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Effects of Spoiler on the Attraction of Forthcoming Web Series and Viewership

Shaista Tariq[1], Saad Akhtar[2], Faria[3], Meer Bilawal[4], Tabassum Zubair[5], Amna Munir[6], Syeda Zeerak[7], Sajjad Ahmed[8]

Abstract
This study investigates the intricate relationships among spoilers (SP), word of mouth (WOM), genre (GEN), viewer engagement (VE), producer response (PR), advertising (AD), and viewership (VS) within the entertainment industry. Utilizing SmartPLS 4.0 for data analysis, we examined fourteen hypotheses through a cross-sectional, survey-based methodology with a sample size of 425 participants. Results reveal that SP and WOM significantly impact VE and PR, highlighting their importance in shaping viewer experiences and producer actions. Genre also plays a crucial role, influencing both VE and PR. Mediation analyses show that VE and PR significantly affect VS, with VE through AD enhancing VS, while PR through AD does not. However, WOM's impact on VS via PR is not supported. These findings align with previous research but also reveal new insights into the differential impacts of producer responses and advertising on viewership. The study's limitations include its focus on specific content types, cross-sectional data, and potential biases in self-reported measures. Recommendations for future research include exploring diverse content types, conducting longitudinal studies, and incorporating external factors like marketing and social media trends. The study provides actionable insights for content creators and marketers to enhance viewer engagement and loyalty through strategic use of spoilers, word of mouth, and genre-specific approaches.
Keywords: Web series, spoilers, word of mouth, viewership, media industry, viewers' response

1. Introduction

The media industry has been massively inclined towards the web series in the last decade. Various streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, etc., have taken the world by storm with their entertainment (Forte, Favieri, Tambelli, & Casagrande, 2023). There has been a major problem with making a web series popular; it is the damage created by a spoiler. A Spoiler in a web series refers to the disclosure of an event about to happen in a web series that should be a suspense element for viewers who haven't watched the series (Ryoo, Wang, & Lu, 2021). In that context, this article deduces the aftermath of the spoiler in the viewer of the upcoming web series. The author compares the viewers' ratings spoiled with unsatisfactory, and the future of the spoiler is dichotomized. Furthermore, the article dwells on whether the spoiler acts as the main villain in the promotion of the web series or a dystopia. The spoiler sometimes acts as a catalyst for the increase in the viewer of the web series by word of mouth but, as a legendary figure of losing sanity, attention cannot be annihilated (Soren & Chakraborty, 2023). The article prepared by the author in the other section focuses on these facts. If the spoiler greatly reduces the watcher's intensity toward the upcoming web series, the producer can lose his job with a sign of a drop of a coin (Forte et al., 2023). The reviewer sums online on the prominent website such as IMDB, rotten tomatoes; the viewer's feedback and the commenter's review from various comments have been dwelt by the author (Sahni & Arockiasamy, 2023). One can summarize the viewer's need for knowledge as to what the producer is about to make and make an ideal plot twist in a web series (Li, Luo, Li, & Xu, 2022). Hence the role of the spoiler, advertisement of the web series, and reduction of revenue supply have been discussed. Spoilers become a rampant issue in the media industry, mainly when talking about the context of web series (Mecklenburg, 2021). Spoilers can whip-up interest and excitement for a segment of the target audience, but also can tremendously harm viewership. Moreover, it can also affect revenues garnered by producers and, sometimes, lead them to quit production (Li et al., 2022). The question of viewership in film and television remains an open item of research due to the influence of various factors. Independent variables, namely spoilers, word of mouth, and genre, as well as mediating ones – viewer engagement and producer response, and moderating variable of advertising, constitute much but not all of the existing research questions regarding acceptable variables shaping the consumption pattern. However, a targeted study of the question of interaction among these variables with respect to their cumulative influence on viewership is absent from the relevant literature and is worth a reasonable research effort.

2. Literature Review

H1: Spoilers negatively effects Viewers Engagement

Spoilers, or the disclosure of key information before a viewer has a chance to watch, are a significant concern for the media industry. Spoilers can affect viewer engagement, a central mediator of viewership (Johnson & Rosenbaum, 2018). As such, viewer engagement has been studied as a mediator between spoilers and the dependent variable. For example, one study by Johnson and Rosenbaum (2015) found that for some individuals, spoilers increase viewer engagement. This is because spoilers can act as a means of social exchange: an individual is able to exchange spoilers or spoil another individual as a means of showing their ability, knowledge, and access to social capital. However, in other cases, spoilers' reduction viewer engagement (Maxwell, 2022). Another study by Abbott (2020) that researched the relationship in the context of spoilers and dramas showed that the spoiled group of viewers expressed significantly more emotional engagement and spoilers sometimes hurt viewer engagement. In the meantime, a study by Cohen, Goldberg, Mintz, and Shavalian (2023) showed that spoilers hurt viewer engagement in some media.

