WHEN TRUST IS NOT ENOUGH : CONSUMER TRUST, SKEPTICISM ABOUT INFLUENCER'S MOTIVES, AND PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARD BEAUTY PRODUCTS

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Abstract

The rapid growth of influencer marketing has transformed the way consumers evaluate beauty products on social media. However, increasing commercial collaborations and sponsored content have raised consumers' skepticism toward influencers' motives, suggesting that trust alone may no longer be sufficient to encourage purchase intention. This study examines the effects of Influencer Credibility and Content Quality on Purchase Intention through Consumer Trust, while investigating the moderating role of Skepticism about Influencer's Motives. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey of 203 TikTok and Instagram users who had viewed beauty product promotions from social media influencers. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS. The findings reveal that Influencer Credibility and Content Quality positively influence Consumer Trust, which subsequently increases Purchase Intention. Furthermore, Skepticism about Influencer's Motives weakens the positive relationship between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention, indicating that consumers' trust becomes less effective when they perceive influencers' recommendations as commercially motivated. These findings extend the literature on influencer marketing by demonstrating that consumer trust does not always translate into purchase intention under conditions of high skepticism. The study also provides practical insights for beauty brands to develop more transparent, authentic, and information-oriented influencer marketing strategies to strengthen consumer trust while minimizing skepticism.

Keywords: Influencer Credibility, Content Quality, Consumer Trust, Skepticism about Influencer Motives, Purchase Intention

The beauty industry is one of the fastest-growing consumer-based manufacturing sectors in Indonesia in recent years. Increasing public awareness of self-care, lifestyle changes, the growth of the middle class, and rising preferences for local cosmetic products have continuously driven demand for skincare, makeup, and personal care products. These conditions make the beauty industry not only a sector with promising business prospects but also one of the contributors to national economic growth. The Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia (2025), citing Statista's projections, estimates that Indonesia's cosmetics market will reach USD 9.7 billion in 2025, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 4.33% through 2030. These projections indicate that Indonesia's cosmetics industry still has significant growth potential alongside increasing domestic consumption and the development of the local cosmetics industry.

The rapid market growth has also been accompanied by increasing competition within the national cosmetics industry. The Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia (2025) reported that the number of cosmetics companies increased from 726 companies in 2020 to 1,292 companies in 2024, with approximately 83% of them being micro and small enterprises. The growing number of industry players means that companies no longer compete solely through product innovation but also through their ability to build effective marketing communication and earn consumer trust. In an increasingly competitive market, the success of a brand is increasingly determined by how information about its products is received, trusted, and used by consumers in the purchase decision-making process.

Digital transformation has accelerated this change. The development of the internet, social media, and social commerce has changed the way consumers obtain, evaluate, and use information before making purchases. Whereas companies were once the primary source of information about their products, consumers are now more actively seeking references through user-generated content, user reviews, and recommendations shared on social media (Akhmad Alfian & Abidin, 2025; Koesuma & Kurniawati, 2022). In the social commerce environment, the quality of digital information has been proven to play an important role in building online trust, which in turn enhances purchase intention (Van Dat et al., 2025). Among the various sources of information, social media influencers have emerged as one of the primary references in the product evaluation process for beauty products. Through firsthand product experiences, reviews, demonstrations, and ongoing interactions with their audiences, influencer recommendations are often perceived as more personal and authentic than conventional marketing communications (Saniyyah et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of influencer marketing does not occur automatically. Consumers do not automatically accept every influencer's recommendation as the basis for their purchase decisions; instead, they first evaluate the influencer's credibility and the quality of the information provided. Recommendations from influencers perceived as credible and supported by accurate, relevant, and useful content are more likely to build consumer trust in the promoted products (Akhmad Alfian & Abidin, 2025; Handarkho & Arifin, 2025; Saniyyah et al., 2025). In this context, trust in social media influencers serves as an important mechanism explaining how influencer characteristics and content quality can be translated into purchase intention. Research by (Van Dat et al., 2025) shows that trust is the central factor mediating the influence of information quality on purchase intention in the social commerce environment.

