

THE INFLUENCE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION OF SKINCARE PRODUCTS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Gabriella Sabatini^{1*}, Andra Prayudha²

¹ Master of Management, Widyatama University, Bandung, Indonesia

² Master of Management, Widyatama University, Bandung, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Gabbysabatini22@gmail.com

Abstract: The growth of social media has revolutionized marketing strategies, making influencer marketing one of the most dominant approaches. However, there is still limited research on how the credibility of influencers particularly their trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness directly influences purchase intention, especially for local skincare brands among younger consumers. This study investigates the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention through a quantitative method. Data were gathered from 100 active university students who use TikTok, and were processed using SPSS Statistics 26. The analysis involved descriptive statistics, classical assumption testing (normality and heteroscedasticity), as well as simple linear regression with t-tests and coefficient of determination. The results reveal that influencer marketing significantly and positively affects purchase intention, accounting for 68.5% of the variance. Moreover, the findings highlight that credibility dimensions trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness play a central role in encouraging consumer interest. These outcomes are consistent with previous research emphasizing influencer credibility as a driver of consumer trust and behavior, while also contributing new insights from the Indonesian skincare market. The study concludes that influencer marketing is a critical factor shaping purchase intention and suggests that brands should strategically collaborate with credible influencers to maximize marketing effectiveness.

Keywords: influencer marketing, credibility, purchase intention, skincare, social media

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has significantly transformed the way companies interact with consumers. Social media today serves not only as a communication platform but also as the primary arena for modern marketing strategies. Unlike traditional advertising, which is one-way in nature, social media enables direct interaction, fosters closeness, and creates more personalized experiences between brands and audiences. Within this context, influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most popular and effective strategies over the past decade.

Influencers are considered figures who can build trust and influence consumer decision-making due to their proximity and relatability to audiences. Previous studies have demonstrated that influencers affect consumer perceptions, attitudes, and even purchase intentions toward a product (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019; Lou & Yuan, 2019). This positions influencer marketing not merely as a promotional activity, but as an essential strategy to strengthen brand image and enhance competitiveness.

The skincare industry has been one of the most impacted sectors by this phenomenon. In recent years, demand for skincare products has grown rapidly, driven by beauty trends that are widely popularized through social media. Influencers play a key role in this trend by providing reviews, recommendations, and testimonials that are perceived as more authentic by consumers

compared to conventional advertisements. This makes influencer marketing a highly relevant channel for the skincare industry.

University students represent an important consumer segment to investigate. As part of Generation Z and Millennials, they are highly active social media users, responsive to digital trends, and often act as trendsetters within their communities. Understanding how influencer marketing affects students' purchase intentions toward skincare products can provide both academic and practical contributions.

Several prior studies have confirmed the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention. For instance, Aritonang et al. (2021) found that influencer marketing significantly contributed to the purchase intention of local skincare products, although electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) was more dominant. Sari et al. (2024) revealed that TikTok influencer endorsements positively influenced purchase intention toward local skincare, while Putri and Dermawan (2023) emphasized that TikTok influencer content affected Gen Z consumers' decisions in Surabaya. Other studies, such as Candra (2023) and Yasmin et al. (2025), highlighted credibility, brand awareness, and lifestyle as critical factors in the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention.

Nevertheless, research that specifically investigates the impact of influencer marketing on university students remains limited, particularly in the context of skincare products in Indonesia. Most previous studies have focused on general populations or other product categories such as fashion and technology. Moreover, deeper insights are needed to understand how young consumers like students respond to influencer-based marketing strategies.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of influencer marketing on purchase intention of skincare products among university students. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on digital marketing communication while offering practical implications for skincare businesses in designing more targeted influencer-based promotional strategies.

2. Literature Review

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing refers to a promotional approach that utilizes the reach and credibility of social media personalities to endorse and market specific products or brands. Influencers are regarded as opinion leaders who can shape consumer perceptions and influence purchasing behavior (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Lou and Yuan (2019) emphasized that message value and influencer credibility play a key role in establishing consumer trust. Other studies further show that attractiveness, authenticity, and emotional closeness with audiences also determine the effectiveness of influencer marketing (Candra, 2023).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is defined as a consumer's tendency to buy a product based on evaluations, attitudes, and beliefs about the product (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the digital era, purchase intention is increasingly shaped by social interactions, online recommendations, and third-party reviews such as those provided by influencers (Yasmin et al., 2025). Sari et al. (2024) demonstrated that TikTok influencer endorsements significantly influence purchase intention for local skincare products.

