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Exploring the mediating role of beauty influencer effectiveness on skincare products: Does credibility still influence purchase intention?

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the impact of beauty influencer credibility on purchase intention, focusing on how influencer effectiveness mediated this relationship. With the rise of social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube, beauty influencers have become key players in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in the competitive beauty industry where local brands like Somethinc compete with global brands. The research analyzed responses from 100 female teenagers aged 15-24 in Bali using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis. The results showed that beauty influencer credibility had a direct and positive effect on influencer effectiveness, with trust and expertise being critical factors. Influencer effectiveness significantly increased purchase intention, as consumers were more likely to make purchasing decisions when influencers communicated persuasively. Credibility also directly influenced purchase intention, but its effect was strengthened when mediated by influencer effectiveness. The findings highlighted that credibility alone was not sufficient; influencers needed to effectively engage their audience to maximize their impact. The study provided valuable insights for beauty brands, suggesting that selecting credible and effective influencers is crucial for successful digital marketing. It also opened avenues for future research into additional factors such as brand loyalty and price, and the potential for cross-cultural and longitudinal studies.

Keywords: Beauty influencer credibility, beauty influencer effectiveness, purchase intention

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INTRODUCTION

The beauty industry, particularly skincare, has become increasingly popular and is now considered a necessity in society (Rodgers et al., 2024). Skincare consists of a series of actions to support skin health, enhance appearance, and improve skin conditions. These products include face wash, toner, moisturizer, sunscreen, serum, essence, eye cream, and others (Pratiwi & Wiksuana, 2020). With this growth, many local skincare brands have emerged, such as Somethinc. Somethinc is an Indonesian local brand launched in May 2019, inspired by millennials who are searching for certified halal skincare and cosmetic products to support their active lifestyle and meet the demands of the Indonesian public.

Bali is known for its deeply rooted cultural traditions, which always involve beauty rituals. In every traditional ceremony in Bali, decorative elements are required, making it essential for Balinese women to maintain their skin's beauty (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Given this phenomenon, the interest in skincare among Balinese women is quite high, particularly among teenagers. Teenagers aged 15-24 tend to feel anxious and confused about the physical changes they are experiencing and are highly concerned about their appearance (Marwoko, 2019). Additionally, starting to use skincare at an early age has positive effects on the skin.

A beauty influencer is someone who provides detailed descriptions of products, particularly cosmetics they have used, and offers reviews of those products (Zukhrufani et al., 2019). One key factor in providing information, educating consumers, and acting as a role model for using these products is choosing a beauty influencer who possesses credibility (Hamouda, 2018; Maryati et al., 2023). The credibility of an influencer refers to their ability to present information honestly and credibly, which aligns with consumer perceptions (Cheah et al., 2024; Coutinho et al., 2023). This is crucial as it impacts consumer responses to brand endorsements and the effectiveness of influencer marketing (Lou & Kim, 2019).

Credibility is defined as how an audience perceives the quality of someone's communication (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), or how well a person can influence their audience through persuasive messages (Jin & Phua, 2014). This aligns with a study that states that a beauty influencer's credibility positively affects purchase intention (Harwansya & Mahfudz, 2023). However, it is found that purchase intention is not influenced by influencer credibility alone, but also depends on the influencer's effectiveness (Wibowo & Heryjanto, 2020).

Effectiveness refers to the success rate in performing tasks or achieving goals, which can be measured by how closely the outcome matches the planned objectives. Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which previously set goals have been achieved (Handyaningrat, 1994). Effectiveness as a way to evaluate how well an organization meets its targets (Mardiasmo, 2017). This implies that effectiveness is linked to good performance that aligns with planned goals. Other studies support the notion that a beauty influencer's effectiveness has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention (Amalia & Nurlinda, 2022; Permana & Astuti, 2023; Raziah, 2022).

Purchase intention arises from stimuli received after being introduced to a product, which creates interest in trying it and eventually leads to the desire to purchase it (Kotler & Keller, 2007). Beauty products require trust, and when that trust is built by observing the lifestyle of a beauty influencer, it fosters the desire to try the product. For example, when a beauty influencer gives positive feedback about Somethinc products after using them for a few weeks, consumers feel more confident and safer, increasing curiosity and the desire to buy Somethinc products.

