



## Evaluating the effect of Personality Traits on Intention to Digital Autopreneurship: Mediating Role of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of mediating the role of motivation in the relationship between personality traits and intention to digital autopreneurship on Instagram. In terms of method, it is a descriptive survey correlation with the nature of the application and in terms of cross-sectional time. The statistical population of this study Includes influencer and active people pages on Instagram from various fields network, 275 people were selected as the statistical sample by the convenience sampling method. The research measurement tool was a researcher-made questionnaire for the variables of personality dimensions, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and digital autopreneurship. The validity of the questionnaires was done by the face and content method and to determine its reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated which was estimated at 0.965. Data analysis was performed using Spss23 and Smart Pls3 software. The results showed that personality traits have an effect on the Intention to digital autopreneurship. Also, the mediating role of extrinsic motivation in the relationship between personality traits and Intention to digital autopreneurship was also confirmed; But the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the relationship between personality traits and Intention to digital autopreneurship was rejected. In the continuation of this research, it is recommended to pay attention to personality traits and extrinsic motivations in order to Increasing People's Intention to digital autopreneurship.

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## 1. Introduction

Cyberspace users, such as bloggers, acquire the status of “digital celebrities” when they gain significant followers on their platforms on Instagram or YouTube. According to Liu, Qu, and Zhao (2017, pp.62-63), digital celebrities are very accessible. They communicate frequently and directly with their followers. This high level of interaction with celebrities creates familiarity and strong interest among their fans. Celebrities have a significant social influence on their followers in the digital space (Jin & Phua, 2014, pp.181-195). This power enables them to play the role of thought leadership, create new attitudes, and change the behaviors of their followers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, pp. 1-7).

One of the behaviors of digital celebrity followers affecting the users is the level of consumption so that digital celebrities and their followers form extra-organizational relationships (Hwang & Zhang, 2018, pp. 155-173). In this regard, followers are more likely to find their favorite celebrities as authentic and reliable sources of information. Many companies have recognized the power of such extra-organizational relationships. They have reallocated their marketing budget to work with celebrities and influencers. Digital celebrities can benefit emotionally, socially, and economically from their follower base. Celebrities' financial rewards come from their status as public figures. Digital celebrities benefit from social media platforms' revenue-sharing policies and followers' payments. Digital celebrities also cooperate with certain brands and develop their business.

The celebrity entrepreneurship phenomenon in the digital space has been named the phenomenon of digital autopreneurship, that is, a combination of “autobiography” and “entrepreneurship” (Ashman et al., 2018, pp. 474–483). Digital celebrities are skillful in identifying opportunities and identifying and achieving resources. In other words, they are entrepreneurs (Morris et al., 2013, pp. 352–369). Entrepreneurship development requires paying attention to the motivations of people associated with one of the following items: extrinsic rewards, the autonomy of action, intrinsic rewards, or family security. These four types of motivation also contribute to entrepreneurial success.

Intrinsically-motivated entrepreneurs desire intrinsic rewards such as increasing one's knowledge and skills and increasing a challenge. Extrinsically-motivated entrepreneurs pursue external rewards such as money (Benzing, Chu & Kara, 2009, pp. 58–91). Regarding the relationship between personality and the intention to be an entrepreneur, considering the theory of integrated personality traits (i.e., big five personality traits), Wang et al. (2016) stated that motivation plays a mediating role in the relationship between personality and intention to entrepreneurship. Their experimental results show that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

are significant mediators. Entrepreneurship studies show that entrepreneurial intention plays a significant role in people's decision to start a business and is the first stage of the entrepreneurial process. However, there is little information about the factors affecting entrepreneurial intention, especially in developing countries (Nabi & Linan, 2011, pp. 325-334). This problem is especially evident from a psychological point of view. Highly credible and popular social media like Instagram users who present their content online are digital celebrities who can influence their followers and develop business activities by showing the authenticity of their lives. Since digital autopreneurship is different from ordinary entrepreneurship, it is necessary to investigate whether the existing theories are predictable for this new form of entrepreneurship and what is the effect of personality traits and motivation on the intention to digital autopreneurship?

