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IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS ON COSMETICS PURCHASING DECISIONS: MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND AWARENESS

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Abstract: *This study explores how influencers and celebrities' impact female consumers' purchase decisions toward cosmetic products and the mediating role of brand awareness. Data were collected through an online survey of female respondents on social media sites in Egypt and analyzed using structural equation modeling SmartPLS V.4, with 394 valid responses. Specifically, influencer marketing is more effective than celebrity marketing in building awareness among female consumers and influencing their decisions to purchase cosmetics. This finding indicates that brand awareness acts as a crucial mechanism through which influencers and celebrities affect female consumers' purchase decisions. Nevertheless, the findings highlight the importance of brand awareness in mediating the effect of influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements on consumer purchasing decisions. The effect of influencers and celebrities on female consumers' purchase decisions is magnified when marketing is based on brand awareness. Consequently, marketing campaigns must focus on promoting brand awareness. Previous research has not extensively examined the mediating role of brand awareness in the relationship between influencer marketing/celebrity endorsements and purchase decisions. This research is one of the first studies to demonstrate that influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements positively impact female consumers' decisions through the mediating role of brand awareness.*

Keywords: *influencer marketing, celebrity endorsement, brand awareness, purchase decisions, cosmetic products*

1. Introduction

Consequently, companies have been increasingly partnering with social media "influencers"—that is, celebrities with large followings on social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram—with the goal of getting recognized for their brands and products (Schomer, 2019). By presenting

themselves as trusted and approachable experts on social media platforms, social media influencers are changing the way marketing is conducted and how consumers interact with products and services. With the shift in marketing strategies from traditional mass media advertising channels such as print media and radio, brand managers can use these social media influencers as a new

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marketing tool to reach more targeted and specific markets, thereby making social media a cost-effective and viable alternative (Phua et al., 2017).

Influencers and celebrities are often leveraged to create brand awareness (De Veirman et al., 2017). The difference between influencers and celebrities is that influencers gain their fame through social media networks and build a reputation among their followers through their behavior on these platforms (Schouten et al., 2020). Briefly, a social media influencer is someone who became famous through their social media presence, rather than a traditional celebrity who makes films, music, and TV (Jin et al., 2019). Social media influencers only affect their loyal followers and produce their own content on social media, perversely. Celebrities are often public figures with many followers (Guruge, 2018). Meanwhile, celebrities gain fame through traditional media channels (e.g., television, music, and sports). In this context, influencers' actions can be perceived as valuable by audiences, as they feel more connected to them compared with celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017)).

Meanwhile, celebrity endorsements are among the most popular forms of marketing communication (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2023) and have become a popular marketing strategy for companies seeking to promote their products and services. This type of marketing involves using celebrities to endorse and promote products or services for fans and followers (Ramadhani & Insani, 2023). Celebrity credibility can improve people's attitudes toward a brand, thereby increasing purchase interest (Singh & Banerjee, 2018). Consumers who perceive a celebrity to be trustworthy give an advantage to the brand promoted by that celebrity. Additionally, celebrity endorsements serve as a marketing strategy that increases the attractiveness and appeal of items and brands to prospective customers (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021), thus making consumers eager to purchase products advocated by their favorite

celebrities at higher prices. Currently, celebrities are becoming more influential among customers because of the increased use of social media. Evidence also supports the idea that celebrity endorsements on social networking sites have an increasing impact on consumer behavior.

Nowadays, many companies use social media as a way to strengthen their brand awareness (Andreani et al., 2021), so that can influence consumer behavior when it comes to buying products or services (Diallo & Siqueira, 2017). When consumers are already aware of a product or service, they are more likely to buy it (Mulyani & Hermina, 2023). Since brand awareness impacts consumer purchasing decisions so significantly, it is a most essential constraint in any brand-related research (Hasudungan & Saragih, 2023). In particular, the mediating role of brand awareness in the relationship between influencer marketing/celebrity endorsements and consumers' purchase decisions has been underexplored in previous research.

Therefore, this study analyzes how brand awareness affects purchase decisions of Egyptian female consumers toward cosmetic products when influencers and celebrities endorse a product. Specifically, this study aims to answer the following three research questions:

RQ1. How can influencer and celebrity marketing help female consumers make a decision to purchase cosmetic products?

RQ2. How can influencer and celebrity marketing help female consumers build brand awareness?

RQ3. How can influencer and celebrity marketing help female consumers make a decision to purchase cosmetic products through brand awareness?

Hence, this study has three research objectives. First, it investigates the effects of influencer and celebrity marketing on female consumers' decisions to purchase cosmetic products. Second, it clarifies the relationships among influencer marketing, celebrity marketing, and brand awareness. Finally, it

explores how influencer and celebrity marketing help female consumers make decisions to purchase cosmetic products through brand awareness.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the related theoretical and empirical literature, develops the research hypotheses, and presents the research framework. Section 3 describes the methodological design to empirically test the model. Sections 4 and 5 present and discuss the results, respectively. Section 6 summarizes the main conclusions.

2. Literature review, research hypotheses, and framework

2.1. Purchase decisions

Previous studies have defined a purchase decision as an individual's decision to choose a specific product or service launched by a company over its competitors (Kim & Sung, 2009). As consumers become more aware of a brand and what it has to offer, they often look for more information about the brand online and evaluate that brand relative to its competitors before making a purchase decision (Sharma et al., 2021). Social media platforms have recently emerged as a cost-effective way to communicate and engage with customers.

2.2. Influencer marketing

In this study, a social media influencer is defined as an individual who has established a significant network of followers online and is considered a trusted tastemaker in one or more niches (Abidin, 2016; De Veirman et al., 2017). Social media influencers create content that is often focused on a specific area of interest (e.g., fashion/beauty, fitness, and technology) and is shared on social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube (Norris et al., 2022).