Based on these phenomena, there is a clear relationship between the credibility of beauty influencers, their effectiveness, and purchase intention. Teenagers aged 15-24 tend to look for examples on social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube, so it is important to research how the effectiveness of beauty influencers mediates the relationship between their credibility and the purchase intention of Somethinc skincare users in Bali.

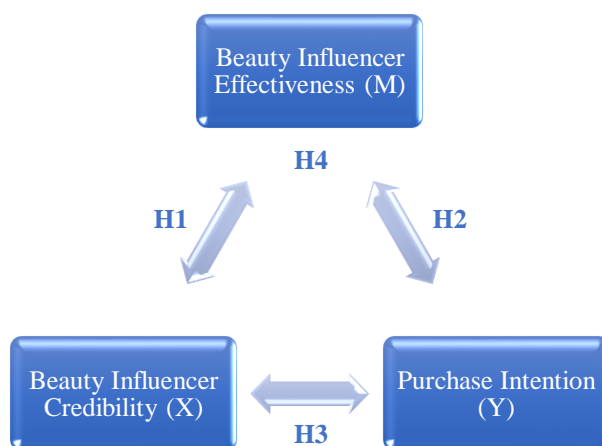


FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Beauty influencer credibility has a positive and significant effect on beauty influencer effectiveness.
- **H2:** Beauty influencer effectiveness has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
- **H3:** Beauty influencer credibility has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
- **H4:** Beauty influencer effectiveness mediates the relationship between beauty influencer credibility and purchase intention.

These hypotheses are derived from the theoretical framework that suggests beauty influencers' credibility can directly influence both their effectiveness and consumers' purchase intention. Moreover, the effectiveness of the influencer is expected to serve as a mediator between credibility and purchase intention, enhancing the overall impact.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid growth of the beauty industry has elevated the role of influencers, particularly in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. The emergence of beauty influencers on platforms like Instagram and YouTube has fundamentally transformed the way consumers engage with beauty products (Lou & Kim, 2019). Beauty influencers are considered credible when they present information in a manner that is perceived as authentic, knowledgeable, and aligned with consumer expectations (Hamouda, 2018).

Credibility of Beauty Influencers

Credibility is a crucial factor in the success of influencer marketing (Belanche et al., 2021). Credibility refers to the extent to which an audience perceives the influencer as trustworthy and competent in delivering persuasive messages (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Studies show that when influencers are perceived as credible, their followers are more likely to trust their product recommendations, which directly influences purchase intention (Jin & Phua, 2014; Lou & Kim, 2019). A study demonstrated that credibility positively affects the effectiveness of influencers in promoting beauty products, underscoring the role of perceived honesty and expertise in building trust among consumers (Baluci et al., 2021).

The study also emphasizes the importance of credibility in generating purchase intentions (Angelica et al., 2020). Their findings revealed that consumers are more inclined to make purchase decisions when they perceive the influencer as honest, reliable, and transparent. Similarly, it is found that a beauty influencer's credibility directly enhances consumers' attitudes toward the endorsed brand, which leads to stronger purchase intentions (Sugiharto et al., 2018).

Effectiveness of Beauty Influencers

Effectiveness refers to an influencer's ability to successfully influence their audience to achieve a desired outcome, such as purchase intention (Al-Mu'ani et al., 2023; Handayani, 1994; Zhao et al., 2024). Influencer effectiveness can be driven by factors such as the quality of content, audience engagement, and alignment between the influencer and the product being promoted. Some studies highlighted that influencers who provide authentic, relatable, and experienced product reviews tend to be more effective in driving purchase intentions (Amalia & Nurlinda, 2022; Raziah, 2022).

The concept of effectiveness in this context is linked to an influencer's ability to communicate the benefits of a product convincingly, leading to an increase in purchase intentions. It is found that the effectiveness of beauty influencers in communicating product benefits significantly impacts consumer purchase decisions (Permana & Astuti, 2023). Furthermore, a study demonstrated that influencers who maintain a high level of effectiveness in their content creation—through honesty and product expertise—are more likely to convert followers into buyers (Mewengkang & Hidayah, 2023).

