The Effect of Perceived Authenticity on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Parasocial Relationship in Beauty Influencer Content

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention and the mediating role of parasocial relationship in beauty influencer content. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 224 social media users in Indonesia who had been exposed to beauty influencer content and beauty product promotions or recommendations. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The findings show that perceived authenticity has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention and parasocial relationship. Parasocial relationship also has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. Furthermore, the specific indirect effect indicates that parasocial relationship significantly mediates the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention. Since the direct effect remained significant, the mediation was identified as partial. These findings indicate that perceived authenticity can influence consumers' purchase intention both directly and indirectly by strengthening the parasocial relationship between followers and beauty influencers. This study contributes to influencer marketing research by clarifying the role of parasocial relationship as a mechanism linking perceived authenticity to purchase intention.

Keywords: Parasocial Relationship; Perceived Authenticity; Purchase Intention;

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become one of the main tools used in digital marketing and has changed the way brands communicate with consumers 2023). The development of digital media has also made it easier for consumers to access product information through various platforms, including social media (Aurellia & Dewi, 2025). In Indonesia, the number of internet users reached 230 million in 2025, representing an internet penetration rate of 80.5%, while social media user identities reached 180 million or 62.9% of the total population (Kemp, 2025). The widespread use of social media has also supported the development of social media influencers, who create and share content based on their knowledge and expertise (Agnihotri et al., 2023). Influencers have become part of social media marketing by sharing product-related information, experiences, and recommendations with their audiences (Aurellia & Dewi, 2025).

The role of social media influencers is particularly relevant in the beauty industry, where social media is widely used to communicate product-related information to consumers (Aurellia & Dewi, 2025). In Indonesia, the beauty industry recorded 16% annual growth in market value, approximately four times higher than the overall FMCG sector, while unit sales grew by 8% (Fajriyani, 2025). This growth was supported by increasing consumer demand, wider product accessibility, and the expansion of online shopping (Fajriyani, 2025). Within this market, influencers not only provide product information but also share their experiences and preferences regarding the products they use (Aurellia & Dewi, 2025). As consumers are exposed to both promotional information and influencers' personal

experiences, how influencers present themselves becomes relevant to consumers' responses to their recommendations.

Because influencer marketing involves both personal self-presentation and product endorsement, authenticity has become an important characteristic examined in influencer marketing research (Agnihotri et al., 2023; Lee & Eastin, 2021). Agnihotri et al. (2023) showed that influencer authenticity is related to consumers' responses toward endorsed brands. Experimental evidence from Andonopoulos et al. (2023) also showed that consumers who perceived social media influencers as authentic reported greater intention to purchase the products they endorsed. This evidence supports the relevance of authenticity when examining how consumers respond to influencer recommendations.

Perceived authenticity refers to consumers' perceptions of how authentically a social media influencer presents themselves through their content and endorsements (Lee & Eastin, 2021). Lee and Eastin (2021) conceptualized perceived influencer authenticity through five dimensions: sincerity, truthful endorsements, visibility, expertise, and uniqueness. Sincerity reflects whether an influencer is perceived as genuine in their self-presentation, while truthful endorsements concern whether product recommendations are perceived as reflecting the influencer's actual opinions. Visibility refers to the extent to which influencers share aspects of their personal lives, expertise reflects their perceived knowledge in a particular area, and uniqueness reflects how distinct they are from other influencers. Lee & Eastin (2021) also found that these dimensions differed in their relationships with consumers' evaluations of influencers, willingness to follow them, and intention to purchase recommended products. Therefore, perceived authenticity captures several dimensions through which followers evaluate influencers and their content.

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Several studies have examined the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention in influencer marketing. Muna and Wiguna (2026) found that perceived authenticity had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among TikTok users and also reported that customer engagement partially mediated this relationship. Wulandari et al. (2026) reported a significant relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention in the context of virtual influencers. Experimental evidence from Andonopoulos et al. (2023) also showed that consumers who perceived social media influencers as authentic expressed greater intention to purchase endorsed products. However, the study also found that inauthentic influencers could still generate positive purchase intention for hedonic products through inspiration. Ren et al. (2023), using experiments conducted in China, South Korea, and the United States, examined perceived authenticity as a mediator of the interaction between influencer type and regulatory focus on purchase intention. Thus, previous studies have examined authenticity both as a direct predictor of purchase intention and as part of a broader mechanism leading to purchase intention.

