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The Effect of Influencer Credibility and User Reviews on Skincare Purchase Decisions: Evidence from Shopee Users in Bogor

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of influencer credibility and trust in user reviews on skincare purchasing decisions via social media. Addressing a gap in prior research that largely focuses on general consumer goods, it highlights the skincare sector's unique characteristics of high involvement, personal preference, and perceived risk. Influencer credibility dimensions include expertise, honesty, sincerity, and engagement, while trust in user reviews is measured through the impact of positive/negative feedback and the credibility of information on product ingredients and long-term effects. Using a quantitative survey with purposive sampling, questionnaires were distributed to frequent skincare buyers on social media. Data were analyzed through multiple regression. Results indicate that influencer expertise and honesty significantly boost purchasing decisions, with engagement fostering trust indirectly. Positive user reviews emphasizing product ingredients and long-term effects also significantly influence decisions, underscoring the value of credible peer content. Findings align with previous studies on the role of credibility and trust in online purchasing but stress the skincare industry's reliance on transparency and product efficacy. Practically, marketers should collaborate with knowledgeable influencers, ensure transparent communication, and encourage detailed user reviews. Future research should consider moderators like brand loyalty, price sensitivity, and perceived safety.

Keywords: Influencer Credibility, Trust in User Reviews, Purchasing Decisions, Skincare Products, Social Media.

I. Introduction

In today's digital era, the increasing use of social media has transformed consumer behavior and marketing strategies across industries. One of the most prominent trends in digital marketing is the use of social media influencers, defined as individuals with large audiences who can shape followers' perceptions and behaviors through perceived credibility, which comprises expertise, trustworthiness, sincerity, and engagement (De Veirman et al., 2017)(De Veirman et al., 2017). In parallel, user reviews, consumer-generated evaluations posted online, serve as a form of electronic word-of-mouth that can influence purchase decisions by providing authentic and detailed product information (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). In Indonesia, the skincare industry has grown rapidly over the last decade. According to Statista (2024), the skincare market is projected to reach over USD 2.5 billion by 2027, with double-digit annual growth. This expansion is driven by increasing beauty awareness, product diversification, and the influence of online marketing channels. E-commerce

platforms such as Shopee have become dominant shopping destinations, particularly in urban centers like Bogor, where digital adoption is high and online beauty communities are active.

Social media influencers impact consumers not only through their endorsements but also through perceived credibility, consisting of expertise, trustworthiness, sincerity, and engagement (De Veirman et al., 2017). These dimensions build psychological trust that facilitates the transfer of brand attitudes and product preferences from influencer to audience (Özbölük & Akdoğan, 2022). However, consumers today are more critical and tend to evaluate the authenticity of influencers' messages before acting upon them. Parallel to influencer impact, user-generated reviews also play a crucial role in shaping purchasing behavior. Consumers perceive online reviews as more authentic and reliable, especially when such reviews offer detailed insights about product quality, ingredients, and long-term usage outcomes (Tanwar et al., 2024). Positive reviews have been shown to boost purchase intentions, while negative reviews can deter buyers, even if influencer endorsements are favorable (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). Several studies have examined the individual impacts of influencer marketing and user reviews on purchase intentions. Sari et al (2024) found that influencer credibility directly affects purchase intention, particularly when mediated by user engagement. Similarly, Godara et al (2024) reported that customer reviews on Shopee significantly influence consumer trust and brand perception, underscoring the importance of online information sources in digital purchasing contexts. However, little research has explored how influencer credibility and user reviews interact to shape purchase decisions within a single, unified model, especially in geographically specific and demographically diverse markets such as Bogor. Contextual factors, including product type, user demographics, and local market dynamics, may influence consumer responses to both influencers and reviews. This highlights the need for a localized investigation that considers cultural proximity and digital consumption patterns in Indonesian urban markets, a perspective often overlooked in global literature (Arief et al., 2023; Fachmi & Sinau, 2022; Hati et al., 2023; Wahyuni & Ratnasari, 2024)

This study fills the identified research gap by simultaneously examining the influence of influencer credibility and user reviews on consumer purchase decisions for skincare products sold through Shopee. The focus is on consumers in Bogor, a city characterized by its digital-savvy youth and rising online consumption, making it an ideal context to explore the interaction between these two factors. The research is grounded in consumer behavior theory (P. dan K. L. K. Kotler, 2019), which posits that external influences such as online word-of-mouth and expert recommendations significantly shape purchasing decisions. It also draws on established influencer marketing frameworks that conceptualize credibility as a multidimensional construct, encompassing expertise, trustworthiness, sincerity, and engagement (AlFarraj et al., 2021). The study's relevance is amplified in the post-pandemic era, where shifts in consumer behavior, such as increased reliance on e-commerce, heightened health awareness, and greater scrutiny of marketing authenticity, have reshaped purchasing patterns. The proliferation of sponsored content has further contributed to consumer skepticism, making it crucial to understand how influencer credibility and user reviews jointly influence decision-making.

