



The Role of Influencer Advertising on Snap-chat platform in Saudi Arabia with The Mediating Effect of Brand Awareness

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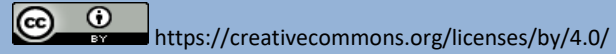
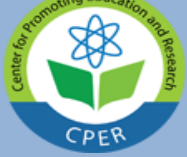
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of influencer's attributes (trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise) as independent constructs on WOM as a dependent construct through brand awareness as a mediating construct. The SPSS V 23 and AMOS V 24 were used to analyze the study data, with a sample of 289 participants determined by the non-probability sampling method who had experience utilizing the Snapchat platform. The findings of this study show that an influencer's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise have a significant and positive impact on brand awareness and WOM, except the effect of the trustworthiness variable on WOM is statistically insignificant. Brand awareness has a direct effect on WOM. The indirect positive effect of an influencer's attractiveness and expertise on WOM is statistically significant by brand awareness as a mediator, while the influencer's trustworthiness has no indirectly significant influence on WOM through Brand awareness.

KEYWORDS: Trustworthiness, Attractiveness, Expertise, Brand Awareness, WOM.

1. Introduction

The digital revolution has contributed to the emergence of many digital applications, which made advertisers do their turn to marketing brands (Wahab et al., 2022). Accordingly, many direct and indirect digital advertisements have emerged on social media, represented by the advertisements of some influencers (Hussain, Priporas & Khaneja, 2024). Due to the strength of their influence on the purchasing habits and behavior of consumers, the messages advertised by social media influencers are often viewed as more reliable and convincing to consumers (Wahab, Alam & Lahuerta-Otero, 2024). According to what has been proven by many studies have confirmed the high rate of consumer response to advertisements by influencers and their effectiveness in supporting their purchasing decision (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020; Woodroof, Howie, Syrdal & VanMeter, 2020). Today, social media influencers are more interactive, exciting, and reach a large number of the target audience on social media. They can attract the attention of their followers with their real personalities, as they express themselves through interactive and real content (Hussain et al., 2024). Therefore, commercial companies realize the importance of using influencers and creating value for the products they advertise for their consumer purchasing decisions (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020). According to a study conducted by DRC (2020) on the influencer advertising market in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Snapchat and Instagram are the most interactive and preferred platforms for consumers and celebrity influencers. Furthermore, Alghamdi and Bogari (2020) indicated that Snapchat and Instagram are considered the most used social media platform among Saudis. Snap-chat Platform is one of the most popular social media platforms among celebrities because they can post their daily events, such as traveling abroad, exercising, or lifestyle (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2020). An influencer is considered a person who is loved by most people (Murwaningtyas, Harisudin & Irianto, 2020). Liu, Zhang, and Zhang (2020) also asserted that celebrities could have a strong influence on consumers in purchasing a product or service and choosing a brand. Celebrities can be used as a marketing tool due to their extraordinary appeal and the large number of followers or fans that others do not have. Defining an influencer as an artist, actor, athlete, or public character that is familiar to most people (Murwaningtyas et al., 2020). Based on Admin (2024), the number of Snap-chat users in Saudi Arabia is 22.64 million users. Snapchat is considered the favorite program among the youth in Saudi, due to the active presence of celebrities in the Kingdom on this application because they share their daily lives on this site. The number of Snap-chat users in Saudi Arabia reaches 44.8% of males and 53.6% of females. In recent years, with the increasing use of social media platforms by consumers have a major change in the marketing process. There have been many firms resorted to a pattern of digital marketing, which is marketing through social media celebrities instead of traditional marketing (Deku, Wang, & Preko, 2024). The importance of the study stems from the scarcity of research on the impact of social media influencers or celebrity advertisements on purchasing behavior in the context of Snap-chat (Lacap et al., 2024; Wahab, Alam, & Lahuerta-Otero, 2024), especially in Arab countries. The study also derives its importance from the fact that most companies use social media celebrity influencers to market their products and luxury brands (Ryu & Han, 2021). In addition, many researchers stated that there is a gap knowledge gap in the academic and practical studies on how digital influencer character can affect brand awareness on social media networks (Alghamdi and Bogari, 2020; Carrilat, O'Rourke & Plourde, 2019), especially in Arabia Countries markets. The



study also derives its importance from the fact that most companies use social media influencers to market their products and brands (Ryu & Han, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to examine the direct and indirect impact of influencers on willingness to purchase a brand as well as the mediating role of brand awareness in increasing customer-brand relationships.

