

Understanding doctor beauty influencers: how source credibility influences skincare purchase intention

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Abstract

The proliferation of beauty influencers' skincare information is frequently inauthentic and inaccurate, leading audiences to scrutinise the credibility of online content more than ever before. This study examines the impact of the trustworthiness of beauty influencer doctors on TikTok on skincare purchase intentions, both directly and via parasocial interactions. This research employed quantitative methodologies, administering surveys to 238 participants and utilising SEM PLS data analysis techniques. Overall, the variables of attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and parasocial interactions are proven to contribute to shaping the audience's purchase intention towards skincare products. However, there are differences in contribution. The findings indicated that trust positively affected purchasing intentions both directly and via parasocial interactions. Attractiveness necessitated mediation, while skill exerted a direct influence. These findings indicate that purchasing intentions are established rationally and that views regarding attitudes and normative beliefs are rational. Consequently, skincare marketers must identify which physicians, as beauty influencers, exhibit substantial trustworthiness and strong parasocial interactions to stimulate purchase intentions for skincare products.

Keywords: beauty influencer; credibility; parasocial interaction; purchase intention; skincare.

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Introduction

In an era when technology is deeply involved in daily life, the significant growth of internet users has also driven the number of social media users to keep rising. Of the total population in Indonesia, 284,438,900 people, as many as 229,428,417 people, or 80.66% of the total population, will be connected to the internet in 2025. The popular social media platform experiencing rapid audience growth at the moment is TikTok. TikTok is the most frequently used social media platform, with a total audience reaching 35.17% of the population in 2025 (APJII, 2025; Abdullah et al., 2024). In addition, globally, Indonesia ranks second in TikTok users with a total of 108 million active users, while the first position is occupied by the United States with 136 million users (Kemp, 2025). This demonstrates that, both nationally and globally, Indonesia has a highly active TikTok user base. TikTok offers accurate content recommendations, a robust algorithm, and ease of access, creating a comfortable and enjoyable user experience (Zhao & Wagner, 2023).

Milieu insight (2024) stated that 27% of Southeast Asians as a whole use TikTok to search for information, with Indonesia and Vietnam each reaching 37% and Thailand at 29%. Among respondents who rely on TikTok as a search engine, 56% consider it more useful than traditional search engines like Google. Furthermore, 87% of TikTok users who use it as a search engine have purchased, visited, or followed products based on what they saw on the app. The increasing number of customers using the internet and spending more time searching for information can influence their purchase intentions (Porturak & Softic, 2019). This phenomenon demonstrates a shift in people's preferences for media for information search, while also showing that TikTok not only functions as an entertainment platform but can also drive customer purchase intentions for products they discover through TikTok content.

TikTok audiences can find a lot of information on health, beauty tips, makeup, fashion, and even food recommendations (Herna, 2022). According to the TikTok Creative Center (2025) report, there are five top product subcategories based on popularity and exposure on TikTok as of October 2025. The skincare product category is in first place with a popularity of 175 million and an exposure level of 3 M. Followed by makeup and perfume with a popularity of 168 million and an exposure level of 3 M, men's tops with a popularity of 126 million and an exposure level of 726 million, women's tops with a popularity of 94 million and an exposure level of 483 million, and cell phone accessories with a popularity of 82 million and an exposure level of 556 million.

Many Indonesians are now aware of the need for self-care, leading to a growing demand for skincare and beauty products. A survey Populix (2022) found that 77% of Indonesians purchase skincare products at least once a month, with an average expenditure of IDR 250,000. This reflects a strong intention among Indonesians to purchase skincare products. During the purchasing process, many customers consider influencers' opinions before making a purchase (Kemeç & Fulya, 2021). Influencers are essentially ordinary individuals who gain popularity by becoming "online celebrities" through creating and sharing content in specific areas, such as health, travel, culinary, lifestyle, beauty, or fashion (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Influencers who frequently create and share content in the beauty sector are referred to as beauty influencers. Currently, approximately 133,000 Indonesian beauty creators are actively creating TikTok content (Salsa, 2025). The abundance of beauty product information from creators makes beauty influencers an important source.

Populix (2023) reported that 19% of Indonesians obtain information about skincare and beauty products from beauty influencers, while another 65% use social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to learn more about these products. The high level of involvement of beauty influencers and social media as a reference in product selection has led to an increasingly abundant amount of information available online. However, this abundance of information sources does not always align with the authenticity and accuracy of the information shared (Audrezet et al., 2020). According to a survey Accenture (2025), 38% of consumers have seen fake online product reviews in recent years, leading 59.9% to question the authenticity of online content more than before. This indicates a need for credible information sources to reduce doubts about review content and thus increase consumer purchase intention for the product.