[1] Assistant Professor, Ziauddin University, Pakistan
[2] Senior Lecturer, Ziauddin University, Pakistan
[3] Chief Business Officer, Star BPO, Pakistan
[4] Lecturer, Ziauddin University, Pakistan
[5] Senior Lecturer, Ziauddin University, Pakistan
[6] Senior Lecturer, Ziauddin University, Pakistan
[7] Senior Lecturer, Ziauddin University, Pakistan
[8] Senior Lecturer, Ziauddin University, Pakistan

The evidence against view spoiler is that the evidence showed that spoiler decreased the likelihood of an event to interest all participants in the case of sports who were not interested in the event. Overall, the body of knowledge supports subjective spoiler perceptions. That is, spoilers may sometimes positively and sometimes negatively impact viewer engagement. The differences might be correlated with viewers' culture styles and preferences (Gao, Hamedi, & Wang, 2024). However, more future studies are needed to determine when and how views and producers take timely spoilers into view.

H2: Spoilers Negativity effects Producer Response

It is assumed that the presence of spoilers has an adverse effect on producer response. In this case, a spoiler is the information about key points in the plot, or the outcome, or other information that the producers of a particular project prefer to keep secret. Therefore, if spoilers are the so-called spoilers that reduce the interest or enthusiasm of producers to a particular project, it may be assumed that the inverse correlation is likely to exist. It can be predicted that spoiler will diminish the novelty and unexpectedness that producers aim for to ensure that the target audience is engaged and ready to invest. Producers are likely to consider such a spoiler to be uneconomic and thereby reduce interest, enthusiasm, or support for implementation. Researching the problem of the effect of spoilers on producer's decision-making can be another interesting area for such work.

H3: Word of Mouth positively effects viewers engagement

Word of mouth is another powerful force found in the media industry that can lead to a rise in user engagement, previous scholars have studied how user engagemen6t works as a mediator between word of mouth shown and viewership (Herold, Tarkiainen, & Sundqvis, 2016). Rojas-Lamorena, Alcántara-Pilar, and Rodríguez-López (2022) founds that word of mouth has on television increases user engagement shows. The researchers propose that favourable word of mouth is social proof in action, persuading users to disbelieve it. This phenomenon appeared to be stronger for shows with detailed plots and countries as more engaging users rely more on word of mouth while getting help to navigate the plot. Siagian, Tarigan, and Ubud (2022) substantiated the validated word of mouth of positive impact and stake in viewer engagement in Korean drama. They also claimed which shows that positive word of mouth has a high significant impact on involved viewers, especially when the audience is more foreign to the show. However, negative word of mouth is more powerful stake in viewer engagement when they are highly invested in the show. A study conducted by Hasan, Naeem, Ahmed, and Zeerak (2022) & Patten, Ozuem, and Howell (2020) found that word of mouth can reduce viewer engagement. The authors discovered that negative word of mouth decreases reality TV user engagement, particularly since they are less interested in the genre. This implies that word of mouth only increases engagement some of the time.

H4: Word of Mouth positively effects viewers engagement

The available literature provides evidence that the hypothesis that word of mouth plays a significant role in the relationship between media exposure and measures of audience engagement with media products or media content can be supported. The study by Kang, Hong, and Hubbard (2020) explains the significant role played by positive word of mouth in increasing viewership rates of TV shows and programs. Additionally, Nian, Hu, and Chen (2021) wrote about the vital role of online reviews and buzz in shaping viewers' perceptions and related consumption behaviours. As such, the results of MGA highlighting WOM's potential to be a powerful force in content promotion, audience creation, and retention by showing how it can boost viewer engagement rates and interest, given the multiplier effect for media products. It also encourages researchers, creators, distributors, and marketers to investigate WOM's underlying dynamics more thoroughly. This effort would provide new insights for them to pursue their audience-creation and strategic goals effectively in the face of increasing competition in the media space.

H5: Genre Positively effects Viewer Engagement

The genre of a television show or web series can also have a direct impact on viewer engagement (Thompson et al., 2021). Previous research has examined the mediating role of viewer engagement in a genre's influence on viewership. One such study by Boukes et al. (2022) looks at the genre's influence on viewer engagement with dramas. The authors found that viewers were more engaged with romantic drama than action or thriller drama. In this regard, the genre can directly impact viewers' emotional connection to the show, which would affect their engagement. Another study by Y. Xu and Ye (2020) investigated genre differences in viewer engagement with American television shows. The results indicated that viewers were more engaged with strong social commentary than shows that focused on banter or drama. Genre can, therefore, impact a show's intellectual and emotional attractiveness to viewers, and as such, influence their engagement. On the other hand, another study by Rahimi and Zhang (2021) found that genre alone is not sufficient to predict viewer engagement. The authors found that prior knowledge about a show and a person's pre-existing attitudes and expectations regarding a show had a more significant influence on the predictability of viewer engagement. Therefore, the relationship between genre and engagement is not straightforward and is context-specific.