Influencer Marketing and Purchase Intention

Research over the last decade has consistently shown a positive relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention. Arintonang et al. (2021) found that influencer marketing significantly influenced the purchase intention of local skincare in Jakarta, although e-WOM had a stronger impact. Putri and Dermawan (2023) confirmed that influencer marketing via TikTok positively affected purchase intention for Somethinc skincare products among Gen Z. Similarly, Julianti et al. (2023) revealed that influencer credibility not only increases purchase intention but also drives impulse buying.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which posits that consumers can be persuaded through two routes: the central route (based on rational arguments) and the peripheral route (based on simple cues such as attractiveness or popularity of the influencer). In the case of influencer marketing, young consumers, including students, are often more influenced by peripheral cues such as popularity and emotional connection with influencers (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

Research Gap

Although empirical evidence on the effectiveness of influencer marketing is growing, most studies have focused on general populations or product categories such as fashion and technology (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Putri & Dermawan, 2023). Studies specifically targeting students as potential skincare consumers remain limited. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the influence of influencer marketing on purchase intention of skincare products among university students.

Hypothesis

Based on the literature review, the research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention of skincare products among university students.

3. Method

This study employed a quantitative approach to examine the influence of influencer marketing on purchase intention of skincare products among active university students.

Research Design

The research design is causal in nature. The independent variable is influencer marketing, measured by three dimensions: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. The dependent variable is purchase intention, measured through four dimensions: transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory intention (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Population and Sample

The study population comprises active university students who use social media and have been exposed to skincare promotions by influencers. A purposive sampling technique was employed with the following criteria: (1) active university students, and (2) active social media users. The sample consisted of 100 respondents.

Research Instrument

Data were collected through an online questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- Influencer marketing was measured using indicators of:
 - *Trustworthiness*: honesty, integrity, and credibility of influencers in delivering information.
 - *Expertise*: knowledge and competence of influencers in the promoted field.
 - *Attractiveness*: appearance, communication style, and charisma of influencers that shape audience perception.
- Purchase intention was measured across four dimensions:
 - *Transactional intention*: the tendency to make a purchase.
 - *Referential intention*: the tendency to recommend the product to others.
 - *Preferential intention*: the tendency to choose the product over competing brands.
 - *Exploratory intention*: the tendency to seek further information about the product.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics version 26 through the following steps:

1. Descriptive Statistics – employed to present respondent characteristics and the distribution of answers for each measurement item.
2. Classical Assumption Testing – comprising normality and heteroskedasticity assessments, aimed at verifying the validity of the regression model.
3. Simple Linear Regression – applied to identify the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention.
4. t-Test – performed to evaluate the statistical significance of the independent variable toward the dependent variable at the 5% significance level.
5. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) – utilized to assess the proportion of variance in purchase intention that can be explained by influencer marketing.

4. Result and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a general overview of the variables examined in this study. The influencer marketing variable was measured through three main dimensions: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of influencers.

Table 1. Result of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maksimum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Influencer Marketing	8.00	25.00	18.66	3.48
Purchase Intention	7.00	35.00	25.58	5.11

Source : Processed Data, 2025

Based on data obtained from 100 respondents, influencer marketing scored a minimum value of 8, a maximum value of 25, with an average (mean) of 18.66 and a standard deviation of 3.48. This result indicates that students' assessment of influencer marketing is relatively high, suggesting that influencers in the skincare industry are perceived to possess sufficient credibility, expertise, and attractiveness to influence perceptions.

For purchase intention, which was measured through four types of intention (transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory), the minimum score was 7, the maximum 35, with an average of 25.58 and a standard deviation of 5.11. These findings suggest that, in general, students demonstrate a relatively high purchase intention toward skincare products promoted by influencers. Hence, both influencer marketing and purchase intention variables are at a sufficiently high level, indicating the potential existence of a significant relationship between them.

