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Celebrity-Endorsed Travel Livestreaming as a Digital Marketing Innovation: Enhancing Booking Intention Through Perceived Authenticity and Emotional Engagement

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Abstract

This study aims to examine how celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, as a digital marketing innovation, influences booking intention through the mediating roles of perceived authenticity and emotional engagement. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, the study conceptualizes livestreaming as a stimulus that activates both cognitive and affective responses, which are subsequently associated with consumer behavioral intentions. A quantitative approach was adopted using a structured questionnaire distributed online to a diverse sample of 609 respondents. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the proposed relationships and mediation effects. The findings reveal that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming has a significant positive effect on booking intention, perceived authenticity, and emotional engagement. In addition, both perceived authenticity and emotional engagement positively influence booking intention, with emotional engagement demonstrating a stronger effect. The mediation analysis further confirms that both perceived authenticity and emotional engagement partially mediate the relationship between livestreaming and booking intention, indicating that the impact of livestreaming is largely transmitted through cognitive and affective mechanisms. The study makes several key contributions by extending the SOR framework to digitally immersive marketing contexts, reconceptualizing authenticity as an interaction-driven construct within celebrity-endorsed environments, and highlighting the prominent role of emotional engagement in consumer decision-making. These findings provide a more nuanced understanding of how innovative digital marketing formats are associated with consumer behavior and offer practical insights for designing more effective livestreaming strategies in the tourism industry.



Keywords: celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming; perceived authenticity; emotional engagement; booking intention; digital marketing innovation; consumer experience

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1. Introduction

The rapid evolution of digital marketing technologies has fundamentally altered how tourism experiences are communicated, evaluated, and ultimately consumed [1,2]. Among the most transformative developments is the emergence of livestreaming as an interactive, real-time promotional channel that collapses the distance between information exposure and experiential imagination. Within this landscape, celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming has gained particular prominence, blending the persuasive power of celebrity influence with the immediacy and immersion of live digital environments [3]. Unlike

traditional endorsements or pre-recorded influencer content, livestreaming introduces a dynamic, seemingly unfiltered interaction that allows audiences to witness destinations, services, and experiences as they unfold [4]. This hybrid form of communication not only reconfigures how travel products are presented but also raises critical questions regarding how consumers interpret, emotionally respond to, and act upon such content in the context of booking decisions [5].

Although celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming shares certain characteristics with influencer marketing and broader social media marketing practices, it constitutes a conceptually distinct digital marketing phenomenon. Social media marketing broadly encompasses the strategic use of digital platforms to facilitate brand communication, customer engagement, and promotional activities across various formats [6]. Influencer marketing, by contrast, primarily relies on the persuasive capacity of individuals with established social capital to shape consumer attitudes and behaviors through curated content and endorsement activities [7].

Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming extends beyond both approaches by integrating celebrity endorsement, synchronous interaction, experiential immersion, and real-time audience participation within a unified digital environment [3]. Unlike conventional influencer marketing, which frequently operates through asynchronous and highly curated content formats, travel livestreaming enables audiences to engage with destinations and experiences as they unfold, thereby reducing temporal and psychological distance between consumers and tourism products [8]. Moreover, the involvement of celebrities introduces additional symbolic, aspirational, and emotional dimensions that reshape how authenticity and experiential value are constructed and interpreted during the consumption process [9].

Accordingly, celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming should not be viewed merely as a subcategory of influencer marketing or social media marketing, but rather as an innovative experiential marketing ecosystem characterized by simultaneous cognitive processing, affective engagement, and interactive co-creation [10]. This conceptual distinction provides the theoretical foundation for examining the unique psychological mechanisms through which celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming influences consumer booking behavior [5].

The effectiveness of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming in shaping booking intention cannot be understood solely through exposure or reach; rather, it hinges on the psychological processes that mediate the transition from passive viewing to active decision-making [11]. The integration of celebrity presence introduces symbolic value, credibility cues, and aspirational appeal, yet these attributes alone do not guarantee behavioral outcomes [12]. Importantly, the prior literature has identified several theoretically related but conceptually distinct mechanisms that shape consumer responses to celebrity-mediated digital environments, including source credibility, parasocial interaction, celebrity authenticity, and perceived authenticity. Specifically, source credibility refers to consumers' evaluations of the expertise, trustworthiness, and reliability of the communicator [13], whereas parasocial interaction captures the perceived social closeness and relational attachment developed toward media personalities [14]. Celebrity authenticity reflects perceptions of the celebrity's genuineness and sincerity, while perceived authenticity, as conceptualized in the present study, refers to consumers' evaluations of the genuineness, realism, and experiential credibility of the celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming experience itself [3,15]. Accordingly, although these constructs may be theoretically related and mutually reinforcing, they represent distinct psychological mechanisms and are not treated as interchangeable constructs within the present theoretical framework. Instead, their influence is contingent upon how audiences perceive the authenticity of the content and the extent to which they become emotionally engaged during the livestream experience [16]. In digitally mediated environments where skepticism toward curated or commercially driven content

is increasing, perceived authenticity emerges as a pivotal construct [17]. The real-time, unscripted nature of livestreaming may enhance perceptions of genuineness, transparency, and trustworthiness; however, the involvement of celebrities—often associated with commercial intent—creates a paradox in which authenticity is simultaneously amplified and contested [18]. This tension underscores the need to critically examine whether and how celebrity-endorsed livestreaming can sustain authenticity perceptions sufficient to influence booking intention. Parallel to authenticity, emotional engagement represents a central mechanism through which livestreaming may be associated with consumer persuasion processes [19]. The immersive and interactive features of livestreaming—such as live comments, immediate feedback loops, and sensory-rich visual narratives—facilitate affective responses that extend beyond cognitive evaluation [20]. When celebrities guide or participate in these experiences, they may intensify emotional resonance by framing the destination through personal storytelling, enthusiasm, and relational cues [21]. Such emotional engagement may contribute to transforming observational consumption into experiential simulation, thereby potentially reducing psychological distance and increasing the likelihood of behavioral commitment [3]. Nevertheless, the extent to which emotional engagement translates into booking intention remains contingent upon its interaction with perceived authenticity, as emotionally compelling content that is perceived as inauthentic may fail to convert interest into action.

The relationship between perceived authenticity and booking intention has been widely acknowledged in tourism research [22]; however, the existing literature remains theoretically fragmented in several important respects. Research on authenticity has predominantly focused on static or post-experience contexts, such as destination image formation, heritage experiences, and user-generated reviews (e.g., [23–25]), thereby overlooking how authenticity is dynamically constructed and negotiated during real-time interactions. Similarly, emotional engagement has been extensively examined within immersive marketing, experiential consumption, and digital storytelling contexts [26], yet these studies have rarely isolated its role within celebrity-mediated livestreaming environments. More importantly, prior research has generally investigated authenticity and emotional engagement as separate explanatory mechanisms, implicitly assuming that cognitive and affective processes operate independently. Such an approach may oversimplify consumer decision-making in digitally immersive environments, where authenticity perceptions and emotional experiences are likely to emerge simultaneously and interactively. Furthermore, previous studies have frequently treated livestreaming, influencer marketing, and social media marketing as conceptually overlapping digital persuasion formats (e.g., [27,28]), thereby overlooking the distinctive configuration through which celebrity presence, synchronous interaction, experiential immersion, perceived authenticity, and emotional engagement jointly influence booking intention. Consequently, the existing literature has yet to provide an integrated theoretical explanation of how these interrelated psychological mechanisms operate concurrently within celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming contexts. Addressing this limitation requires moving beyond the incremental extension of established relationships toward the development of a more integrative understanding of how cognitive and affective mechanisms operate simultaneously within digitally immersive tourism environments. Accordingly, the present study advances existing knowledge by reconceptualizing celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming as a distinct experiential marketing ecosystem and by examining the concurrent and interactive roles of perceived authenticity and emotional engagement within a unified theoretical framework.

Anchoring this inquiry within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework offers a theoretically robust lens through which to conceptualize these relationships. In this context, celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming functions as the external stimulus,

characterized by its interactive, real-time, and socially enriched features [5]. The organismic responses are represented by internal psychological states, specifically perceived authenticity and emotional engagement, which capture both cognitive appraisal and affective immersion [29,30]. These internal states, in turn, shape the response, operationalized as booking intention [22,31]. While the S-O-R framework has been extensively applied in digital marketing and online consumer behavior research, its application to livestreaming—particularly within tourism and celebrity endorsement contexts—remains fragmented. More critically, prior studies often isolate either cognitive or emotional mediators, thereby overlooking the interplay between authenticity and emotional engagement as coexisting mechanisms that jointly drive behavioral outcomes. Despite its widespread application, previous S-O-R studies have frequently adopted reductionist perspectives by privileging either cognitive evaluations or affective responses as the primary explanatory mechanism of consumer behavior (e.g., [32,33]). While such approaches have generated important insights, they may be insufficient for explaining consumer responses within highly immersive and celebrity-mediated digital environments, where cognitive appraisal and emotional experience are inherently intertwined. Accordingly, the application of the S-O-R framework to celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming requires a more integrative conceptualization that captures the simultaneous and interactive influence of authenticity perceptions and emotional engagement on booking intentions [34]. Various theoretically plausible alternative model specifications were considered during model development, including sequential relationships between perceived authenticity and emotional engagement, as well as the incorporation of constructs such as trust, perceived credibility, destination image, and parasocial interaction. However, the present study adopts a parsimonious model specification to facilitate the examination of the concurrent cognitive and affective mechanisms through which celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming influences booking intention within the S-O-R framework. Although several organismic mechanisms have been employed in prior applications of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework within tourism and digital marketing research, including trust, parasocial interaction, destination image, and perceived credibility (e.g., [35,36]), the present study focuses specifically on perceived authenticity and emotional engagement for both theoretical and contextual reasons. First, perceived authenticity represents a fundamental cognitive evaluation mechanism within digitally mediated tourism experiences, particularly in livestreaming environments where consumers continuously assess the genuineness, transparency, and credibility of presented experiences [37]. Second, emotional engagement captures the affective and experiential dimensions of consumer responses that emerge through immersive, interactive, and celebrity-mediated digital encounters [26]. While constructs such as trust and perceived credibility primarily reflect evaluative judgments and parasocial interaction emphasizes relational attachment [38], perceived authenticity and emotional engagement together provide a more comprehensive representation of the cognitive and affective processes central to the S-O-R framework. Accordingly, the present study conceptualizes perceived authenticity as a distinct cognitive organismic mechanism rather than as a proxy for source credibility, parasocial interaction, or celebrity authenticity. Moreover, destination image has traditionally been conceptualized as a pre-visit evaluative construct rather than a real-time psychological response emerging during livestream interactions.