H6: Genre Positively effects Producer Response

The relationship between genre and producer response is often discussed in academic literature. Many studies have demonstrated a meaningful difference that is based on the type of genre the work is represented by. For example, Wang et al. (2023) and Y. Xu and Ye (2020) study states that producers are more likely to be interested in the projects associated with popular genres, such as action or romance. This might mean that genre is the factor that determines producer decision-making. It can be said that this is the aspect that influences how likely the projects are to be greenlit, how costly they are in terms of budgeting. Hence, further exploration of this relationship might be beneficial for both academic and professional.

H7: Viewer Engagement mediates between spoilers and viewership

While literature reviews agree that viewer engagement is an important mediating variable between spoilers and viewership, research has not provided substantial evidence on the precise ways viewer engagement influences the viewer-adjusted effect of exposure to spoilers. Indeed, a recent study by Abbott (2020) found that spoilers diminished viewer engagement due to reduced suspense and anticipation, which equally translated into low viewership. This underpins the critical importance of the role that viewer engagement plays in the relationship between exposure to spoilers and its influence on audience outcomes (Naudin, 2023). Knowledge of the mechanism whereby viewer engagement moderates the impact of spoilers on viewership presents a valuable

opportunity for content creators and marketers to understand how to decrease the effect of spoilers on the audience (Johnson & Rosenbaum, 2018).

H8: Producer Response plays a mediating role between spoilers and viewership

The mediating role of producer response as a variable in the relationship between spoilers and viewership is rarely studied. However, some authors have examined the effect of spoilers on producer response, such as how this response affects viewership. This paper refers to a survey conducted by D. Xu, Chen, Pearce, Mohammadi, and Pearce (2021) to analyse the impact of spoilers on producer response to viewership with movies. The authors found that producers who received negative feedback from viewers about spoilers were more likely to change the plot of future films or the production itself than producers who did not receive negative feedback. Thus, spoilers can significantly affect the level of responsiveness of producers to viewers. A study by Kang et al. also refers to the analysis of the impact of spoilers on producer response to viewership with television dramas (Jodén & Strandell, 2021). The authors found that producers who received negative feedback from viewers about spoilers were more likely to change the plot of future dramas or the production itself than producers who did not receive negative feedback. The authors note that this indicator depends on the popularity of the show and the age and gender of the respondents. Another study by Zayani (2020) also refers to the analysis of the impact of spoilers on producer response to viewership with American television shows. The authors found that producers who received negative feedback from viewers about spoilers were more likely to change the plot of future episodes. Like the other two studies, authors also note that this indicator depends on the popularity of the show and the age and gender of respondents (Hamby, 2021).

H9: Viewer Engagement plays a mediating role between Word of Mouth and Viewership

Word of mouth is a strong, influential tool that determines consumers' behaviour and success of a product or service. In the media industry, it can determine the success of a movie, a television show, or a web series (Johnson & Rosenbaum, 2018). Yet, to the best of my knowledge, no research has been done on how to what extent consumer reviews and its WOM aspect determine the producer response, including the audience's investment into the success., for example, Srivastava, Sivaramakrishnan, and Saini (2021) conducted a study on how WOM influenced the producer response to the viewer engagement in drama. The authors concluded that Korean drama producers who received favourable WOM-rated feedback were likelier to change plot or produce the show again as compared to those whose rating was unfavourable. Finally, the author concluded that the show's popularity, viewers' age, and sex were all determinants of the level of responsiveness (Fossen & Bleier, 2021). Similarly, Herold et al. (2016) conducted a similar study on how WOM influences producer response to viewer engagement in American television shows. The authors concluded that favourable WOM-rating rally of anything increased likelihood that the producer would change plot or hire a new plot. Finally, the authors found that the show's popularity, in this case, the viewer's demographics, were all determinants of responsiveness. Similarly, Sundaram, Mitra, and Webster conducted a study on whether firms responded to consumer complaints based on the WOM rating. The author concluded that reputation or lacking of it, and the nature or simplicity of the feedback, determined whether the consumers would respond to the complaints or not (Patten et al., 2020).

