

## **The Effect of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention of Beauty Products among TikTok Users in the Special Region of Yogyakarta through Trust as a Mediator**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the effect of influencer credibility on the purchase intention of beauty products among TikTok users in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, with trust as a mediating variable. In the current digital era, influencer marketing has become an effective strategy to shape consumer decision-making, particularly in the beauty sector. A quantitative approach was employed in this research, using a non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling. A total of 240 respondents, who are active TikTok users and have viewed promotional content related to beauty products by influencers in the region, were selected as participants. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS) through the SmartPLS software. The findings indicate that influencer expertise and physical attractiveness have a direct influence on purchase intention, while reliability does not demonstrate a direct effect. However, trust was found to significantly mediate the relationship between both reliability and expertise with purchase intention. In contrast, physical attractiveness does not influence trust, resulting in an insignificant mediation effect. These results emphasize the importance of establishing trust through credibility elements such as reliability and expertise, rather than relying solely on visual appeal. This study offers strategic implications for marketers in selecting and managing influencer collaborations to enhance the effectiveness of beauty product promotions on digital platforms like TikTok.

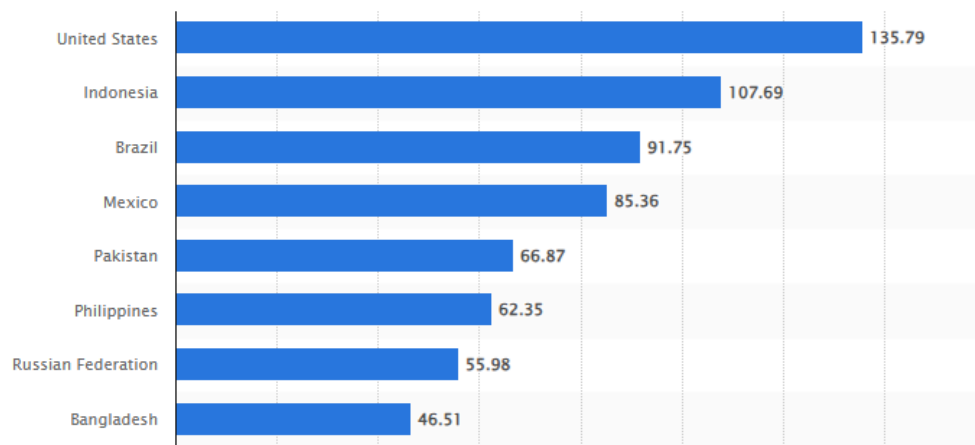
**Keywords:** Influencer, Influencer Credibility, Trust, Purchase Intention, TikTok, Beauty Products.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

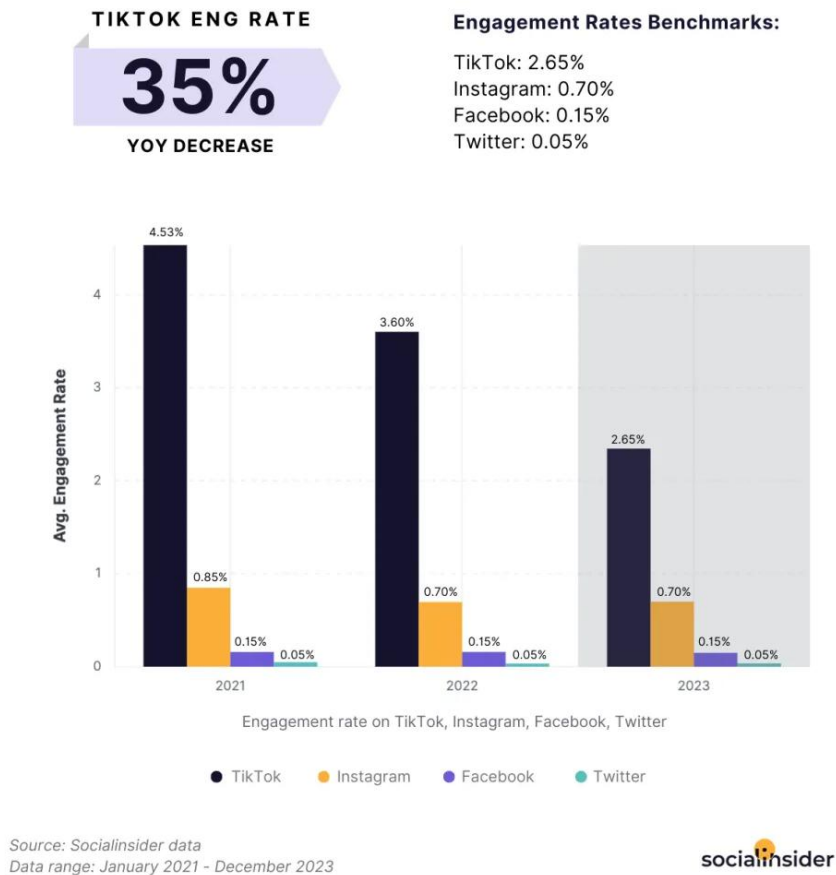
In today's digital era, social media has become an inseparable part of people's daily lives. Data from We Are Social (2025) shows that the number of social media users in Indonesia reached 185.3 million people in 2024, accounting for around 66.5% of the total population. The rapid development of social media has led to intense competition on these platforms, as well as changes in consumer behavior, making consumers increasingly selective in choosing products (Nofal et al., 2022). This occurs because social media not only facilitates marketers in reaching a wider audience but also provides consumers with greater access to a variety of product options and more abundant information (Nurhadi et al., 2024). In this regard, marketers must be careful in selecting the most appropriate social media platform, ensuring that their marketing messages can be delivered more effectively and can optimally drive purchase intention.

