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RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring Social Media Influencers' Attitudes toward Self-Improvement and Belongingness: The Mediating Role of Virtual Influencer Credibility on Brand Attitude

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to clarify how social media influencers' perspectives on belonging and self-improvement affect young consumers' attitude towards the brand. The goal is to shed light on how self-improvement and a sense of belongingness affect brand preferences in the era of digital influencers by examining the mediating effect of virtual influencer credibility in influencing young consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward brands. A cross-sectional survey method, employing a positivist and deductive approach, was utilized to collect data from 154 participants. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to identify correlations between variables. The study utilized convenience sampling, along with a seven-point Likert scale. The findings provide light on many different aspects of influencer marketing and the evolving significance of influencers in the age of technology. As this offers insightful information about the complex patterns of self-improvement, Belongingness, and brand attitude in the world of social media influencers. The study also indicated that social media influencers' views on belonging and self-improvement have a big impact on young people's perceptions towards the brand. . This study adds to literature an original perspective on social media influencers and the relationships they have with belongingness, self-improvement, and brand attitude. By highlighting the fact that influencers are active drivers of social and personal change instead of just being spokespersons for brands, it creates an innovative model in the field of internet marketing.

| **KEYWORDS** | Attitude towards Brand, Need to Belong, Self-Improvement, **S**ocial Media Influencer, Virtual Influencer Credibility |

Introduction:

Social media influencers (SMIs) have become more and more common due to the growth of social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, and Twitter. A social media influencer is a person who has a sizable social media network of followers as a result of their online content and the ability to maintain influence over those followers (Ki & Kim, 2019). According to Muzaffar, et. al. (2019) Varsamis, (2018) and Muzaffar, et. al. (2020) these SMIs communicate with their followers through their views, subject-matter knowledge, and frequently sponsored goods. To their followers, they frequently promote sponsored products (Varsamis, 2018). As a result, some well-known brands have jumped on the new SMI endorsement marketing bandwagon to increase their brand recognition and sale. Social media influencers strive to improve the quality of life for their target audience especially young

consumers on all levels. For instance, influencing young consumers to use or buy a particular product or service or to change habits, attitudes, or behaviors—like what they wear, eat, or make other lifestyle decisions—are examples (Ryan, 2014; Solomon, 2020).

Virtual influencers are new type of influencers. Now a days young consumers are following them. It was projected that the influencer marketing market would reach about $21.1 billion by 2023. According to Data Bridge Market Research, the influencer marketing platform market had a value of USD 7.36 billion in 2021 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 32.50% from 2022 to 2029 to reach USD 69.92 billion. Before making a purchase, 67% of beauty fans consult influencers. The majority of 520 Facebook beauty young fans surveyed by Vetesse before making a purchase are consuming influencer content: In 59% of cases, outside reviews are read. 55% consult with industry experts in beauty. According to statistics, 70% of teenagers believe SMIs to be more trustworthy than conventional celebrities (DMI, 2018), and 53% of women have purchased purchases based on SMIs' recommendations (Morrison, 2016). SMIs frequently become recognized as authorities on a particular field. Makeup and beauty influencer Huda Kattan has 47.9 million Instagram followers. Huda, who is well-known for her makeup and beauty advice tutorials, is the owner of several lucrative brands, including Huda beauty and Wishful skin. Her ascent to success as a valuable influencer was based on the millions of followers she attracted with her personal and distinctive beauty advice. Similar to this, fashion blogger and businesswoman Chiara Ferragni has over 22.5 million Instagram followers. She has been sponsored by a number of reputable companies, including Bulgari and Hermes, and she owns her own brand.

The use of social media by celebrities to build and maintain relationships with their fans especially with young consumers and to promote products has increased recently, therefore it's important to know how they affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Furthermore, digital content providers have the ability to become social media influencers (SMIs) and change the attitudes, prices, and purchasing patterns of young consumers. Public figures and corporations working together is not a new concept.

It is a current issue that has arisen with as social media platforms have grown, so too has the field of study on social media influencers and virtual influencers as human brands. The effectiveness, impact, and moral implications of deploying virtual and social media influencers to develop a human brand are currently being researched and debated. This is also an exciting and dynamic field of study because of how quickly the social media landscape is changing and because new trends and methods are always emerging according to the demands of young consumers.