Impact of Beauty Influencers on Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's inclination to buy a product after being exposed to a marketing stimulus, such as influencer content (Kotler & Keller, 2007; Lisichkova & Othman, 2017; Zniva et al., 2023). A study argued that influencers with high credibility and effectiveness can enhance consumers' purchase intentions by fostering trust and emotional connection (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). When influencers authentically share their experiences with a product, it creates a stronger bond with their audience, leading to increased trust and higher purchase intentions (Jin & Phua, 2014).

Research further supports the notion that credible and effective influencers can significantly impact consumers' purchasing behavior (Lou & Kim, 2019). The ability of influencers to act as trusted figures in the beauty community enhances their persuasive power, making their product recommendations more likely to result in consumer purchases. It is found that the alignment between influencers' content and consumers' needs amplifies purchase intentions, particularly in the skincare sector (Agustin & Amron, 2022).

Mediator Role of Effectiveness

Several studies have demonstrated that the effectiveness of a beauty influencer can mediate the relationship between credibility and purchase intention. As noted by researchers, the more effective an influencer is at delivering honest and engaging content, the more likely their credibility will positively influence purchase intention (Angelica et al., 2020; Lou & Kim, 2019). It is found that beauty influencer effectiveness serves as a critical mediator in the decision-making process of consumers, particularly when influencers are seen as credible sources of information (Liana et al., 2021).

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research approach, gathering data from 100 female respondents aged 15-24 years in Bali through a structured questionnaire. The sample was selected using non-probability sampling. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with statements using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

Variables Measurement:

- **Beauty Influencer Credibility (X)** was measured with three indicators: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness.
- **Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M)** was measured with five indicators: honesty, experience, appearance, admiration, and similarity with the influencer.
- **Purchase Intention (Y)** was measured with three indicators: willingness to buy, product selection after viewing content, and understanding the product's advantages.

The data was analyzed using SEM-PLS, with two models evaluated: the outer model (validity and reliability) and the inner model (hypothesis testing).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

From the dataset collected, 100 respondents were participating in this study. In the SEM-PLS analysis, two types of testing were carried out, namely Outer Model Evaluation and Inner Model Evaluation.

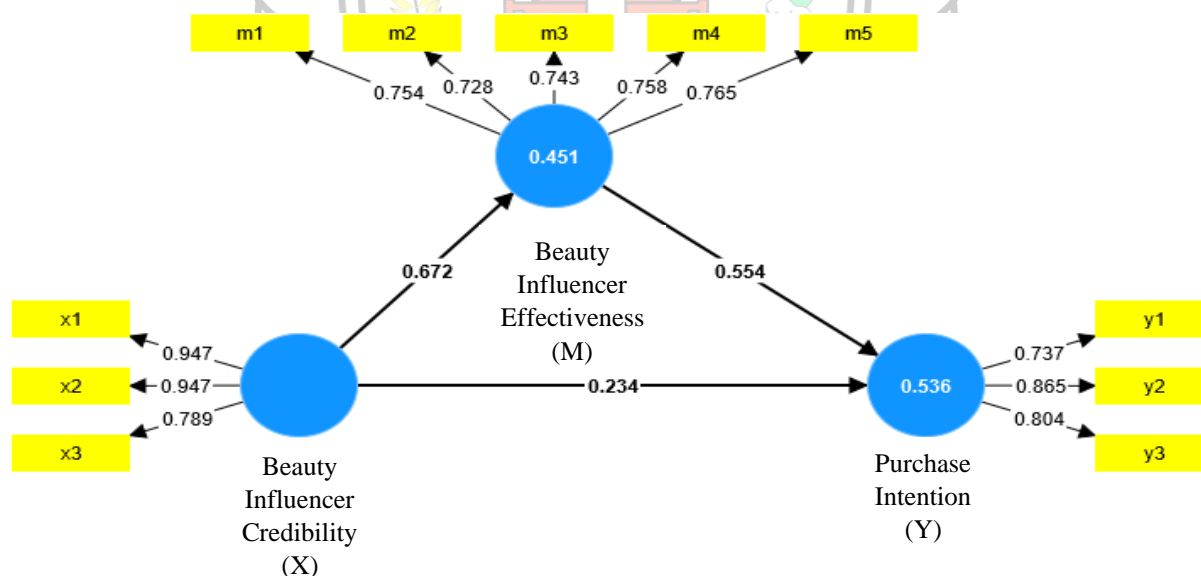


FIGURE 2. Outer Model PLS

The following table presents the convergent validity results for each indicator used in the study. Convergent validity measures how well each indicator correlates with its associated construct. All indicators in this study have outer loading values above 0.7, indicating that the data meet the criteria for convergent validity.