However, the development of influencer marketing in recent years has shown a different dynamic. The increasing prevalence of paid partnerships, affiliate marketing, and sponsored content has made consumers increasingly aware that some influencer recommendations are driven by commercial interests. At the same time, the phenomenon of *deinfluencing* has emerged, a content trend that encourages audiences to be more critical before purchasing a product. This phenomenon indicates that consumers no longer consider only whether an influencer is trustworthy but also begin to question the motives underlying the recommendations provided. In other words, trust in influencers alone may no longer be sufficient to drive purchase intention when consumers have doubts about the commercial motives behind those recommendations (Jin et al., 2026). This condition suggests that skepticism toward influencer motives has the potential to influence the effectiveness of the relationship between trust and purchase intention (Penttinen et al., 2026).

Various previous studies have demonstrated the importance of influencer credibility, content quality, and consumer trust in shaping purchase intention in the digital environment (Akhmad Alfian & Abidin, 2025; Handarkho & Arifin, 2025; Saniyyah et al., 2025). However, most studies still assume that increasing consumer trust will consistently lead to higher purchase intention. As consumers become increasingly aware of influencers' commercial motives, this assumption becomes increasingly relevant to reexamine. Although research on skepticism toward influencer motives has begun to develop, studies that integrate consumer trust as a mediating mechanism while simultaneously examining skepticism toward influencer motives as a moderating variable within a single research model remain relatively limited, particularly in the context of Indonesia's beauty industry. This gap indicates the need for a model that can explain how trust in influencers continues to influence purchase intention as consumers become increasingly critical of the promotional motives behind recommendations.

Based on these phenomena and research gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of influencer credibility and content quality on purchase intention through consumer trust, as well as examine the role of skepticism toward influencer motives as a moderating variable in the relationship between consumer trust and purchase intention. This study is expected to contribute theoretically by expanding the literature on influencer marketing and consumer behavior in the social commerce environment through the integration of trust and skepticism mechanisms within a conceptual framework. Furthermore, the findings are expected to provide practical implications for beauty companies in designing influencer marketing strategies that are more credible, transparent, and capable of maintaining consumer trust amid increasing critical attitudes toward digital promotional content.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Source Credibility Theory (SCT)

Source Credibility Theory, introduced by Hovland and Weiss (1951), explains that the effectiveness of communication is influenced by the audience's perception of the credibility of the information source. The higher the source's credibility, the greater the likelihood that the message will be accepted, trusted, and influence the recipient's attitudes and behavior. Ohanian (1990) developed this theory in the context of marketing communication by proposing that source credibility is formed by three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. These three dimensions determine the extent

to which a source can build trust and influence consumers' evaluations of the information they receive.

In the social commerce environment, this theory serves as an important foundation for explaining the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Unlike conventional advertising, influencers act as information sources who not only deliver marketing messages but also build ongoing relationships with audiences through product usage experiences, reviews, and interactions on social media. Therefore, consumers' perceptions of influencer credibility are a determining factor in their level of trust in product recommendations and ultimately influence purchase intention. Based on the perspective of Source Credibility Theory, this study views Influencer Credibility as a factor that drives the formation of Consumer Trust, which subsequently influences Purchase Intention.

Influencer Credibility (IC)

Influencer credibility describes consumers' perceptions of the extent to which an influencer is viewed as having the expertise, honesty, and ability to provide reliable information about a product (Ohanian, 1990). In the context of social media, credibility is determined not only by an influencer's popularity but also by content consistency, experience using the product, transparency in delivering information, and the ability to build relationships with followers. When an influencer is perceived as a credible source of information, consumers tend to evaluate the recommendations they provide more positively, thereby increasing trust in the promoted product.

