

Narrative Transportation in the Social Media Age: Enhancing Employer Brand Through Instagram Stories

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Abstract

Drawing upon transportation theory, this study explores the narrative persuasion of user-generated content in shaping perceived employer brands. Specifically, it examines how Instagram Stories influence viewers' perceptions and intentions regarding employer brands. An experiment was conducted to test the mediating role of transportation mechanisms: (1) affective response (measured as emotional response), (2) cognitive response (measured as informativeness), and (3) self-referencing in the relationship between Instagram Stories characteristics (content source and valence) and employer brand outcomes (credibility perception, organisational attractiveness perception and positive word-of-mouth intention). A between-subject experiment with 281 participants revealed that self-referencing and informativeness serve as stronger mediators when content originates from sources beyond the organisation's control. Additionally, company-controlled content demonstrates limited effectiveness in enhancing employer brand perceptions and intentions. This study advances understanding of the role of user-generated content in employer branding and social media contexts, underscoring the persuasive power of "new media" narratives and storytelling in shaping employer brands.

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Introduction

The effects of compelling stories on social media goes beyond entertainment and enjoyment. Information shared in the form of narratives or stories has the potential to enhance message persuasiveness (Busselle and Bilandzic, 2009; Escalas, 2007). Research suggests that narratives encourage the cognitive construction of hypothetical scenarios with the viewer as the main character (Taylor and Schneider, 1989), resulting in changes in attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs (Escalas, 2004). This phenomenon, known as narrative transportation, is underpinned by transportation theory which posits that by becoming immersed in a story, viewers are transported into a narrative world (Gerrig, 1993; Green and Brook, 2000). While narrative transportation has been widely explored in public health messaging and marketing communication (Chen, Taylor, and Bell, 2024; Dunlop *et al.*, 2010), its application within employer branding research, especially in the context of social media, remains limited. Given the growing reliance on user-generated content across platforms like Instagram, there is a timely opportunity to investigate whether such mainstream communication styles can effectively support organisations to stand out as preferred employers (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Davies, 2008; Ewing *et al.*, 2002).

Building on the widespread sharing and viewing of user-generated content, this study examines how the narrative format of sharing personal work experiences via Instagram Stories (InstaStories) may enhance viewers' perceptions of the featured organisation's employer brand. InstaStories is a feature for sharing (and viewing) of "everyday moments through photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours" (Instagram, 2020). Notably, Instagram reports that more than 500 million users interact daily through InstaStories, underscoring the platform's potential as a strategic communication channel for employer branding. InstaStories allow users to share everyday moments through interactive features like text, music, stickers, filters, and GIFs. These are elements that could potentially enhance narrative transportation for viewers (Green, Brook, and Kauffman, 2004). An initial qualitative research study on employee generated work-related content across three social media platforms (i.e. Instagram, LinkedIn and Glassdoor) by the authors suggests that participants have a high propensity to share daily moments and snippets (both positive and negative) about their work experiences, workplaces and employers via InstaStories. Interestingly, the authors found that participants closely considered both the source of the narrative and the overall valence (positive or negative tone) when evaluating stories about work, workplaces, and employers.

While social media stories are widely used in employer branding, little is known about how InstaStories shared by individuals about their work experience, workplace and employer shape audience perceptions of the featured organisation. This study investigates how such stories influence viewers' attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs through the mechanism of narrative transportation. Findings will provide valuable insights into how organizations can leverage user-generated content on social media platforms, such as Instagram, to enhance employer brand perceptions. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Examine the impact of InstaStories source and valence on employer brand outcomes.
2. Analyse the serial mediation of narrative transportation, which operates through parallel psychological influences (affective response, cognitive response, and self-referencing) to explain the relationship between InstaStories source, valence, and employer brand outcomes.

3. Investigate the moderating role of source in the mediation model, determining how different sources (close friend, stranger, employer) influence the extent to which transportation shapes employer brand outcomes.

Literature Review

User-generated content and employer branding

A strong employer brand, which allows an organisation to differentiate itself from its competitors as a desirable employer (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Davies, 2008), is pivotal in attracting the most talented candidates and enhancing overall organisational performance (Kele and Cassell, 2023; Piehler *et al.*, 2016). Although employees' word-of-mouth have been found to shape employer's brand (Cervellon and Lirio, 2016), interestingly, much of the existing research examines the effects of negative user-generated content on employer review sites to understand employer branding (Kollitz *et al.*, 2022; Könsgen *et al.*, 2018; Melián-González and Bulchand-Gidumal, 2016). While understanding the lasting impact of negative user-generated content is crucial (Van Hoyer and Lievens, 2005; Yu, Goh, and Kawasaki, 2022), it is equally important for employers to recognise the powerful role of positive content in shaping their brand (Dineen *et al.*, 2019). Positive user-generated content, particularly from employees, is an untapped resource for strengthening employer brands in the era of social media (Dabirian, Kietzmann, and Diba, 2017). As digital natives, the current generation of workforce practise less separation between their professional and personal lives (Cervellon and Lirio, 2016), prompting them to be more candid and nonchalant about their sharings and thoughts on social media. There is a need to obtain a deeper understanding of what types and how user-generated content may foster favourable viewer employer brand perceptions, allowing employers to potentially leverage employee-generated content to strengthen their employer brand.

Therefore, user-generated content in this study refers to positive or negative information about a work experience, workplace and employer shared via social media by prospective, current, or former employees, beyond the employer's direct control (Kollitz *et al.*, 2022; Yu *et al.*, 2022). Employer brand literature suggests that a content viewer's perception of user-generated content depends highly on the extent to which the content generator is outside the direct control of the employer, and whether the content viewer is aware of the fact that the employer is strategically using social media to enhance its employer brand (Dineen *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, social media literature demonstrates that content valence (positive vs negative) influences how viewers' relate and engage with the content. For example, positive veganism messages are perceived as more informative than negative ones (Phua, Jin and Kim, 2020), but negative employer reviews have longer-lasting effects on job seekers than positive ones (Van Hoyer and Lievens, 2009). Currently, there is limited understanding of how positive work-related content (e.g. conveying work-life balance, employer care, or employee excitement) and negative content work-related content (e.g. highlighting stress, overwork, or employee disappointment) shape employer brand outcomes. Hence, extending on current employer branding and social media research, this study seeks to examine how InstaStories source (i.e. close friend, stranger, and employer) and valence (i.e. positive vs negative) influence viewers' employer brand perception and intention.

