

The Effect of Influencer Credibility and Celebrity Endorsements on Purchase Intention, with E-Trust as a Mediating Variable

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital marketing has transformed the way consumers interact with brands, particularly through the use of influencers and celebrity endorsements. However, the effectiveness of these strategies largely depends on the level of trust consumers develop in digital environments (e-trust). This study aims to analyze the effect of influencer credibility and celebrity endorsement on purchase intention, with e-trust as a mediating variable. This research adopted a quantitative approach using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale and analyzed to examine both direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results indicate that influencer credibility and celebrity endorsement have a positive and significant effect on e-trust. Furthermore, both variables also significantly influence purchase intention. E-trust is proven to have a positive effect on purchase intention and partially mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and celebrity endorsement with purchase intention. The structural model demonstrates strong predictive power and reliability. In conclusion, the effectiveness of influencer and celebrity-based marketing strategies is significantly enhanced when they are able to build consumer trust. Therefore, companies should prioritize selecting credible influencers and trustworthy endorsers to strengthen e-trust and increase consumer purchase intention.

Keywords: influencer credibility; celebrity endorser; e-trust; purchase intention; PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought major changes in global communication patterns and marketing strategies, including in Indonesia. Social media is the main platform in building interaction between brands and consumers. Based on DataIndonesia.id report, as of January 2023, the number of active social media users in Indonesia reached 167 million people or around 60.4% of the population (Widi, 2023). However, the high number of users does not automatically guarantee the effectiveness of digital marketing communication, so brands need to understand the dynamics of consumer behavior and engagement strategies assisted through the right celebrity or influencer media so that the message conveyed remains relevant and impactful.

This phenomenon shows a great opportunity for social media-based marketing practices, especially in the local beauty and skincare industry which is growing rapidly. Today's consumers rely heavily on beauty influencers as a source of product recommendations, reviews, and beauty tips. However, there have not been many studies that specifically examine the extent to which influencer interactivity and trust formed through these interactions can affect purchase intent for local skincare products. Skintific products are skincare products that are in high demand today (Putra et al., 2024).

Skintific is the main choice of consumers because it has managed to become the pioneer with the highest sales controlling around 7% of the beauty package market share on Shopee in the first quarter of 2025 (Compas, 2025). Skintipic's popularity is increasing because it is supported by the presence of celebrity Maahalini as a brand ambassador and influencer Tasya Farasya who is known to have a great influence in the Indonesian beauty community. The presence of these two public figures strengthens the brand's credibility and increases the product's exposure on social media.

One of the commonly used marketing strategies is celebrity endorsement, whose effectiveness is determined by three main indicators: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise of the public figures involved (Ramayanti, Pristiyono, & Febriani, 2024).

In the modern context, this concept has evolved with the advent of influencers, which are seen as a new form of celebrity endorsement or micro/macro-celebrity. If celebrity endorsements function as a formal branding strategy, then influencer interactivity presents a more relational approach through personal branding and interactivity. Influencer interactivity such as replying to comments or having a live chat is an important way to build a perception of authenticity, which is the extent to which the audience feels authenticity and personal closeness to the influencer. This authenticity, in turn, increases consumer confidence in the digital aspect of promotion, i.e. e-trust, which explains why e-trust plays an important role in mediating the relationship between celebrity endorsement and influencer interactivity strategies and consumer responses (Jun & Yi, 2020). Thus, the relationship between celebrity endorsements and influencer interactivity simultaneously becomes relevant because they are two complementary approaches in influencing consumer decisions.

In the context of digital marketing, e-Trust also plays an important role. e-Trust is the level of trust consumers have in digital entities such as platforms or influencers promoting products. Consumers believe that the parties involved in the transaction are able to maintain data security, make payments securely, and fulfil promises regarding product delivery and service. Indicators of e-Trust include the willingness to provide personal data and confidence that online companies behave professionally and fulfil their promises. Thus, e-Trust has a direct connection in building brand trust which ultimately influences consumers' purchasing decisions online (Agustina et al., 2021).

Furthermore, previous research has shown that brand trust can mediate the relationship between online consumer behavior and purchase intent, but the direct influence of influencer interactivity on purchase intent is still minimally studied academically, especially in the context of local Indonesian skincare (Putra et al., 2024). Coupled with the use of technology to become e-Trust digitally. Most research still focuses on marketing strategy variables such as brand image (Agustini & Elistia, 2024), so research on the influence of influencers as a modern advertising medium still has room to be explored further.

By looking at the gap, this study was conducted to analyze how the interactivity of influencers and celebrity endorsements can affect the purchase intention of local skincare product consumers, considering e-trust as a mediating variable. A deeper understanding of the relationship between these variables is important to increase the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in the local skincare industry amid increasingly competitive competition. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in integrating influencer credibility and celebrity endorsement within a single research framework, with e-trust positioned as a mediating

variable in shaping purchase intention. This study also specifically focuses on the local skincare industry in Indonesia, thereby offering a contextual contribution that distinguishes it from previous studies, which have generally emphasized broader consumer markets or global contexts.