Research Problem

The present study pertains to answering a particular question, and bridges a particular study gap “Do influencer's trustworthiness, attractiveness and expertise consider an important antecedent for brand awareness and word of mouth (WOM)?, how can construct of brand awareness mediate the relationship between influencer's and WOM in the Snapchat app context?

Research Questions

- 1- Is there an effect of an influencer's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise on brand awareness and WOM?
- 2- Is there an effect of brand awareness on WOM?
- 3- Is there an effect of influencer's attributes on WOM through brand awareness as a mediator?

Research Objectives

- 1- To examine the impact of influencer's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise with brand awareness and WOM.
- 2- To investigate the impact of brand awareness on WOM.
- 3- To analyze the mediating effect of brand awareness on the relationship of influencer's attributes with WOM.

2. Methodology Research

2.1 Measurements

The present study included scales based on the previous research, containing 21 items distributed by five constructs. Influencer's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise were measured employing 12 items scale by Magano et al., (2022) and Masuda et al, (2022) based on Ohanian (1990), and brand awareness was measured using five items by Liu et al. (2020) based on (Hsu et al., 2011; Keller, 1993). The four-item scale by Liu et al. (2020) and Hutter et al. (2013) was employed to measure word of mouth (WOM). All scales were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The study showed the scale of each construct in the questionnaire and the linked literature (See Table 1).

Table 1: The Study Measurements

Construct	Item	Measure
Trustworthiness	TRU1	I think, I can rely on perfume influencer I follow on Snapchat in making purchase decision
	TRU2	I believe that the perfume influencer I follow on Snapchat is honest someone
	TRU3	I feel that the perfume influencer I follow on Snapchat is trustworthy someone
	TRU4	I believe that this influencer I follow on Snapchat use the same brand he/she advertise
Attractiveness	ATT1	The perfume influencer I follow on Snapchat is very attractive
	ATT2	The perfume influencer I follow on Snapchat is very classy
	ATT3	The perfume influencer I follow on Snapchat is good looking
	ATT4	The perfume influencer I follow on Snapchat is aroused
Expertise	EXP1	The perfume influencer I am following on Snapchat app is experts in him/her scope
	EXP2	The perfume influencer I am following on Snapchat app has a good knowledge
	EXP3	The perfume influencer I am following on Snapchat is experienced in him/her scope
	EXP4	I feel that the perfume influencer I am following on Snapchat knows a lot
Brand Awareness	BAW1	My favourite perfume brand comes up first in my mind when making a purchase decision
	BAW2	I can recognize my favourite perfume brand within competing brands
	BAW3	I can quickly recall my favourite perfume brand
	BAW4	I can distinguish my favourite perfume brand from the other brands
	BAW5	I aware this brand on Snapchat app by influencer
Word of Mouth (WOM)	WOM1	I talk very positive about this perfume brand ads by influencer
	WOM2	I can recommend perfume brand to my friends and relatives
	WOM3	I am willing to try the new brand of this product.
	WOM4	I will inspire others about perfume brand