Credibility is a crucial factor for influencers, influencing consumer purchase intentions (Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020). Companies can use influencers who are experts in their field to enhance audience trust (Yulianti & Keni, 2022). Observations of the TikTok app reveal that many influencers with professional backgrounds, particularly in the medical field, have amassed large followings. Notable examples include Kamila Jaidi, dokterdetektif, Doctor Zie, dokterkulitkucom, and Dr. Giovanni Abraham. These doctors are active in sharing educational skincare and beauty content while also engaging closely with their audiences. Kamila Jaidi, an aesthetic skincare and beauty specialist, founded H&H Skincare and Aesthetic Clinic and frequently shares skincare education, product promotions, and live broadcasts. She also actively responds to audience questions about skin conditions through comments and educational content. Similarly, Doctor Samira Farahnaz, known as dokterdetektif, reviews local and global skincare brands and raises audience awareness regarding ingredient accuracy by presenting laboratory test results.

Meanwhile, Doctor Yessica Tania (Doctor Zie), founder of the skincare brand Ziepotion, combines promotional and educational content by discussing skincare ingredients, skin concerns, and skincare tips while also interacting with audiences through comments and videos. Dr. Arthur Samuel Simon (dokterkulitkudotcom), a dermatologist, venereologist, and aesthetics specialist, founded the dokterkulitku clinic and the S DailyCare brand, sharing educational promotional content about skincare usage, ingredients, and skin problem treatments. In addition, Dr. Giovanni Abraham, a general practitioner and content creator, actively reviews local and global skincare products based on their ingredients and provides skincare tips while responding to audience questions in the comments section. These doctors act as beauty influencers on TikTok, which is a reference group of experts or specialists. This reference group helps consumers evaluate products and is expected to instil confidence because its

members have jobs, education, or experience relevant to the products being reviewed. Therefore, the groups to which consumers belong will influence their purchasing and consumption behaviour (Sumarwan, 2011).

In addition to the source's credibility, another factor that can motivate consumers to form purchase intention is parasocial interaction (Choi & Lee, 2019). Parasocial interaction is a pseudo-condition in which consumers imagine a real, mutually beneficial relationship with a public figure; when the figure delivers a message, the audience feels as if they are having a direct interaction (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Although in this era of social media, the audience can comment and the public figure can reply, the public figure cannot respond to all comments due to the volume, so the communication feels one-way. However, in reality, the public figure's opportunity and capacity to respond to or engage directly with the large number of audience responses are not balanced (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). This false sense of closeness fosters familiarity and trust, making the audience more receptive to product recommendations (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Emotional bonds are even slightly more influential than influencer credibility and attractiveness, as they are associated with stronger emotional attachment to purchase intention (Choi & Lee, 2019; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Therefore, when consumers have a parasocial interaction with an influencer who recommends a product, this apparent closeness can facilitate the formation of consumer purchase intention for that product (Lin et al. 2021).

Several previous studies have stated that the credibility of information sources and parasocial interactions influence purchase intentions (Angelica et al., 2020; Choi & Lee, 2019; Garg & Bakshi, 2024). However, several other studies have stated the opposite (Atta et al., 2025; Rahmi et al., 2017; Rungruangjit, 2022; Wijayanti et al., 2024) This is because consumers do not really care who recommends a product, but tend to care about information packaged in interesting content (Rosadi, 2024). Therefore, based on the inconsistent results of several previous studies regarding the influence of information sources' credibility on purchase intentions through parasocial interactions, and research specifically using doctors as beauty influencers is still rare, this study aims to examine the effect of the credibility of doctors as TikTok beauty influencers on skincare purchase intentions with parasocial interactions as a mediating variable.