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test: P-P Plot and Kolmogorov-Smirnov

The normality test was conducted to examine whether the residual data in the regression model followed a normal distribution. The P-P plot shows that the residual data points are relatively aligned with the diagonal line, despite minor deviations at the beginning and end of the distribution. This suggests that the residuals approximate normal distribution.

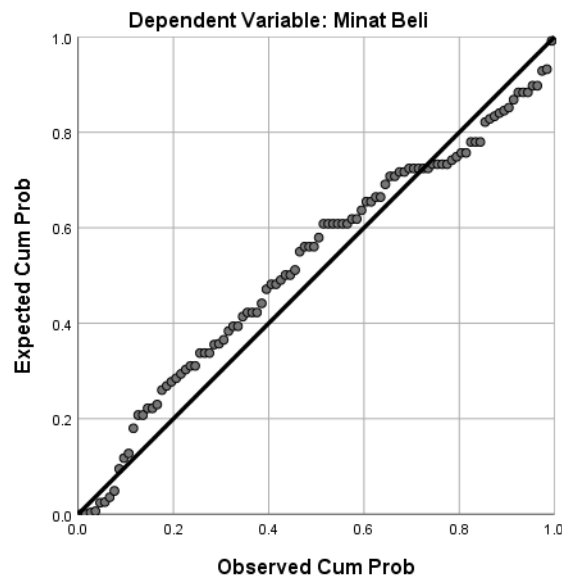


Figure 1: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
 Source: Processed Data, 2025

In addition, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a significance value of 0.016 (<0.05), indicating statistical deviation from normality. However, considering the relatively large sample size ($N=100$), the Central Limit Theorem suggests that the residual distribution can still be considered approximately normal. Therefore, the assumption of normality is met, and the regression model remains suitable for hypothesis testing.

Table 1. Result of Normality Test

Unstandardized Residual	Sig.
Kolmogorov Smirnov Test	0.016

Source : Processed Data, 2025

Heteroskedasticity Test: Scatterplot and Glejser Test

The heteroskedasticity test aimed to determine whether differences in variance of the residuals exist within the regression model. The scatterplot of Unstandardized Residuals versus Unstandardized Predicted Values shows data points dispersed randomly above and below the Y-axis zero line, with no clear pattern such as funnel-shaped or widening distribution. This indicates the absence of heteroskedasticity.

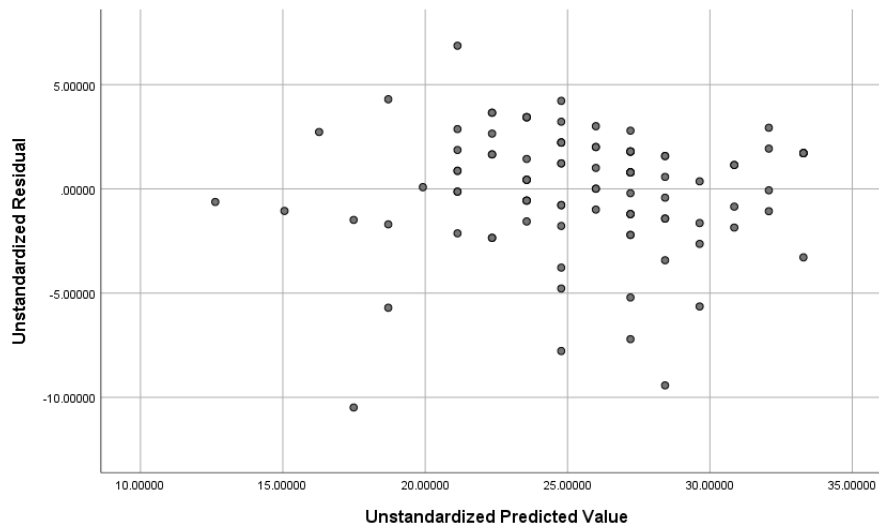


Figure 2: Scatterplot of Unstandardized Residual vs. Predicted Value

Source: Processed Data, 2025

The Glejser test further confirms this finding, as the significance value of the independent variable was 0.236 (>0.05). Thus, the regression model does not suffer from heteroskedasticity, and the assumption is met.