2.3. Celebrity endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is a widely used marketing strategy in which businesses use famous people to promote their products or brands (Liu et al., 2023). This celebrity spokesperson advertises a company's products or services using physical characteristics, intelligence, personality, attractiveness, lifestyle, and so on based on uses and gratifications theory (usefulness and satisfaction). Celebrity endorsements can also help in transferring positive associations from the celebrity to the brand, affecting consumers' purchase decisions (Sudjawoto et al., 2023).

2.4. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to a customer's ability to recognize and remember a brand in different situations. Brand awareness plays a crucial role in consumers' purchasing decisions. As customers often purchase a product after becoming familiar with the brand, brand awareness aids their understanding of the product and influences their purchase decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Khan & Watson (2003) describe consumer awareness as the knowledge consumers possess about a particular product. Hence, consumers base their purchasing decisions on brand awareness (Hien & Nhu, 2022).

2.5. Influencer marketing and brand awareness

With rise of social media, influencer marketing has emerged as a key strategy used by businesses and brands to raise awareness (Venciute et al., 2023). Influencer marketing is effective if the influencer is credible, authoritative, and connected to the product or service they are promoting (Wielki, 2020). Brand awareness and customer trust are significantly affected by social media marketing influencers. Therefore, consumers' trust in a brand makes it easier to build

stronger connections (Ali & Alqudah, 2022). When consumers perceive an influencer as reliable, it generates positive brand awareness and significantly increases their purchase intentions (Yuan & Lou, 2020). Successful influencer marketing branded content shared on social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, YouTube, and Tiktok) increases brand awareness, foot traffic to retailers' stores, and purchase intention (Nair & Marciniak, 2023). However, there is insufficient evidence to determine the effect of different influencer marketing factors on brand awareness (Bonus et al., 2022). Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Influencer marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness

2.6. Influencer marketing and purchasing decisions

The social exchange theory explains why female consumers follow influencers and why the relationship is beneficial to both parties. However, influencer marketing differs from traditional human relationships in that influencers promote products directly to followers with the goal of converting them into customers. The study attempts to fill this gap and apply social exchange theory to influencer marketing on social media (Homans, 1961) Specifically, this study builds on the reciprocity principle (Blau, 2017) of the social exchange theory to fully capture the nature of influencer-follower relationships and the persuasion mechanism of influencer marketing. In addition, influencer marketing may positively influence consumer attitudes toward certain product categories of the sponsoring brand, thereby influencing purchasing behavior (Venciute et al., 2023). Information credibility and expertise are key characteristics of social media fitness influencers and can have a significant impact on purchasing decisions. However, other characteristics, such as the number of followers, content, and attractiveness, are not associated with buyers' purchasing decisions

(Kumar et al., 2023). In this context, influencers can present information about a cosmetics brand in an entertaining way to convince female consumers to make a purchase decision. Therefore, we postulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. Influencer marketing has a positive effect on female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetic products

2.7. Celebrity endorsement and brand awareness

Celebrity endorsements significantly influence brand awareness (Ramadhani & Insani, 2023). In the age of digital communication, brand awareness alone may not be sufficient to enhance consumers' purchase intentions (Hameed et al., 2023). However, when combined with celebrity endorsements, brand awareness can positively affect purchase intentions (Yohana, 2022). Celebrity endorsements also boost trust, familiarity, and awareness of a product, which significantly affect consumers' purchasing decisions (Li et al., 2023). Furthermore, celebrity endorsements significantly affect purchase intentions for luxury products, especially when considering aspects such as celebrity credibility, trustworthiness, and product-celebrity match-up (Usman & Zuhurifa, 2022).

For cosmetics, both celebrity endorsements and brand awareness have positive and significant effects on purchasing decisions. The use of celebrity endorsers helps increase awareness among followers of these public figures and indirectly links the recommended products to endorsers in the minds of consumers. This connection can influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Furthermore, brand awareness plays an important role in differentiating cosmetics from other products in the market and facilitate the consumers' decision-making process (Ramadhani & Insani, 2023; Salqaura et al., 2023). Hence, we put forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Celebrity endorsement has a positive effect on brand awareness

2.8. Celebrity endorsement and purchasing decisions

Celebrity endorsement has a significant impact on purchasing decisions, especially in the cosmetics industry (Sudjawoto et al., 2023; Salqaura et al., 2023; Amboningtyas & Hasiholan, 2023; Samsudin et al., 2023; Rahma et al., 2022). Factors such as the trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity of the celebrity endorser can significantly affect purchase decisions (Sudjawoto et al., 2023; Leonita, 2023). Additionally, brand image also plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions and can be influenced by celebrity endorsements and product quality (Amboningtyas & Hasiholan, 2023; Samsudin et al., 2023; Rahma et al., 2022). Celebrity endorsements can influence consumers' purchasing decisions in several ways. First, they increase brand awareness and recognition (Husnul Khatimah, 2023). Second, they build consumer trust and credibility (Sudjawoto et al., 2023). Third, they create a positive association between the product and the celebrity endorser, which indirectly influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Usman & Zuhurifa, 2022).

However, the influence of celebrity endorsements on purchase decisions may not always be straightforward. Overall, celebrity endorsements can be an effective marketing strategy for influencing consumer purchasing decisions; however, it is important for companies to carefully consider the characteristics of celebrity endorsers and their impact on brand image. Therefore, we put forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4. Celebrity endorsements have a positive effect on female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetic products

2.9. Brand awareness and purchasing decisions

The decision to purchase a product begins with information. Products with high brand awareness have higher market shares (Clarissa & Bernarto, 2022). Hence, positive consumer brand awareness has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchasing decisions (Dayanti et al., 2018). In other words, if brand awareness is raised among consumers, purchase decisions also increase (Novansa & Ali, 2017), as customers make purchase decisions based on the knowledge that results from brand awareness (Suwardi, 2023).

