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PAPER

An Examination of the Effectiveness of Instagram Stories in Driving Consumer Engagement with Brand Content: A Quantitative Study

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*This study has been done during the Sabbatical leave granted by Princess Sumaya University for Technology for the academic year 2024/2025 for Professor Mohammad Al Khasawneh.

ABSTRACT

This study tests how Instagram Stories features shape Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) among active users in Jordan. The market here is mobile first. A cross-sectional online survey produced 443 valid responses from individuals with active Instagram accounts who regularly view Stories and follow at least one brand account, with eligibility confirmed through screening questions embedded at the start. Judgmental purposive sampling guided recruitment, and only respondents passing the use and frequent-viewing checks were retained. The sample is 60.7% female, largely 19–25 years old (72.9%), and mostly holds a bachelor's degree (77.9%). Measurement validity was tested with confirmatory factor analysis, and the CBE model was estimated using structural equation modeling (SEM) that achieved good overall fit. The fit indices indicate solid performance. Key statistics are CFI = 0.934 and RMSEA = 0.044. Five Stories features, namely entertaining content, interactivity, user-generated content, influencer trustworthiness, and up-to-date information, were modeled as antecedents of cognitive processing, which then predicted affection and activation consistent with the common three-stage structure of engagement. All five features had positive and significant effects on cognitive processing, with the strongest paths for entertaining content ($\beta = 0.321$, $p < 0.05$) and influencer trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.318$, $p < 0.05$). Entertainment leads in this model clearly. User-generated content ($\beta = 0.200$, $p < 0.05$), up-to-date information ($\beta = 0.171$, $p < 0.05$), and interactivity ($\beta = 0.142$, $p < 0.05$) followed in size. Cognitive processing strongly predicted affection ($\beta = 0.647$, $R^2 = 0.418$) and activation ($\beta = 0.718$, $R^2 = 0.515$), while its own explained variance was modest at $R^2 = 0.241$. Taken together, these results position Stories features as practical levers that can lift engagement in a mobile-first Middle Eastern market, even if cognitive processing captures a modest share of upstream variance in the model.

KEYWORDS

Instagram stories, consumer brand engagement (CBE), entertaining content, interactivity, user-generated content, influencer trustworthiness, up-to-date information, Jordan

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social networking has changed how people connect, consume information, and relate to brands across markets, with global adoption surpassing 4.9 billion users in 2023, according to recent industry estimates [1] [2]. Millennials and Gen Z power this shift. Visual platforms dominate brand interaction and content creation among these cohorts [3–5].

Launched in 2010, Instagram enables scaled, creative brand communication through photos, short videos, Reels, and live formats, reaching more than two billion monthly users by 2023 [6–8]. Stories changed the engagement toolkit for brands. Introduced in 2016, Instagram Stories offer ephemeral, full-screen formats and interactive tools such as polls and questions that heighten storytelling and authenticity, drawing over 500 million daily users by 2023 [6] [9].

Despite extensive work on social media marketing and engagement, evidence that isolates how Stories features map onto consumer brand engagement (CBE) dimensions remains limited, especially in Middle Eastern settings [10]. Jordan offers a focused test bed. Instagram is among the most used platforms in Jordan, engaging nearly a third of internet users, which makes it suitable for identifying which Stories features drive outcomes brands value [11].

We test a grounded structural model in which entertaining content, interactivity, user-generated content, influencers' trustworthiness, and up-to-date information precede cognitive processing, with effects cascading to affection and activation among active Instagram users in Jordan. Structural equation modeling (SEM) estimates the paths here. The test uses survey data from active users screened for regular Stories viewing.

The study offers three clear contributions. It links story features to core engagement dimensions using validated measures and paths, and it extends evidence beyond frequently studied Western markets by leveraging the Jordanian setting to improve external relevance for similar cultural contexts. It also guides resource allocation by highlighting interactivity and user-generated content as primary levers and placing entertainment and influencer trustworthiness in secondary roles [6] [10] [11].