This gap becomes more pronounced when considering the broader discourse on digital marketing innovation and user experience. Although livestreaming is frequently positioned as an innovative tool capable of enhancing consumer experience (Luo et al., 2025 [39]), the literature has not sufficiently interrogated the conditions under which such innovation translates into meaningful behavioral impact. Specifically, there is a lack of nuanced understanding regarding whether the perceived immediacy and interactivity of livestreaming

genuinely enhance authenticity perceptions, or whether they merely create an illusion of authenticity that may not withstand critical evaluation. Similarly, while emotional engagement is often assumed to be inherently beneficial, its effectiveness as a mediator in driving booking intention within celebrity-endorsed contexts remains underexplored. The absence of integrated models that simultaneously examine these mechanisms limits the theoretical advancement of digital tourism marketing and constrains the practical implications for designing effective livestreaming strategies.

In response to these limitations, this study seeks to systematically investigate the role of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming as a digital marketing innovation in relation to booking intention through the mediating effects of perceived authenticity and emotional engagement. It aims to disentangle the complex relationships between the livestreaming stimulus and consumer response by examining how authenticity perceptions are constructed within celebrity-driven environments, how emotional engagement is elicited and sustained during real-time interactions, and how these internal states independently and collectively influence booking intention. By doing so, the study moves beyond simplistic cause–effect assumptions and provides a more granular understanding of the psychological processes underpinning consumer behavior in digitally mediated tourism contexts.

The contributions of this research are multifaceted. First, this study contributes to the tourism and digital marketing literature by conceptualizing celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming as a distinct experiential digital marketing phenomenon rather than merely an extension of influencer marketing or conventional social media marketing practices. Specifically, the study argues that the integration of celebrity endorsement, synchronous interaction, experiential immersion, and real-time audience participation creates a unique digital consumption environment that warrants independent theoretical examination. Second, this research extends the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework by simultaneously incorporating cognitive and affective mediating mechanisms, namely perceived authenticity and emotional engagement, thereby offering a more comprehensive explanation of consumer behavioral responses within digitally immersive tourism contexts. By examining these mediators concurrently, the study advances existing S–O–R applications, which have traditionally focused on either cognitive or emotional processes in isolation. Rather than merely replicating previously established associations, the study advances existing theory by integrating conceptually distinct cognitive and affective mechanisms within a novel celebrity-mediated livestreaming context. Third, the study advances the authenticity literature by reconceptualizing perceived authenticity as an interaction-driven and contextually constructed phenomenon within celebrity-endorsed livestreaming environments. In doing so, it addresses the inherent tension between commercial persuasion and perceived genuineness, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of authenticity formation in contemporary digital tourism marketing. Fourth, this research enriches the literature on emotional engagement by demonstrating its role not merely as an affective outcome of digital interaction, but as a critical psychological mechanism associated with the relationship between experiential exposure and behavioral intention. This perspective provides deeper insight into how emotionally immersive digital experiences influence consumer decision-making processes. From a practical standpoint, the findings are expected to inform tourism marketers, destination management organizations, and content creators on how to design celebrity-endorsed livestreaming strategies that effectively balance entertainment value, perceived credibility, authenticity, and emotional resonance. Ultimately, the study contributes to the growing discourse on digital marketing innovation by providing evidence-based insights into how interactive and immersive communication technologies may be associated with enhanced consumer experiences and stronger booking intentions within the tourism industry.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR)

The present study draws on the SOR framework to explain how digitally mediated tourism experiences translate into behavioral intentions. Within contemporary marketing environments, stimuli are no longer passive informational cues but immersive, interactive experiences that are closely associated with consumer perceptions and experiences [40]. Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming exemplifies this shift, functioning as a hybrid stimulus that merges real-time visual exposure, social interaction, and symbolic endorsement [41]. Its influence does not stem solely from celebrity presence but appears to be associated with its capacity to simulate experience, reduce psychological distance, and create a sense of immediacy that conventional digital formats achieve to a lesser extent [42]. Within this process, the organismic state is conceptualized through perceived authenticity and emotional engagement, capturing two distinct yet interdependent psychological mechanisms [29,30]. Perceived authenticity reflects a critical evaluative judgment, particularly relevant in livestreaming contexts where commercial intent coexists with claims of spontaneity and transparency [37]. Rather than being inherently embedded in the content, authenticity is constructed through audience interpretation, making it highly sensitive to the credibility of the celebrity and the perceived naturalness of the interaction [43]. In parallel, emotional engagement represents the affective immersion generated during the livestream experience, driven by narrative intensity, real-time interaction, and parasocial connection with the celebrity [44]. This emotional activation is associated with a transition from passive viewing to experiential involvement, thereby increasing the perceived salience of the promoted destination [45].

The behavioral response, represented by booking intention, is conceptualized as being associated with the combined influence of these cognitive and affective states rather than direct exposure to the stimulus [46]. Perceived authenticity is linked with lower levels of skepticism and higher levels of trust, while emotional engagement is linked with stronger desire and experiential attachment [47]. Importantly, the absence of either mechanism appears to reduce the overall strength of the observed relationships, as emotionally engaging content lacking authenticity may fail to convert, while authentic yet emotionally neutral content may not motivate action [3]. This interplay highlights the necessity of examining both mediators simultaneously to fully capture the effectiveness of livestreaming as a digital marketing innovation. By positioning celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming within the S-O-R framework, the study advances a more nuanced understanding of how digital stimuli operate in tourism contexts. It challenges the assumption that technological interactivity alone is sufficient to explain consumer responses, emphasizing instead that its effectiveness is contingent upon the extent to which consumers perceive experiences as authentic and emotionally engaging.

The present study conceptualizes perceived authenticity and emotional engagement as distinct yet complementary organismic mechanisms operating simultaneously within celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments. Nevertheless, the relationship between these constructs may extend beyond simple parallel effects. From a theoretical perspective, emotional engagement may strengthen the influence of perceived authenticity on behavioral intentions by enhancing experiential immersion and reducing psychological distance. However, the primary objective of the present study is to examine the independent and complementary roles of cognitive and affective organismic mechanisms within celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming contexts. Therefore, potential interaction or sequential relationships between perceived authenticity and emotional engagement were beyond the scope of the present investigation and represent a promising avenue for future research.

2.2. Celebrity-Endorsed Travel Livestreaming and Booking Intention

Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming introduces a mode of promotion in which travel experiences are encountered as ongoing events rather than pre-constructed representations. By presenting destinations in real time, this format minimizes the abstraction typically associated with tourism advertising and allows viewers to engage with unfolding details, situational dynamics, and unedited impressions as they occur [5,48]. This immediacy is associated with greater perceptual vividness, making the experience easier to imagine and cognitively process compared to static or highly curated promotional content [49]. The inclusion of a celebrity further shapes how this experience is interpreted. Rather than functioning solely as attention-generating figures, celebrities act as symbolic frames through which the destination is evaluated, embedding it within meanings related to status, familiarity, and social desirability [50]. As a result, the livestream does not merely display a destination but situates it within a socially endorsed narrative, which is associated with higher perceived attractiveness and psychological accessibility among potential travelers [11].

However, the effectiveness of this format does not depend on the absence of consumer skepticism. The simultaneous presence of real-time exposure and recognizable promotional intent is associated with a dual evaluative context in which viewers are both engaged and critical [51,52]. Despite this, the interactive and immersive nature of livestreaming is associated with sustained attention and deeper cognitive and experiential processing, allowing consumers to mentally simulate the travel experience while observing it [53]. This process appears to strengthen the transition from passive viewing to active consideration, thereby increasing the likelihood of behavioral intention formation, even under conditions of partial skepticism [39,54]. Although previous studies have generally supported the effectiveness of livestreaming and celebrity endorsement in influencing consumer behavioral intentions [16,55], their findings remain fragmented across different theoretical and contextual settings. Several studies have demonstrated that livestream interactivity, immediacy, and social presence are positively linked with purchase and booking intentions through greater experiential immersion and reduced psychological distance [56,57]. Similarly, celebrity endorsement has been associated with increased destination attractiveness, symbolic value, and consumer persuasion [58]. However, other studies have suggested that heightened commercial awareness and promotional skepticism may weaken these effects, particularly when consumers perceive celebrity involvement as overly strategic or commercially motivated [59,60]. These inconsistent findings suggest that the influence of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming cannot be adequately explained through direct stimulus-response relationships alone. Rather, its effectiveness appears to depend on the psychological mechanisms through which consumers cognitively and emotionally process livestream experiences [61]. Consequently, further investigation is required to explain how celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming translates into booking intention within digitally immersive tourism environments.

From the perspective of the SOR framework, celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming is conceptualized as a stimulus characterized by high interactivity, immediacy, and symbolic influence, while booking intention represents the behavioral response associated with this exposure [46,62]. The richness of the livestreaming environment is associated with a greater capacity to activate internal evaluation processes than less dynamic promotional formats, thereby contributing to a higher likelihood of behavioral intention formation [3,11]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. *Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming has a significant positive effect on booking intention.*

2.3. Celebrity-Endorsed Travel Livestreaming and Perceived Authenticity

Authenticity in celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming is inherently unstable. What appears as spontaneous exposure is simultaneously recognized as intentional performance, placing viewers in a constant state of evaluation. The livestream does not simply present a destination; it exposes the conditions under which the experience is being mediated, forcing audiences to decide whether what they see should be trusted or questioned. This ambiguity is central rather than incidental, as authenticity is not embedded in the content itself but emerges from how this tension is resolved by the viewer [63]. The live format is associated with heightened evaluative pressure. Unedited sequences, real-time reactions, and audience interaction provide cues that may be perceived as less controllable, making the experience appear less constructed than conventional promotional material [64]. At the same time, the presence of a celebrity introduces a counter-signal—one that reminds viewers of commercial intent and strategic communication [65]. Authenticity, therefore, is shaped at the intersection of these opposing cues: perceived spontaneity versus inferred persuasion. Rather than passively accepting the content, audiences actively interrogate it, drawing on visible inconsistencies, immediate feedback, and contextual awareness to determine whether the experience reflects genuine engagement or staged representation [66,67].