One of the social media platforms experiencing rapid growth in Indonesia is TikTok. This platform has become the most downloaded application globally, with Indonesia ranking as the second-largest user after the United States, reaching 107.6 million users (Statista, 2025). TikTok users in Indonesia are predominantly located on the island of Java, accounting for 45% of the users, while the remainder is spread across various other regions (Victory, 2025). Among the provinces on Java Island, the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) is among the top five locations with the highest number of TikTok users, following Jakarta, East Java, West Java, and Central Java. This distribution is influenced by the high population density on Java and better internet access compared to other regions (Anggraini et al., 2023).



**Figure 1. The Largest TikTok User Countries in 2025**  
(Statista, 2025)

The frequency of TikTok usage also shows a significant trend, complementing the platform's dominance in Indonesia. Data from We Are Social (2025) further confirms that TikTok is the most frequently accessed platform among social media users in the country. On average, active social media users in Indonesia spend 38 hours and 26 minutes per month on TikTok. This figure surpasses YouTube (31 hours and 28 minutes) and WhatsApp (26 hours and 13 minutes), which rank second and third respectively. TikTok's high popularity indicates that users spend more time on this platform compared to others, making it one of the most effective places for marketers to reach their target audience and optimally influence purchase intentions among potential consumers.



**Figure 2. Social Media Engagement Rates in 2023**  
(Socialinsider, 2024)

Beyond its broad reach, user engagement is also a crucial factor in fostering consumer purchase intentions. The higher the engagement, the greater the likelihood that advertisements or promotions will capture attention and influence purchasing decisions (Zheng et al., 2022). TikTok excels in this area, offering higher engagement rates compared to other social media platforms. According to data from Socialinsider (2024), TikTok recorded an average engagement rate per post of 2.65% in 2023, meaning each post attracted interaction from 2.65% of the total audience who viewed the content. Although this figure represents a 35% decrease from the previous year, it remains significantly higher than Instagram, which ranked second with an average engagement rate of only 0.70%. This fact demonstrates that TikTok continues to be the most effective platform for marketers to build interactions with their audiences and enhance the chances of converting engagement into actual purchases.

Along with the development of TikTok in recent years, the beauty industry in Indonesia has also experienced rapid growth, driven by the presence of this digital platform. According to INSG.co (2024), this industry ranks first as the most popular content category created on social media. Data from the Association of Indonesian Cosmetic Companies and Associations recorded that the beauty industry grew by 21.9% in 2023, with the number of beauty companies increasing

from 913 to 1,010 (Supriyatna, 2023). One of the main factors driving this growth is the rise of local beauty brands utilizing TikTok as an effective marketing tool. Furthermore, KOL.id (2025) reported that the beauty category has the highest purchase rate on TikTok, with the majority of purchased products coming from local brands. This is supported by data from iPrice (2023), which shows that the five most-watched local beauty brands on TikTok are Somethinc, Wardah, Avoskin, Emina, and Lacoco. This phenomenon indicates that TikTok plays a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and enhancing the competitiveness of beauty brands in the digital market. With increasingly fierce competition, marketers need to design the right strategies to attract consumer attention and drive purchase intentions for their products.

Influencer marketing has become one of the most popular digital marketing strategies in Indonesia, particularly on social media platforms like TikTok. According to data from INSG.co (2024), over 91% of brands in Indonesia expected an increase in their marketing budgets in 2022, with a strong focus on influencer marketing. This trend shows a consistent increase in investment in influencer marketing, where brands in Indonesia investing more than 30% of their marketing budgets in influencer marketing rose by 19%, from 10% in 2020 to 29% in 2022. This aligns with global trends, where approximately 68% of global brands in 2022 stated they would invest more of their marketing budgets in influencer marketing. This increase demonstrates that influencer-based marketing strategies have become a primary approach for brands to reach consumers more effectively and extensively.

