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HOW INFLUENCER ATTRIBUTES SHAPE PURCHASE INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED EMOTIONAL VALUE

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Abstract. The rapid growth of social media platforms such as Tiktok has transformed beauty marketing, making influencers key figures in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intention. This Study investigates how three key attributes of Social Media Influencers (SMIs) reliability, trustworthiness, and authenticity influencer purchase intention, with perceived emotional value as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach, was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to three hundred active social media users who had purchased beauty products recommended by influencers. Data were analyzed using covariance based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships and assess the overall model fit. The findings reveal that reliability, trustworthiness and authenticity each have significant positive effects on perceived emotional value. Furthermore, perceived emotional value has a strong and positive influence on consumers purchase intention, serving as a key mediator that links influencer attributes to behavioral outcomes. These results underscore that emotional engagement plays a pivotal role in transforming influencer into actual consumer intention to purchase. Consumers tend to form stronger emotional bonds when influencers appear authentic, trustworthy, and personally relatable, which enhances the overall perceived value of the endorsed products. Collaborations emphasizing sincerity, trust, and emotional storytelling are likely to create deeper consumer attachment and higher purchase conversion rates.

Keywords; Social Media Influencer, Relatability, Trustworthiness, Perceived Authenticity, Perceived Emotional Value, Purchase Intention

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of the beauty industry in Indonesia reflects a major transformation driven in part by the influence of social media. According to Fajriyani (2025), the beauty sector is growing at around 16% annually, while the market value of cosmetics and personal care products reached US\$8.09 billion in 2023 and is expected to increase to US\$9.17 billion in 2024 (Insight of, 2024). This growth shows how consumer behavior is changing, especially because of digital communication and public figures on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. In this context, beauty influencers play a key role in shaping how consumers feel and think about brands. They do this by using personal and genuine communication styles that build a strong psychological connection and trust in the brand.

This phenomenon can be explained through the Source Credibility Theory according to Hovland & Weiss (1951), which highlights the importance of the credibility of the source, and the Consumer Culture Theory according to Arnould & Thompson (2005), which views consumption as an emotional expression of meaning. One of the main factors in an influencer's credibility is relatability, which is the perception of similarity in values, lifestyle, and personality with the audience. Influencers who are relatable create empathy and

emotional closeness because the audience feels represented (Atiq et al., 2022; Liao & Chen, 2024). Indicators of relatability include shared experiences, natural speaking style, and the ability to communicate warmly (Lee & Eastin, 2021).

Beyond closeness, trustworthiness is also a key factor in forming emotional bonds between influencers and their audiences. Trustworthiness develops when influencers are seen as honest, consistent, and transparent in their product recommendations (Coutinho et al., 2023a; Li Yuxuan, 2025). Studies Ünalmış et al. (2024) and Li Yuxuan (2025) emphasize that trustworthiness increases emotional value because it creates a sense of safety and positive psychological confidence. Another factor that strengthens emotional attachment is authenticity, which refers to the perception that an influencer shows their true personality and remains consistent in every post (Kim & Wang, 2024; Reinikainen et al., 2020). Authenticity creates warmth and emotional trust that traditional promotional strategies find difficult to match (Hasan et al., 2024a; Koles et al., 2024).

Perceived Emotional Value (PEV) shows the emotional benefits that consumers feel from interacting with an influencer and a product Sweeney & Soutar (2001), such as happiness, pride, and satisfaction (Cao et al., 2025). PEV acts as an important mediator between an influencer's personal attributes and purchase intention, because buying decisions are now more influenced by emotional satisfaction than by rational thinking (Z.-X. Wang et al., 2024; Zhou & Tong, 2022).

There has been extensive research on various influencer attributes, but existing studies tend to examine relatability, trustworthiness, and authenticity in isolation rather than in an integrated model. Moreover, research rarely explores how these three attributes jointly shape perceived emotional value, which subsequently drives purchase intention particularly within the rapidly growing beauty influencer landscape in Indonesia. This fragmentation creates a notable research gap, as emotional value has become increasingly central in shaping consumer decisions in digital environments. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by analyzing the combined effects of relatability, trustworthiness, and authenticity on purchase intention, with perceived emotional value as the mediating variable.