Various empirical studies support this relationship. (Akhmad Alfian & Abidin, 2025) found that influencer credibility has a positive effect on consumer trust and indirectly increases purchase intention among TikTok users. Similar results were also reported by (Saniyyah et al., 2025), who stated that perceptions of influencer credibility enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing communication through the development of consumer trust. These findings indicate that influencer credibility is one of the primary determinants in building a psychological relationship between consumers and influencers.

Based on Source Credibility Theory and the findings of previous studies, this study assumes that the higher the Influencer Credibility, the higher the Consumer Trust.

Content Quality (CQ)

In addition to the characteristics of the information source, the effectiveness of digital marketing communication is also influenced by the quality of the information received by consumers. Content quality refers to consumers' perceptions of the quality of information delivered through digital media, encompassing aspects such as accuracy, relevance, completeness, clarity, and the usefulness of the information (Handarkho & Arifin, 2025). In the marketing of beauty products, content quality plays an important role because consumers generally require adequate information about product benefits, ingredients, safety, and user experiences before deciding to make a purchase.

Informative and high-quality content can reduce consumer uncertainty during the product evaluation process and increase trust in the information received. (Van Dat et al., 2025) demonstrated that information quality in the social commerce environment significantly contributes to the development of online trust, which subsequently increases purchase intention. The findings of (Handarkho & Arifin, 2025) also confirm that content quality is an important determinant in building consumer trust in digital platforms.

Thus, the higher the quality of the content delivered by influencers, the greater the likelihood that consumers will trust the information they receive.

Consumer Trust (CT)

Consumer Trust refers to consumers' belief that influencers provide information honestly, authentically, and based on real experiences, so that the recommendations given can be relied upon in the purchasing decision-making process. In the social commerce environment, trust is a psychological mechanism that reduces consumer uncertainty regarding digital information and increases confidence in recommended products (Van Dat et al., 2025). Unlike conventional transactions, social media consumers cannot directly evaluate products, so they rely more on the credibility of information sources as a basis for building trust.

Various studies have shown that trust is one of the main determinants of purchasing behavior in digital environments. Van Dat et al. (2025) demonstrated that online trust has a positive effect on purchase intention through a mechanism that reduces perceived risk. Similar results were also found by Akhmad Alfian & Abidin (2025) and Saniyyah et al. (2025) who showed that consumers with higher levels of trust in influencers tend to have greater confidence in product recommendations, thereby increasing purchase intention.

In addition to having a direct effect on purchase intention, previous research has also shown that trust plays a role as a mechanism explaining how influencer characteristics and information quality are translated into consumer behavior. Therefore, this study positions Consumer Trust as a mediating variable that connects Influencer Credibility and Content Quality with Purchase Intention.

Influencer Motive Skepticism (IMS)

The development of influencer marketing in recent years has shown that consumers no longer directly accept all influencer recommendations. The increasing practice of paid partnerships, affiliate marketing, and sponsored content has caused consumers to become increasingly aware that most recommendations provided by influencers have commercial interests. This condition has led to the emergence of influencer motive skepticism, namely the tendency of consumers to question the sincerity and motives behind influencer recommendations before trusting the information conveyed (Jin et al., 2026).

This phenomenon is further strengthened by the development of the deinfluencer trend, which encourages audiences to become more critical of various forms of promotion on social media. Penttinen et al. (2026) explain that increasing skepticism toward influencers' commercial motives can reduce the effectiveness of marketing communication because consumers become more cautious in evaluating product recommendations. Therefore, even if consumers have a high level of trust in an influencer, purchasing decisions are not necessarily increased if they believe that the recommendation is driven more by commercial interests than by genuine user experiences.

Unlike previous studies that generally position skepticism as an independent variable, this study views Influencer Motive Skepticism as a boundary condition that determines the extent to which trust in influencers can still be translated into purchase intention. In other words, the higher the level of consumer skepticism toward influencer motives, the weaker the positive influence of Consumer Trust on Purchase Intention.