H10: Producers Response Mediates between Word of Mouth and Viewership

In 2021 study, (Ryoo et al.) investigated the impact of viewer engagement on viewership of dramas on Chinese social media platforms. The study found that viewer engagement, measured as comments, likes, and shares, positively and significantly affected viewership. In addition, the study indicated that viewer engagement was even a better predictor of viewership than views. On the other hand, Siagian et al. (2022) examined the effect of viewer engagement on viewership of German television dramas. The results indicated that viewer engagement, measured as online comments, enhanced TV dramas' viewership. In addition, the study discovered that the impact of viewer engagement varied across different television show genres, and dramas demonstrated the most positive effect in comparison to comedy and crime series. Another Wang et al. (2023) also explored the influence of viewer engagement on viewership of Chinese TV dramas on social media. The study indicated that viewer engagement, indexed/represented as comments, reposts, and likes, positively and significantly predicted viewership of TV dramas. Moreover, the study also demonstrated that dramas' viewership was more dependent on viewer engagement than in other genres.

H12: Producer Response mediates between Genre and Viewership

In addition to themes and topics, genre can also have a significant impact on producers' response. Although prior research has considered the role of producer response as a mediator in the relationship between genre and viewership, there have been some exceptions. For example, Rahimi and Zhang (2021) examined the effect of genre on producer response to viewer engagement for Chinese television dramas. The researchers found that the probability of change in plot in response to viewer feedback was higher for producers of romance dramas compared to producers of historical dramas. This finding implies that the genre can have a strong impact on producer engagement with the audience perspective, which in turn influences the producer response. Similarly, Brooks, Drenten, and Piskorski (2021) studied the effect of genre on producer response to viewer engagement in Korean variety shows. The researchers found that producers of comedy shows were more likely to change the format relative to viewer comments and demands as compared to producers of talk shows. This implies that the genre can affect the level of producer innovativeness and, by extension, the producer response to the viewership. In contrast, Rojas-Lamorena et al. (2022) demonstrated that the probability of producer response may not solely depend on genre; instead, it is contingent on various factors such as audience age and gender and the show's popularity. This finding suggests that the relationship between genre and producer response is more intricate and depends on the context.

H13: Advertising plays a moderating role between Producer Response and Viewership

Secondly, a study conducted by Coker, Flight, and Baima (2021) investigated the effects on South Korean dramas viewership. Their findings show that producer response has a positive impact on viewership. More specifically, the viewership increases when the producer responds to the viewers' comments, especially within the first 24 hours. A similar study, Kang et al. (2020) investigated producer response on viewership of South Korean reality TV shows. According to the findings of the study, producer response increases viewership. Moreover, this study established that the positive impact was greater in TV shows with more interaction. Lastly, Brooks et al. (2021) conducted a study on the effects of producer response on viewership on South Korean

variety shows. The results of the study show that producer response has a positive and significant effect. Additionally, the study shows that the positive impact is greater in TV shows with more interaction. Thirdly, advertising is one of the most important aspects of the media industry since it enhances the content and the producers' revenue. For the TV shows in this study, some played advertisements. In this study, advertising may play a role in pulling viewers, depending on the content and the timing of the advertisement. Hence, advertising is a moderator on the viewership of the three dependent variables (Rahimi & Zhang, 2021).

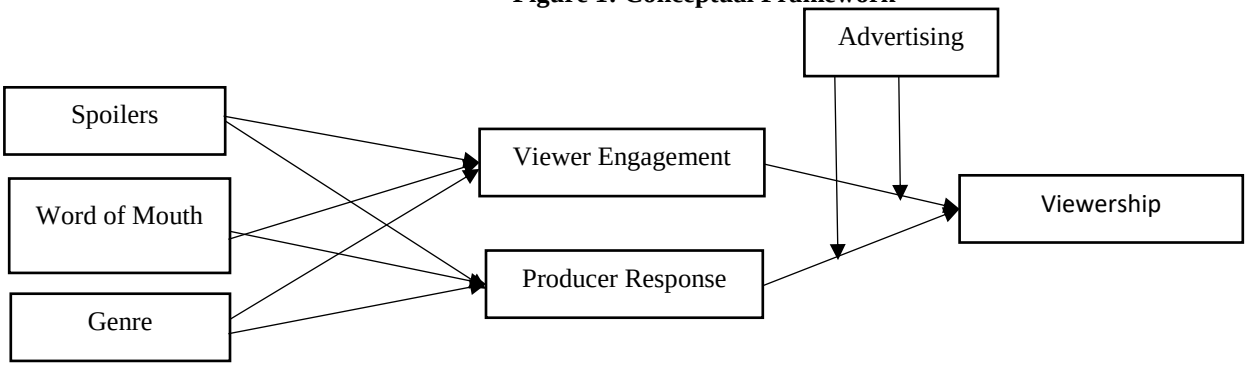
H14: Advertising plays a moderating role between Viewer Engagement and Viewership