Literature Review

Marketing Mix

According to Malau (2020), the marketing mix is the foundation of a marketing strategy model and a tool that companies can control to achieve their marketing objectives in the target market. The marketing mix has four main elements: product, price, place, and promotion (Kotler & Keller, 2009). A product is anything offered to the market for purchase, use, or consumption to meet consumer needs and desires. Therefore, the concept of a product refers not only to tangible goods but also includes services, individuals, places, organisations, ideas, technology, design, and various other forms of marketable value (Hasibuan et al., 2022). According to Bahri and Rosandy (2025), price is the value of a good or service expressed in monetary units. Kotler and Keller (2009) defined place as a bridge between producers and consumers, serving as a distribution channel and an activity for delivering products from providers to recipients. Promotion is any form of information or a series of ideas that helps inform customers about a product (Malau, 2020). According to Kotler et al. (2024) promotional mix includes advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion. In the context of this study, influencers are included in the promotional mix through advertising, which is understood as paid promotional communication by doctors, acting as beauty influencers on TikTok, in collaboration with certain skincare brands.

Theory of Reasoned Action

According to Fishbein dan Ajzen (1975), intention is a person's position on a scale of probability regarding whether they will perform a behaviour, based on their own beliefs and considerations. Intention has a causal relationship with belief, with two types of beliefs that form intention: beliefs about the consequences of performing or not performing a behaviour, and assessments of those

consequences. This is called attitude toward behaviour. In addition, there are beliefs about whether other people considered important to a person approve or disapprove of the behaviour, called normative beliefs. These beliefs can come from information sources such as reading books, watching television, and interacting with others, which ultimately form attitudes toward the behaviour and subjective norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Sarver, 1983). This theory assumes that there is a causal and reasoned sequence of beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviour. It also assumes that humans make decisions rationally, using available information cognitively to form intentions, and then behave accordingly (Sarver, 1983).

Source Credibility

According to Ohanian (1990), source credibility is the positive value of a communicator that impacts the message and its recipient. There are three main dimensions of source credibility: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. Attractiveness is the degree to which a person's physical appearance is perceived as attractive or aesthetically pleasing (Caballero & Pride, 1984). Expertise is defined as the perception of an endorser's ability, derived from knowledge, experience, and skill, to convey valid and reliable information (Mansour & Diab, 2016). Trustworthiness is a person's level of honesty and integrity, as reflected in the audience's confidence in the message conveyed by the communicator (Freeman & Chen, 2021).

Parasocial Interaction

The initial concept of parasocial interaction was put forward by Horton dan Wohl (1956) who defined it as a pseudo-relationship between an audience and a media figure that appears to be face-to-face and is characterised by the illusion of intimacy from a distance. Rubin et al. (1985) defined parasocial interaction as interpersonal involvement between media users and what they consume. Meanwhile, according to Hartmann et al. (2016), parasocial interaction is a one-sided perceptual process that occurs during media exposure to the individuals featured in that media. Based on the definitions presented, parasocial interaction is an individual's illusory relationship with a public figure in the media, wherein the individual experiences a sense of closeness and involvement, as if interacting directly with that figure.

Purchase Intention

According to Spears dan Singh (2004), purchase intention is a consumer's tendency to purchase, which serves as a predictor of actual behaviour towards a brand. Furthermore, purchase intention can be understood as a consumer's likelihood of purchasing a product after a process of consideration and evaluation (Kian et al., 2017). Also, purchase intention is defined as a person's likelihood of having something they desire, which is influenced by interest in the product, so that the consumer ultimately makes a purchase (Shwastika & Keni, 2021). Based on the various definitions presented, purchase intention is the likelihood that an individual will purchase a product of interest, leading to an actual purchase.

Relationship among Variables

According to Yudha (2023), when consumers perceive an influencer as interesting, they tend to feel connected to or want to have something in common with the influencer, making them more easily influenced by the message conveyed. Furthermore, attractiveness shapes first impressions, where appearance significantly influences relationship building (Choi & Lee, 2019), thereby increasing communication effectiveness (Mansour & Diab, 2016), which ultimately affects consumer purchase intentions (Rungruangjit, 2022).

H1: The attractiveness of doctors as beauty influencers has a positive impact on the skincare purchasing intentions of audiences who view the doctor's content.

Expertise positively affects audience attitudes when the video features the product implicitly (Choi & Lee, 2019). Lou and Yuan (2019) stated that when someone intends to purchase a beauty product, they are more receptive to beauty vloggers' opinions. This indicates that when influencers are perceived as authoritative in a particular field, their opinions can shape consumer perceptions. Influencers' expertise

leads to greater audience trust than that of influencers without expertise. Therefore, influencers should possess in-depth knowledge of a product to more easily gain consumer trust (Rungruangjit, 2022).

H2: Expertise of doctors as beauty influencers has a positive impact on the skincare purchasing intentions of audiences who view the doctor's content.