Purchase Intention (PI)

Purchase intention describes the consumer's tendency to buy a product after evaluating the information received (Dodds et al., 1991). In the context of social commerce, purchase intention is not only influenced by product characteristics but also by information quality, the credibility of information sources, and the level of consumer trust in recommendations received through social media. In the beauty product category, the evaluation process becomes increasingly important because consumers generally consider the benefits, safety, and suitability of products with their personal needs before making a purchase.

Based on this perspective, this study views Purchase Intention as a behavioral consequence influenced by Influencer Credibility, Content Quality, and Consumer Trust, considering the role of Skepticism toward Influencer Motives as a condition that can strengthen or weaken these relationships.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships between Influencer Credibility, Content Quality, Consumer Trust, Skepticism about Influencer Motives, and Purchase Intention toward beauty products. A quantitative design is considered appropriate because the objective of this study is to empirically test the proposed research model and examine the causal relationships among variables.

The population of this study consists of Indonesian consumers who actively use social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram. This study applies a non-probability sampling technique using purposive sampling because respondents are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. Respondents were required to meet the following criteria: (1) at least 17 years old; (2) active users of TikTok or Instagram; (3) have viewed beauty product promotions from social media influencers within the past three months; and (4) have considered purchasing or had an intention to purchase beauty products recommended by influencers. A total of 203 valid questionnaires were collected and used for data analysis.

Table 1.
Respondent Characteristics

No.	Characteristics	Category	Amount	Percentage
1.	Gender	Men	37	18,23%
		Women	166	81,77%
		Total	203	100%
2.	Age	18-23 Years	51	25,12%
		24-29 Years	97	47,78%
		30-35 Years	44	21,67%
		> 35 Years	11	5,42%
		Total	203	100%
3.	Occupation	Student/University Student	42	20,69%
		Private Sector Employee	66	32,51%

Civil Servant/State-Owned Enterprise Employee	39	19,21%
Entrepreneur	26	12,81%
Freelancer	22	10,84%
Other	8	3,94%
Total	203	100%

Source: data processed by the Author (2026)

Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. All measurement items were adapted from previously validated studies to ensure content validity. Influencer Credibility was measured using indicators adapted from Khairul Aini et al. (2025), Content Quality was measured based on Handarkho & Arifin (2025), Consumer Trust was adapted from Suman & Kurniawati (2024) while Skepticism about Influencer's Motives was adapted from Penttinen et al. (2026). Finally, Purchase Intention was measured using indicators adapted from .Wang & Huang (2025). All indicators were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS software. The analysis was carried out in two stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to examine the validity and reliability of the constructs using standardized factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Second, the structural model was assessed to test the proposed hypotheses by evaluating path coefficients, critical ratios (CR), and probability values (p-values). In addition, the mediating effect of Consumer Trust and the moderating effect of Skepticism about Influencer's Motives were examined in the structural model. Model fit was evaluated using several goodness-of-fit indices, including Chi-square/df (CMIN/DF), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).

Research Hypotheses

This study aims to analyze the influence of Influencer Credibility and Content Quality on Purchase Intention of beauty products through Consumer Trust, with Skepticism about Influencer's Motives as a moderating variable. Based on theoretical studies and the results of previous research, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