## **2. Review literature:**

### ***2.1. The theory of big five personality traits***

Although many personality traits have been identified, the most accepted method for personality evaluation is the Big Five model (Mount, Ilies & Johnson, 2006, pp. 591–622). These five factors are as follows:

Neuroticism (emotional stability): People with emotional stability are secure, confident, stable, and calm. On the other side of the spectrum, lack of emotional stability is nervousness and neuroticism, and people on this side are angry, uncertain, insecure, depressed, and anxious (Yang et al., 2015, pp.568-580).

Extroversion: Extroversion people are social and decisive, while introverted people are reserved, timid, quiet, and cautious (Bolvardi & Damavandian, 2015, pp. 1255-1249).

Flexibility (openness): this factor refers to a person's interest and fascination with new phenomena and experiences. These people are creative, curious, and sensitive. People on the other side of the spectrum follow tradition and are more comfortable in familiar situations (Sodermans et al., 2016, pp. 1-22).

Agreeableness: Agreeable people have a spirit of cooperation and are friendly and reliable. On the contrary, disagreeable people are cold, competitive, and belligerent (Sadeghi et al., 2016, p. 655).

Conscientiousness: Conscientious people are responsible, stable, structured, and reliable, while less conscientious people, i.e., those who score low in this dimension, are unreliable and disturbed (Rezvan & Arefi, 2016, pp. 5-270).





## ***2.2. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations***

Motivation can be classified into two categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. When individuals perform tasks in an enriched job, they feel effective, competent, and meaningful, which means intrinsic motivation in the job (Hejazi et al., 2013, pp. 77-88). Extrinsic motivation becomes meaningful when a source of behavior reinforcement or a source of reward is an external factor. In other words, a person performs a behavior to reach a specific external state or condition (Amabile, 1993, pp. 185-201). Extrinsic motivation is based on external rewards such as (food, money, and position and is considered by others, etc.). Most of these people focus on the issues surrounding themselves and other people rather than their satisfaction and pleasure. Instead of focusing their attention on doing the activity correctly and feeling satisfaction from it, this type of person focuses on social rewards and punishments (Alborazi and Razavieh, 2013, pp. 57-66).

### ***Digital autopreneurship***

From the conventional perspective of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs experience work professionally and can create new opportunities owing to opportunities or alertness and readiness to recognize them (Guercini & Cova, 2018, pp. 385– 391). Unconventional entrepreneurship uses passion and not recognition of the opportunity to start the entrepreneurial process. Unconventional entrepreneurs are often ordinary consumers' with the tendency and passion for doing their leisure or hobby activities (Milanesi, 2018, pp. 423–430).

Their passion enhances their knowledge and competence (Shah, S. K., & Tripsas, 2007, pp. 123–140) and enables them to be active in their interest groups, which can increase their popularity compared to other group members (Haefliger et al., 2010, pp. 1198–1213). It also helps the use and development of innovative products with commercialization potential. It also results in identifying the opportunities and creating. This is the fundamental difference from ordinary entrepreneurship. According to these definitions, digital entrepreneurship is classified as digital autopreneurship. Very credible and popular social media users spend time presenting their self-produced content online. These digital celebrities can influence their followers and develop business activities by displaying the authenticity of their life or product expertise (Yeh et al., 2020, pp. 35-45). A summary of the domestic and foreign background related to the research variables is presented in Table 1.