Based on the identified research gap, this study aims to analyze the effect of influencer credibility and celebrity endorsement on purchase intention, as well as to examine the mediating role of e-trust in this relationship. In particular, this study seeks to explain how influencer credibility influences e-trust and purchase intention, how celebrity endorsement affects e-trust and purchase intention, and how e-trust strengthens the relationship between these marketing variables and consumer behavioral intentions. This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective, the study enriches the literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior by integrating influencer credibility and celebrity endorsement within the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework. From a practical perspective, the findings can serve as a strategic reference for companies, especially in the beauty and skincare industry, in designing more effective digital marketing campaigns by emphasizing credibility, trust building, and consumer engagement. In addition, this study may help marketers select suitable influencers and celebrities to enhance consumer trust and ultimately increase purchase intention.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative research design with an explanatory approach. Explanatory design aims to explain the causal relationships between variables through testing pre-formulated hypotheses. This approach was chosen because the study focused on testing the influence of influencer interactivity and celebrity endorsement on purchase intention with e-trust as a mediating variable. The analysis of the relationship between variables was carried out simultaneously using Structural Equation Modelilng (SEM), so that it was able to explain the direct and indirect influences in one integrated model (Pardede & Manurung, 2014; Hair et al., 2019).

The measurement of all variable indicators in this study used a five-point Likert scale, with a value range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Likert scale is used because it is able to quantitatively capture respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and judgments and is commonly used in marketing and consumer behavior research. The use of this scale was considered effective for measuring latent constructs in SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

Instrument testing is carried out to ensure that the measuring instrument used is valid and reliable. The convergent validity test was carried out by looking at the outer loading value and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where the AVE value ≥ 0.50 indicates good validity. The discriminatory validity test was carried out using the Fornell–Larcker and Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criteria. Meanwhile, the reliability test was measured through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values, with a value of ≥ 0.70 indicating a good level of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019).

The Influence of Influencer Interactivity on E-Trust

Influencer interactivity is a form of two-way communication that allows audiences to interact directly with influencers through comments, messages, or interactive content. Based

on SOR theory, this interactivity functions as a stimulus capable of influencing the psychological state of consumers. The higher the level of influencer interactivity, the greater the perception of closeness, authenticity, and transparency felt by the audience. This condition encourages the formation of e-trust, because consumers feel that influencers are more responsive, trustworthy, and care about the needs of their followers. Previous empirical findings show that active interaction of influencers contributes significantly to increased consumer trust in digital contexts. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Influencer interactivity has a positive effect on e-trust.

The Influence of Celebrity Endorsements on E-Trust

Celebrity endorsements are marketing strategies that utilize public figures with high levels of popularity to increase brand credibility. Within the framework of SOR, the presence of celebrities acts as a stimulus that shapes the perception and psychological evaluation of consumers. Celebrity attributes such as appeal, trustworthiness, and expertise relevant to skincare products can increase consumer confidence in the advertised brand. When celebrities are perceived to have a good reputation and appropriate competencies, consumers tend to trust the information conveyed so that e-trust in digital products and platforms is increasing. Thus, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H2: Celebrity endorsements have a positive effect on e-trust.

The Influence of Influencer Interactivity on Purchase Intention

In SOR theory, a strong stimulus not only affects the organism, but can also have a direct impact on the behavioral response. Influencer interactivity allows for a more personal connection between influencers and audiences, thereby increasing consumer emotional engagement. When consumers feel engaged and cared for, they tend to have a positive attitude towards recommended products. This condition can encourage the emergence of purchase intention without going through complex cognitive processes. Therefore, the higher the influencer interactivity, the greater the tendency of consumers to intend to buy the skincare products being promoted. The hypotheses proposed are:

H3: Influencer interactivity has a positive effect on purchase intention.

The Influence of Celebrity Endorsements on Purchase Intention

Celebrity endorsements also act as a stimulus that can directly affect consumer responses. The popularity and positive image of celebrities can be transferred to the advertised product, thereby increasing the appeal and perception of the product's quality in the eyes of consumers. In the context of skincare, consumers tend to follow the recommendations of celebrities who are considered to have attractive appearances and lifestyles that are relevant to beauty products. This encourages increased buying interest in products supported by these celebrities. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Celebrity endorsements have a positive effect on purchase intention.