What distinguishes livestreaming from other formats is not that it guarantees authenticity, but that it provides the conditions under which authenticity can be continuously tested. Viewers are not limited to a single, fixed representation; they are exposed to a stream of signals that can confirm or contradict each other as the experience unfolds. This ongoing verification process is associated with the dynamic development of authenticity judgments, making them more responsive to the characteristics of the content compared to static or pre-produced communication [68,69]. In this sense, authenticity is not delivered—it is conceptualized as being constructed through interaction, observation, and interpretation [70]. The tourism literature has long recognized authenticity as a multidimensional construct encompassing objective, constructive, and existential perspectives [71]. Objective authenticity refers to the genuineness and originality of tangible objects and experiences, whereas constructive authenticity emphasizes socially and culturally negotiated interpretations of authenticity [72]. In contrast, existential authenticity focuses on subjective feelings of self-realization, emotional immersion, and experiential fulfillment emerging through participation in tourism experiences [73]. Although these perspectives represent distinct theoretical approaches, their relevance varies according to the nature of the tourism context under investigation. In celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments, authenticity judgments are unlikely to rely primarily on the objective verification of destination attributes. Instead, authenticity perceptions are conceptualized as arising from consumers' interpretations of real-time interaction, perceived spontaneity, transparency, and experiential immersion [3].

Consistent with the constructive and existential perspectives of authenticity, the present study conceptualizes perceived authenticity as a psychologically constructed evaluation of genuineness emerging from consumers' interpretations of celebrity-mediated and digitally immersive tourism experiences. Rather than presenting a consensual view, existing research offers competing interpretations regarding the relationship between celebrity-mediated digital communication and authenticity perceptions. On one hand, several studies argue that the immediacy, transparency, and interactivity of livestreaming environments enhance perceptions of authenticity by reducing the perceived distance between consumers and mediated experiences [74,75]. On the other hand, scholars have cautioned that the commercial and performative nature of celebrity endorsement may undermine authenticity perceptions by increasing consumer awareness of persuasive intent and strategic self-presentation [76,77]. These competing perspectives suggest that

authenticity in celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming cannot be understood as an inherent attribute of the content itself, but rather as a negotiated psychological outcome emerging from the simultaneous presence of authenticity-enhancing and authenticity-threatening cues. This apparent contradiction reflects what may be described as the authenticity paradox in celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments. Consumers recognize that celebrity participation is often commercially motivated and strategically designed to shape consumer evaluations and responses [78]. As well, the real-time, interactive, and seemingly unscripted nature of livestreaming simultaneously provides cues that reinforce perceptions of spontaneity, transparency, and experiential genuineness. Rather than perceiving these signals as mutually exclusive, consumers may reconcile them through a process of selective interpretation, whereby commercial intent is accepted as an expected characteristic of contemporary digital marketing, provided that the celebrity's behavior, emotional expressions, and interactions are perceived as sufficiently natural and believable [79]. Accordingly, perceptions of authenticity appear to emerge through consumers' ability to balance commercial persuasion with experiential credibility within digitally immersive environments [80]. Consequently, the extent to which celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming contributes to perceived authenticity remains theoretically unresolved and warrants further empirical investigation.

Within the SOR framework, celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming is conceptualized as a stimulus characterized by competing evaluative cues rather than a single, unified message [5]. Perceived authenticity reflects the outcome of this internal evaluation process, shaped by how viewers reconcile immediacy with perceived intent [81]. The density and immediacy of livestreaming signals are associated with the formation and adjustment of such evaluations in real time, thereby reinforcing the relationship between livestreaming experiences and authenticity perceptions [82,83]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. *Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming has a significant positive effect on perceived authenticity.*

2.4. *Celebrity-Endorsed Travel Livestreaming and Emotional Engagement*

Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming differs from conventional digital formats in its ability to present travel experiences as they unfold rather than as finalized representations. This real-time exposure places viewers in closer temporal proximity to the experience, allowing them to observe reactions, atmospheres, and evolving moments as they occur [7]. Such immediacy is associated with reduced distance between perception and imagination, facilitating more vivid and affectively charged processing of the content, where viewers can momentarily experience the destination through mediated exposure [3]. The presence of a celebrity is further associated with this process by providing an interpretive lens through which the experience is emotionally framed; visible expressions of excitement or enjoyment function as cues that are associated with audience responses to what is being presented [64]. Emotional engagement, however, does not arise automatically from exposure. Its intensity depends on the extent to which the livestream maintains coherence in its unfolding narrative and sustains a sense of relational closeness with the audience [84]. The inherent unpredictability of live content is linked with higher engagement when spontaneity is reinforced and lower engagement when interactions appear staged or disconnected [85]. In addition, viewers' prior attitudes toward the celebrity may influence their emotional responses, at times directing engagement toward the endorser rather than the destination itself [3].

Existing research generally supports the positive role of immersive and interactive digital environments in generating emotional engagement [45,86]; however, the strength and

nature of this relationship remain contingent upon contextual and experiential conditions. Previous studies have consistently shown that interactivity, social presence, and experiential immersion are positively associated with affective responses in digital consumption settings [45,87]. Nevertheless, other studies have suggested that emotional engagement may vary substantially depending on the perceived authenticity of the experience, the credibility of the communicator, and the extent to which consumers develop a sense of psychological proximity to the presented content [88,89]. These findings indicate that emotional engagement should not be considered an automatic consequence of digital exposure but rather a context-dependent psychological response shaped by multiple interacting cues. Consequently, further investigation is required to clarify the relationship between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and emotional engagement within digitally immersive tourism environments. Despite these variations, the integration of real-time immersion, interactive elements, and expressive cues is linked with greater emotional engagement compared to less dynamic communication formats [90]. Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming represents a stimulus enriched with immediacy and interactivity, while emotional engagement reflects the internal affective state associated with such exposure within the SOR perspective [3]. The richness of this stimulus is associated with deeper emotional involvement, supporting the expectation that livestreaming is more strongly linked with engagement than static promotional approaches [91]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. *Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming has a significant positive effect on emotional engagement.*

2.5. Perceived Authenticity and Booking Intention

Perceived authenticity becomes particularly critical in tourism decisions because the experience itself cannot be verified before consumption. Under such conditions, consumers do not rely on the objective accuracy of information as much as they depend on their confidence in its credibility [92,93]. In digitally mediated environments—where content is often curated and strategically presented—this confidence is formed through evaluative judgments regarding whether the information reflects a genuine experience or a constructed message [94]. When authenticity is perceived, the presented experience is more readily accepted as a reliable indicator of what can be expected, contributing to lower perceived risk and greater decision confidence [95,96]. Beyond reducing uncertainty, authenticity also contributes to how the experience is evaluated. Content perceived as genuine is more likely to be considered meaningful and personally relevant, which increases its perceived persuasive value. By contrast, when authenticity is questioned, even visually appealing or highly engaging content may fail to produce intention due to lingering skepticism [97,98]. This indicates that authenticity appears to play an important role in how consumers interpret and respond to promotional experiences, as it shapes both trust in the information and the perceived significance of the experience [99].

The influence of perceived authenticity on behavioral intention has traditionally been interpreted through the lens of trust formation, risk reduction, and destination evaluation [100]. However, the increasing prevalence of digitally mediated tourism experiences challenges these conventional interpretations. In celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments, authenticity is not merely a static assessment of informational credibility but a dynamic psychological judgment developed through continuous exposure to real-time interactions, symbolic cues, and experiential narratives [11]. In this vein, the persuasive value of authenticity extends beyond reducing uncertainty to contributing to how consumers mentally construct, experience, and anticipate future travel experiences [101]. This conceptual shift suggests that the relationship between perceived authenticity and booking

intention in livestreaming contexts may operate differently from traditional tourism settings, thereby necessitating further empirical examination within digitally immersive and celebrity-mediated environments. This evaluative process aligns with the SOR framework, where behavioral outcomes emerge through internal cognitive states rather than direct exposure. Within this mechanism, perceived authenticity represents the point at which information is judged as sufficiently credible, facilitating the alignment between expectations and perceived reality, thereby supporting intention formation [47,102,103]. Once this threshold of credibility is reached, the likelihood of behavioral commitment increases, reinforcing the role of authenticity as a key driver of booking intention [98,104]. So, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H4. *Perceived authenticity has a significant positive effect on booking intention.*

2.6. Emotional Engagement and Booking Intention

In tourism contexts, intention is not typically conceptualized as arising solely from exposure to information, but rather from the extent to which the experience is perceived as psychologically compelling. Emotional engagement can be understood as a process through which presented content acquires motivational significance beyond mere knowledge. When consumers are emotionally involved, the destination is less likely to be evaluated from a purely detached perspective and is more likely to be anticipated and mentally pursued [105]. This shift from evaluation to desire provides a possible explanation for why emotionally engaging content is often linked to booking decisions, particularly when the experience cannot be physically verified in advance [26]. What appears to be important, therefore, is not merely the presence of emotion, but the extent to which emotional experiences sustain motivational relevance. Weak or momentary emotional reactions may attract attention without generating action [106]. In contrast, stronger forms of engagement are often accompanied by a greater sense of psychological proximity, which contributes to perceptions of attainability. Under such conditions, intention can be understood as emerging not solely through calculated evaluation but also through previously activated motivational states [26,107]. Despite broad agreement that emotional engagement positively influences consumer behavioral intentions [108], existing research remains less conclusive regarding the psychological mechanisms through which this influence occurs. Some studies emphasize the role of emotional immersion and experiential involvement in explaining behavioral responses, whereas others highlight anticipation, psychological proximity, and affective attachment as the primary drivers of consumer action [26]. This variation suggests that emotional engagement should not be understood merely as an emotional reaction to marketing stimuli but rather as a complex motivational process through which consumers translate affective experiences into behavioral commitment [109]. Consequently, further investigation is required to clarify how emotional engagement functions as an organismic mechanism linking digitally mediated tourism experiences with booking intention.