2.2 Sampling and Data Collection

To fulfill the study objectives, a quantitative method has been implemented employing the structured questionnaire and using a convenience-sampling approach. Hence, this research applied a procedure (Hair et al., 2021) that indicates that the sample size may be employed is ten times the indicator number. This means that the study's sample size is 210 respondents as a result of the following equation (21×10). Then, the researcher ensured sampling adequacy for analysis, the size of the sample in this study was 300 respondents. This study was applied to a sampling of King Abdul-Aziz University's students in Jeddah. This university was chosen for two reasons. The first reason, this university is considered one of the leading universities in the field of education and research as well as the most ancient in Saudi Arabia. The university is located in the second-largest city in Saudi Arabia in terms of area and population. The data to examine model path hypotheses was collected from Snap-chat users of university students who can be influenced by influencers' advertising related to perfume brands, which can enhance consumers' willingness to purchase by followers for this account. It selected this Snap-chat platform for several reasons. The first reason, according to G0-Globe's statistics (2024), Saudi Arabia Country is the seventh rank in the world in terms of individual social media accounts. The second reason, statistics indicate that Saudi youth spend nearly 3 to 5 hours per day on social media. In addition, Snapchat is used extensively Snapchat in Saudi Arabia among youth to participate in their daily activities with family and friends (Alghamdi and Bogari, 2020). Finally, most individuals who utilize media networks are between the ages of 18 - 34 years. Given this research employed Snapchat as the social media network where participants react to the luxury brand, the checking question, "Do you use Snapchat?" was appended to eliminate any respondent who did not utilize Snapchat. While the respondent who replied "yes" to the checking question is valid to gather the data. After data cleaning, a total of 289 valid and complete responses were used for data analysis. A total of 289 participants were used for analysis by SPSS V 23. Among the participants, 51.6% (n = 149) were female, and the age level from 18 to 22 (51.6%, n = 149). In total, 55.4% (n = 160) of respondents were students at the bachelor's stage, and 18.3% (n = 53) of students at the postgraduate stage, less than SAR1000 18.3% (n = 53) of the income level was bachelor's level students (See Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic Profile

The demographic profile	Percentage
Gender	
Male	48.4
Female	51.6
Age	
18 -less than 22 years	36.3
22 -less than 26 years	41.9
26 -less than 29 years	12.1
29 -less than 33 years	6.6
33 years and over	3.1
Experience years of using "Snap-chat app "	
Less than 1 year	5
1 -2 years	14.2
3 - 5 years	30.3
Above 5 years	50.5
Educational stage	
Dbloma	26.3
Bachelor	55.4
Postggrduate	18.3
Income level	
Less than 1000 SAR	30.4
1000 - Less than 2000 SAR	24.7
2000 - Less than 3000 SAR	20.6
3000 - Less than 5000 SAR	15.5
5000 SAR and above	8.8
Total	100%

3. Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

Exploratory-Confirmatory Analysis Method (AVE/CFA) was performed on the data, to assess the sampling adequacy and reliability of the study constructal model. By SPSS Statistics, The KMO test was conducted to identify the sampling adequacy of each construct in the research model, the KMO value must be greater than 0.6 (Fidell & Tabachnick, 2014). The Cronbach's α test was carried out to identify the reliability of the indicator, which should be greater than 0.70, as referenced by Hair et al. (2014). Based on Table 2, all constructs exceed the recommended criterion. The KMO value = 0.88 supported a statistically significant level ($p = 000$), which confirms that the sample is adequacy for factor analysis and Cronbach's α value of each variable was greater

than 0.70, the construct values of trustworthiness, attractiveness, brand awareness, and WOM were (0.854, 0.835, 0.920, 0.921, 0.900) respectively (See Table3).

Table 3: Reliability and Sampling Adequacy Test

Construct	Cronbach's α	KMO value of each construct	KMO and Bartlett's Test value of constructs
Trustworthiness,	0.854	0.810	Chi-Square = 4137.838 Sig (p= 000)
Attractiveness	0.835	0.800	
Expertise	0.920	0.857	
Brand Awareness	0.921	0.879	
WOM	0.900	0.826	

To evaluate the study model before testing the hypothesized path, structural equation modeling (SEM) could be applied via the AMOS V 24. Based on the criteria of model fit according to (Hair et al., 2019), with $p = >0.05$, $\chi^2/df = <0.5$, RMSEA and SRMR should be smaller than <0.08 , as well as CFI, GFI, TFI, and INI should be greater than 0.90. According to Hair et al (2014), factor loading should be >0.7 . The validity was assessed by testing "Composite Reliability" (CR) and "Average Variance Extraction" (AVE). The values of CR ought to be higher than 0.7, and AVE should be greater than 0.5. Based on (Hair et al., 2019), discriminant validity values, the AVE's square root of any latent construct must be higher than the correlation between this "certain latent construct" and "other latent constructs". The analysis results of factor outer showed that the hypothesized structural model was not tested because three indicators such as TRU1, ATTI, and WOM4 of factor loading's values were less than 0.7. (See Table 4). Then, these indicators should be eliminated from the study model.