TABLE 1. Convergent Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Beauty Influencer Credibility (X)	X1	0.947

	X2	0.947
	X3	0.789
Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M)	M1	0.754
	M2	0.728
	M3	0.743
	M4	0.758
	M5	0.765
Purchase Intention (Y)	Y1	0.737
	Y2	0.865
	Y3	0.804

Source: Primary Data, 2023

This table provides the discriminant validity results, showing the correlation between indicators and constructs. Discriminant validity ensures that each indicator is more strongly related to its corresponding construct than to other constructs. The table shows that the study data meet the discriminant validity criteria.

TABLE 2. Discriminant Validity Test

Indicator	Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M)	Beauty Influencer Credibility (X)	Purchase Intention (Y)
M1	0.754	0.583	0.510
M2	0.728	0.457	0.524
M3	0.743	0.427	0.485
M4	0.758	0.524	0.579
M5	0.765	0.512	0.562
X1	0.601	0.947	0.562
X2	0.601	0.947	0.522
X3	0.597	0.789	0.579
Y1	0.546	0.473	0.737
Y2	0.629	0.497	0.865
Y3	0.536	0.493	0.804

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The following table presents the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each variable. AVE measures the level of variance captured by the construct relative to the variance due to measurement error. All constructs in the study have AVE values above 0.5, indicating good reliability.

TABLE 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Beauty Influencer Credibility (X)	0.562
Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M)	0.805
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.646

Source: Primary Data, 2023

This table shows the composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable. Both metrics are used to assess the internal consistency of the constructs. The values exceed 0.7, which suggests that the data meet the reliability criteria.

TABLE 4. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M)	0.805	0.865
Beauty Influencer Credibility (X)	0.875	0.925
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.724	0.845

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The table below presents the R-square values, which indicate the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. The R-square values suggest that 45.1% of the variation in beauty influencer effectiveness and 53.6% of the variation in purchase intention can be explained by the model.

TABLE 5. R-square Values

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M)	0.451	0.445
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.536	0.527

Source: Primary Data, 2023

This table summarizes the results of the direct influence hypothesis testing. The relationships between beauty influencer credibility, effectiveness, and purchase intention are all positive and significant, as shown by the T-statistics and P-values.

TABLE 6. Results of Direct Influence Testing

Relationship Tested	Original Sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Remark
Beauty Influencer Credibility (X) → Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M)	0.672	7.825	0.000	Accepted
Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M) → Purchase Intention (Y)	0.554	5.870	0.000	Accepted
Beauty Influencer Credibility (X) → Purchase Intention (Y)	0.234	2.528	0.011	Accepted

Source: Primary Data, 2023

The table below presents the results of the indirect effect testing, showing how beauty influencer effectiveness mediates the relationship between credibility and purchase intention. The results confirm that the mediation effect is significant.

TABLE 7. Hypothesis Testing

Relationship Tested	Original Sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Remark
Beauty Influencer Credibility (X) → Beauty Influencer Effectiveness (M) → Purchase Intention (Y)	0.372	4.197	0.000	Accepted

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Discussion

Influence of Beauty Influencer Credibility on Beauty Influencer Effectiveness

The influence of beauty influencer credibility on beauty influencer effectiveness shows a T-statistic value of 7.825 (> 1.98) and a P-value of 0.000, indicating that the higher the beauty influencer's credibility, the more effective they will be. The conclusion is that beauty influencer credibility has a positive and significant impact on beauty influencer effectiveness; thus, the hypothesis is accepted. Credibility has successfully supported the effectiveness of beauty influencers, which is backed by trust in the beauty influencer, the influencer's expertise in reviewing Somethinc brand products, and the influencer's appeal.

Another finding shows that the credibility of beauty influencers includes competencies that can make consumers trust the reviews provided. The credibility of Somethinc's beauty influencers, built through creating honest and credible review content, can persuade the effectiveness of beauty influencers. This aligns with the findings of Baluci et al. (2021), who stated that influencer credibility has a positive and significant effect on the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

Research by Harwansya & Mahfudz (2023) on the influence of micro-influencer credibility also supports this study, as reinforced by Fihasti (2022).

