

## Beauty Influencer Credibility and Cosmetic Purchase Intention Among Undergraduate Beauty Education Students

Trisnani Widowati\*, Clarita Aprilliani, Septian Eko Prasetyo, Anik Maghfiroh

Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

\*Correspondent Author: niwid@mail.unnes.ac.id

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### Abstract

The widespread use of social media has significantly influenced consumer behavior, particularly in the beauty industry, where beauty influencers serve as key sources of cosmetic information and recommendations. However, limited studies have explored how beauty influencer credibility affects cosmetic purchase intention among undergraduate beauty education students. This study aimed to examine the effect of beauty influencer credibility on cosmetic purchase intention among students of the Department of Beauty Education, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Semarang. A quantitative explanatory design was employed involving 102 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression in IBM SPSS Statistics. The results showed that respondents reported high perceptions of beauty influencer credibility ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ) and cosmetic purchase intention ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). Regression analysis revealed that beauty influencer credibility significantly influenced cosmetic purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.684$ ,  $t = 9.487$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), explaining 47.5% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.475$ ). These findings highlight the importance of influencer credibility in shaping consumers' purchase intentions and extend the application of Source Credibility Theory within beauty education. The study also offers practical implications for higher education institutions and the cosmetics industry in promoting digital consumer literacy and effective influencer marketing.

**Keywords:** beauty influencer, cosmetic

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### INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of social media has fundamentally transformed the way consumers search for information, evaluate products, and make purchasing decisions. Within the beauty industry, platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become major channels through which consumers obtain product information and recommendations from beauty influencers rather than relying solely on traditional advertising [1]–[4]. The increasing investment in influencer marketing reflects its strategic role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions across digital platforms.

Beauty influencers are considered opinion leaders because they communicate product information through tutorials, reviews, and personal experiences. Their credibility is commonly evaluated through expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, which together determine the persuasiveness of marketing messages [5]–[8]. These credibility dimensions are particularly important in the cosmetics industry because consumers often cannot evaluate product performance before purchase.

According to Source Credibility Theory, consumers are more likely to accept persuasive messages when they perceive the communicator as knowledgeable, trustworthy, and attractive [5]. Numerous studies have confirmed that influencer credibility enhances consumer trust and positively influences purchase intention, particularly for beauty and skincare products [2], [6], [9].

Previous studies have investigated influencer marketing among general consumers; however, limited attention has been given to undergraduate beauty education students. Unlike ordinary consumers, beauty education students possess formal knowledge regarding cosmetics, skincare, and beauty science while simultaneously engaging with beauty-related content on social media. This unique characteristic makes them an important population for investigating the influence of beauty influencer credibility on purchase intention [10]–[12].

Although previous studies have demonstrated positive relationships between influencer credibility and purchase

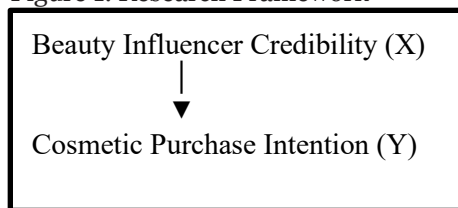
intention, evidence remains limited in the context of higher education, particularly among students specializing in beauty education. Furthermore, previous research has mainly focused on general consumers without considering respondents who possess formal knowledge of cosmetic products. Therefore, this study examines the influence of beauty influencer credibility on cosmetic purchase intention among undergraduate beauty education students, extending the application of Source Credibility Theory within the context of beauty education [5], [6], [13]–[15].

## METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to investigate the effect of beauty influencer credibility on cosmetic purchase intention among undergraduate beauty education students. An explanatory design was selected because it enables researchers to examine causal relationships between independent and dependent variables through hypothesis testing using statistical procedures. The conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework



### 2.2 Participants

The research was conducted at the Department of Beauty Education, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia. The target population consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in the Beauty Education program.

A purposive sampling technique was employed because respondents were required to meet specific inclusion criteria. Participants had to (1) be active undergraduate students in the Beauty Education program, (2) actively use at least one social media platform (Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube), (3) have watched beauty influencer content within the last six months, and (4) have experience purchasing or intending to purchase cosmetic products after viewing beauty influencer recommendations.

Based on these criteria, 102 respondents participated voluntarily in this study.

### 2.3 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online through Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of 18 items, representing two research variables.