Table 4. The Value of the Loading Factor

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading
Trustworthiness	TRU1	0.660	Brand Awareness	BAW1	0.828
	TRU2	0.859		BAW2	0.867
	TRU3	0.839		BAW3	0.894
	TRU4	0.727		BAW4	0.745
Attractiveness	ATT1	0.616		WOM	WOM1
	ATT2	0.716	WOM2		0.844
	ATT3	0.855	WOM3		0.923
	ATT4	0.818	WOM4		0.693
Expertise	EXP1	0.844			
	EXP2	0.885			
	EXP3	0.873			
	EXP4	0.847			

Based on Fig 1, the good fit was fulfilled threshold level, with $\chi^2 = 236.234$, $p = 0.00$, $\chi^2/df = 1.890$, RMSEA= 056, SRMR= 0.037, CFI= 0.969, GFI= 0.918, NFI= 0.937, IFI=0.969, TLI = 0.962.

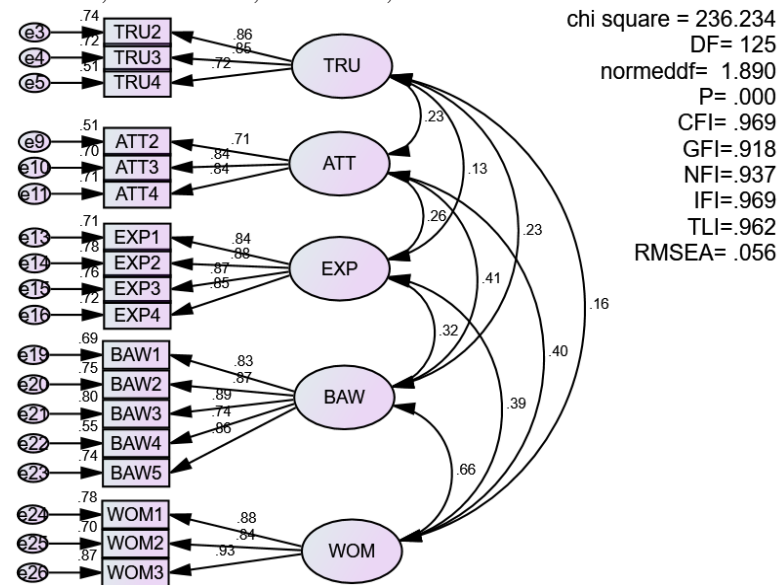


Figure 1: Model fit

Table 5 showed that the values of CR were greater than 0.07 and AVE exceeded the statistical threshold level of 0.50. In addition, the analysis findings of the AVE of all constructs indicated that the root values have the highest level of correlation with other constructs. Therefore, the model variables confirmed adequate convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 5 convergent and discriminant validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	BAW	TRU	ATT	EXP	WOM
BAW	0.923	0.706	0.436	0.930	0.840				
TRU	0.850	0.656	0.052	0.865	0.227	0.810			
ATT	0.841	0.639	0.170	0.853	0.412	0.226	0.800		
EXP	0.921	0.743	0.150	0.922	0.321	0.130	0.262	0.862	
WOM	0.915	0.783	0.436	0.925	0.660	0.164	0.401	0.387	0.885

Table 6 displayed that the R² value of the brand awareness variable is 0.233, and the R² value of the WOM variable is 0.483. These values are considered acceptable for analysis path contracts based on (Hair et al., 2014). This explains that constructs of trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise affect brand awareness and WOM by 23% and 48% respectively. The results of the estimate and CR are applied to interpret the direct influence of the dependent variable (IV) on the dependent variable (DV). Meanwhile, the standardized indirect impact can explain the indirect influence of IV on DV by the mediating effect. The direct effect of the hypothesis may be supported or not be supported by a path estimate between constructs and the P-value. The indirect effects of the hypothesis were examined through bootstrapping and the findings of t-statistic > 1.96, with the level of p-value < 0.05.

