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Credibility and purchase intention: The mediating role of product fit in skincare marketing

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Abstract: *Influencer marketing effectiveness may depend on how consumers evaluate source credibility, authenticity, and the fit between an influencer and an endorsed product. This study examines the direct effects of beauty influencer credibility and authenticity on purchase intention for Glad2Glow cosmetics and the mediating role of product fit. A cross-sectional survey of 100 Generation Z consumers in Jombang Regency who recognized Glad2Glow, knew Tasya Farasya, and had viewed her Glad2Glow-related content was analyzed using partial least squares-structural equation modeling in SmartPLS 4. Credibility had positive effects on product fit and purchase intention, while product fit positively affected purchase intention. Product fit partially mediated the effect of credibility on purchase intention. Authenticity showed no significant direct effect on product fit or purchase intention and no significant indirect effect through product fit. The model explained 47.0% of the variance in product fit and 47.3% of the variance in purchase intention. In the tested sample and campaign context, credibility and product fit were significant drivers of purchase intention, whereas authenticity was not significant in the specified model. Managers should prioritize credible influencers whose expertise, image, and values align with the endorsed brand while maintaining transparent communication.*

Keywords: *authenticity; credibility; influencer marketing; product fit; purchase intention*

Kredibilitas dan minat beli: Peran mediasi *product fit* dalam pemasaran perawatan kulit

Abstrak: *Efektivitas pemasaran influencer dapat bergantung pada cara konsumen menilai kredibilitas sumber, autentisitas, dan product fit antara influencer dan produk. Penelitian ini menguji pengaruh langsung kredibilitas dan autentisitas beauty influencer terhadap minat beli kosmetik Glad2Glow serta peran mediasi product fit. Survei potong lintang terhadap 100 orang konsumen Generasi Z di Kabupaten Jombang yang mengenal Glad2Glow, mengetahui Tasya Farasya, dan pernah melihat*

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kontennya terkait Glad2Glow dianalisis menggunakan partial least squares-structural equation modeling pada SmartPLS 4. Kredibilitas berpengaruh positif terhadap product fit dan minat beli, sedangkan product fit berpengaruh positif terhadap minat beli. Product fit memediasi secara parsial pengaruh kredibilitas terhadap minat beli. Autentisitas tidak menunjukkan pengaruh langsung yang signifikan terhadap product fit maupun minat beli dan tidak menunjukkan pengaruh tidak langsung yang signifikan melalui product fit. Model menjelaskan 47,0% varians product fit dan 47,3% varians minat beli. Dalam sampel dan konteks kampanye yang diuji, kredibilitas dan product fit menjadi pendorong signifikan minat beli, sedangkan autentisitas tidak signifikan dalam model. Manajer perlu memprioritaskan influencer kredibel yang keahlian, citra, dan nilainya selaras dengan merek, sekaligus tetap menjaga komunikasi yang transparan.

Kata kunci: *autentisitas; kredibilitas; minat beli; pemasaran influencer; product fit*

INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing has transformed influencers into sources of information, opinion leaders, personal brand managers, and liaisons between brands and young consumers (Casaló et al., 2020). Their effectiveness stems not only from their reach but also from their ability to create content, build communities, manage relationships, and perform commercial persuasion functions (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Hudders et al., 2021; Ifie et al., 2018). Cosmetic consumers also seek examples, experience, and recommendations in addition to information on product functionality. This presents the opportunity for influencers to be part of the process of evaluating products prior to buying them. In Generation Z, who evaluates products using mainly visual and online sources, source credibility, self-presentation, and product suitability can affect buying intention (Vrontis et al., 2021; Widyanto & Agusti, 2020). Along with the increased number of collaborations between companies, customers also examine the intentions behind promotions, sponsorships, and information provided (De Veirman et al., 2017; Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019; Evans et al., 2017; Weismueller et al., 2020).

Authenticity and credibility both refer to evaluations of an influencer, though their basis of persuasion differs from each other. Source credibility refers to whether people see an influencer as an authority figure who is persuasive and believable (Ohanian, 1990). Expertise in influencer marketing involves knowledge and competence regarding the category of products, while trustworthiness involves honesty and dependability. The attractiveness and likability of the person can also have an impact on advertising and purchasing behaviors (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Munnukka et al., 2016; Wiedmann & Von Mettenheim, 2021). Expertise is therefore treated as a relevant dimension of credibility in this study. Followers also evaluate the message itself, such as informativeness, content credibility, and entertainment value contribute to their assessment of branded content (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Authenticity signifies the belief that an influencer expresses themselves in a truthful, coherent, and honest way. Lee & Eastin (2021) stress the significance of sincerity and transparent endorsements, Balaban & Szambolics (2022) address warmth and genuine recommendation intention, and Mabkhot et al. (2022) encompass honesty, reliability, and warmth in influencer assessment. The authenticity of influencers is molded by the justness and clarity of their interaction with brands when commercial activities proliferate (Audrezet et al., 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021; Pöyry et al., 2019). Therefore, an influencer could be seen as credible without being considered sufficiently expert to appraise a certain product, and conversely.