The independent variable, Beauty Influencer Credibility, was measured using four dimensions adapted from Source Credibility Theory, namely:

- Expertise
- Trustworthiness
- Attractiveness
- Visibility

These dimensions were represented by 12 questionnaire items.

The dependent variable, Cosmetic Purchase Intention, consisted of 6 items measuring respondents' willingness, desire, and likelihood to purchase cosmetic products recommended by beauty influencers.

All items employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

| Variable                      | Dimension          | Number of Items |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Beauty Influencer Credibility | Expertise          | 3               |
|                               | Trustworthiness    | 3               |
|                               | Attractiveness     | 3               |
|                               | Visibility         | 3               |
| Cosmetic Purchase Intention   | Purchase Intention | 6               |

Table 2. Measurement Sources

| Variable           | Source                                                                                       |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Beauty Credibility | Influencer Adapted from Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990)                            |
| Cosmetic Intention | Purchase Adapted from previous purchase intention studies in influencer marketing literature |

## 2.4 Validity and Reliability

Prior to hypothesis testing, the instrument underwent validity and reliability assessment. Construct validity was examined using the Pearson Product Moment correlation, while internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha.

Items with correlation coefficients exceeding the critical value were considered valid, whereas Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70 indicated satisfactory reliability. The instrument demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties and was therefore suitable for subsequent statistical analysis.

## 2.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted online over approximately four weeks. Before participating, respondents received information regarding the objectives of the study and were asked to provide informed consent electronically. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Respondents could discontinue participation at any point without penalty.

## 2.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The analysis consisted of:

1. Descriptive Statistics
2. Validity Test
3. Reliability Test
4. Classical Assumption Tests
  - Normality
  - Linearity
  - Heteroscedasticity
5. Simple Linear Regression Analysis
6. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )
7. Hypothesis Testing

Statistical significance was determined using a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## 2.7 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to fundamental principles of research ethics. Participation was voluntary, and respondents provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained throughout the study. The collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes and were analyzed in aggregate form without revealing participants' identities.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 3.1 Respondent Characteristics

A total of 102 undergraduate Beauty Education students participated in this study. All respondents met the inclusion criteria, including active use of social media platforms and previous exposure to beauty influencer content. The majority of respondents reported using Instagram (87.3%), followed by TikTok (82.4%), and YouTube (68.6%) as their primary sources of cosmetic information. Most respondents also indicated that they had purchased cosmetic products after viewing recommendations from beauty influencers at least once during the previous six months.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Characteristics | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender          |               |                |
| Female          | 96            | 94.1           |
| Male            | 6             | 5.9            |
| Age             |               |                |
| 18–20 years     | 38            | 37.3           |
| 21–23 years     | 58            | 56.9           |
| >23 years       | 6             | 5.8            |

| Most Frequently Used Platform |    |      |
|-------------------------------|----|------|
| Instagram                     | 89 | 87.3 |
| TikTok                        | 84 | 82.4 |
| YouTube                       | 70 | 68.6 |

The demographic profile indicates that respondents were highly familiar with digital beauty content, supporting the suitability of the selected sample for investigating the influence of beauty influencer credibility on cosmetic purchase intention.

### 3.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis was conducted to identify respondents' perceptions regarding beauty influencer credibility and cosmetic purchase intention.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

| Variable                      | Mean | SD   | Category |
|-------------------------------|------|------|----------|
| Beauty Influencer Credibility | 4.18 | 0.49 | High     |
| Cosmetic Purchase Intention   | 4.06 | 0.56 | High     |

The results demonstrate that respondents perceived beauty influencer credibility at a high level ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ). Likewise, cosmetic purchase intention was also categorized as high ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). The relatively small standard deviations indicate a consistent perception among respondents regarding both variables.

### 3.3 Instrument Validity and Reliability

Before hypothesis testing, validity and reliability analyses were performed.

Table 5. Validity and Reliability Results

| Variable                      | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Beauty Influencer Credibility | 12              | 0.918            | Excellent      |
| Cosmetic Purchase Intention   | 6               | 0.889            | Good           |

All questionnaire items showed corrected item-total correlation values above the required threshold, indicating satisfactory construct validity. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeded 0.70 for both variables, confirming acceptable internal consistency.

### 3.4 Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of beauty influencer credibility on cosmetic purchase intention.

