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The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention: The Moderating Role of Sponsorship Disclosure

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Master in Marketing

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**BUSINESS
SCHOOL**

Department of Marketing, Operations & General Management

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Resumo

O marketing de influência tornou-se um formato publicitário de referência, sobretudo na indústria da beleza, onde as marcas recorrem a influenciadores digitais para publicitar produtos e estimular a intenção de compra. Contudo, a conformidade com as exigências de divulgação de patrocínio (p. ex., orientações da Federal Trade Commission e da Comissão Europeia) permanece irregular, e a literatura prévia sobre o seu impacto na persuasão é mista. Este estudo aborda esta lacuna ao analisar de que modo três antecedentes - Credibilidade da Fonte, Interação Parasocial e Confiança - impulsionam a intenção de compra e se a divulgação de patrocínio modera tais efeitos. Para tal, foram administrados dois questionários online idênticos, que diferiram apenas no estímulo (um com divulgação de patrocínio e outro sem). Foi também desenvolvido um modelo conceptual quantitativo para testar as relações entre os antecedentes e a intenção de compra, bem como o papel moderador da divulgação de patrocínio. Os resultados mostram que os antecedentes diferem na força persuasiva: alguns aumentam de forma consistente a intenção de compra, enquanto outros exercem influência limitada. A divulgação de patrocínio altera modestamente estas dinâmicas, acrescentando nuance à literatura e sugerindo vias pelas quais a transparência pode coexistir com, e, nalguns casos, reponderar, os efeitos do marketing de influência. Em termos teóricos, o estudo clarifica quais os sinais que mais eficazmente se traduzem em intenção de compra e como a divulgação de patrocínio condiciona esses efeitos. Em termos práticos, oferece orientações a profissionais de marketing e criadores de conteúdos sobre a priorização de sinais acionáveis com cumprimento das regras de rotulagem, apoiando campanhas de influência eficazes e transparentes.

Palavras-chave: marketing de influência; divulgação de patrocínio; credibilidade da fonte; interação parasocial; confiança; intenção de compra; indústria da beleza; publicidade

JEL: M31; M37

Abstract

Influencer marketing has become a leading advertising format, especially in beauty, where brands leverage creators to showcase products and stimulate purchase intention. Yet adherence to sponsorship-disclosure requirements (e.g., FTC and European Commission guidance) remains uneven, and prior findings on how disclosure shapes persuasion are mixed. This study addresses that gap by examining how three antecedents - Source Credibility, Parasocial Interaction, and Trust - drive purchase intention, and whether sponsorship disclosure moderates these effects. To this end, two otherwise identical online surveys were fielded, differing only in the stimulus (one with sponsorship disclosure, one without). A quantitative conceptual model was specified to test links from the antecedents to purchase intention and the moderating role of disclosure. Results indicate that the antecedents differ in their persuasive strength: some reliably increase purchase intention, while others exert limited influence. Sponsorship disclosure modestly alters these dynamics, adding nuance to existing literature and indicating pathways by which transparency can coexist with, and in some cases reweight, influencer effects. The study contributes theoretically by clarifying which influencer cues most effectively translate into intention and how disclosure conditions those pathways. Practically, it offers guidance for marketers and creators on prioritizing actionable cues while complying with labeling laws, supporting effective, and transparent influencer campaigns.

Keywords: influencer marketing; sponsorship disclosure; source credibility; parasocial interaction; trust; purchase intention; beauty marketing; advertising

JEL: M31; M37

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Glossary

AVE: Average Variance Extracted

CR: Composite Reliability

FTC: Federal Trade Commission

HMTM: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations

IPMA: Importance–Performance Map Analysis

MGA: Multi-Group Analysis

PKM: Persuasion Knowledge Model

PSI: Parasocial Interaction

1. Introduction

Influencer marketing has become a leading strategy, gradually replacing traditional celebrity endorsements by leveraging the extensive social media reach and micro-celebrity status of influencers to promote products (Aw & Agnihotri, 2023; Noyan, 2017). This strategy involves engaging influential individuals online to share brand messages through sponsored content (Sammis et al., 2016). It relies on trusted influencers to build authentic connections with their audiences through relatable content and parasocial interactions - one-sided relationships that create the illusion of intimacy (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Tanwar et al., 2022).

The rise of social media has empowered consumers with greater control over purchasing decisions while pushing marketers to move from interruptive tactics toward influencer marketing, which relies on social proof and persuasive psychology to engage audiences (Agnihotri, 2020; Ge & Gretzel, 2018). Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have amplified influencers' roles as key brand advocates (Hudders et al., 2021; Ki et al., 2020), enabling businesses to create trustworthy connections that traditional endorsements cannot (Aw & Agnihotri, 2023).

Valued at \$12.67 billion in 2023, the global influencer marketing market is projected to grow to \$49.28 billion by 2029, reflecting its expanding influence (Yahoo Finance, 2024). However, despite its success, challenges persist, requiring ongoing research to address evolving consumer behaviors and ensure its effectiveness in the dynamic marketing landscape.

In the beauty industry, those who create content related to cosmetics, such as product reviews or tutorial videos, are widely known as beauty vloggers or beauty influencers (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Their detailed makeup tutorials, which guide consumers through the step-by-step application process, make the marketing experience more relatable and authentic (Lee & Lee, 2022). This perceived authenticity has led cosmetic marketers to collaborate extensively with beauty influencers to promote their products (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). The cosmetics industry is characterized by intense competition, with brands often struggling to distinguish their offerings in a crowded market (Wang et al., 2012). Additionally, many brands face challenges in building authenticity on social media, where overly commercialized content may be poorly received by consumers (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Selecting the right beauty influencer for brand endorsements is critical but often difficult, as the choice can significantly impact the effectiveness of marketing campaigns (Gupta et al., 2017).

This study will focus on the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention. Influencer marketing, particularly through beauty vloggers, has become a pivotal strategy for cosmetic companies, as influencers are perceived as more credible and relatable than traditional celebrity

endorsers (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Manchanda et al., 2022). This perceived authenticity and trust directly influence consumer purchase intentions (Chetioui et al., 2020; Saima & Khan, 2021). However, the prevalence of deceptive marketing practices and non-compliance with sponsorship disclosure regulations (Musiyiwa & Jacobson, 2023) poses significant ethical and legal challenges.

By focusing on cosmetic influencers, this study addresses gaps in understanding the role of source credibility, trust, parasocial interactions, and sponsorship disclosure on purchase intention. It will also investigate the moderating role of sponsorship disclosure on the relationships between source credibility, parasocial interaction (PSI), trust, and purchase intention. Prior research has explored sponsorship disclosure in various ways. For instance, Lee and Kim (2020) examined the effects of disclosure types, influencer credibility, and brand credibility on the effectiveness of Instagram influencer promotional posts. Chung et al. (2023) compared the effectiveness of different types of sponsorship disclosures (no disclosure, implicit, and explicit), while Lou et al. (2020) analyzed how sponsorship disclosure interacts with advertising literacy interventions to influence the activation of consumer persuasion knowledge. Additionally, Waltenrath (2024) investigated the impact of advertising disclosure on engagement by drawing upon the source credibility and persuasion knowledge models.

Despite these advancements, many researchers have called for further exploration of sponsorship disclosure. For instance, Tanwar (2022) called for expanding this research beyond fashion influencers to different platforms and industries. Moreover, cultural variations and differences in target audiences across countries, as noted in prior studies conducted in developing nations like India (Garg & Bakshi, 2024b), make it crucial to explore these dynamics in diverse contexts. To date, sponsorship disclosure has not been extensively examined as a moderating variable. While source credibility has been studied alongside PSI, and relationships between PSI, sponsorship disclosure, and trust have been explored, no research has yet integrated the three theoretical frameworks: source credibility model, parasocial interaction theory, and persuasion knowledge model. This study seeks to bridge this gap, offering a novel perspective on how sponsorship disclosure influences these interconnected factors and their effect on purchase intention. Therefore, this study attempted to address the following research questions: “How do source credibility, parasocial interaction, and trust influence purchase intention in the context of social media influencer marketing? and “Does sponsorship disclosure moderate these relationships?”.

This dissertation is structured into five chapters, each advancing understanding of how influencer content shapes purchase intention in the cosmetics context. The Introduction outlines the research domain and relevance, states the problem, objectives, and guiding questions, and

positions the study within contemporary influencer advertising practice. The Literature Review synthesizes prior work on source credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness), parasocial interaction, trust, and sponsorship disclosure, clarifies definitions and relationships among these constructs, and surfaces gaps the thesis addresses. It also presents the hypotheses guiding the empirical work.

The Methodology chapter details the research design, measure selection, stimuli development, data collection and sampling. The Results and Discussion chapter reports the model estimates and hypothesis tests, interprets the roles of parasocial interaction, trust, and expertise in driving purchase intention, and examines the moderation of sponsorship disclosure. It integrates the findings with the literature, highlights theoretical contributions and derives managerial implications for influencer selection, briefing, and evaluation.

Finally, the Conclusion and Recommendations chapter summarizes the principal findings, and acknowledges limitations alongside directions for future research in influencer marketing.

2. Literature Review

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature on influencer marketing, with a focus on the drivers of purchase intention. It defines and differentiates the core constructs - source credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness), parasocial interaction, trust, and sponsorship disclosure - and reviews their proposed roles and mechanisms in social media contexts. The review examines antecedents and synthesizes evidence on how these constructs translate into attitudes and intentions.

Building on this synthesis, the chapter presents the hypotheses linking these constructs to purchase intention and specifies the expected direction and relative importance of effects. It also addresses the potential moderating role of sponsorship disclosure, outlining theoretical rationales for transparent labeling. Finally, a conceptual model integrating these relationships is introduced to guide the empirical tests reported in subsequent chapters.

2.1. Influencer Marketing: A Brief Introduction

Social media has revolutionized how people interact, collaborate, and communicate (Bognar et al., 2019; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). By enabling the creation and sharing of content among consumers (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2004; Mangold & Faulds, 2009), these platforms allow brands to engage in two-way communication, fostering greater customer value (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010; Hamilton et al., 2016; Wang & Rodgers, 2011). This evolution has made building strong brand-consumer relationships a vital part of marketing strategies in social media ecosystems (Deighton & Kornfeld, 2009; Kapoor et al., 2018; Fischer & Reuber, 2011; Labrecque, 2014; SI, 2016; Rizomyliotis et al., 2017).