In digital marketing, trustworthiness is a key attribute of online information sources (Choi & Lee, 2019). Influencers with compelling opinions and high levels of trustworthiness are more effective in influencing consumer attitudes because they are more receptive to the message conveyed, compared to influencers with weak and untrustworthy opinions (Giffin, 1967; Ohanian, 1990).

H3: Trust in doctors as beauty influencers positively influences the skincare purchase intentions of audiences who view their content.

According to Kuswati et al. (2024), communication between audiences and influencers will be more effective when the influencer's attractiveness aligns with the audience's expectations. Social media users are often encouraged to build parasocial relationships with influencers they find attractive (Lin et al., 2021). Once a parasocial interaction is established, it creates an emotional bond, increasing feelings of closeness and positive attitudes toward the product, which then influences purchase intentions (Ata et al., 2022; Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Kemeç & Fulya, 2021; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Weismueller et al., 2020).

H4: The parasocial interaction experienced by the audience when watching the doctor's content as a beauty influencer mediates the relationship between the influence of attractiveness on skincare purchase intentions.

According to Lawrence dan Meivitananli (2023), when an influencer is perceived as having expertise in a field of interest to the audience, their opinion will influence the audience's perspective on that field. This interaction fosters a virtual relationship that strengthens the emotional connection between the audience and the influencer, ultimately shaping their behaviour. This makes parasocial interaction a crucial factor in increasing purchase intention (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Purnamaningsih et al., 2023; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

H5: The parasocial interaction experienced by the audience when watching the doctor's content as a beauty influencer mediates the relationship between the influence of expertise on skincare purchase intentions.

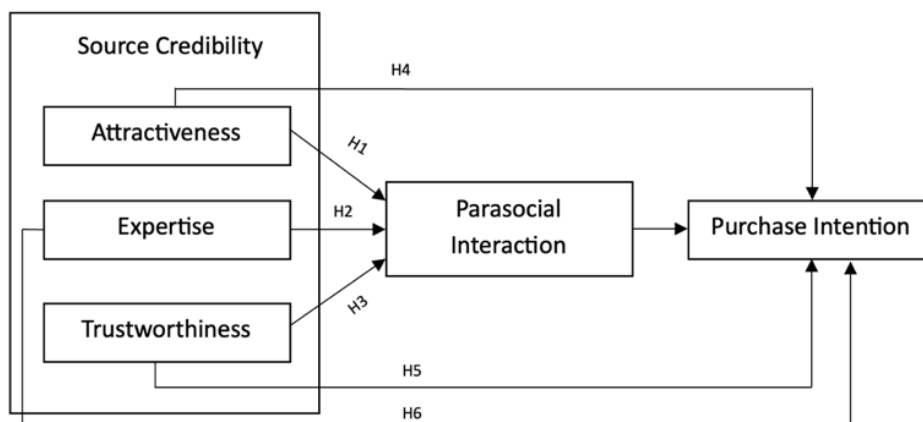
According to Lawrence dan Meivitananli (2023), influencers need to demonstrate their objectivity to avoid any attempts that appear manipulative to the audience, thereby increasing trust in influencer opinions. The credibility of the information source is an important factor in maintaining an influencer's authenticity, thereby increasing positive attitudes towards the product and influencing purchase intentions (Ata et al., 2022; Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). This is because influencers perceived as possessing credibility attributes (attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) tend to foster positive parasocial relationships, which ultimately increase emotional closeness and form a positive relationship between consumers and the promoted product (Yuan et al., 2016).

H6: The parasocial interaction experienced by the audience when watching the doctor's content as a beauty influencer mediates the relationship between the influence of trust on skincare purchase intentions.

Figure 1 presents the proposed research model, illustrating the hypothesized relationships among the study constructs.

Research Methods

This study uses quantitative data analysis with a causal research design, employing a survey method with questionnaires distributed online through TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, and X. The questionnaire items used in this study are presented in Appendix 1. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, with the following criteria: female gender, at least 18 years old, familiar with skincare products, and having seen skincare review content by doctors who are beauty influencers on TikTok. Statistical analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modelling approach based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) supported by SmartPLS software version 4.1.1.6.