Table 6. R² value

Construct	R ²
WOM	0.483
Brand Awareness	0.233

Source: Analysis results, 2024

The hypothesized path analysis in the study model was conducted employing AMOS V 24 software. The results of the analysis can be seen in Figure 2 and Table 8,9.

chi square = 236.234
 DF= 125
 normeddf= 1.890
 P= .000
 CFI= .969
 RMSEA= .056

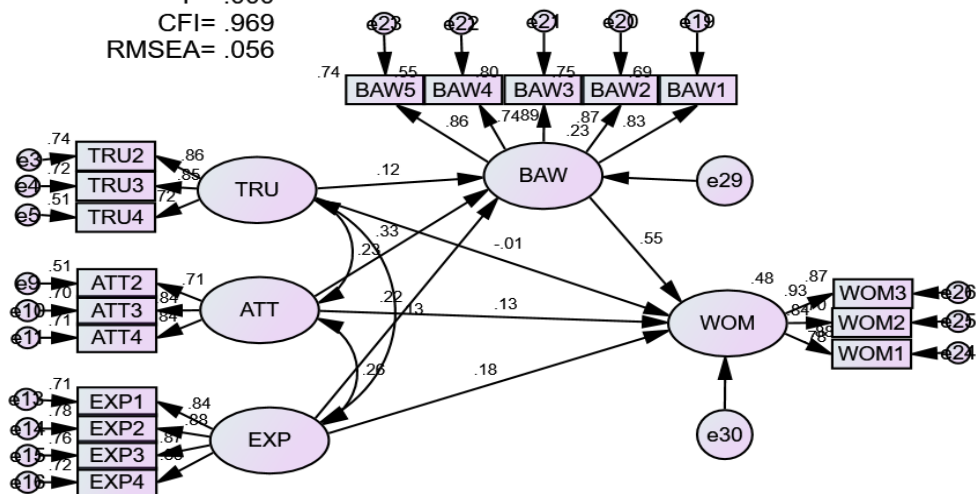


Figure 2: Path analysis

Note: standardized Regression Wights are given on “the arrows”. ***P <0.001, **P <0.01, *P <0.05

The direct effect

The direct effect of Trustworthiness (TRU) on Brand Awareness (BAW) was significant, with (Est 0.116, S.E 0.057, *p < 0.5), supporting H1. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies (Ansari, Ansari, Ansari, Ghor, & Kazi, 2019; Renchen, 2020). However, the effect of TRU on WOM was insignificant (Est -0.012, E.S 0.048, p > 0.05), then the result did not support H2. This goes against previous researcher’s findings (Aggad & Ahmad, 2021; Patmawati & Miswanto, 2022). The results indicated that Attractiveness (ATT) directly affects BAW and WOM, with (Est 0.401, E.S 0.083, ***p <0.001; Est 0.156, E.S. 0.071, p < 0.05) respectively. In sum. H3 and H4 were supported. These results are consistent with (Patmawati & Miswanto, 2022). Moreover, H5 and H6 were supported, Expertise (EXP) directly influenced BAW with (Est 0.177. E.S. 0.049, ***p <0.001) and WOM with (estimate 0.141, E.S 0.042, ***p <0.001). Lastly. The result of H7 indicated that BAW has a direct significant impact on WOM, with (estimate 0.542, E.S 0.062, ***p <0.001). This result is linked with (Hutter et al., 2013).