Influencer marketing, a key approach in this space, uses the reach and credibility of social media influencers (SMIs), such as content creators, online personalities, and celebrities, to increase brand recognition, drive sales, and connect with hard-to-reach audiences through user-generated content (Abidin, 2021; Freberg et al., 2011; Enke & Borchers, 2019; Mai et al., 2022; Martensen et al., 2018). This strategy relies on the ability of influencers to foster high levels of audience engagement through likes, comments, and shares, which can result in significant returns on investment for businesses.

Unlike traditional celebrities, social media influencers are typically ordinary individuals who have built large followings by creating content tailored to niche interests (Lin et al., 2018; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Sammis et al., 2015). Their personal expertise and relatable personas enable them to provide valuable information and connect authentically with audiences (Lou & Yuan, 2019; De Veirman et al., 2017; Yuan & Lou, 2020). This connection has made influencer marketing a

powerful collaborative tool for brands seeking to promote products on social media platforms and achieve measurable business goals (Bognar et al., 2019; Farivar et al., 2021; De Veirman et al., 2017; Lim et al., 2017).

Additionally, consumers tend to trust influencers more than traditional advertisements due to the influencers' perceived authenticity and credibility (Lou & Yuan, 2019; De Veirman et al., 2017). As a result, influencer marketing has become a cornerstone of modern branding strategies, allowing businesses to connect with audiences in a more personal and impactful way.

2.2. Source Credibility and Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the consumer's willingness to buy specific products or services, influenced by their subjective evaluation and overall perception. It represents the "psychological stage" in the decision-making process leading to a purchase (Wells et al., 2011).

Source credibility refers to the degree to which a communicator is perceived as believable, unbiased, and trustworthy, directly influencing how their messages are received and accepted by audiences (Pornpitakpan, 2004; Hass, 1981). This concept is rooted in the source credibility model by Ohanian (1990), which breaks credibility into three dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Stubb & Colliander, 2019; Flanagin & Metzger, 2007; McGuire, 1985). Highly credible sources have a greater persuasive impact on audience attitudes and behavioral intentions compared to low-credibility sources, as demonstrated across multiple contexts in consumer behavior (Pornpitakpan, 2004; Hudders et al., 2021).

In the context of social media, influencers are often seen as more authentic and relatable than traditional celebrities due to the nature of their content (Rizomyliotis et al., 2024). As a result, they are perceived as more credible (Weismueller et al., 2020), which is a crucial factor in their selection as influencers (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Weismueller et al., 2020; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Research has consistently found that the credibility of influencers has a positive impact on audience perceptions and purchasing intentions, mostly from their ability to establish trust and expertise (Xiao et al., 2018; Schouten et al., 2020). For instance, Schouten et al. (2020) emphasize that expertise enhances an influencer's persuasiveness, making them more effective in shaping consumer decisions.

Higher levels of credibility encourage audiences to perceive an influencer's intent as genuine rather than calculative, fostering deeper trust and engagement (Kim & Kim, 2021; Wang et al., 2022; Hudders et al., 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Influencers who are perceived as proficient and trustworthy become more persuasive, ultimately driving stronger purchase intentions (Ohanian, 1990; Rizomyliotis et al., 2024). According to Ohanian (1990), Wiedmann and von Mettenheim

(2020), and Yu and Kim (2020), credibility is regarded as the most crucial attribute for successful influencers.

While the source credibility model has traditionally been applied to celebrity endorsers (Bhatt et al., 2013; Roy et al., 2013; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018), it is equally relevant in the context of social media influencers, particularly in the beauty sector. Influencers, often referred to as micro-celebrities, hold the same credibility attributes, making the model applicable to influencer marketing (Shan et al., 2019).

In the cosmetics industry, a spokesperson's physical appeal strongly affects consumers' favorable perceptions of a product, making it a key factor in shaping brand attitudes (Lou & Yuan, 2019). The concept of source attractiveness includes both physical attractiveness (Ohanian, 1991) and non-physical attributes (McGuire, 1985). Lee and Watkins (2016) explored the effect of physical and social attractiveness on consumers' purchase intentions for luxury cosmetics, finding that products reviewed by attractive and familiar sources tend to generate stronger purchase intentions. Therefore, this study will focus on evaluating the credibility of the endorser, specifically a cosmetic influencer (often referred to as a beauty vlogger or influencer), by examining the three core dimensions outlined by Ohanian (1991): trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness.

Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence that an audience has in the endorser's message, reflecting the level of acceptance and assurance they feel regarding the information being conveyed (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Endorsers who are perceived as trustworthy and hold strong opinions tend to be more persuasive in influencing consumer attitudes compared to those lacking credibility (Giffin, 1967; Ohanian, 1991).

Expertise, as described by Hovland et al. (1953), is the perceived competence and knowledge an endorser has on a particular subject, which influences consumers' reliance on their information when making purchasing decisions. Influencers who demonstrate expertise are more likely to shape consumer perceptions and guide their choices effectively.

Attractiveness, on the other hand, relates to the physical and social characteristics of the endorser. It can be divided into physical attractiveness, which pertains to observable features such as appearance and facial traits, and social attractiveness, which includes the endorser's likeability, familiarity, and similarity to the audience (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Kim & Kim, 2021). McGuire (1985) found that attractive endorsers are often more well-liked and can positively influence consumer attitudes toward the products they promote. In the beauty industry, the attractiveness of an endorser, both physically and socially, has played a significant role in shaping consumers' attitudes and driving purchasing behavior (Garg & Bakshi, 2024).

Recent research highlights the significant impact of influencer marketing activities on consumer behavior, attitudes, and purchasing decisions (Chetioui et al., 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020). Influencers, by shaping brand attitudes and admiration, have been shown to positively influence consumers' purchase intentions (Lim et al., 2017; Chetioui et al., 2020; Trivedi & Sama, 2020). The credibility of influencers is a key factor in this process (Chetioui et al., 2020; AlFarraj et al., 2021; Weismueller et al., 2020), as it affects brand consideration and purchase intention. Higher levels of credibility lead to greater consumer receptivity (Chin et al., 2020; La Ferle & Choi, 2005; Saima & Khan, 2021; Rizomyliotis et al., 2024).

The credibility of influencers, particularly in beauty and cosmetic marketing, is linked to higher brand awareness and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Online reviews and comments from credible sources can also enhance purchase intention, especially for high-involvement products (Fan & Miao, 2012; Wang & Rodgers, 2011). Influencers on platforms have proven to significantly boost purchase intention, particularly in the cosmetic sector (Konstantopoulou et al., 2019). Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The source credibility of a social media influencer positively affects consumers' purchase intention.

2.3. Parasocial Relationships and Purchase Intention

Social media has created new opportunities for individual interactions, which help cultivate a sense of intimacy between users and influencers (Berryman & Kavka, 2017). This interaction has led to the development of parasocial relationships, a concept derived from parasocial interaction theory, which refers to the perceived kinship between an audience and a celebrity (Lou & Kim, 2019). Such relationships are one-sided, with the celebrity unaware of their followers, creating a false sense of intimacy (Leuck, 2015). Social media platforms, however, allow influencers to maintain closeness with their audiences through direct interactions, leading followers to form long-term emotional attachments (Bond, 2016; Lawrence & Meivitanli, 2023).

Parasocial interaction (PSI) involves an illusionary experience where consumers engage with public figures as if they are involved in a mutually beneficial, reciprocal relationship (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). This illusion of friendship and emotional connection is fostered through virtual communication, allowing followers to perceive that they are engaging in a two-way relationship with the celebrity or influencer (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Labrecque, 2014).

While PSI originally applied to media outlets such as television and radio, where audiences developed one-sided relationships with media personalities (Horton & Wohl, 1956), the rise of social media has significantly expanded its scope. Influencers now use these platforms to directly

interact with their followers, broadening the reach and impact of parasocial interactions (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). This shift highlights the growing role of social media in shaping consumer behavior and fostering emotional connections, which can ultimately influence purchase intentions.

Regarding the cosmetics industry, beauty vloggers often post regular content about their personal lives and engage with their audience through Q&A sessions, addressing questions related to their day-to-day experiences, which establishes a deeper connection (Kim et al., 2020; Lee & Watkins, 2016; Choi & Lee, 2019). Social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, provide a space for followers to engage directly with beauty vloggers by commenting on their content, further fostering these interactions (Shan et al., 2019). The nature of parasocial interactions has shifted, evolving into a more interactive communication style involving reciprocal engagement, where beauty vloggers not only entertain but also educate their audiences (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Through this engagement, viewers develop familiarity and trust in the vloggers, often relying on their advice in a way similar to seeking guidance from a close friend when making purchasing decisions (Labrecque, 2014).

From a marketing perspective, beauty vloggers offer a valuable opportunity for cosmetic brands to promote their products. Consumers often turn to beauty vloggers for guidance before making a purchase, with the repeated interactions and illusionary friendships formed between vloggers and their followers being effectively utilized by marketers to influence purchasing decisions (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Hu et al., 2020; Manchanda et al., 2022).

Previous research has explored how parasocial relationships, often described as intimate pseudo-friendships, shape consumer behavior (Hartmann et al., 2008). Parasocial relationship theory has been applied to better understand consumer-brand connections on social media, helping brands identify the traits of celebrities that strengthen parasocial bonds (Labrecque, 2014; Chung & Cho, 2017). Studies by Kim et al. (2015) and Hanief et al. (2019) have shown that parasocial relationships with internet celebrities have a positive influence on consumer behavior. Previous studies have also established that parasocial interaction (PSI) is a key predictor of purchase intention (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2022), with increased PSI correlating to higher purchase intentions. Given the substantial impact of these interactions on the daily lives of social media users, incorporating parasocial interactions into influencer marketing research is crucial. Thus, the second hypothesis is presented:

H2: Parasocial interaction by social media influencers positively influences consumer purchase intention.

2.4. Trust and Purchase Intention

Trust is a fundamental element in the relationship between two parties, playing a pivotal role in consumer decision-making processes (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). In the context of advertising and marketing, trust toward the advertiser is crucial as it reassures consumers that the product-related information aligns with their interests (Jia et al., 2024).