Source: Author's work (2026)

Figure 1. Research Model

Results

Respondent Characteristics

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents were aged 18–28 years, accounting for 200 respondents (84.03%), followed by those aged 29–44 years with 37 respondents (15.55%). In terms of occupation, most respondents were college students (137, 57.56%), followed by employees (69, 28.99%) and entrepreneurs (22, 9.24%). These findings indicate that the respondents were predominantly young adults pursuing higher education, consistent with the study sample.

Regarding social media use, respondents could select more than one platform, indicating that many actively use multiple platforms. TikTok was the most frequently used platform, selected by 210 respondents (88.24%), followed by Instagram with 177 respondents (74.37%) and X with 114 respondents (47.90%). Regarding skincare purchasing behaviour, most respondents (121; 50.84%) purchased products every 2–3 months, followed by monthly purchases (83; 34.87%). Furthermore, the largest proportion of respondents reported spending between Rp100,000 and Rp300,000 per skincare purchase (110 respondents; 46.22%), suggesting that this price range represents the most common expenditure among the respondents.

Descriptive Statistics

Based on descriptive statistics for the variables of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, respondents tended to agree that the doctors they watched as beauty influencers on TikTok are attractive, expert, and trustworthy. In the parasocial interaction variable, respondents reported experiencing interactions that felt like they were directly interacting with the doctors as beauty influencers. However, respondents stated that they did not yet have a clear stance on meeting in person with the beauty influencer doctors they had watched. This is evidenced by 60 respondents who answered neutrally to the statement "I want to meet directly with the beauty influencer doctors that I watched." Furthermore, regarding the purchase intention variable, respondents reported having purchase intent. Thus, respondents who agreed they wanted to use and buy the products shown in the videos reported that the videos they watched helped them make purchasing decisions, and they would buy the products shown in the videos if similar products at the same price were available.

Tabel 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Description	Total	%
Age	18 – 28 years old	200	84.03%
	29 – 44 years old	37	15.55%
	45 – 60 years old	1	0.42%
	> 60 years old	0	0.00%
Occupation	Student	4	1.68%
	College student	137	57.56%
	Employee	69	28.99%
	Entrepreneur	22	9.24%
	Other	6	2.52%
Frequently used social media	TikTok	210	88.24%
	Instagram	177	74.37%
	X	114	47.90%
	Youtube	72	30.25%
	Other	1	0.42%
Frequently of skincare purchases	Every month	83	34.87%
	Every 2 - 3 months	121	50.84%
	Every 4 – 6 months	33	13.87%
	More than 6 months	1	0.42%
Expenses for every skincare purchase	Less than Rp50.000	1	0.42%
	Rp50.000 – Rp100.000	31	13.03%
	Rp100.000 – Rp300.000	110	46.22%
	Rp300.000 – Rp500.000	66	27.73%
	More than Rp500.000	30	12.61%

Source: Author’s work (2026)

Outer Model

The measurement model was evaluated for validity and reliability, with convergent validity assessed using loadings > 0.5 and AVEs > 0.5, and composite reliability assessed using composite reliability > 0.6. (Hair et al., 2017). Based on Table 2, the model has fulfilled convergent validity because the loading factor values on the constructs of attractiveness, trust, parasocial interaction, and purchase intention have obtained values above 0.5 or indicate that the statement items are valid (Hair et al., 2017), where all items within a construct are highly correlated and represent a coherent concept. The AVE value for each variable is above 0.5, except for the expertise variable, which achieved an AVE of 0.365. However, this was maintained because the AVE value for expertise in the second model measurement test was higher than in the first. Furthermore, all research variables have composite reliability values above 0.60, indicating that the items measuring attractiveness, expertise, trust, parasocial interaction, and purchase intention measure the same concept consistently. Next, an HTMT test was conducted to analyse differences between constructs. Based on the results of the HTMT test, the constructs of attractiveness, expertise, trust, parasocial interaction, and purchase intention yielded HTMT values ≤ 0.90, indicating that respondents consider each construct to measure a distinct concept and that all constructs meet the criteria for discriminant validity.

After conducting the outer model test, the inner model test was conducted to analyse the relationship between constructs. The inner model test is calculated and interpreted by examining R-squared, F-squared, Q-squared, path coefficients, and indirect effect values. Based on the R-squared test, parasocial interaction accounted for 29.8% of the variance, with the model classified as low to moderate, indicating that a significant proportion of the variation is still influenced by factors beyond the research model. Meanwhile, purchase intention had an R-squared of 43.9%, indicating a moderate model. This indicates that the model has sufficient explanatory power: it is neither weak nor very strong, suggesting that other factors influencing the dependent variable are not included in this study.