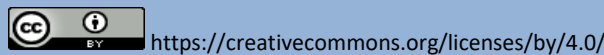


Table 7: The direct effect of hypothesized path

Hypothesized path	Est	S.E	CR	p-value	Result
$R^2 (BAW) = 0.233$					
H1: TRU→ BAW	0.116	0.057	2.023	0.043	Supported
H3: ATT→ BAW	0.401	0.083	4.847	***	Supported
H5: EXP→ BAW	0.177	0.49	3.611	***	Supported
$R^2 (WOM) = 0.483$					
H2: TRU→ WOM	-0.012	0.048	-0.253	0.800	Not supported
H4: ATT→ WOM	0.156	0.071	2.206	0.027	Supported
H6: EXP→ WOM	0.141	0.042	3.347	***	Supported
H7: BAW→ WOM	0.542	0.062	8.798	***	Supported

Note: TRU-trustworthiness, ATT- attractiveness, EXP - expertise, BAW - Brand Awareness, WOM – word of mouth;
 Est- estimate, S.E. - standard error, CR- Critical ratio

The indirect effect (The mediating effect of BAW)

Based on Fig 2 and Table 9, the analysis results found that brand awareness (BAW) has a partial mediation effect in linking the relation between ATT and WOM (Est. Path ATT→ BAW→WOM= 0.181, **P< 0.01), as well as the relation between EXP and WOM (Est. Path EXP→ BAW→WOM= 0.121, *P< 0.05). This result aligns with the findings made by Amitay et al. (2020), which stated that brand awareness mediates the relationship between influencer attributes with consumer behavior among social media platform users. However, the direct influence of TRU with WOM was insignificant, and with BAW was significant, but the effect was slight (P= 0.043). Therefore, BAW did not mediate the relationship between TRU and WOM, with (Est path TRU→BAW→WOM= 0.069, p > 0.080). This study does not conform with the findings of the research by Patmawati & Miswanto (2022), which indicated that social network influencers indirectly affect WOM through brand awareness. Brand awareness is proven to mediate the relationship between social media influencers and purchase intention.

Table 8 the mediating of BAW

path	Standardized Estimate		indirect	P-value	conclusion
	Direct without mediator	Direct with mediator			
TRU→BAW→WOM	0.124	-0.013	0.069	0.080	(No mediation) H8 is not supported
ATT→ BAW→WOM	0.327	0.130	0.181	0.006	(Partial mediation) H9 is supported
EXP→ BAW→WOM	0.219	0.178	0.121	0.019	(Partial mediation) H10 is supported

Note: TRU-trustworthiness, ATT- attractiveness, EXP - expertise, BAW - Brand Awareness, WOM – word of mouth .

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the effect of influencer or celebrity advertising on the Snapchat platform on word of mouth (WOM), and the mediating role of brand awareness in determining the study model relationships. The results show that WOM can be influenced by social media influencers' advertising, particularly, with the effect of influencers' attractiveness and expertise on Snapchat. The use of the Influencer's attributes of trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise indeed contribute to building consumers' awareness and affecting their behavior toward a brand of sportive WOM. The effect caused via utilizing social media influencers to advertise Snapchat is to pay attention and increase awareness among their followers which is foreseeable to enhance WOM for the advertised brand. In addition, social network platforms can boost two-way interaction, which in turn leads to strengthening the relationship between brands and consumers. The results provide profound insights into how firms may maximize the use of social media advertising by influencers to fulfill their marketing targets. In addition, these findings will assist brand management in recognizing how social media network influencers' attributes can affect WOM towards diverse brands through brand awareness. Also, these results support advertisers in understanding the fundamental variables that may interpret the positive or negative word of mouth towards social media platform influencers. Therefore, the marketer needs to establish brand awareness through social network platforms and influencers to boost sales. The importance of this study lies in its contribution to how to practice influencers for ads online. The study displays a new scene on the value of the Influencer's attributes and brand awareness in online brand advertising strategies. This study not only supplies the best theoretical conceptions but also supplies workable guidance for marketers to develop the efficiency of their marketing campaigns. However, there are some limitations linked with the current study that may provide significant guidelines for future research. First of all, the coverage of the study sample is bound to a certain population that might only partly act as some target market segment. In addition, this study has taken into consideration only one platform of social media network platform (i.e. Snapchat). It is recommended that other platforms be taken into consideration for finding a comprehensive understanding of social media brands. Finally, future research can further extend this study by considering other pertinent constructs and dimensions for this research. For example, influencers use video content on social media is effective in increasing engagement, conversions, brand awareness, and sportive WOM (Aggad & Ahmad, 2021). It is recommended that future studies add advertising content as a construct in the study model to explore its influence on WOM.



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