Product fit provides the evaluative context for credibility and authenticity. Within this investigation, product fit signifies the consumers' perceived compatibility between the influencer and the recommended product in terms of image, expertise, product use, lifestyle, and values. The notion is significantly associated with the wider body of literature around endorser-brand alignment, although the label product fit remains unchanged as the variable name due to the original research methodology and questionnaire explicitly addressing suitability in the context of the Tasya Farasya-Glad2Glow product. The match-up theory asserts that endorsements are more potent when the attributes of the source pertain to the product being endorsed, whereas the meaning-transfer model details how the symbolic connotations of an endorser can be imparted to the product and its users (Kamins, 1990; McCracken, 1989). A high degree of product fit clarifies the influencer's relevance to the product, lessens the view

of a just transactional collaboration, and bolsters the appraisal of the endorsement (Belanche et al., 2021; Breves et al., 2019; Janssen et al., 2022; Schouten et al., 2020). The outcomes persist in being ambiguous, yet. According to Gubalane & Ha (2023), perceived alignment aids in the evaluative process that drives purchase intention, however Putri & Handriana (2023) indicate that alignment and credibility do not invariably boost purchase intention.

Earlier investigations have predominantly focused on credibility, authenticity, and product fit in separate frameworks, creating doubt about their individual direct and mediated impacts when evaluated together. Analyzes of parasocial interactions underscore relational mechanisms, in contrast to studies on product fit that prioritize an evaluative mechanism rooted in the alignment of source and brand (Reinikainen et al., 2020; Taillon et al., 2020). The Tasya Farasya-Glad2Glow scenario was intentionally selected as it merges a beauty-oriented influencer, a skincare company, and an audience that had consumed material connecting the influencer to the brand. In this case, expertise, credibility, and product fit are all investigated under the same context of influencer endorsement.

This research investigates how beauty influencer credibility and authenticity are associated with the product fit and purchase intentions. It further examines the impact of product fit on purchase intentions and whether the product fit acts as a mediator in the relationship between credibility and authenticity. Investigating these relationships, altogether, helps to investigate source evaluation, relational integrity, and compatibility between source and brand independently. The study investigates seven relationships based on theories with one PLS-SEM framework with responses from Generation Z members of Jombang Regency.

Source credibility theory states that the audience has a higher justification for believing in an assertion made by a competent communicator. In the cosmetic products industry, expertise shows the communicator's knowledge of the product type, and credible and informative content helps the audience to evaluate the suitability of the influencer as a brand ambassador (Belanche et al., 2021; Gubalane & Ha, 2023; Ohanian, 1990). On this basis, higher credibility is expected to strengthen product fit.

H_1: Beauty influencer credibility has a positive effect on product fit.

Credibility might have a direct effect on purchase intentions since credible advice would lessen information risk and increase susceptibility. Research conducted on social media endorsement shows that expertise and credibility lead to positive perceptions of brands and purchases especially where the consumer cannot evaluate the brand prior to its use (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Weismueller et al., 2020; Wiedmann & Von Mettenheim, 2021). These findings support the expectation that credible beauty influencers will increase purchase intention.

H_2: Beauty influencer credibility has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Consumers might perceive better fit with the product when the endorsement aligns with the influencer's character and normal content style. Honest recommendations, clear communication of sponsorship, and harmony of one's own values and business practices could give the impression of authenticity (Audrezet et al., 2020; Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019; Lee & Eastin, 2021; Pöyry et al., 2019). Authenticity is therefore expected to strengthen product fit.

H_3: Beauty influencer authenticity has a positive effect on product fit.

Authenticity may also affect purchase intention directly by reducing skepticism about commercial motives. Honest, reliable, and warm communication can help followers interpret a recommendation as genuine, increase confidence in the message, and strengthen favorable purchase responses (Balaban & Szambolics, 2022; Cabeza-Ramírez et al., 2022; Liu & Zheng, 2024). Perceived authenticity is therefore expected to increase purchase intention.

H_4: Beauty influencer authenticity has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Product fit reflects alignment between the influencer's image, expertise, product use, lifestyle, and values and those associated with the endorsed brand. When product fit is high, an endorsement is easier to process as a plausible and relevant recommendation. This logic is consistent with the match-up hypothesis and meaning-transfer model (Kamins, 1990; McCracken, 1989). Empirical studies likewise show that product fit improves source evaluation, advertising responses, and behavioral intention (Breves et al., 2019; Janssen et al., 2022; Schouten et al., 2020). Product fit is therefore expected to increase purchase intention.

H_5: Product fit has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Credibility may affect purchase intention indirectly by first strengthening product fit. Expertise and trustworthy information make the influencer-brand relationship appear more plausible, and product

fit then provides contextual relevance for the purchase decision. Prior evidence shows that source credibility and product fit are related but distinct drivers of endorsement effectiveness (Ao et al., 2023; Gubalane & Ha, 2023). Product fit is therefore expected to transmit part of the effect of credibility on purchase intention.