The success of influencer marketing is evident in its impact on consumer purchase intention. Purchase intention refers to an individual's tendency to buy a product based on prior considerations (Hakim & Indarwati, 2022). In Indonesia, 62% of online consumers report being influenced by influencer recommendations before making a purchase (Zukhrufani & Zakiy, 2019). Consumers today place greater trust in authentic reviews and the natural communication style of influencers compared to traditional advertisements (Belanche et al., 2021; Lestari et al., 2023). From a marketing perspective, influencer marketing has also proven to be more profitable than conventional advertising. This strategy can generate up to eleven times higher return on investment (Ahmad, 2018). Collaborating with influencers is considered effective in building closeness, authentic brand image, and enhancing consumer trust and purchase intention (Gomes et al., 2022; Johnstone & Lindh, 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Credibility is the key factor in influencer marketing that plays a crucial role in influencing consumers' purchase intentions (Kemeç & Yüksel, 2021). Chu & Kamal (2008) stated that credibility is a vital factor determining an influencer's effectiveness in influencing consumer decisions. Influencer credibility consists of three dimensions: physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise (Ohanian, 1990). Research by Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024) on TikTok users in Spain found that physical attractiveness, reliability, and expertise are independent variables that significantly impact influencer credibility. Influencers perceived as physically attractive, trustworthy, and skilled in a particular field are more likely to foster consumers' purchase intentions. This means that the higher an influencer's credibility, the greater their influence in driving consumers' purchasing decisions.

Physical attractiveness is the first variable that builds an influencer's credibility. Physical attractiveness refers to a person's ability to capture attention through aesthetic visual appearance, creating a positive impression on the audience (Ohanian, 1990). According to Sokolova & Kefi (2020), influencers with high physical attractiveness tend to be more effective in capturing their followers' interest, as audiences often associate attractive appearances with higher quality. Moreover, followers of highly attractive influencers are more likely to imitate their lifestyle and product choices, thus increasing their motivation to purchase promoted products and boosting purchase intentions (H. Kim & Park, 2023). In the beauty industry, an influencer's physical attractiveness becomes a crucial factor because consumers are more drawn to products introduced by individuals whose appearances align with current beauty trends or standards (Xie et al., 2023).

In addition to physical attractiveness, credibility is also influenced by an influencer's reliability. Reliability describes the extent to which an influencer can be relied upon to deliver accurate, consistent, and honest information over time (Ohanian, 1990). Reliability plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions of a product. According to Kim and Kim (2021), influencers perceived as trustworthy are capable of reinforcing a positive brand image, which in turn encourages consumers to make a purchase. Moreover, influencer trustworthiness is associated with the objectivity in delivering information, which strengthens audience confidence in the recommendations provided. Amidst the intense competition in Indonesia's beauty industry, marketers must exercise caution in selecting influencers who not only possess a large follower base but also maintain a transparent track record and a good reputation. Consumers are more likely to purchase products promoted by influencers who are known for their transparency and honesty in endorsing products or services.

The final variable influencing influencer credibility is expertise. Expertise refers to the influencer's level of knowledge and skills within a particular field, positioning them as a competent and credible source of information (Ohanian, 1990). Influencers who possess a high degree of expertise are better able to persuade consumers, particularly when the promoted product aligns with their area of specialization. Consumers are more inclined to trust information from individuals perceived to have deep insights, thus reducing their skepticism towards marketing messages. Expertise also enables influencers to deliver more detailed and experience-based reviews, thereby strengthening audience confidence in choosing a product and directly contributing to an increase in purchase intention (Ki et al., 2020).

Several previous studies have examined the influence of each influencer credibility variable—namely physical attractiveness, reliability, and expertise—on consumer purchase intention. For instance, research by Rathnayake and Lakshika (2022) as well as Widyanto and Agusti (Widyanto & Agusti, 2020) found that an influencer's physical attractiveness has a direct impact on consumer purchase intention. However, differing results were reported by Wong and Wei (2023), who stated that physical attractiveness does not have a significant influence on purchase intention. Further studies on the influence of influencer reliability on purchase intention, conducted by Al-Mu'ani et al. (2023) and Lou and Yuan (2019), confirmed that influencer reliability directly affects purchase intention. Conversely, a study by Venciute et al. (2023) found

that reliability did not significantly influence consumer purchasing behavior. Research on the effect of influencer expertise on purchase intention has also been conducted by Al-Mu'ani et al. (2023), who found that expertise significantly affects purchase intention. However, these findings contradict those of Widyanto and Agusti (2020), who reported that influencer expertise does not impact consumer purchase intention.