Moving beyond traditional studies of viewers' organisational pursuit behaviour and application intentions (Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar, 2002), this study examines employer brand perceptions and intentions through three constructs: (i) credibility perception, which is

defined by the trust viewers place in online content and its source, believing them to be true, (ii) organisational attractiveness perception, which is defined by organisations' images as favourable or unfavourable employers, and (iii) positive word-of-mouth (WOM) intention, which is defined by viewers' willingness to share positive sentiments or thoughts about the featured organisation to their social networks. The evolving social media landscape, as well as, the diverse online information sources continue to alter the notion of credibility, eroding the traditional authority of company controlled messages (Metzger, Flanagin, and Medders, 2010). This evolving phenomenon makes credibility perception a highly relevant employer brand outcome in the social media context. Meanwhile, organisational attractiveness perception is considered to be a 'surface brand association', reflecting a company's general attractiveness as an employer which serves as a cue for low-effort comparison (Collins and Kanar, 2013). Given the ease of resharing and disseminating online content on social media, examining viewers' WOM intention as an employer brand outcome provides valuable insights into how organisations can manage their image.

Transportation

Narrative transportation, a concept first introduced by Gerrig (1993), emerged from cognitive psychology to explore readers' experiences with novels and literature. Gerrig (1993) defines narrative transportation as "a state of detachment from the world of origin that the traveler (story receiver) experiences because of his or her engrossment in the story". In 2000, Green and Brock expanded this concept to encompass other media forms, such as movies and video games, demonstrating that individuals experiencing narrative transportation are more susceptible to persuasive effects, a phenomenon referred to as narrative persuasion. Experiencing these persuasive effects, transported individuals forgo scrutiny and careful evaluation of arguments. Instead their thoughts and attention are focused on the events occurring in the narrative (Tal-Or and Cohen, 2010). A review of the literature highlights the diverse mechanisms of narrative transportation, including affective responses, cognitive responses, and self-referencing. All of which are key in influencing viewers' beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural intentions (Escalas, 2004; Yim, Kim, and Lee, 2021).

While transportation theory has been widely studied in fields such as media enjoyment (Green and Brock, 2000; Green, Brook, and Kauffman, 2004), persuasive health communication (de Graaf, 2014; Mittenentzwei *et al.*, 2023), consumer marketing strategies (Chen, Taylor, and Bell, 2024; Chen and Yao, 2021; Escalas, 2007) and tourism marketing (Le, Scott, and Lohmann, 2019), its application in communicative content along employer branding strategies remains underexplored. Given current scholarly focus on the roles of user-generated content in employer brand studies (Roumpi *et al.*, 2020; Tanwar and Kumar, 2019), further research on how transportation mechanisms (e.g. affective and cognitive responses, and self-referencing) foster employer brand perceptions and intentions (Collins and Martinez-Moreno, 2022; Keeling *et al.*, 2013) would provide significant practical value for organisations. Hence, this research study could offer useful insights into the persuasiveness of "new media" narratives compared to traditional media forms (Green, Brook, and Kauffman, 2004), enabling the development of more effective employer branding strategies and practices. The present study also presents an opportunity to examine if content source (Jin and Ryu, 2020) and valence (Kanar, Collins and Bell, 2010; Yu, Goh, and Kawasaki, 2022) have varying effects on employer branding outcomes in the context of work-related InstaStories.

As a platform intended to enable users to share their everyday life with friends through a series of pictures and/or videos (Chen, 2018), surveillance motivation has been identified as one of the most important gratifications for using Instagram (Sheldon and Bryant, 2016).

More specifically, the daily sharing (and viewing) of mundane work routines, innermost feelings and personal workplace encounters via InstaStories (Kim, 2022), which mimics the act of storytelling, makes InstaStories highly suitable for this study on narrative transportation and persuasion.

Affective responses, cognitive responses and self-referencing

Affective and cognitive responses are two primary, but distinct constructs which have been found to mediate the relationship between narrative messages and attitudes (van Laer *et al.*, 2014). While affective responses refer to expression of feelings or emotions, cognitive responses refer to the expression of thoughts. Existing narrative transportation research has shown that messages or stories in a narrative format can more effectively stimulate positive feelings, which in turn leads to the simulation of positive scenarios in viewers' minds (Escalas, 2004). This positive affective response generated through narrative transportation subsequently leads to favourable beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural intentions (Yim, Kim, and Lee, 2021). Moreover, narrative transportation has been found to reduce cognitive resistance by diminishing both the frequency and effectiveness of counterarguing or logical scrutiny of messages or stories (Green and Brock, 2000; van Laer *et al.*, 2014). In doing so, viewers' story-consistent beliefs, attitudes and behavioural intentions are enhanced (Dal Cin, Zanna and Fong, 2004). Findings from Escalas' (2004) experiment examining the effects of persuasive narratives in a print advertising context confirmed that stimulated affective and cognitive responses influence ad attitudes and brand evaluations. A similar study by Dunlop *et al.* (2010) focusing on persuasive health mass media messages also showed that both the affective and cognitive pathways of persuasion led to more effective health communication campaigns. Building on these findings, examining the impact of narrative transportation through affective and cognitive pathways of persuasion, particularly in the context of user-generated content and social media, would be meaningful for organisations seeking to strengthen their employer brand or even, enhance engagement with viewers.

Self-referencing is another cognitive psychology concept that has been found to mediate the relationship between narrative messages, and beliefs and attitudes (Burnkrant and Unnava 1995). Self-referencing occurs when individuals compare incoming information with self-relevant information stored in memory to aid their understanding (Debevec and Romeo 1992). In addition to enhancing learning and recall of information, self-referencing has been found to affect persuasion by prompting viewers to compare incoming information with their existing knowledge and experiences (Burnkrant and Unnava 1995; Escalas, 2007). More importantly, feelings of transportation have been associated with an increase in self-referencing (Dunlop *et al.*, 2010). Self-referencing has also been found to enhance persuasive effects in the contexts of health communication (de Graaf, 2014; Dunlop *et al.*, 2010) and consumer advertising (Escalas, 2004; Yim, Kim, and Lee, 2021) by influencing readers' and viewers' beliefs and attitudes. For instance, Burnkrant and Unnava (1995), and Yim, Kim, and Lee (2021) both found that ads which reminded viewers of their own prior experiences with the product prompted viewers to engage in more self-referencing. In doing so, viewers as consumers are able to construct mental simulations about the product in the ad, leading to greater purchase intention.