However, the findings are not entirely consistent. While Muna and Wiguna (2026) reported significant effects, Rani and Shyam (2026) ound no significant direct effect of influencer authenticity on consumers' purchase intention. These different findings suggest that the relationship between authenticity and purchase intention may vary across research contexts. Therefore, further examination of the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention is still needed.

Previous studies have also examined authenticity in different ways. Tsuraya dan Ridanasti (2026) examined several authenticity attributes separately and found that expertise, truthful endorsement, and uniqueness had significant effects on purchase intention, whereas sincerity and visibility did not. These results show that not all aspects of authenticity are equally related to purchase intention. Together with the contrasting findings reported by Muna and Wiguna (2026) and Rani and Shyam (2026), this variation provides further justification for examining the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention.

Despite these inconsistent findings, perceived authenticity is expected to positively influence purchase intention because consumers who perceive an influencer as authentic may respond more favorably to the products presented in the influencer's content. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Perceived authenticity has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Parasocial relationship offers one possible explanation for this relationship (Azam, 2026). It refers to a one-sided relationship in which individuals develop a sense of closeness with a media figure despite the absence of reciprocal interaction (Azam, 2026). Taher et al. (2022) similarly describe parasocial relationship as a one-sided and long-term relationship that may develop through repeated mediated interactions. Nassim et al., (2026) also explain that continuous exposure to influencer content, personal content sharing, and perceived intimacy can strengthen the sense of familiarity and closeness between followers and influencers. Segev et al. (2026) found that perceived authenticity was positively related to parasocial relationship. Azam (2026) similarly reported a significant positive relationship between perceived authenticity and parasocial relationship. Li and Chen (2026) also found a significant positive relationship between perceived authenticity and parasocial relationship in the context of virtual influencers.

Based on the findings reported by Segev et al. (2026) , Azam, (2026), and Li and Chen (2026), perceived authenticity is expected to have a positive relationship with parasocial relationship. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Perceived authenticity has a positive effect on parasocial relationship.

The relevance of parasocial relationship also extends to consumers' purchase intention. Koay et al. (2023) found that parasocial relationship positively influenced purchase intention toward products endorsed by social media influencers. Similar findings were reported by Azam (2026) and Tsuraya & Ridanasti (2026). In the beauty product context, Taher et al. (2022) also found a significant positive relationship between parasocial relationship and purchase intention. More recently, Muhmin et al. (2026) reported a positive relationship between parasocial relationship and purchase intention among 407 Indonesian beauty-influencer followers. Nassim et al. (2026) found a similar relationship among social media users in Morocco. These studies consistently show that parasocial relationship is positively related to purchase intention across different influencer marketing contexts.

A stronger parasocial relationship may therefore increase purchase intention because followers who feel closer to an influencer may respond more favorably to the products recommended by that influencer. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Parasocial relationship has a positive effect on purchase intention.

More specifically, parasocial relationship may mediate the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention. Azam (2026) found that parasocial

relationship significantly mediated the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention. Li & Chen (2026) reported a similar result in virtual influencer marketing, where the indirect relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention through parasocial relationship was significant. However, Taher et al. (2022) reported a different result in the beauty product context. Although their model also positioned perceived authenticity as an antecedent of parasocial relationship and purchase intention as the outcome, the indirect effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention through parasocial relationship was not significant. These contrasting findings, obtained across different influencer and product contexts, indicate that the mediating role of parasocial relationship in the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention has not been consistent across previous studies. The present study therefore examines this mediating relationship among Indonesian social media users exposed to beauty influencer content.

Based on the previous findings, parasocial relationship is expected to mediate the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Parasocial relationship mediates the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention.

Based on the previous findings, this study aims to examine the effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention and the mediating role of parasocial relationship in beauty influencer content. The study focuses on both the direct relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention and the indirect relationship through parasocial relationship. This approach is intended to provide further evidence regarding the role of parasocial relationship in explaining how perceived authenticity is related to purchase intention. The study also examines these relationships specifically in the context of beauty influencer content, where previous findings concerning the direct and indirect relationships among these constructs have not been fully consistent.