Influencer marketing is a potent branding and marketing technique that draws attention to brands from social media users (SMUs), particularly millennials in Generation Y and Gen Z. The fact that followers are the ultimate consumers of social media as well as the products and services that SMIs promote, there is an increasing need for a deeper understanding of social dynamics in the context of digital interactions between followers.

For social media influencers, staying genuine while developing their personal brands is a major challenge. They must strike a balance between being authentic and producing material that engages with their audience. Additionally, they might have to deal with inappropriate material and fake items, among other brand safety issues. Social media influencers are paid well to promote goods, therefore they don't always consider the merits of the products they are endorsing because it is their job to do so. If the social media influencer promotes everyone, one of the disadvantages is that if the follower has

a problem with the product, the social media influencer will be responsible because she reviewed it for payment because it was her job and the customer lost.

Literature Review

The current study applies as per Tajfel's definition from 1972, "social identity" refers to an individual's understanding of being a member of a particular community along with the emotional and personal significance they attach to it. As per the findings of (Ellemers, Spears et al. 2002), social identity can be defined as the element of an individual's self-concept that arises from their connection with a community of people or groups, together with the emotional and monetary significance associated with their involvement.

Social identity theory explains how online communities are formed and maintained by social media influencers who cultivate a sense of identity and belonging. In light of the influencer's content and brand connections, followers' behavior and attitudes are influenced by these dynamics, which are explained by the theory as well as why followers identify with and interact with influencers. Consumers are attracted to brands and goods that reflect aspects of their social identities (many studies in the fields of psychology and marketing have been done on this topic; see, for example, (Forehand, Deshpandé et al. 2002).

Influencers on social media frequently establish a unique online persona. By associating with particular hobbies, ideals, and lifestyle options, they forge this identity. Within their online communities, influencers have the power to create and uphold specific standards. Followers might feel more confident in themselves and like they belong to a community of like-minded people by interacting with the influencer's content and connecting with their online persona. The online communities of influencers offer a means for users to identify with a specific group, frequently based on common interests, values, or goals that the influencer exemplifies.

Self -improvement

A purposeful change in yourself is an essential part of self-improvement. (O'Brien and Kardas, 2017; Sedikides and Hepper, 2009) From a single moment to the next. The drive to better oneself appears in one's (Sedikides and Hepper, 2009) Cognitive suggests that might improving one's character, improving oneself, developing confidence, or any of another modification to one's personality. people's perceptions of themselves plays a crucial part in it as it evolves constantly (Gao, Wheeler et al. 2009). When people discover a way to improve themselves, they feel the desire to inequalities in their perception of themselves, or the distance between the self-perception that they currently have and the ideal self-perception (Mandel, Rucker et al, 2017). The concept of self-improvement is widely understood and encompasses a variety of goods and services, such as wellness apps (millennials spend twice as much as baby boomers), self-growth literature (for example, the UK sees a 20% increase in self-improvement literature), personal coaching (the second fastest growing industry worldwide), and motivational speakers ($1bn US market) (LaRosa, 2018). This desire can be seen in a variety of consumption-related choices that people make to enhance various aspects of their selves, such as beginning a rigorous exercise regimen or acquiring a new skill. The study of SMIs demonstrates that followers want to imitate SMIs because they see them as cultural and political influencers (Ki & Kim, 2019).

Need To Belong

The "need to belong" theory is a major factor in how individuals relate to and engage with political and cultural leaders. According to (Leary and Baumeister, 1995), this need is the primary motivation to establish and preserve meaningful interpersonal relationships, demonstrating the need for acceptance and validation. According to the notion of the need to belong (Leary, Kelly et al, 2013), people who have a high need to belong are more likely to actively seek out and cherish relationships and to care profoundly about how other people see them. Building and sustaining relationships is necessary to satisfy the desire to belong, according to(Hall and Davis 2017), albeit each person's need for belonging is different in terms of intensity. People seek perceived intimacy and social relationships at different levels, according to (Greenwood and Long, 2011), particularly when interacting with celebrities and other prominent media characters. These well-known individuals, who are easily accessed through both new and conventional media channels, are regarded as reliable resources for satisfying the want for acceptance. According to (Escalas and Bettman, 2017), their extensive celebrity and public familiarity make them desirable sources for this reason.