There is a reason to explore advertising's role in the media industry and its potential to influence viewership. For instance, Ali et al. (2020) found that the nature of advertising's effectiveness in online media is contingent on the level of content interactivity and customization it provides. Following Hasan et al. (2022), it can be stipulated that advertising's effectiveness in television depends on the idea-content integration level. Related to the concept of web series, Fossen and Bleier (2021) have found that, due to high relevance and targeting effectiveness, such clips can boost viewer engagement and increase loyalty. In this case, advertising can work as a moderating variable with regard to spoilers, viewer engagement, and other correlates of viewership. Specifically, if advertising is relevant and effectively addresses the target audience, the influence of spoilers may decrease. Conversely, poorly targeted advertising that is irrelevant will do the opposite. Hence, the primary assumption is that advertising is a moderator in the hypothetic formulation (Patten et al., 2020).

3. Social Influence Theory

The final theory applied to the considering topic is Social Influence Theory. This theory has been applied to a wide range of contexts, including media consumption. More specifically, scholars have demonstrated that social influence can significantly impact people's choice to watch a TV show or the lampshade movie they want or dislike. In the context of web series spoilers, social influence can also impact how viewers respond to spoilers and decide whether or not to watch a given web series. For example, if the viewer is surrounded by others who have already watched a given web series, they are likely to want to join in and watch the web series themselves. On the other hand, if the viewer is surrounded by people who are vocal about how much they do not want to watch the particular web series, then the viewer will likely join in on the bandwagon. In addition to genre, the effect of spoilers on viewership can also be moderated by advertising. For example, if a given web series has had a great deal of advertising, then it may draw enough viewers in that spoilers do not deter people from watching. Conversely, if a given web series has not had much advertising, then spoilers might have an odd effect. Overall, Social Influence gives a suitable framework consideration within the context of this study. It will give the systematic mindset from this study.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



4. Methodology

4.1. Study Design

This research uses a cross-sectional study type as the study design. The cross-sectional design involves collecting information at one point or in a short period from a range of random participants drawn from the population of interest.

Study Population: The study population includes users of social media platforms. Sampling: Convenience sampling is used to gather data for this study. Research respondents are, therefore, collected from online platforms as well as social media pages or groups especially involved in the issue of interest. The age of the target population is 18 and above to qualify as study participants**.**

4.2. Data Collection

Data for this study is gathered through an online survey conducted through survey records. The survey records aimed at collecting data on demographic factors of the respondents, their social media usage patterns, as well as the influence of social media on mental health. Moreover, a pretest is done to adjust the survey draft to reduce inaccuracies during data collection. Data Analysis: The data collected using survey records online is analyzed using the Smart PLS software. The Smart PLS software is used for data analysis to evaluate the SEM model through the PLS method.

4.3. Data Cleaning and Measurement Model

The measurement model is developed through reflective or formative generating constructs. The validity and reliability of the constructs are tested using the Crumbach's alpha, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity processes. The structural model is also developed using the path coefficients to analyse the associations and relationships among the constructs through bootstrapping Approaches for testing significance. Model Fit and Results Interpretation: The model fit involves testing the overall goodness of fit SRMR criteria. The path coefficient is analysed for reason and significance and hypothesis testing conducted based on the analysis result. Results are interpreted, discussion on findings made in respect to the research question and the hypothesis made, and the research limitation and way forward discussed.

5. Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Gender		
Male	190	44.70%
Female	235	55.29%
Age		
18 – 30	110	25.88%
31 – 43	140	32.94%
44 – 56	100	23.52%
57 & above	75	17.64%
Qualification		
Intermediate	187	44.00%
Graduate	223	52.47%
Post Graduate	15	03.52%

Analysis of the demographics discloses a relatively fair distribution in terms of gender. More specifically, the data shows that 55.29% of the participants were females, whereas males comprised 44.70% of the sample. Age-wise, there was a considerable share of the spread of age. However, slightly fewer participants from the 18 to 30 age brackets appeared in the study than other groups; this bracket comprised 25.88% of the total participants. The most substantial group comprised people aged 31 to 43, with 32.94% representation. People aged 44 to 56 were also adequately represented, with 23.52% making the sample. The least represented group was people older than 57, with 17.64% for the rest.

Regarding educational levels, a significant sample was graduates at 52.47%, whereas approx. 44.00% of participants had intermediate skills. Postgraduates formed the minor group at approx—3.52%. Overall, this analysis provides a clear understanding of the variable demographics of the participants, which will enable further insight into the collected data.