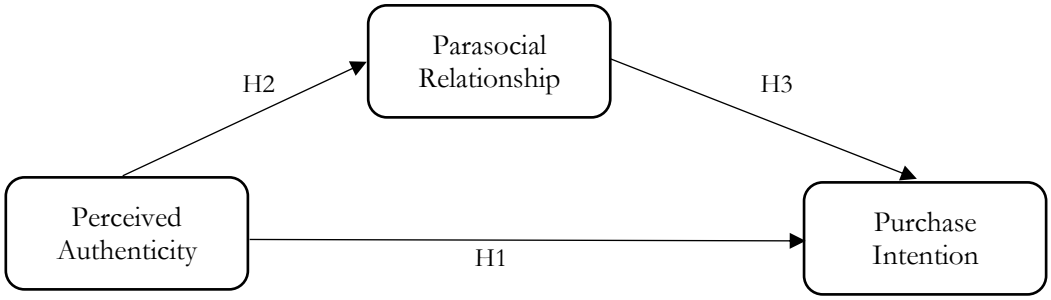

Figure 1. Research Model

II. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among perceived authenticity, parasocial relationship, and purchase intention. The target population consisted of social media users in Indonesia who had been exposed to beauty influencer content and beauty product promotions or recommendations shared by beauty influencers. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined eligibility criteria. Eligible respondents were required to actively use social media, be familiar with beauty influencer content, and have previously encountered beauty product promotions or recommendations from beauty influencers. Following the screening process, 224 responses were included in the final analysis.

The research instrument consisted of a closed-ended questionnaire, with all items measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly

agree). Perceived authenticity was measured using 10 items based on the five dimensions proposed by Lee and Eastin (2021): sincerity, truthful endorsements, visibility, expertise, and uniqueness. Parasocial relationship was measured using four items adapted from Bi and Zhang (2023) and Liu and Zheng (2024) while purchase intention was measured using four items based on Zniva et al. (2023). The measurement items were adapted from previous studies to maintain consistency with the conceptual definition of each construct. The questionnaire therefore measured respondents' perceptions of influencer authenticity, their parasocial relationship with beauty influencers, and their intention to purchase products recommended by beauty influencers. The reliability and validity of the measurement items were subsequently assessed before the structural model was evaluated.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. At the beginning of the questionnaire, respondents were provided with information about the purpose of the study and were asked to indicate their willingness to participate. Screening questions were then used to assess whether respondents met the predetermined eligibility criteria before proceeding to the main questionnaire. The screening process focused on respondents' age, social media use, familiarity with beauty influencer content, and previous exposure to beauty product promotions or recommendations from beauty influencers. Responses that satisfied the eligibility requirements were retained in the final dataset and subsequently used for data analysis.

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. Following Hair et al. (2019), the analysis was conducted in two stages consisting of measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. The measurement model was evaluated using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) to assess indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). After evaluating the measurement model, the structural model was assessed using path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and coefficients of determination (R^2) to examine the proposed relationships among perceived authenticity, parasocial relationship, and purchase intention. The mediating role of parasocial relationship was examined using the specific indirect effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention through parasocial relationship. The significance of the indirect effect was determined based on its t-statistic, p-value, and 95% bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) confidence interval

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Result

A total of 224 respondents were included in the final analysis. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Characteristics (n = 224)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	199	88.8
	Male	25	11.2
Age (years)	17-28 years	216	96.4
	29-44 years	7	3.1
	Other (16 years)	1	0.4
Education	Senior High School	124	55.4
	Diploma/Bachelor's Degree	95	42.4
	Master's Degree	2	0.9
	Doctoral Degree	1	0.4
	Other	2	0,9
Occupation	Student	161	71.9

	Employee	35	15.6
	Entrepreneur	18	8.0
	Civil Servant	4	1.8
	Other	6	2.7
Monthly Income (IDR)	< 1.000.000	81	36.2
	1.000.000 – 3.000.000	87	38.8
	3.000.000 – 5.000.000	36	16.1
	> 5.000.000	20	8.9

As presented in Table 1, the sample consisted predominantly of female respondents (199; 88.8%), while male respondents accounted for 25 participants (11.2%). Most respondents were 17–28 years old (216; 96.4%). In terms of education, the largest group had completed senior high school (124; 55.4%), followed by respondents with a diploma or bachelor's degree (95; 42.4%). Students represented the largest occupational group (161; 71.9%), followed by employees (35; 15.6%). Regarding monthly income, 87 respondents (38.8%) reported income between IDR 1,000,000 and IDR 3,000,000, while 81 respondents (36.2%) reported income below IDR 1,000,000. These figures indicate that the sample was concentrated among young, predominantly female respondents, many of whom were students. This sample composition should be considered when interpreting the findings and their generalizability.