In digitally mediated environments, where consumers are continuously exposed to emotionally stimulating content, only engagement that maintains this motivational pull appears to be strongly related to behavioral outcomes. Emotional engagement can be conceptualized as a mechanism through which affective experiences become behaviorally relevant by reinforcing anticipation and reducing perceived distance between the present and the expected experience [54,110]. This mechanism is consistent with the SOR framework, in which behavioral intention is conceptualized as being related to internal affective states rather than direct exposure alone. Here, emotional engagement represents the organismic condition through which external stimuli acquire behavioral relevance, thereby

facilitating the relationship between heightened emotional involvement and booking intention [111–113]. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5. *Emotional engagement has a significant positive effect on booking intention.*

2.7. The Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity

The relationship between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and booking intention is not fully understood at the point of exposure alone but also through the interpretive processes that follow it. Livestreaming presents a stream of visible and interactive cues, yet these cues do not carry persuasive value on their own. Their persuasive relevance appears to depend on whether they are perceived as credible representations of the experience being promoted. In digitally mediated settings, where promotional intent is often embedded within seemingly spontaneous interactions, consumers are likely to engage in evaluative assessments regarding whether what they observe can be trusted before forming behavioral intentions [1,114]. This positions perceived authenticity as a potentially important mechanism through which exposure acquires psychological relevance [3,115]. This dependency becomes more evident in the context of celebrity endorsement. The same features that make livestreaming engaging—real-time visibility, expressive reactions, and interactive communication—also introduce ambiguity regarding intent. Viewers are required to reconcile two competing interpretations: whether the experience reflects genuine engagement or a strategically constructed performance [105]. When authenticity is perceived, ambiguity appears to be reduced, increasing the likelihood that the experience will be regarded as a credible basis for decision-making. Under such conditions, consumers may exhibit higher levels of trust, lower levels of skepticism, and stronger booking intentions [116]. In contrast, when authenticity perceptions are weak, the relationship between exposure and booking intention appears to be attenuated, even when the content attracts attention or emotional interest [37,117,118].

Previous research has provided indirect evidence supporting the mediating role of authenticity in digital consumer behavior contexts (e.g., [116,119]), although this mechanism has rarely been examined explicitly within celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments. Existing studies have suggested that interactive and immersive digital experiences are positively related to perceptions of authenticity, while separate streams of research have consistently demonstrated that perceived authenticity positively influences trust, experiential evaluation, and behavioral intentions in tourism settings [115,120]. However, these relationships have largely been investigated independently, resulting in limited understanding of how authenticity functions as a psychological mechanism linking digitally mediated promotional experiences with consumer behavioral outcomes. This fragmentation suggests that the mediating role of perceived authenticity remains theoretically plausible but insufficiently integrated within existing tourism and livestreaming research, thereby warranting further empirical examination. Rather than functioning as an additional influence, authenticity can be conceptualized as a psychological mechanism through which the relationship between livestreaming exposure and behavioral intention is interpreted. The relationship between exposure and intention appears to vary according to the extent to which the livestream is interpreted as credible. This perspective suggests that the persuasive impact of livestreaming may be better understood through authenticity perceptions rather than through direct effects alone. This interpretation is consistent with the SOR, where external stimuli acquire behavioral relevance only after passing through internal evaluative states. In this context, perceived authenticity represents the stage at which livestreaming cues are validated, allowing them to be translated into behavioral intention [10,54,121]. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H6. *Perceived authenticity mediates the relationship between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and booking intention.*

2.8. The Mediating Role of Emotional Engagement

Unlike cognitive evaluations that depend on credibility judgments, the relationship between exposure and behavioral intention in tourism appears to be influenced by how the experience is emotionally experienced rather than solely by how it is cognitively assessed [122]. Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming presents destinations through a continuous stream of sensory and expressive cues that can facilitate affective involvement among viewers, making the experience more immediate and personally relevant. In this context, the persuasive relevance of the content appears to depend less on informational characteristics alone and more on the extent to which it elicits lasting emotional impressions during exposure [3]. Consequently, booking intentions may be influenced not only by knowledge about the destination but also by the strength of the emotional responses experienced during viewing [91]. Within this process, emotional engagement appears to influence how the livestream experience is perceived and interpreted. When viewers experience higher levels of emotional absorption, the content is more likely to be perceived as experientially meaningful, potentially reducing psychological distance and strengthening anticipatory responses [123]. This psychological shift may increase the perceived immediacy and attractiveness of the booking decision, as the experience is perceived as something already partially lived rather than entirely future-oriented [124]. When emotional engagement is limited, the relationship between livestream exposure and booking intention may become weaker [125]. In this sense, emotional engagement enables the conversion of exposure into meaningful involvement, providing the motivational basis required for action [44,126]. Prior research has consistently emphasized the importance of emotions in shaping tourism decision-making [127,128]; however, the process through which emotional experiences are transformed into behavioral intentions remains insufficiently understood. Existing studies have variously conceptualized emotional engagement as a consequence of experiential immersion, a form of affective attachment, or a motivational state that facilitates consumer action [44,109]. These alternative interpretations suggest that emotional engagement does not merely accompany consumer experiences but may function as a psychological process through which experiential exposure acquires behavioral significance [26]. Nevertheless, empirical research has rarely examined this process explicitly within celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments, where emotional experiences are continuously shaped through real-time interaction, symbolic cues, and immersive digital exposure. Hence, further investigation is required to clarify the mediating role of emotional engagement in transforming livestream experiences into booking intentions.

This pattern reflects the logic of the SOR framework, where the effect of external stimuli depends on the internal states they generate. Here, emotional engagement represents the affective condition through which livestreaming becomes behaviorally influential, allowing the experienced content to translate into booking intention [11,111]. The outcome, therefore, depends on the extent to which the experience is emotionally processed rather than merely observed [129]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7. *Emotional engagement mediates the relationship between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and booking intention.*

Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual research model and illustrates the hypothesized relationships among celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, perceived authenticity, emotional engagement, and booking intention.

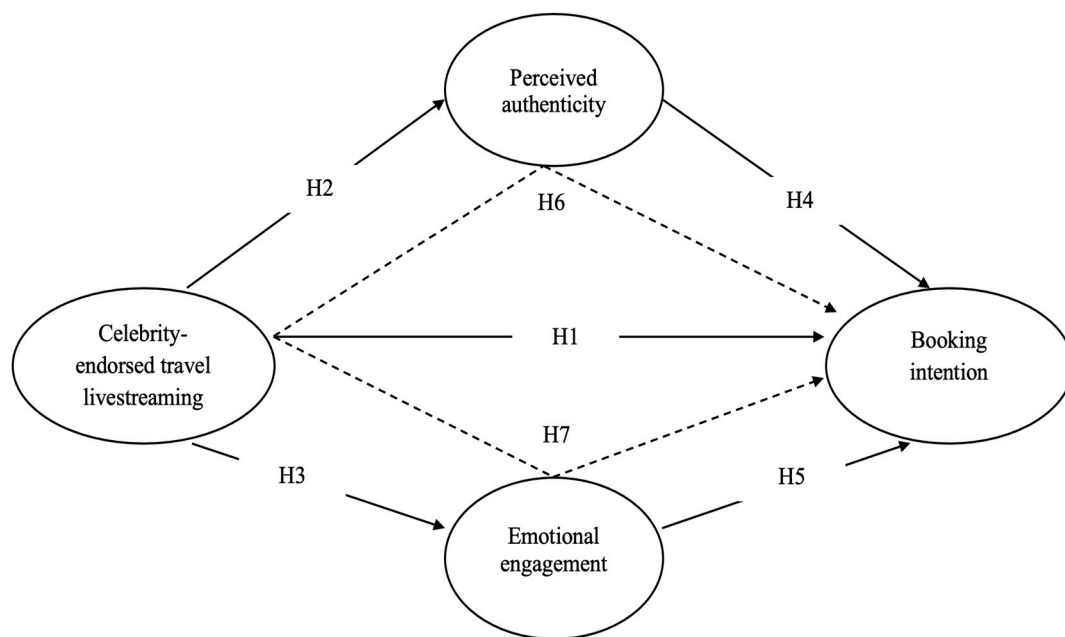


Figure 1. The proposed model.

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

The study was designed as a quantitative investigation, with primary data collected through an online questionnaire constructed and distributed via Google Forms. Rather than relying on traditional sampling frames, the data collection strategy was embedded within the same digital environments in which travel livestreaming is experienced. Accordingly, participants were approached within travel-focused communities across major social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn. This approach reflects recent methodological directions in livestreaming research, where sampling is anchored in platform-based user activity rather than detached recruitment channels [130,131]. A convenience sampling technique was adopted, not simply for ease of access but to capture individuals who are already engaged with travel-related digital content and therefore capable of providing informed responses.

Convenience sampling facilitated access to active travel livestream users; however, this approach may introduce sampling bias and limit the representativeness of the findings. Specifically, individuals who are more active on social media platforms and more engaged with travel-related digital content may have been overrepresented in the sample. Nevertheless, because the study specifically targeted consumers who actively participate in celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments, platform-based recruitment was considered appropriate for identifying information-rich participants with direct experiential familiarity. While the sample reflects the heterogeneous characteristics of contemporary travel livestream audiences, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to the broader population of tourism consumers and livestream viewers. Given the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame for travel livestream consumers, platform-based convenience sampling represents a pragmatic and widely adopted approach for accessing this emerging digital consumer segment.

Before proceeding with the survey, participants were presented with a brief introduction outlining the purpose of the study, confirming the confidentiality of their responses, and requesting their informed consent. To further ensure consistency in interpretation, key concepts—particularly those related to travel livestreaming—were clarified at the outset.

Recognizing the heterogeneous composition of the target population, which included both Saudi and international respondents, the questionnaire was made available in Arabic and English. This was intended to facilitate participation without imposing linguistic constraints that could distort responses, particularly when measuring perceptual and emotional constructs.