H_6: Product fit mediates the effect of beauty influencer credibility on purchase intention.

Authenticity could also affect purchase intention via product fit. A recommendation that appears genuine and consistent with the influencer's persona may lead followers to view the brand partnership as appropriate. That judgment of product fit may then strengthen purchase intention. Research on endorsement transparency and influencer-brand relationships provides a basis for this sequence, although the strength of the relationships varies by context (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019; Lee & Eastin, 2021; Pöyry et al., 2019). Accordingly, product fit is expected to mediate the effect of authenticity on purchase intention.

H_7: Product fit mediates the effect of beauty influencer authenticity on purchase intention.

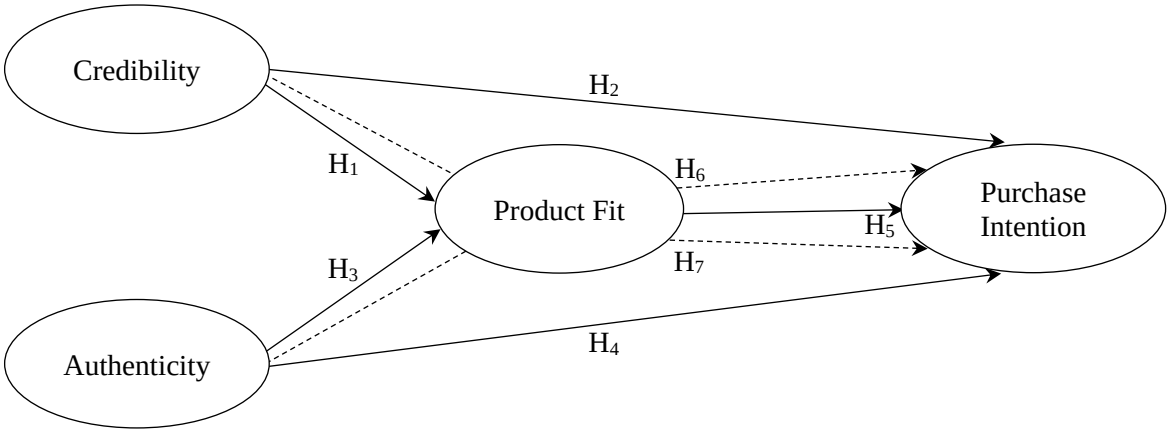


Figure 1. Theoretical framework
Source: Developed by author (2026)

METHOD

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted among Generation Z residents of Jombang Regency born between 1997 and 2012. Purposive sampling was conducted whereby participants must have known (i) the cosmetic brand Glad2Glow, (ii) Tasya Farasya as a beauty influencer, and (iii) the influencer's reviews regarding the cosmetic. A screening question was included at the beginning of the survey questionnaire for excluding those failing to meet the three above-mentioned criteria. The exact number of consumers of Generation Z exposed to all three factors could not be found and therefore probability sampling was unfeasible. The minimum sample size was estimated based on the endogenous equation involving the largest number of predictors. When alpha is 0.05, statistical power is 0.80, and the effect size is medium ($f^2 = 0.15$), the minimum sample size is 77 cases (Hair et al., 2022). The target number of 100 was determined to offer a cushion on top of this number; 100 complete and valid responses were finally obtained. The sample size obtained satisfies the stated criteria for modeling purposes; however, it does not statistically represent all Generation Z population in Jombang Regency. The data collection process involved the use of a pre-designed survey tool with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Of those who took part in the survey, 93 were females (93%) while only 7 were males (7%). Regarding the year of birth, 52 respondents (52%) were born between 2002 and 2005, 43 respondents (43%) between 2006 and 2012, while 5 respondents (5%) were born between 1997 and 2001. Jombang District formed 48 participants (48%), while the other 52 participants (52%) were from other parts of Jombang Regency. All of the respondents satisfied the criterion of interacting with material by Tasya Farasya related to Glad2Glow.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	7	7%
Female	93	93%
Year of birth		
1997-2001	5	5%
2002-2005	52	52%
2006-2012	43	43%
Domicile		
Jombang District	48	48%
Other sub-districts in Jombang Regency	52	52%

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

The measurement model comprised four reflective constructs. Credibility was measured with six items covering expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, informativeness, content credibility, and entertainment value. Expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness were adapted from Ohanian (1990), while informativeness, content credibility, and entertainment value were adapted from Lou & Yuan (2019). Authenticity was measured with four adapted items covering honesty, reliability, warmth, and genuine intention to recommend. No single new scale was created; the items were synthesized from established dimensions reported by Balaban & Szambolics (2022), Lee & Eastin (2021), and Mabkhot et al. (2022). Product fit was measured with five items covering image, expertise, product-use, lifestyle, and value fit, adapted from product fit and match-up research (Gubalane & Ha, 2023; Schouten et al., 2020). Purchase intention was measured with eight items covering referential, preferential, and exploratory interest; product knowledge; liking; primary-choice preference; confidence; and purchase intention (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021; Sinaga & Sulistiono, 2020).