The measurement model was assessed before testing the structural relationships. Indicator reliability was examined through outer loadings, while internal consistency reliability and convergent validity were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Perceived Authenticity	PA1	0.723	0.811	0.859	0.436
	PA2	0.692			
	PA3	0.698			
	PA4	0.694			
	PA5	0.759			
	PA6	0.564			
	PA7	0.557			
	PA10	0.557			
Parasocial Relationship	PSR1	0.792	0.769	0.852	0.592
	PSR2	0.827			
	PSR3	0.666			
	PSR 4	0.782			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.799	0.724	0.828	0.548
	PI2	0.638			
	PI3	0.743			
	PI4	0.771			

As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values were 0.811 for perceived authenticity, 0.769 for parasocial relationship, and 0.724 for purchase intention. The corresponding composite reliability values were 0.859, 0.852, and 0.828. All six reliability coefficients exceeded the commonly applied 0.70 threshold, indicating acceptable internal consistency reliability. The outer loadings ranged from 0.557 to 0.759 for perceived authenticity, from 0.666 to 0.827 for parasocial relationship, and from 0.638 to 0.799 for purchase intention. PA8 and PA9 were removed during the measurement assessment because of inadequate indicator performance. However, the AVE for perceived authenticity was 0.436, below the recommended 0.50 threshold. In contrast, the AVE values for parasocial relationship (0.592) and purchase intention (0.548) exceeded 0.50. Therefore, convergent validity is supported

for parasocial relationship and purchase intention, while perceived authenticity requires cautious interpretation because its AVE remains below the recommended level despite acceptable internal consistency reliability. This limitation should be acknowledged when interpreting the structural results.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Assessment Using HTMT

Construct	PA	PI	PSR
PA	-		
PI	0.875	-	
PSR	0.774	0.715	-

The HTMT values ranged from 0.715 to 0.875. The highest value was observed between perceived authenticity and purchase intention (0.875), followed by perceived authenticity and parasocial relationship (0.774), and parasocial relationship and purchase intention (0.715). Since all values were below the 0.90 criterion, the results indicate that the three constructs demonstrate adequate discriminant validity according to this criterion.

After the measurement model assessment, the structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. The explanatory power of the model was assessed through the coefficient of determination (R^2).

Table 4. Structural Model Assessment

Relationship	B	t-statistic	p-value	Results
PA → PI	0.550	6.725	< 0.001	Significant
PA → PSR	0.619	13.226	< 0.001	Significant
PSR → PI	0.211	2.474	0.013	Significant

The results in Table 4 show that perceived authenticity had a positive and statistically significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.550$, $t = 6.725$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, H1 is supported. Perceived authenticity also had a positive and significant effect on parasocial relationship ($\beta = 0.619$, $t = 13.226$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. In addition, parasocial relationship had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.211$, $t = 2.474$, $p = 0.013$), supporting H3. All estimated path coefficients were positive, indicating that higher perceived authenticity was associated with stronger purchase intention and parasocial relationship, while a stronger parasocial relationship was associated with higher purchase intention. The R^2 value for purchase intention was 0.491, meaning that perceived authenticity and parasocial relationship jointly explained 49.1% of the variance in purchase intention. The remaining 50.9% was attributable to factors outside the model. The R^2 value for parasocial relationship was 0.383, indicating that perceived authenticity explained 38.3% of its variance, while 61.7% was explained by other factors not included in this study.

The mediating role of parasocial relationship was examined by testing the specific indirect effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention through parasocial relationship. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Mediation Analysis

Indirect Relationship	β	t-statistic	p-value	95% BCa CI	Result
PA → PSR → PI	0.131	2.484	0.013	[0.029, 0.232]	Significant

As reported in Table 5, the indirect effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention through parasocial relationship was positive and statistically significant (β = 0.131, t = 2.484, p = 0.013). The 95% bias-corrected and accelerated confidence interval ranged from 0.029 to 0.232 and did not include zero, providing further support for the significance of the indirect effect. H4 is therefore supported. Because the direct effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention also remained significant (β = 0.550, p < 0.001), the mediation is classified as partial. This means that parasocial relationship accounts for part, but not all, of the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention.