Hypotheses Development

This study aims to examine, using experimental design, how specific InstaStories characteristics (i.e. source and valence) influence viewers' employer brand perceptions and intentions through three key transportation mechanisms: affective responses and cognitive responses, and self-referencing. Given the prevalent practice of routinely sharing of both

professional and personal life moments (Cervellon and Lirio, 2016) on social media, it is worthwhile to examine whether such frequent and sequential sharing of one's work experience, workplace and employer may have an influence viewers' perception and intention through narrative persuasion. As suggested by Green, Brook, and Kauffman (2004), a key element of an enjoyable, transportative media experience is in its ability to take viewers away from their mundane reality and into the generators' story world. Bainotti *et al.* (2021) also found that the notion of ephemerality fosters content sharing, allowing generators to better engage with other users through authentic, exciting, real time digital content. Designed to "bring your stories to life" by "capturing the everyday, highlighting the special moments, or expressing yourself" through content which "disappear after 24 hours" (Instagram, 2020), it is expected that InstaStories plays a key role in shaping employer brand perception and intention through narrative persuasion.

Research on the role of social media in recruitment and job searchers indicates that content created outside an employer's direct control is often viewed by prospective employees as more credible and less biased than employer-generated content (Van Hove and Lievens, 2007; Yu, Goh, and Kawasaki, 2022). This perception is reinforced by scepticism toward employers who may exaggerate claims and withhold accurate information about their organisation (Collins and Martinez-Moreno, 2022). Consequently, user-generated content by current and former employees, which are beyond a company's immediate influence, tends to have a greater impact on shaping employer branding perception (Cervellon and Lirio, 2017; Dineen *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, existing social relationships and closeness with content sources have been found to influence recipients' credibility perception as well as attitudinal or behavioural intentions (Taillon *et al.*, 2020). Sharings from close or familiar sources enhance viewers' perceptions of the source's expertise, trustworthiness, and motivation for sharing, all of which collectively strengthen the perceived credibility of information (Keeling *et al.*, 2013). Thus, it is hypothesised that:

H1(a): InstaStories source will influence credibility perception, with content from a closer friend leading to higher credibility than a stranger or employer.

H1(b): InstaStories source will influence organisational attractiveness perception, with content from a closer friend leading to higher credibility than a stranger or employer.

H1(c): InstaStories source will influence positive word-of-mouth intention, with content from a closer friend leading to higher credibility than a stranger or employer.

Current and former employees are an important informal source of difficult-to-obtain information about the job and workplace. That being said, these sources are beyond the direct control of the organisation and capable of undermining (or reinforcing) company controlled messages through negative and positive user-generated content, respectively (Keeling *et al.*, 2013; Van Hove and Lievens 2005). Given the advancement of social media and proliferation of user-generated content, there is an opportunity to examine the interaction of content valence and content source on employer brand outcomes. It is posited that the impact of content valence on employer brand perception and intention is stronger when the information is from close or familiar sources (close friends), compared with less familiar sources (stranger or employer). Refer to Figure 2 for the conceptual model.

H2(a): InstaStories source will moderate the effect of valence on credibility perception, such that the effect is strongest for a close friend

H2(b): InstaStories source will moderate the effect of valence on organisational attractiveness perception, such that the effect is strongest for a close friend

H2(c): InstaStories source will moderate the effect of valence on positive word-of-mouth intention, such that the effect is strongest for a close friend.

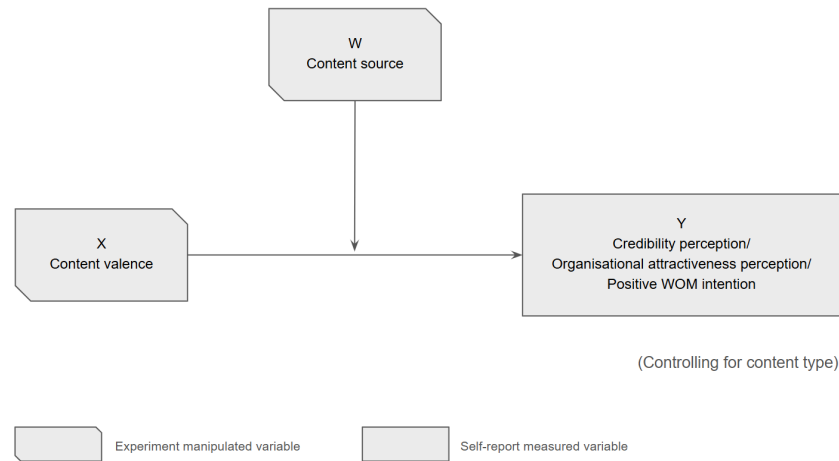


Figure 1: Simple moderation model using path analysis

Drawing on transportation theory, it is proposed that the consecutive sharing of virtual narratives of one's work experiences, workplace, and employer through InstaStories may engage viewers, ultimately resulting in a sense of transportation. Given the social affordance of Instagram, where users primary intent is to provide friends and peers both personal and professional life updates (Vázquez-Herrero, Direito-Rebollal, and López-García, 2019), the viewing of these daily InstaStories resembles the viewing of life stories with the content generator as the main character. The ephemeral nature of InstaStories (which disappears after 24 hours) creates a sense of time pressure for viewers, encouraging persistent and frequent viewing of and engagement with such content.

Based on existing transportation literature, narrative persuasion occurs through three mechanisms: affective responses, cognitive responses, and self-referencing. Refer to Figure 1 for the conceptual model. InstaStories about one's personal work experiences, workplace, and employer may evoke feelings in viewers, distracting viewers' attention away from any analytical assessment of the InstaStories content and featured employer (Escalas, 2007; Green and Brock, 2000). According to Green, Brook, and Kauffman (2004), transportation relies on viewers' natural tendency to empathise and relate to story characters (in this case InstaStories generators) as a natural way to understand what others are experiencing. That is to say when viewers engage in narrative self-referencing, memories of their own experiences and personal thoughts are triggered (de Graaf, 2014) as viewers empathise with InstaStories generators (Raney, 2003). Ultimately, self-referencing triggers narrative persuasion, enhancing viewers' story-consistent beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural intentions.

In this study, as an outcome of transportation, it is proposed that viewers become less critical about trustworthiness, have a general positive affect toward the featured organisation and have higher tendencies to speak positively about the featured organisation (Aiman-Smith, 2001; Mittenentzwei *et al.*, 2023; Wang and Tang, 2021). Refer to Figure 2 for the conceptual model.

H3(a): The effect of InstaStories characteristics (source and valence) on credibility perception will be serially mediated by transportation, followed by parallel mediation through (i) affective response, (ii) cognitive response, and (iii) self-referencing;

H3(b): The effect of InstaStories characteristics (source and valence) on organisational attractiveness perception will be serially mediated by transportation, followed by parallel mediation through (i) affective response, (ii) cognitive response, and (iii) self-referencing;

H3(c): The effect of InstaStories characteristics (source and valence) on positive word-of-mouth intention will be serially mediated by transportation, followed by parallel mediation through (i) affective response, (ii) cognitive response, and (iii) self-referencing.