The appendix section lists the item wording, item numbers, and sources. To adapt the questionnaire to this study, generic references to the influencer and brand were replaced with Tasya Farasya and Glad2Glow. The meaning of the source constructs was retained. The construct of authenticity, developed from many validated assessments, specifically embodies four components, such as honesty, reliability, warmth, and genuine recommendation intention. The measurement-model assessment reported below evaluates the reliability and convergent and discriminant validity of all adapted measures.

The data were analyzed using partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4. Measurement-model assessment included outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability, and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). Indicators were considered acceptable when outer loadings generally exceeded 0.70, AVE exceeded 0.50, composite reliability exceeded 0.70, and HTMT was below 0.85. Structural-model assessment included the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), path coefficients, and indirect effects. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p < 0.05$. Effect sizes were interpreted as negligible when below 0.02, small from 0.02, moderate from 0.15, and large from 0.35 (Hair et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The descriptive scale used the following intervals, such as 1.00-1.80 (very low), 1.81-2.60 (low), 2.61-3.40 (moderate), 3.41-4.20 (high), and 4.21-5.00 (very high). Table 2 shows that credibility averaged 3.94 and was categorized as high. Informativeness had the highest mean value (4.08), with attractiveness next (4.04). Entertainment had the lowest mean value (3.69). This pattern suggests that respondents rated the usefulness and clarity of Tasya Farasya's information more favorably than the entertainment value of her content. Mean value of product fit is 3.76, which falls below the high-level category. The maximum value of 4.04 belongs to expertise fit which indicates that the respondents have found

relevance between Tasya Farasya expertise and Glad2Glow brand. The lowest value is found in the lifestyle fit with mean of 3.49 but yet falls into the high-level category.

Authenticity fell in the low category, with a mean value of 2.43. Honesty had the highest mean value (2.51), yet 54% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement concerning the influencer's transparency about product benefits. Reliability averaged 2.40, with 62% negative responses. Warmth averaged 2.37, with 60% negative responses, while genuine recommendation intention averaged 2.43, with 59% negative responses. Across the 400 authenticity ratings, 58.75% were scored 1-2, 23.50% were scored 3, and 17.75% were scored 4-5. Overall, respondents tended not to regard the Glad2Glow-related content as honest, reliable, warm, and genuinely motivated. Purchase intention was in the high category, with a mean value of 3.61. Product knowledge and confidence in product quality shared the highest mean value (3.77 each), followed by liking (3.69). Preference for Glad2Glow as a primary choice averaged 3.24, while preferential interest relative to other cosmetic brands averaged 3.31; both were moderate. Respondents thus evaluated the product favorably, but their preference for it over competing brands was less pronounced.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for respondents' answers

Construct	Indicator	Average	Category
Credibility	Expertise	3.95	High
	Trustworthiness	3.95	High
	Attractiveness	4.04	High
	Information quality	4.08	High
	Content credibility	3.93	High
	Entertainment value	3.69	High
Credibility (average)		3.94	High
Authenticity	Honest	2.51	Low
	Reliable	2.40	Low
	Perceived warmth	2.37	Low
	Intention to recommend	2.43	Low
Authenticity (average)		2.43	Low
Product fit	Image fit	3.69	High
	Expertise fit	4.04	High
	Product-use fit	3.81	High
	Lifestyle fit	3.49	High
	Value fit	3.76	High
Product fit (average)		3.76	High
Purchase intention	Referential interest	3.65	High
	Preferential interest	3.31	Moderate
	Exploratory interest	3.61	High
	Knowledge	3.77	High
	Liking	3.69	High
	Preference as the primary choice	3.24	Moderate
	Confidence	3.77	High
	Purchase intention	3.53	High
Purchase intention (average)		3.61	High

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

All indicators retained in the final model had outer loadings from 0.752 to 0.914, indicating that each item adequately represented its construct. Composite reliability ranged from 0.879 to 0.960, and AVE ranged from 0.646 to 0.748, meeting the criteria for internal consistency and convergent validity. Authenticity had the lowest reliability among the constructs, but its value remained above the acceptance threshold. Nonsignificant authenticity therefore cannot be attributed to inadequate reliability or convergent validity.

Table 3. Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Indicator	Outer loading	Composite reliability	AVE
Credibility	Expertise	0.797	0.937	0.711
	Trustworthiness	0.859		
	Attractiveness	0.886		
	Information quality	0.873		
	Content credibility	0.855		
	Entertainment value	0.783		
Authenticity	Honest	0.774	0.879	0.646
	Reliable	0.814		
	Perceived warmth	0.869		
	Intention to recommend	0.752		
Product fit	Image fit	0.883	0.935	0.741
	Expertise fit	0.823		
	Product-use fit	0.879		
	Lifestyle fit	0.835		
	Value fit	0.883		
Purchase intention	Referential interest	0.875	0.960	0.748
	Preferential interest	0.867		
	Exploratory interest	0.820		
	Knowledge	0.808		
	Liking	0.914		
	Preference as the primary choice	0.866		
	Confidence	0.877		
	Purchase intention	0.889		

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

Discriminant validity was also established. All HTMT values in Table 4 were below 0.85, and the highest value was 0.736 for the credibility-product fit construct pair. HTMT values between authenticity and the other constructs were low, ranging from 0.113 to 0.197. Authenticity was therefore empirically distinct from credibility, product fit, and purchase intention.