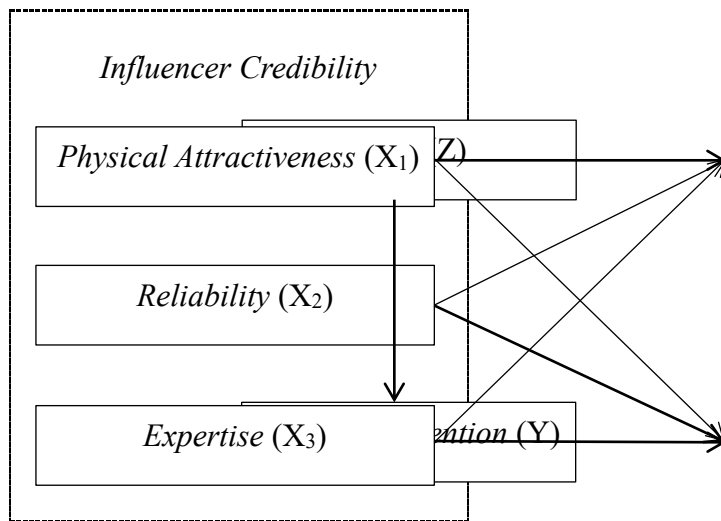
Due to the inconsistencies or gaps identified in previous research regarding the direct effect of each credibility variable on purchase intention, this study incorporates trust as a mediating variable. According to Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002), trust reflects the degree of confidence and willingness of the audience to rely on information provided by an individual. Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024) argued that followers' trust in influencers creates the perception of a mutually beneficial relationship, which ultimately increases their intention to purchase products recommended by influencers. Findings by Khan (2023) show that consumer trust serves as a mediating variable between influencer credibility and purchase intention. These findings align with the research conducted by Kim and Kim (2021), who emphasized that trust mediates the relationship between sources of influencer credibility, such as attractiveness and expertise, and purchase intention. This study also highlights that trust significantly contributes to consumer purchasing decisions. Without the presence of trust, the influence of credibility-building variables would not fully succeed in encouraging consumers to accept recommendations and make purchases.

Based on the described phenomena and research gaps, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how influencer credibility affects beauty product purchase intentions on TikTok. Given TikTok's dominance as the primary platform for the beauty industry in Indonesia, particularly in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, and the high level of user engagement, it is crucial for marketers to understand the factors that enhance influencer marketing effectiveness. This study aims to examine the direct effects of physical attractiveness, reliability, and expertise on purchase intention; the direct effects of physical attractiveness, reliability, and expertise on trust; and the direct effect of trust on purchase intention. Additionally, it investigates whether trust mediates the relationship between each of the credibility variables—physical attractiveness, reliability, and expertise—and purchase intention.

## **Conceptual Model And Hypothesis Development**

### **H1: Physical attractiveness has a direct effect on purchase intention**

Physical attractiveness influences consumers' purchase intention by drawing attention and creating positive perceptions of product quality (Ohanian, 1990; Rathnayake & Lakshika, 2022). Studies by Widyanto & Agusti (2020) support this view, suggesting that influencers' looks shape purchasing motivation. However, conflicting findings by Lou & Yuan (2019) and Wong & Wei (2023) show no significant direct effect, indicating that attractiveness may work through other mediators such as trust.



**Figure 3. Conceptual Framework**

**H2: Reliability has a direct effect on purchase intention**

Influencers perceived as reliable—honest and consistent—positively affect consumers' purchase intention (Al-Mu’ani et al., 2023) Rathnayake & Lakshika, 2022). This aligns with Lou & Yuan (2019), who highlight reliability as key to influencing buying decisions. Yet, Widyanto & Agusti (2020) found no significant direct relationship. Ohanian (1990) emphasized that trust in reliable influencers leads to safer and more confident purchases.

**H3: Expertise has a direct effect on purchase intention**

Expertise enhances an influencer’s credibility, increasing the likelihood of consumer purchase (Al-Mu’ani et al., 2023; Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024). Rathnayake & Lakshika (2022) also found expertise had a significant effect. However, Lou & Yuan (2019) and Widyanto & Agusti (2020) reported no direct effect. According to Venciute et al. (2023), consumers respond better to influencers with industry knowledge and experience, which shapes perceived relevance and credibility.

**H4: Physical attractiveness has a direct effect on trust**

Attractive influencers are often seen as more credible and professional, which can boost trust (Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Lou & Yuan (2019) support this connection. However, Kim & Kim (2021) argue physical appeal alone may not be sufficient, as trust is more strongly influenced by consistency, expertise, and transparency in communication.

**H5: Reliability has a direct effect on trust**

Reliability is a critical predictor of trust (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024). Consistent, transparent communication fosters strong audience relationships. Misleading or biased content, on the other hand, can significantly damage trust over time.

**H6: Expertise has a direct effect on trust**

Influencers with high expertise are more likely to be trusted due to their deep product or industry knowledge (Kim & Kim, 2021; Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024). However, Lou & Yuan (2019) and Khan (2023) found that trust also depends on how transparently expertise is communicated.

**H7: Trust has a direct effect on purchase intention**

Trust significantly drives purchase intention by reducing consumer uncertainty. Trusted influencers are perceived as more ethical and competent, making consumers more confident in their buying decisions (Kim & Kim, 2021).

**H8: Physical attractiveness affects purchase intention through trust**

Attractiveness positively influences trust, which then mediates its impact on purchase intention (Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024; Khan, 2023). Visual appeal captures attention and fosters initial trust, which is essential for converting admiration into purchasing behavior.

**H9: Reliability affects purchase intention through trust**

Reliable influencers earn trust, which then leads to increased purchase intention (Khan, 2023; Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024). Trust acts as a bridge between reliability and consumer behavior by ensuring that recommendations are seen as credible and safe to follow.