Table 2. Result of Heteroscedasticity Test

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.350	1.050		3.190	0.002
	Influencer Marketing	-0.066	0.055	-0.120	-1.193	0.236

Source : Processed Data, 2025

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression was applied to evaluate the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention. The analysis produced a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.828, signifying a very strong association between both variables. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was found to be 0.685, indicating that influencer marketing accounts for 68.5% of the variation in purchase intention. Meanwhile, the remaining 31.5% is attributed to other determinants beyond the scope of this study, such as brand image, pricing, and product quality.

The regression equation obtained is as follows:

$$Y = 2.905 + 1.215X$$

The constant of 2.905 indicates that even without the influence of influencer marketing, students' purchase intention remains positive at 2.905. The regression coefficient for influencer marketing (1.215) shows that every one-unit increase in influencer marketing contributes to a 1.215-point increase in purchase intention.

Table 3. Result of Correlation and Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square
1	0.828	0.685

Source : Processed Data, 2025

Table 4. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	
	B	Std. Error
1 (Constant)	2.905	1.579
Gender Equality	1.215	0.083

Source : Processed Data, 2025

Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

The t-test results show that influencer marketing has a t-value of 14.610, which is far greater than the t-table value of 1.984 at a 5% significance level. The significance value of 0.000 (<0.05) confirms that influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention for skincare products among students. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5. Result of t-test

Model	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	1.840	0.069
Gender Equality	14.610	0.000

Source : Processed Data, 2025

Discussion

The findings reveal that influencer marketing significantly influences students' purchase intention for skincare products. The regression results show a strong and positive effect, with $R^2 = 0.685$, indicating that influencer credibility accounts for more than two-thirds of the variation in purchase intention.

These results support the Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999), which emphasizes trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness as critical determinants of marketing

communication effectiveness. Influencers who are perceived as credible are more likely to be trusted by their audience, thereby enhancing purchase intention. Moreover, influencers' attractiveness helps foster emotional connections with audiences, reinforcing positive attitudes toward endorsed products.

This study aligns with prior findings by Ki & Kim (2019), who found that influencer credibility strongly impacts consumer attitudes and purchase intention, and Lou & Yuan (2019), who emphasized trust as a key mediator in influencer effectiveness. Similarly, Djafarova & Trofimenko (2019) confirmed that attractiveness and authenticity in influencer content positively affect purchase intentions, especially among younger demographics.

However, contrasting evidence has been found in studies such as Hudders et al. (2021), which suggested that overtly commercialized influencer promotions may reduce effectiveness. Interestingly, in this study, students maintained strong purchase intentions despite commercial elements, likely due to social proximity and parasocial relationships with influencers considered as lifestyle role models.

This suggests that student consumers, as part of the younger generation, are more responsive to social media-based marketing than conventional advertising. This is consistent with De Veirman, Hudders, & Nelson (2019), who showed that young audiences rely heavily on influencers for purchasing decisions in lifestyle-related products.

Overall, this study provides empirical support for the pivotal role of influencer credibility dimensions in shaping purchase intention, while highlighting opportunities for future research to explore additional variables such as authenticity, interactivity, and parasocial relationships.

5. Conclusions

This research demonstrates that influencer marketing exerts a strong and significant influence on students' intention to purchase skincare products. The simple linear regression analysis indicates that 68.5% of the variation in purchase intention can be explained by influencer marketing, while the remaining 31.5% is attributable to other factors beyond the proposed model. These findings reinforce the Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999), which highlights the importance of trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness as key attributes determining an influencer's ability to shape consumer behavior. The results also align with earlier studies (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Ki & Kim, 2019), confirming that influencer credibility and personal appeal significantly strengthen purchase intention, particularly in the skincare sector.

In light of these results, several practical and academic implications can be drawn. For practitioners, especially within the skincare industry, it is crucial to collaborate with influencers who exhibit high credibility, expertise, and positive personal image, as these dimensions directly affect consumer decisions and enhance campaign effectiveness. From a research perspective, future studies are encouraged to integrate additional variables such as brand perception, product quality, price sensitivity, and psychological factors, while employing advanced analytical techniques like multiple regression or structural equation modeling (SEM) for richer insights. Moreover, considering that this study was limited to a sample of 100 university students, subsequent research should involve larger and more diverse populations to improve the external validity and generalizability of the findings.

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