Many factors also influence consumers' purchase decisions, such as brand value, price, packaging, and product-related features. However, when consumers are faced with factors such as brand equity, price, and product features, they tend to choose based on the brand name first because of increased brand awareness and then consider the price (Supiyandi et al., 2022). Moreover, businesses can use social media to increase brand awareness, improve corporate image, and establish two-way communication, which helps influence a consumer's decision to use a product or service (Simbolon et al., 2022). At a certain stage, consumers make a certain brand their primary choice; the higher the brand awareness, the greater the market's purchasing interest (Pranata & Pramudana, 2018).

Hypothesis 5. Brand awareness has a positive effect on female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetic products.

2.10. Mediating role of brand awareness

Next, the proposed framework examines how influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements affect female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetic products while considering the mediating role of brand awareness. Given that influencer marketing and celebrity endorsement are

expected to be positively related to brand awareness and that brand awareness is expected to positively influence purchase decisions, brand awareness is expected to act as a pathway for the effect of influencer marketing and celebrity endorsement on purchase decisions. Additionally, brand awareness built through viral marketing on social media platforms is expected to influence respondents' purchasing decisions (Mustikasari & Widaningsih, 2019). However, social media marketing has not proven that brand awareness is directly or indirectly related to purchase decisions due to consumers' rationality, which means they must spend more time and effort evaluating sportswear's characteristics and performance (Ardiansyah & Sarwoko, 2020). While influencers increase consumer buying interest by increasing brand awareness on social media (Priatni et al., 2020). When social media influencers use brand awareness as a mediator, the impact on purchase intention is greater (Patmawati & Miswanto, 2022). Brand awareness has been shown to be a mediating factor between celebrity endorsements and purchasing decisions, which means female consumers are more likely to purchase cosmetics from brands that are already well-known than from brands that are less well-known or unknown (Usman & Zuhurifa, 2022), Celebrity can strengthen

brand awareness, increase purchase intention, and increase sales (Amitay et al., 2020). Hence, brand awareness is expected to mediate the main effects proposed in H1 and H4. Consequently, based on the results of previous studies, it can be concluded that brand awareness is an important factor in using influencers and celebrities to increase purchase decisions. Therefore, these hypotheses can be formed as follows:

Hypothesis 6. Brand awareness acts as a mediator between influencer marketing and female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetic products.

Hypothesis 7. Brand awareness acts as a mediator between celebrity endorsement female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetic products.

2.11. Research Framework

Based on the research objectives, literature review, and hypothesized relationships between variables, the analytical framework of this study is presented in Figure 1. In the research framework, influencer marketing and celebrity endorsement are the dependent variables, brand awareness is the mediating variable, and purchase decisions is the dependent variable.

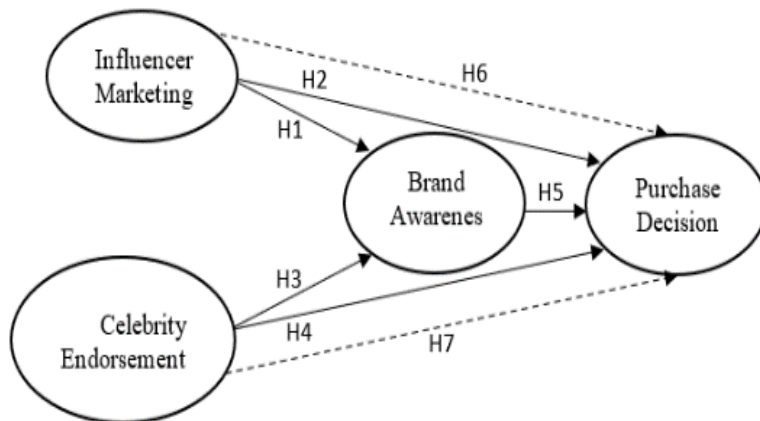


Figure 1. The research framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement

Each construct was evaluated using a multi-item reflective measure based on pre-defined scale items. The items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree." Influencer marketing was reflected by three first-order constructs (i.e., trust, expertise, and similarity), which were used by Hugh et al. (2022) as follows: a five-item measure of trust and a four-item measure of expertise from Ohanian (1990). Similarity was measured using three items from Bower and Landreth (2001). Celebrity endorsement was reflected by trust, expertise, and attractiveness. Following Calvo-Porrall et al., (2021), we used a five-item measure of trust, a four-item measure of expertise, and a two-item measures of attractiveness from Ohanian (1990). Brand awareness was measured using three items adapted from Seo and Park (2018). For purchase decisions, the dependent variable was measured using an eight-item scale, following Salem (2018).

3.2. Data Collection and Sample

Data were collected through an online survey of female respondents residing in Egypt in May 2023. who were willing to cooperate with us and provided informed consent. Online survey was selected due to their ability to reach the target audience, keep their identities anonymous. Respondent selection criteria required that they followed at least one influencer and had seen that influencer's brand recommendation posts in the three weeks prior to the survey. The celebrity endorser was also selected based on the following criteria: First, the chosen celebrity must be very popular among female Egyptian consumers. Second, the celebrity must have a positive image among the Egyptian public. Third, the celebrity must have a relationship with cosmetics use. Fourth, the celebrity must be from the Arab world since local celebrities

can generate more positive attitudinal responses. Based on these criteria, three Arab artists who previously promoted cosmetic products were chosen: Mona Zaki, Yasmine Sabry, and Dora. In total, 394 valid responses were extracted for analysis out of 428 responses obtained, of which 34 questionnaires were deleted due to missing values (18 cases), straight-lining (10 cases) and outliers (8 cases). In terms of age, 14% were under 20 years old, 32% were between 20 and 30 years old, 26% were between 30 and 40 years old, 20% were between 40 and 50 years old, and 8% were above 50 years old. In terms of educational level, 19% had less than a college degree, 24% were in college, 43% had a bachelor's degree, and 14% had a postgraduate degree. In terms of income level, 13% earned less than 5000 EP, 27% earned 5000 to 10000 EP, 49% earned 10000 to 15000 EP, and 11% earned more than 15000 EP per month. Regarding marital status, 62% were married and 38% were single.