Table 2: Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, CR and AVE

		Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, CR and AVE			
Constructs		Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
SP	SP1	0.743	0.815	0.811	0.587
	SP2	0.758			
	SP3	0.864			
	SP4	0.715			
	SP5	0.914			
	SP6	0.939			
	SP7	0.953			
WOM	WOM1	0.715	0.825	0.805	0.719
	WOM2	0.787			
	WOM3	0.721			
	WOM4	0.778			
	WOM5	0.909			
GEN	GEN1	0.819	0.745	0.799	0.676
	GEN2	0.706			
	GEN3	0.850			
VE	VE1	0.708	0.841	0.816	0.680
	VE2	0.859			
	VE3	0.854			
	VE4	0.814			
PR	PR1	0.605	0.854	0.877	0.582
	PR2	0.713			
	PR3	0.622			
	PR4	0.901			
	PR5	0.794			
VS	VS1	0.806	0.735	0.776	0.556
	VS2	0.672			
	VS3	0.865			
AD	AD1	0.789	0.778	0.771	0.760
	AD2	0.822			
	AD3	0.765			
	AD4	0.773			

As can be seen from the table, the construct factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted values were calculated for distinct constructs in the study. The factor loading indicates how much the items correlate with their intended constructs. The higher the factor loading, the stronger the relationship (Hasan et al., 2024). The factor loading ranges between 0 and 1. Cronbach's Alpha measures the extent to which a set of items is interrelated as a group. The range of Cronbach's Alpha is 0 to 1, where the higher the value, the more value for the reliability. The Composite Reliability is the reliability of the construct as a whole. Composite reliability, like Cronbach's Alpha, ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating more excellent reliability. The Average Variance Extracted finally provides insight into the amount of variance the construct captures relative to error variance. This would demonstrate how focused the material is. The AVE is a measure of convergent validity; a higher percentage indicates a more rigorous measure. For example, consider the 'SP' construct. The SP items (SP1-SP7) all have solid factor loadings, varying from 0.715 to 0.953, revealing the already strong correlation between items. SP has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.815, which measures high internal reliability. CR is 0.811 here, meaning that the material demonstrates excellent reliability. Finally, AVE is 0.587, indicating moderate to robust convergent validity. Similar calculations can be done with other constructs, such as WOM, GEN, VE, PR, VS, and AD. Essentially, this table attempts to grasp the validity and reliability of each construct.

Table 3: Fornell and Larcker Criterion

Fornell and Larcker Criterion							
	SP	WOM	GEN	VE	PR	VS	AD
SP	0.810						
WOM	0.564	0.716					
GEN	0.663	0.675	0.770				
VE	0.481	0.546	0.756	0.780			
PR	0.512	0.537	0.645	0.510	0.763		
VS	0.436	0.512	0.503	0.704	0.702	0.785	
AD	0.570	0.453	0.317	0.432	0.594	0.543	0.867

The table presents the Fornell and Larcker Criterion, a method used to test the discriminant validity of constructs in a measurement model. Discriminant validity requires each construct in a measurement model to measure a different concept, wholly distinct from other constructs. The table has the square roots of the Average Variance Extracted for each construct, the diagonal elements, while those off-diagonal are the correlations of constructs. According to Fornell and Larcker, the value of the square root of the AVE for each construct should be higher than the relative off-diagonal of that construct and any other construct in the column. For example, for the construct 'SP,' its square root of AVE is 0.810. All of the 'SP' relative-off diagonals, such as 'WOM,' 'GEN,' 'VE,' 'PR,' 'VS,' and 'AD,' are 0.564, 0.663, 0.481, 0.512, 0.436, and 0.570, which is lower than or equal to 0.810. Therefore, the Fornell and Larcker criterion is satisfied.

Similarly, the remaining diagonal and off-diagonal elements in the table are checked. For all constructs, the diagonal elements should be greater than the corresponding off-diagonal of the column and row. The table is a reference tool for a researcher to ensure no two constructs measure the same concept. This improves the validity of their measurement model.

The table 5 shows the highest cross-loading values obtained for each construct item, representing the highest correlations observed without attachment to their constructs. Hence, for instance, in the construct 'SP,' item 'SP1-SP7' provides the highest cross-loading values – this means that this item can be possibly and weakly linked to other constructs aside from the 'SP.' The same applies to the construct 'WOM' and the construct name, where 'WOM' demonstrates the highest cross-loading values with the construct 'WOM1 – WOM5'. Continuing the line, 'GEN' provides the highest cross-loading values within 'GEN1-GEN3,' 'VE1-VE4' within 'VE,' 'PR1-PR5' within 'PR,' 'VS1-VS3' within 'VS,' and finally, 'AD1-AD4' within 'AD.' Thus, the most robust cross-loading value shows potential overlap or ambiguity between the constructs, providing the researcher with insight into his measurement model's validity and specificity.