**H10: Expertise affects purchase intention through trust**

Expertise influences purchase intention indirectly through trust (Kim & Kim, 2021). Consumers are more likely to follow product recommendations from influencers with perceived knowledge. However, Khan (2023) notes that without transparency or audience connection, expertise alone may not result in trust or purchases.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a quantitative approach, using data collection through a closed-ended questionnaire containing questions related to physical attractiveness, reliability, expertise, trust, and purchase intention. The questionnaire was distributed to TikTok users residing in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, which was selected as the unit of analysis. Data collection was conducted using a one-shot (cross-sectional) research design during the period from January to March 2025. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with a total of 240 respondents. The respondent criteria included: (1) residing in the Region of Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta City, Sleman, Bantul, Gunungkidul, and Kulonprogo Regencies), (2) at least 14 years old, in accordance with TikTok's user age policy in Indonesia, (3) following influencers on TikTok, and (4) having seen beauty product content or promotions from influencers at least once.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Quantitative Analysis**



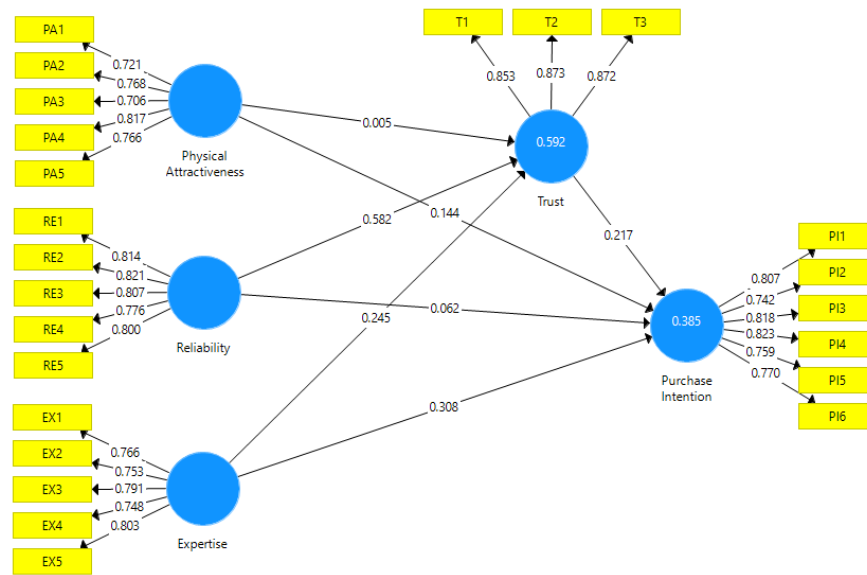


Figure 4. Algorithm Results

#### Outer Model (Measurement Model)

Validity was assessed using convergent validity and discriminant validity. All indicators had outer loading values  $> 0.70$  and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values  $> 0.50$ , thereby meeting the criteria for convergent validity. Discriminant validity was also confirmed, as each indicator had the highest cross-loading on its respective construct. Reliability was tested using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, all of which exceeded 0.70, indicating that all constructs are reliable.

Table 1. Validity & Reliability

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Physical Attractiveness</i>	Attractive	0,721	0,572	0,870	0,812
	Classy	0,768			
	Handsome/Beautiful	0,706			
	Elegant	0,817			
	Sexy	0,766			
<i>Realibility</i>	Reliabel	0,814	0,646	0,901	0,863
	Honest	0,821			
	Loyal	0,807			
	Sincere	0,776			
	Faithful	0,800			
<i>Expertise</i>	Expert	0,766	0,597	0,881	0,832
	Experienced	0,753			
	Knowledgeable	0,791			
	Qualified	0,748			
	Skilled	0,803			
<i>Trust</i>	Fulfills their commitments	0,853	0,750	0,900	0,833

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Purchase Intention</i>	Provides honest informations	0,873	0,619	0,907	0,877
	Promises can be trusted	0,872			
	Desire to buy	0,807			
	Consider to buy	0,742			
	Potential to buy	0,818			
	Desire to buy next time	0,823			
	Desire to buy when it's needed	0,759			
	Urge to recommed	0,770			