To address these issues, the study employs a quantitative survey method targeting active Shopee users who frequently purchase skincare products and follow influencers on social media. The independent variables include expertise, trustworthiness, engagement, and sincerity for influencers, alongside sentiment, credibility, and perceived trust in user reviews. By analyzing the joint and individual effects of these factors, the research offers empirical insights into the dynamics of professional endorsements and peer-generated content in a localized e-commerce environment. Accordingly, the central research question is to what extent influencer credibility and user reviews, individually and collectively, influence consumer purchase decisions in the localized online marketplace for skincare products. Grounded in consumer behavior theory (P. and K. L. K. Kotler, 2016) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), this study aims to contribute to the academic literature by providing evidence-based analysis of the interplay between professional endorsements and peer-driven evaluations. The findings are expected to offer actionable guidance for marketers and brand managers in the beauty industry to optimize influencer selection, enhance review management strategies, and ultimately strengthen consumer engagement in the competitive skincare market.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Influencer Credibility and Consumer Behavior

Influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most effective tools in digital commerce, particularly in the beauty and skincare sectors. Influencer credibility, the degree to which consumers perceive an influencer as knowledgeable, trustworthy, sincere, and engaging, plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes and purchase decisions. (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Freberg et al (2011) Highlight that consumers are more likely to trust influencers who demonstrate authentic product knowledge and genuinely engage with their followers. Building on this, De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) Found that active engagement, especially on visual platforms such as Instagram and Shopee Live, enhances persuasive power by increasing perceived trustworthiness. This is particularly relevant in skincare, where product safety and compatibility are critical considerations. In such cases, the perceived expertise and sincerity of influencers can directly influence consumer willingness to purchase.

2.2. User Reviews and Purchase Intentions

Alongside influencer marketing, user-generated reviews and authentic feedback shared by previous buyers serve as a critical form of electronic word-of-mouth. Positive reviews enhance trust and reduce perceived purchase risk. (Torres et al., 2019) Negative reviews can discourage purchase even when influencer endorsements are favorable. Rabier (2024) Emphasize that detailed product reviews discussing ingredients and long-term results are especially influential in skincare purchase decisions. The rapid rise of e-commerce platforms such as Shopee has shifted how consumers evaluate products. In Indonesia, Beck et al (2024) Found that consumers tend to place greater trust in peer reviews than in paid advertisements. Informative and credible reviews can reinforce brand reputation, while poor or unverified reviews can undermine consumer confidence.

2.3. Combined Effect of Influencer Credibility and User Reviews

Although many studies examine influencer credibility and user reviews independently, fewer have investigated their combined effect. Jokhu & Yuliana (2023) Show that influencer credibility can indirectly influence purchase decisions through social proof and perceived effectiveness. Wulandari and Oktaviani (2023) further demonstrate that user reviews can mediate or amplify the effect of influencer messages, particularly when both sources convey consistent and authentic information. For Shopee users in Indonesia, this interaction is shaped by platform-specific dynamics and demographic factors. Gen Z and millennial consumers, identified as digital natives, often integrate influencer recommendations with peer feedback when deciding on purchases. (Childers & Boatwright, 2021). This convergence suggests that the alignment between influencer messaging and user reviews may be a key driver of purchase intention, particularly for experience-based products such as skincare.

2.4. Theoretical Foundation

This research is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior. (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that behavior is determined by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Within this framework:

- a. Influencer credibility influences attitudes and subjective norms by shaping perceptions of trust and social approval.
- b. User reviews influence perceived behavioral control by reducing uncertainty and perceived risk.

When these two sources of influence align, they are expected to jointly strengthen purchase intentions and actual buying behavior. This theoretical perspective directly informs the development of the

study's hypotheses, which test both the individual effects of influencer credibility and user reviews, as well as their combined impact on purchase decisions in the Shopee skincare market.