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Instagram remains central to visibility and interaction across platforms [12] [13]. Instagram still sits at the center today. Firms run economical visual campaigns that scale across segments, and over 70% of leading brands use Instagram for one-to-one interaction within always-on programs [14] [15]. Capability gaps persist as analysts call for stronger analytics and commerce tools to unlock strategic leverage, so the channel is high reach and high engagement, but operational limits can mute realized ROI [16]. Digital storytelling strengthens emotional ties and moves behavior from awareness to decision and loyalty, while narrative structure and imagery aid recall and simplify complex value propositions, and engaging visuals create feedback loops that improve retention and decision quality [17–19] [12]. Over-curation reduces authenticity and trust even when production is polished, which tilts guidance toward austere narratives, lightly curated visuals, and focused interactivity [16]. Authenticity wins here.

Affordances work in different ways across platforms. Facebook's like, share, and comment primitives build conversation and relationship strength, TikTok favors spontaneity and viral lift with shallower targeting for some aims, and Snapchat's

ephemerality aids immediacy but lacks the persistence YouTube offers for complex messages [18–20]. Instagram, especially Stories, blends visual here and nowness with native interactivity to trigger emotional and behavioral engagement and to fill gaps seen elsewhere [13]. Across studies, matching purposes to affordances is advised, with Stories suited to rapid attention, quick feedback, and minor action as users respond when content delivers information, entertainment, and social value through rich interactive media [21] [22]. Rich formats that engage multiple senses raise time spent, click intent, and sharing, and authenticity plus emotional connection enhance trust and loyalty, which Stories can harness in mobile-first settings [16] [18–20]. Fit matters most.

Entertainment often matters for engagement outcomes. Visual beauty, humor, and emotional appeal raise interaction and recall, and entertainment activates affective and cognitive responses that lift interaction intent and consideration, though humor, misfits, and gimmicks can backfire [23] [24] [15]. Two-way exchange through polls, questions, and reactions improves engagement quality by inducing input and discussion, and fast, relevant replies raise perceived value and affective bonds [20] [25]. User-generated content signals believability through lived experience, building trust and loyalty, and peer testimony as contemporary word of mouth shifts purchases and behavior, with stories adding immediacy and community cues while keeping message costs low [26–28]. Creator credibility shapes evaluations and purchases, and when transparency, fit, and quality accompany truthful disclosure, plus up-to-date information on launches, deals, and events, interest is maintained, ambiguity falls, and swift action becomes likely [29–32] [28]. Cognitive processing captures depth of thought and predicts intense engagement, and deeper elaboration primes emotion and behavior consistent with CBE's affection and activation, with online brand community outcomes clarifying the routes [33–37]. Stories prompt the upstream mind.

This study examines how specific Instagram Stories features influence CBE among active Instagram users in Jordan. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Entertaining content has a positive impact on Cognitive Processing.
H2: Interactivity has a positive impact on Cognitive Processing.
H3: User-generated content has a positive impact on Cognitive Processing.
H4: Influencer trustworthiness has a positive impact on Cognitive Processing.
H5: Up-to-date information has a positive impact on Cognitive Processing.
H6a: Cognitive Processing has a positive impact on Affection.
H6b: Cognitive Processing has a positive impact on Activation.

The research model is depicted in Figure 1.

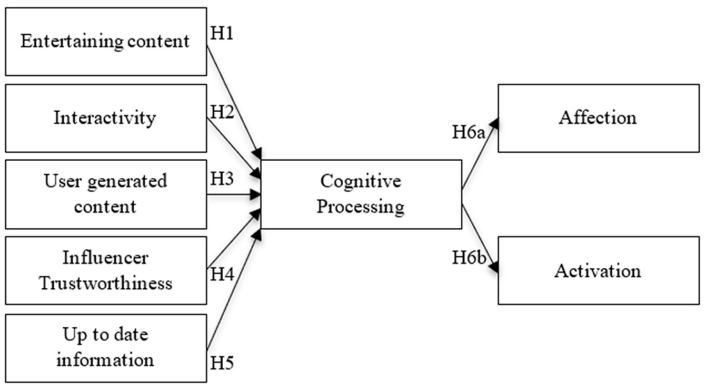

Fig. 1. Research model

Source: Compiled by authors.