2. Literature Review

Relatability refers to how much an influencer feels like someone similar to their audience in terms of values, lifestyle, and personality. When an influencer is seen as relatable, people are more likely to feel connected and understand them because they share similar experiences and ways of communicating (Atiq et al., 2022; Liao & Chen, 2024). When followers feel close to an influencer, they often feel happy, excited, or attached. Research shows that when an influencer is relatable, it makes the content feel more emotional and meaningful, which increases how much people value the emotional experience (Lee & Eastin, 2021).

H1: Relatability has a positive effect on Perceived Emotional Value.

Trustworthiness is an important factor that affects how consumers feel emotionally when they see influencers. It means people believe the influencers are honest, reliable, and open when they talk about products (Coutinho et al., 2023b; Li Yuxuan, 2025). When influencers are genuine and keep their messages consistent, it makes people feel safe and

comfortable emotionally (Ünalmiş et al., 2024) Studies show that trustworthiness adds more emotional value because people who trust influencers often form stronger emotional connections and feel more positive about the products they recommend (Li Yuxuan, 2025).

H2: Trustworthiness has a positive effect on Perceived Emotional Value.

Authenticity is about how influencers show their real personality and act the same way on all their platforms. Real influencers share their true feelings and personal stories that match who they are and what they believe in (Kim & Wang, 2024; Reinikainen et al., 2020) Research shows that when influencers are genuine, it makes people feel warm, sincere, and emotionally connected in a way that regular ads usually can't (Hasan et al., 2024b; Koles et al., 2024). When people think an influencer is being themselves, they connect more emotionally and feel that the experience has more emotional value.

H3: Authenticity has a positive effect on Perceived Emotional Value.

Perceived Emotional Value (PEV) is about the positive feelings people get when they see influencers or buy products that are recommended. These feelings can make someone feel happy, proud, or satisfied (Cao et al., 2025; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) New research shows that PEV plays a big role in why people make buying decisions. More and more, people choose what to buy based on how they feel instead of just thinking things through (Z.-X. Wang et al., 2024; Zhou & Tong, 2022). When people think a product has a lot of emotional value, they are more likely to want to buy it, especially if it's endorsed by someone they trust and who connects with them emotionally.

H4: Perceived Emotional Value has a positive effect on Purchase Intention.

Perceived emotional value (PEV) serves as an affective mechanism that explains how influencer characteristics influence consumer purchasing behavior. Previous studies show that emotional value acts as a link between credibility cues and source characteristics and thus decision-making (J. Wang et al., 2025; Zhou & Tong, 2022). When target groups perceive an influencer as approachable, trustworthy, and authentic, these characteristics generate positive emotions such as well-being, joy, pride, and emotional security, which increase the perceived value of the advertised product (Cao et al., 2025). Therefore, PEV is expected to mediate the relationship between the characteristics of social media influencers and consumers' purchase intention.

H5: Perceived emotional value mediates the relationship between the attributes of social media influencers (reliability, trustworthiness, and authenticity) and purchase intention.

3. Methods

This study employed a quantitative survey method to examine the effects of empathy, credibility, and perceived authenticity on purchase intention, with perceived emotional value as a mediator. The population consisted of Indonesian social media users who had purchased beauty products based on influencer recommendations. Samples were selected using purposive sampling with criteria: ≥ 18 years old, actively following beauty influencers, and having prior purchase experience. A total of 300 respondents participated, meeting the

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minimum requirement for SEM ($\geq 5-10 \times$ indicators). Data were collected through an online questionnaire containing demographic items and variable statements measured using a 1–10 bipolar scale to enhance sensitivity and reduce midpoint bias (Kotler et al., 2019). Data analysis used CB-SEM with AMOS 24 and SPSS 27, including tests of normality, validity, reliability, goodness of fit (CFI, TLI, GFI, AGFI, RMSEA), and direct and mediating effects within the conceptual model.

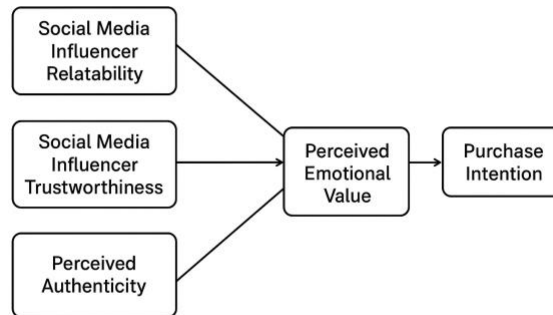


Fig 1. Research Model

Data analysis was performed using the covariance-based stochastic linear equation model (SEM) with AMOS software. The process included developing the conceptual model, verifying data integrity and validity, and checking validity and reliability to ensure construct accuracy. Once the model was deemed adequate, a significance test was performed to evaluate the relationships between the variables according to the research hypotheses (Kline, 2023)