Trust enhances the credibility of an individual's words and actions, especially in situations characterized by uncertainty or potential harm (Giffin, 1967). Morgan and Hunt (1994) emphasized that trust is established when the audience perceives integrity and reliability in the information presented by a spokesperson. Interestingly, trust does not require the ability to control or supervise the other party's actions. Instead, it is marked by one party's willingness to accept vulnerability based on the belief that the other party will act in a way that fulfills their positive expectations and interests (Rousseau et al., 1998, Mayer et al., 1995).

In influencer marketing, specifically for cosmetics, beauty vloggers build credibility and trust with their audiences through consistent and meaningful engagements. This includes live video sessions, addressing audience feedback, and responding to product-related inquiries, which foster a sense of connection and reliability. Trust is further enhanced when consumers perceive similarities and familiarity between the lifestyles of the vloggers and their own, prompting them to seek advice from these influencers before making purchase decisions (Garg & Bakshi, 2024).

Building trust is a critical component of effective influencer marketing. For influencers, cultivating trust with their followers can significantly enhance the success of their product endorsements (Jia et al., 2024). Marketing practitioners are encouraged to prioritize strategies that foster consumer trust in beauty vloggers to maximize the effectiveness of influencer campaigns (Ki et al., 2023; Garg & Bakshi, 2024).

Consumers often trust information shared by influencers and celebrities, and this trust can significantly shape consumption behavior (Lucassen & Schraagen, 2012; Farivar et al., 2021). Trust between influencers and their audiences creates conditions conducive to purchase intention (Ki et al., 2023). Because influencers act as intermediaries between firms and consumers, audience trust, coupled with perceived authenticity, facilitates acceptance of promoted products and strengthens purchase decisions (Firman et al., 2021). Consistent with this view, Kim and Kim (2021b) find that trust in an influencer positively predicts both consumer loyalty and purchase intention for endorsed products. More broadly, trust reduces perceived risk and uncertainty, thereby encouraging purchase (McKnight et al., 2002).

Thus, trust emerges as a central factor in influencer marketing, influencing both consumer attitudes and purchase behaviors. Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Trust in influencers positively influences consumers' purchase intentions.

2.5. Understanding Sponsorship Disclosure

In response to evolving online advertising practices, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), an independent American agency for the promotion of consumer protection, mandates that influencers disclose sponsorship information in all promotional posts to ensure transparency and protect consumers from deceptive advertising practices (Lee & Kim, 2020; Chung et al., 2023, FTC, 2021). To address potential ambiguity in disclosures, the FTC requires explicit language, such as hashtags like #advertising or #sponsored, on every promotional post; otherwise, such content is classified as covert advertising (Chung et al., 2023). Similarly, the European Commission's (n.d.) consumer protection laws also require clear disclosure of advertising, including brand partnerships, product-for-content exchanges, and affiliate marketing on social media.

The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) posits that individuals gradually develop knowledge and coping mechanisms to handle persuasive attempts as they encounter advertising messages over time (Friestad & Wright, 1994). When consumers recognize the persuasive intent behind advertisements, such as sponsored product review posts on social media platforms, their persuasion knowledge is activated, often leading to resistance toward the advertising message (Chung et al., 2023).

The effects of sponsorship disclosure have been a significant focus of research, with studies revealing mixed outcomes on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Many studies have shown that sponsorship disclosure negatively influences attitudes toward the endorsed product and reduces purchase intentions (Boerman et al., 2017; Van Reijmersdal et al., 2016; Evans et al., 2017; Lou et al., 2021). For instance, De Veirman and Hudders (2020) found that disclosing sponsorship in a promotional post increased skepticism and led to negative attitudes toward the brand. Similarly, Lou et al. (2021) observed that consumers, particularly those skilled at evaluating persuasive messages, were less likely to purchase a product promoted in posts with sponsorship disclosures than in those without. Other studies have shown that undisclosed ads can evoke heightened reactance, as consumers perceive them as manipulative, which can harm source credibility and reduce engagement (Carr & Hayes, 2014; Evans et al., 2019).

In contrast, other research highlights the potential positive effects of sponsorship disclosures. Some studies suggest that clear disclosures can enhance transparency and trust, leading to more

favorable attitudes and higher purchase intentions (De Jans & Hudders, 2020; Kay et al., 2020). For example, De Jans and Hudders (2020) found that children exposed to a vlog with a sponsorship disclosure had a more positive attitude toward the endorsed brand. Kay et al. (2020) also demonstrated that participants were more likely to purchase a beauty product promoted in a disclosed post than in an undisclosed one. In addition, disclosed ads are often viewed as more transparent and credible, enhancing consumers' perceptions of the post and its source (Amazeen & Wojdyski, 2019; Evans et al., 2019). Experienced consumers with high persuasion knowledge may even appreciate clear disclosures, recognizing the influencer's need for income without attributing calculative motives to the disclosure (Saternus et al., 2022; Lou, 2021; Saternus et al., 2022; W. Wang & Wang, 2019). This understanding of advertisers' motives helps consumers refine their attitudes toward brands and products, ultimately influencing their purchase intentions (Lou et al., 2021).

2.5.1. The Moderating Role of Sponsorship Disclosure

The role of information disclosure in fostering trust has been extensively studied, with researchers emphasizing its importance in building and maintaining trust across various domains (Coleman, 1994; Butler Jr., 1995). In advertising and marketing, sponsorship disclosure plays a similar role, enhancing trust in endorsers by signaling transparency and concern for consumers' interests. By revealing the commercial nature of promotional content, sponsorship disclosure allows consumers to make informed decisions, demonstrating that endorsers prioritize consumer well-being over self-interest (Jia et al., 2024). This transparency reduces the fear of exploitation and fosters trust (Butler Jr., 1995). Trust, in turn, strengthens the perceived reliability of product information, increasing perceived product benefits, reducing risks, and fostering positive attitudes toward the brand (McKnight et al., 2002; Jia et al., 2024). Han (2020) demonstrated a strong positive relationship between trust in influencers and consumers' willingness to purchase endorsed products.

Sponsorship disclosure can also influence other key variables in influencer marketing. Parasocial relationships are critical to the effectiveness of influencer marketing and the impact of disclosures (Saternus, Weber, & Hinz, 2022; Chung & Cho, 2017; X. Wang et al., 2022). Properly managing sponsorship disclosures within this context is essential to maintaining these relationships and ensuring their authenticity. Waltenrath (2024) found that effective sponsorship disclosures not only enhance trust but also dispel perceptions of calculative motives. Transparency in advertising posts increases source credibility by presenting the influencer as honest and genuine, encouraging consumers to attribute affective motives to future content. This, in turn, enhances engagement and fosters positive consumer perceptions.

Given this evidence, sponsorship disclosure is posited to positively moderate the relationship between source credibility, parasocial interactions, trust, and purchase intentions. Influencers who prioritize transparency through sponsorship disclosure are more likely to potentially build trust, enhance their credibility, and strengthen their emotional connection with followers, ultimately influencing consumer decision-making. Thus, this study predicts:

H4: Sponsorship disclosure of social media influencer posts positively moderates the relationships between source credibility, parasocial interactions, trust, and purchase intention.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

The diagram below presents the model employed in this thesis. It depicts the relationships between three independent antecedents - source credibility (via its facets: expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness), parasocial interaction, and trust - and the dependent outcome, purchase intention. The arrows represent the hypotheses (H1–H3) tested in the study, while sponsorship disclosure is specified as a contextual moderator (H4) that may alter the strength of these paths.

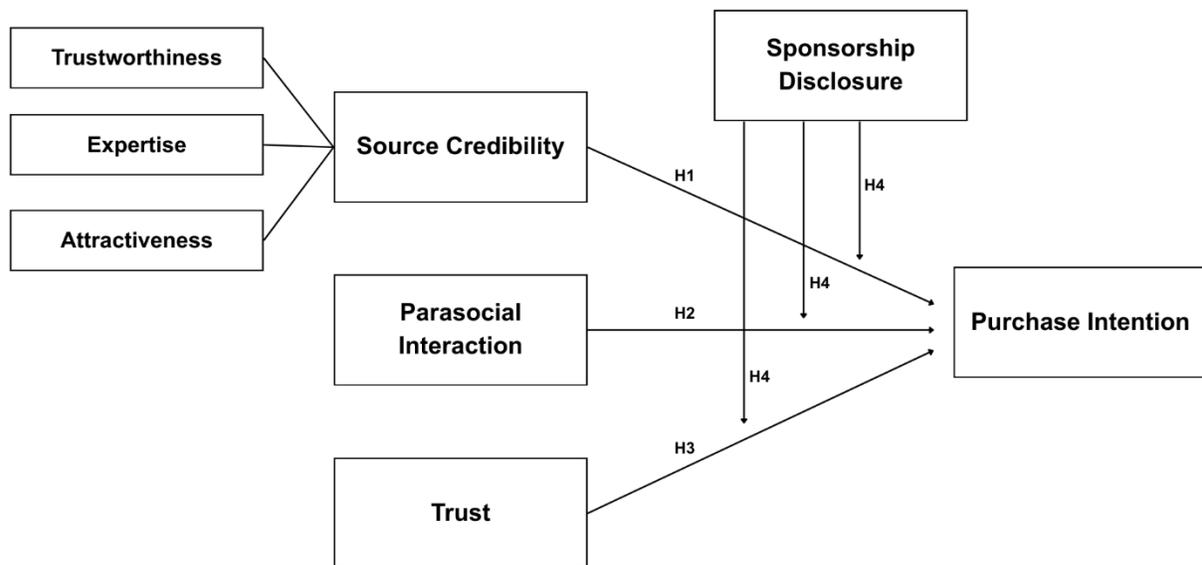


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's elaboration

In this framework, the independent variables capture informational and relational cues that shape how audiences evaluate influencer content, whereas purchase intention reflects consumers' propensity to buy. The model tests whether parasocial interaction, trust, and the credibility facets (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness) differentially shape intention, and whether sponsorship

disclosure (transparent labeling) moderates these effects. The objective is to identify the specific pathways through which influencer attributes and relationship signals affect consumer decisions in beauty contexts.