Table 6. Regression Analysis

| Variable                      | $\beta$ | t     | Sig.   |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------|--------|
| Beauty Influencer Credibility | 0.684   | 9.487 | <0.001 |

The regression analysis revealed that beauty influencer credibility significantly influenced cosmetic purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.684$ ,  $t = 9.487$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the proposed hypothesis was accepted.

### 3.5 Coefficient of Determination

Table 7. Model Summary

| R     | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> |
|-------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 0.689 | 0.475          | 0.470                   |

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.475$ ) indicates that 47.5% of the variance in cosmetic purchase intention can be explained by beauty influencer credibility, while the remaining 52.5% may be influenced by other factors such as product quality, brand image, electronic word-of-mouth, price perception, digital literacy, and consumer trust.

### 3.6 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that beauty influencer credibility positively and significantly affects cosmetic purchase intention among undergraduate beauty education students. This result confirms that students are more likely to develop purchase intentions when beauty influencers are perceived as knowledgeable, trustworthy, attractive, and authentic. The findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that influencer credibility strengthens consumers' trust and increases purchase intention through persuasive communication and positive product evaluation [16]–[19].

The significant role of credibility can be explained by Source Credibility Theory, which argues that individuals tend to accept recommendations from communicators perceived as possessing expertise and trustworthiness [5]. In the beauty industry, consumers often face uncertainty regarding cosmetic quality before actual use. Consequently, beauty influencers become an important external source of product information that helps reduce perceived risk and facilitates purchasing decisions [16], [20].

Interestingly, this study focuses on undergraduate beauty education students who have formal knowledge of cosmetics, skincare, and beauty science. Although these students possess academic competencies in evaluating cosmetic products, the results reveal that beauty influencer credibility continues to influence their purchase intention. This finding suggests that formal education and digital information obtained from social media complement rather than replace each other in consumer decision-making. Similar findings have been reported in recent studies demonstrating that consumers combine professional knowledge with social media recommendations before making purchasing decisions [17], [18].

The regression analysis showed that beauty influencer credibility explained 47.5% of the variance in cosmetic purchase intention. This indicates that credibility represents an important predictor of purchasing behavior, while the remaining variance may be explained by additional variables such as electronic word-of-mouth, perceived product quality, brand image, price perception, consumer trust, and social influence [19], [21], [22]. Future studies are therefore encouraged to incorporate these variables into more comprehensive research models.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide valuable implications for cosmetic companies and digital marketers. Rather than selecting influencers solely based on popularity or follower numbers, companies should prioritize influencers who consistently demonstrate expertise, authenticity, transparency, and ethical communication. Such characteristics are more likely to strengthen consumer confidence and generate sustainable purchase intentions [16], [20].

For higher education institutions, especially beauty education programs, these findings highlight the importance of integrating digital consumer literacy into the curriculum. Students should be equipped with competencies to critically evaluate online cosmetic information, distinguish evidence-based recommendations from promotional content, and make informed purchasing decisions based on scientific evidence. Such competencies are essential in preparing future beauty professionals capable of educating consumers responsibly.

Although the present study contributes to understanding influencer marketing in beauty education, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, respondents were recruited from a single university, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, this study employed a cross-sectional design that does not capture changes in purchasing behavior over time. Third, only one independent variable was investigated. Future research should include additional constructs such as parasocial interaction, consumer trust, digital literacy, electronic word-of-mouth, brand love, and perceived product quality to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of cosmetic purchase intention.

### 3.7 Theoretical Implications

The present study extends the application of Source Credibility Theory within the context of higher education in beauty studies. While previous studies have primarily focused on general consumers, this research demonstrates that source credibility remains influential even among individuals who possess formal academic knowledge related to beauty and cosmetic science. This finding suggests that professional knowledge does not necessarily diminish the persuasive power of credible beauty influencers. Instead, students tend to integrate information obtained through formal education with digital information acquired from social media before making purchasing decisions.

The findings also support the growing body of literature emphasizing that influencer credibility functions as a multidimensional construct encompassing expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and visibility. These dimensions jointly influence consumers' cognitive evaluation of information quality and ultimately affect behavioral intention. Therefore, influencer credibility should not be viewed merely as a promotional strategy but as a psychological mechanism influencing consumer decision-making in digital environments.

### 3.8 Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide several practical implications for higher education institutions, cosmetic companies, and beauty influencers.