Virtual influencer creditability

As consumer connection with online spaces and platforms deepens and spreads, the lines separating real life and the virtual world are becoming increasingly hazy (Robinson, 2020). In light of this, an intriguing line of current study examines how people interact with VIs and their responses and behaviors. The objective to observe real and virtual influences was determined to be identical by (Sands, Ferraro et al, 2022). In both situations, observers showed the same level of receptivity and assessed both types of influencers' customization levels to be equivalent. The application of social heuristics of human interaction is motivated by prior research that demonstrates audiences' great propensity to mistakenly assign human qualities and behaviors to computers. (Lou, Kiew et al, 2023)claim that VIs can sway consumers' engagement and decisions because of their millions of SM follower's. However, (Sands, Ferraro et al, 2022) highlighted that VIs are less trusted by individuals than influencers despite the fact that consumers are open to recommendations from VIs. According to Huang et al.'s research from 2022, consumers were more ready to buy when virtual idols were popular, homogeneous, relevant, and anthropomorphic. Unquestionably, one of the key factors affecting the efficacy of influencers is what is known as parasocial interaction, which refers to the envisioned one-sided relationship between the creator and the viewer (Shan, Chen et al, 2020). As opposed to traditional influencers, VIs have a closer social connection to their audience.

Attitude towards brand

According to (Lutz, MacKenzie et al. 1983), attitude toward the brand (Ab) is the affective response of viewers to the marketed brand. In addition to reasoning, affect is another factor that has been extensively examined in terms of how it affects attitude. The definition of affect is "evaluative reactions that can be embodied" (Clore and Schnall 2005). While some thinkers believed that psychological structure entirely accountable for attitude creation and modification, taking into account the influence of Others have proposed that affect also has a direct, independent impact on behavior (Bodur, Brinberg et al,2000). In addition, it is claimed that the focus of attitude – whether it is toward an action or an object – determines how affect influences attitude (Clore and Schnall, 2005). When an object is the focus of evaluation, either a positive or negative affect can be applied to that object; however, when tasks and actions are the main focus, affect affects how information is processed (Clore and Schnall, 2005).

Hypothetical Development:

Self-improvement with virtual influencer creditability:

The credibility of virtual influencers and self-improvement are positively correlated. When it comes to beauty product suggestions, people who follow beauty influencers typically have more faith in them. On the other hand, comparable advertising initiatives that lack clarity and easily recognizable advertisements may have a detrimental effect on the reputation of beauty influencers. Perceived trustworthiness of these influencers is crucial in cultivating positive attitudes towards them. The audience's attitudes and actions toward influencers are more likely to be positive when they are seen as credible. Many people place a high value on self-improvement, and if this goal can be rewarding and pleasurable, it can help make the path to better personal health easier to navigate. The idea that beauty can be beneficial is being more and more supported by the field of psychology. People are more likely to investigate and accept novel ideas when they actively participate in their education. Learning may be enjoyable and lead to new ideas and insights, as (Tews, Michel et al. 2017) have highlighted.

H1 The consumer need for self-improvement is influenced by virtual influencer credibility

Need to belong relationship with virtual influencers' credibility

The desire for acceptance by people in a group or online beauty influencers, commonly referred to as the need to belong or belongingness, is a basic human need. As seen in earlier sections, a beauty celebrity endorser may give meaning to the brands he or she supports (Escalas and Bettman, 2017), acting as a foundation for customers' appraisals of the brand. We believe that the impact of celebrity attachment on brand assessments can be more apparent for some customers, particularly those with a high need to belong, in line with (Miller and Allen, 2012) hypothesis that consumers' need to belong may interfere with the meaning transmission mechanism. According to (Escalas and Bettman 2017), consumers with a strong need to belong are more likely to go to beauty brands that are supported by notable figures for significant indications. According to (Pickett, Gardner et al. 2004), those who feel the desire to belong may pay greater attention to social indicators and draw a conclusion based on them. Using this concept as support, (Puzakova, Kwak et al, 2009)argued that customers who have a strong need to belong are more likely to notice human inspiration in beauty brands and actively engage in anthropomorphism of the brand with the final objective of satisfying their needs for social belonging through the use or purchase. In other words, these customers tend to attribute importance to beauty brands depending on what or who a brand is socially associated. Similar to this, it is predicted that for customers who have a strong desire to belong, meaning transfers from a linked celebrity to a brand would happen more strongly.