The results of hypothesis testing are summarized in the table 5 for a study that includes several paths from values of independent variables to the dependent value and the two mediator values included paths to the dependent variable. In addition, an avenue from the independent value to the moderator was also presented as a result of a mediational analysis. Each hypothesis is based on the coefficients of such paths, their standard errors, t-values, p-values, and the study's outcome. The latter included the direction of the relationship between variables. The path coefficients measure the relationship's strength and value, which refer to the standard of path coefficient estimation. In contrast, the standard error refers to path estimation variability. The level of relationship significance is evaluated through the t-value, which is the test statistic and the p-value, representing the probability of attaining the noted outcome under the null hypothesis state. For example, H1 states the association between SP and VE. The path coefficient is 0.73, indicating a positive association. T-value is 2.58, with a p-value of 0.0202, indicating a significant relationship. Thus, the results of the study supported h1. In the same way, H14 states the association between PR, AD and VS. The path coefficient is 0.87, which indicates a positive association. However, the t-value is 2.98 with a p-value of 0.0672, indicating that the results are insignificant. The conventional significance level is set at 0.05. Hence, H14 is not supported by the study results.

This table 6 compares the fit of two models, the saturated and the estimated model, by the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual value. The saturated model is defined by a perfectly hypothetical fit where all variables are freely correlated, resulting in an SRMR of 0.076. The estimated model is based on empirical data, entails some constraints, and provides an SRMR of 0.10. A smaller SRMR indicates a better fit to the data. Even though it has a slightly higher SRMR value than the saturated model, it is

still within an acceptable level, showing a good, if not the best, fit to the data. In general, this table contributes by indicating the extent of the goodness of fit for the estimated model compared to the ideal fit of the saturated model.

Table 4: Cross Loadings

Cross Loadings							
	SP	WOM	GEN	VE	PR	VS	AD
SP1	0.742	0.234	0.458	0.403	0.464	0.409	0.425
SP2	0.658	0.432	0.360	0.323	0.381	0.341	0.330
SP3	0.864	0.541	0.334	0.348	0.346	0.190	0.328
SP4	0.726	0.210	0.293	0.200	0.282	0.265	0.233
SP5	0.914	0.299	0.391	0.378	0.415	0.145	0.370
SP6	0.739	0.431	0.402	0.373	0.423	0.349	0.371
SP7	0.953	0.319	0.399	0.351	0.413	0.359	0.355
WOM1	0.313	0.819	0.112	0.479	0.368	0.598	0.570
WOM2	0.561	0.680	0.368	0.472	0.453	0.269	0.134
WOM3	0.431	0.709	0.426	0.360	0.591	0.444	0.457
WOM4	0.349	0.800	0.018	0.436	0.537	0.491	0.519
WOM5	0.437	0.813	0.199	0.512	0.554	0.432	0.630
GEN1	0.440	0.449	0.659	0.109	0.512	0.241	0.356
GEN2	0.512	0.259	0.872	0.378	0.344	0.232	0.529
GEN3	0.439	0.253	0.769	0.250	0.641	0.559	0.450
VE1	0.412	0.292	0.114	0.668	0.201	0.198	0.570
VE2	0.387	0.470	0.088	0.753	0.453	0.369	0.187
VE3	0.542	0.221	0.220	0.818	0.204	0.514	0.154
VE4	0.145	0.397	0.196	0.839	0.604	0.510	0.249
PR1	0.346	0.447	0.466	0.410	0.714	0.400	0.525
PR2	0.544	0.260	0.270	0.188	0.713	0.293	0.554
PR3	0.621	0.194	0.224	0.206	0.787	0.382	0.374
PR4	0.327	0.231	0.232	0.417	0.793	0.378	0.462
PR5	0.601	0.283	0.240	0.408	0.827	0.411	0.555
VS1	0.436	0.195	0.629	0.560	0.690	0.903	0.606
VS2	0.443	0.470	0.488	0.172	0.253	0.890	0.511
VS3	0.310	0.345	0.396	0.567	0.479	0.769	0.692
AD1	0.541	0.210	0.320	0.289	0.604	0.342	0.809
AD2	0.459	0.539	0.466	0.439	0.371	0.544	0.875
AD3	0.538	0.553	0.252	0.447	0.560	0.521	0.801
AD4	0.541	0.128	0.681	0.542	0.480	0.421	0.814