For higher education institutions, particularly undergraduate beauty education programs, the results highlight the importance of integrating digital consumer literacy into the curriculum. Students should be encouraged to critically evaluate cosmetic information disseminated through social media, distinguish promotional content from evidence-

based recommendations, and develop the ability to assess product claims using scientific knowledge. Such competencies are increasingly important in preparing future beauty professionals capable of making informed decisions and educating consumers responsibly.

For cosmetic companies, the results suggest that influencer selection should prioritize credibility rather than popularity alone. Influencers possessing professional expertise, transparent communication, and authentic product experiences are more likely to establish consumer trust and generate stronger purchase intentions than influencers selected solely based on follower counts.

For beauty influencers, maintaining honesty, transparency, and consistency in product reviews is essential for sustaining audience trust. Ethical disclosure of sponsored content and evidence-based recommendations may strengthen long-term credibility and improve audience engagement.

### 3.9 Contribution of the Study

This research contributes to both theoretical and practical perspectives.

From a theoretical perspective, the study extends the application of Source Credibility Theory within the context of beauty education by demonstrating that influencer credibility significantly affects cosmetic purchase intention among undergraduate beauty education students. Unlike previous studies focusing primarily on general consumers, the present study examines future beauty professionals who possess formal educational backgrounds in cosmetic science, thereby providing a more specific understanding of influencer effectiveness within an educational setting.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer valuable insights for universities, cosmetic companies, digital marketers, and beauty influencers in designing evidence-based digital communication strategies that promote informed consumer behavior while enhancing marketing effectiveness.

### 3.10 Research Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study.

First, this research adopted a cross-sectional survey design, preventing causal conclusions regarding changes in purchase intention over time. Future longitudinal studies are recommended to investigate how prolonged exposure to beauty influencer content influences purchasing behavior.

Second, respondents were recruited exclusively from one public university, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other educational institutions or demographic groups. Future studies should include respondents from multiple universities and different geographical regions.

Third, the study focused solely on beauty influencer credibility as the independent variable. Cosmetic purchase intention is a complex behavior influenced by multiple psychological and marketing factors, including electronic word-of-mouth, consumer trust, brand image, perceived product quality, social influence, and digital literacy. Incorporating these variables into future research may provide a more comprehensive explanation of purchasing behavior.

Finally, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire responses, which may introduce response bias due to social desirability or individual interpretation of questionnaire items.

### 3.11 Future Research

Future studies are encouraged to develop more comprehensive research models by incorporating additional constructs such as consumer trust, parasocial interaction, electronic word-of-mouth, perceived product quality, brand love, social media engagement, and digital literacy. Employing structural equation modeling (SEM) or partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) may provide a deeper understanding of the direct and indirect relationships among these variables.

Furthermore, comparative studies involving students from different academic disciplines or countries would enrich understanding of how educational background and cultural context influence the effectiveness of beauty influencer marketing strategies.

#### Discussion

The discussion is focused on linking the data and the analysis results to the problems or research objectives. The discussion also links research results or findings with relevant research results and theories. The discussion also answers the question of why such facts are found in the data.

The discussion also outlines the contribution of research results or findings to relevant fields, especially educational administration/management, consisting of educational leadership, policy and planning, academic economics, and educational politics. The discussion also outlines the limitations of the research and its implications for practice and research opportunities in the future. We recommend that the words in the discussion are at least 70% of the words in the results.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect of beauty influencer credibility on cosmetic purchase intention among undergraduate beauty education students at Universitas Negeri Semarang. The findings revealed that beauty influencer credibility has a positive and statistically significant influence on students' purchase intention. Respondents who perceived beauty influencers as more credible in terms of expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and visibility demonstrated stronger intentions to purchase cosmetic products recommended through social media. The regression analysis further indicated that beauty influencer credibility explained 47.5% of the variance in cosmetic purchase intention, highlighting its important role in influencing consumer behavior in the digital era.

The study contributes to the application of Source Credibility Theory within the context of beauty education by demonstrating that influencer credibility remains influential even among students with formal knowledge of cosmetics and beauty science. These findings provide practical implications for cosmetic companies in selecting credible influencers and for higher education institutions in strengthening students' digital consumer literacy through critical evaluation of online beauty content. Future research is recommended to incorporate additional variables, such as electronic word-of-mouth, consumer trust, parasocial interaction, brand image, and digital literacy, as well as involve more diverse participants from different universities to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

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