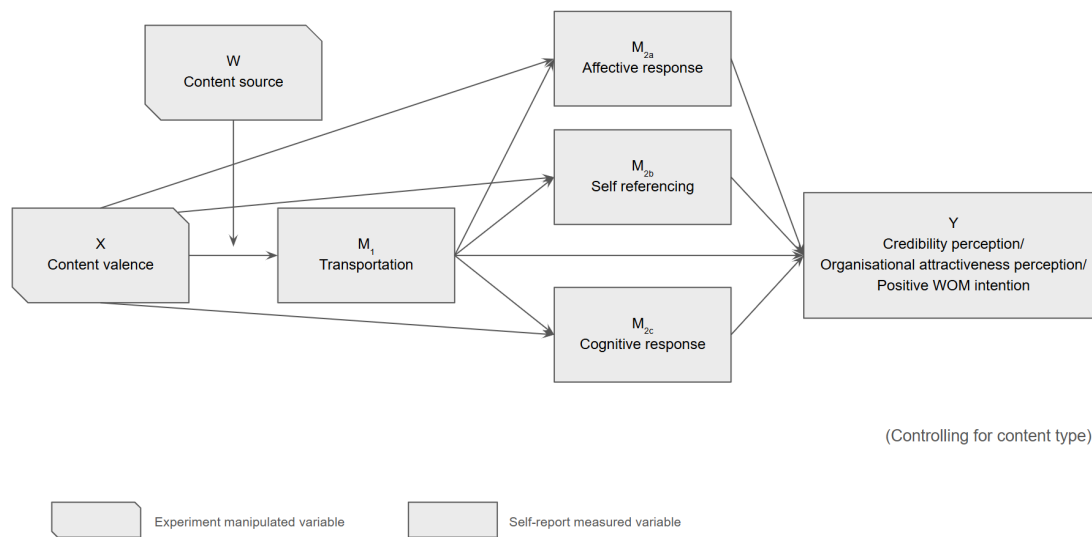


Figure 2: Moderated mediation model using path analysis

Method

Study design and participants

This study employs a 2 (source: close friend, stranger) x 2 (valence: positive vs negative) + 1 (source: employer; valence: positive) between-subjects experimental survey design. Our experiment deliberately excludes the condition in which employers generate or share negative content via InstaStories, as this scenario is unlikely to occur in reality. That said, understanding how the three sources (i.e. close friend, stranger, employer) of positive content influences viewers' perceptions and intentions provides valuable insights into how well an organisation's messages are received in comparison to user-generated content beyond the organisation's control. A deeper understanding of these dynamics can help organisations refine their communication strategies to enhance audience trust and engagement in digital environments.

Instagram user participants were recruited by Cint, a research panel provider the authors engaged to access a research panel and to manage the respondents' compensation. There were several inclusion criteria for this study. Firstly, participants had to be Malaysians and at least 18 years of age. Second, participants must generate and/or view content on Instagram more than once a week. Third, participants had to complete the survey and successfully answer the manipulation check questions. In the end, a total of 281 participants were recruited.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 73 with an average age of 34 ($SD = 10.97$). Some 56% of the participants were female ($n = 157$). In terms of employment status, the majority of them are either 'employed and not currently looking for work' (38%, $n = 107$) or 'employed but actively looking for work' (32%, $n = 92$).

Procedure and stimuli

The experimental survey was conducted using Qualtrics. After answering basic demographic questions, participants were randomly assigned to view one of five InstaStories conditions (i.e. Close Friend/Positive, Close Friend/Negative, Stranger/Positive, Stranger/Negative, or Employer/Positive). Each condition had four InstaStories content as experimental stimuli. Prior to viewing the stimuli, participants were provided with a short description about the four InstaStories they were about to view (see Appendix A). For example, a participant randomly assigned to the Close Friend/Positive condition would view instructions indicating that the four InstaStories in the following page were posted by the participant's close friend. In the next frame, the research participants would view four positive InstaStories about the content generator's work experience, workplace or employer. After viewing all four InstaStories, the participants were invited to rate on the items for all measures. Data collection procedures employed in this study are in compliance with the institution's human research ethics requirements.

Manipulation check

Content source and content valence are both experimental manipulated variables in this study. Hence, participants were asked to identify the content source (i.e. close friend, stranger, or employer) after viewing the InstaStories content. Participants who answered wrongly were dropped from the study. Similarly, participants were also asked to rate the content valence of four InstaStories viewed using a six-point scale anchored by extremely negative and extremely positive. Participants who responded extremely *negative*, *negative* or *somewhat negative* to a positive valence InstaStories (and vice versa) were dropped from the study.

Measures

Green and Brock's (2000) *transportation* scale items were adopted to measure the extent to which participants experienced immersion or absorption into InstaStories. Responses were obtained on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree). To measure affective response, participants rate their *emotional response*, which assesses the extent to which they felt emotionally engaged after viewing InstaStories using a 7-point scale (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). To measure cognitive response, Carpentier, Van Hove and Weijters' (2019) *informativeness* scale, which assesses how informative viewers perceived the InstaStories to be, was adopted. All items were measured using a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree). *Self-referencing* was assessed with items selected from Dunlop *et al.* (2010) and slightly modified for the context of InstaStories. All items were measured using a 5-point scale (1 = None at all; 5 = A great deal). Gaziano and McGrath's (1986) scale items for media credibility were used to assess participants' *credibility perception* of InstaStories viewed using a 5-point scale (1 = None at all; 5 = A great deal). To measure *organisational attractiveness perception*, Aiman-Smith *et al.*'s (2001) organisational attractiveness scale items were adopted. Responses were obtained on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree). Bettencourt *et al.*'s (2001) scale items were adopted to assess participants' *positive WOM intention* after viewing InstaStories. A 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) was used to obtain responses for this measure.

The control variables used in this study are instrumental and symbolic attributes. Referring to Kanwal and Van Hove (2003), and Van Hove (2022), three scale items to measure

instrumental attributes of InstaStories viewed were developed for this study: “*The content presents tangible benefits associated with this employer*”, “*...are focused on concrete and objective information about the employer*”, “*...emphasise practical and measurable aspects of the employer*”. Similarly, three items were developed to measure symbolic attributes: “*The contents convey intangible qualities of this employer*”, “*...are focused on abstract and subjective perceptions of the employer*”, “*...emphasise emotional and symbolic aspects of the employer*”). Responses for both measures were obtained on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree). An assessment of the measurement model (see Appendix B) demonstrated that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values (>0.50), composite reliability (CR) values (>0.70), and internal reliability (IR) (>0.70) exceed the recommended thresholds (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Lu *et al.*, 2016).