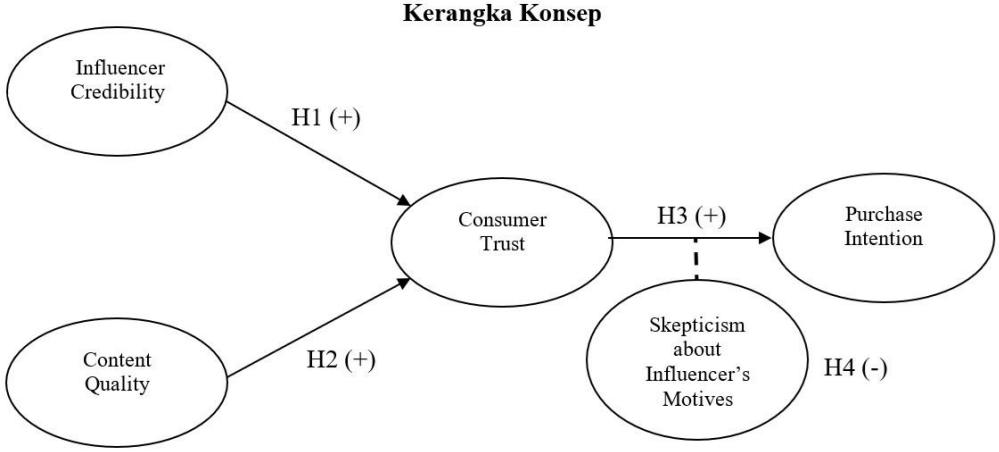
- H1: Influencer Credibility has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Trust.
- H2: Content Quality has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Trust.
- H3: Consumer Trust has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention of beauty products.
- H4: Skepticism about Influencer's Motives moderates the effect of Consumer Trust on Purchase Intention, where Skepticism about Influencer's Motives weakens the positive relationship between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention.

Research Model

This research model illustrates the relationship between Influencer Credibility and Content Quality as independent variables and Purchase Intention as the dependent variable through Consumer Trust as a mediating variable. In addition, this study also examines the role of Skepticism about Influencer's Motives as a moderating variable that influences the

relationship between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention. The conceptual model of this research is presented in the following figure:

Gambar 1.
Kerangka Konsep



Sumber: Karya Penulis (2026)

This research model illustrates the relationship between Influencer Credibility and Content Quality as independent variables toward Purchase Intention as the dependent variable through Consumer Trust as a mediating variable. In addition, this study examines the role of Skepticism about Influencer's Motives as a moderating variable that influences the relationship between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention. This research employs a quantitative approach using a survey method, in which data are collected through the distribution of questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale. Furthermore, the data are analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on AMOS to examine the relationships among variables, mediation effects, and moderation effects within the research model. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of literature on influencer marketing and consumer behavior, while also providing input for companies in the beauty industry in designing more effective influencer-based marketing strategies amid increasing consumer skepticism toward digital promotional content.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of Convergent Validity Testing (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the convergent validity of the five research constructs, namely Influencer Credibility (IC), Content Quality (CQ), Consumer Trust (CT), Skepticism about Influencer's Motives (SIM), and Purchase Intention (PI). Based on the estimation results using AMOS 24, all indicators across the five constructs produced standardized loading factor values above the threshold of 0.50 (Table 2), indicating that all indicators were valid in measuring their respective constructs. The highest loading factor values were obtained by indicators SIM6 (0.918) and SIM3 (0.905), while the lowest value was found in indicator CQ2 (0.633), which nevertheless remained above the required critical value.

Tabel 2.
Loading Factor of Research Constructs

Construct	Indicator	Loading Factor	Description
Influencer Credibility	IC1	0,585	Valid
	IC2	0,713	Valid
	IC3	0,825	Valid
	IC4	0,784	Valid
	IC5	0,697	Valid
	IC6	0,762	Valid
	IC7	0,680	Valid
Content Quality	CQ1	0,663	Valid
	CQ2	0,633	Valid
	CQ3	0,674	Valid
	CQ4	0,732	Valid
Consumer Trust	CT1	0,800	Valid
	CT2	0,867	Valid
	CT3	0,706	Valid
Skepticism about Influencer's Motives	SIM1	0,903	Valid
	SIM2	0,823	Valid
	SIM3	0,905	Valid
	SIM4	0,881	Valid
	SIM5	0,818	Valid
	SIM6	0,918	Valid
Purchase Intention	PI1	0,797	Valid
	PI2	0,870	Valid
	PI3	0,905	Valid

Source: data processed by the Author (2026)

Construct Reliability Test Results

Construct reliability was evaluated using the Construct Reliability (CR) value, with a threshold of ≥ 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). The test results in Table 3 show that all constructs have CR values ranging from 0.771 to 0.952, indicating that the five constructs are reliable. The highest reliability was found in Skepticism about Influencer's Motives (CR = 0.952), while the lowest reliability was found in Content Quality (CR = 0.771).