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to test a theoretically grounded model that links Instagram Stories features to dimensions of CBE. In this model, entertaining content, interactivity, user-generated content, influencer trustworthiness, and up-to-date information are positioned as antecedents of cognitive processing, which in turn is used to predict affection and activation. SEM was used to estimate both the measurement and structural models. The target population consisted of individual customers residing in Jordan who are active users of Instagram and regularly view Instagram Stories. This sample group is theoretically relevant, since only people with frequent exposure to Stories can meaningfully assess entertaining content, interactivity, user-generated content, influencers' trustworthiness, up-to-date information, or their own engagement with branded content.

In this case, a judgmental purposive sampling strategy was utilized. Two screening items at the beginning of the questionnaire ensured that only (1) current Instagram users and (2) frequent Stories viewers were allowed to proceed. Respondents failing either screening condition were automatically terminated and excluded from the dataset. This approach is common in social and digital media research where no complete sampling frame of platform users is available, selects "information-rich" cases, and secures construct validity by avoiding non-users or very occasional users who cannot reliably assess the focal constructs.

The online survey was open for about four weeks. During that time, responses were checked, and data quality checks were applied. Responses that were incomplete, inconsistent, or obviously careless were removed. After all the inclusion, exclusion, and quality criteria had been used, 443 valid cases remained for analysis; this is more than the sample size required according to general recommendations on multivariate analysis and SEM.

The demographic profile is indicative of Instagram's youth-skewed platform in Jordan. Out of the 443 respondents, 269 (60.7%) were female, and 174 (39.3%) were male. Ages ranged as follows: 72.9% between 19–25 years (n = 323), 12.4% between 26–36 years, and only small percentages fell into older categories, consistent with the platform's core user group. Educational attainment centered on a bachelor's degree (77.9%, n = 345), with smaller shares at high school or postgraduate levels, and 45.6% were unemployed, while the rest reported income from 200 to over 800 JOD. The sample is educated with high unemployment.

These characteristics, coupled with the screening criteria, signal that the sample represents active Instagram Stories users in Jordan, which is precisely the analytic population for which the study's conclusions are intended. Results are therefore framed as analytic generalization to similar active users rather than statistical generalization to all Jordanians.

All main constructs were measured using multi-item five-point Likert scales (1 = "strongly disagree," 5 = "strongly agree") adapted from established instruments in the realms of social media and engagement research. Entertaining content, interactivity, user-generated content, influencer trustworthiness, and up-to-date information were operationalized using items derived from prior work on social media content and communication quality, with wording tailored to the context of Instagram Stories. CBE was captured through its three dimensions—cognitive processing, affection, and activation—using items adapted from related studies. The following demographic and usage variables were also recorded: gender, age, education, income, and patterns of Instagram use.

Experts in digital marketing and social media reviewed the survey for validity and clarity, a pilot led to wording changes for readability, and low-loading items were removed to improve fit, as detailed in the results. Edits were small but targeted and documented.

We administered an online questionnaire via Google Forms and distributed the link on platforms in Jordan, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and WhatsApp, aligning recruitment with the digital phenomenon and inviting only active Instagram Stories users. The channel matched the behavior studied. Respondents used smartphones, tablets, or computers at their convenience; the form blocked multiple submissions from the same device, and we screened for missingness, straight-lining, and inconsistencies before excluding ineligible or low-quality cases.

We analyzed data in SPSS for descriptive statistics and preliminary checks and used AMOS 22 for confirmatory factor analysis and SEM in a two-step approach that first evaluated the measurement model. Validity was checked rigorously across key criteria. CFA (Confirmatory Factor) evaluated reliability and validity using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, standardized loadings, AVE (Average Variance Extracted), and the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

The hypothesized structural relationships among the constructs were tested using SEM with maximum likelihood estimation. The model fit was evaluated using multiple indices: χ^2/df (CMIN/DF), GFI (Goodness-of-Fit), AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), NFI (Normed Fit Index), and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). The fitness indices of the final model were acceptable (AGFI = 0.901, GFI = 0.867, CFI = 0.934, NFI = 0.937, RMSEA = 0.044), and all hypothesized paths were significant at $p \leq 0.05$. R^2 values for cognitive processing, affection, and activation were used to estimate the explanatory power of the model.