3. Methodology

To address the research questions and test the conceptual model, this study used a quantitative approach with primary questionnaire data. A between-groups, two-condition experiment was implemented via two otherwise identical questionnaires that differed only in the stimulus: in one condition the post included sponsorship disclosure; in the other it did not. After viewing the stimulus, respondents completed validated items capturing source credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness), parasocial interaction, trust, and purchase intention. This design enables comparison of path estimates across disclosure and no-disclosure conditions while holding all other content constant, thereby assessing the impact of influencer marketing on purchase intentions for cosmetic products.

3.1. Measures

The selection of questionnaire measures followed a structured process. First, a comprehensive review of prior literature was conducted to identify validated measures relevant to the constructs under investigation. The final measures were selected from existing literature based on their frequency of use, reliability, and suitability for the present study's context.

Source credibility was operationalized at the facet level using widely cited endorser/influencer measures: trustworthiness (e.g., Munnukka et al., 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019; Ohanian, 1991; Teng et al., 2020; Garg & Bakshi, 2024), expertise (e.g., Ohanian, 1990, 1991; Bergkvist et al., 2016; Ki & Kim, 2019; Chetioui et al., 2020; Teng et al., 2020; Garg & Bakshi, 2024), and attractiveness (e.g., Ohanian, 1991; Ki & Kim, 2019; Teng et al., 2020; Munnukka et al., 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019; Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Parasocial interaction items were adapted from social media–appropriate PSI scales (Rosaen & Dibble, 2016; Lee & Watkins, 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019; Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Trust in the influencer drew on measures capturing competence, integrity, and benevolence (Lu et al., 2014; Kennedy et al., 2001; Chetioui et al., 2020; Meng & Wei, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2021b; Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Purchase intention was measured with standard behavioral–propensity items frequently used in advertising and social media research (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; Ajzen, 2011; Yuan & Jang, 2008; Hsu & Lin, 2015; Kumar et al., 2009; Martins et al., 2017; Stubb & Colliander, 2019; Lou & Kim, 2019; Chetioui et al., 2020). Full item wordings and exact source-to-item mappings are provided in Appendix A1 and A2.

Although the cited sources employed both five-point and seven-point Likert scales, all items in this study were standardized to a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 7 (“Strongly Agree”). Items originally derived from five-point scales were adapted accordingly to ensure consistency across the questionnaire.

The seven-point Likert scale was used to increase sensitivity and capture more nuanced responses, which is advantageous when measuring attitudes and behavioral intentions in marketing research. This choice was guided by prior methodological literature cited above. An AI assistant (ChatGPT 5.0) was also consulted to sanity-check the appropriateness of seven-point standardization. The decisions was ultimately determined by the authors.

3.2. Selection of Stimuli

The experimental manipulation for the survey required the creation of realistic video stimuli. The cosmetics industry was selected as the target category due to its broad consumer relevance and frequent use in influencer marketing contexts. Within this category, mascara was identified as the most suitable product. The decision was supported by both industry data and experiential reasoning. Market research revealed that, while skincare dominated the beauty industry with nearly 40% market share in 2024 (Statista, 2025), mascara remained among the most commonly used makeup products (StyleSeat, n.d.), with the prestige eye makeup segment showing notable growth (Circana, 2025). Additionally, anecdotal evidence indicated that mascara is widely incorporated into minimal beauty routines.

Regarding the social media platform, studies have shown that Instagram is the leading platform for beauty shopping and it is the most preferred by brands for influencer marketing (Sandu, 2025). Taken together, these considerations justified the choice of mascara as the stimulus product and Instagram as the chosen platform.

To ensure ecological validity, the stimulus video was sourced from Instagram and found using the hashtag #mascarareview. A publicly available influencer reel was selected, as it presented a spoken review format consistent with the constructs under investigation. The original video included limited sponsorship disclosure, namely a brand mention (@lorealparis) and the hashtag #lorealparispartner in the caption.

3.3. Experimental Manipulation

The reel was edited to create two experimental conditions using the Canva graphic design platform. In the undisclosed condition, sponsorship cues were removed by deleting the partnership hashtag present in the original reel. In the disclosed condition, multiple sponsorship indicators were added. Specifically, a “Paid Partnership” label was positioned below the influencer’s name, the hashtag #ad was embedded within the video, and the original sponsorship hashtag was retained in the caption. This procedure reflects the methodological approaches of Chung et al. (2023) and Jia et

al. (2024) and adheres to the disclosure requirements outlined by the Federal Trade Commission (2021) and the European Commission (n.d.).

3.4. Survey Design and Procedure

Both surveys were structurally identical, differing only in the manipulated stimuli. Each included the edited reel and a static screenshot of it to ensure consistent exposure. Appendix B and C illustrate the stimuli screenshots for the no-disclosure group and the disclosure group, respectively. The stimuli were presented once at the beginning of the survey, immediately following the introduction, to ensure that all participants were exposed under the same conditions. After viewing the stimuli, participants responded to the same set of measures assessing perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions.

The questionnaires were designed and distributed via the Qualtrics Platform and divided into two main sections. In the first section, participants were exposed to the experimental stimuli and then completed items measuring the central constructs of the study: source credibility, parasocial interaction, trust, and purchase intention. The second section collected information about demographics and social media usage habits.

This structure enabled a direct comparison of participant responses between the disclosure and non-disclosure conditions, thereby isolating the effect of sponsorship transparency on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions.

3.5. Data Collection and Sample

Questionnaire links were distributed through personal networks and shared onward via acquaintances, yielding a convenience sample. Because the questionnaire was in English, English proficiency was the primary inclusion criterion. Given the stimuli, participants were also expected to have at least a basic interest in cosmetics. Data collection spanned approximately two months. All responses were anonymous, and demographic information was collected solely for analytical purposes.

To characterize respondents, the questionnaire captured age group, gender, highest education, employment status, and annual income. These variables were collected solely for descriptive purposes and were not included as covariates in the main analyses, which focus on perceptions and intentions elicited by the experimental post.

In total, 203 respondents completed the study: No-Disclosure ($n = 102$) and Sponsorship-Disclosure ($n = 101$). The sample was predominantly female (~97%), concentrated in young adults (~88% aged 18–34), and highly educated (~74% Bachelor's/Master's). Most were employed

(~63%), with a substantial share of students (~29%). Income most commonly fell under “< €6,000,” with “Prefer not to say” reported by ~19%. Nationality was not collected; recruitment targeted English-speaking adults in Europe (e.g., Portugal, Moldova, UK, Germany, Croatia) to capture responses to a standardized post rather than profile country-specific audiences.

The two groups were broadly similar on the main demographics. The No-Disclosure group skewed slightly younger (more 18–24), whereas the Sponsorship-Disclosure group included slightly more 25–34. These differences are small and are reported for context only.

This composition aligns with the audience most likely to consume and react to beauty-related influencer content - younger, female-majority, cosmetics-interested (Sandu, 2025) - and is therefore appropriate for testing responses to the stimuli. However, the use of convenience recruitment, a female-dominant and young-adult profile, tertiary-education skew, and English-only participation limits external validity; findings are most applicable to English-literate, European, beauty-interested social media users.

Finally, beyond demographics, respondents reported moderate-to-positive engagement with beauty/influencer content (combined means \approx 4.5–4.6 on 1–7 scales for enjoyment and viewing frequency), indicating that participants are familiar with and regularly exposed to the type of content used in the stimuli.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter reports the main findings derived from the collected data and the conducted analyses. Results are presented in line with the study's objectives, offering evidence on how source credibility, parasocial interaction, and trust shape purchase intention in influencer marketing. The analysis also evaluates whether sponsorship disclosure alters these relationships, thereby clarifying the conditions under which influencer content is more or less persuasive. The disclosure and no-disclosure models used identical specifications - the same indicators for each construct, the same data treatment, and the same estimation settings in SmartPLS - thereby ensuring configural equivalence by design.

The primary objective is to connect the proposed framework with the quantitative results, interpret the patterns that emerge from the structural model, and draw conclusions relevant to consumer decision-making in the context of influencer advertising.

4.1. Statistical Analysis

The conceptual model was examined with structural equation modeling (SEM). In line with the study's predictive focus, partial least squares (PLS), a variance-based SEM approach, was implemented in SmartPLS 3 (Ringle et al., 2015). Following a two-step approach, the measurement model was evaluated before the structural model.

Measurement quality was evaluated in terms of indicator reliability, convergent validity, internal consistency, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). During refinement, a small number of poorly performing indicators were removed to improve psychometric quality while preserving content coverage. In the final model, all standardized loadings met the 0.60 benchmark (min = 0.700; max = 0.933) and were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$ (Appendix D), supporting indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2017). Internal consistency reliability was adequate across constructs, with both Cronbach's α and composite reliability (CR) exceeding 0.70 (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Composite reliability, average variance extracted, correlations, and discriminant validity checks

Latent Variables	α	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) Parasocial Interaction	0.883	0.906	0.547	0.740	0.789	0.725	0.432	0.567	0.725
(2) Purchase Intention	0.881	0.918	0.736	0.722	0.858	0.51	0.597	0.607	0.773
(3) SC - Attractiveness	0.764	0.858	0.670	0.614	0.450	0.818	0.378	0.46	0.506
(4) SC - Expertise	0.814	0.878	0.642	0.388	0.512	0.297	0.802	0.564	0.702
(5) SC - Trustworthiness	0.936	0.954	0.839	0.533	0.558	0.403	0.493	0.916	0.895
(6) Trust	0.839	0.886	0.609	0.653	0.679	0.428	0.584	0.794	0.780

Note: α -Cronbach Alpha; CR -Composite reliability; AVE -Average variance extracted. Bolded numbers are the square roots of AVE. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs. Above the diagonal elements are the HTMT ratios.

Source: Author's elaboration based on PLS outputs

Convergent validity was established on three grounds. First, all indicators loaded positively and significantly on their intended constructs ($p < 0.001$). Second, every construct exhibited CR values above 0.70. Third, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceeded the benchmark of 0.50 (range 0.547–0.839), as shown in Table 4.1 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Discriminant validity was examined using two complementary criteria. Fornell–Larcker requires that a construct's $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ (bolded on the diagonal in Table 4.1) be greater than its highest correlation with any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This condition held for all constructs except a marginal Trust–Trustworthiness case, where the correlation (0.794) slightly exceeded $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ for Trust (0.780). HTMT was also assessed (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015): all HTMT ratios were below 0.90 (max = 0.895). Although the Trust–Trustworthiness HTMT value (0.895) exceeds the more conservative 0.85 threshold (table 4.1), it remains below 0.90; given the constructs' conceptual proximity, both were retained and this limitation is noted.