Tabel 3.
Construct Reliability (CR)

Construct	Construct Reliability (CR)	Description
Influencer Credibility (IC)	0,884	Reliable
Content Quality (CQ)	0,771	Reliable
Consumer Trust (CT)	0,835	Reliable
Skepticism about Influencer's Motives (SIM)	0,952	Reliable
Purchase Intention (PI)	0,893	Reliable

Source: data processed by the Author (2026)

Evaluation of Model Fit (Goodness of Fit)

Tabel 4.
Goodness of Fit Index

Index	Model Value	Cut-off	Description
CMIN/DF	2,633	≤ 3,00 (Good); ≤ 5,00 (Accepted)	Good
Probability (p)	0,088	≥ 0,05	Accepted
RMR	0,108	≤ 0,08	Marginal
GFI	0,806	≥ 0,90 (Good); ≥ 0,80 (marginal)	Marginal
AGFI	0,762	≥ 0,90 (Good); ≥ 0,80 (marginal)	Marginal
NFI	0,823	≥ 0,90 (Good); ≥ 0,80 (marginal)	Marginal
RFI	0,800	≥ 0,90 (Good); ≥ 0,80 (marginal)	Marginal
IFI	0,881	≥ 0,90 (Good); ≥ 0,80 (marginal)	Marginal
TLI	0,866	≥ 0,90 (Good); ≥ 0,80 (marginal)	Marginal
CFI	0,881	≥ 0,90 (Good); ≥ 0,80 (marginal)	Marginal
RMSEA	0,090	≤ 0,08 (Good); ≤ 0,10 (Accepted)	Accepted

Source: data processed by the Author (2026)

The CMIN/DF value of 2.633 falls within the good category (≤ 3.00), while the RMSEA value of 0.090 is within the acceptable category (≤ 0.10). Most of the incremental indices (NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI, CFI) and absolute indices (GFI, AGFI) are in the range of 0.76–0.88, which are considered marginal because they have not yet reached the ideal threshold of ≥ 0.90. A significant chi-square probability value is a common occurrence in complex models with a large number of parameters (55 parameters) and a medium sample size (n = 203), so it is not used as the sole basis for rejecting the model (Hair et al., 2019). Overall, this research model can be categorized as having a reasonably acceptable level of fit (acceptable fit).

Hypothesis Testing (Regression Weights)

Hypothesis testing was conducted based on the Critical Ratio (C.R.) and probability (p) values, with the path criterion being considered significant if $p < 0.05$ (C.R. > ±1.96). The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.
Hypothesis Testing Results (Standardized Regression Weights)

Hypothesis	Route	Estimate (β)	C.R.	P	Description
H1	IC → CT	0,338	2,353	0,019	Significant (H1 supported)
H2	CQ → CT	0,455	2,996	0,003	Significant (H2 supported)
H3	CT → PI	0,707	8,856	***	Significant (H3 supported)
-	CS → PI	-0,116	-2,008	0,045	Significant negative
H4	CT*SIM → PI	-0,144	-2,557	0,011	Significant negative (H4 supported)

Source: data processed by the Author (2026)

The analysis results show that Influencer Credibility has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Trust (β = 0.338; C.R. = 2.353; p = 0.019), thus supporting H1. Content Quality also has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Trust (β = 0.455; C.R. = 2.996; p = 0.003), supporting H2, with a relatively greater magnitude of influence compared to Influencer Credibility. Furthermore, Consumer Trust is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (β = 0.707; C.R. = 8.856; p < 0.001), making it the

strongest predictor in this model, thus supporting H3. The moderating effect of Skepticism about Influencer's Motives on the relationship between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention (the CT*CS interaction) produces a negative and significant coefficient (β = -0.144; C.R. = -2.557; p = 0.011), which means that the higher the level of consumer skepticism, the weaker the influence of Consumer Trust on Purchase Intention, thus supporting H4. In addition, Skepticism about Influencer's Motives also shows a direct negative and significant effect on Purchase Intention (β = -0.116; C.R. = -2.008; p = 0.045).