To ensure linguistic equivalence and conceptual consistency across both language versions, the original questionnaire was developed in English and subsequently translated into Arabic. The Arabic version was reviewed by multiple bilingual experts with experience in tourism, marketing, and social science research to ensure semantic accuracy, conceptual equivalence, and contextual appropriateness. Minor modifications were implemented based on expert feedback to improve clarity and comprehensibility. In addition, a pilot study was conducted to verify the clarity, consistency, and interpretability of the questionnaire items across both language versions. These procedures helped minimize potential measurement bias resulting from linguistic differences.

The survey was circulated through multiple channels, including posts in specialized travel groups such as Traveller Advisor, Traveller Experience, and Travel Secrets Club, as well as through direct messaging and targeted advertisements to extend reach beyond organically active users. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no form of compensation offered, thereby reducing the likelihood of artificially motivated responses.

To ensure that the data reflected actual experiential familiarity with the phenomenon, two screening questions were introduced at the entry stage. These questions verified whether respondents had prior exposure to livestreaming across platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and similar applications and whether they had ever made a purchase based on livestreamed content. Responses that did not meet these criteria were excluded automatically, as they did not align with the experiential focus of the study.

The requirement that respondents possess prior purchase experience related to livestreamed content was introduced to ensure that participants had sufficient experiential familiarity with the behavioral phenomenon under investigation. However, this criterion may have excluded an important segment of travel livestream viewers who regularly consume livestream content but have not yet translated their engagement into actual purchasing behavior. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted primarily within the context of experienced livestream consumers, and future research may benefit from comparing purchasing and non-purchasing livestream audiences to better understand behavioral conversion processes. Accordingly, the findings of the present study should not be generalized to the broader population of tourists, social media users, or livestream audiences. Rather, they should be interpreted as representing digitally active consumers who are familiar with travel-related social media content and possess prior experience with celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments.

The data collection process spanned from September 2025 to the end of February 2026. During this period, the survey link was distributed to 1191 potential participants, yielding 821 responses. The dataset was subsequently refined through a structured screening process. A total of 66 responses were removed due to substantial incompleteness, defined as leaving more than 20% of the questionnaire unanswered. In addition, 146 responses were excluded because participants indicated no prior experience with livestreaming, as identified through the screening questions. The final sample consisted of 609 valid responses. This sample size exceeds the minimum threshold recommended by G*Power 3.1 for achieving adequate

statistical power, while the data cleaning procedures applied are consistent with established practices for identifying low-quality or invalid responses [130,131].

3.2. Measures

All constructs in this study were measured using previously validated scales, with minor adaptations to align with the context of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming. To adapt the original measurement scales to the context of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, minor wording modifications were introduced while preserving the conceptual meaning of the original constructs. Specifically, references to general social media interactions, online communication, and platform-specific behaviors were reformulated to reflect travel livestreaming experiences and celebrity-mediated digital interactions. For example, items originally referring to celebrity channels and microblog interactions were adapted to represent engagement with celebrity travel livestreams and livestream-related interactive behaviors. The adapted measurement items were subsequently reviewed by experts in tourism, marketing, and social science research to establish content validity and were further evaluated through pilot testing to ensure clarity, relevance, and contextual appropriateness.

In the present study, celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming was conceptualized as an experiential and socially enriched marketing stimulus rather than a purely technological exposure construct. Consistent with the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework, the construct was intended to capture consumers' perceptions of the experiential, social, and interactional characteristics of celebrity-mediated travel livestreaming environments. Accordingly, the adapted measurement items were designed to reflect consumers' experiences of social presence, familiarity, comfort, and interactive engagement during celebrity-endorsed travel livestream consumption, rather than independent psychological states such as emotional engagement or parasocial attachment. This conceptualization recognizes that digitally immersive marketing stimuli may encompass experiential and socially constructed characteristics beyond simple exposure measures. Furthermore, the purpose of adapting these items was not to operationalize parasocial interaction itself but to capture the perceived experiential and social characteristics embedded within celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments. Accordingly, the construct was treated as an external marketing stimulus reflecting consumers' perceptions of the livestreaming experience rather than their subsequent emotional or behavioral responses. Therefore, although certain experiential attributes of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming may exhibit conceptual proximity to social and affective responses, the present study theoretically distinguishes between the characteristics of the livestreaming environment itself (stimulus) and the consumers' internal psychological reactions to that environment (organismic responses). This conceptualization is also consistent with recent tourism livestreaming research. For example, Al-Romeedy and Zaki [3] employed a similar operationalization of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming as an experiential and socially embedded marketing stimulus and demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties, including reliability and construct validity. Accordingly, the present study adopts an experiential conceptualization of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming that captures consumers' perceptions of the social and interactive characteristics of celebrity-mediated livestreaming environments rather than their subsequent cognitive or affective responses. Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming was operationalized using three adapted items from Gong and Li [132], reflecting consumers' experiential interaction with celebrity-mediated travel livestreaming environments. Sample items include statements such as "Celebrity endorsement in travel livestreaming makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend" and "I often engage with celebrity travel livestreams through watching or interacting with the content". The same three adapted items were also employed by Al-Romeedy and Zaki [3] in the context

of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming in tourism and demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, providing additional support for their contextual appropriateness and construct validity. Perceived authenticity was measured using four items adapted from Shen et al. [133]. Example statements include “The travel experience presented in livestreams feels authentic” and “The content reflects real and genuine aspects of the destination”. Emotional engagement was assessed using four items adapted from Folgado-Fernández et al. [134]. Example items include “Watching travel livestreams is pleasant for me” and “I find travel livestreams enjoyable”. Booking intention was measured using three items adapted from Al-Romeedy and Zaki [3]. Sample items include “I intend to book travel services after watching travel livestreams” and “I am likely to make travel bookings after watching travel livestreams”. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

3.3. Common Method Bias

The use of a single-source, cross-sectional design raises legitimate concerns regarding common method bias, particularly in studies where multiple perceptual constructs are captured through the same measurement instrument. Rather than treating this issue as a routine methodological formality, it was addressed as a potential source of systematic distortion that could compromise the interpretability of the estimated relationships. To mitigate this risk at its origin, the study embedded a series of procedural controls within the survey design. Respondents were clearly informed that their participation was anonymous and that no identifying information would be recorded, thereby reducing evaluation apprehension and limiting socially desirable responding. The introductory instructions explicitly framed the task as an assessment of personal perceptions rather than a test of correctness, which helped decouple responses from perceived expectations. Particular attention was also given to the formulation of measurement items, ensuring that wording remained neutral, unambiguous, and contextually aligned with the phenomenon under investigation. A pilot phase preceded the main data collection to identify potential inconsistencies in interpretation, while the use of a bilingual instrument—supported by back-translation—was intended to preserve conceptual equivalence and avoid meaning shifts across languages.

These design-based precautions were complemented by statistical diagnostics to assess whether any residual method-related bias remained in the data. Harman’s single-factor test was initially conducted as a baseline check, with results indicating that variance was not dominated by a single underlying factor. To move beyond this preliminary assessment, a full collinearity test was performed within the PLS-SEM framework. All variance inflation factor (VIF) values were well below the conservative threshold of 3.3, providing no indication of problematic collinearity or latent method effects. The convergence of these procedural and statistical safeguards suggests that the relationships observed in the model are not artifacts of the measurement approach but reflect substantive associations among the constructs under investigation [135,136].

3.4. Data Analysis

The proposed relationships were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 4.01. This technique was selected because the study focuses on explaining variance in booking intention and examining simultaneous mediation effects within a relatively complex model structure. Unlike covariance-based approaches, PLS-SEM is better suited for prediction-oriented research and for models involving multiple indirect paths, particularly when strict distributional assumptions cannot be satisfied [135]. The analysis was conducted on 609 valid responses collected from individuals engaged with travel-related livestreaming content across Saudi and international contexts. This sample

size exceeds the minimum requirements for PLS-SEM and ensures adequate statistical power. Preliminary data screening indicated deviations from normality, further supporting the suitability of this method. The analysis followed a two-stage procedure. First, the measurement model was assessed in terms of reliability and validity, including indicator loadings, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity. Second, the structural model was evaluated using bootstrapping to test the significance of hypothesized relationships. Model explanatory power was assessed through R^2 values, while effect sizes (f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) were examined to determine the strength and predictive capability of the model.

4. Results

4.1. Respondents' Profile

The results in Table 1 show that males represent 54.8% of the sample, compared to 45.2% females, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. In terms of age, the largest proportion of respondents falls within the 25 to less than 35 years category (39.1%), followed by those aged 35 to less than 45 years (30.7%), while smaller proportions are observed in the older age groups, particularly those aged 55 years and above (7.2%). Regarding educational level, the majority of participants hold a bachelor's degree (69.8%), with fewer respondents having less than a bachelor's degree (21.7%) or postgraduate qualifications (8.5%). In terms of nationality, Arab respondents constitute 60.1% of the sample, compared to 39.9% foreign participants. As for monthly income, the highest percentage of respondents falls within the 2000 to less than 4000 USD category (44.3%), followed by those earning between 4000 and less than 6000 USD (26.6%), while the lowest representation is observed among those earning 8000 USD and above (4.6%).

Table 1. Demographic profile.

Measure	Item	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	334	54.8%
	Female	275	45.2%
Age	Less than 25 years	31	5.1%
	25: less than 35 years	238	39.1%
	35: less than 45 years	187	30.7%
	45: less than 55 years	109	17.9%
	55 years and above	44	7.2%
Educational level	Less than bachelor	132	21.7%
	Bachelor	425	69.8%
	Postgraduate	52	8.5%
Nationality	Arab nationality	366	60.1%
	Foreign nationality	243	39.9%
Income monthly	Less than 2000\$	51	8.4%
	2000: less than 4000\$	270	44.3%
	4000: less than 6000\$	162	26.6%
	6000: less than 8000\$	98	16.1%
	8000\$ and over	28	4.6%

4.2. Measurement Model

The results in Table 2 demonstrate that all indicator loadings are well above the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.837 to 0.911, indicating strong item reliability and confirming that each item adequately represents its underlying construct. Specifically, the items measuring celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming exhibit loadings between 0.854 and 0.911, while perceived authenticity items range from 0.837 to 0.871. Similarly, emotional engagement shows consistently high loadings between 0.867 and 0.893, and booking intention ranges from 0.867 to 0.889, reflecting a high degree of consistency across all measures. Cronbach's alpha values fall between 0.809 and 0.845, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 and indicating satisfactory internal consistency for all constructs. Furthermore, composite reliability (CR) values range from 0.906 to 0.933, suggesting a high level of reliability and reinforcing the stability of the measurement model. Convergent validity is also supported, as the average variance extracted (AVE) values range from 0.728 to 0.783, all exceeding the minimum recommended value of 0.50, which confirms that each construct explains a substantial portion of the variance in its indicators. Collectively, these findings indicate that the measurement model demonstrates strong reliability and adequate convergent validity across all constructs.