The study conformed to general ethical standards for survey studies. Participants were informed in a written note on the first page of the questionnaires of the purpose of the research, that participation was strictly voluntary, and that their answers would be treated anonymously and confidentially. Only those who responded with their consent passed the screening questions. No personal data that might identify participants individually was collected. Data are kept securely and used exclusively for the purposes of academic endeavor.

4 RESULTS

Table 1 presents the main demographic characteristics of the respondents. In total, 443 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis after applying the screening and data-quality criteria. Females comprise 60.7% of the sample, with males at 39.3%. Age skews young, as 72.9% of participants fall in the 19–25 bracket, while the remaining respondents are distributed across older categories in much smaller proportions.

Table 1. Sample characteristics (n = 443)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	269	60.7
	Male	174	39.3
	Total	**443**	**100.0**

(Continued)

Table 1. Sample characteristics (n = 443) *(Continued)*

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18 and under	29	6.5
	19–25	323	72.9
	26–36	55	12.4
	36–45	15	3.4
	46–55	18	4.1
	56–65	3	0.7
	66 and above	0	0.0
	Total	**443**	**100.0**
Education	High school student	33	7.4
	High school diploma	30	6.8
	Bachelor's degree	345	77.9
	Master's degree	32	7.2
	PhD	3	0.7
	Total	**443**	**100.0**

Source: Compiled by authors.

The sample is highly educated and matches our audience. As shown in Table 1, 77.9% hold a bachelor's degree, additional respondents report master's or doctoral qualifications, and a small proportion have high school-level education, aligning with a youthful, educated, mobile-first Instagram segment. It aligns with active Instagram Stories users in Jordan.

We used AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) 22 to test the model. With AMOS 22, we used CFA and SEM to validate the measurement model and test hypotheses, estimating structural paths, fit indices, and descriptive statistics on 443 Instagram users in Jordan. These tests cover reliability and validity.

EFA (Statistical Analysis) sharpened the measurement set meaningfully. We ran exploratory factor analysis to refine the item pool and identify common variance across indicators, dropping items with loadings below 0.50 and removing five, as reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Deleted items

Factor Loadings < 0.50	Variable
Instagram Stories help me know which products will reflect my unique personality.	Entertaining
From Instagram Stories I learn about trends and what to buy to impress others.	Entertaining
Instagram Stories keep me on the leading edge of information about brands.	Up-to-date Information
I watch influencers on Instagram Stories because they are sincere.	Influencer Trustworthiness
The content generated on Instagram Stories by other users about brands is very attractive.	User-generated Content

Source: Compiled by authors.

As shown in Table 3, experts reviewed the questionnaire and proposed edits before fielding. Cronbach's alpha assessed internal consistency. Values above 0.70 met the

acceptance threshold. Convergent validity was supported by standardized loadings above 0.50 for retained items, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above 0.60 for each construct, and Composite Reliability (CR) above 0.70. These results support reliable and valid measurement.

Table 3. Internal consistency and convergent validity

	Factor Loading	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Entertaining				
E1	0.781	0.701	0.812	0.794
E2	0.632			
E3	0.841			
E4	0.597			
Interactivity				
I1	0.529	0.698	0.756	0.718
I2	0.693			
I3	0.714			
Up-to-date Information				
UTD1	0.863	0.885	0.941	0.834
UTD2	0.841			
UTD3	0.835			
User-generated Content				
UGC1	0.692	0.771	0.807	0.779
UGC2	0.874			
UGC3	0.687			
Influencer Trustworthiness				
IT1	0.501	0.603	0.753	0.708
IT2	0.621			
IT3	0.714			
IT4	0.598			
Cognitive Processing				
CP1	0.894	0.897	0.918	0.847
CP2	0.921			
CP3	0.821			
Affection				
AF1	0.597	0.793	0.831	0.749
AF2	0.784			
AF3	0.754			
Activation				
AC1	0.914	0.897	0.906	0.876
AC2	0.982			
AC3	0.941			

Source: Compiled by authors.