Coefficient of Determination (Squared Multiple Correlations)

The Squared Multiple Correlations (R^2) value is used to determine the extent of variance in endogenous variables that can be explained by their exogenous variables. The estimation results show that Influencer Credibility and Content Quality jointly explain 57.1% of the variance in Consumer Trust (R^2 = 0.571), while Consumer Trust, Skepticism about Influencer's Motives, and the interaction effect between the two explain 54.0% of the variance in Purchase Intention (R^2 = 0.540). These two values indicate that the research model has explanatory power that is considered moderate to substantial

Bootstrapping Results (Structural Path Stability Test)

To test the stability and significance of the structural paths, bootstrapping analysis was conducted using the bias-corrected percentile method at a 90% confidence interval (Table 6).

Table 6.
Hasil Bootstrapping Bias-Corrected Percentile (90% CI)

Route	Estimate	Lower (90%)	Upper (90%)	P	Description
CT ← IC	0,606	-0,563	1,612	0,311	Not significant (CI crosses zero)
CT ← CQ	0,617	-0,034	1,374	0,122	Not significant (CI crosses zero)
PI ← CT	0,797	0,620	0,980	0,008	Significant
PI ← SIM	-0,088	-0,148	-0,011	0,046	Significant
PI ← Interaction (CT*SIM)	-0,122	-0,207	-0,031	0,020	Significant

Source: data processed by the Author (2026)

The bootstrapping results show that the paths Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention, Skepticism about Influencer's Motives → Purchase Intention, and the interaction effect (Consumer Trust x Skepticism about Influencer's Motives) → Purchase Intention remain significant (the confidence intervals do not cross zero), consistent with the results of the Maximum Likelihood testing in Table 5. This indicates that these three paths are robust and stable against data resampling.

Conversely, the paths Influencer Credibility → Consumer Trust and Content Quality → Consumer Trust, which were initially significant in the Maximum Likelihood test, became insignificant in the bootstrapping results because the confidence intervals for both paths crossed zero (p = 0.311 and p = 0.122). This instability is consistent with the high correlation between Influencer Credibility and Content Quality (r = 0.815), indicating the presence of multicollinearity between the two predictors. This high correlation causes the variances of

the two coefficients to overlap in explaining the variation in Consumer Trust, making the estimates of each effect less stable when the data are resampled.

The Effect of Influencer Credibility on Consumer Trust

The research results show that Influencer Credibility has a positive effect on Consumer Trust, indicating that the higher the influencer's credibility, the higher the consumer trust in beauty product recommendations conveyed through social media. This finding is consistent with the Source Credibility Theory proposed by Hovland and Weiss (1951), which explains that the effectiveness of communication is influenced by the credibility of the information source. In addition, Ohanian (1990) stated that influencer credibility is formed by the dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, which are capable of increasing consumers' confidence in the information they receive. The results of this study also support previous research (Akhmad Alfian & Abidin, 2025; Koesuma & Kurniawati, 2022; Saniyyah et al., 2025) which concluded that influencers with high credibility are more effective in building consumer trust. Therefore, influencer credibility is one of the important factors that companies need to consider when developing marketing strategies through social media.