4. Data analysis and results

This study used the SmartPLS software (version 4.0) and the partial least squares (PLS) method to examine the measurement model, verify the research hypotheses, and evaluate the structural model. PLS is a multivariate technique that minimizes the unexplained variance in endogenous variables (Quoquab et al., 2020). Therefore, in this study, the PLS-structural equation modeling (SEM) technique was used for data analysis because it is a non-causal prediction method that allows the simultaneous analysis of different variable relationships and can estimate complex models and structural paths without the need for distributional assumptions of the data (Hair et al., 2019).

4.1. Evaluating the Reflective Measurement Model

The reflective measurement model included a second-order factor for influencer marketing

and celebrity endorsement and was evaluated in terms of indicator consistency, internal consistency, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Figure 2). Table 1

shows the criteria and ranges used to evaluate the reflective measurement model in this study, according to Hair et al. (2019).

Table 1. Evaluation criteria of the reflective measurement model

Evaluation	Criteria	Statistical Threshold
Indicator reliabilities	Reflective indicator loadings	≥ 0.708
Internal consistency reliability	Cronbach's alpha	≥ 0.70
	Composite reliability (CR)	≥ 0.70
Convergent validity	Average variance extracted (AVE)	≥ 0.50
Discriminant validity	Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio	< 0.90 For conceptually similar constructs. < 0.85 For conceptually different constructs.
	Fornell-larcker criterion	The correlations of a construct with other constructs are less than the square root of its AVE.

Note: Adapted from Hair et al. (2019)

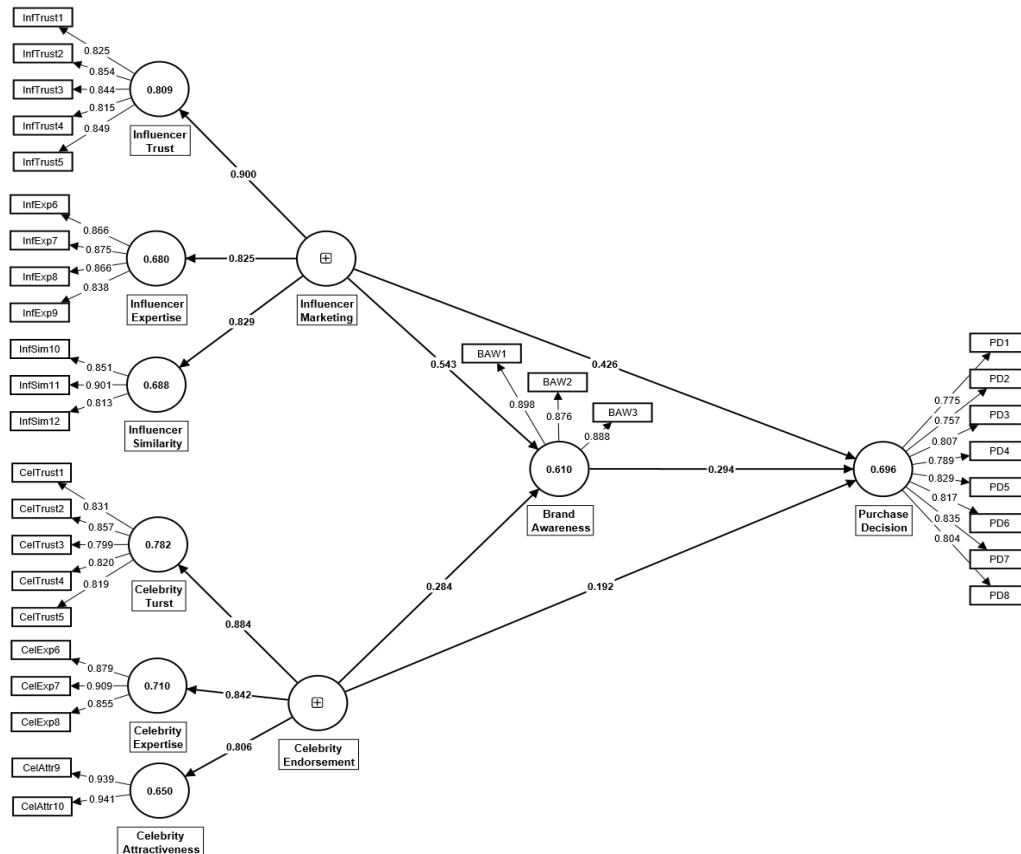


Figure 2. The reflective measurement model (First-order)

Table 2 shows that all indicators loaded substantively, were statistically significant, and fell within an acceptable range of (0.757 – 0.941), more than 0.708. The values of Cronbach’s alpha for all constructs were greater than 0.70 and ranged from 0.816 to 0.921. Additionally, composite reliability (CR) estimates were higher than 0.70 and ranged from 0.891 to 0.938. Thus, internal consistency reliability was achieved, and the average variance extracted (AVE) for all first-

order constructs surpassed the threshold value of 0.50 and ranged from 0.643 to 0.883, thus meeting the necessary conditions for convergent validity. Finally, Tables 3 and 4 show that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded its bivariate correlation with other constructs and all heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion values were less than the cut-off value of 0.85, respectively, indicating that discriminant validity was achieved.

