



# The Influence of Beauty Influencers on the Purchasing Decisions of College Students in the Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of beauty influencers on the purchasing decisions of college students in Nueva Ecija, Philippines. Using a descriptive quantitative research design, data were collected from 155 randomly selected college students through a structured questionnaire focusing on influencer credibility, engagement, and content type. Results revealed that credibility, particularly trustworthiness and authenticity, had the most significant impact on purchase intentions, followed by expertise and transparency. Students preferred influencers who appeared genuine, disclosed sponsorships, and demonstrated deep product knowledge. In terms of content, educational posts—including tutorials and product explanations—were found to be the most persuasive, while video demonstrations, high-quality images, detailed written reviews, and storytelling techniques further enhanced trust and buying confidence. The findings underscore that college students are critical yet responsive consumers who value honesty, relatability, and informative content over overt promotional tactics. The study recommends that businesses collaborate with credible and authentic influencers, prioritize transparent and educational content, and foster interactive engagement to build stronger consumer relationships and improve marketing effectiveness.

**Keywords:** beauty influencers, purchasing decisions, influencer credibility, authenticity, educational content

**JEL Classifications:** M3, I1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has significantly reshaped the way individuals, especially the youth, make purchasing decisions. Unlike the past, where consumers relied mainly on traditional advertisements, many college students now turn to social media influencers—particularly those in the beauty industry—for product recommendations and reviews (Abidin, C. 2021). These influencers, whether celebrities, beauty experts, or everyday content creators, have gained credibility among their followers by producing consistent, engaging, and relatable content.

With the rise of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook, beauty influencers have emerged as powerful figures in digital marketing. Brands actively collaborate with them to promote cosmetics, skincare, and other beauty-related products,

strategically targeting audiences like college students who are highly active on social media (Lou and Yuan, 2019). However, while some students trust and follow these endorsements, others question the authenticity of influencer promotions, raising concerns about whether such recommendations are driven by genuine product experiences or paid partnerships (Evans et al., 2017).

This study seeks to examine how beauty influencers impact the purchasing decisions of college students in Nueva Ecija. By analyzing factors such as trustworthiness, engagement, and product relevance, this research aims to provide meaningful insights into the role of influencer marketing in shaping consumer behavior. The findings will help businesses and marketers refine their strategies to better connect with student consumers in the local context.

Furthermore, this study is significant because college students represent one of the most dynamic consumer groups in society. Their purchasing choices often reflect emerging trends and can influence broader market behavior. Understanding how beauty influencers affect their decisions can provide valuable knowledge for both local and national businesses, helping them design effective marketing campaigns that align with the preferences of young consumers (Lee, M. & Watkins, B., 2021). At the same time, the study will also guide students to become more critical and discerning in evaluating influencer content, ensuring that their decisions are not solely based on promotional tactics but on genuine value and personal needs. (Audrezet, A. et al., 2020; Zhang, Z. et al., 2020).

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between beauty influencers and the purchasing decisions of college students in Nueva Ecija. It highlights three major factors that may influence student consumers:

1. Influencer credibility – including expertise, trustworthiness, transparency, and authenticity (Audrezet, A. et al. (2020); Evans, N. J. et al. 2017).
2. Influencer engagement – measured by likes, comments, and interactions between influencers and their followers (Lou, C. & Yuan, S. 2019).
3. Type of content – such as video posts, image-based content, written reviews, storytelling, and whether the content is educational or purely promotional (Kim & Kim 2023).

These elements are expected to shape students' level of trust and ultimately affect their purchasing behavior.

### 2.1. Research Problem

This study aims to determine how beauty influencers affect the purchasing decisions of college students in Nueva Ecija, Philippines. Specifically, it seeks to analyze how influencer credibility, engagement, and content type influence student consumers' trust and buying intentions. The results are intended to provide insights that will guide business owners in developing effective influencer-based marketing strategies.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of: 1.1 age 1.2 gender 1.3 civil status 1.4 average monthly income 1.5 shopping application used
2. How does influencer credibility affect purchasing decisions in terms of: 2.1 expertise 2.2 trustworthiness 2.3 transparency 2.4 authenticity
3. How does influencer engagement affect purchasing decisions in terms of: 3.1 likes 3.2 comments 3.3 influencer–consumer interactions
4. How does the type of influencer content affect purchasing decisions in terms of: 4.1 video posts 4.2 image-based posts 4.3 written reviews 4.4 Educational versus promotional content 4.5 storytelling techniques
5. What strategies can be recommended to business owners for developing an enhanced marketing promotional plan using influencer partnerships?