The Influence of Content Quality on Consumer Trust

The research results indicate that Content Quality has a positive effect on Consumer Trust, suggesting that content quality plays an important role in building consumer trust. Informative, accurate, relevant, and easy-to-understand content is able to reduce consumer uncertainty in evaluating products. This finding is consistent with the concept of Information Quality proposed by Handarkho & Arifin (2025) which explains that information quality is a key determinant in the formation of online trust. The results of this study also support previous research (Van Dat et al., 2025; Wang & Huang, 2025) which shows that good content quality can increase consumer trust in both the information and products being promoted. Therefore, companies need to pay attention to the quality of content delivered by influencers in order to optimally increase consumer trust.

The Influence of Consumer Trust on Purchase Intention

The research results show that Consumer Trust has a positive effect on Purchase Intention, which means that the higher the consumer's trust in influencers and the product recommendations provided, the higher the consumers' intention to make a purchase. This finding supports consumer behavior theory, which explains that trust can reduce perceived risk, thereby increasing consumers' confidence in making purchasing decisions. The results of this study are also consistent with previous research (Akhmad Alfian & Abidin, 2025; Van Dat et al., 2025) which states that consumer trust is an important factor in increasing purchase intention in the social commerce environment. Thus, consumer trust becomes the primary mechanism that connects the effectiveness of digital marketing communication with purchase intention.

The Moderating Role of Skepticism about Influencer's Motives on the Relationship between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention

The research results show that Skepticism about Influencer's Motives weakens the effect of Consumer Trust on Purchase Intention. This finding indicates that although consumers have developed trust in influencers, a high level of skepticism toward influencers' commercial motives can reduce the effectiveness of that trust in encouraging purchase intention. This result is consistent with the study by Blanco-Encomienda et al. (2025) which

states that consumer skepticism acts as a moderating variable in consumer behavior. In addition, research by (Penttinen et al. (2026) on the phenomenon of deinfluencing and serta Jin et al. (2026) shows that increasing consumer awareness of paid partnerships and sponsored content encourages consumers to evaluate influencer recommendations more critically. This finding extends Source Credibility Theory by demonstrating that the influence of trust on purchase intention depends on the level of consumer skepticism. Therefore, companies need to enhance transparency and authenticity in marketing communications so that consumer trust remains effective in encouraging purchase intention.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Influencer Credibility has a positive effect on Consumer Trust, meaning that the higher the credibility of influencers demonstrated through expertise, honesty, and attractiveness, the higher consumers' trust in beauty product recommendations conveyed through social media. In addition, Content Quality also has a positive effect on Consumer Trust, indicating that informative, relevant, accurate, and easy-to-understand content can increase consumers' trust in the product information they receive. Furthermore, Consumer Trust is proven to have a positive effect on Purchase Intention, showing that consumer trust in influencers and product recommendations is an important factor in encouraging purchase intentions for beauty products. Thus, Consumer Trust acts as the main mechanism connecting the effectiveness of influencer marketing communication with the formation of purchase intention.

The research results also show that Skepticism about Influencer's Motives negatively moderates the relationship between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention. This indicates that the higher the level of consumer skepticism toward influencers' commercial motives, the weaker the influence of consumer trust in encouraging purchase intention. Therefore, although consumer trust is an important factor in shaping purchase intention, its effectiveness may decrease when consumers have a high level of skepticism toward influencer recommendations. Overall, this study confirms that the success of influencer marketing strategies for beauty products is not only determined by influencer credibility and content quality in building consumer trust, but is also influenced by the level of consumer skepticism toward promotional motives. Therefore, companies need to develop more transparent, authentic, and information-oriented communication strategies to build trust while minimizing consumer skepticism toward marketing activities through influencers. Although this study provides empirical evidence regarding the role of Consumer Trust and Skepticism about Influencer's Motives in shaping Purchase Intention, the findings are still limited to the context of beauty products and use a cross-sectional research design. Therefore, future research is recommended to test this model across different product categories, consumer characteristics, or cultural contexts to improve the generalizability of the findings. In addition, future studies may integrate other variables, such as parasocial relationship, perceived authenticity, or electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), to enrich the understanding of the psychological mechanisms influencing the effectiveness of influencer marketing in the digital era.

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