Based on the results of the f-squared test, attractiveness explains 0.103, expertise explains 0.005 (a very small effect), and trust explains 0.16 (a moderate effect). Meanwhile, in explaining purchase intention,

attractiveness contributes 0.015 (a very small effect), expertise contributes 0.028 (a small effect), trust contributes 0.072 (a small effect), and parasocial interaction contributes 0.169 (a moderate effect). These results indicate that, in explaining parasocial interactions, the attribute that contributes most is trust, followed by attractiveness, and lastly, expertise. Meanwhile, in explaining purchase intention, parasocial interaction makes the greatest contribution, followed by expertise and trust, and finally by attractiveness. Based on the results of the Q-squared test, the Q-squared predict value for parasocial interaction is 0.265 and purchase intention is 0.309, which is above 0, so that $Q^2 > 0$. Therefore, it can be stated that this study has a good predictive relevance model.

Tabel 2. Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability Results

Variables	Code	λ	Composite reliability (rho c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Attractiveness	DT1	0.654	0.765	0.521
	DT2	0.742		
	DT3	0.766		
Expertise	KH1	0.657	0.696	0.365
	KH2	0.558		
	KH3	0.551		
	KH4	0.644		
Trustworthiness	KP1	0.682	0.803	0.506
	KP2	0.753		
	KP3	0.686		
	KP5	0.72		
Parasocial Interaction	IP1	0.722	0.867	0.566
	IP2	0.776		
	IP3	0.766		
	IP4	0.672		
	IP5	0.818		
Purchase intention	NB1	0.786	0.818	0.6
	NB2	0.814		
	NB4	0.721		

Source: Author's work (2026)

The outer model evaluation was subsequently conducted, and the results are presented in Table 2. The measurement model met the convergent validity criteria, as the loading factor values for the attractiveness, trustworthiness, parasocial interaction, and purchase intention constructs were all above 0.50, indicating that the measurement items were valid (Hair et al., 2017). This finding suggests that the items within each construct were highly correlated and consistently represented the same underlying concept.

Tabel 3. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	P-values	Keterangan
DT→NB	0.112	0.072	Rejected
KH→NB	0.147	0.005	Accepted
KP→NB	0.244	0	Accepted
DT→IP→NB	0.115	0.001	Accepted
KH→IP→NB	-0.027	0.142	Rejected
KP→IP→NB	0.139	0	Accepted

Source: data processed using PLS 4.0, (2026)

Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, except for the expertise construct, which obtained an AVE value of 0.365. Nevertheless, the expertise construct was retained because its AVE value in the second measurement model assessment improved compared to the first. In addition, all research constructs achieved

composite reliability values above 0.60, indicating that the measurement items for each variable consistently measured its respective construct and demonstrated satisfactory reliability.

Based on Table 3, Hypothesis 1 has a p-value of 0.072 (> 0.05), indicating an insignificant effect. In contrast, Hypothesis 2 has a p-value of 0.005 (< 0.05), indicating a significant effect. Similarly, Hypothesis 3 obtains a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), showing a significant effect. Hypothesis 4 also demonstrates a significant effect with a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05). Meanwhile, Hypothesis 5 has a p-value of 0.142 (> 0.05), indicating an insignificant effect. Lastly, Hypothesis 6 obtains a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating a significant effect.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 is not supported. This finding is further supported by the fact that the target audience is largely comprised of Generation Z, who tend to be more sceptical and analytical, thus valuing authentic and trustworthy information over attractiveness (Azzahra & Roslina, 2025). This finding is due to the majority of respondents aged 18–28, who frequently use TikTok. Respondents in this demographic are relatively active on social media, making them accustomed to consuming content that leverages physical attractiveness, so they no longer consider physical attractiveness a significant factor warranting purchase intentions.

In the context of the Theory of Reasoned Action applied in this study, "attractiveness" is a factor that shapes the audience's beliefs about the consequences of purchasing behaviour. However, in this instance, that attractiveness represents a belief that is not sufficiently strong to foster a positive attitude toward the purchasing behaviour. Consequently, it fails to drive the intention to purchase the recommended product. Furthermore, according to Levi dan Varnali (2017), audience response to public figures perceived as attractive is closely related to their psychological state. Audiences with low self-esteem may more easily connect with less attractive figures because they perceive them as more similar to themselves. Furthermore, overly attractive public figures can appear unrealistic, leaving audiences feeling distant from them.