B. Discussion

Perceived authenticity had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, supporting H1. This result shows that respondents who perceived beauty influencers as more authentic tended to report a stronger intention to purchase the products they recommended. In beauty influencer content, followers are exposed not only to information about products but also to influencers' opinions, experiences, and personal ways of presenting recommendations. Perceptions of authenticity may therefore become relevant when followers evaluate the products introduced through this content. The finding is consistent with Muna and Wiguna (2026), who found that perceived authenticity positively influenced purchase intention among TikTok users. Wulandari et al. (2026), also reported a significant relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention, although their study was conducted in the context of virtual influencers. Experimental evidence from Andonopoulos et al. (2023) similarly showed that consumers who perceived social media influencers as authentic expressed greater intention to purchase endorsed products. In contrast, Rani & Shyam (2026) found no significant direct effect of influencer authenticity on purchase intention. This difference indicates that the relationship between authenticity and purchase intention may depend on the influencer and marketing context examined. In the present study, perceived authenticity remained significantly related to purchase intention even when parasocial relationship was included in the model, showing that authenticity retained a direct relationship with purchase intention in beauty influencer content.

Perceived authenticity had a positive and significant effect on parasocial relationship, supporting H2. This finding indicates that followers who perceived beauty influencers as more authentic were also more likely to develop a stronger sense of connection with them. In beauty influencer content, followers are repeatedly exposed to influencers' personal opinions, product experiences, and everyday self-presentation. When these forms of self-presentation are perceived as genuine, followers may find it easier to feel familiar with the influencer and to develop a sense of closeness despite the relationship remaining one-sided. This result is consistent with Segev et al. (2026), who found that perceived authenticity was positively related to parasocial relationship, and with Azam (2026), who reported a similar significant relationship. Li and Chen (2026) also found that perceived authenticity was positively associated with parasocial relationship in the context of virtual influencers. However, Taher et al. (2022) reported a different result in the beauty product context, where perceived authenticity did not significantly influence parasocial relationship. The contrast suggests that authenticity does not always lead to the same level of parasocial connection across studies. In the present study, however, perceived authenticity was strongly associated with parasocial relationship, indicating that authenticity may play an important role in how Indonesian followers form a sense of connection with beauty influencers.

Parasocial relationship had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, supporting H3. The positive coefficient indicates that respondents who developed a stronger sense of connection with beauty influencers also tended to report higher intention to purchase the products they recommended. This finding is particularly relevant in beauty influencer content, where product reviews and recommendations are often presented

alongside personal stories, routines, and other content that followers regularly consume. Previous studies have reported a similar relationship. Koay et al. (2023) found that parasocial relationship positively influenced purchase intention toward products endorsed by social media influencers, while Azam (2026) also reported a significant positive relationship between the two constructs. Evidence from the beauty context shows the same pattern. Taher et al. (2022) found that parasocial relationship positively influenced purchase intention for beauty products, and Muhmin et al. (2026) reported a similar result among Indonesian followers of beauty influencers. Nassim et al. (2026) also found a positive relationship between parasocial relationship and purchase intention among social media users in Morocco. Across these different settings, followers' sense of connection with an influencer appears to be consistently associated with how they respond to product recommendations. The present finding confirms that this relationship is also evident among Indonesian consumers exposed to beauty influencer content.

The mediation analysis showed that parasocial relationship significantly mediated the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention, supporting H4. The significant indirect effect indicates that perceived authenticity was associated with stronger purchase intention partly through the parasocial relationship developed between followers and beauty influencers. In other words, respondents who perceived beauty influencers as more authentic were more likely to develop a stronger parasocial relationship, which was then associated with higher purchase intention toward the products recommended by those influencers. This finding is consistent with Azam (2026), who also found a significant mediating role of parasocial relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention. Li and Chen (2026) reported a similar indirect relationship in the context of virtual influencers. However, Taher et al. (2022) found that the indirect effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention through parasocial relationship was not significant in the beauty product context. The different results suggest that the mediating role of parasocial relationship may not appear in the same way across all influencer marketing settings. In the present study, the mediation was partial because perceived authenticity remained significantly related to purchase intention after parasocial relationship was included in the model. This means that parasocial relationship explains part of the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention, while perceived authenticity also maintains a direct relationship with purchase intention. The result therefore places parasocial relationship as an important, but not exclusive, mechanism linking authenticity perceptions with purchase intention in beauty influencer content.