The structural model was evaluated on three criteria: (i) the sign, magnitude, and significance of the structural path coefficients; (ii) the model's explanatory power via R^2 for the endogenous construct; and (iii) predictive relevance using Stone–Geisser's Q^2 (Hair et al., 2017). Before assessing the paths, collinearity was examined (Hair et al., 2017): VIFs ranged from 1.441 to 4.853, all below the indicative cutoff of 5, indicating no multicollinearity concerns. For Purchase Intention, the coefficient of determination was $R^2 = 61.6\%$, exceeding the 10% benchmark (Falk & Miller, 1992). The Q^2 value for Purchase Intention was 0.594 (> 0), indicating predictive relevance of the model.

4.2. Quantitative Results

Table 4.2. Structural Model Results

	Path coefficients			
	Mean, STDEV, T values, p values			
	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Parasocial Interaction -> Purchase Intention	0.494	0.067	7.420	0.000
SC_Attractiveness -> Purchase Intention	-0.018	0.056	0.326	0.745
SC_Expertise -> Purchase Intention	0.170	0.049	3.479	0.001
SC_Trustworthiness -> Purchase Intention	0.021	0.079	0.263	0.792
Trust -> Purchase Intention	0.249	0.093	2.674	0.008

Source: Author's elaboration based on PLS outputs

The results in Table 4.2 show that parasocial interaction has a significantly positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$) and that the expertise dimension of source credibility also has a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.170$, $p < 0.010$). These findings provide support for H2 and partial support for H1, respectively. Trust in influencers has a significantly positive relation with purchase intention ($\beta = 0.249$, $p < 0.010$), supporting H3. However, the attractiveness ($\beta = -0.018$, n.s.) and trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.021$, n.s.) dimensions of source credibility were not significant; therefore, source credibility was only partially significant. Group-specific estimates (No vs. Yes disclosure) are provided for context in Appendix E and F, respectively. Notably, the Trust and Purchase Intention relation was not significant in the No-disclosure subgroup ($\beta = 0.138$, $p = 0.358$) but was positively significant in the Disclosure subgroup ($\beta = 0.339$, $p = 0.003$).

4.2.1. Moderation by Sponsorship Disclosure (MGA)

The moderating role of sponsorship disclosure was examined by comparing path coefficients between the no-disclosure and disclosure groups using two-tailed permutation multi-group analysis (MGA; $p < 0.050$) (Sarstedt et al., 2011). With $\Delta\beta$ coded as No – Yes, sponsorship disclosure positively moderates the attractiveness and purchase intention relationship ($\Delta\beta = -0.233$, $p = 0.035$), indicating a stronger effect under disclosure (table 4.3). By contrast, group differences were not significant for parasocial interaction ($\Delta\beta = +0.188$, $p = 0.169$), expertise ($\Delta\beta = +0.016$, $p = 0.870$), trustworthiness ($\Delta\beta = +0.150$, $p = 0.320$), and trust ($\Delta\beta = -0.201$, $p = 0.287$), providing no evidence of moderation for these links. Although the trust path appears different when each group is inspected separately, the between-group difference is not statistically reliable and is attributed to sampling variability rather than moderation. Accordingly, H4 is supported only for the attractiveness dimension of source credibility; for the remaining paths, no moderated effect was detected.

Table 4.3. Multi-Group Analysis Focused on the Moderator Variable

Multi-Group Analysis		
Path Coefficients		
	$\Delta\beta$ (No – Yes)	2-tailed (No vs Yes) p value
Parasocial Interaction -> Purchase Intent	0.188	0.169
SC_Attractiveness -> Purchase Intention	-0.233	0.035
SC_Expertise ->Purchase Intention	0.016	0.870
SC_Trustworthiness -> Purchase Intention	0.150	0.320
Trust -> Purchase Intention	-0.201	0.287

Source: Author's elaboration based on PLS outputs

4.2.2. Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

IPMA was used to complement the hypothesis tests with a prioritization view (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016), identifying which constructs and indicators most strongly drive purchase intention and thus warrant attention in the Discussion. With purchase intention as the target, construct-level importance ranked as follows: parasocial interaction (total effect = 0.494), trust (0.249), and source credibility - expertise (0.170), with trustworthiness (0.021) and attractiveness (–0.018) contributing negligibly (table 4.4). At the indicator level (Appendix G), the largest importance values were PSI3 (0.105), PSI4 (0.100), PSI8 (0.098), and PSI5 (0.081) within parasocial interaction; Trust2 (0.076) and Trust1 (0.074) within trust; and SC_Expert2 (0.061) and SC_Expert3 (0.054) within expertise. Detailed indicator-level implications are considered in the Discussion. These results suggest that strengthening parasocial interaction, and, to a lesser extent, trust and expertise, offers the greatest potential to increase purchase intention.

Table 4.4: Importance Map Analysis at the Construct-Level

Importance Map	
Construct Total Effects for Purchase Intention	
	Purchase Intention
Parasocial Interaction	0.494
SC_Attractiveness	-0.018
SC_Expertise	0.170
SC_Trustworthiness	0.021
Trust	0.249

Source: Author's elaboration based on PLS outputs

4.3. Discussion

This subchapter discusses the findings from the structural model, connecting the empirical results with the relevant literature on source credibility, parasocial interaction, trust, purchase intention, and sponsorship disclosure. The goal is to interpret the meaning of the results beyond statistical significance and to outline theoretical and managerial implications for influencer marketing in the cosmetics industry.

Of the hypotheses tested, H2 (parasocial interaction) and H3 (trust) were supported, whereas H1 (source credibility) received partial support: within credibility, expertise was significant, while attractiveness and trustworthiness were not. The moderation hypothesis (H4) was partially supported: sponsorship disclosure significantly altered only the attractiveness and purchase intention relationship. Together, these results highlight the primary role of relationship cues and expert knowledge in shaping purchase intention, and indicate that disclosure does not broadly weaken effectiveness; rather, it selectively reweights cues, with attractiveness behaving differently when sponsorship is explicit.

The discussion proceeds by antecedent, examining each construct's influence on purchase intention and noting expected and unexpected patterns. A synthesis of broader implications follows, emphasizing contributions to theory and practice in influencer advertising.

4.3.1. Building Parasocial Ties to Drive Purchase Intention

Parasocial interaction emerged as the strongest and most consistent predictor of purchase intention in this study. This result underscores the view that relational bonds play a decisive role in shaping consumer responses to influencer content, particularly when followers perceive the influencer as attentive, familiar, and socially present (Labrecque, 2014). In beauty contexts, repeated interactions and the illusion of friendship formed between influencers and their audiences have been shown to guide consumers toward products and routines, lending persuasive weight to recommendations (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Hu et al., 2020; Manchanda et al., 2022). The present findings align with this literature by indicating that the felt relationship with the influencer, rather than isolated message characteristics, is central to how intentions are formed.

The deeper analysis of the indicator-level (Appendix G and H) importance results has suggested that, as this bond develops, its influence appears to operate through a set of interrelated perceptions. When viewers feel “known” by the influencer, that is, when their needs are anticipated and addressed, they may be more likely to regard product claims as relevant to their own situations, potentially leading to higher purchase intentions. Anticipation for subsequent posts further sustains attention, creating a sense of continuity that strengthens the perceived relationship over time.

Moments of personal disclosure or direct acknowledgement of followers add to this effect by humanizing the influencer and reducing psychological distance. Taken together, these processes help explain why parasocial interaction not only reached statistical significance but also topped the importance ranking: it organizes how information is received, interpreted, and ultimately acted upon.

Marketing managers should note that typically this influence does not stem from a single post or isolated exposure. Rather, it reflects an ongoing pattern of communication in which the creator consistently demonstrates understanding of follower needs, sustains engagement across episodes, and invites continued interaction (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Content that addresses common pain points may signal practical relevance; serialized formats with clear “next episode” cues could encourage return viewing; and glimpses into the creator’s personal perspective or routine could deepen the sense of familiarity. In combination, these elements may reinforce the relational frame through which product information is evaluated and intentions are formed.

These findings highlight the practical costs of overlooking the relational dimension in influencer selection and content design. Brands that emphasize audience fit and reach without attending to how creators engage, with direct address, meaningful replies, and sustained narrative arcs, risk underleveraging the very mechanism most strongly associated with purchase intention. Conversely, campaigns that cultivate these relational cues are better positioned to convert interest into intention, not by relying on a single persuasive message, but by sustaining a pattern of communication that makes recommendations feel personally relevant and relatable (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Hu et al., 2020; Manchanda et al., 2022).

4.3.2. Leveraging Trust and Expertise for Successful Influencer Marketing

Trust and source credibility are closely related but conceptually distinct routes to persuasion. Trust concerns a consumer’s willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the influencer’s intentions and behavior (Rousseau et al., 1998; Mayer et al., 1995). Source credibility, in turn, is typically operationalized via expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990; Stubb & Colliander, 2019). Across social media contexts, higher credibility is generally linked to more favorable evaluations and stronger purchase intentions, especially when competence- and trust-related cues are salient (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Weismueller et al., 2020; Hudders et al., 2021; Rizomyliotis et al., 2024).

In the present model, trust was positively associated with purchase intention, indicating that relational confidence in the influencer translates into a greater propensity to buy. Within the source credibility block, however, only expertise predicted purchase intention, whereas trustworthiness

and attractiveness did not. This pattern aligns with work positioning perceived knowledge and product-specific competence as the persuasive core of credibility in influencer settings (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1990; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020; Weismueller et al., 2020), and departs from studies in some beauty contexts where trustworthiness or attractiveness have shown positive links to attitudes or intentions (Giffin, 1967; Ohanian, 1991; Garg & Bakshi, 2024).