Discriminant validity followed the Fornell and Larcker logic. Square roots of AVE exceeded inter-construct correlations for all constructs, as shown in Table 4. No evidence of construct overlap was observed.

Table 4. Discriminant validity

	E	*I*	*UTD*	*UGC*	*IT*	*CP*	*AF*	*AC*
X5	***.837***							
X4	.000	***.835***						
X3	.000	.000	***.941***					
X2	.000	.000	.000	***.878***				
X1	.000	.000	.000	.000	***.776***			
X6	.218	.200	.171	.142	.221	***0.947***		
M	.107	.098	.084	.070	.109	.493	***0.891***	
Y	.097	.089	.076	.063	.099	.447	.220	***.947***

Source: Compiled by authors.

We collected 486 responses through Google Forms. We excluded 43 non-users of Instagram Stories. The final sample included 443 valid responses, equal to 91.1% of the distributed surveys. Most respondents were 19 to 25 years old, 72.9%. Females comprised 60.7% (n = 269), and males 39.3% (n = 174). Most held a bachelor's degree, n equals 345. Table 5 reports full demographics.

Table 5. Analysis of demographic data

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	269	60.7
Male	174	39.3
Total	**443**	**100%**
Age		
18 and under	29	6.5
19–25	323	72.9
26–36	55	12.4
36–45	15	3.4
46–55	18	4.1
56–65	3	0.7
66 and above	0	0.0
Total	**443**	**100%**
Education		
High school student	33	7.4
High school diploma	30	6.8
Bachelor's degree	345	77.9
Master's degree	32	7.2
PhD	3	0.7
Total	**443**	**100%**

Source: Compiled by authors.

AMOS, CFA, and SEM indicated acceptable fit. AGFI, GFI, RMSEA, CFI, and NFI met or exceeded recommended cutoffs, as reported in Table 6. These results support the structural integrity of measurement and structural models. As shown in Table 5.

Table 6. Fit model

Indicator	AGFI	$\frac{X^2}{df}$	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Value Recommended	> 0.8	< 5	> 0.8	< 0.05	> 0.9	> 0.9
Value of Model	0.901	4.341	0.867	0.044	0.934	0.937
Results	appropriate	appropriate	appropriate	appropriate	appropriate	appropriate

Source: Compiled by authors.

We tested paths with SEM and used $p \leq 0.05$ for significance. R-squared values quantified the explained variance as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. The results of testing hypotheses

Hypotheses	(β) Path Coefficients	t-Value	p-Value	(Coefficient of Determination) R^2	Decision
E ....➢ CP	0.321	4.413	p < 0.05 = 0.000	0.241	Accept
I ....➢ CP	0.142	2.854	p < 0.05 = 0.006		Accept
UTD ....➢ CP	0.171	3.005	p < 0.05 = 0.003		Accept
UGC ....➢ CP	0.200	3.486	p < 0.05 = 0.000		Accept
IT ....➢ CP	0.318	3.617	p < 0.05 = 0.000		Accept
CP ....➢ AF	0.647	12.078	p < 0.05 = 0.000	0.418	Accept
CP ....➢ AC	0.718	13.690	p < 0.05 = 0.000	0.515	Accept
R^2: 0.51 = Strong; 0.33 = Moderate; 0.20 = Weak.					

Source: Compiled by authors.