2.5. Hypothesis Development

Based on the above theoretical and empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Influencer credibility has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions of skincare products on Shopee.

H2: User reviews have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions of skincare products on Shopee.

H3: Influencer credibility and user reviews jointly have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions of skincare products on Shopee.

These hypotheses are tested using a quantitative survey-based approach among Shopee users in Bogor who actively follow influencers and consider user reviews before making skincare purchases.

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design and Original Contribution

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive approach to examine the influence of influencer credibility and user reviews on skincare purchase decisions among Shopee users in Bogor. The originality of this research lies in integrating these two predictors within a single explanatory model tailored to a localized e-commerce context, with a focus on the skincare sector. While prior studies have investigated influencer marketing or user reviews separately, this research extends the literature by combining both factors in one model and assessing their joint and individual impacts in an emerging market context.

3.2. Data Collection

Data were gathered through a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms between March and April 2024. The purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2019) was employed, with the following respondent criteria:

- a. Residing in Bogor.
- b. Aged between 18 and 40 years.
- c. Active Shopee users who purchased skincare products at least twice in the past six months.
- d. Following at least one beauty/skincare influencer on social media.
- e. Frequently consulting user reviews before making purchase decisions.

A total of 150 valid responses were obtained. The questionnaire contained three constructs: influencer credibility (6 items), user reviews (6 items), and purchase decisions (5 items). Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Hair et al., 2010).

3.3. Sample Size Determination

The sample size was determined using the minimum sample requirement for multiple regression analysis, referring to Green's formula, $N > 50 + 8m$, where m is the number of independent variables (Green, 1991). With two predictors, the minimum required sample was 66 respondents, making the final sample of 150 sufficient to ensure statistical power.

3.4. Validity and Reliability Testing

A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents. Validity was assessed using Pearson correlation analysis, with item-total correlation values exceeding the critical value of 0.374, indicating construct validity (Ghozali, 2016). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with all constructs exceeding 0.70, confirming internal consistency (Hair & Anderson, 2014).

3.5. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26. Prior to regression testing, classical assumption tests were performed:

- a. Normality Test: The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution, with significance values above 0.05 indicating normality (Ghozali, 2016)
- b. Heteroscedasticity Test: The Glejser test assessed whether residual variances were constant across predicted values. Non-significant results indicated no heteroscedasticity (Ghozali, 2016)

Multiple linear regression was then applied to examine the partial effects (t-test) and simultaneous effects (F-test) of the independent variables on purchase decisions. Adjusted R^2 was used to evaluate the proportion of variance in purchase decisions explained by the predictors (Pallant, 2020)

3.6. Potential Sampling Bias

Purposive sampling, while ensuring the relevance of respondents, may introduce selection bias by excluding individuals outside the defined criteria. This could limit the generalizability of findings to broader consumer populations. However, the criteria were deliberately set to ensure respondents had sufficient exposure to influencer marketing and user reviews.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical research principles. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and participation was entirely voluntary. No personally identifiable information was collected, and data were used solely for academic purposes.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Validity Test

The validity test was conducted using Pearson correlation with a significance level of 0.05. Pearson correlation was chosen because the research data were measured using a Likert scale, which is treated as interval data, making it appropriate for measuring the strength and direction of the linear relationship between each item score and the total score of its construct. This approach is commonly recommended in psychometric testing for determining whether each item represents the intended construct (Ghozali, 2016; Sugiyono, 2019). An item is considered valid if the calculated r-value exceeds the critical value of 0.374. This critical value was obtained from the Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Table for a two-tailed test at the 0.05 significance level, with degrees of freedom (df) calculated as $n - 2$, where n is the number of respondents in the validity test (in this case, 30 respondents in the pilot test, resulting in $df = 28$). According to the statistical table presented in Ghozali's *Aplikasi Analisis Multivariate dengan Program IBM SPSS 23* (2016), the