This may also be due to controversies involving several skincare doctors on TikTok, ranging from conflicts among figures and accusations of overclaiming to legal disputes that have shifted perceptions of doctors as beauty influencers. The phenomenon of beauty influencer doctors like Reza Gladys, Amira Farahnaz (Doktif), and Richard Lee demonstrates that high exposure does not automatically translate to increased public trust. When professional figures appear more prominently in conflict contexts than in educational settings, audience attention shifts from product recommendations to personal issues. Exposure to such controversies can increase scepticism and the awareness that the content prioritises certain commercial interests.

Hypothesis 2 is accepted. This was because the majority of respondents purchased skincare every 2–3 months, spending between Rp100,000 and Rp300,000. This indicates that the audience makes regular purchases and is willing to sacrifice costs. Therefore, the expertise of someone recommending skincare products is significant because it signals competence, reducing uncertainty about a product's safety.

In the Theory of Reasoned Action, expertise is a factor that shapes beliefs about the positive consequences of purchasing behaviour. When the audience perceives a doctor as competent, it fosters the belief that purchasing the recommended skincare product will yield positive outcomes, such as healthier skin. This, in turn, cultivates a positive attitude that generates an intention to purchase.

This aligns with Rungruangjit (2022) findings that influencers with high levels of specialised expertise significantly influence purchase intentions compared to those without. Furthermore, expertise influences how much audiences accept and process information with low scepticism (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Therefore, when audiences perceive a beauty influencer doctor as competent in the skincare

field, they will be more receptive to the doctor's opinion, thereby increasing message effectiveness and driving purchase intentions.

This study supports Hypothesis 2. This finding is dominated by respondents who use TikTok more frequently than other social media platforms. TikTok is used not only for entertainment but also for skincare-related information, ensuring accurate information. Therefore, trust in information sources is crucial for fostering confidence in both the source and the information itself.

In the Theory of Reasoned Action, trust is conceptualised as a belief regarding the positive consequences of purchasing behaviour. When the audience perceives doctors as trustworthy figures, it fosters the belief that purchasing recommended skincare products will yield positive outcomes. This, in turn, generates a positive attitude toward the purchasing behaviour, thereby driving purchase intention.

These results align with Lou dan Yuan (2019) findings that influencer content can persuade audiences of what it conveys, thereby increasing their purchase intention for the advertised product. This occurs because trusted sources demonstrate high objectivity and sincerity, leading audiences to perceive the information as credible (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Furthermore, trust in a public figure is perceptual and depends on how the audience interprets it. Therefore, influencers who are perceived as the most honest and reliable by the public are often used by marketers as intermediaries to build audience trust in the products they promote (Mansour & Diab, 2016), given that consumers trust influencers on social media almost as much as they trust their friends (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

Hypothesis 4 is accepted. In this case, attractiveness acts as an initial trigger to capture audience attention while viewing the content, which then encourages audiences to engage more parasocially (Lin et al, 2021). Furthermore, when this pseudo-closeness is created, audiences are more likely to consider the doctor's recommendations. The stronger the parasocial interaction, the greater the influence of the public figure's attractiveness on audience attitudes and responses to the products featured (Gong & Li, 2017).

This study's results support Eun and Watkins (2016), who found that consumers interact more intensively with influencers they deem attractive, creating a sense of closeness. Interactions with attractive individuals tend to elicit positive emotions and a desire to build close relationships (Aw & Chuah, 2021). These findings also explain that attractiveness does not directly influence purchase intention. However, attractiveness needs to be mediated by parasocial interactions to foster skincare purchase intentions among audiences watching beauty influencers.

This study failed to prove Hypothesis 5. This result is dominated by respondents who buy skincare every 2-3 months with expenses of IDR 100,000 - IDR 300,000, where the audience needs to make routine purchases that require them to make rational considerations about the costs that will be sacrificed, so that the evaluation of the doctor's expertise as a beauty influencer is more objective and does not need to be mediated by pseudo-closeness, because expertise has signaled competence to reduce doubts about the safety or otherwise of a product.

Furthermore, Wijayanti et al. (2024) showed that when parasocial interactions between influencers and their followers have developed intensively, attributes of source credibility, such as expertise, become less relevant in influencing purchase intentions. Under these conditions, followers tend to be influenced by recommendations from social media influencers, driven by loyalty formed through parasocial interactions rather than credibility. Therefore, excessive feelings of closeness can appear unprofessional, diminish the sense of objectivity, and blur the lines between education and entertainment.