Antecedents to cognitive processing. Entertainment showed a positive effect on cognitive processing, with β equal to 0.321 and p less than 0.05. Interactivity was positive, β equals 0.142, and p is less than 0.05. User-generated content was positive, β equals 0.171, and p is less than 0.05. Influencer trustworthiness was positive, with β equal to 0.200 and p less than 0.05. Up-to-date information showed a strong positive effect, β equals 0.318 and p is less than 0.05. Together, these predictors explained limited variance in cognitive processing, R-squared equals 0.241. Downstream effects. Cognitive processing had a strong effect on activation, with β equal to 0.647 and p less than 0.05, with moderate variance explained, with R-squared equal to 0.418. Cognitive processing also had a strong effect on affection, with β equal to 0.718, p less than 0.05, and higher variance explained, with R-squared equal to 0.515. Overall, the SEM supports all hypothesized direct effects on cognitive processing and confirms the central role of cognitive processing in driving both activation and affection.

We tested a CBE model for Instagram Stories. Five features predicted Cognitive Processing, which then predicted Affection and Activation. All predictors were significant with uneven strengths. Entertainment showed the largest effect on Cognitive Processing, β = 0.321. Influencer trustworthiness followed, β = 0.318. UGC, β = 0.200, and up-to-date information, β = 0.171, were smaller. Interactivity was positive yet the weakest, β = 0.142. Cognitive Processing strongly predicted Affection, β = 0.647, and Activation, β = 0.718. Explained variance for Cognitive Processing was modest, R^2 = 0.241, which signals missing antecedents such as relevance fit, prior attitude, and exposure frequency. Results confirm a serial pathway, feature exposure triggers Cognitive Processing, which then triggers Affection and Activation. As shown in Figure 2.

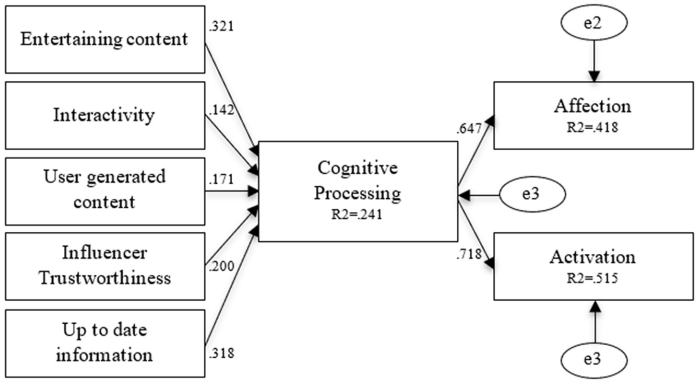

Fig. 2. CBE model

Source: Compiled by authors.

We tested the structural paths in AMOS using maximum likelihood estimation and a significance threshold of $p \leq 0.05$. Global fit indices met recommended cutoffs (AGFI = 0.901, χ^2/df = 4.341, GFI = 0.867, RMSEA = 0.044, CFI = 0.934, NFI = 0.937), supporting the adequacy of the model. Table 8 reports standardized path coefficients (β), t-values, exact p-values, explained variance (R^2) for each endogenous construct, and the decision for each hypothesis.

Table 8. Hypotheses testing results (SEM, N = 443)

H	Structural Path	β	t-Value	p-Value	R^2 (DV)	Decision
H1a	Entertaining → Cognitive processing (CP)	0.321	4.413	0.000	0.241	Supported
H1b	Interactivity → CP	0.142	2.854	0.006	0.241	Supported
H1c	Up-to-date information → CP	0.171	3.005	0.003	0.241	Supported
H1d	User-generated content → CP	0.200	3.486	0.000	0.241	Supported
H1e	Influencer trustworthiness → CP	0.318	3.617	0.000	0.241	Supported
H2	Cognitive processing → Affection (AF)	0.647	12.078	0.000	0.418	Supported
H3	Cognitive processing → Activation (AC)	0.718	13.690	0.000	0.515	Supported

Notes: Decision rule $p \leq 0.05$. R^2 interpretation: 0.51 = strong, 0.33 = moderate, 0.20 = weak.
Source: Compiled by authors.