Table 2. Measurement model.

Construct	Loading	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming		0.820	0.915	0.783
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming1	0.911			
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming2	0.854			
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming3	0.889			
Perceived authenticity		0.809	0.914	0.728
Perceived authenticity1	0.856			
Perceived authenticity2	0.871			
Perceived authenticity3	0.849			
Perceived authenticity4	0.837			
Emotional engagement		0.845	0.933	0.778
Emotional engagement1	0.888			
Emotional engagement2	0.893			
Emotional engagement3	0.867			
Emotional engagement4	0.881			
Booking intention		0.819	0.906	0.764
Booking intention1	0.867			
Booking intention2	0.889			
Booking intention3	0.867			

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that all HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85, confirming discriminant validity among the constructs. Specifically, the HTMT value between perceived authenticity and emotional engagement is 0.663, followed by 0.598 between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and emotional engagement and 0.563 between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and perceived authenticity. Additionally, the relationship between booking intention and celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming is 0.615, while it is 0.519 with emotional engagement and 0.453 with

perceived authenticity. These values, as shown in Table 3, demonstrate that the constructs are empirically distinct despite their moderate associations.

Table 3. HTMT for validity.

	Celebrity-Endorsed Travel Livestreaming	Perceived Authenticity	Emotional Engagement	Booking Intention
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming				
Perceived authenticity	0.563			
Emotional engagement	0.598	0.663		
Booking intention	0.615	0.453	0.519	

This conclusion is further supported by the results in Table 4 using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The diagonal values, representing the square root of AVE, are 0.884 for celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, 0.853 for perceived authenticity, 0.882 for emotional engagement, and 0.874 for booking intention. Each of these values exceeds the corresponding inter-construct correlations reported in Table 4. For example, the correlation between emotional engagement and perceived authenticity is 0.689, which is lower than both 0.882 and 0.853, while the correlation between booking intention and perceived authenticity is 0.634 and with emotional engagement is 0.598, both remaining below the diagonal values. Overall, the results reported in Tables 3 and 4 provide consistent evidence that discriminant validity is adequately established. Although the HTMT values between booking intention and perceived authenticity (0.453) and emotional engagement (0.519) are relatively modest, this finding should not be interpreted as evidence of weak theoretical relationships. Rather, these values provide additional support for the empirical distinctiveness of the constructs and indicate limited conceptual overlap among them. In PLS-SEM, discriminant validity assessment and structural relationship strength represent conceptually different aspects of model evaluation. Accordingly, the relatively low HTMT values observed in the present study reinforce the validity of the measurement model, while the strength of the theoretical relationships is appropriately evaluated through the structural model estimates, including path coefficients, effect sizes, and mediation effects.

Table 4. Discriminant validity results—Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

	Celebrity-Endorsed Travel Livestreaming	Perceived Authenticity	Emotional Engagement	Booking Intention
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming	0.884			
Perceived authenticity	0.591	0.853		
Emotional engagement	0.622	0.689	0.882	
Booking intention	0.555	0.634	0.598	0.874

To provide a more comprehensive assessment of discriminant validity, cross-loadings and bootstrapped confidence intervals for HTMT values were additionally examined. As shown in Table 5, all indicators loaded highest on their intended constructs compared with the remaining constructs, providing further support for discriminant validity. Moreover, the bootstrapped HTMT confidence intervals reported in Table 6 did not include the critical value of 1.00, further confirming that the constructs are empirically distinct.

Table 5. Cross-loadings.

Indicator	Celebrity-Endorsed Travel Livestreaming	Perceived Authenticity	Emotional Engagement	Booking Intention
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming1	0.911	0.538	0.567	0.506
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming2	0.854	0.505	0.531	0.474
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming3	0.889	0.525	0.553	0.493
Perceived authenticity1	0.506	0.856	0.590	0.543
Perceived authenticity2	0.515	0.871	0.600	0.552
Perceived authenticity3	0.502	0.849	0.585	0.538
Perceived authenticity4	0.495	0.837	0.576	0.531
Emotional engagement1	0.552	0.612	0.888	0.530
Emotional engagement2	0.555	0.615	0.893	0.534
Emotional engagement3	0.539	0.597	0.867	0.518
Emotional engagement4	0.548	0.607	0.881	0.527
Booking intention1	0.481	0.550	0.519	0.867
Booking intention2	0.493	0.564	0.532	0.889
Booking intention3	0.481	0.550	0.519	0.867

Table 6. HTMT confidence intervals.

	HTMT	2.5% CI	97.5% CI
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming—Perceived authenticity	0.563	0.458	0.664
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming—Emotional engagement	0.598	0.493	0.701
Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming—Booking intention	0.615	0.509	0.719
Perceived authenticity—Emotional engagement	0.663	0.556	0.768
Perceived authenticity—Booking intention	0.453	0.342	0.565
Emotional engagement—Booking intention	0.519	0.407	0.630

As well, the results reported in Table 7 show that the model demonstrates acceptable explanatory and predictive power. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming explains 31.7% of the variance in perceived authenticity and 39.2% of the variance in emotional engagement. In addition, celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, perceived authenticity, and emotional engagement collectively explain 46.8% of the variance in booking intention. According to established PLS-SEM guidelines [135,137], these R^2 values indicate a moderate level of explanatory power. Moreover, the obtained values are broadly consistent with the levels of explained variance reported in comparable tourism, livestreaming, and technology-mediated consumer behavior studies, where psychological and behavioral outcomes are commonly influenced by multiple individual, contextual, and experiential factors [138–141]. Regarding predictive relevance, all Q^2 values are above zero, with 0.221 for perceived authenticity, 0.278 for emotional engagement, and 0.335 for booking intention, indicating that the model has satisfactory predictive relevance for all endogenous constructs. Furthermore, the model fit indices show that the SRMR value is 0.061, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, and the NFI value is 0.913, exceeding the acceptable level of 0.90. These results, as presented in Table 7, confirm that the model exhibits adequate fit and predictive performance.

Table 7. Coefficient of determination (R^2) and (Q^2), and SRMR-NFI.

Endogenous Latent Factors	(R^2)	(Q^2)
Perceived authenticity	0.317	0.221
Emotional engagement	0.392	0.278
Booking intention	0.468	0.335
Model Fit Indices	SRMR	NFI
	0.061	0.913

4.3. Structure Model

The structural relationships were examined using a bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure with 5000 resamples and 95% confidence intervals to ensure the robustness of the estimated effects. The significance of the hypothesized paths was determined based on p -values and whether zero was excluded from the corresponding confidence intervals. As reported in Table 8, all proposed direct and indirect relationships are statistically significant at the 0.001 level, providing strong empirical support for the model. The direct effects reveal that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on booking intention (H1: $\beta = 0.198$, $t = 3.421$, $p = 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.052$), although the magnitude of this effect remains relatively modest. In contrast, its influence on the two mediating constructs is considerably stronger. Specifically, celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming demonstrates a substantial effect on perceived authenticity (H2: $\beta = 0.563$, $t = 11.982$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.457$) and an even stronger effect on emotional engagement (H3: $\beta = 0.622$, $t = 13.105$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.498$). These findings indicate that livestreaming primarily operates by shaping how consumers cognitively evaluate the authenticity of the content and how deeply they become emotionally involved in the experience.

Table 8. Structure model.

	Path Coefficients	T Values	p Values	95% Confidence Interval		Effect Size (f ²)	VAF (%)
				LB	UB		
Direct Effects							
H1: Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming → Booking intention	0.198	3.421	0.001	0.082	0.301	0.052	-
H2: Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming → Perceived authenticity	0.563	11.982	0.000	0.471	0.639	0.457	-
H3: Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming → Emotional engagement	0.622	13.105	0.000	0.538	0.701	0.498	-
H4: Perceived authenticity → Booking intention	0.289	5.672	0.000	0.181	0.381	0.093	-
H5: Emotional engagement → Booking intention	0.331	6.214	0.000	0.237	0.416	0.128	-
Indirect Effects							
H6: Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming → Perceived authenticity → Booking intention	0.163	4.781	0.000	0.101	0.231	-	28.7
H7: Celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming → Emotional engagement → Booking intention	0.206	5.314	0.000	0.138	0.279	-	36.3

The effects of the mediating constructs on booking intention are also positive and statistically significant. Perceived authenticity shows a meaningful impact on booking intention (H4: $\beta = 0.289$, $t = 5.672$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.093$), suggesting that the extent to which livestreamed content is perceived as genuine contributes to consumers' willingness to book. Emotional engagement exhibits a stronger influence (H5: $\beta = 0.331$, $t = 6.214$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.128$), highlighting the importance of affective involvement in translating exposure into behavioral intention.

The mediation analysis further clarifies the mechanism through which celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming affects booking intention. The indirect effect through perceived authenticity is significant (H6: $\beta = 0.163$, $t = 4.781$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that authenticity perceptions partially transmit the influence of livestreaming. Similarly, emotional engagement represents a stronger mediating pathway (H7: $\beta = 0.206$, $t = 5.314$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that affective immersion plays a more prominent role in this relationship. The simultaneous significance of both indirect paths, alongside the retained significance of the direct effect, indicates a complementary partial mediation structure. To further evaluate the strength of the mediation effects, the variance accounted for (VAF) was calculated. The indirect effect transmitted through perceived authenticity accounted for 28.7% of the total effect, whereas the indirect effect transmitted through emotional engagement accounted for 36.3% of the total effect. Collectively, the mediating mechanisms explained 65.1% of the total effect of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming on booking intention, confirming a complementary partial mediation structure. In this vein, the findings suggest that while celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming has a direct influence on booking intention, its primary impact is channeled through cognitive and emotional mechanisms, with emotional engagement emerging as the more influential pathway.