**Table1- summary of domestic and foreign research background**

Author	Goal	Important findings
Haghdadeh et al. (2020).	Investigating the relationship between entrepreneurial desire, marketing capabilities, and company performance considering the intensity of competition in Shazand Petrochemical Company	The results indicate the positive effect of the variables of entrepreneurial desire, the intensity of competition and marketing capability on company performance, and the positive effect of entrepreneurial desire and competition on marketing capabilities.
Taheri et al. (2019)	Identifying personality factors affecting women's entrepreneurship with emphasis on Razavi culture	Each of the six personality variables studied as a path analysis regression model has influenced the mentioned process directly and indirectly while explaining the personality factors. Among the personality components, the villagers tend to have personal desires and perceptions to enter entrepreneurship. Also, based on the results, education, earning profit, determination, perseverance, and familiarity with information sources are the most critical indicators in each index.
Salmani et al. (2018)	Measuring the personality components in villagers' tendency to entrepreneurship	Four influential factors, including environment, personal characteristics, business capabilities, and strategic activities, were obtained along with the indicators of each.
Sakhteh and Karimi (2018)	Factors affecting open innovation in digital entrepreneurship	Social capital affects job motivation and organizational entrepreneurship, and job motivation affects organizational entrepreneurship. Also, motivation mediates the relationship between social capital and organizational entrepreneurship.
Kheirandish and Jamshidi (2016)	The effect of social capital on organizational entrepreneurship through the mediation of job motivation	Personality traits of entrepreneurs affect entrepreneurial motivation.
Ghorbani and Kulubandi (2015)	Investigating the effect of personality traits of entrepreneurs on entrepreneurial motivation	There is a significant relationship between women's personality traits and entrepreneurial desire.
Mohammadi et al. (2011)	Investigating the relationship between personality traits and entrepreneurial desire	Dimensions and personality traits are correlated with entrepreneurship. Personality factors such as conscientiousness, extroversion, and openness positively correlate with organizational entrepreneurship. At the same time, there is a significant negative relationship between personality dimensions of neuroticism and agreeableness and organizational entrepreneurship.
Ahmadi et al. (2011)	Investigating the relationship between personality factors and entrepreneurship	Personality traits such as extroversion and agreeableness better predict extrinsic motivation, while personality traits such as the tendency for new experiences contribute to intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations positively lead to automatic prediction intention, and the effect of extrinsic motivation is twice that of intrinsic motivation.
Yeh et al. (2020)	Predicting individuals' digital autopreneurship: Does educational intervention matter?	There was a significant relationship between
İspir et al.	The relationship between personality traits	

Author	Goal	Important findings
(2019)	and entrepreneurial tendencies and the career adaptability of nursing students	personality traits, entrepreneurial tendency, and students' career adaptability scores.
Viinikainen et al, (2017)	Are entrepreneurs born? Adolescent personality traits and entrepreneurship in adulthood	Among the traits related to type A behavior, the leadership dimension in early life significantly leads to a higher probability of becoming an entrepreneur and tremendous success as an entrepreneur.
Çolakoğlu & Gözüikara (2016)	Investigating the comparison of personality traits based on the attitude of university students toward entrepreneurship	Students who had entrepreneurial tendencies and intentions had more initiative, achieved more success, and achieved more internal control than those who did not have such an intention.

Given what was presented in this section, the conceptual model of the research is presented in Figure 1.

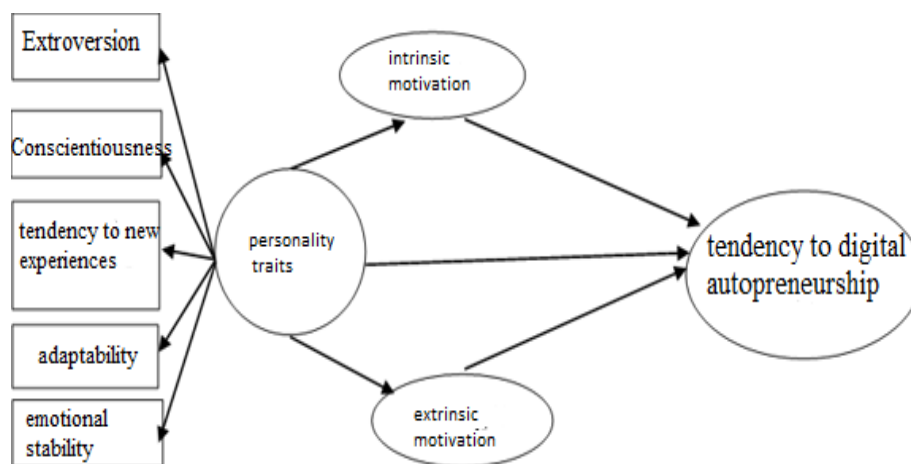


Figure 1. The conceptual model of the research (source: Yeh et al. (2020))

### 3. Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey, and due to evaluating the effect of several variables on each other, it is correlational. It is also applied in terms of nature and cross-sectional in terms of time (specific period of spring and summer in 2020). This study used a survey method (questionnaire) to collect data so that it can be classified as field research. Data were analyzed at two levels, descriptive and inferential, and according to the level of data measurement and data distribution; Structural Equation Analysis (SEM) methods were used. Finally, SPSS-23 and Smart Pls-3 software was used for data analysis. The statistical population of the study included all the pages of famous and active people on Instagram from different fields.