4. Results

This study was conducted with 300 respondents. The characteristics of the respondents were divided into several groups, starting with age and how often they watch TikTok Live per week. The characteristics of the respondents selected for the study are presented in Table

Table 1. Characteristic Responden

Characteristics	Attribute	Total	%
Gender	Men	92	30,7
Gender	Woman	208	69,3
Age	<18 year	9	3,0
Age	18–24 year	198	66,0
Age	25–34 year	69	23,0
Age	35 years	24	8,0
Number of beauty influencers followed	1–3 account	102	34,0
Number of beauty influencers followed	4-6 account	132	44,0

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Characteristics	Attribute	Total	%
Number of beauty influencers followed	>6 account	66	22,0
TOTAL		300	100

Source : Research Result, 2025

Of the 300 respondents, the majority were women (69.7%) aged between 18 and 24 (66.0%), representing the main audience for beauty content on social media. In addition, 45.3% followed between 4 and 6 influencers, indicating broad exposure that can reinforce emotional value and encourage the intention to purchase recommended products.

In the first step of structural equation modeling (SEM), a normality test was performed. The multivariate critical ratio of -0.911 was within the acceptable range of ± 2.58 , indicating a normal distribution of the data. Outlier detection also proceeded without any problems, as all Z-values were within ± 3 and the highest Mahalanobis distance (30.917) was below the chi-square threshold (37.697). Thus, the data met the requirements of normal distribution and absence of outliers and were therefore suitable for further SEM analysis.

Table 2. Measurement, Loadings, CR, and VE

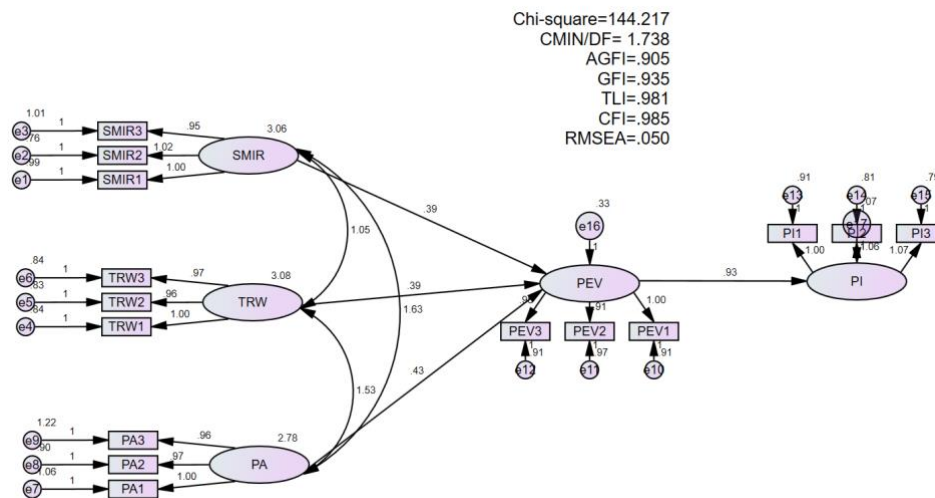
NO	Questionnaire Statements	Construct	Indicator	Loading Factor	CR	VE
1	Shared lifestyle and values with the audience.	Relatability	R 1	0.869	0.907	0.764
2	A natural, uncontrived way of communicating.		R 2	0.897		
3	The ability to create "peer-like" relationships.		R 3	0.856		
4	Openness to brand collaboration.	Trustworthiness	TW 1	0,886	0.913	0.778
5	Consistency of influencer messaging and behavior.		TW 2	0,880		
6	A sense of security and confidence in influencer recommendations.		TW 3	0,880		
7	Alignment between personal values and promotional messages.	Authenticity	PA1	0.851	0.882	0.714
8	Consistency of communication style and behavior across platforms.		PA 2	0.862		
9	Authenticity in conveying personal		PA 3	0.822		

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NO	Questionnaire Statements	Construct	Indicator	Loading Factor	CR	VE
	experiences and emotions					
10	Feelings of pleasure and satisfaction when following an influencer's recommendation.	Perceived Emotional Value	PEV 1	0.883	0.906	0.763
11	A sense of pride or confidence after using the product.		PEV 2	0.858		
12	Emotional attachment to the influencer or brand.		PEV 3	0.879		
13	Desire to purchase the promoted product.	Purchase Intention	PI 1	0.869	0.916	0.785
14	Willingness to try the recommended product.		PI 2	0.893		
15	Likelihood to recommend the product to others.		PI 3	0.896		

Source : Research Result, 2025

Validity and reliability tests showed that all indicators had factor loadings above 0.40, while VE values exceeded 0.50 and CR values were above 0.70. These results confirm that all constructs in the study are valid and reliable.