The results in Table 8 show that all hypothesized paths are positive and statistically significant. Among the antecedents of Cognitive Processing, Entertaining

(β = 0.321) and Influencer trustworthiness (β = 0.318) exhibit the largest effects, while UGC (β = 0.200), Up-to-date information (β = 0.171), and Interactivity (β = 0.142) provide smaller but meaningful contributions, jointly explaining a modest share of variance in CP (R^2 = 0.241). Downstream, Cognitive processing strongly predicts Affection (R^2 = 0.418; moderate) and Activation (R^2 = 0.515; strong), underscoring CP's central role in translating exposure to Stories into deeper engagement states.

5 DISCUSSION

The order of effects indicates that the features of Instagram Stories are differentiated stimuli that first enhance cognitive processing and, through this appraisal state, carry over to affect affective and behavioral engagement. The strongest antecedent effects on cognitive processing were influencer trustworthiness (β = 0.318) and entertainment (β = 0.321), while user-generated content (β = 0.200), current information (β = 0.171), and interactivity (β = 0.142) added smaller yet significant contributions (R^2_CP = 0.241).

These findings are in line with research showing that short, image-heavy narratives enhance arousal and attention, and arousal and attention enhance elaboration and recall afterward [19]. They also endorse studies on credibility transfer, where appropriate and clear disclosures enable creators to serve as opinion leaders whose trust signals mitigate perceived risk and strengthen brand attitudes [29–31]. The activity of UGC supports contemporary word-of-mouth effects: peer-generated depictions of use and benefit serve as authenticity cues that enhance diagnosticity and loyalty intention [26–28]. Recent posts also reduce information search costs and uncertainty in dynamic environments, which is associated with quicker decisions and higher conversion probability [32].

At the same time, the modest direct effect of interactivity suggests execution contingencies rather than theoretical weakness. Prior studies show that social presence and information seeking are enhanced by cues such as Q&A and polls when they are simple, timely, and responded to promptly [24–25]; the current expectations are that, in practice, design frictions (e.g., choice overload, task complexity, or delayed responses) may dilute their standalone effect, with interactivity acting better as an amplifier overlay on top of compelling stories, credible creators, or well-timed promotions.

Downstream relationships—cognitive processing → affection (β = 0.647; R^2_AF = 0.418) and cognitive processing → activation (β = 0.718; R^2_AC = 0.515)—follow the traditional CBE structure in which elaboration precedes emotion and action [33] [35–37]. Within the platform-comparative framework, Stories' integration of native interactivity and visual immediacy appears to convey both emotional and behavioral responses more strongly than formats with less interactivity or diminished visual salience [13] [17] [18]. Instagram applications are now effectively building marketing communication to send promotional messages [38]. The demographic composition of the sample (youth-skewed and mobile-first) is also consistent with greater returns to entertainment value and creator authenticity and with the salience of real-time updating, aligning with research that Gen Z and younger Millennials favor ephemeral, full-screen experiences for transient information and social signaling [3] [12]. Social media has a significant influence on consumer choices [39]. Finally, the low variance explained for cognitive processing suggests space to incorporate additional antecedents prioritized in past studies—relevance

fit, prior attitudes, brand awareness, exposure frequency, creative quality, and algorithmic reach—and design choices that minimize cognitive load and maximize prompt clarity [16] [19].

6 CONCLUSION

This study examines how specific Instagram Stories features influence CBE among active Instagram users in Jordan. Instagram Stories have emerged as a viable strategic channel for CBE when feature choices are considered. Cognitive Processing is most consistently triggered by engaging micro-narratives and endorsers' credible suggestions, with UGC, timeliness, and targeted interactive prompts adding to the valuable but smaller increments. Since cognitive processing is a strong predictor of both activation and affection, managers are advised to foreground culturally attuned entertainment and creator–brand congruence, incorporate light peer proof, utilize Stories for live updates, and ensure calls-to-action are simple and immediately noted. For researchers, the results confirm a stimulus–organism–response process for transient, vertical video contexts and invite model extensions that test alternative antecedents, resolve probable endogeneity, and compare short-form platforms (Stories, Reels, TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Snapchat) with longitudinal and behavioral designs.

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