Table 4. Discriminant validity based on HTMT

Construct pairs	HTMT
Product fit - Authenticity	0.197
Credibility - Authenticity	0.150
Credibility - Product fit	0.736
Purchase intention - Authenticity	0.113
Purchase intention - Product fit	0.661
Purchase intention - Credibility	0.664

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

The model explained 47.0% of the variance in product fit and 47.3% of the variance in purchase intention, indicating moderate explanatory power. Credibility had a large effect on product fit (F^2 = 0.821) and a moderate effect on purchase intention (F^2 = 0.163). Product fit had a small effect on purchase intention (F^2 = 0.127). The effects of authenticity on product fit (F^2 = 0.015) and purchase intention (F^2 = 0.001) were negligible because they fell below the 0.02 threshold.

The bootstrapping results in Table 6 supported H_1, H_2, H_5, and H_6. Credibility had positive effects on product fit (β = 0.667; $p < 0.001$) and purchase intention (β = 0.399; $p < 0.001$). Product fit also positively affected purchase intention (β = 0.355; p = 0.006). The indirect effect of credibility through product fit was significant (β = 0.236; p = 0.007). Because the direct effect of credibility on purchase intention remained significant, product fit served as a complementary partial mediator. H_3, H_4, and H_7 were not supported because authenticity did not significantly affect product fit (β = -0.091; p = 0.250),

purchase intention (β = 0.022; *p* = 0.832), or purchase intention indirectly through product fit (β = -0.032; *p* = 0.278).

Table 5. Explanatory power and effect sizes

Criteria	Construct/relationship	Value	Interpretation
R^2	Product fit	0.470	Moderate
R^2	Purchase intention	0.473	Moderate
F^2	Authenticity → Product fit	0.015	Negligible
F^2	Authenticity → Purchase intention	0.001	Negligible
F^2	Product fit → Purchase intention	0.127	Small
F^2	Credibility → Product fit	0.821	Large
F^2	Credibility → Purchase intention	0.163	Moderate

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

Table 6. Results of hypothesis testing

Hypotheses and paths	β	T statistic	*P*	Verdict
H_1: Credibility → Product fit	0.667	7.766	<0.001	Accepted
H_2: Credibility → Purchase intention	0.399	3.542	<0.001	Accepted
H_3: Authenticity → Product fit	-0.091	1.150	0.250	Rejected
H_4: Authenticity → Purchase intention	0.022	0.212	0.832	Rejected
H_5: Product fit → Purchase intention	0.355	2.742	0.006	Accepted
H_6: Credibility → Product fit → Purchase intention	0.236	2.681	0.007	Accepted
H_7: Authenticity → Product fit → Purchase intention	-0.032	1.084	0.278	Rejected

Source: Processed primary data (2026)

Discussion

Positive causal relationship between credibility and product fit indicates that Generation Z participants made their assessment of the Tasya Farasya-Glad2Glow collaboration based on the source credibility. Merely visual similarity and familiarity do not justify such an evaluation. Expertise in the cosmetic industry implies the ability to evaluate the ingredients, use, and performance of the product. Trustworthiness and content credibility eliminate suspicion that the review is promotional, while informativeness aids in evaluating the product. These aspects of credibility may therefore give consumers reasons to perceive product fit. Xiao et al. (2018) show that both message and source cues contribute to influencer credibility. Audiences assess argument quality, information, and source attributes together, rather than treating credibility as a fixed personal characteristic. In the present study, such cues may also help explain why respondents regard the influencer-brand partnership as appropriate. Nafees et al. (2021) likewise show that perceived influencer credibility mediates the relationship between influencer power and brand attitudes, connecting evaluations of the individual to evaluations of the brand. Breves et al. (2019) approaching the topic from the other angle: the alignment between influencer and brand increases credibility, which in turn, increases persuasion. While the original model considers products fit prior to credibility, the current one considers credibility prior to product fit. These judgments may be self-reinforcing. The followers may see that the influencer is credible, conclude that the brand is suitable for the influencer's expertise, and thus prove their first assumption of credibility right based on product fit Ao et al. (2023) state that credibility and product fit, are two other influencer attributes, identified by this study as being unique in their influence on the formation of purchase intention. Determining which attribute is assessed before the other requires longitudinal research.