Table 2 Measurement items of the first-order constructs

Construct and Items	Standardized Loading (sig.)	Alpha	CR	AVE
Influencer Marketing				
Influencer Trust		0.893	0.921	0.701
I feel influencer is dependable	0.825**			
I feel influencer is honest	0.854**			
I feel influencer is reliable	0.844**			
I feel influencer is sincere	0.815**			
I feel influencer is trustworthy	0.849**			
Influencer Expertise		0.884	0.920	0.742
I consider the influencer to be an expert in the field of cosmetics.	0.866**			
I consider the influencer to be sufficiently in the field of cosmetics.	0.875**			
I consider influencer to have a lot of knowledge about in the field of cosmetics.	0.866**			
I consider influencer to be competent in making assertions about cosmetics.	0.838**			
Influencer Similarity		0.816	0.891	0.732
influencer and I have a lot in common.	0.851**			
influencer and I are a lot alike.	0.901**			
influencer and I easily identify with each other.	0.813**			
Celebrity Endorsement				
Celebrity Trust		0.883	0.915	0.682
I have confidence in the information/recommendations provided by celebrities regarding cosmetics.	0.831**			
Celebrities show a high level of commitment to consumers.	0.857**			
Celebrities have high integrity when recommending cosmetics products.	0.799**			
Celebrities care and are concerned about consumers.	0.820**			
cosmetics celebrity influencers consume the same cosmetics products they recommend.	0.819**			
Celebrity Expertise		0.855	0.912	0.776
Celebrities recommending cosmetics products are experienced in this area.	0.879**			
Celebrities recommending cosmetics products are qualified in this area.	0.909**			
Celebrities recommending cosmetics products are skilled in using cosmetics.	0.855**			

Celebrity Attractiveness			0.868	0.938	0.883
The celebrity recommending the cosmetics product is attractive to me.	0.939**				
I pay more attention towards advertisements/recommendations presented by attractive/beautiful celebrities.	0.941**				
Brand Awareness			0.865	0.918	0.788
I am always aware of the brand of this cosmetics company.	0.898**				
I am familiar with the characteristics of this cosmetics company.	0.876**				
I can always remember the logo of this cosmetics company.	0.888**				
Purchase Decision			0.921	0.935	0.643
Brand name on packaging affects my purchase decision-making.	0.775**				
The existence of product information affects my purchase decision-making.	0.757**				
Color in packaging affects my purchase decision-making.	0.807**				
The shape of packaging attracts me to buy the product.	0.789**				
The perfect size of packaging affects my purchase decision-making.	0.829**				
The easy use of the product affects my purchase decision-making.	0.817**				
The disposal package of a product affects my purchase decision-making.	0.835**				
Packaging benefits affect my purchase decision-making.	0.804**				
Note: **: P < 0.01. Alpha denotes Cronbach's alpha; CR denotes composite reliability; and AVE is the average variance extracted.					

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlations between constructs (Fornell-Larcker method)

NO.	Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Influencer Trust	0.837							
2	Influencer Expertise	0.559**	0.861						
3	Influencer Similarity	0.676**	0.549**	0.855					
4	Celebrity Trust	0.475**	0.645**	0.474**	0.825				
5	Celebrity Expertise	0.521**	0.614**	0.552**	0.558**	0.880			
6	Celebrity Attractiveness	0.586**	0.596**	0.558	0.549**	0.645**	0.939		
7	Brand Awareness	0.671**	0.675**	0.572**	0.587**	0.579**	0.623**	0.887	
8	Purchase Decision	0.683**	0.736**	0.594**	0.598**	0.633**	0.613**	0.750**	0.801
	Mean	4.195	4.038	4.117	4.053	3.747	4.038	4.028	3.959
	Standard Deviation	0.784	0.806	0.753	0.815	0.923	0.981	0.866	0.820
Notes: **: P < 001; The square root of AVE is typed in <i>bold italic</i> along the diagonal.									

Table 4. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion values

NO.	Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Influencer Trust								
2	Influencer Expertise	0.627							
3	Influencer Similarity	0.788	0.640						
4	Celebrity Trust	0.535	0.729	0.553					
5	Celebrity Expertise	0.595	0.703	0.657	0.641				
6	Celebrity Attractiveness	0.665	0.679	0.662	0.627	0.750			
7	Brand Awareness	0.765	0.772	0.678	0.671	0.672	0.718		
8	Purchase Decision	0.752	0.816	0.678	0.661	0.713	0.685	0.839	

The second-order constructs were included in the first analysis model (repeated indicators approach) but were not yet examined and evaluated. Therefore, the two-stage approach proposed by Becker et al. (2012) was used to evaluate the constructs of the second-order reflective measurement model represented by influencer marketing and celebrity endorsement (Figure 3). After the first-order evaluation, the latent variables were determined and used as manifest variables for the second-order constructs. Tables 5 and 6 show the validity and reliability results for these constructs. Table 5 shows the indicator

factor loadings, the Cronbach's alpha values, which were 0.815 for influencer marketing and 0.809 for celebrity endorsement, the CR values, which were 0.890 and 0.887 for influencer marketing and celebrity endorsement, respectively, and AVE values that surpassed the threshold value of 0.50, indicating that internal consistency reliability and convergent validity were achieved. Further, Table 6 shows that all HTMT values were less than 0.90, thus establishing discriminant validity for the second-order constructs. These results indicate acceptable psychometric properties.

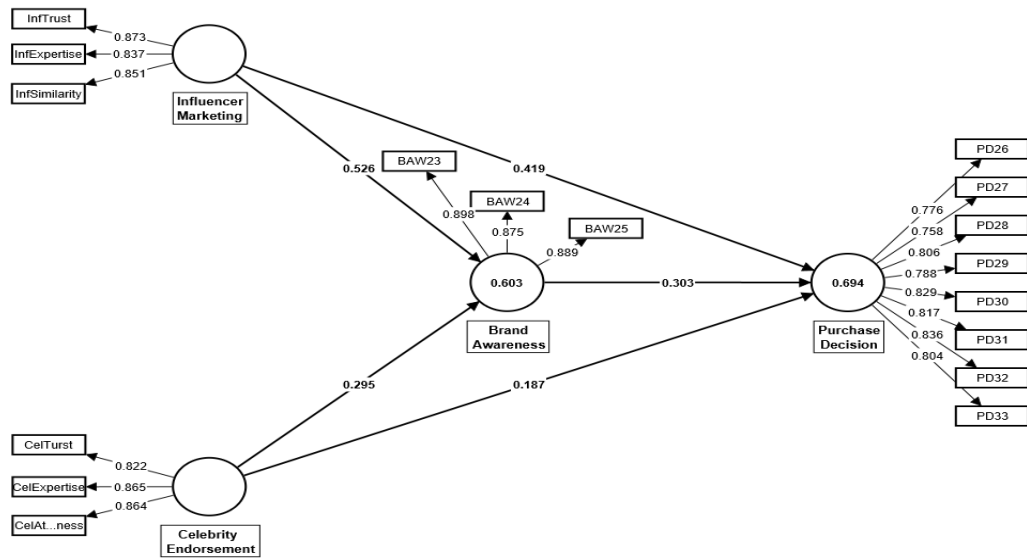


Figure 3. The reflective measurement model (Second-order)