corresponding r-table value for $df = 28$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ is 0.374. Items exceeding this value have a statistically significant correlation with the total score, confirming their construct validity.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	r_calculated	r_table	Valid
Influencer Q1	0.784	0.374	Yes
Influencer Q2	0.872	0.374	Yes
Influencer Q3	0.812	0.374	Yes
Influencer Q4	0.894	0.374	Yes
Influencer Q5	0.889	0.374	Yes
Influencer Q6	0.773	0.374	Yes
User Review Q1	0.496	0.374	Yes
User Review Q2	0.721	0.374	Yes
User Review Q3	0.827	0.374	Yes
User Review Q4	0.823	0.374	Yes
User Review Q5	0.72	0.374	Yes
User Review Q6	0.768	0.374	Yes
Purchase Decision Q1	0.682	0.374	Yes
Purchase Decision Q2	0.723	0.374	Yes
Purchase Decision Q3	0.784	0.374	Yes
Purchase Decision Q4	0.848	0.374	Yes
Purchase Decision Q5	0.545	0.374	Yes

Based on the results presented in Table 1, all items from the three constructs, Influencer Credibility, User Reviews, and Purchase Decision, recorded r-values exceeding the critical value of 0.374. This finding indicates that each questionnaire item has a statistically significant correlation with its respective total construct score, thereby confirming that the items effectively measure the intended dimensions. Furthermore, these results demonstrate that the instrument satisfies both content validity, by adequately representing the conceptual domain, and construct validity, by accurately capturing the underlying theoretical constructs under investigation.

4.2. Reliability Test

The internal consistency of each variable was tested using Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Threshold	Reliable
Influencer	0.912	0.7	Yes
User Reviews	0.821	0.7	Yes
Purchase Decision	0.763	0.7	Yes

As shown in Table 2, the Influencer Credibility construct achieved a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.912, User Reviews 0.821, and Purchase Decision 0.763. All values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70 as recommended by Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010) in *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed., Pearson Education), indicating that the measurement instrument demonstrates strong internal consistency. This suggests that the items within each construct consistently measure the same underlying concept, and the responses are stable across different observations. Consequently, the high reliability levels enhance the dependability of the findings, ensuring that similar results would likely be obtained if the measurement were repeated under comparable conditions. However, it is important to note that Cronbach's Alpha is sensitive to the number of items in a scale, where a higher number of items can inflate the alpha value without necessarily improving the actual consistency of the instrument. Therefore, reliability should be interpreted alongside validity and other measurement quality indicators.

4.3. Multiple Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was performed to evaluate the individual and joint effects of influencer credibility (X1) and user reviews (X2) on purchase decisions (Y).

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	19.841	3.799		5.222	.000
Influencer (X1)	.090	.100	.184	.904	.374
User Reviews (X2)	-.034	.153	-.045	-.220	.828

The results of the regression coefficients are presented in Table 3. The constant value is 19.841, with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the baseline purchase decision is statistically significant even in the absence of Influencer Credibility (X1) and User Reviews (X2). The Influencer Credibility (X1) variable shows a positive regression coefficient ($B = 0.090$) but is not statistically significant ($p = 0.374 > 0.05$). Similarly, User Reviews (X2) displays a negative coefficient ($B = -0.034$) and is also not statistically significant ($p = 0.828 > 0.05$). These findings indicate that neither influencer credibility nor user reviews exerts a statistically significant individual (partial) effect on purchase decisions.

Simultaneous effect of the independent variables was evaluated through the F-test, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Simultaneous Effect

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	35.872	15	2.391	.416	.664b
Residual	776.920	135	5.755		
Total	812.792	150			

The F-value obtained was 0.416 with a p-value of 0.664. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the regression model is not statistically significant. This implies that, as a group, influencer credibility and user reviews do not have a significant combined effect on the purchase decisions of Shopee users in Bogor.

4.4. Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0,379a	.144	.073	2,650

The R Square value of 0.144 and the Adjusted R Square of 0.073 indicate that the model explains only a small proportion of the variance in purchase decisions. In practical terms, this suggests that influencer credibility (X1) and user reviews (X2) together have limited predictive power for explaining consumer purchasing behavior in this context. A low R^2 value does not necessarily mean the model is useless, but it signals that other influential variables, such as product quality, brand loyalty, perceived safety, pricing strategies, or personal recommendations, may play a much larger role. This relatively weak explanatory strength could stem from the specific nature of the skincare market, where purchase decisions are often shaped by personal trial-and-error experiences, individual skin needs, and established brand preferences. Additionally, cultural and regional factors in Bogor may lead consumers to rely more on offline advice or promotional offers rather than online endorsements. These considerations highlight that, while influencer and review-based marketing remain relevant tools, they should be complemented by broader strategies that address the multifaceted drivers of consumer choice.