Two considerations help reconcile these results. First, in short-form review content, audiences appear to prioritize diagnostic information - demonstrations, explanations, and usage know-how - when forming intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020; Hudders et al., 2021). This naturally favors expertise over surface cues. Second, measurement diagnostics indicated conceptual proximity between trust and trustworthiness, which may dilute the incremental variance attributable to the trustworthiness facet once expertise and the broader relationship-level trust are in the model. Put differently, trustworthiness in Ohanian's framework is a message-level attribute judgment, while trust reflects a relationship-level confidence built over repeated interactions (Mayer et al., 1995; Kim & Kim, 2021; Hudders et al., 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019). It is therefore plausible for trust to predict intention even when trustworthiness adds little unique explanatory power.

Credibility still matters, but in this setting its effective component is expertise. For practice, this points to briefing and evaluating creators on clear demonstrations, comparative evaluations, and product know-how, rather than relying on appearance-based appeal or generic "honesty" impressions, when the objective is to move purchase intention (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1990; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020). In parallel, sustaining trust through balanced reviews, consistency over time, and responsiveness to follower concerns remains essential in converting audience attention into purchase intent (Rousseau et al., 1998; Mayer et al., 1995; Ki et al., 2023; Jia et al., 2024).

4.3.3. From Transparency to Impact: How Sponsorship Disclosure Reweights Attention

Sponsorship disclosure is intended to make persuasive intent clear, and current regulations require explicit labels (e.g., #ad) to ensure transparency (FTC, 2021; European Commission, n.d.). Theoretically, such cues activate persuasion knowledge and can change how people process messages (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Empirically, however, the effects are mixed: some studies find that disclosure increases skepticism and lowers intentions (Boerman et al., 2017; Van Reijmersdal et al., 2016; Evans et al., 2017; De Veirman & Hudders, 2020; Lou et al., 2021), whereas others show that clear labeling signals honesty, supports trust, and can improve responses (Amazeen & Wojdyski, 2019; Evans et al., 2019; De Jans & Hudders, 2020; Kay et al., 2020; Saternus et al., 2022; Lou, 2021; W. Wang & Wang, 2019).

Within this context, the present study reveals a selective disclosure effect. Only one path differed across groups: the effect of attractiveness on purchase intention was stronger under disclosure. For parasocial interaction, expertise, trustworthiness, and trust, the multi-group differences were not significant. Thus, disclosure did not uniformly weaken persuasion; rather, it appears to reweight the cues audiences rely on. When a post is clearly labeled as sponsored, viewers may discount claim-based content but continue to draw on heuristic, presentation-related signals such as attractiveness.

On the other hand, although disclosure strengthened the attractiveness pathway relative to no disclosure, attractiveness did not show a significant main effect on purchase intention in the pooled analysis; appeal cues became more salient under disclosure but did not displace the primacy of parasocial interaction and expertise. Second, the trust and purchase intention relationship was significant in the complete sample and did not differ reliably by disclosure condition, which aligns with evidence that transparency can coexist with trust rather than necessarily undermining it (Jia et al., 2024; Kim & Kim, 2021b; Han, 2020).

Overall, these results support a cue-reweighting view of disclosure. Clear labeling does not erase influence; it changes which signals matter most. Practically, transparent sponsorship is compatible with effectiveness when creators emphasize expert demonstrations and relationship-rich communication, while recognizing that visually appealing presentation may draw more attention under disclosure (Amazeen & Wojdyski, 2019; Kay et al., 2020; De Jans & Hudders, 2020). In short, compliance with disclosure standards (FTC, 2021; European Commission, n.d.) can align with persuasive goals if campaigns foreground informational and relational quality and treat attractiveness as a secondary, context-sensitive cue.

4.3.4. Theoretical Contributions

This study refines explanations of how influencer content shapes purchase intention by integrating relational, credibility, and transparency mechanisms within a single empirical model. First, it strengthens a relationship-oriented account of persuasion in beauty reviews: parasocial interaction and trust emerged as reliable drivers of intention, indicating that perceived familiarity, relatability, attentiveness, and confidence in the creator meaningfully condition how viewers respond to a product recommendation. Importantly, this claim is method-consistent: although the design used a single exposure to a review reel, the parasocial interaction construct captures *as-if* relational perceptions that can be evoked within one post and shape interpretation at the moment of exposure.

Second, the findings sharpen the source credibility framework by privileging expertise as the operative facet for moving purchase intention in short-form, review-oriented contexts. Once competence-based cues are accounted for, trustworthiness and attractiveness contributed no incremental explanatory power to intention. The simultaneous significance of trust alongside a non-significant trustworthiness facet helps clarify why prior results have been mixed: trust reflects a broader, relationship-level confidence often built over repeated encounters with a creator's style and stance, whereas trustworthiness is a message-level attribute judgment about a specific communication. This distinction suggests that credibility theories in influencer settings should emphasize diagnostic, competence-based signals (demonstrations, clear explanations, usage know-how) when explaining why audiences act on guidance.

Third, the study contributes to research on sponsorship disclosure by evidencing a selective, cue-reweighting effect rather than a uniform dampening of persuasion. Conceptually, this supports the view that making persuasive intent explicit does not erase influence; it changes which cues matter most, leaving relational and informational routes largely intact while increasing the salience of presentation-related signals under transparency. Although persuasion knowledge was not measured directly, the study was informed by the Persuasion Knowledge Model as an interpretive lens: the disclosure results are consistent with PKM's prediction that transparency alters message processing. The contribution to PKM is therefore indirect and can be seen as a boundary-condition refinement for short-form beauty reviews: disclosure can coexist with effectiveness by shifting attention among cues rather than depressing responses across the board.

Fourth, by integrating the Source Credibility Model and Parasocial Interaction within a single study, and interpreting disclosure effects through the Persuasion Knowledge Model, the study offers a more complete account of how source credibility, trust, parasocial interaction, and sponsorship disclosure jointly shape purchase intention.

Finally, the work extends contextual and methodological boundary conditions for influencer research. Contextually, it adds additional evidence and boundary-condition detail within the cosmetics category, where products are used close to the body and audiences seek actionable, low-risk guidance - conditions under which expertise and moment-of-exposure relational cues plausibly dominate. Methodologically, it combines a controlled multi-group disclosure manipulation with PLS-SEM, complemented by Importance-Performance Map Analysis to provide a prioritization lens on theoretical levers. Taken together, these contributions advance a more integrated and nuanced account of influencer persuasion in beauty: relationship cues organize interpretation, expertise carries the persuasive load, and disclosure reweights attention among cues without broadly weakening core mechanisms.

4.3.5. Practical Implications

The findings of this study translate into actionable guidance for marketing practitioners, particularly in the cosmetics industry.

First, a relationship-first strategy should be adopted. Because parasocial interaction and trust most strongly shaped purchase intention, brands should prioritize influencers who reliably evoke relational cues - direct address, anticipation of audience needs, sustained attention across a series of posts, and acknowledgment of feedback. This communicative style can help convert exposure into personally relevant guidance rather than generic promotion.

Brands should also foreground expertise in briefs, selection, and deliverables. Within source credibility, expertise, rather than attractiveness or generic trustworthiness, drove purchase intention in this context. Creative briefs and approvals should emphasize competence signals: clear demonstrations, side-by-side comparisons, explicit usage guidance (“what works for whom, when, and why”), and transparent reasoning. Talent vetting should assess an influencer’s track record of diagnostic content (tutorials, troubleshooting, decision aids) rather than defaulting to reach or aesthetics. Contracts can reinforce this by specifying expertise-showcasing deliverables (e.g., structured review sequences; method-transparent before–after assets) and by linking incentives to quality indicators (saves, average watch time, substantive comments) rather than impressions alone.

Third, disclosure should be treated as a design constraint, not a liability. Sponsorship disclosure is compatible with effectiveness, but it reweights attention among cues: with clear labels, audiences may rely more on presentation-related signals even as relational and informational routes remain stable. Some influencers may hesitate to disclose for fear of dampening responses; in this study, disclosure did not harm effectiveness. Accordingly, brands should ensure compliance with applicable regulations and platform guidance (e.g., #ad, “Paid partnership”) and reinforce disclosure compliance in briefs and approvals. Labels should be clear and conspicuous, while each post should still lead with “why this works for you,” pairing transparency with expert, relationship-rich formats and polished, yet authentic, visuals.

Additionally, measurement should be aligned with the operative mechanisms. Brands should move beyond impressions and prioritize indicators tied to usefulness and engagement: saves, average watch time/completion, and meaningful two-way interaction (unique commenters, influencer reply depth). For disclosed posts, A/B testing of creative variants that hold the label constant while varying expertise cues or relational framing can help preserve informational quality alongside visual appeal. These expectations should be codified in briefs, influencer guidelines, and post-campaign scorecards.

In summary, a coherent playbook emerges: brands should select influencers for how they teach and relate, design content that makes competence unmistakable, ensure sponsorship disclosure is present and compliant, and evaluate performance on signals of utility and engagement rather than impressions alone.