These results can also be explained by the phenomenon of several skincare doctors on TikTok, ranging from interpersonal conflicts and accusations of overclaiming to legal disputes with other celebrities. The controversial phenomenon of beauty influencer doctors like Reza Gladys, Amira Farahnaz (Doktif), and Richard Lee can shift the audience's focus from skincare education to personal matters. In such

situations, the resulting parasocial interactions tend to focus on controversy rather than on the doctor's competence as a beauty influencer.

Hypothesis 6 is accepted. The results of the study indicate that the parasocial interaction experienced by audiences when viewing content featuring doctors as beauty influencers mediates the relationship between trust and skincare purchase intentions. This finding is predominantly observed among respondents aged 18–28 who frequently consume TikTok content, thereby enabling the formation of a parasocial relationship that deepens trust and ultimately drives purchase intentions. Furthermore, when beauty influencers demonstrate objectivity and authenticity in their content, audiences tend to perceive them as trustworthy (Casaló et al., 2020; Lawrence & Meivitanli, 2023).

This perception of trust fosters parasocial interactions, as audiences perceive the opinions expressed as honest and reliable. Furthermore, these parasocial interactions serve as a bridging mechanism between trust and purchase intention, enabling trust to operate not only directly but also through the bond established between the audience and the beauty influencer. These findings align with those of Lin et al. (2021) and Yudha (2023), who demonstrated that parasocial interactions bridge the relationship between trust and purchase intention. Similarly, Jans et al. (2019) also stated that trust is a key factor in building relationships.

Conclusion, Limitations, and Further Research

This study concludes that attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and parasocial interactions all contribute to shaping consumers' purchase intention toward skincare products. However, their roles differ. Attractiveness influences purchase intention only through parasocial interactions, whereas expertise has a direct effect, independent of parasocial interactions. Despite these findings, this study has several limitations. The research focused only on beauty influencer doctors, without distinguishing between those who own skincare brands and those who collaborate with other brands, potentially introducing marketing communication bias. In addition, the study was limited to TikTok, did not classify respondents by age or education level, did not include male participants, and did not specify skincare brands or product prices, or operationalise the term “attractive,” limiting the generalisability of the results. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to differentiate influencer doctor categories, include other social media platforms such as Instagram, X, and YouTube, apply age segmentation, involve specific skincare brands and price ranges, refine the operational definition of attractiveness, include respondents with diverse educational backgrounds and genders, and extend the research to other product categories with relevant influencer types, such as fashion, travel, and technology.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire Item

Variabel	Code	Item
Attractiveness (Choi & Lee, 2019).	AT1	This doctor has a beautiful/handsome face
	AT2	This doctor has classy image
	AT3	This doctor is very interesting
	AT4	Other people will want to look like this doctor
Expertise (Choi & Lee, 2019).	EXP1	This doctor really understands he topic that he improved in his upload
	EXP2	This doctor is an expert in the topic she/he discusses
	EXP3	This doctor has extensive experience related to the topics presented in their posts
	EXP4	This doctor is likely to frequently read and watch content related to the topics they post.
	EXP5	This doctor provides viewers with information about the topics presented in their posts
Trustworthiness (Choi & Lee, 2019).	TRS1	This doctor is sincere at all times
	TRS2	This doctor does not exaggerate or provide misleading information.
	TRS3	This doctor does not pretend to know things that they do not actually understand well.
	TRS4	This doctor does not speak without a factual basis.
	TRS5	This doctor honestly expresses their position, thoughts, and opinions.
Parasocial Interaction (Atta et al., 2025)	PSI1	I look forward to watching this doctor's content on their TikTok account.
	PSI2	When I watch this doctor's content, I feel as though I am part of their audience or community.
	PSI3	I would like to meet this doctor in person.
	PSI4	If there is an article or news story about this doctor online, I will read it.
	PSI5	This doctor makes me feel comfortable, as if I am interacting with a friend.
Purchase intention (Choi & Lee, 2019).	PI1	When this doctor shares their opinions or feelings about a skincare product, it helps me form my own opinion about that product.
	PI2	I would like to use the product featured in the video.
	PI3	I am willing to purchase the product featured in the video.
	PI4	This video helps me make purchasing decisions.
	PI5	If the prices are similar, I would choose to buy the product featured in the video.