H2 Need to belong is influenced by virtual influencer credibility.

Virtual influencer creditability relation towards brand attitude:

As user interaction with online platforms and places develops and becomes stronger, the lines dividing real life and online life are becoming thinner (Robinson 2020). The success of influencer marketing can also be shown in terms of how someone's discomfort with how they look influences them to take an influencer's suggestions and make purchases. According to (Deng and Jiang, 2023), influencers in both situations lead to observers being unsatisfied with how they appear, though this discontent occurs more

frequently in the case of human influencers. It also suggests that human influencers are more effective in creating a stronger desire to purchase the recommended beauty products. The study of the effect of AI-based deep fake advertisements on consumers buy intentions in e-commerce (Sivathanu, Pillai et al,2023) revealed encouraging results, revealing that 62.2% of consumers intended to make online purchases after watching these advertisements.

H3-Virtual influencer credibility is positively relation with brand attitude.

Self-improvement with virtual influencer credibility as mediator and attitude towards brand:

Self-improvement and the validity of online beauty influencers are directly related. When they support the advertised beauty product, those who follow beauty influencers gain increased trust. Similar efforts suffer from limited brand honor, which degrades the role of beauty influencers. It's necessary for beauty influencers to appear trustworthy in order to generate good feelings. How someone's worry impacts their decision to follow an influencer's advice and make purchases is another way to measure the success of social media advertising. (Deng and Jiang, 2023)assert that influencers in both situations result in onlookers feeling unhappy with how they appear, though the feeling occurs frequently in the case of human influencers. It also suggests people have more options for shaping people's decisions to buy the suggested makeup. Information from previous studies and practical applications suggests that SMI power It's going to affect consumer attitudes towards brand generally. According to the consumer socialization theory, market signaling theory, and the naive theory of social influence discussed above, increasing the SMI power is expected to lead to more favorable consumer sentiments regarding the endorsed brand. This could be because customers are more inclined to attribute their own SMI personal qualities to the marketed brand(s) as SMI power increases. Relatedly, an influential SMI's function as a socialization agent could predispose consumers to pick up part or all of their norms, attitudes, motives, and behaviors, including the SMI's preference for the advertised brands.

H4 Self-improvement shows positive relationship with virtual influencers and attitude towards brand.

Need to belong relationship with virtual influencers Credibility (mediating role) and relationship with brand attitude

As seen in the previous section, a celebrity endorser could give meaning to the brands they support (Escalas and Bettman 2017)providing as inspiration for consumers evaluations of those companies. We suggest that, in agreement with (Miller and Allen, 2012)hypothesis that needs to belong may interfere with the meaning transfer mechanism the impact of celebrity attachment on brand assessments can be more apparent for some consumers particularly those with a high need to belong. According to (Escalas and Bettman 2017), customers who have a strong need to belong are more likely to go to brands that have celebrity endorsements for significant information. (Puzakova, Kwak et al. 2009)customer who have a strong need to belong are more likely to notice human instructions in brands and actively participates in anthropomorphizing them in order to satisfy their needs for social inclusion through brand consumption or purchase. To put it another way, these customers tend to attribute significance to brand depending on what or who a brand is socially connected to. In the same way, it is expected that meaning transference from an associated celebrity to a brand will happen more strongly for customers who have a strong need to belong.