Results

This study comprises two research models: (1) a 2 (source: close friend, stranger) $\times 2$ (valence: positive, negative) model and (2) a 3 (source: close friend, stranger, employer) $\times 1$ (valence: positive) model. Each hypothesis is tested across both models. The first model examines both positive and negative valence content from two sources (close friend and stranger). In contrast, the second model focuses exclusively on positive valence content from three sources (close friend, stranger, and employer).

Main effect of source

To test Hypothesis 1, a series of ANCOVA analyses were conducted. As shown in Table 1, the results indicate that the main effect of source on credibility perception, organisational attractiveness perception, and positive WOM intention is not significant in both the 2×2 and 3×1 models (all p -values $> .05$). Therefore, **Hypotheses 1(a), 1(b), and 1(c) were not supported.**

Table 1: ANCOVA results for source effects on credibility, organisational attractiveness, and positive WOM intention

Dependent Variable	Model	F	df1	df2	p	η^2
Credibility perception	2×2	3.09	1	219	.080	.014
	3×1	1.22	2	178	.298	.013
Organisational attractiveness perception	2×2	0.41	1	219	.710	.001
	3×1	2.15	2	178	.120	.024
Positive word-of-mouth intention	2×2	0.27	1	219	.604	.001
	3×1	0.80	2	178	.450	.009

Note: η^2 = partial eta squared, df = degrees of freedom.

Moderating role of source

Next, the moderating role of content source on the relationships between content valence and credibility perception (H2a), organisational attractiveness perception (H2b) and positive WOM intention (H2b) was analysed respectively. To test Hypothesis 2, the regression-based path analytic SPSS Hayes PROCESS Macro (Model 1) was employed. Valence was modelled as an independent variable, source as a moderator, and content type (instrumental and

symbolic) as control variables. Credibility perception, organisational attractiveness perception, and positive WOM intention were modelled as dependent variables, respectively. The tests for the 2 x 2 model results revealed that content source did not significantly moderate the relationship between content valence and credibility perception ($\Delta R^2 = .0004$, $F(1, 217) = .14$, $p = .70$), organisational attractiveness perception ($\Delta R^2 = .002$, $F(1, 217) = 1.89$, $p = .17$), nor positive WOM intention ($\Delta R^2 = .003$, $F(1, 217) = 2.32$, $p = .13$).

However, the 3 x 1 model results revealed that content source significantly moderates the relationship between content valence and credibility perception ($\Delta R^2 = .018$, $F(2, 175) = 2.92$, $p = .057$). Further analysis revealed a significant interaction between content valence and employer ($\beta = -0.36$, $t(175) = -2.41$, $p = .017$, 95% CI [-0.65, -0.07]) as a source. More importantly, findings on conditional effects of content valence on credibility perception is significant when the source is a close friend ($\beta = 0.39$, $t(175) = 3.49$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.17, 0.61]) but is not significant when the source is a stranger ($\beta = 0.19$, $t(175) = 1.88$, $p = .062$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.39]) or an employer ($\beta = 0.03$, $t(175) = 0.32$, $p = .75$, 95% CI [-0.18, 0.24]). This suggests that positive valence significantly predicts credibility when the information came from a close friend but has a weaker, non-significant impact when the source is a stranger or an employer. Therefore, **Hypothesis 2(a) is partially supported.**

The 3 x 1 model results also indicate that content source significantly moderates the relationship between valence and organisational attractiveness ($\Delta R^2 = .016$, $F(2, 175) = 3.24$, $p = .041$). Specifically, a significant interaction was found between valence and strangers ($\beta = 0.33$, $t(175) = 2.27$, $p = .025$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.62]). Finally, conditional effects analysis revealed that valence significantly affects organisational attractiveness for all sources, with the strongest effect observed when the source is a stranger ($\beta = 0.63$, $p < .001$), followed by an employer ($\beta = 0.34$, $p = .002$) and a close friend ($\beta = 0.30$, $p = .009$). Although source has been found to moderate the relationship between valence and organisational attractiveness perception, its effect is not strongest when the source is a close friend. For this reason, **Hypothesis 2(b) is partially supported.**

Finally, the 3 x 1 model results also revealed that content source significantly moderates the relationship between valence and positive WOM intention ($\Delta R^2 = .019$, $F(2, 175) = 3.68$, $p = .027$). The conditional effects analysis demonstrate that valence had a significant positive impact when the source is a stranger ($\beta = 0.60$, $p < .001$) and an employer ($\beta = 0.29$, $p = .016$), but not when the source is a close friend ($\beta = 0.20$, $p = .11$), **partially supporting Hypothesis 2(c).**

Mediating role of transportation

To test the mediating roles of transportation, emotional response, self-referencing and informativeness on the relationship between content valence and credibility perception, a customised SPSS Hayes PROCESS Macro model was employed. Using SPSS syntax, a custom SPSS Hayes PROCESS Macro (Model 81) with an added moderator (W) variable was constructed from scratch using a combination of *B* matrix and *W* matrix (Hayes, 2022). More specifically, this customised model examines content valence as an independent variable; transportation as the first mediator; emotional response, self-referencing and informativeness as the second set of mediators (in parallel); source as a moderator; and finally, content type (instrumental and symbolic) as control variables. Credibility perception, organisational attractiveness perception, and positive WOM intention were modelled as dependent variables, respectively, for each test. To estimate the indirect effects, 5,000 bootstrap samples were used.

Hypothesis 3 is first tested in the 2×2 model, with the results presented in Table 2. The mediation pathway through transportation $\rightarrow$ self-referencing was found to be significant for the effects of content valence on credibility perception, organisational attractiveness perception, and positive WOM intention, respectively, when the source is a close friend (confidence intervals did not include zero). Moreover, when the source is a close friend, the mediation pathway through transportation $\rightarrow$ informativeness is also significant for the effects of content valence on credibility perception and organisational attractiveness perception, respectively, but not for positive WOM intention. Interestingly, when the source is a close friend, the indirect effect through transportation $\rightarrow$ informativeness is negative. Finally, none of the mediation pathways through transportation $\rightarrow$ emotional response for all outcome variables were significant when the source is a close friend. More importantly, none of the indirect effects reached significance for strangers as a source, as all confidence intervals crossed zero. That said, the index of moderated mediation was not significant in all cases, meaning the strength of the indirect effects did not significantly differ across close friend and stranger conditions.