Table 5. Measurement items of the second-order constructs

Construct and Items	Standardized Loading (sig.)	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Influencer Marketing		0.815	0.890	0.729
Influencer Trust	0.873			
Influencer Expertise	0.837			
Influencer Similarity	0.851			
Celebrity Endorsement		0.809	0.887	0.723
Celebrity Trust	0.822			
Celebrity Expertise	0.885			
Celebrity Attractiveness	0.864			
Note: **: P < 0.01. Alpha denotes Cronbach's alpha; CR denotes composite reliability; and AVE is the average variance extracted.				

Table 6. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion values (second-order)

NO.	Construct	1	2	3	4
1	Influencer Marketing				
2	Celebrity Endorsement	0.886			
3	Brand Awareness	0.842	0.838		
4	Purchase Decision	0.855	0.837	0.839	

4.2. Evaluating the Structural Model

Through the coefficient of determination R^2 (explained variance), the effect size (f^2), and variance inflation factor (VIF), the structural model (Figure 4) was evaluated. First, the criterion for evaluating the structural model was the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the endogenous latent variables. Accordingly, these coefficients were measured. Our results show that $R^2 = 0.600$ for brand awareness and $R^2 = 0.621$ for cosmetics purchase decisions (Table 7). This means that 60% of brand awareness and more than 60% of purchase decisions were explained by the independent

variables in our conceptual models. Second, the effect size (f^2) measures the power of each variable in explaining endogenous variables. The results indicate that the effect size values for the constructs ranged from 0.046 to 0.273, varying between being weak, medium, and strong, according to Cohen (2013). Third, most VIF values were below the conservative threshold of 3, except for influencer marketing, in the regressions of purchase decisions. However, as the VIF value (3.172) was close to 3, our structural model had no critical issue of collinearity among the predictor constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

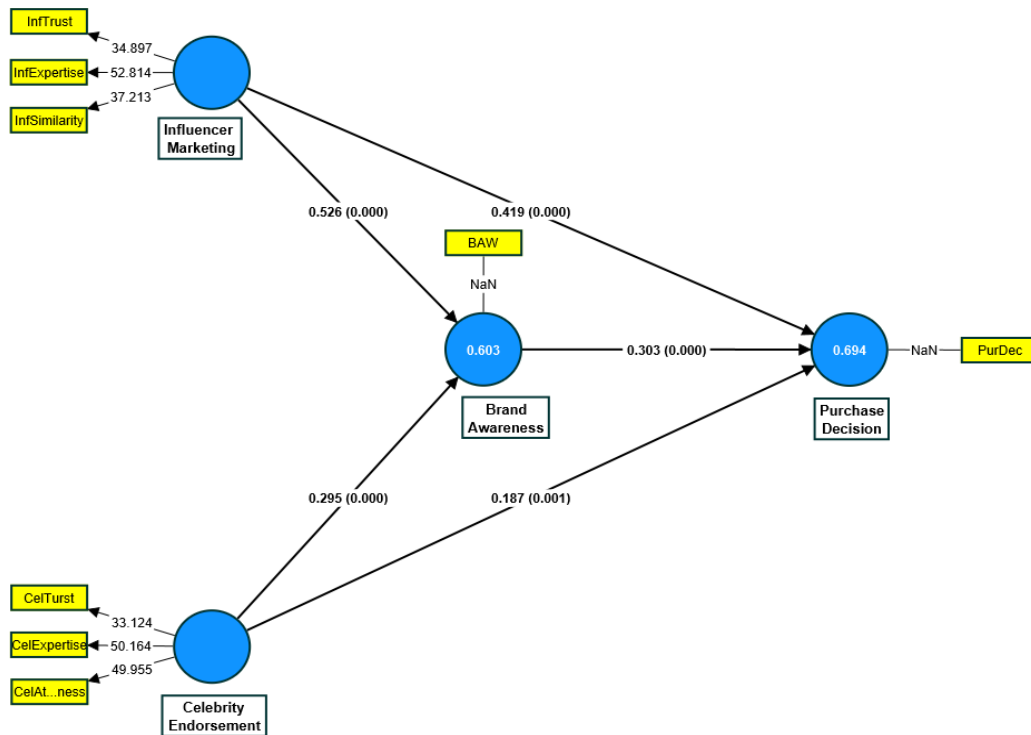


Figure 4. The structural model

Table 7. Structural model evaluation

Construct	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Collinearity Assessment	Confidence Intervals 95% (BCa) Bootstrap		F ² Effect Size	Level of R ²
		2.5%	97%		
Influencer Marketing	2.475	0.372	0.640	0.273	
	3.172	0.245	0.553	0.170	
Celebrity Endorsement	2.475	0.178	0.443	0.096	
	2.695	0.086	0.313	0.046	
Brand Awareness	2.521	0.163	0.457	0.125	0.600
Purchase Decision					0.621

4.3. Hypotheses tests

The “direct effect” hypotheses were tested first by examining the standardized path (beta) coefficients and associated significance levels. Bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples were used to evaluate the significance of the path coefficients. As shown in Table 8, the results supported the proposition that influencer marketing is reflected through trust, expertise, and similarity with the influencer and has direct positive and significant impact on brand awareness (H1: $\beta = 0.515$, $p < 0.01$, confidence interval (CI) = 0.372 to 0.640), thus verifying H1. Next, influencer marketing was found to have a positive and significant impact on cosmetics purchase decisions (H2:

$\beta = 0.404$, $p < 0.01$, confidence interval (CI) = 0.245 to 0.553), supporting H2. Moreover, celebrity endorsement was found to have a direct positive influence on brand awareness (H3: $\beta = 0.305$, $p < 0.01$, confidence interval (CI) = 0.178 to 0.443), thereby supporting H3. Celebrity endorsement also positively influenced the decision to purchase cosmetics, but to a lesser extent than influencer marketing (H4: $\beta = 0.196$, $p < 0.01$, confidence interval (CI) = 0.086 to 0.313), thus supporting H4. At the end of the direct analysis, brand awareness was found to have a positive and significant effect on female consumers’ decisions to purchase cosmetics (H5: $\beta = 0.310$, $p < 0.01$, confidence interval (CI) = 0.163 to 0.457), thus supporting H5.

Table 8. Structural model estimates

Hypothesis	β	Critical ratio	P-Value	Results
H1 Influencer Marketing → Brand Awareness	0.515	7.43	<0.01	Supported
H2 Influencer Marketing → Purchase Decision	0.404	5.17	<0.01	Supported
H3 Celebrity endorsement → Brand Awareness	0.305	4.52	<0.01	Supported
H4 Celebrity endorsement → Purchase Decision	0.196	3.40	<0.01	Supported
H5 Brand Awareness → Purchase Decision	0.310	4.09	<0.01	Supported
H6 Influencer Marketing → Brand Awareness → Purchase Decision	0.160	3.45	<0.01	Supported
H7 Celebrity endorsement → Brand Awareness → Purchase Decision	0.095	3.05	<0.01	Supported

The mediating role of brand awareness hypothesized in H6 and H7 was tested using the bias-corrected (BCa) bootstrap method with 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Bootstrapping analysis revealed that the standardized coefficient (β) for the indirect effect of influencer marketing on cosmetics

purchase decisions through brand awareness was significant ($\beta = 0.160$, CI = 0.077–0.255; $p = 0.001$), indicating partial mediation due to the significance of the direct effect in H2. Additionally, the indirect effect of celebrity endorsement on female consumers’ decisions to purchase cosmetics through brand

awareness was significant ($\beta = 0.095$, $CI = 0.042-0.161$; $p = 0.001$), indicating partial mediation owing to the significance of the direct effect in H4. Thus, these results partially support H6 and H7. A summary of these results is presented in Table 8.

5. Discussion

This study examines the direct and indirect effects of influencers and celebrities on the purchase decisions of female consumers toward cosmetic products and the mediating role of brand awareness. The results support H1, indicating that influencer marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness. That is, an influencer who is trustworthy and a beauty product expert has the ability to build awareness of a cosmetics brand for female consumers. This result is partly in line with Ali & Alqudah (2022), who state that influencer marketing can create consumer impressions of brand awareness. However, this does not necessarily mean that followers trust the sponsored content. Additionally, this finding is also in line with the findings by Xu (2023) who suggests that when influencers are involved, brands can raise brand awareness and increase consumer engagement and purchases. Further, our research partially aligns with Lou and Yuan (2019) who find that an influencer's credibility, attractiveness, and perceived similarity (with their followers) have a positive impact on followers' trust in the brand-related posts. As influencers often present credible and attractive online personas, followers tend to trust their sponsored content more if they perceive them as trustworthy and attractive. Additionally, followers tend to imitate influencers with whom they identify; thus, followers' similarity with the influencer positively affects their trust in the brand-related posts created by the influencer. Followers usually view influencers as experts in their respective fields.

Furthermore, the results support H2, which indicates that influencer marketing positive

affects female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetic products. As influencers engage in marketing activities for the brand, appeal to the affection of female consumers, and create positive impressions of cosmetic products, more purchasing decisions will be made. This result is partly in line with Munandar's (2023) argument that purchase decisions are influenced by factors such as the quality of the influencer's content, the influencer's profile, the number of followers, the impact of likes and comments, the reaction from shares, and the relevance generated from the influencer's profile in judging the similarity with the respondents' profiles. However, although influencers can help respondents recognize and remember a product, they may not necessarily make them think that the product is of good quality. These results are also in line with those of Caiado et al. (2023), who state that when a purchasing decision is made, influencer opinions have more influence than other external factors. Consistent with these findings, Chetioui et al. (2020) argue that credibility is the dominant factor influencing people's perceptions, and consequently, their interest in becoming followers. Arguably, followers will attempt to equate their characteristics, including behaviors, with those of the influencer. This implies that they are willing to make sacrifices to achieve economic and social benefits. Arief et al. (2023) point out that the more influencers are used in a marketing campaign, the more it encourages customers to make purchase decisions. However, our findings are in line with those of Kumar et al. (2023), who find that a buyer's decision to purchase supplements is highly influenced by the information's trustworthiness and influencer's expertise, with no significant effect between the buyer's decision and the number of followers, content, or attractiveness.

Moreover, the results support H3, indicating that celebrity endorsements have a positive effect on brand awareness. This result is in line with Ramadhani & Insani's (2023)

argument that celebrity-supported advertising not only creates brand awareness and recognition but also enables a company to reach a specific audience. Overall, celebrity endorsements play a significant role in enhancing brand awareness and influencing consumer behaviors. Likewise, the results support H4, which indicates that celebrity endorsements have a positive effect on female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetic products. Sudjawoto et al. (2023) Find that female consumers are more likely to purchase female cosmetics if celebrities endorse them. This finding is also in line with the findings of Leonita (2023) that celebrity endorser characteristics such as trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity have a significant impact on purchase decisions, and the appropriateness of choosing a celebrity endorser is based on the attributes that engage the consumers. These characteristics can influence the advertisements.