H5- Need to belong is influenced with virtual influencer and is positively associated with brand attitude.
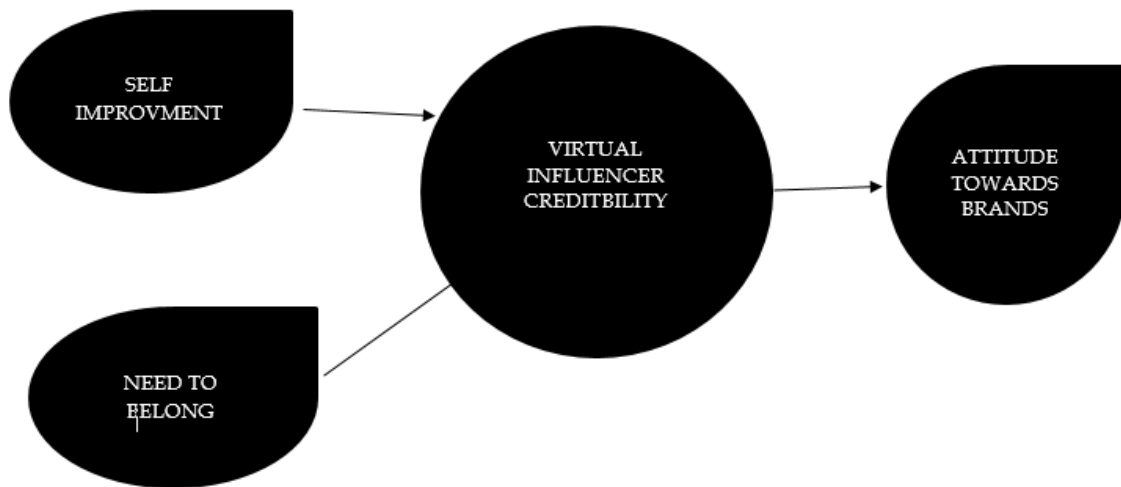

Figure 1: Conceptual model

Material and Methods

The study structure's independent and dependent variables are estimated using scale items that have been modified from an already-published collection of studies. The construct's dependability and reliability are guaranteed by adapting scale items from the body of current research to ensure the construct's reliability and dependability. The scale item of self-improvement comprises four items and was adapted from the study of (Social media influencers as a human brand -a need fulfillment perspective)**.** Similarly, the three-item scale of attitude towards brand was adapted from the study of (The influence of users generated content on attitude towards brands and purchase intention-case of Bahrain). Moreover, the four-item scale of virtual influencer credibility was adapted that measuring the concept of credibility. Lastly, the four-item scale for need to belong was adapted from the prestigious studies of (Leary et al. (2013); seven -point Likert scale anchored with SD- SA) respectively.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage
Age	15-25	110	71.4
	26-35	34	22.1
	36-45	1	.6
	46-55	9	5.8
Gender	Male	88	57.1
	Female	66	42.9
Marital	Single	125	81.2
	Married	25	16.2
	Divorced	3	1.9
	Widower/Widow	1	0.6
Education Level	Primary	2	1.3
	Secondary	41	26.6
	Bachelors	66	42.9
	Masters	37	24.0
	Other	8	5.2

Occupation	Unemployed	74	48.1
	Self-employed	32	20.8
	Formal employed	9	5.8
	Professional	25	16.2
	Other	14	9.1

Data Collection and Analysis

Considering the empirical nature of the study, the random sampling technique is used to collect the data from respondents. The initiative will now go to a survey-based quantitative research phase, where 154 SMI followers will be utilized for filling up the online questionnaire. Young consumers were asked to respond to the questions. Google Form and questionnaire were used for collecting data. This large sample size is deemed good for the SEM-based analysis. SMART PLS 4 and SPSS software were used. The demographic analysis shows that 42.9% of respondents were male and 57.1% were female respondents. Table1, illustrates the demographic profile of the study in accordance with the control variables.

Table 2
Scale items and assessment measurement model

Construct	Items	Loading	CA	CR	AVE	INN VIF	R²
Self Improvement (SI)	(SI 1). He/She offers helpful beauty tips.	0.856	0.920	0.922	0.808	2.100	
	(SI 2).He/She helps me to become more confident about makeup and beauty.	0.924					
	(SI 3) He/She helps me to become better in makeup and beauty.	0.919					
	(SI 4). It's trendy to interact with my favorite ones via social media for makeup.	0.895					
Need To Belong (NTB)	(NTB1). It bothers me if other people don't seem to accept her	0.839	0.886	0.889	0.745	2.100	
	(NTB2). I often worry about whether other people care about her or not.	0.884					
	(NTB3). He/She tries hard not to do things which other people don't like.	0.836					
	(NTB4). He/She doesn't like to let you stay lonely.	0.893					
Virtual Influencer Credibility (VIC)	(VIC1) He/She is a credible person	0.391	0.750	0.835	0.595	1.000	0.553
	(VIC2). He/She tells the whole story.	0.890					
	(VIC3). He/She is fair in her talks.	0.878					
	(VIC4).He/She is concerned about community.	0.814					
Attitude Towards Brand (ATB)	(ATB1). He/She tends to search online beauty products.	0.816	0.815	0.817	0.730		0.536
	(ATB2).He/She always receives high quality products.	0.879					
		0.822					

	(ATB3). He/She gives impression that beauty brand has a good quality.