Table 2: Indirect effects and moderated mediation indices of the 2×2 model

Mediation Pathway	Source	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Valence $\rightarrow$ Transportation $\rightarrow$ Emotional Response $\rightarrow$ Credibility	Close Friend	0.0006	0.0013	-0.0017	0.0035
	Stranger	0.0001	0.0005	-0.0010	0.0014
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	-0.0004	0.0012	-0.0004	0.0013
Valence $\rightarrow$ Transportation $\rightarrow$ Self-referencing $\rightarrow$ Credibility	Close Friend	0.0101	0.0062	0.0006	0.0243
	Stranger	0.0023	0.0040	-0.0053	0.0112
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	-0.0079	0.0064	-0.0227	0.0020
Valence $\rightarrow$ Transportation $\rightarrow$ Informativeness $\rightarrow$ Credibility	Close Friend	0.0108	0.0066	0.0011	0.0268
	Stranger	0.0024	0.0046	-0.0059	0.0129
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	-0.0084	0.0067	-0.0238	0.0029
Valence $\rightarrow$ Transportation $\rightarrow$ Emotional Response $\rightarrow$ Organisational attractiveness	Close Friend	0.0022	0.0041	-0.0065	0.0108
	Stranger	0.0005	0.0017	-0.0035	0.0040
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	-0.0017	0.0037	-0.0108	0.0048
Valence $\rightarrow$ Transportation $\rightarrow$ Self-referencing $\rightarrow$ Organisational attractiveness	Close Friend	0.0155	0.0093	0.0005	0.0363
	Stranger	0.0035	0.0061	-0.0068	0.0180
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	-0.0120	0.0092	-0.0333	0.0031
Valence $\rightarrow$ Transportation $\rightarrow$ Informativeness $\rightarrow$ Organisational attractiveness	Close Friend	-0.0176	0.0145	-0.0540	-0.0007
	Stranger	-0.0039	0.0080	-0.0247	0.0068
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	0.0136	0.0125	-0.0033	0.0445

Valence → Transportation → Emotional Response → Positive WOM	Close Friend	0.0024	0.0043	-0.0069	0.0114
	Stranger	0.0005	0.0019	-0.0040	0.0045
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	-0.0019	0.0040	-0.0112	0.0054
Valence → Transportation → Self-referencing → Positive WOM	Close Friend	0.0196	0.0103	0.0022	0.0417
	Stranger	0.0044	0.0076	-0.0097	0.0210
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	-0.0152	0.0108	-0.0382	0.0038
Valence → Transportation → Informativeness → Positive WOM	Close Friend	-0.0085	0.0104	-0.0354	0.0047
	Stranger	-0.0190	0.0048	-0.0149	0.0044
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	0.0066	0.0089	-0.0051	0.0295

Note: Boot SE = bootstrap standard error; LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval. Significant effects are indicated by confidence intervals that do not include zero.

The second moderated mediation analysis was conducted using the 3×1 model, with dummy coding for source as the moderator variable. The results are presented in Table 3. Key findings revealed several significant mediation pathway effects across the different sources. First, the mediation pathway transportation → self-referencing is significant for the effects of content valence on credibility perception and positive WOM intention, respectively, for both close friends and strangers, with the strongest effect observed for strangers. Second, the media pathway through transportation → informativeness also significantly mediates the effect of content valence on credibility perception and positive WOM intention, respectively, for strangers, with a weaker effect for close friends. Third, transportation → emotional response did not show significance for any source, as all confidence intervals include zero. Finally, the index of moderated mediation is not significant, indicating that while mediation effects varied in magnitude, the differences between sources were not statistically significant. Based on the results from both the 2×2 model and 3×1 model, **Hypotheses 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c) are partially supported.**

Table 3: Indirect effects and moderated mediation indices of the 3×1 model

Mediation Pathway	Source	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Valence → Transportation → Emotional Response → Credibility	Close Friend	0.0037	0.0040	-0.0004	0.0146
	Stranger (W1)	0.0067	0.0060	-0.0005	0.0217
	Employer (W2)	0.0048	0.0057	-0.0005	0.0204
Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0030	0.0041	-.0035	.0130
	W2	0.0011	0.0040	-.0052	.0117
Valence → Transportation → Self-referencing → Credibility	Close Friend	0.0254	0.0143	0.0017	0.0579
	Stranger (W1)	0.0454	0.0215	0.0099	0.0938
	Employer (W2)	0.0326	0.0198	-0.0012	0.0767

Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0201	0.0198	-0.0175	0.0625
	W2	0.0072	0.0185	-0.0298	0.0462
Valence → Transportation → Informativeness → Credibility	Close Friend	0.0192	0.0122	0.0005	0.0483
	Stranger (W1)	0.0344	0.0202	0.0037	0.0827
	Employer (W2)	0.0247	0.0173	-0.0010	0.0657
Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0152	0.0161	-0.0125	0.0530
	W2	0.0054	0.0143	-0.0220	0.0374
Valence → Transportation → Emotional Response → Organisational attractiveness	Close Friend	0.0026	0.0036	-0.0018	0.0121
	Stranger (W1)	0.0046	0.0056	-0.0027	0.0193
	Employer (W2)	0.0033	0.0053	-0.0020	0.0180
Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0020	0.0033	-0.0025	0.0111
	W2	0.0007	0.0030	-0.0032	0.0093
Valence → Transportation → Self-referencing → Organisational attractiveness	Close Friend	0.0084	0.0094	-0.0062	0.0315
	Stranger (W1)	0.0150	0.0157	-0.0103	0.0531
	Employer (W2)	0.0108	0.0131	-0.0074	0.0436
Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0066	0.0106	-0.0097	0.0329
	W2	0.0024	0.0086	-0.0119	0.0246
Valence → Transportation → Informativeness → Organisational attractiveness	Close Friend	0.0097	0.0094	-0.0057	0.0311
	Stranger (W1)	0.0174	0.0166	-0.0086	0.0558
	Employer (W2)	0.0125	0.0132	-0.0072	0.0445
Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0077	0.0115	-0.0086	0.0371
	W2	0.0028	0.0093	-0.0138	0.0250
Valence → Transportation → Emotional Response → Positive WOM	Close Friend	0.0039	0.0040	-0.0008	0.0147
	Stranger (W1)	0.0069	0.0066	-0.0013	0.0237
	Employer (W2)	0.0050	0.0062	-0.0010	0.0219
Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0031	0.0043	-0.0029	0.0138
	W2	0.0011	0.0039	-0.0042	0.0124
Valence → Transportation → Self-referencing → Positive WOM	Close Friend	0.0168	0.0112	0.0006	0.0434
	Stranger (W1)	0.0301	0.0187	0.0024	0.0752
	Employer (W2)	0.0215	0.0164	-0.0010	0.0626

Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0133	0.0149	-0.0106	0.0497
	W2	0.0048	0.0131	-0.0185	0.0348
Valence → Transportation → Informativeness → Positive WOM	Close Friend	0.0190	0.0133	-0.0005	0.0516
	Stranger (W1)	0.0341	0.0250	0.0006	0.0954
	Employer (W2)	0.0244	0.0190	-0.0023	0.0704
Index of Moderated Mediation	W1	0.0151	0.0198	-0.0108	0.0663
	W2	0.0054	0.0159	-0.0244	0.0429

Discussion

Results suggest that whether the content is posted by a close friend, a stranger or an employer, viewers trust the content to a similar degree. While existing literature on source credibility is divided, this paper's findings indicate that users do not inherently trust official sources (e.g., Johnson and Hong, 2023; Van Hove and Lievens, 2007) on Instagram more, nor do they necessarily find work-related information from personal sources (e.g., Cervellon and Lirio, 2016; Dineen *et al.*, 2019) on Instagram more credible. Existing research suggests that at the platform or website level, user trust can be fostered through perceived functionality (e.g. ease of use and usefulness), institutional structures (e.g. structural assurance), and user enjoyment (Lu *et al.*, 2016; Ou and Sia, 2009). Findings from the present study could suggest that Instagram is generally a reliable platform altogether, where credible perceptions of InstaStories about work experiences, workplaces, and employers do not significantly differ based on whether the source is a close friend, a stranger, or an employer. The ephemeral nature of Instagram Stories, which fosters engagement and enhances perceived authenticity (Bainotti et al., 2021), may contribute to viewers' reduced skepticism regarding the credibility of the source.

The absence of content source effects on organisational attractiveness perception and positive WOM intention may be explained by the instrumental-symbolic framework (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). This framework suggests that functional (instrumental) and self-expressive (symbolic) content about the organisation plays a crucial role in shaping organisational attractiveness and WOM intentions (Carpentier, Van Hove and Weijters, 2019). Moreover, an analysis of 38,000 employer reviews revealed that employees generally evaluate seven key employer branding value propositions (i.e. social, interest, application, development, economic, management, and work-life balance) when determining whether an organisation is a great place to work (Dabirian, Kietzmann, and Diba, 2017). Given this, it could be argued that within the context of employer brand signaling via InstaStories, content source alone may not significantly influence organisational attractiveness perception or WOM intentions, especially if the InstaStories content does not fall within one of the seven key employer branding value propositions indicated above.

A simple moderation analysis for the 2×2 model revealed that source (close friends and strangers) does not significantly moderate the effect of content valence (both positive and negative) on organisational attractiveness perception, or positive WOM intention. This finding could be explained by the widespread sharing of both negative and positive user-generated content (Dabirian, Kietzmann, and Diba, 2017), causing work-related content

from close friends and strangers to be perceived as comparable, particularly since both types of these sharings occur outside the control of employers. Additionally, Instagram's overarching social affordance, where users predominantly share personal and work life updates (Vázquez-Herrero, Direito-Rebollal, and López-García, 2019), as well as their innermost thoughts (Kim, 2022), may also lead viewers to overlook the closeness, or lack thereof, of their relationship with the content generator, be it a close friend or a stranger.

However, in the context of positive valence content as tested in the 3 x 1 model, source (close friends, strangers and employers) was found to significantly moderate the effects of valence on credibility perception, particularly when the source is an employer. Further results also revealed that positive valence significantly influences credibility perception when the InstaStories is generated by a close friend but has a non-significant impact when the source is a stranger or an employer. This finding aligns with existing employer branding literature suggesting that viewers' credibility perceptions are more sensitive to employer-generator content due to concerns about exaggerated or biased claims from organisations (Collins and Martinez-Moreno, 2022; Dabirian, Kietzmann, and Diba, 2017). As posited, valence positively influences credibility perception when the source is a close friend, corroborating previous studies that existing social relationships and closeness with content sources helps enhance viewers' credibility perceptions (Keeling et al., 2013; Taillon et al., 2020).

Interestingly in the 3 x 1 model, organisational attractiveness perception and positive WOM intentions are most influenced when the source is a stranger, suggesting that unknown individuals may serve as more persuasive sources for evaluating organisations and driving advocacy behaviour. While these findings do not align with this study's initial predictions, existing literature suggests that highly self-disclosing (unfiltered or candid) posts, even negative ones, by Instagram influencers foster a sense of authenticity and strong psychological connections with their followers (Kim, 2022). Building on this, InstaStories from strangers (operationalised in this study as an Instagram user with a public account) may be perceived as more reassuring, as they originate from a neutral source. An alternative explanation is that InstaStories viewers have the tendency to engage in social comparison (Mackson, Brochu, and Schneider, 2019), as well as, belonging behaviours such as liking, commenting and tagging (Keep and Amon, 2017) with strangers. Unlike traditional social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram provides users with greater opportunities to interact with strangers (Keep and Amon, 2017), especially with its asymmetric follow model where users can follow other users without requiring mutual approval.

The differing importance of strangers as a source between the 2 x 2 model and the 3 x 1 model may be explained by the interaction between content valence and viewers processing mechanisms. In the 2 x 2 model, where both positive and negative content are present, close friends play a more crucial role through self-referencing and informativeness. Specifically, the mediation pathway through transportation → self-referencing significantly explains the effects of content valence on all dependent variables when the source is a close friend. This supports the notion that personal social connections enhance narrative persuasion by fostering deeper immersion and personal relevance. However, in the 3 x 1 model, where only positive content is considered, strangers become the most influential source, surpassing even close friends. This shift suggests that when negative content is removed, viewers engage more in personal reflection and information processing when the source is unfamiliar. In this case, self-referencing and informativeness become stronger mediators for strangers, potentially because a neutral or distant source encourages viewers to evaluate the content more objectively, rather than relying on prior social connections. This distinction potentially highlights how the presence of negative content amplifies the persuasive power of personal

connections, while in a purely positive context, informational value and self-referential thinking become more salient when the source is unfamiliar.