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to determine the influence of beauty influencers on the purchasing decisions of college students in Nueva Ecija, Philippines. A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument, divided into two parts: Demographic profile and perception items. The demographic section gathered data on age, gender, civil status, average monthly income, and shopping applications used, which were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentages. The second section focused on constructs from the conceptual framework—credibility, engagement, type of content, trust, and purchasing behavior—measured through a 4-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4).

The target population of the study included college students enrolled in higher education institutions across Nueva Ecija. A total of 155 respondents were selected using simple random sampling, ensuring equal chances of participation. The questionnaire was validated by research experts for content and clarity, while a pilot test was conducted with a small group of students to test reliability. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure internal consistency, with values of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable.

Data collection was carried out either through online forms or printed copies, depending on accessibility, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. The gathered data were encoded, cleaned, and analyzed using statistical tools. Weighted means were computed for Likert-scale responses to determine the degree of agreement on each construct. Results were presented in tables and supported by narrative explanations, providing insights into the relationship between influencer characteristics and students' purchasing behavior.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Most of the respondents were within the 18-21 age group (54.8%), followed by 22-25 years old (24.5%), while only a small portion were below 18 (12.9%) and above 25 years old (7.8%) (Table 1). This distribution reflects that the respondents were primarily traditional college-aged students, which aligns with the focus of the study. The dominance of the 18-21 group also indicates that purchasing decisions influenced by beauty influencers are most prevalent among younger consumers, who are also the most active social media users.

Out of 155 respondents, 56.1% were female, 38.7% male, and 5.2% identified as other (Table 2). This shows that females made up the majority of the respondents, which is consistent with the nature of the study since beauty products are more frequently marketed to women. Nonetheless, the notable percentage of male and non-binary respondents indicates that beauty consumption is not limited to females, reflecting the growing inclusivity and diversity in beauty marketing and influencer content.

A vast majority of respondents were single (93.5%), while 6.5% were married, and none identified as other. Since most

participants were college students, the dominance of single respondents was expected (Table 3). This also suggests that the purchasing behaviors analyzed in this study are influenced primarily by individual decisions rather than household or family responsibilities.

Nearly half of the respondents reported having an average monthly allowance of ₱1,001-₱3,000 (45.2%), followed by ₱3,001-₱5,000 (29.0%) (Table 4). A smaller percentage received either below ₱1,000 (12.9%) or above ₱5,000 (12.9%). This suggests that most students have limited but manageable financial resources, making them price-sensitive buyers. Their budget constraints highlight the importance of trust and authenticity in influencer content, as students are more cautious about how they spend their limited allowance on beauty products.

The most frequently used shopping platform was Shopee (83.9%), followed by Lazada (74.2%), and TikTok Shop (58.1%) (Table 5).

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to age**

Age group	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Below 18	20	12.9
18-21	85	54.8
22-25	38	24.5
Above 25	12	7.8
Total	155	100

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to gender**

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Male	60	38.7
Female	87	56.1
Other	8	5.2
Total	155	100

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to civil status**

Civil Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Single	145	93.5
Married	10	6.5
Other	0	0
Total	155	100

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to average monthly allowance**

Allowance range	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Below ₱1,000	20	12.9
₱1,001-₱3,000	70	45.2
₱3,000-5,000	45	29.0
Above ₱5,000	20	12.9
Total	155	100

**Table 5: Shopping applications used by respondents (n=155; multiple responses allowed)**

Shopping application	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Shopee	130	83.9
Lazada	115	74.2
TikTok Shop	90	58.1
SHEIN	65	41.9
Temu	50	32.3
Others	15	9.7

Other platforms such as SHEIN (41.9%) and Temu (32.3%) were also popular, while 9.7% mentioned other platforms. These results reveal that online shopping is the dominant purchasing method among students, with Shopee and Lazada being the leading choices due to affordability, accessibility, and frequent promotions. The increasing use of TikTok Shop indicates a shift toward social commerce, where influencer-driven content directly links to purchasing platforms. This highlights the importance of influencers in shaping product visibility and purchase intent on emerging e-commerce apps.