4.3.6. What Matters Most for Purchase Intention: Drivers & Actions

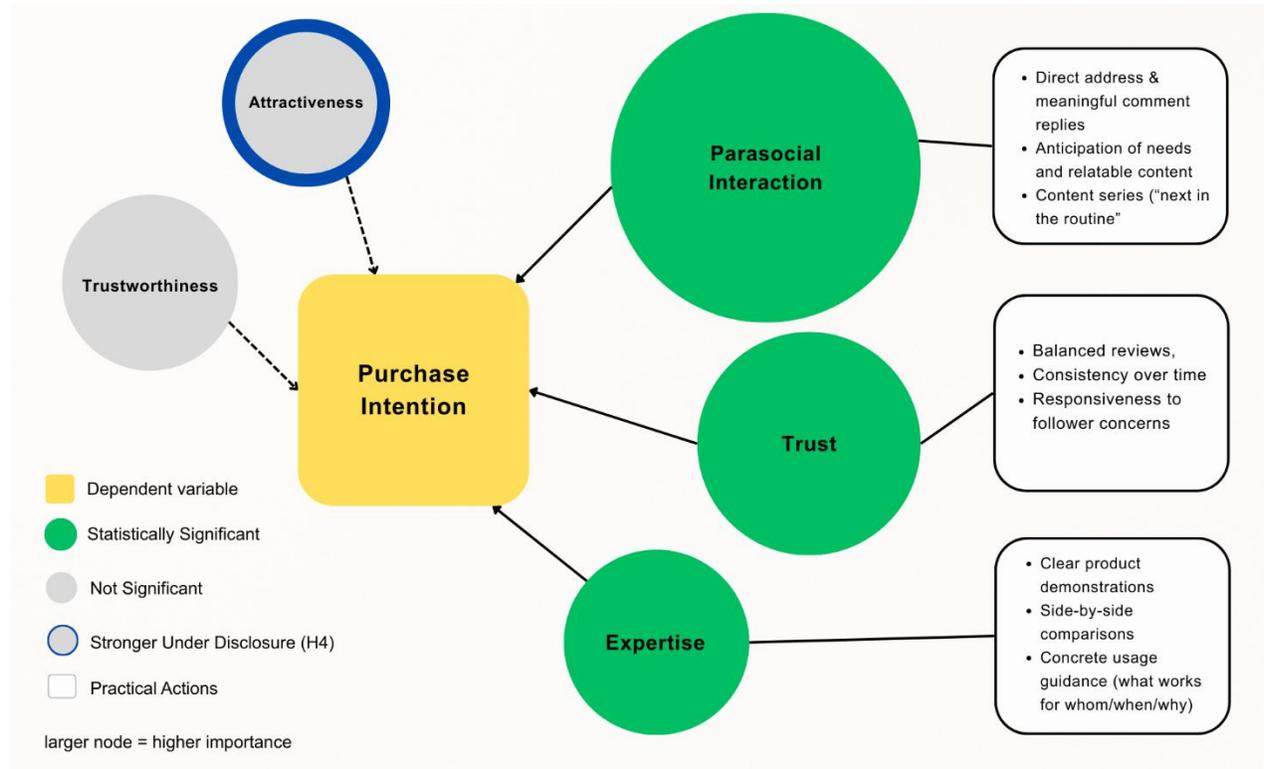


Figure 4.1 What Matters Most for Purchase Intention: Drivers & Actions

Source: Author's elaboration

To aid interpretation of the preceding results, the figure provides a visual synthesis of the tested paths to purchase intention. Circle color indicates hypothesis outcomes (green = supported; grey = not significant), size reflects relative importance (larger node equals higher importance), and line style distinguishes effects (solid = supported; dashed = not significant). A teal ring marks the path that strengthens under sponsorship disclosure (H4). The right-hand callouts translate the validated drivers - parasocial interaction, trust, and expertise - into concise, actionable guidelines for practice.

5. Conclusion

The objective of this dissertation was to clarify how influencer attributes and relational dynamics shape purchase intention in the cosmetics context and to examine whether sponsorship disclosure alters these effects.

The findings indicate that parasocial interaction and trust function as reliable drivers of purchase intention, underscoring the centrality of relationship-based mechanisms in influencer persuasion. Within source credibility, expertise emerged as the operative facet for translating endorsements into purchase intention, whereas trustworthiness and attractiveness did not exhibit significant effects in the pooled model. With respect to transparency, sponsorship disclosure showed a selective influence: it strengthened the attractiveness–purchase intention pathway relative to the no-disclosure condition. Viewed together, these results support a relationship-first, competence-led account of persuasion in short-form beauty reviews and suggest that clear disclosure is compatible with effectiveness.

Collectively, this research advances a more differentiated understanding of how influencer content informs consumer decision-making. Rather than treating persuasive cues as uniformly impactful, the study demonstrates that relational closeness and demonstrable expertise carry the persuasive load, while disclosure reweights attention among cues without broadly dampening influence. These insights offer an empirically grounded basis for more relationally attuned, competence-focused strategies in influencer marketing and invite future work to extend these conclusions to behavioral outcomes, additional categories, and alternative disclosure formats.

5.1. Limitations and Further Research Suggestions

Similar to other empirical studies, this work is bounded by contextual and methodological choices that shape the scope of its contributions. The decision to examine influencer effects within a single category (cosmetics/mascara) and platform format (Instagram) offers clarity but may limit generalizability to other price tiers, product types, platforms, or influencer archetypes. Measurement diagnostics also indicated conceptual proximity between Trust and the Trustworthiness facet of credibility, suggesting caution when interpreting their unique roles. In addition, the study did not directly measure persuasion knowledge (e.g., ad recognition, skepticism, reactance), which constrains strong causal claims about why disclosure may reweight cues. The cross-sectional, self-report design and a modest sample size limit causal inference and external validity, and the moderation hypothesis received only partial support, indicating more complex boundary conditions than initially specified.

Building on these limitations, future research could broaden context and method. Studies might test alternative categories and price points across platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube) and influencer types (subject-matter experts vs. lifestyle creators), and compare disclosure formats (badge vs. hashtag), placement, and wording. Designs with stronger causal leverage, such as longitudinal panels, field or lab A/B experiments with real posts, and multi-source datasets that link intentions to behavioral metrics could clarify temporal dynamics and outcomes. It would also be valuable to manipulate operative cues directly (e.g., direct address, serialized content, reply depth; demonstrations, side-by-side comparisons, usage guidance) to isolate their effects on intention and behavior, and to measure persuasion knowledge to test whether disclosure operates through ad recognition or skepticism. Finally, refining the credibility block by modeling Trust (relationship-level) and Trustworthiness (message-level) with explicit theoretical separation, and by assessing discriminant validity with robust criteria (e.g., HTMT, construct-level CFA) may help disentangle their contributions and illuminate when disclosure selectively strengthens Attractiveness without displacing the primacy of Parasocial Interaction, Trust and Expertise.

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Appendix

Appendix A1: Independent Variable Measures

Construct	Measure	Source
Source Credibility: Trustworthiness	I feel the influencer is honest.	Adapted from Munnukka et al., 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019
Source Credibility: Trustworthiness	I consider the influencer trustworthy.	Adapted from Munnukka et al., 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019
Source Credibility: Trustworthiness	I feel the influencer is truthful.	Adapted from Munnukka et al., 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019
Source Credibility: Trustworthiness	I consider the content provided by the influencer reliable.	Adapted from Ohanian, 1991; Teng et al., 2020; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Source Credibility: Expertise	I consider the influencer an expert in this topic.	Adapted from Bergkvist et al. (2016); Ohanian (1990); Chetioui et al., 2020
Source Credibility: Expertise	I feel the influencer has great knowledge.	Adapted from Bergkvist et al. (2016); Ohanian (1990); Chetioui et al., 2020
Source Credibility: Expertise	I think the influencer has enough knowledge about the product/brand she's endorsing.	Adapted from Ohanian, 1991; Ki & Kim, 2019; Teng et al., 2020; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Source Credibility: Expertise	I think the influencer is qualified enough to give a professional opinion on the product/brand.	Adapted from Ohanian, 1991; Ki & Kim, 2019; Teng et al., 2020; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Source Credibility: Attractiveness	The influencer has an attractive personality.	Adapted from Ohanian, 1991; Ki & Kim, 2019; Teng et al., 2020; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Source Credibility: Attractiveness	The influencer is very sexy.	Adapted from Munnukka et al., 2016; Lou & Kim, 2019; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Source Credibility: Attractiveness	The influencer has unique charisma.	Adapted from Ohanian, 1991; Ki & Kim, 2019; Teng et al., 2020; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Parasocial Interaction	The influencer makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend.	Adapted from Rosaen and Dibble (2016); Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee & Watkins 2016; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Parasocial Interaction	I see the influencer is a natural, down-to-earth person.	Adapted from Rosaen and Dibble (2016); Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee & Watkins 2016; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Parasocial Interaction	The influencer seems to understand the kind of things I want to know	Adapted from Rosaen and Dibble (2016); Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee & Watkins 2016; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Parasocial Interaction	If I see a story about the influencer in other places, I would read it.	Adapted from Rosaen and Dibble (2016); Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee & Watkins 2016; Garg & Bakshi, 2024

Parasocial Interaction	I would love to meet the influencer in person.	Adapted from Rosaen and Dibble (2016); Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee & Watkins 2016; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Parasocial Interaction	The influencer would fit in well with my group of friends.	Adapted from Rosaen and Dibble (2016); Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee & Watkins 2016; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Parasocial Interaction	If the influencer lived in my neighborhood, we would be friends.	Adapted from Rosaen and Dibble (2016); Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee & Watkins 2016; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Parasocial Interaction	I look forward to seeing more of this influencer's posts.	Adapted from Rosaen and Dibble (2016); Lou & Kim, 2019; Lee & Watkins 2016; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Trust	I believe that I can depend on the influencer to make purchasing decisions.	Adapted from Lu et al. (2014); Ohanian (1990); Chetioui et al., 2020
Trust	I believe the influencer is sincere.	Adapted from Lu et al. (2014); Ohanian (1990); Chetioui et al., 2020
Trust	I believe the influencer uses the same products they advertise.	Adapted from Lu et al. (2014); Ohanian (1990); Chetioui et al., 2020
Trust	I think that the influencer did their best to provide information to help others.	Meng & Wei, 2020; Garg & Bakshi, 2024
Trust	I believe what this influencer says and that she would not try to take advantage of her followers.	Kennedy et al., 2001; Kim & Kim, 2021b

Source: Author's Elaboration

Appendix A2: Dependent Variable Measures

Construct	Measure	Source
Purchase Intention	I would like to buy the product in the video.	MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986); Stubb & Colliander, 2019
Purchase Intention	It's possible that I will visit some online stores or actual stores because of her post	Yuan and Jang (2008); Lou & Kim, 2019
Purchase Intention	It's probable that I may purchase this product or another from the brand that the influencer promoted if I need one.	Yuan and Jang (2008); Lou & Kim, 2019
Purchase Intention	I will probably recommend the product advertised by the influencer.	Ajzen (2011); Hsu and Lin (2015); Kumar et al. (2009); Martins et al. (2017); Chetioui et al., 2020