The four findings also help explain why previous studies have not always reached the same conclusion about the role of perceived authenticity in purchase intention. Some studies have found a significant direct relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention, while others have reported a non-significant effect. The present study shows that examining the direct relationship alone may not fully describe how perceived authenticity is related to purchase intention. Perceived authenticity was directly associated with purchase intention, but it was also related to purchase intention through parasocial relationship. This pattern is important because it shows that authenticity may operate through more than one route in beauty influencer content. At the same time, the significant partial mediation found in this study differs from Taher et al. (2022), who reported a non-significant indirect effect through parasocial relationship. The result therefore adds evidence from Indonesian beauty influencer followers to a relationship that has produced different findings across previous studies. Rather than replacing the direct effect of perceived authenticity, parasocial relationship appears to explain an additional part of its relationship with purchase intention.

From a theoretical perspective, this study brings perceived authenticity, parasocial relationship, and purchase intention into a single model in the context of beauty influencer content. Previous research has generally examined perceived authenticity as an antecedent of

consumer responses to influencers (Lee & Eastin, 2021; Wulandari et al., 2026) , while other studies have emphasized the role of parasocial relationship in shaping purchase intention (Koay et al., 2023; Muhmin et al., 2026). By testing these relationships together, the present study shows that parasocial relationship serves as one pathway through which perceived authenticity is associated with purchase intention. The partial mediation result is also important because it indicates that parasocial relationship does not fully account for this relationship. Perceived authenticity remained directly related to purchase intention even after the mediator was included. This suggests that authenticity can be considered both as a factor related to followers' relational connection with influencers and as a factor directly associated with purchase intention. In this way, the study provides a more integrated explanation of how perceived authenticity and parasocial relationship are linked to consumers' responses to beauty influencer recommendations.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that beauty brands should pay attention not only to an influencer's reach but also to how the influencer is perceived by followers. Since perceived authenticity was directly associated with purchase intention and was also related to parasocial relationship, choosing influencers who communicate in a way that appears consistent with their usual content may be more useful than relying only on follower numbers or visibility. For influencers, this means that product recommendations should remain aligned with the way they normally present opinions, experiences, and personal content. Recommendations that appear too different from their usual communication style may weaken the sense of authenticity that followers have developed. The significant role of parasocial relationship also suggests that the connection between influencers and followers should not be treated as something that can be created through a single promotional post. Regular interaction, familiar content, and continuity in communication may help maintain the sense of closeness that followers develop over time. For beauty brands, these findings indicate that influencer selection and campaign design should consider both perceived authenticity and the existing relationship between an influencer and their audience.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, so the data reflect respondents' perceptions at one point in time and cannot show how perceived authenticity or parasocial relationship may change as followers continue to interact with influencer content. Second, respondents were selected through purposive sampling, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to all social media users in Indonesia. The sample was also relatively concentrated in one demographic profile: most respondents were female, aged 17–28 years, and students. This composition means that the relationships found in this study may not appear in the same way among older consumers, male consumers, or respondents with different occupational backgrounds. In addition, the study was limited to beauty influencer content, so the findings should not automatically be generalized to other influencer categories or product types. Finally, the dependent variable was purchase intention rather than actual purchase behavior. The results therefore describe respondents' stated intention to purchase recommended products, not whether they eventually completed a purchase.

Future research could examine the same relationships using a more diverse group of respondents to determine whether the findings remain similar across different demographic profiles. Since the present sample was dominated by young female respondents and students, later studies could include a larger proportion of male respondents, older consumers, and participants with different occupational backgrounds. Future studies could also examine other influencer categories, such as fashion, food, travel, or technology, to see whether the role of perceived authenticity and parasocial relationship differs across content types. A longitudinal design would also be useful for examining whether parasocial relationship becomes stronger as followers are exposed to influencer content over a longer period. In

addition, because parasocial relationship only partially mediated the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention, other mediating variables could be considered to explain the remaining direct relationship. Finally, future research could move beyond purchase intention by examining actual purchasing behavior, allowing researchers to determine whether the relationships identified in this study are also reflected in consumers' subsequent purchase decisions.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention and the mediating role of parasocial relationship in beauty influencer content. The results showed that perceived authenticity had a positive and significant effect on both purchase intention and parasocial relationship, while parasocial relationship also had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. In addition, parasocial relationship significantly mediated the relationship between perceived authenticity and purchase intention. However, because the direct effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention remained significant, the mediation was partial. These findings indicate that perceived authenticity is related to purchase intention both directly and indirectly through the parasocial relationship developed between followers and beauty influencers. Overall, the study shows that both authenticity perceptions and the relationship between influencers and followers are relevant in explaining consumers' purchase intention toward products recommended through beauty influencer content.

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