Influence of Beauty Influencer Effectiveness on Purchase Intention

The analysis results show a T-statistic value of 5.870 (> 1.98) and a P-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). This indicates that the higher the effectiveness of the beauty influencer, the more it will increase purchase intention. Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted. The findings of this study describe that a beauty influencer has performed their role well according to expectations, supported by indicators such as honesty and experience.

Another finding reveals that beauty influencers have been effective in doing their job, which is to review Somethinc products. The honesty and experience they have in using Somethinc skincare products generate purchase intention.

This is consistent with the studies of Amalia & Nurlinda (2022); Permana & Astuti (2023); Raziah (2022)

which show that beauty influencer effectiveness has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention.

Influence of Beauty Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention

The influence of beauty influencer credibility on purchase intention shows a T-statistic value of 2.528 (> 1.98) and a P-value of 0.011 (less than 0.05). This indicates that the higher the credibility of the beauty influencer, the more it will increase purchase intention. In this finding, the beauty influencer's communication about the Somethinc brand is clear when providing reviews, and there are tangible results after using Somethinc products.

The credibility of Somethinc's beauty influencers in providing honest and trustworthy reviews can make consumers have high trust in the Somethinc brand, thus increasing purchase intention. Beauty influencers are individuals who have a high level of credibility in the social media world within the beauty industry, so they have the ability to encourage their followers to try or purchase various products. This is in line with Angelica et al. (2020), who stated that the level of beauty influencer credibility positively affects purchase intention.

Earlier research conducted by Sugiharto et al. (2018) also shows that beauty influencer credibility positively affects purchase intention. The findings by Mewengkang & Hidayah (2023) are consistent, showing that influencer credibility significantly impacts purchase intention.

Beauty Influencer Effectiveness Mediates the Relationship Between Beauty Influencer Credibility and Purchase Intention

Beauty influencer effectiveness can mediate the influence of beauty influencer credibility on purchase intention. This is confirmed by the T-statistic value of 4.197 (> 1.98) and a P-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). This indicates that beauty influencer credibility has a positive and significant indirect effect on purchase intention through beauty influencer effectiveness.

In this finding, the effectiveness of a beauty influencer can be seen from how they create effective review content for consumers according to expectations, supported by indicators such as honesty and experience. Another finding shows that the credibility of a beauty influencer in providing honest and trustworthy reviews about Somethinc skincare products aligns with what they truly experience.

Field results show that what the beauty influencer honestly states and matches the facts will trigger customer trust that the Somethinc skincare product reflects the beauty influencer's claims. The more convincing the beauty influencer is, the more it will excite consumers to try Somethinc products. Agustin & Amron (2022) note a similar outcome. Angelica et al. (2020) revealed that beauty influencer credibility positively impacts purchase intention. Moreover, research conducted by Liana & Purba (2021) shows that beauty influencer credibility positively influences purchase intention.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that both beauty influencer credibility and effectiveness play crucial roles in influencing consumer purchase intentions, particularly in the beauty industry. While credibility is important for building trust and establishing an initial connection with the audience, it is the influencer's effectiveness—how well they communicate, engage, and resonate with their followers—that ultimately drives consumers toward making a purchase. The findings revealed that beauty influencer effectiveness mediates the relationship between credibility and purchase intention, highlighting that credibility alone is not sufficient to guarantee consumer action. Instead, influencers who are not only credible but also skilled at delivering authentic, engaging content are more likely to have a stronger impact on purchasing behavior.

For brands like Somethinc, these insights underscore the importance of carefully selecting influencers who are not just trustworthy, but also highly effective in creating persuasive, relatable content that aligns with the target audience's needs. This dual focus on credibility and effectiveness should guide digital marketing strategies aimed at younger consumers, particularly in the context of influencer-led promotions. Moreover, the research paves the way for further studies to explore additional factors such as brand loyalty, product quality, and price, as well as the influence of cross-cultural dynamics and the long-term effects of influencer marketing on consumer behavior. By adopting more diverse methodologies and expanding the scope of inquiry, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving role of influencers in shaping consumer decisions across various industries and markets.

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