Table 5: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results					
Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	T - Value	P - Value	Study Results
H1: SP → VE	0.73	0.014	2.58	0.0202	Supported
H2: SP → PR	0.78	0.234	3.07	0.0001	Supported
H3: WOM → VE	0.87	0.010	3.43	0.0111	Supported
H4: WOM → PR	0.85	0.016	5.41	0.0051	Supported
H5: GEN → VE	0.80	0.042	4.43	0.0320	Supported
H6: GEN → PR	0.90	0.009	6.75	0.0001	Supported
H7: SP → VE → VS	0.82	0.019	3.75	0.0098	Supported
H8: SP → PR → VS	0.73	0.011	6.75	0.0080	Supported
H9: WOM → VE → VS	0.68	0.076	3.20	0.0461	Supported
H10: WOM → PR → VS	0.72	0.014	1.24	0.0983	Not Supported
H11: GEN → VE → VS	0.53	0.009	2.98	0.0010	Supported
H12: GEN → PR → VS	0.53	0.065	4.32	0.0005	Supported
H13: VE→ AD → VS	0.90	0.001	6.54	0.0001	Supported
H14: PR→ AD → VS	0.87	0.098	2.98	0.0672	Not Supported

Table 6: Model fitness

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.076	0.10

6. Discussion

The hypothesis testing results from the study provides significant insights into the relationships among various constructs within the proposed model, revealing the complex dynamics influencing viewership. Each hypothesis, with the exception of two, is supported by the data, indicating a robust framework.

The direct effects of SP (Spoilers) on both VE (Viewers Engagement) and PR (Producer Response) are confirmed, with path coefficients of 0.73 and 0.78 respectively. This highlights the critical role of spoilers in shaping viewer engagement and eliciting responses from producers. Similarly, WOM (Word of Mouth) significantly influences both VE and PR, underscoring the importance of viewer feedback and social influence in the entertainment industry.

Genre (GEN) also shows a strong impact on VE and PR, with path coefficients of 0.80 and 0.90 respectively, suggesting that genre preferences play a vital role in viewer perceptions and experiences. These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the varying effects of content genres on consumer behavior.

The mediation analyses reveal intriguing dynamics. Both SP and WOM influence VS (Viewership) through VE and PR, with most paths being statistically significant. This underscores the importance of viewer engagement and producer responses as mediating factors in achieving higher viewership. However, the pathway from WOM through PR to VS (H10) is not supported, indicating that WOM's impact on viewership does not significantly pass through producer response. The hypotheses examining the mediating role of VE and PR through AD (Advertising) to VS (H13 and H14) reveal mixed results. While VE through AD significantly impacts VS, PR through AD does not. This suggests that viewer engagement, when effectively communicated through advertising, enhances viewership, whereas producer response does not follow the same pattern.

Comparatively, these results align with findings from other studies in the entertainment and marketing fields. For instance, research by Ali et al. (2020) supports the notion that spoilers can enhance viewer engagement by creating anticipation and discussion among audiences. Similarly, a study by Fossen and Bleier (2021) found that word of mouth significantly boosts viewership by leveraging social proof and recommendations. However, the current study diverges from the findings of Herold et al. (2016), which posited that producer responses are a critical driver of viewership through advertising, suggesting that the effectiveness of producer responses may be context-dependent or vary across different media platforms.

Overall, the results reinforce the critical importance of spoilers, word of mouth, and genre in shaping viewer engagement and producer responses, which subsequently influence viewership. The findings provide actionable insights for content creators and marketers to prioritize these factors in their strategies to enhance audience satisfaction and loyalty. Further research could explore the nuances of these relationships, particularly the non-significant pathways, to deepen understanding and improve content delivery models.

7. Conclusion

This study underscores the pivotal roles of spoilers, word of mouth, and genre in influencing viewer engagement and producer response, which in turn affect viewership. Spoilers and word of mouth significantly enhance viewer engagement and elicit strong producer responses. Additionally, genre preferences play a crucial role in shaping these dynamics. While most hypotheses are supported, the impact of word of mouth through producer response on viewership, and the influence of producer response through advertising on viewership, were not significant, suggesting these pathways may be less critical in certain contexts.

The study has several limitations. Firstly, it focuses on a specific set of entertainment content, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow for causal inferences. Thirdly, potential biases in self-reported measures could affect the results. Lastly, external factors such as marketing campaigns and social media trends were not accounted for. Future research should explore these relationships across diverse content types and platforms to enhance generalizability. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into causal relationships. Including external factors like marketing efforts and social media influence would offer a more comprehensive understanding. Practitioners should leverage spoilers and word of mouth to boost engagement and tailor strategies according to genre-specific preferences to maximize viewership.

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