A direct causal association between credibility and purchase intention implies that the quality of the source assisted the participants in assessing a purchase in an uncertain situation. Since cosmetics products are experienced individually, depending on the type of the skin, routine, and expectations, the credibility of the influencer could make the product evaluation claims applicable to the consumer's choice. Saima & Khan (2021) similarly identify credibility as a mechanism linking influencer marketing to purchase intention. Liu & Zheng (2024) show that informational value, authenticity, and homophily

contribute to parasocial relationships, which affect brand credibility and purchase intention. Collectively, these results imply that source credibility can be considered as an information-processing concept as well as a relationship concept. Based on meta-analytical results from 62 studies, Ao et al. (2023) report significant associations between purchase intention and expertise, trustworthiness, credibility, informative value, and product fit. A direct relationship is not present in every setting, however. Shojaei & Barbosa (2026) find that influencer credibility improves attitudes and consumer engagement among beauty-product consumers without directly increasing purchase intention; customer engagement mediates part of the effect. Foroughi et al. (2024) also show that different combinations of influencer and consumer conditions can lead to purchase intention. The present finding may thus depend on Tasya Farasya's relevance to cosmetics and the respondents' need for product information. Future studies could examine product engagement, prior brand familiarity, perceived risk to the skin, and frequency of exposure to clarify when this relationship occurs.

Authenticity did not have a significant causal relationship with product fit in the tested model. One possible explanation is that the two evaluations concern different aspects of endorsement. Authenticity relates to the extent to which the consumers feel that Tasya Farasya is honest, trustworthy, warm, and sincere. Product fit is about the compatibility between her image, expertise, product usage, lifestyle, and values with the cosmetic brand. It is possible that an influencer appears to be authentic while being ill-fitted for the brand's expertise or image at the same time. Likewise, it is possible that an influencer may appear to be fit for the brand despite an obviously promotional message. Moulard et al. (2015) describe authenticity as being a situation where a public figure is true to himself and not responding to any outside influences. Ilicic & Webster (2016) state that celebrities also relate authenticity with sticking to oneself in terms of behavior and consumer relations. In both instances, consistency is stressed; however, they do not automatically make the specific brand relationship authentic in a technical and symbolic sense. Category knowledge, experience with the product, and brand compatibility remain relevant in such an evaluation. Wellman et al. (2020) add the dimension of ethics, including duties toward the self, the personal brand, and the audience when producing sponsored content. These duties can help foster the relationship with fans without the need to create product fit. Cheah et al. (2024) also states that repeated endorsements can reduce credibility from the perspective of authenticity-related perceptions in such a way that product interest affects the effect's strength. Further studies could differentiate between the personal authenticity, message authenticity, sponsorship disclosure, and product relevance, and investigate whether any evidence of sustained product usage moderates the effect of authenticity on the product fit.

Once the factors of credibility and product fit were controlled for, the factor of authenticity had no statistically significant direct impact on purchase intention. In this study, the variables of honesty, reliability, warmth, and recommendation intention were insignificant in adding further information to purchase intention. This finding only concerns the specific model and sample studied; it does not prove the general insignificance of authenticity. The low ratings on descriptive scales imply negative perceptions of communication; still, these alone do not help understand the nonsignificant structural path. It is possible that authenticity influences the behavioral response through some other psychological process. Liu & Zheng (2024) support this perspective by proving that authenticity contributes to building parasocial bonds, and then these parasocial bonds affect buying intention and brand trust. In this research, authenticity cannot be considered a purchasing signal itself. Yuan & Lou (2020) show as well that the reliability of the source and the impression of fairness strengthen parasocial bonds and interest in products. Genuine communication could be the first thing to change the nature of the relationships between followers or interest in a product before making any purchase. In the case when the credibility of the source and the fit of the product are taken into account as predictors, the role of authenticity could be less important because of relational responses. Jin & Ryu (2020) illustrate that parasocial involvement and emotion appraisal explain social-commerce responses to influencers' recommendations. Masuda et al. (2022) proving that the parasocial relationship has a greater correlation to purchase intention than other influencer personal traits. Croes & Bartels (2021) further illustrate that the identification of young adults correlates their motivations for engaging with influencers to their advertising interactions and purchasing habits. Warmth and genuine recommendation intention may hold significance since they foster intimacy, connection, or motivation rather than provide explicit proof regarding the goods. Commercial openness may yield more intricate results than merely a straightforward beneficial correlation. Boerman (2020) demonstrates that standardized disclosures enhance the acknowledgment

of influencer marketing and can elevate brand recall and engagement intentions without harming parasocial relationships. Cheah et al. (2024) report an indirect relationship between excessive recommendation and purchase intention through reduced credibility, with product interest modifying this process. Genuine communication may still support transparency and long-term trust even when an immediate association with purchase intention is absent. Trust, inspiration, identity, parasocial connections, and product interest warrant examination as possible mediators.