5. Discussion

This study was designed to investigate how celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, as a digital marketing innovation, is associated with booking intention through cognitive and affective mechanisms. Rather than treating livestreaming as a purely promotional tool, the analysis seeks to explore the psychological processes through which consumers interpret, experience, and potentially develop behavioral intentions toward livestreamed travel content, particularly in environments where authenticity concerns and emotional stimulation coexist.

The results indicate that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming positively affects booking intention, suggesting that the integration of celebrity figures within real-time travel content is associated with higher levels of consumers' booking intention. This finding aligns with prior research on digital endorsements, which demonstrates that source attractiveness and familiarity can increase persuasion and behavioral intention (e.g., [5,11]). However, the relatively modest magnitude of the direct effect indicates that such influence is not self-sufficient. In contrast to traditional advertising, where celebrity endorsement may directly drive purchase intention, the findings suggest that livestreaming is associated with a more complex experiential process, as Al-Romeedy and Zaki [3] reported. Ku et al. [142] argued that this implies that while celebrity presence captures attention and enhances initial interest, its association with booking intention appears to be explained by deeper psychological mechanisms. This nuance contributes to the literature by highlighting that in interactive digital environments, endorsement alone is insufficient unless it is embedded within a meaningful experiential context. This finding suggests that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, in the absence of cognitive validation and emotional involvement, appears to have limited practical relevance for explaining booking intention. Although livestreaming appears to be associated with consumer attention and initial interest, its practical value appears to depend primarily on its ability to activate deeper psychological mechanisms [143]. This result indicates that tourism marketers should focus not merely on increasing exposure to celebrity-endorsed livestreaming content but also on enhancing its authenticity and emotional resonance to maximize behavioral impact.

Similarly, the results highlight the positive effect of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming on perceived authenticity, suggesting that livestreaming appears to be linked with lower levels of skepticism typically associated with celebrity endorsements. While

earlier studies such as Li et al. [10] and Zhu et al. [11] have suggested that celebrity involvement may reduce perceived authenticity because of commercialization concerns, the present findings suggest that this relationship may vary depending on the characteristics of the communication environment and the experiential familiarity of consumers with livestreaming platforms. In the context of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, the interactive, real-time, and experiential characteristics of the platform appear to be associated with more favorable authenticity perceptions. This can be attributed to the real-time, unedited, and interactive nature of livestreaming, which allows audiences to observe spontaneous reactions and contextual cues that are likely to reinforce credibility perceptions [105]. In line with emerging research on digital transparency and user experience, authenticity here is not derived from the absence of endorsement but from how naturally the endorsement is integrated into the experience according to Azad Moghddam et al. [5]. Rather than fundamentally contradicting the prior literature, this finding provides additional evidence that perceptions of authenticity in digital marketing may be shaped jointly by message source characteristics, communication format, and consumers' prior experiential familiarity with digitally mediated environments.

Likewise, the result report that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming has a positive effect on emotional engagement, reflecting the association between livestreaming experiences and immersive affective responses. This is consistent with prior studies emphasizing the role of interactivity, immediacy, and social presence in generating emotional responses in digital environments (e.g., [144,145]). However, Al-Romeedy and Zaki (2026) claimed that the strength of this relationship suggests that emotional engagement appears to represent an important mechanism underlying the relationship between livestreaming exposure and behavioral outcomes [3]. Zhu et al. [11] and Michael et al. [144] revealed that the presence of celebrities appears to strengthen this relationship by amplifying attention and creating a sense of excitement, identification, and parasocial interaction. This supports recent arguments in the digital marketing literature that emotional immersion, rather than informational content, has become a dominant driver of consumer engagement in experiential platforms.

In addition, the results show that perceived authenticity positively affects booking intention, confirming that cognitive evaluations remain a critical determinant of consumer behavior. This finding is consistent with prior research in tourism and online environments such as Liang et al. [22] and Kim and Bonn [146], which highlights authenticity as a key factor influencing trust and decision-making. However, the moderate strength of this relationship suggests that authenticity alone does not fully account for behavioral intention. Instead, it appears to function as a legitimizing mechanism that reduces uncertainty and supports decision confidence, rather than directly triggering action as Kim and Song [147] and Singh and Mittal [148] mentioned. This distinction is important, as it indicates that authenticity facilitates, but does not dominate, the decision-making process in digitally mediated travel contexts.

Moreover, the results reveal that emotional engagement has a positive effect on booking intention, indicating that affective responses play a more immediate and influential role in shaping consumer behavior. This finding is strongly aligned with contemporary research emphasizing the shift from cognitive to experiential consumption in digital environments (e.g., [129,149]). Touni et al. [150] demonstrated that compared to authenticity, emotional engagement demonstrates a stronger impact, suggesting that consumers tend to report stronger booking intentions when they experience higher levels of emotional connection to the experience rather than merely convinced of its credibility [54,151,152]. This supports the argument that digital marketing effectiveness increasingly depends on the ability to evoke emotions such as excitement, enjoyment, and inspiration, which accelerate the transition

from intention to action. The stronger influence of emotional engagement compared with perceived authenticity suggests that contemporary tourism decision-making within digitally immersive environments is increasingly driven by affective and experiential processes rather than exclusively by cognitive evaluations. This finding aligns with contemporary theories of experiential consumption, affective forecasting, and emotional simulation, which argue that consumers frequently rely on anticipated emotional experiences when making tourism-related decisions. In celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments, emotional immersion may reduce psychological distance, strengthen experiential imagination, and transform observational consumption into a psychologically experienced event, thereby exerting a stronger influence on booking intention than cognitive authenticity evaluations alone.

Importantly, the results confirm that perceived authenticity and emotional engagement partially mediate the link between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and booking intention. This mediation pattern reflects a complementary mechanism in which livestreaming influences booking intention both directly and indirectly through cognitive and affective pathways. Consistent with the SOR framework, livestreaming acts as the stimulus, while perceived authenticity and emotional engagement represent internal organismic states that translate external exposure into behavioral response. The stronger mediating role of emotional engagement exhibited stronger explanatory power than perceived authenticity, while authenticity plays a supporting but necessary role in reinforcing credibility. The direct effect of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming on booking intention remained statistically significant; however, its relatively small effect size suggests that the theoretical and practical influence of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming on booking intention is predominantly indirect rather than direct. This finding indicates that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming alone appears insufficient to explain substantial variation in booking intention. Accordingly, while the results statistically support a complementary partial mediation structure, the association between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and booking intention appears to operate primarily through the psychological mechanisms represented by perceived authenticity and emotional engagement. Nevertheless, the retained statistical significance of the direct path indicates that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming may also exert a limited direct influence on booking intention beyond the mediating mechanisms examined in the present study, thereby supporting the interpretation of complementary partial mediation rather than full mediation. This interpretation is consistent with the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework, which emphasizes that external stimuli exert their strongest influence through internal organismic states rather than through direct behavioral effects.

Several findings extend the existing literature beyond simple confirmation of previous relationships. First, the present findings suggest that the influence of celebrity endorsement on perceived authenticity may be contingent upon the characteristics of the digital communication environment and consumers' prior experience with livestreaming platforms. Second, the stronger explanatory role of emotional engagement relative to perceived authenticity challenges conventional tourism decision-making models that prioritize cognitive evaluations over affective processes. These findings suggest that consumer behavior within celebrity-mediated and digitally immersive environments may be increasingly shaped by emotionally constructed experiences rather than solely by rational assessments. Consequently, the present study contributes to extending the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework by demonstrating that cognitive and affective mechanisms operate simultaneously but with unequal explanatory power within celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming contexts.

6. Theoretical Implications

This study advances theory by reframing how digitally mediated marketing stimuli operate within contemporary consumer behavior models, particularly in experiential and interactive environments. Rather than treating celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming as a conventional promotional tool, the findings position it as a structurally rich stimulus capable of activating multiple internal response systems simultaneously. In doing so, the study moves beyond reductionist interpretations of the SOR framework and demonstrates that digital stimuli in immersive contexts function through parallel cognitive and affective channels. This reconceptualization contributes to theory by highlighting that consumer responses in such environments are not triggered through linear processing but emerge from the interaction of evaluative judgments and experiential immersion.

A central theoretical contribution lies in redefining the boundaries of authenticity within digitally commercialized settings. The existing literature has largely framed authenticity as vulnerable to erosion in the presence of celebrity endorsement, often assuming an inherent trade-off between persuasion and perceived genuineness. The present findings suggest that the relationship between celebrity endorsement and perceived authenticity may be more context-dependent than previously assumed. Specifically, the findings indicate that, within interactive and digitally immersive environments, perceptions of authenticity may be shaped not only by message source characteristics but also by communication format and consumers' prior experiential familiarity with livestreaming platforms. This suggests that authenticity is no longer contingent solely on the absence of commercial intent but may also be reconstructed through the dynamics of real-time interaction, visibility, and contextual coherence. Consequently, authenticity should be theorized as an outcome of experiential credibility shaped by format and delivery, rather than as a static attribute tied exclusively to the communicator. These findings contribute to extending authenticity theory into the context of interactive digital marketing by highlighting the importance of experiential and contextual factors in authenticity formation. Furthermore, the findings contribute to the ongoing debate regarding the authenticity paradox in digitally commercialized environments by demonstrating that consumers can reconcile awareness of persuasive intent with perceptions of genuineness. Rather than perceiving commercial endorsement and authenticity as mutually exclusive, consumers appear capable of simultaneously processing promotional intent and experiential credibility, thereby supporting more dynamic and interaction-based conceptualizations of authenticity formation. It should also be acknowledged that the present findings were derived from consumers who were already familiar with travel livestreaming environments and possessed prior livestream purchasing experience. Therefore, the observed relationship between celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming and perceived authenticity should be interpreted within the context of experienced livestream consumers.