Moreover, the results support H5, which indicates that brand awareness has a positive effect on female consumers' cosmetics purchase decisions. The higher the brand awareness, the stronger the purchase decisions based on the information, benefits, trust, and positive perceptions gained through brand awareness. This finding is line with the conclusions of Supiyandi et al. (2022) that consumers' purchase decisions increase with the increase in brand awareness. In addition, this finding confirms the conclusions of Ansari et al. (2019) that the chances of a consumer making a purchase decision increase when they are well acquainted with the brand, since awareness helps in resolving any doubts they may have. These results pave the way for reaching the ultimate objective of this research, which is to show that brand awareness plays the role of a mediator through which the impact of influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements is transmitted to female consumers' purchase decisions regarding cosmetics.

This study explores the key antecedents and consequences of influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements. The novelty and contribution of the proposed conceptualization can be summarized in two main findings. First, based on the results for H6, influencer marketing affects female consumers' purchase decisions toward cosmetic products, both directly and indirectly, through the mediating effect of brand awareness. Second, based on the results for H7, celebrity endorsements are directly associated with female consumers' purchase decisions toward cosmetic products through the mediation of brand awareness. These findings offer important implications for marketing research and theory. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between influencer/celebrity influence, brand awareness, and female consumers' purchase decisions in the cosmetics industry. These results are not in line with those of Ardiansyah & Sarwoko (2020) argue that there is no guarantee that consumers will make purchase decisions toward these specific brands or products when they feel familiar with them. But this result is in line with Patmawati & Miswanto (2022) argument that brand awareness has been shown to mediate the relationship between social media influencers and purchase intentions, with the influencer's presence serving as an incentive. When someone is successfully influenced by an ad exposure, they first think of what they saw, meaning they became aware of the brand after seeing the influencer's advertisement. Our findings are in line with those of Amitay et al. (2020) who find that if the level of brand awareness increases, it will increase the relationship between celebrity endorsements and the purchase intention of women. Building on these findings, brands and researchers alike can develop more effective marketing strategies and further advance our understanding of consumer behavior in the modern digital landscape.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated how influencers and celebrities' impact female consumers' purchase decisions toward cosmetic products. We proposed relevant hypotheses based on a detailed literature review and consumer survey data. Using an online survey, 394 valid responses were collected from female consumers regarding their cosmetics purchase decisions in Egypt. Using SEM, we conducted empirical tests and reached the following conclusions: Influencers and celebrities significantly affect female consumers' cosmetics purchasing decisions through brand awareness. Specifically, influencers and celebrity endorsers play a vital role in shaping a brand's image, which, in turn, influences purchasing decisions. The research findings highlight the important role of influencer and celebrity marketing as marketing tools to increase brand awareness and consequently purchase decisions. These results confirm that digital technologies are already causing disruptions, including in marketing. Early marketing through traditional media, such as television, newspapers, magazines, and radio, has shifted to social media, such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and other similar applications.

6.1. Theoretical and managerial implications

The mediating roles of brand awareness has not been widely studied in the context of the effect of influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements on purchase decisions. Our study is among the first to confirm that influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements positively influence female consumers' decisions to purchase cosmetics through the mediating role of brand awareness. Brand awareness serve as a pathway for the impact of influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements on purchase decisions. A similar effect was found to be associated with brand awareness

as a mediator between social media marketing and purchase decisions (Mustikasari & Widaningsih, 2019). Based on statistical testing, influencer marketing and celebrity endorsements were found to have a positive effect on purchase decisions. The results showed that influencer marketing has a greater impact than celebrity endorsement in influencing female consumers to make cosmetics purchase decisions. This is because influencers are closer and more similar to their audiences than celebrities. Moreover, they have extensive knowledge and experience in cosmetics. Additionally, brand awareness plays an important role in influencing female purchase decisions for cosmetics, as celebrities and influencers are guided by building brand awareness.

The results are consistent with the theory of uses and gratifications, as brand awareness plays an important role as a mediator between celebrity endorsements and female consumers' decisions to purchase cosmetics. The essence of this theory assumes that consumers are not passive receivers of information but active participants who choose which media content to engage with based on their interests and motivations. Moreover, in the context of social exchange theory, female consumers follow influencers to increase brand awareness, and influencers seek to convert followers into consumers by directly promoting brands, with both parties finding this relationship beneficial. However, social exchanges do not adequately explain purchasing decisions. Coco & Eckert (2020) advocated a new theory called the influencer-follower relationship management theory, which can help us understand and improve the quality of interactions between influencers and their followers. It focuses on mutual benefits, trust, commitment, and satisfaction, which are characteristics of long-term and productive relationships. These results have important theoretical and managerial implications for marketing managers and entrepreneurs in the cosmetics industry and highlight the need for carefully selecting appropriate influencer marketing

and celebrity endorsement strategies for specific consumer groups to improve purchasing decisions.

6.2. Practical implications

Our findings offer valuable insights for companies and brand representatives when selecting influencers and celebrities for advertising campaigns. The results indicate that companies should consider the factors of trust, experience, and similarity with the target audience when choosing influencers and the elements of attractiveness, trust, and experience when choosing celebrities for marketing campaigns, as these factors contribute to shaping female consumers' awareness of cosmetics brands. Additionally, empirical data show that influencers have greater impact than celebrities in influencing the purchase decisions of female consumers. Regarding managerial recommendations, the results of this study highlight the importance of brand awareness, as the influence of

marketing through influencers and celebrities on female consumers' decisions to purchase cosmetics was greater when this influence was mediated by brand awareness. Therefore, marketing campaigns of cosmetic companies must focus on building brand awareness.

6.3. Limitations and future research directions

Although this study has interesting theoretical and practical implications, it has certain limitations. The respondents were recruited from one developing country only. Similar studies should be conducted in other contexts to compare the results. Additionally, only female consumers were surveyed to overcome the social, cultural, and economic differences. As the purchasing decisions of female consumers are more complex than those of male consumers, future research should explore the use of artificial intelligence tools in developing marketing strategies for female consumers.

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