Product fit was positively causally related to purchase intention. This finding suggests that respondents considered why Tasya Farasya was a suitable representative for Glad2Glow as well as what she said about the products. Alignment in image, expertise, product use, lifestyle, and values gives a recommendation on a recognizable basis. For this particular instance, followers might be able to correlate the influencer's background in beauty reviews with the brand's mission and vision. Product fit, therefore, can enable consumers to understand the relationship between the two and consider the recommendation as relevant. Breves et al. (2019) provide evidence that perceptions of influence-brand alignment have an effect on expertise, trustworthiness, brand perceptions, and behavioral intentions. Their results show that fit influences the perceptions of the influencer as well as the brand. Ao et al. (2023) identify the product fit as one of the influencer characteristics related to purchase intention and consumer engagement. The current outcome is similar to the positive effect that occurs when consumers comprehend the relationship between the influencer and the brand. However, the context of this relationship is also important. Foroughi et al. (2024) show that purchase intention arises out of several combinations of factors. The fit between the product and its user can be the key factor in one situation and may complement trustworthiness, perception, and consumer engagement in another. This is why different results are observed among endorsement campaigns using highly renowned influencers. In the case of cosmetic products, product fit includes both symbolic and functional aspects such as image, lifestyle, and value fit as well as expertise and product use. Subsequent research ought to assess these variables independently across other product categories and degrees of perceived risk.

The sixth aim investigated the influence of credibility on purchase intention through product fit. The notable mediation suggests two complementary methods of persuasion. The initial aspect is diagnostic as reliable information diminishes product ambiguity. The second aspect is contextual, as credibility enhances the plausibility of the Tasya Farasya-Glad2Glow association, whilst product fit imparts significance to that association in the purchasing decision. Product fit does not supplant the intrinsic worth of credibility; it elucidates how a segment of source credibility is linked to the influencer-brand dynamic. Nafees et al. (2021) demonstrate that perceived influencer credibility transfers their influence into brand attitudes. Despite the variance in their mediators from the current research, both frameworks illustrate that source assessment can influence brand results. Breves et al. (2019) present the inverse order as product fit enhances perceived expertise and trustworthiness prior to influencing persuasion. The research together indicates a reciprocal mechanism where credibility enhances product fit, and product fit may in turn validate credibility. The approved mediation encapsulates one aspect of this wider assessment process. Investigations conducted by Saima & Khan (2021) and Shojaei & Barbosa (2026) elucidate the significance of mediation in influencer studies. Saima & Khan (2021) identify credibility as a mediator linking influencer marketing to purchase intention, while Shojaei & Barbosa (2026) find that consumer engagement carries the effect of credibility to purchase outcomes among beauty consumers. Although the mediators differ, both studies point to more than one route through which influencer characteristics may matter. A model that includes product fit, attitude, involvement, and brand credibility could compare these routes and examine how repeated exposure affects them.

The indirect causal relationship between authenticity and purchase intention through product fit was not significant. Thus, the supported paths differed for credibility and authenticity within this model. Expertise and content credibility give consumers reasons to see an influencer as relevant to cosmetics brand, making product fit a plausible mediator of credibility. Warmth and genuine recommendation intention may support the relationship with followers without supplying the same evidence of category relevance. They do not necessarily establish alignment in image, expertise, product use, lifestyle, or values. The nonsignificant pathway may therefore reflect how authenticity relates to the chosen mediator; it does not remove authenticity's theoretical relevance. Prior studies suggest other routes. Liu & Zheng (2024) connect authenticity with parasocial interactions and purchase intention. Yuan & Lou (2020) relate source evaluations and fairness to parasocial interactions and product interest. Masuda et

al. (2022) emphasize the relationship between parasocial interactions and purchase intention, while Jin & Ryu (2020) examine relational and emotional processes in social-commerce responses. Croes & Bartels (2021) identify a link through identification between motives for following influencers and buying behavior. Personal and relational qualities may consequently operate through closeness, identity, engagement, and emotion as well as through product fit. This interpretation is consistent with accounts of authenticity. Ilicic & Webster (2016) as well as Moulard et al. (2015) relate authenticity to consistency with the self, while Wellman et al. (2020) connect it to ethical responsibilities toward the self, personal brand, and audience. These accounts do not imply that every sincere endorsement will be judged as a good fit. Future studies could compare several mediators and establish their order over time. One possibility to test is that authenticity first supports parasocial trust or identity, making followers receptive to a recommendation, after which credibility and product fit help explain purchase intention.