In this study, the sample size was estimated at 280 samples. A convenience sampling method was used in this study. Accordingly, the questionnaire was first electronically presented on the

Press Line website. Then the questionnaire link was sent to this group of pages on the Instagram page, and after reaching the desired quorum, the desired link was deactivated. It should be noted that five questionnaires were answered in a distorted form and were excluded from the sampling process. Therefore, the sample size was calculated at 275 people.

The face and content validity methods were used to ensure the validity of the questionnaire further. To confirm the content validity, a special validity questionnaire was distributed among several subject experts, including several professors of entrepreneurship, management, and supervisors. After reaching the theoretical saturation, the content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed. To confirm face validity, the questionnaire was sent as a pilot among 30 people from the statistical population, including entrepreneurs and active people on Instagram. Their opinions on the way of writing the questionnaire items were applied. To measure reliability, Cronbach's alpha method was used using SPSS- 23 software. The reliability in a sample of 30 was obtained at 0.965.

## **4. Results**

### ***4.1. Descriptive statistics results***

The results of the study revealed that out of a total of 275 people, in terms of gender, the highest frequency was related to females at 72.4%, and the lowest frequency was related to males at 27.6%. Regarding marital status, the highest frequency was related to married people at 57.8%, and the lowest was related to single people at 42.2%. The results of the Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant difference between the mean opinions of people (single/married) and (female/male). Regarding age status, the highest frequency (43.3%) was related to 20 to 30 years, and the lowest frequency (6.5%) was the age group over 40 years. Regarding education, the majority of the samples (34.2%) had master education, and the lowest (9.5%) had associate education. The Kruskal-Wallis test showed no significant difference between the mean opinions of different age and educational groups.

### ***4.2. The results of testing the hypotheses***

H1: Personality traits have a significant effect on intrinsic motivation.

The value of the t-statistic for the effect of personality traits on the creation of intrinsic motivation, as presented in Table 2, is 35.198, and the p-value is 0.000. Since the t-statistic is more significant than 1.96 and the p-value values are smaller than 0.05, personality traits significantly affect the creation of intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, the relevant factor



value is 790, directly due to its positive relationship between the two variables of personality traits and intrinsic motivation.

**Table 2- t-statistic values related to the conceptual model of the research**

	Factor load values	The sample mean values (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	t-statistic	p-value	Result
Extrinsic motivation -> digital autpreneurship tendency	0.192	0.195	0.072	2.685	0.007	Accepted
Intrinsic motivation -> digital autpreneurship tendency	0.113	0.105	0.098	2.153	0.013	Accepted
Personality -> Extrinsic motivation	0.785	0.785	0.023	34.577	0.000	Accepted
Personality -> Intrinsic motivation	0.790	0.790	0.022	35.198	0.000	Accepted
Personality -> digital autpreneurship tendency	0.661	0.648	0.079	8.399	0.00	Accepted

H2: Personality traits have a significant effect on extrinsic motivation.

Based on the values listed in Table 2, the value of the t-statistic for the effect of personality traits on extrinsic motivation is 34.577, and the p-value is 0.000.

Thus, personality traits have a significant effect on extrinsic motivation. Also, the value of the relevant factor is 0.785, which is direct due to its positive relationship between the two variables of personality traits and the creation of extrinsic motivation.

H3: Personality traits have a significant effect on creating a tendency toward digital autpreneurship.

Based on the values in Table 2, the t-statistic value for the effect of personality traits on creating a tendency toward digital autpreneurship is 8.399, and the p-value is 0.000. Thus, personality traits significantly affect a tendency toward digital autpreneurship. Also, the value of the relevant factor is 0.661, which is direct due to its positive relationship between the two variables of personality traits and creating a tendency to digital autpreneurship.

H4: Personality traits have a significant effect on creating a tendency toward digital autpreneurship, considering the mediating role of intrinsic motivation.

Path analysis was used to investigate the effect of personality traits on creating a tendency toward digital autpreneurship, considering the mediating role of extrinsic motivation. Accordingly, the variable of creating a tendency to digital autpreneurship was considered a dependent variable, and personality traits and intrinsic motivation were considered independent variables in the multiple regression model. As shown in Table 3, the beta coefficient value for

personality traits is 0.756 and 0.065 for intrinsic motivation, so the effect of personality traits and extrinsic motivation on creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship is significant at the level of 0.05.