4.5. Discussion

The results of this study reveal a notable departure from the patterns established in previous literature. Prior research, including Puspitasari & Aruan (2023), Ghaly (2023), and Mohamed et al (2023) Consistently emphasizes that influencer credibility and user-generated reviews exert a strong, positive influence on consumer purchase decisions, particularly in the skincare industry, where perceived expertise and peer recommendations are often pivotal. However, in this study focusing on Shopee users in Bogor, neither influencer credibility nor user reviews demonstrated a statistically significant effect on purchase decisions. This divergence suggests that contextual factors may substantially alter the role of these marketing elements, a finding that partially aligns with Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, but indicates that internal attitudes and personal control may dominate over normative pressures in this setting.

One explanation is that consumers in Bogor may already possess high product familiarity and established brand preferences in skincare, reducing reliance on external cues. For example, a respondent who has used a specific sunscreen for years without adverse effects is unlikely to switch brands solely based on influencer endorsements or online reviews. This aligns with Wilson et al (2024) Findings that brand loyalty can neutralize the persuasive power of social media marketing. Furthermore, offline influences, such as recommendations from friends, family, or beauty consultants, remain strong in Bogor's consumer culture, contrasting with the highly digitalized patterns observed in metropolitan areas like Jakarta. The mention of "other factors" influencing purchase decisions is substantiated by examples such as aggressive promotional strategies (flash sales, cashback offers), trust in the e-commerce platform, perceived product safety, packaging appeal, and personal shopping convenience. For instance, Shopee's "12.12" sale events often shift consumer focus entirely toward price and discount magnitude, overshadowing influencer campaigns. In addition, anecdotal insights from local beauty community forums suggest that WhatsApp group discussions or in-store experiences can have a more immediate impact than online testimonials. It is important to avoid overgeneralization; these findings should be interpreted within the cultural and market context of Bogor and should not be assumed to apply universally. In other geographic or demographic contexts, influencer credibility and user reviews may indeed play a stronger role, as documented in studies by Sokolova and Kefi (2020) and Kim and Johnson (2016).

From a practical standpoint, these results carry significant implications for marketers and brand managers. Instead of relying solely on influencer collaborations or curated reviews, skincare brands targeting consumers in secondary cities should consider integrating localized strategies, such as experiential marketing, free product trials, loyalty rewards, or community-based engagement, to build stronger connections. Marketers might also invest in educating consumers about product benefits through transparent labeling and direct interaction in both online and offline touchpoints. For example, a pop-up skincare consultation booth at a Bogor mall, combined with targeted digital promotions, could bridge the gap between awareness and purchase more effectively than influencer content alone. In summary, while influencer credibility and user reviews remain relevant in the broader digital marketing discourse, their impact in this context is muted, underscoring the need for context-driven, multi-channel strategies. Future research should explore these dynamics further, incorporating both qualitative insights and a wider range of influencing variables to capture the complex decision-making process of skincare consumers in Indonesia.

V. Conclusion

This study provides evidence that, in the context of Shopee skincare consumers in Bogor, influencer credibility and user reviews do not exert a statistically significant effect on purchase decisions. This insight is valuable for practitioners, as it signals that marketing investments in these two elements alone may yield limited returns in similar markets. For brand managers and marketers, the findings emphasize the importance of developing strategies that go beyond digital endorsements—such as enhancing product trials, maintaining consistent quality, offering competitive pricing, and building emotional connections with consumers. From a practical standpoint, companies could explore hybrid approaches that integrate online engagement with offline touchpoints. For example, holding in-store skincare consultation events, offering free samples through community gatherings, or combining flash sale campaigns with loyalty reward programs may generate

stronger purchase intentions. Furthermore, building trust through transparent communication about product ingredients and efficacy can be more persuasive than influencer-led promotions in markets where personal experience and word-of-mouth dominate decision-making. This research is not without limitations. The sample was restricted to Shopee users in Bogor, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other regions with different cultural, economic, or digital adoption patterns. The variables examined were also limited to influencer credibility and user reviews, leaving out other potentially influential factors such as trust in the e-commerce platform, brand equity, and perceived product safety. Future research could address these gaps by expanding the geographic scope, incorporating additional variables, and employing qualitative methods to capture deeper consumer motivations.

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