Source : Research Result, 2025

Fig 2. Model Amos

Table 3. Goodness of fit

<i>Goodness of Fit</i>	<i>Result Analysis</i>	<i>Cut of Value</i>	<i>Evaluasi Model</i>
<i>Chi-Square</i>	144.271	Diharapkan kecil	Marjinal Fit
<i>CMIN/DF</i>	1.739	< 2.000	Fit
<i>AGFI</i>	0.905	> 0.90	Fit
<i>GFI</i>	0.935	> 0.90	Fit
<i>TLI</i>	0.981	> 0.95	Fit
<i>CFI</i>	0.985	> 0.95	Fit
<i>RMSEA</i>	0.050	< 0.80	Fit

Source : Research Result, 2025

The goodness-of-fit test is performed to evaluate the adequacy of the structural model with the empirical data. According to the criteria of Kline (2023), which include Chi-square, $CMIN/DF \leq 3$, GFI, AGFI, CFI, and $TLI \geq 0.90$, as well as $RMSEA \leq 0.80$, the results of the analysis show that all indicators meet the goodness-of-fit limits. Therefore, the model is considered adequate and suitable for further analysis.

Table 4. Direct Hypothesis Testing

<i>Influencer Relationship</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>C.R.</i>	<i>P</i>
PEV $\leftarrow$ SMIR	0.395	9.857	0.000
PEV $\leftarrow$ TRW	0.395	10.271	0.000
PEV $\leftarrow$ PA	0.434	8.923	0.000
PI $\leftarrow$ PEV	0.926	20.688	0.000

Table 5. Indirect Hypothesis Testing

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	<i>P</i>
R $\rightarrow$ PEV $\rightarrow$ PI	0.366	0.245	0.498	0.002
TW $\rightarrow$ PEV $\rightarrow$ PI	0.366	0.243	0.497	0.002
PA $\rightarrow$ PEV $\rightarrow$ PI	0.402	0.289	0.542	0.001

Source : Research Result, 2025

Table 4 and table 5 shows that all hypotheses are supported. Relatability significantly affects perceived emotional value ($\beta = 0.395$, $p = 0.000$) and parasocial relationship ($\beta = 0.395$, $p = 0.000$), while perceived authenticity positively influences perceived emotional value ($\beta = 0.434$, $p = 0.000$). Perceived emotional value strongly affects purchase intention ($\beta = 0.926$, $p = 0.000$), and bootstrapping confirms its mediating role between influencer attributes and purchase intention (indirect effects: relatability = 0.366, trustworthiness = 0.366, authenticity = 0.402; all $p < 0.005$), highlighting it as a key psychological mechanism in purchase decisions.

5. Discussion

The findings show that relatability, trustworthiness, and authenticity significantly enhance perceived emotional value, which then increases purchase intention. This supports prior research indicating that influencer persuasiveness is strongly driven by emotional rather than purely informational responses. The results also align with parasocial interaction theory, which proposes that emotional closeness to a source strengthens consumer persuasion (Ohlin & Gyllen, 2023). The mediating role of emotional value confirms that purchase decisions are

influenced by how consumers feel toward an influencer, consistent with studies showing emotional value as a key driver of consumer behavior (J. Wang et al., 2025). Additionally, the combined effect of these influencer attributes corresponds with source credibility findings emphasizing the importance of authenticity and trust in shaping consumer responses (Koles et al., 2024). Practically, brands should prioritize influencers who can create genuine emotional resonance, as emotional engagement has been shown to improve marketing effectiveness.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study finds that relatable, trustworthy, and authentic influencers enhance consumers' emotional value, which in turn boosts purchase intention. Emotional value acts as a key mediator, highlighting the importance of emotional connection over informational content in driving purchases. The research is limited to Indonesian social media users, uses a cross-sectional design, and examines only emotional value as a mediator. Future studies should explore other mediators, diverse cultural contexts, different product categories, and use longitudinal or experimental methods to better understand influencer-driven marketing effects.

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