**Table 2. Cross Loadings**

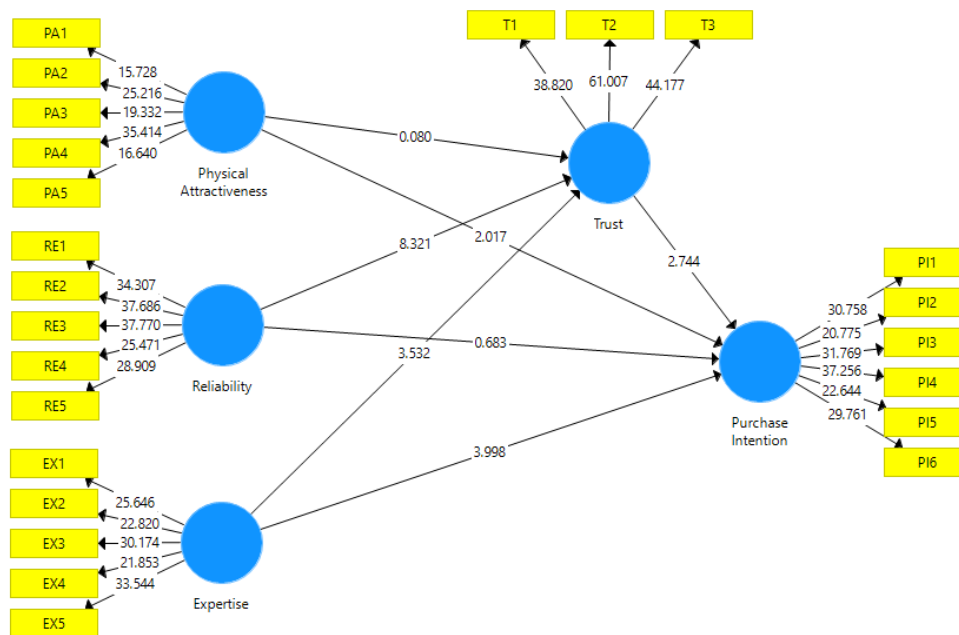
Indicator	<i>Physical Attractiveness</i>	<i>Reliability</i>	<i>Expertise</i>	<i>Trust</i>	<i>Purchase Intention</i>
PA1	<b>0,721</b>	0,386	0,393	0,319	0,344
PA2	<b>0,768</b>	0,422	0,441	0,371	0,337
PA3	<b>0,706</b>	0,399	0,456	0,337	0,372
PA4	<b>0,817</b>	0,429	0,456	0,373	0,355
PA5	<b>0,766</b>	0,442	0,374	0,346	0,295
RE1	0,484	<b>0,814</b>	0,608	0,599	0,493
RE2	0,430	<b>0,821</b>	0,511	0,596	0,365
RE3	0,499	<b>0,807</b>	0,540	0,614	0,396
RE4	0,400	<b>0,776</b>	0,504	0,574	0,365
RE5	0,392	<b>0,800</b>	0,492	0,616	0,411
EX1	0,444	0,414	<b>0,766</b>	0,327	0,366
EX2	0,442	0,512	<b>0,753</b>	0,483	0,383
EX3	0,384	0,563	<b>0,791</b>	0,549	0,423
EX4	0,444	0,507	<b>0,748</b>	0,495	0,493
EX5	0,463	0,533	<b>0,803</b>	0,542	0,497
T1	0,364	0,632	0,534	<b>0,853</b>	0,463
T2	0,414	0,675	0,560	<b>0,873</b>	0,438
T3	0,423	0,633	0,551	<b>0,872</b>	0,463
PI1	0,392	0,414	0,443	0,413	<b>0,807</b>
PI2	0,305	0,363	0,423	0,400	<b>0,742</b>
PI3	0,346	0,423	0,457	0,436	<b>0,818</b>
PI4	0,389	0,423	0,445	0,469	<b>0,823</b>
PI5	0,317	0,340	0,431	0,366	<b>0,759</b>
PI6	0,377	0,424	0,480	0,390	<b>0,770</b>

### ***Inner Model (Structural Model)***

The structural model was evaluated using R-Square and Q-Square values. The R-Square results show that the exogenous constructs explain 38.5% of the variability in purchase intention and 59.2% of the variability in trust. Meanwhile, the Q-Square values were 0.232 and 0.433 respectively, indicating that the model has good predictive relevance.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

Parameter estimation plays a crucial role in research by providing a deeper understanding of the relationships between the variables being tested. Hypothesis testing is conducted by assessing the probability and statistical significance of each variable relationship. In this study, the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) used is 5%, which corresponds to a p-value of 0.05. The hypothesis testing process was conducted using the SmartPLS 3.0 software with the bootstrapping method. This method allows researchers to evaluate the significance of path coefficients by calculating t-statistics and p-values. The analysis results provide insights into how independent variables influence the dependent variable, as illustrated in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 5. Bootstrapping Results**

Table 3 presents the results of the direct relationship testing between the independent variables—physical attractiveness, reliability, expertise, and trust—and the dependent variable in this study, which is purchase intention.

**Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results (Direct Effect)**

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T Statistics ( O/STDEV )</i>	<i>P- Values</i>	<i>Ket.</i>
<i>Physical Attractiveness -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0,144	0,150	0,071	2,017	<b>0,044</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>Reliability -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0,062	0,058	0,091	0,683	<b>0,495</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>Expertise -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0,308	0,304	0,077	3,998	<b>0,000</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>Physical Attractiveness -&gt; Trust</i>	0,005	0,004	0,057	0,080	<b>0,936</b>	<b>Rijected</b>
<i>Reliability -&gt; Trust</i>	0,582	0,583	0,070	8,321	<b>0,000</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>Expertise -&gt; Trust</i>	0,245	0,245	0,069	3,532	<b>0,000</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
<i>Trust -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0,217	0,220	0,079	2,744	<b>0,006</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Table 4 below displays the results of the indirect effect analysis to test whether trust serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between the independent variables—physical attractiveness, reliability, and expertise—and purchase intention.

**Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results (Indirect Effect)**

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T Statistics ( O/STDEV )</i>	<i>P- Values</i>	<i>Ket.</i>
<i>Physical Attractiveness -&gt; Trust -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0,001	0,001	0,013	0,075	<b>0,940</b>	<b>Rijected</b>
<i>Reliability -&gt; Trust -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0,126	0,128	0,049	2,568	<b>0,011</b>	<b>Rijected</b>
<i>Expertise -&gt; Trust -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0,053	0,054	0,026	2,085	<b>0,038</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

**Physical Attractiveness Has a Direct Influence on Purchase Intention**

Based on the hypothesis testing results, this study demonstrates that physical attractiveness has a significant direct influence on purchase intention. This aligns with previous research (Rathnayake & Laksita, 2022; Widyanto & Agusti, 2020), which emphasizes that an influencer's physical appearance plays a crucial role in capturing attention and enhancing message persuasiveness. According to Ohanian's (1990) source credibility theory, physical attractiveness is a key element that increases message acceptance by audiences. Kim and Kim (2021) also highlight the importance of visual appeal in marketing communication, noting that attractive visuals trigger initial engagement and foster deeper consumer involvement. Influencers with high physical appeal are more capable of building emotional bonds with their audiences, which can translate into stronger purchase intentions. This is reinforced by Sokolova and Kefi (2020), who assert that emotional attachment formed through physical attractiveness can increase identification with influencers and lead to higher likelihoods of product adoption. Furthermore, in industries like beauty and fashion, the match-up between an influencer's appearance and the brand image enhances credibility and consumer trust. Rathnayake and Laksita (2022)

### **Reliability Does Not Have a Direct Influence on Purchase Intention**

The results indicate that reliability does not directly influence purchase intention, contrasting with findings by Al'Muaini et al. (2023) and Lou and Yuan (2019), but aligning with Widyanto and Agusti (2020). This may be due to consumers' increasing awareness of the promotional nature of influencer content, leading to skepticism toward recommendations, even from those perceived as reliable. Ohanian (1990) also noted that reliability alone does not always significantly affect purchasing behavior. On platforms like TikTok, where content is highly visual and trend-driven, consumers tend to prioritize emotional appeal, viral content, and perceived authenticity over consistent information delivery. Venciute et al. (2023) support this, emphasizing that followers are more responsive to experiential and visually engaging content than to credibility markers like reliability. In the beauty industry, for example, transformation videos and social proof such as likes or peer testimonials often carry more weight than influencer trustworthiness. Thus, while reliability is valuable for building long-term audience trust, it is not a primary driver of immediate purchase intention in influencer marketing.

### **Expertise Has a Direct Influence on Purchase Intention**

This study finds that expertise significantly influences purchase intention, in line with findings by Rathnayake and Laksita (2022) and Al-Mu'ani et al. (2023), who emphasize that knowledgeable influencers are more persuasive than those lacking experience. Supported by Hovland et al. (1953) and Ohanian (1991), expertise is a key component of source credibility, as audiences are more likely to trust and act on information from competent sources. On platforms like TikTok, especially in beauty marketing, influencers with proven expertise—such as dermatologists or experienced makeup artists—are more effective in shaping consumer behavior than general content creators. These influencers not only promote products but also educate their audiences, increasing consumer confidence and purchase likelihood. As shown by Hughes et al.

(2019), informative content enhances awareness and trust, making expertise a critical factor for brands aiming to improve the impact of their influencer marketing strategies.

### **Physical Attractiveness Does Not Have a Direct Impact on Trust**

The results show that physical attractiveness does not directly influence consumer trust, contradicting Lou & Yuan (2019) but aligning with Kim & Kim (2021). While attractive influencers may draw attention and engagement, especially on platforms like TikTok, this does not guarantee trust—particularly if they lack relevant expertise. Trust is built through consistent, honest, and valuable interactions over time, not just through visual appeal. Influencers who focus solely on appearance without delivering meaningful, credible content often fail to establish lasting trust. As Dipboye et al. (1976) noted, trust stems from repeated, transparent communication rather than instant impressions. For brands, especially in the beauty industry, relying solely on physical attractiveness is insufficient; selecting influencers with both credibility and domain expertise is key to fostering genuine consumer trust.

### **Reliability Has a Direct Impact on Trust**

This study finds that reliability significantly influences consumer trust, supporting Lou & Yuan (2019) and reinforcing the idea that consistent, honest communication builds credibility. In influencer marketing, particularly on platforms like TikTok, audiences are more likely to trust influencers who share transparent, accurate, and experience-based content (Casaló et al., 2020; Khan, 2023). Reliability fosters long-term trust by creating stable, two-way relationships rather than superficial endorsements. As emphasized by Ohanian (1990) and Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024), reliability is a core element of source credibility, essential for establishing audience confidence. Influencers who consistently provide clear, objective information and engage authentically are better positioned to build trust and enhance the impact of brand messaging. Thus, brands should prioritize collaboration with influencers known for their integrity and transparency to strengthen consumer trust.