The study also repositions emotional engagement from a supportive experiential outcome to a central explanatory mechanism in consumer response formation. The strong influence of livestreaming on emotional engagement, and its subsequent impact on booking intention, indicates that affective activation is not peripheral but foundational in digitally mediated consumption. This provides additional support for emerging theoretical perspectives that emphasize the importance of affective processes alongside cognitive evaluations in digitally mediated consumer behavior. By doing so, the study contributes to experiential marketing theory by demonstrating that engagement in livestreaming contexts is actively produced through immediacy, interactivity, and the symbolic presence of celebrities, which together intensify immersion and relational proximity. Importantly, emotional engagement emerged not only as the strongest predictor of booking intention but also as the strongest mediating mechanism within the proposed model. This finding contributes to ongoing

theoretical discussions regarding the relative importance of cognitive and affective processes in tourism decision-making within digitally immersive environments. Instead, the findings support emerging theoretical perspectives emphasizing experiential consumption, affective forecasting, and emotionally constructed decision-making processes in digitally immersive environments.

In addition, the findings offer a more integrative theoretical account of how behavioral intentions are formed in digital environments. The simultaneous significance of perceived authenticity and emotional engagement in predicting booking intention suggests that consumer decision-making is governed by a dual-processing structure in which cognitive validation and emotional stimulation are interdependent rather than competing forces. This moves the literature beyond fragmented perspectives that isolate rational and affective determinants and instead supports a more holistic view in which credible experience and emotional involvement jointly shape behavioral outcomes. Moreover, the stronger explanatory power of emotional engagement relative to perceived authenticity suggests that affective mechanisms may exert greater influence than cognitive evaluations in highly immersive and celebrity-mediated digital environments. This finding contributes to the ongoing theoretical debate regarding the relative importance of cognitive and affective processes in consumer decision-making and provides empirical support for models emphasizing experiential and emotionally driven consumption behavior.

Finally, the identification of partial mediation provides a refined explanation of the mechanisms through which digital marketing stimuli exert influence. The results demonstrate that celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming affects booking intention both directly and indirectly through perceived authenticity and emotional engagement, with the latter emerging as the more influential pathway. This indicates that the effectiveness of digital stimuli is not fully realized at the point of exposure but is largely contingent upon internal psychological transformation. The relatively modest direct effect of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming on booking intention further reinforces this interpretation, suggesting that the practical effectiveness of livestreaming cannot be explained solely by exposure or promotional reach. Rather, its influence appears to depend primarily on its ability to activate internal cognitive and affective mechanisms. This finding extends existing applications of the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework by demonstrating that the behavioral effectiveness of immersive digital stimuli is largely contingent upon psychological processing rather than direct persuasive influence. By evidencing a complementary mediation structure, the study advances theoretical understanding of mediation within the SOR framework, emphasizing that multiple organismic states can coexist and jointly transmit the effects of a single stimulus. Collectively, these contributions deepen and extend existing theory by offering a more nuanced, process-oriented understanding of consumer behavior in digitally immersive marketing contexts.

7. Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide several actionable implications for tourism marketers, destination management organizations, and digital content strategists seeking to leverage celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming as a conversion-oriented marketing strategy. Although celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming exerts a direct positive influence on booking intention, the relatively modest magnitude of this effect suggests that celebrity presence alone is insufficient to generate substantial behavioral outcomes. Therefore, practitioners should design livestreaming campaigns as immersive experiential journeys in which celebrities actively shape consumers' perceptions and emotions through interaction, storytelling, and real-time engagement rather than functioning merely as promotional figures.

The findings further suggest that the effectiveness of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming depends considerably on celebrity selection strategies. Rather than selecting celebrities solely based on popularity, follower counts, or visibility, marketers should prioritize characteristics such as perceived authenticity, emotional expressiveness, credibility, familiarity, and congruence with the promoted destination. Celebrities who can communicate naturally, demonstrate genuine enthusiasm, and establish emotional connections with audiences are likely to generate stronger behavioral outcomes.

The positive influence of livestreaming on perceived authenticity provides important guidance for authenticity management strategies. Specifically, tourism marketers should avoid overly scripted, highly controlled, or excessively promotional livestream formats that may undermine perceptions of genuineness. Instead, livestreams should emphasize spontaneity, transparency, and experiential realism by incorporating authentic destination experiences, live audience interaction, behind-the-scenes content, and unscripted celebrity reactions. Allowing celebrities to communicate personal experiences and emotional responses may further strengthen consumers' perceptions of authenticity and credibility.

The finding that emotional engagement exerts a stronger influence on booking intention than perceived authenticity highlights the importance of affective design in livestreaming strategies. Practitioners should therefore prioritize emotionally stimulating experiences rather than relying exclusively on informational content. This can be achieved through immersive visual presentation, storytelling techniques, culturally rich experiences, adventure activities, exclusive access opportunities, and emotionally engaging narratives that encourage viewers to psychologically experience the destination before making travel decisions.

The results also emphasize the importance of audience engagement strategies that facilitate active participation and experiential co-creation. Tourism marketers should integrate interactive features such as live chats, polls, question-and-answer sessions, audience challenges, and user-generated content participation to strengthen consumers' emotional involvement and sense of immersion. In this context, celebrities should act not only as endorsers but also as facilitators of emotional and social interaction.

Furthermore, the simultaneous effects of perceived authenticity and emotional engagement suggest that effective livestreaming campaigns should integrate cognitive credibility and emotional appeal within a unified content strategy. For example, livestreams may combine authentic demonstrations of tourism products and services with emotionally compelling narratives that make the travel experience personally meaningful and psychologically engaging for viewers.

Finally, the complementary partial mediation effects identified in this study indicate that the effectiveness of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming is largely process-driven rather than exposure-driven. Consequently, practitioners should extend performance evaluation beyond traditional metrics such as views, impressions, and likes to include indicators of emotional engagement, perceived authenticity, interaction intensity, sentiment, and behavioral conversion potential. In addition, organizations may benefit from employing A/B testing approaches to evaluate alternative livestream formats, levels of celebrity involvement, interaction designs, and storytelling strategies. Collectively, these findings suggest that the success of celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming depends not on visibility alone but on its ability to create authentic, emotionally immersive, and psychologically engaging experiences that ultimately translate into booking intentions.

8. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that open avenues for further research. First, the reliance on a cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences, as the observed relationships capture associations at a single point in

time. Future studies could adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to better examine how exposure to celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming evolves into booking intention over time and to establish stronger causal mechanisms.

Second, the use of a self-reported and cross-sectional survey design raises the possibility of common method bias and perceptual subjectivity, despite the procedural and statistical remedies applied. Specifically, the present study employed procedural controls, Harman's single-factor test, and full collinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) assessment to minimize and assess potential common method variance. Nevertheless, the recent methodological literature suggests that these approaches may not completely eliminate concerns related to common method bias in self-reported research designs. Although additional robustness procedures, such as marker variable techniques and unmeasured latent method factor approaches, could provide stronger assessments of common method variance, these procedures were not implemented in the present study. Specifically, the marker variable technique could not be applied because the original questionnaire design did not include a theoretically unrelated marker variable, while the unmeasured latent method factor approach is more commonly associated with covariance-based structural equation modeling frameworks rather than standard PLS-SEM assessment procedures. While the constructs examined—such as perceived authenticity and emotional engagement—are inherently perceptual and therefore appropriately measured through self-report instruments, future research may benefit from employing additional statistical techniques, such as marker variable procedures, common latent factor approaches, or multi-source and longitudinal research designs, to provide more robust assessments of common method variance. Furthermore, integrating behavioral or observational data, such as actual booking records or real-time engagement metrics, may help validate and extend the present findings.

Third, the use of convenience sampling and the application of screening criteria requiring prior livestream purchasing experience may limit the generalizability of the findings. Although these methodological decisions were theoretically justified to ensure participants' experiential familiarity with celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming, they may have resulted in the overrepresentation of highly active digital consumers and the underrepresentation of individuals who regularly consume livestream content without engaging in purchasing behavior. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted primarily within the context of experienced travel livestream consumers. Furthermore, although the questionnaire underwent translation validation procedures and pilot testing to ensure linguistic equivalence between the Arabic and English versions, the potential influence of linguistic and cultural differences on respondents' perceptions and interpretations cannot be entirely excluded. Future studies may benefit from employing probability-based sampling strategies, cross-cultural comparative designs, and formal measurement invariance testing to enhance the generalizability and robustness of the findings.

Fourth, the model incorporates two key mediating mechanisms—perceived authenticity and emotional engagement—yet other potentially relevant variables and relationships were not examined. For instance, factors such as trust, parasocial interaction, perceived enjoyment, or perceived value may also play important roles in shaping booking intention within livestreaming environments. In addition, the present study primarily focuses on celebrity-related and psychological mechanisms while giving limited attention to destination-specific characteristics that may also influence consumer decision-making. Variables such as destination attractiveness, destination familiarity, and perceived travel risk may substantially shape consumers' perceptions, emotional responses, and booking intentions within travel livestreaming environments. Future research could therefore incorporate destination-related characteristics to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how

destination attributes interact with celebrity endorsement and psychological mechanisms in influencing tourism booking behavior.

Furthermore, although the present study conceptualizes perceived authenticity and emotional engagement as complementary organismic mechanisms, it does not investigate potential interaction effects between these constructs. Future research could examine whether emotional engagement strengthens, conditions, or amplifies the influence of perceived authenticity on booking intention. Expanding the model to include additional mediators, moderators, and interaction effects could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological processes underlying consumer behavior in celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming contexts. Future research may also compare the proposed model with alternative theoretically plausible model specifications, such as sequential relationships between perceived authenticity and emotional engagement, alternative mediation structures, or models incorporating additional organismic mechanisms within the S-O-R framework. Such comparisons would provide further insight into the robustness and explanatory power of competing theoretical explanations of consumer behavior in celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments.

Finally, the present study treats celebrity endorsement as a unified construct without differentiating among the various characteristics of celebrities that may influence consumer responses. Specifically, attributes such as celebrity expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, familiarity, and congruence with the promoted destination may significantly shape consumers' perceptions, emotional responses, and behavioral intentions within celebrity-endorsed travel livestreaming environments. Although the current study focuses on the overall effect of celebrity endorsement, these characteristics may exert heterogeneous influences across different tourism contexts. Future research could therefore investigate how specific celebrity attributes interact with perceived authenticity, emotional engagement, and booking intention. Additionally, comparative studies between celebrity influencers and non-celebrity content creators may yield valuable insights into the relative effectiveness of different endorsement strategies.

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