## 4.2. Influencer’s Credibility Affecting Purchasing Decisions

### 4.2.1. Expertise

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
I trust influencers who have deep knowledge about the products they recommend.	2.85	Agree
An influencer who is an expert in their field has a greater impact on my purchasing decisions.	2.88	Agree
I am more likely to buy a product if recommended by an influencer with industry experience.	2.84	Agree
I prefer influencers who provide detailed and reliable information about a product.	2.87	Agree
Influencers who explain complex features simply influence me more.	2.83	Agree
Overall mean	2.85	Agree

Respondents agreed that influencer expertise mattered: they trusted influencers who demonstrate product knowledge, industry experience, and the ability to explain complex features simply. This indicates that informational depth elevates perceived influence among students who seek guidance before spending limited resources. In marketing terms, expertise reduces perceived purchase risk and increases perceived product value, especially for beauty items that require product knowledge (ingredients, skin types, usage). Empirical work on influencer credibility shows expertise is a robust predictor of purchase intention because knowledgeable presenters increase message believability and consumer confidence (Brown, A., Davis, J. 2020).

### 4.2.2. Trustworthiness

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
I trust influencers with a long-standing good reputation.	2.90	Agree
I am more likely to buy from influencers who don’t promote many brands.	2.86	Agree
Honest reviews influence me more than paid ads.	2.95	Agree
I trust products consistently recommended by the same influencer.	2.88	Agree
I trust influencers who share both pros and cons of a product.	2.91	Agree
Overall mean	2.90	Agree

Trustworthiness scored highest among credibility dimensions (overall mean 2.90), with the top item being preference for honest reviews over paid ads. This signals that students weigh an influencer’s integrity heavily: Consistent, candid messaging and

restrained brand-hopping improved influence. For marketers, this means frequent, transparent endorsements may backfire; a focused, consistent voice that preserves trust yields better conversion among budget-conscious students. The literature consistently finds that trustworthiness (honesty, reputation) strongly predicts follower purchase intention and mediates brand-attitude effects, reinforcing your empirical pattern (Ki, C.W., Cuevas, L.M., Chong, S.M., Lim, H.S. 2020).

4.2.3. Transparency

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
I prefer influencers who disclose sponsored posts.	2.92	Agree
Transparency in partnerships affects my purchasing decision.	2.86	Agree
Disclosure of brand partnerships increases my trust.	2.88	Agree
I prefer influencers who give both positive and negative feedback.	2.90	Agree
I trust influencers who clarify if endorsements are personal or sponsored.	2.85	Agree
Overall mean	2.88	Agree

Respondents agreed that disclosure and clarity about sponsorships and partnerships increased trust and affected purchasing decisions (overall mean 2.88). This indicates that transparent practices—clear sponsored-post labels and balanced pros/cons—help preserve credibility and maintain persuasive power. Given regulatory attention on deceptive reviews and paid endorsements, transparency not only aligns with ethical best practice but also supports commercial outcomes: studies show that disclosure, when done straightforwardly, strengthens trust rather than weakening persuasive effects. This reinforces the necessity for influencers and brands to disclose partnerships to maintain student trust.

4.2.4. Authenticity

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
I am influenced by influencers who appear natural and unscripted.	2.87	Agree
An influencer’s relatability affects my trust.	2.90	Agree
I’m more likely to buy if I believe they genuinely use the product.	2.93	Agree
Openly expressed opinions increase my trust.	2.85	Agree
I value influencers who share both success and failure experiences.	2.88	Agree
Overall mean	2.89	Agree

Authenticity scored strongly (2.89 overall): respondents were more likely to act when influencers appeared unscripted, relatable, and genuinely users of the product. Students preferred influencers who share both successes and failures, implying that vulnerability and real-life demonstration drive credibility. Authentic content reduces skepticism and elevates perceived usefulness, particularly among informed young consumers who can detect staged endorsements. Research on influencer authenticity and follower responses supports this: authentic storytelling and demonstrations increase trust and purchase likelihood (Suganya, R. V., Asan Bawa, S. 2024).

4.3. Type of Influencer Content Affecting Purchasing Decisions

4.3.1. Video posts

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
I am more likely to buy after watching a video review.	2.83	Agree
Video demonstrations help me understand product features.	2.90	Agree
Short-form videos influence me more.	2.78	Agree
Video content is more engaging than text or images.	2.87	Agree
I am likely to share a compelling video.	2.82	Agree
Overall mean	2.84	Agree

Video content was influential: students reported that demonstrations and reviews in video form helped them understand products and increased likelihood to buy (items ranging up to 2.90). Short-form videos were noted as particularly persuasive, consistent with trends that short, informative, entertaining video formats raise trust and purchase intent among younger consumers. Research on short-form video advertising confirms that usefulness, entertainment, and ease of consumption in short videos significantly boost trust and purchase intention, making video a priority format for beauty product explanation and demo (Torres, P., Rodriguez-López, M.E., Kalinic, Z., Liébana-Cabanillas, F. 2024).