Common Method Bias

In order to figure out if common method

bias is present the study used Harman's single-factor methodology. Cronbach's alpha, factor loading, and composite reliability are among the outcomes of the measurement. The Cronbach's alpha values, the composite reliability values are higher than the required minimum of 0.70. According to these findings, the study satisfies reliability criteria. Further, it finds out that the average variance extracted (AVE) values are higher than the minimal requirement of 0.50. This demonstrates that the reliability requirements are met. The graphical results of these criteria are shown in Figure 2.
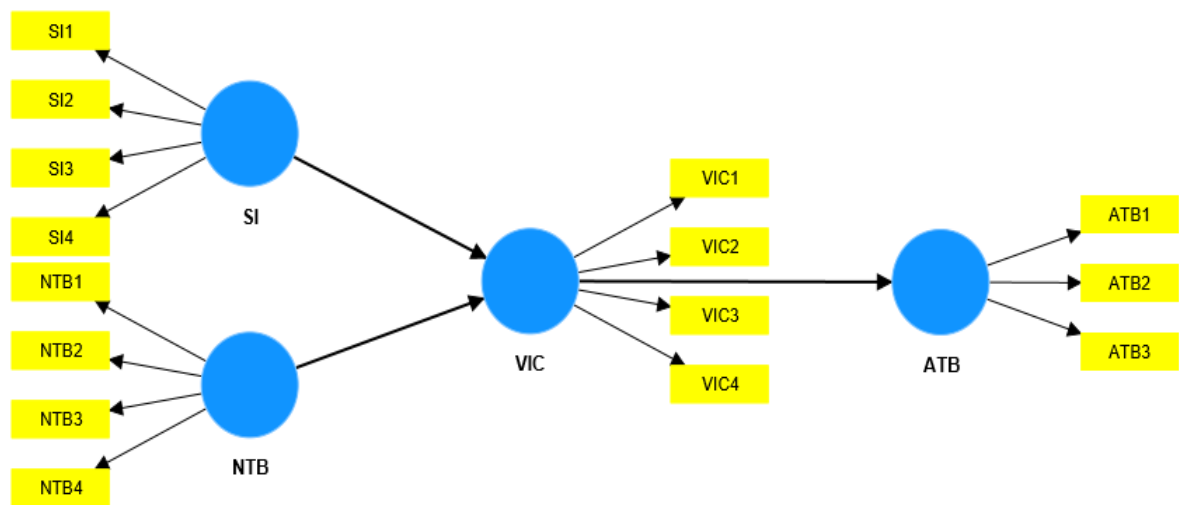

Figure 2. Presents the graphical outcome of the measurement model and path relationships.

Results and Discussion

Assessment of Measurement Model

A critical component of evaluating the measurement model is estimating the discriminant validity between the components. To determine the discriminant validity, the social scientist frequently uses two methods. The Fornell-Larcker and HTMT approach is shown initially. This method makes sure the diagonal values of the HTMT table are the AVE square roots and that they are correlated. According to hair (2010,2019), all values should be lower than this criterion and the HTMT outcome should be less than 0.85 these suggest that the measures for all constructs have acceptable levels of reliability and discriminant and convergent validity. The discriminant validity is best assessed using HTMT. The variance influence factor (VIF) outcome is shown in Table 2. By calculating the means of independent variables that have an influence on the other variables, VIF calculates the multi-collinearity. All of the VIF values in this study fall within the specified range, which is where the values of VIF should fall.

Table 3
(HTMT) Matrix .outcome of the study

	ATB	NTB	SI	VIC
ATB				
NTB	8.837			

SI	0.716	0.803	
VIC	0.907	0.808	0.839

Table 4
Fornell-Larcker Matrix

	ATB	NTB	SI	VIC
ATB	0.854			
NTB	0.713	0.863		
SI	0.620	0.724	0.899	
VIC	0.734	0.676	0.709	0.771

Hypothesis Testing (Path Analysis)

The study has five testable statements. Three hypotheses will check the direct relationships of the variables. Two hypothesis belongs to the mediation relationship. The beta value represents the positive or negative relationship between the variables. T-value is significant representing the existence of the relationship. Whereas, a P-value less than 0.01 means a strong relationship exists between the construct.