Source: Author's Elaboration

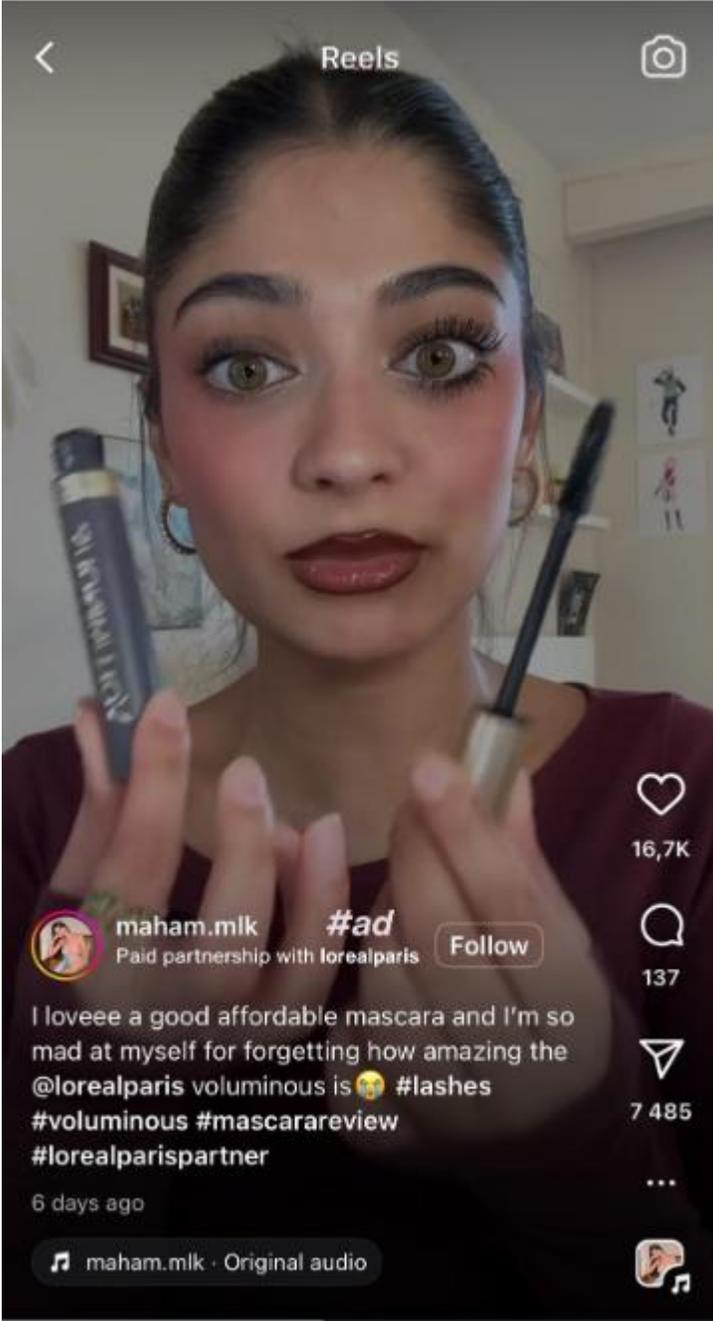
Appendix B: Partial Stimuli for The No-Sponsorship Disclosure Group
(screenshot of the video stimuli)



Source: Retrieved from Instagram and edited with Canva Graphic Design by the Author

Appendix C: Partial Stimuli for The Sponsorship Disclosure Group

(screenshot of the video stimuli)



Source: Retrieved from Instagram and edited with Canva Graphic Design by the Author

Appendix D: Standardized Outer Loadings and Significance Testing of Indicators

Outer Loadings					
Mean, STDEV, T values, p values					
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
PSI1 <- PSI	0.719	0.717	0.037	19.271	0.000
PSI2 <- PSI	0.704	0.702	0.043	16.380	0.000
PSI3 <- PSI	0.730	0.730	0.033	21.947	0.000
PSI4 <- PSI	0.768	0.768	0.036	21.350	0.000
PSI5 <- PSI	0.749	0.749	0.035	21.227	0.000
PSI6 <- PSI	0.754	0.751	0.040	18.966	0.000
PSI7 <- PSI	0.706	0.703	0.047	14.911	0.000
PSI8 <- PSI	0.783	0.783	0.031	25.611	0.000
Purch_Int1 <- Purch_Int	0.862	0.861	0.021	42.019	0.000
Purch_Int3 <- Purch_Int	0.843	0.842	0.024	35.008	0.000
Purch_Int4 <- Purch_Int	0.880	0.880	0.019	45.495	0.000
Purch_Int5 <- Purch_Int	0.846	0.845	0.024	35.565	0.000
SC_Attr1 <- SC_Attr	0.881	0.881	0.019	45.436	0.000
SC_Attr4 <- SC_Attr	0.700	0.690	0.074	9.491	0.000
SC_Attr5 <- SC_Attr	0.862	0.861	0.029	29.575	0.000
SC_Expert1 <- SC_Expert	0.795	0.792	0.040	19.640	0.000
SC_Expert2 <- SC_Expert	0.876	0.875	0.021	41.653	0.000
SC_Expert3 <- SC_Expert	0.760	0.759	0.041	18.633	0.000
SC_Expert5 <- SC_Expert	0.770	0.767	0.041	18.661	0.000
SC_Trust1 <- SC_Trust	0.925	0.925	0.011	82.455	0.000
SC_Trust2 <- SC_Trust	0.889	0.887	0.021	41.542	0.000
SC_Trust3 <- SC_Trust	0.933	0.932	0.011	84.568	0.000
SC_Trust4 <- SC_Trust	0.917	0.917	0.012	78.586	0.000
Trust1 <- Trust	0.749	0.749	0.034	21.929	0.000
Trust2 <- Trust	0.882	0.882	0.015	60.352	0.000
Trust3 <- Trust	0.735	0.733	0.049	14.954	0.000
Trust4 <- Trust	0.731	0.730	0.040	18.463	0.000
Trust5 <- Trust	0.794	0.791	0.041	19.546	0.000

Source: Author's elaboration based on PLS outputs

Appendix E: Structural Model Results, Group No-Sponsorship Disclosure

Path coefficients				
Mean, STDEV, T values, p values				
	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Parasocial Interaction -> Purchase Intention	0.619	0.093	6.686	0.000
SC_Attractiveness -> Purchase Intention	-0.159	0.089	1.791	0.073
SC_Expertise -> Purchase Intention	0.185	0.079	2.339	0.019
SC_Trustworthiness -> Purchase Intention	0.090	0.117	0.771	0.441
Trust -> Purchase Intention	0.138	0.150	0.920	0.358

Source: Author's elaboration based on PLS outputs

Appendix F: Structural Model Results, Group with Sponsorship Disclosure

Path coefficients				
	Mean, STDEV, T values, p values			
	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Parasocial Interaction -> Purchase Intention	0.431	0.100	4.300	0.000
SC_Attractiveness -> Purchase Intention	0.074	0.069	1.077	0.281
SC_Expertise -> Purchase Intention	0.170	0.065	2.625	0.009
SC_Trustworthiness -> Purchase Intention	-0.060	0.096	0.627	0.531
Trust -> Purchase Intention	0.339	0.115	2.947	0.003

Source: Author's elaboration based on PLS outputs

Appendix G: Importance Map at the Indicator-Level

Importance Map	
Construct Total Effects for Purchase Intention	
	Purchase Intention
PSI1	0.073
PSI2	0.072
PSI3	0.105
PSI4	0.100
PSI5	0.081
PSI6	0.070
PSI7	0.066
PSI8	0.098
SC_Attr1	-0.009
SC_Attr4	-0.004
SC_Attr5	-0.008
SC_Expert1	0.049
SC_Expert2	0.061
SC_Expert3	0.054
SC_Expert5	0.048
SC_Trust1	0.006
SC_Trust2	0.005
SC_Trust3	0.005
SC_Trust4	0.006
Trust1	0.074
Trust2	0.076
Trust3	0.053
Trust4	0.056
Trust5	0.060

Source: Author's elaboration based on PLS outputs

Appendix H: Indicator - Item Codes

Construct	Measure	Item Code
Source Credibility: Trustworthiness	I feel the influencer is honest.	SC_Trust1
Source Credibility: Trustworthiness	I consider the influencer trustworthy.	SC_Trust2
Source Credibility: Trustworthiness	I feel the influencer is truthful.	SC_Trust3
Source Credibility: Trustworthiness	I consider the content provided by the influencer reliable.	SC_Trust4
Source Credibility: Expertise	I consider the influencer an expert in this topic.	SC_Expert1
Source Credibility: Expertise	I feel the influencer has great knowledge.	SC_Expert2
Source Credibility: Expertise	I think the influencer has enough knowledge about the product/brand she's endorsing.	SC_Expert3
Source Credibility: Expertise	I think the influencer is qualified enough to give a professional opinion on the product/brand.	SC_Expert5
Source Credibility: Attractiveness	The influencer has an attractive personality.	SC_Attr1
Source Credibility: Attractiveness	The influencer is very sexy.	SC_Attr4
Source Credibility: Attractiveness	The influencer has unique charisma.	SC_Attr5
Parasocial Interaction	The influencer makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend.	PSI1
Parasocial Interaction	I see the influencer is a natural, down-to-earth person.	PSI2
Parasocial Interaction	The influencer seems to understand the kind of things I want to know	PSI3
Parasocial Interaction	If I see a story about the influencer in other places, I would read it.	PSI4
Parasocial Interaction	I would love to meet the influencer in person.	PSI5
Parasocial Interaction	The influencer would fit in well with my group of friends.	PSI6

Parasocial Interaction	If the influencer lived in my neighborhood, we would be friends.	PSI7
Parasocial Interaction	I look forward to seeing more of this influencer's posts.	PSI8
Trust	I believe that I can depend on the influencer to make purchasing decisions.	Trust1
Trust	I believe the influencer is sincere.	Trust2
Trust	I believe the influencer uses the same products they advertise.	Trust3
Trust	I think that the influencer did their best to provide information to help others.	Trust4
Trust	I believe what this influencer says and that she would not try to take advantage of her followers.	Trust5
Purchase Intention	I would like to buy the product in the video.	Purch_Int1
Purchase Intention	It's possible that I will visit some online stores or actual stores because of her post	Purch_Int3
Purchase Intention	It's probable that I may purchase this product or another from the brand that the influencer promoted if I need one.	Purch_Int4
Purchase Intention	I will probably recommend the product advertised by the influencer.	Purch_Int5

Source: Author's Elaboration