The Influence of E-Trust on Purchase Intention

E-trust is a psychological condition of consumers that reflects the level of trust in digital entities, including influencers, celebrities, and e-commerce platforms. In the SOR model, e-trust acts as an organism that bridges stimuli and responses. The high level of e-trust will reduce risk perception and increase consumers' sense of security in making online transactions. Consumers who have a high level of trust tend to be more confident to buy digitally promoted skincare products. Therefore, the higher the consumer e-trust, the greater the purchase intention formed. The hypotheses proposed are:

H5: E-trust has a positive effect on purchase intention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The bootstrapping results showed that influencer interactivity had a positive and significant effect on e-trust ($\beta = 0.411$, $t = 7.96$, $p < 0.001$), so H1 was accepted. Celebrity endorsements also have a positive effect on e-trust ($\beta = 0.367$, $t = 7.79$, $p < 0.001$), so H2 is accepted.

Furthermore, influencer interactivity ($\beta = 0.354$, $t = 5.95$, $p < 0.001$) and celebrity endorsement ($\beta = 0.257$, $t = 4.76$, $p < 0.001$) were shown to have a positive effect on purchase intention, so H3 and H4 were accepted. E-trust also had a positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.347$, $t = 5.75$, $p < 0.001$), so H5 was accepted.

Table 1. Measurement Model Results

Construct	Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Celebrity Endorser	CE1	0,883	0,847	0,907	0,765
Celebrity Endorser	CE2	0,868			
Celebrity Endorser	CE3	0,873			
Influencer Credibility	IC1	0,811	0,852	0,894	0,629
Influencer Credibility	IC2	0,792			
Influencer Credibility	IC3	0,767			
Influencer Credibility	IC4	0,785			
Influencer Credibility	IC5	0,81			
E-Trust	ET1	0,848	0,85	0,901	0,695
E-Trust	ET2	0,809			
E-Trust	ET3	0,852			
E-Trust	ET4	0,824			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0,909	0,884	0,928	0,812
Purchase Intention	PI2	0,889			
Purchase Intention	PI3	0,905			

Source: Processed results of researchers using SmartPLS (2026)

Table 2. Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	t-stat	p-value	Results	Verdict
H1	IC -> AND	0,411	7,96	<0.001	Significant	Accepted
H2	THIS -> AND	0,367	7,79	<0.001	Significant	Accepted
H3	IC -> PI	0,354	5,95	<0.001	Significant	Accepted
H4	CE -> IP	0,257	4,76	<0.001	Significant	Accepted
H5	AND -> PI	0,347	5,75	<0.001	Significant	Accepted

Source: Processed results of researchers using SmartPLS (2026)

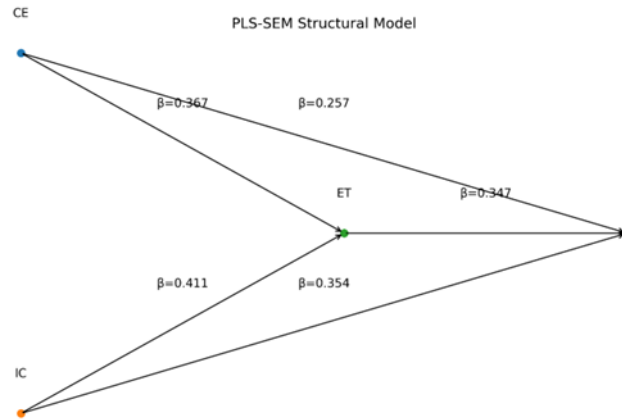
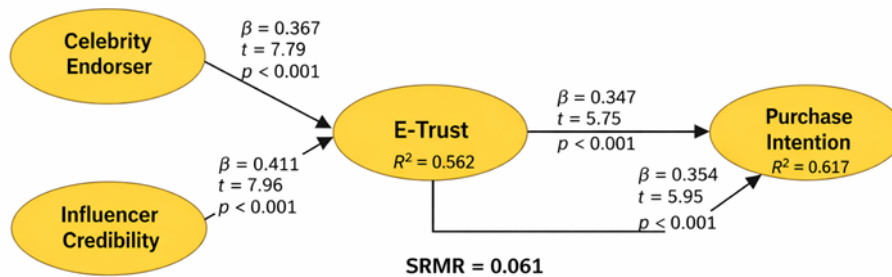


Figure 1. Research Model

Source: Developed by researchers (2026)



CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method, this study concludes that influencer credibility and celebrity endorsers have an important role in increasing consumer purchase intent. Directly, these two variables have been proven to have a positive and significant effect on e-trust and purchase intention. The results show that influencer credibility has a stronger influence on e-trust than celebrity endorser, indicating that the perception of expertise, honesty, and attractiveness of influencers are key factors in building consumer trust in the digital environment. In addition, e-trust has been shown to have a significant effect on purchase intention, thus emphasizing the role of trust as a psychological mechanism that encourages purchase intent. The mediation findings confirm that e-trust partially mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and celebrity endorsers to purchase intention. This means that the strategy of using influencers and celebrities will be more effective if they are able to build consumer trust first. Practically, companies are advised to be more selective in choosing influencers who have high credibility and ensure that marketing communication messages are able to increase consumer trust. For further research, it is recommended to add other variables such as perceived value, brand image, or customer engagement and expand the industry context so that the generalization of findings becomes stronger.

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