In the current study, H1 represents self-improvement having significant impact on virtual influencer credibility. The results show that both have strong relationship that makes a positive contribution to the with β=0.462, and p-value=0.000. Hence H1 is approved. H2 discusses relationship between need to belong and virtual influencer creditability the results show that both makes a strong and positive contribution to with β=0.341, and p-value=0.000. Hence H2 is also approved. The third hypothesis (H3) evaluates the relationship between virtual influencers credibility and attitude towards brand. The results show the existence of a positive relationship between the two variables with β=0.734, and p-value=0.000. therefore, H3 is also approved. H4 present the mediation effect SI->VIC->ATB where beta value is 0.399 and p value is significant. There is a partial mediation. So H4 is approved. The last H5 is also mediation NTB->VIC->ATB has significant results. So H5 is approved.

Table 5
Hypotheses tests

HYPOTHESIS	Path	beta	Std	T value	P value	Results
H1 DIRECT	SI->VIC	0.462	0.089	5.193	0.000	Supported
H2 DIRECT	NTB->VIC	0.341	0.085	4.015	0.000	Supported
H3 DIRECT	VIC->ATB	0.734	0.053	13.766	0.000	Supported
H4 INDIRECT	SI->VIC->ATB	0.339	0.069	4.9550	0.000	Supported
H5 INDIRECT	NTB->VIC->ATB	0.251	0.071	3.533	0.000	Supported

Table 6
Mediation hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	Std. dev	T-Value	P-Value	Result
H4	SI->VIC->ATB	0.339	0.069	4.9550	0.000	Approved
H5	NTB->VIC->ATB	0.251	0.071	3.533	0.000	Approved

The mediation effect SI->VIC->ATB is presented in H4, where the p-value is significant and the beta value is 0.399. A Partial mediation is in place. H4 is therefore authorized. The final H5 also shows significant results for the mediation NTB->VIC->ATB. Thus, H5 is accepted.

Conclusion

The results shed light on the many different aspects of influencer marketing as well as the evolving importance of influencers in the technological era. They also provide

valuable insights into the intricate patterns of belongingness, brand attitude, and self-improvement that exist among social media influencers. The fascinating connection between the power of virtual influencers on brand perceptions and their trustworthiness. Like traditional influencers, virtual influencers are fully digital creations and have the unique capacity to seem more reliable as well as approachable, which helps their followers feel more like they belong. This increased trust in virtual influencers resulted in noticeably more positive brand views among their audiences' especially young consumers, indicating that in the social media age, consumers' perceptions and behaviors can be shaped by the authenticity of the digital world just as much as by reality.

In order to better understand how social media influencers' views toward self-improvement and belongingness interact with their overall trustworthiness, we looked at the numerous relationships between these characteristics and how brand attitudes are shaped by them. According to the results, consumer perceptions of a brand's credibility are highly influenced by their need for belonging and self-improvement. In order to better understand how social media influencers' views toward self-improvement and belongingness interact with their perceived credibility, we looked at the complex interactions between these characteristics and how brand attitudes are shaped by them. According to the results, customers' opinions of a brand's credibility are highly influenced by their need for belonging and self-improvement. This means that influencers can increase their marketing effectiveness and create more positive feelings about the businesses they promote by genuinely representing the values of personal development and community involvement. Virtual influencers play an important part in influencing consumers' impressions of brands as they look for more relatable and reliable personalities in their online interactions.

Additionally, the importance of sincerity and reliability in influencer marketing techniques is highlighted by the mediating role of virtual influencer credibility. The findings of our study emphasize that influencer interactions should be given top priority by brands in order to connect with consumers who share their goals of community involvement and self-improvement. Brands may successfully use the power of social media personalities to improve their interactions with customers by establishing real connections and endorsing believable stories. In order to enhance our understanding of influencer impact in the quickly changing digital environment, future studies ought to look further into the multifaceted nature of these connections across a range of platforms and categories.

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