### **Expertise Has a Direct Impact on Trust**

The study finds that expertise significantly influences consumer trust, aligning with Kim & Kim (2021), who stated that higher expertise leads to greater audience confidence. Influencers with deep product or industry knowledge are perceived as more credible and trustworthy (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). On platforms like TikTok, audiences tend to trust influencers who provide detailed, experience-based insights rather than generic promotions. According to Al-Mu'ani et al. (2023), credibility built on expertise positively shapes consumer attitudes and enhances message reception. When influencers explain product benefits clearly and share personal experiences, they offer added value that fosters trust. Hovland et al. (1953) also emphasized that expertise increases message acceptance, especially when backed by education or professional

experience. Thus, influencers with proven knowledge not only build stronger trust but also encourage long-term consumer relationships and brand loyalty.

### **Trust Has a Direct Effect on Purchase Intention**

This study confirms that trust has a direct effect on purchase intention, supporting findings by Lou & Yuan (2019), Kim & Kim (2021), Khan (2023), and Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024). Trust reduces uncertainty in consumer decision-making, making influencer recommendations feel more valid and reliable. It is built through consistent, transparent interactions and plays a key role in shaping positive product perceptions, follower loyalty, and willingness to act (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In beauty product marketing—where risks like skin reactions or financial loss exist—trust becomes a psychological bridge that enhances confidence in purchase decisions. Influencers who foster strong trust-based relationships not only drive higher purchase intentions but also create lasting engagement and brand loyalty among their followers.

### **Physical Attractiveness Does Not Affect Purchase Intention through Trust as a Mediating Variable**

This study finds that physical attractiveness does not influence purchase intention through trust as a mediating variable. However, attractiveness can directly affect purchase intention, suggesting that consumers may be drawn to products endorsed by attractive influencers. Despite this direct effect, physical attractiveness does not significantly foster trust. As supported by Kim & Kim (2021), while it captures attention and engagement, attractiveness alone is insufficient to build strong trust. Trust is more closely linked to credibility factors such as expertise and transparency. The findings also show that on platforms like TikTok, trust is better established through honest communication, integrity, and consistent value-added content. Echoing Sokolova & Kefi (2020), trust is driven more by perceived authenticity and expertise than by appearance. Therefore, although physical attractiveness may enhance initial appeal, it must be complemented by credible and informative engagement to influence consumer behavior meaningfully. Brands are advised to prioritize influencers who combine visual appeal with authenticity, reliability, and product knowledge to maximize the impact of marketing campaigns.

### **Reliability Affects Purchase Intention through Trust as a Mediating Variable**

This study finds that reliability significantly influences purchase intention indirectly through trust, although no direct effect was observed. Trust serves as a key mediating variable, reinforcing the role of reliability in driving consumer behavior. These results are consistent with prior research (Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024; Khan, 2023), which shows that reliable influencers—those who consistently share honest and accurate information—foster trust that leads to increased purchase intention. Trust built from perceived reliability reduces uncertainty and enhances consumers' psychological comfort, making them more receptive to influencer recommendations. As noted by Octaviani & Selamat (2024), consumers are more likely to act on product endorsements when they believe the influencer is trustworthy. On platforms like TikTok, fostering long-term engagement through consistent interaction and authentic content is essential for building reliability and

strengthening the influencer-audience relationship. This trust, in turn, significantly enhances the likelihood of purchase.

### **Expertise Affects Purchase Intention through Trust as a Mediating Variable**

This study reveals that expertise significantly influences purchase intention through trust as a mediating variable. Consistent with findings by Kim & Kim (2021) and Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024), an influencer's expertise enhances their credibility, which in turn fosters trust—an essential precursor to consumer purchase behavior. Expertise involves not only communication skills but also a deep understanding of the product, which helps assure consumers that recommendations are authentic and not solely profit-driven. Trust formed from perceived expertise provides consumers with a sense of confidence and intellectual support in decision-making. As suggested by Lou & Yuan (2019), delivering educational, evidence-based content and aligning recommendations with personal values enhances perceived authenticity. Building trust through expertise is a strategic, long-term effort that fosters stronger influencer-follower relationships and has a lasting impact on consumer behavior. These findings reinforce the idea that source credibility, particularly expertise, is central to effective influencer marketing.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that an influencer's physical attractiveness has a direct effect on purchase intention, but not through trust. In contrast, reliability does not directly influence purchase intention but plays a significant role through trust. An influencer's expertise impacts purchase intention both directly and indirectly through trust. Trust is proven to be a key mediating factor, strengthening the influence of reliability and expertise on purchase intention. Based on these findings, practitioners are advised to select influencers who demonstrate strong reliability and expertise relevant to the product domain, especially in the beauty industry. Transparent, educational content that actively engages the audience can foster trust and enhance promotional effectiveness. Future research is encouraged to include additional variables to improve the R-square value and explore potential moderating factors that may influence the relationships among variables. To enhance generalizability, studies should be expanded to different regions or consumer segments. Furthermore, this model could be tested in other sectors—such as fashion, food, health, and technology—to ensure relevance across various industries.

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