The absence of mediation effects through transportation $\rightarrow$ emotional response in both the 2×2 , and 3×1 models suggests that affective InstaStories do not strongly influence employer brand perceptions or intentions. Instead, when assessing the credibility of work-related information or an employer's attractiveness, viewers are more likely to reflect on their own memories and experiences (self-referencing) and evaluate the informational value of the content (informativeness). Finally, employers were found to exhibit the weakest mediation effects, reinforcing the idea that work- or employment-related content from company controlled sources is processed differently from non company controlled sources, and are potentially met with skepticism. Given that notion of self-referencing is underpinned by viewers' propensity to empathise with the content creator (Raney, 2003), formal Instagram profiles of organisations may hinder viewers' ability to engage in self-referencing, as there is no human face to the content generator.

Research Implications and Limitations

Drawing on transportation theory, findings of the present study demonstrates that the narrative format of InstaStories fosters persuasion, particularly by encouraging viewers' self-referencing when the content is generated by close friends and strangers. This highlights how work-related content shared via InstaStories can shape employer brand perceptions through narrative persuasion. To the authors' knowledge, this study is the first to examine the applicability of narrative persuasion within employer branding and social media contexts. Moreover, this research contributes to narrative persuasion and source credibility theories by demonstrating how social connections on persuasion are influenced by content valence. Specifically, findings suggest that negative content strengthens the persuasive impact of close (viewer-generator) relationships, whereas in a purely positive context, informational value and self-referential thinking play a more dominant role when the source is unfamiliar.

This study offers several practical implications for employer branding strategies. Beyond reinforcing the role of user-generated content in shaping positive employer brand perceptions (Dabirian *et al.*, 2017; Dineen *et al.*, 2019; Lievens and Slaughter, 2016), the findings underscore the importance of employee-generated narratives that are designed to transport viewers into a compelling story realm, enhancing both attitudinal and behavioural engagement. Furthermore, improving employees' work experiences may serve as a proactive approach to encouraging the voluntary creation and sharing of positive work-related content within their social networks via InstaStories. Finally, initiatives aimed at educating employees about the potential reputational risks of negative employee-generated content could help mitigate the sharing of unfavorable content on social media. By fostering a positive work environment and equipping employees with awareness of content impact, organisations can better leverage social media storytelling as a tool for employer branding.

Although the current study offers novel discoveries, it is not free from limitations. First, the experiment relied on cross-sectional data, which may not fully capture the cumulative effect of repeatedly viewing a close friend's posts about their work experiences, workplace, or employer over time. Future research should address this gap by employing a longitudinal design to examine these dynamics over an extended period. Second, this study did not account for industry sector differences in employment, despite prior research suggesting that industry-level image perceptions vary more significantly than organisation-level perceptions (Van Hoya *et al.*, 2022). Future research could examine whether employer brand outcomes

differ across industries. Beyond these considerations, future research should also investigate the role of content type (instrumental vs symbolic) in shaping employer brand perceptions. In particular, examining how transportation theory and narrative transportation mediate the effects of content type could offer valuable contributions to understanding the persuasive mechanisms underlying employer branding content on social media. Given the significant role of strangers in enhancing perceived organisational attractiveness, future research should explore the effects of Instagram influencers as a content source. As influencers occupy an intermediate position between acquaintances and unfamiliar sources, examining their impact on employer brand perceptions could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of source credibility and content engagement in social media-based employer branding.

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Appendix A

Sample experiment stimuli for Close Friend/Positive and Close Friend/Negative conditions.

Instruction

In the next few pages, you will be viewing 4 work-related Instagram Stories posted by **Daniel**.

Daniel is a **close friend** of yours and you went to university together.

Daniel's Instagram account is set to **private**.

Carefully view the 4 Instagram Stories.

Positive valence	Negative valence

Note: Research participants only viewed the four Instagram Stories (InstaStories) of one valence condition.

Appendix B

Assessment of the measurement model, including factor loadings, means, standard deviations, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Internal Reliability (IR) for each construct.

Construct	Item	Factor Loading	Mean	Standard Deviation	AVE	CR	IR
Transportation	I could picture myself in the scene of the events shown in the InstaStories	0.919	5.01	1.396	0.637	0.829	0.752
	I could imagine myself in the InstaStories I was watching	0.931	5.04	1.388			
	The InstaStories affected my feelings	0.446	4.71	1.54			
Emotional response	Unhappy-Happy	0.917	4.81	1.982	0.837	0.963	0.951
	Annoyed-Pleased	0.934	4.62	1.924			
	Unsatisfied-Satisfied	0.927	4.57	1.995			
	Melancholic-Contented	0.893	4.76	1.73			
	Despairing-Hopeful	0.904	4.81	1.884			
Self-referencing	How much did the InstaStories make you think about you and your experiences at work?	0.841	3.38	1.036	0.687	0.898	0.846
	To what extent did you imagine the situations shown in the InstaStories happening to you?	0.819	3.25	1.071			
	To what extent did you think the InstaStories related to you personally?	0.806	2.94	1.199			
	To what extent were you reminded of your own experiences at work while viewing the InstaStories?	0.848	3.27	1.118			
Informativeness	The InstaStories allowed me to create a mental picture of the company/workplace	0.769	5.42	1.154	0.679	0.863	0.759
	The InstaStories provided useful information to evaluate the company/workplace	0.897	5.39	1.26			
	I think the InstaStories give an accurate view of the company/workplace	0.801	5.05	1.393			
Credibility perception	Believable	0.845	3.49	0.945	0.708	0.906	0.859
	Accurate	0.862	3.27	0.929			
	Trustworthy	0.880	3.31	0.975			
	Complete	0.774	3.27	1.055			
Organisational attractiveness perception	This would be a good company to work for	0.959	4.68	1.816	0.938	0.984	0.977
	I would want a company like this in my community	0.974	4.73	1.968			
	This company cares about its employees	0.973	4.74	1.963			
	I find this a very attractive company	0.967	4.59	1.968			
Positive word-of-mouth intention	I would tell friends and family that this is a good place to work	0.954	4.48	1.968	0.909	0.980	0.975
	I would say good things about this company to others	0.962	4.62	1.828			

	I would share positive sentiments about this company	0.941	4.73	1.832			
	I would encourage friends and family to consider products, services or employment by this company	0.954	4.64	1.849			
	I would actively promote products, services or employment by this company	0.955	4.45	1.786			
Instrumental	The content presents tangible benefits associated with this employer.	0.808	3.65	1.034	0.677	0.862	0.757
	The content is focused on factual and objective information about the employer.	0.848	2.64	0.892			
	The content emphasises functional and measurable aspects of the employer.	0.811	3.81	0.882			
Symbolic	The content conveys intangible qualities of this employer.	0.756	3.72	0.911	0.633	0.838	0.709
	The content is focused on abstract and subjective perceptions of the employer.	0.829	3.7	0.905			
	The content emphasises emotional and symbolic aspects of the employer.	0.800	3.83	0.885			