4.3.2. Image-based posts

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
A well-edited image makes a product more appealing.	2.90	Agree
I trust products shown in multiple high-quality images.	2.88	Agree
Image posts usually catch my attention.	2.87	Agree
Before-and-after images increase my confidence in the product.	2.89	Agree
I often stop scrolling when I see attractive images.	2.85	Agree
Overall mean	2.88	Agree

High-quality image posts (before-and-after, multiple HQ photos) scored strongly. Respondents indicated images attract attention and increase product confidence—especially when visuals clearly show results. Visuals function as rapid cues of product efficacy in beauty categories, and high production value can signal product quality. Industry and research reports note that influencer-created visuals hold attention and contribute to perceived authenticity when paired with real testimonials or process shots (Kim, J. & Kim, S., 2023; Lee, M. & Watkins, B., 2021).

4.3.3. Written reviews

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
I rely on detailed written reviews before purchasing.	2.89	Agree
Detailed reviews are more convincing than hashtags.	2.85	Agree
I trust in-depth analysis more than short comments.	2.91	Agree
Written reviews help me compare different products.	2.90	Agree
I save or bookmark long reviews for future reference.	2.84	Agree
Overall mean	2.88	Agree

Detailed written reviews remained valuable: students trusted in-depth analyses and used written content to compare alternatives and

bookmark products. This underscores that even in an image- and video-dominant environment, long-form written content provides cognitive support for decision-making—helping students evaluate features and trade-offs before purchase. Studies on online reviews and consumer behavior show that detailed reviews and verified user experiences strongly influence purchase decisions across product categories (Abdullah, M., Farooq, H., Mukhtar, S., Mushtaq, E.S., Muhammad, S., Ul, N. 2023).

4.3.4. Educational versus promotional content

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
I prefer educational content over purely promotional posts.	2.93	Agree
Product explanations make me more convinced to buy.	2.95	Agree
Pure promotions without information don't convince me.	2.90	Agree
I value influencers who teach how to use products.	2.91	Agree
Educational content increases my purchase confidence.	2.92	Agree
Overall mean	2.92	Agree

Educational content scored highest among content types (overall mean 2.92). Students preferred tutorials, ingredient explanations, and how-to demonstrations over pure promotional posts. This indicates that knowledge-building content reduces perceived risk and raises purchase confidence—especially important for beauty products where proper use and safety are concerns. Industry guidance and influencer-marketing trends emphasize educational content as a major driver of authentic engagement and sustained sales, supporting your finding that informative posts convert better than uncontextualized promotions.

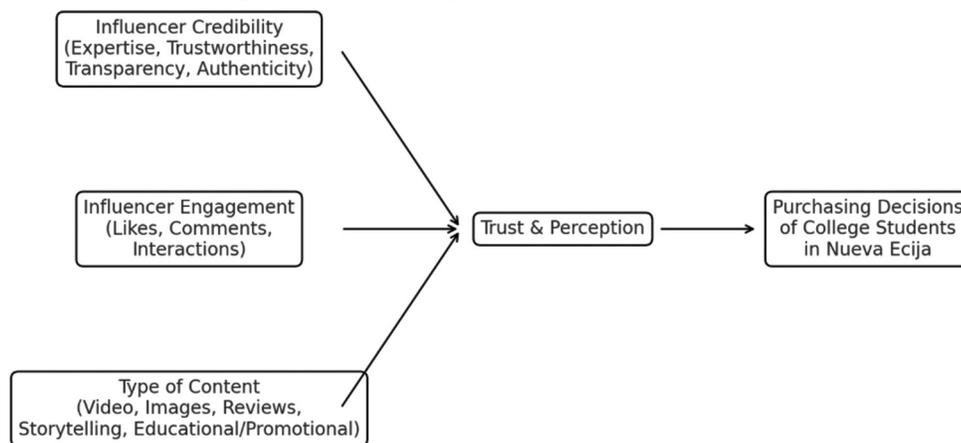
4.3.5. Storytelling techniques

Statement	Weighted mean	Verbal description
Personal stories make me trust influencers more.	2.90	Agree
Story-driven content feels authentic and relatable.	2.88	Agree
Real-life integration affects my purchase decisions.	2.89	Agree
Stories help me visualize how a product fits into my lifestyle.	2.86	Agree
I feel emotionally connected through storytelling.	2.85	Agree
Overall mean	2.88	Agree

Storytelling also scored well: students responded positively to personal narratives that integrate products into everyday life, creating emotional connection and helping them visualize product fit. Story-driven content appears to humanize the influencer and situate the product in relatable contexts, increasing persuasion. Recent research on micro-influencers and narrative marketing shows that sticky, authentic narratives strengthen engagement and help convert followers into customers by building sustained identification and trust (Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2020).

5. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS OWNERS USING INFLUENCER PARTNERSHIPS

Key finding	Insight	Recommended strategy
Influencer credibility – expertise	Students trusted influencers with deep product knowledge and clear explanations.	Partner with influencers who are knowledgeable in beauty/skincare, and require them to provide detailed tutorials and product breakdowns.
Influencer credibility – trustworthiness	Honest reviews and consistent endorsements increased purchase intention.	Work with influencers who limit brand partnerships and highlight both pros and cons of products. Encourage long-term collaborations for consistent messaging.
Influencer credibility – transparency	Students preferred influencers who disclosed sponsorships clearly.	Require influencers to label paid promotions and maintain transparency in content to build consumer trust.
Influencer credibility – authenticity	Relatable, natural, and genuine influencers had greater persuasive power.	Select influencers who authentically use and integrate products into daily routines, showcasing real experiences.
Influencer engagement	Likes, comments, and interactions strengthened influence.	Encourage influencers to interact with followers through Q and A sessions, comment replies, and polls to deepen engagement.
Content type – video posts	Video reviews and demonstrations helped students understand products better.	Prioritize video content, especially short-form tutorials and product demos, on TikTok, Reels, and YouTube Shorts.
Content type – image-based posts	High-quality visuals (before-and-after) increased confidence.	Provide influencers with creative freedom to produce aesthetic, high-quality images showing product results.
Content type – written reviews	Detailed reviews supported comparisons and purchase decisions.	Support influencers who publish long-form captions or blog-style reviews for product education.
Content type – educational content	Educational posts were most persuasive, boosting purchase confidence.	Focus campaigns on tutorials, ingredient explanations, and usage guides instead of purely promotional posts.
Content type – storytelling techniques	Personal stories created relatability and emotional connection.	Encourage influencers to integrate personal narratives and lifestyle contexts into endorsements to humanize products.

**Figure 1:** Research paradigm-it is a conceptual model not copied from book or article

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed that beauty influencers significantly shaped the purchasing decisions of college students in Nueva Ecija. Among the dimensions of influencer credibility, trustworthiness and authenticity emerged as the strongest factors influencing purchase intention, as students preferred honest, transparent, and relatable endorsements. Expertise and transparency also played crucial roles, as detailed product knowledge and clear disclosure of sponsorships increased trust.

In terms of content type, educational posts were found to be the most persuasive, as students valued tutorials, explanations, and practical guidance over purely promotional content. Video demonstrations, high-quality images, detailed written reviews, and storytelling techniques further reinforced purchasing confidence by enhancing product understanding and relatability. Engagement, measured by likes, comments, and interactions, also strengthened consumer trust and buying intention, showing that two-way communication between influencers and followers was essential.

Overall, the findings emphasized that college students were discerning consumers who valued credibility, transparency, and informative content over aggressive promotional tactics. This highlighted the importance of aligning influencer partnerships with authenticity and meaningful engagement to create stronger marketing impact.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For business owners and marketers
  - Collaborate with influencers who demonstrate credibility through expertise, authenticity, and long-term consistency
  - Prioritize educational and transparent content such as tutorials, product breakdowns, and honest reviews
  - Encourage influencers to engage actively with followers through interactive posts, Q and A sessions, and personalized responses
  - Focus on multi-format content strategies, with emphasis on video demonstrations, relatable storytelling, and high-quality visuals.

2. For influencers
  - Maintain honesty and transparency by disclosing sponsorships and sharing both product strengths and weaknesses
  - Develop authentic content that reflects genuine use and integrates products naturally into daily routines
  - Enhance relatability by combining storytelling with educational approaches to build stronger audience trust.
3. For students/consumers
  - Exercise critical evaluation when engaging with influencer content to avoid being swayed solely by promotional tactics
  - Compare educational reviews and multiple content formats before making purchasing decisions
  - Consider product value and personal needs rather than relying exclusively on influencer endorsements.

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