Results add to the research on source credibility and endorsement alignment by confirming that source credibility, authenticity, and product fit constructs are distinct and measurable in a single framework. Ao et al. (2023) and Schouten et al. (2020) similarly, separate source credibility from the suitability of the product. Authenticity research focuses on sincerity, identity consistency, and relationship quality (Lee & Eastin, 2021; Moulard et al., 2015; Wellman et al., 2020). This indirect influence of credibility on purchase intention, via product fit, could be explained through an evaluation mechanism since credible information might assist consumers to recognize similarity between the influencer and the brand, which would influence purchase intention. The non-significance of authenticity paths does not mean that authenticity is insignificant in any context because it could operate through different mechanisms such as parasocial relationships, inspiration, or credibility instead of product fit (Andonopoulos et al., 2023; Liu & Zheng, 2024; Wang & Weng, 2024). The present model helps separate these possible functions of source credibility, relational authenticity, and endorser-brand congruence.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Among the 100 eligible Generation Z respondents, credibility and product fit were significant predictors of purchase intention for Glad2Glow. Credibility does have a significant direct effect on product fit and purchase intention. Credibility does have a significant indirect effect (on purchase intention) through product fit in the tested model. Product fit does have a significant direct effect on purchase intention. Authenticity does not have a significant direct effect on product fit and purchase intention; and, it does not have a significant indirect effect (on purchase intention) through product fit in the tested model. These results distinguish source expertise and trustworthiness from perceived sincerity without claiming that the two coefficients are universally different across populations or campaign contexts. Descriptively, purchase intention is high, although preference for Glad2Glow as the primary choice remains moderate and perceived influencer authenticity is low. Glad2Glow should therefore use an influencer-selection system that evaluates category expertise, information quality, trustworthiness, product experience, and product fit. Authenticity should be strengthened through transparent discussion of product advantages and limitations, consistent information, warm interaction, and genuine reasons for recommendation, but it should be evaluated separately from expertise and product fit.

The findings should be interpreted within four limitations. First, purposive nonprobability sampling and the final sample of 100 restrict statistical generalization beyond eligible respondents. Second, the study covers one region, one influencer, and one brand, so the results may be context dependent. Third, the cross-sectional, self-reported design does not establish temporal or causal order. Fourth, the model does not include relational mechanisms, such as parasocial relationships, inspiration, identification, or advertising skepticism. Future research should address each limitation directly. Bigger probabilistic samples would increase inference about the population, whereas multilocational research could determine whether the conclusions are transferable across regions. Comparisons across different brands, influencers' levels, and product categories will help understand the contextual influence on the findings. Experimental or longitudinal designs would be useful for understanding the causality and temporal sequence. The future models could examine the mediation of other variables, such as product fit versus parasocial relationship, inspiration, identification, credibility, and involvement. Future studies

could explore whether authenticity is used to improve parasocial trust and identification and, consequently, product fit and purchase intention.

Regarding Glad2Glow, influencer selection should focus on expertise, informativeness, credibility, trust, genuineness of their experience with the product, and product fit. As authenticity needs to be a key criterion of communication, the product benefits and drawbacks need to be discussed, along with consistent messaging and good reasoning of product recommendation. Since the lack of authenticity was found among the influencers examined here, as well as nonsignificant paths to purchase intention, authenticity alone cannot explain purchase intention for the audience examined here. Consequently, transparent communication should be based on expertise and product fit.

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APPENDIX

Table A presents the English phrasing of the questionnaire items intended for publishing. Every assertion was evaluated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The generic source and brand referents from the referenced metrics were contextualized as Tasya Farasya and Glad2Glow.

Table A. Construct measures, item wording, and sources

Construct	Code	Item wording	Sources
Credibility	CRED1	Tasya Farasya is knowledgeable about cosmetic products.	Lou & Yuan (2019); Ohanian (1990)
	CRED2	I consider Tasya Farasya trustworthy when reviewing Glad2Glow.	
	CRED3	Tasya Farasya is attractive as a beauty influencer.	
	CRED4	Tasya Farasya's Glad2Glow content provides useful information.	
	CRED5	The information in Tasya Farasya's Glad2Glow review is credible.	
	CRED6	Tasya Farasya's Glad2Glow content is entertaining.	
Authenticity	AUT1	Tasya Farasya is honest when reviewing Glad2Glow.	Balaban & Szambolics (2022); Lee & Eastin (2021); Mabkhot et al. (2022)
	AUT2	Tasya Farasya is reliable when conveying information about Glad2Glow.	
	AUT3	Tasya Farasya communicates warmly when reviewing Glad2Glow.	
	AUT4	Tasya Farasya appears genuinely willing to recommend Glad2Glow.	
Product fit	PF1	Tasya Farasya's image fits Glad2Glow.	Gubalane & Ha (2023); Schouten et al. (2020)
	PF2	Tasya Farasya's expertise fits Glad2Glow.	
	PF3	Tasya Farasya's use of cosmetic products fits Glad2Glow.	
	PF4	Tasya Farasya's lifestyle fits Glad2Glow.	
	PF5	Tasya Farasya's values fit Glad2Glow.	
Purchase intention	PI1	I would recommend Glad2Glow products to other people.	Kotler & Armstrong (2021); Sinaga & Sulistiono (2020)
	PI2	I prefer Glad2Glow to similar cosmetic brands.	
	PI3	I intend to seek further information about Glad2Glow.	
	PI4	I know the features and benefits of Glad2Glow products.	
	PI5	I like Glad2Glow cosmetic products.	
	PI6	Glad2Glow would be one of my primary choices when purchasing cosmetics.	
	PI7	I believe Glad2Glow products are of good quality.	
	PI8	I intend to purchase Glad2Glow cosmetic products.	

Source: Adaptation and compilation of literature (2026)