construction process is neutral or positive and they are enjoying the process. Based on the previous content, we know that personally initiated psychological changes and family assistance should be one of the reasons that make a high proportion of positive emotions. Passive changes prompted by objective conditions, on the other hand, are more likely to trigger negative emotions. For example, as Blogger 10 says: "Smartphones are easy for you, but not so easy for us! "

The reason for the high occurrence of neutral emotional expressions is mainly due to the fact that short video shoots require a lot of contextual explanation of the subsequent behaviour, and in these texts the emotions presented are mostly neutral. The mixed emotional expressions of older bloggers appear mainly because older bloggers have experienced and met more people than other age groups and have a greater capacity for self-psychological regulation [1].

4.3. The reverse effect of self-image construction of older online bloggers

Having discussed the factors that influence the image construction of older bloggers, we continue our exploration of RQ4. How do the self-image construction videos created by elderly bloggers have a reverse impact on younger audiences? The top ten young people's comments under each video were categorised and encoded to infer the differential reverse impact of older bloggers' videos on younger audiences.

Referring to the "Depreciating", "Admiring", "Inspiring" and "Imitating" codes mentioned in Guzman's article, we initially coded the top ten young comments under each video to infer different responses from young audiences.

According to Table 9, the initial coding shows that comments predominantly exhibited "Admiring," "Inspiring," "Imitating" tendencies, and "Depreciating" tendency. "Admiring" comments were positive evaluations, often expressing surprise; some elderly bloggers demonstrated high levels of ability in their respective fields, which evoked a sense of identification among young audiences. "Inspiring" meant that viewers drew inspiration from the videos of elderly bloggers, such as "If older people can do it, so can I"; "Imitating" meant that viewers gained a deeper understanding of elderly bloggers, viewing them as role models, and even using their work as a guide for their own later life. "Depreciating", on the other hand, triggers younger generations' reflection on their behavior. Therefore, a deeper coding can be derived: in the

process of self-construction, elderly bloggers primarily exert a reverse influence on the younger generation by prompting reflection on their behavior and providing them with life experience references.

Table 9. Emotion encoding statistics

Theme	Category	Codes	Number	Evidence
Effective reverse effect	Reflection on behavior	Depreciating	8	For the traffic, this old man eats and drinks with his grandson in the middle of the night, it's too unhealthy.
		Admiring	42	It's so fashionable to be able to match it so well at this age!
	Life experience reference	Inspiring	31	It turns out that grandma lived to be 100 years old because she didn't mind her own business, learn from her, I don't mind my own business either.
Imitating		19	I hope I can be as graceful, healthy and confident as this grandpa when I grow old.	

5. Discussion

This paper reveals that the self-image construction of elderly bloggers is heavily influenced by the postfigurative culture on the TikTok platform, primarily through personalization and breaking stereotypes.

The personalization includes Diversification of Roles (Emotional Mentor, Fashion Blogger), Behavioural Rejuvenation (developing new interests, parodying popular videos), Trendy Wording (using buzzwords, personal hashtags) and Technological Shooting (using editing effects like cross-dressing).

Breaking stereotypes is primarily driven by intrinsic motivation and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivations include joking about stereotypes themselves, highlighting the advantages of age; extrinsic motivations include adapting to the demands of the times and technology, and family synergy.

The results regarding the self-image construction methods of elderly bloggers clearly show that their self-image construction does not exhibit a single independent or dependent characteristic. Self-construction theory considers intrinsic motivation as the marker of independent self-construction and extrinsic motivation as the marker of dependent self-construction. During the coding process, we found that the self-construction of elderly bloggers in China is influenced by external social and familial factors, with passive acceptance and use of technology to maintain stable family relationships and daily lives. However, unlike traditional theories that suggest excessive suppression of individual expression to maintain interpersonal relationships, they exhibit a very clear internally driven, personalized component. They possess independent thought, freely express emotions, and actively utilize technology, moving from passive acceptance to proactive innovation.

Therefore, elderly bloggers in China exhibit a hybrid self-construction model, demonstrating a fusion of independent and dependent self-construction. This reflects both the influence of collectivist social relationships and the emphasis on individuality in Western culture, thus forming a uniquely Chinese self-construction model in the new media era.

Regarding the emotional tendencies in the self-construction process of elderly bloggers, coding analysis shows that neutral and positive emotions dominate. Personally initiated psychological changes are one of the reasons for a high proportion of positive emotions, while passive changes caused by objective conditions are

more likely to trigger negative emotions. This confirms that the self-construction behavior of elderly bloggers is largely self-created.

Finally, the analysis of the themes in the comments below the videos by young viewers shows that the self-constructed video content of older bloggers has a reverse influence on young viewers. These influences are reflected in providing young people with life experience references (admiration, inspiration, and imitation) and prompting them to reflect on their own behavior.

The above findings also have limitations. First, due to time and other conditions, the sample size that can be collected is limited, and it may not be able to comprehensively summarize the image construction methods of elderly bloggers. Secondly, in the process of qualitative analysis, there is inevitably the influence of the author's subjective factors [30]. Finally, this paper mainly studies the Chinese version of TikTok. Due to the different users and operation methods, the conclusions may not be fully applicable to the foreign version of TikTok.

The image construction of elderly bloggers is deeply influenced by post-figurative culture (youth culture), and at the same time, it also affects young people to a certain extent. So what does this interaction mean for the two groups? Is this correlation also present on other platforms like YouTube, Facebook? This is worth discussing in future research.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the image construction process of elderly bloggers in the context of post-figurative culture. Through thematic analysis, this paper summarizes the main ways of image construction and breaking stereotypes of old Internet celebrity bloggers. The main ways of image construction are Diversification of roles, Behavioural rejuvenation, Trendy wording and Technological shooting. The main ways to break stereotypes are driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. A self-construction model with Chinese characteristics is summarized. This self-construction is both dependent on social relationships and interpersonal development, and under the influence of the new media era, it exhibits distinct independent personality traits and individual expression.

The second part also explores the emotional tendencies of older bloggers in the image building process and whether they have a reverse effect on younger groups. And it is found that elderly bloggers have a more positive attitude in the process of image building. The image construction of elderly bloggers also has a certain reverse effect on the younger group.

This paper chooses TikTok as the research platform, which adds discussion and reference to this emerging social media for social media research, and the research target selected in this paper belongs to the elderly group, which increases the diversity of audience research in social media research.

Notes

1. Available at: <https://www.questmobile.com.cn/>
2. An ethical concept that children must repay their parents.
3. Audiences substituted themselves into elderly peoples' 'pride' vibes.
4. The Chinese "medicine" is pronounced like "yo".

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