**Table 3- Multiple regression coefficients for the effect of personality traits and intrinsic motivation on creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship**

Model	Non-standard coefficients		standard coefficients	t-statistic	p-value
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant (c)	0.853	0.151		5.660	0.000
* Personality traits	0.830	0.075	0.756	11.110	0.000
Intrinsic motivation	0.052	0.054	0.065	0.956	0.050

Using the Sobel test, the mediating role of intrinsic motivation was investigated in the relationship between personality traits and creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship. The test output is listed in Table 4:

**Table 4- Sobel test for the mediating role of intrinsic motivation was investigated in the relationship between personality traits and creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship**

Variable	Beta	t-statistic	Sobel test	p-value
Personality traits	0.756	11.110	0.952	0.341
Intrinsic motivation	0.065	0.956		

Since the Sobel statistic is 0.952 and the p-value is 0.341 ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ), the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the relationship between personality traits and creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship is insignificant, and the hypothesis is rejected.

H5: Personality traits significantly affect creating a tendency toward digital autopreneurship considering the mediating role of extrinsic motivation. Path analysis was used to investigate the effect of personality traits on creating a tendency toward digital autopreneurship, considering the mediating role of extrinsic motivation. Accordingly, the variable of creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship was considered a dependent variable, and personality traits and extrinsic motivation were considered independent variables in the multiple regression model. As shown in Table 5, the beta coefficient value for the personality traits variable is 0.509 and 0.239 for extrinsic motivation, and the p-values are 0.001, so the effect of personality traits and extrinsic motivation on creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 5- Multiple regression coefficients for personality traits and extrinsic motivation on creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship**

Model	Non-standard coefficients		standard coefficients	Statistic-t	p-value
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant (c)	0.886	0.147		6.041	0.000
* Personality traits	0.559	0.081	0.509	6.942	0.000
Extrinsic motivation	0.189	0.058	0.239	3.261	0.001

The Sobel test examined the mediating role of extrinsic motivation in the relationship between the personality traits and creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship. The test output is listed in Table 6:

**Table 6- presents the Sobel test for the mediating role of extrinsic motivation in the relationship between personality traits on creating a tendency for digital autopreneurship**

Variable	Beta	t-statistic	Sobel test	p-value
Personality traits	0.509	6.942	2.952	0.002
Extrinsic motivation	0.239	3.261		

Based on the Sobel statistic of 2.952 and the p-value of 0.002 ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ), the mediating role of extrinsic motivation in the relationship between personality traits and creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship can be significantly confirmed.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The Internet allows ordinary users to produce and publish content relatively cheaply. If their published content attracts a large audience, ordinary users can create large bases and pages and become Internet celebrities (influencers). Internet celebrities have successfully become virtual entrepreneurs and achieved excellent career opportunities by creating content and sharing their activities. In recent studies, the terms entrepreneurship (Ashman et al., 2018), accidental entrepreneurship (Shah & Tripsas, 2007), and user entrepreneurship (Haefliger et al., 2010) have been used to name this new phenomenon. Digital autopreneurship is a type of unconventional entrepreneurship with specific processes and patterns, and this study has examined it in the context of content-based social media (i.e., Instagram).

Following the idea of Wang et al. (2016) and Yeh et al. (2020), in this study, the combination of personality, motivation, and intention to entrepreneurship was included in a single model. Compared to recent studies that considered personality and motivation as antecedents of the tendency to entrepreneurial (Pittino, Visintin, & Lauto, 2017), considering motivation as a

mediating variable provides a stronger theoretical foundation for the relationship between personality and the intention to digital autopreneurship. Although it is stated that extroversion has a positive effect on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, some Instagram celebrities have admitted to being introverts. As stated by Ashman et al. (2018), this paradoxical argument indicates that personality can be a weak predictor compared to motivation. The results of the present study indicate that motivation can mediate the relationship between personality traits and the intention to digital autopreneurship. However, one of the hypotheses regarding the effect of personality traits and intrinsic motivation on to digital autopreneurship was not confirmed. The results obtained regarding the first and second hypotheses of the study revealed that personality traits significantly affect intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The results of this study are in line with the results of the research conducted by Yeh et al. (2020), which showed that interpersonally involved personality traits (i.e., extraversion and agreeableness) are better predictors of extrinsic motivation, while involved personality traits (for example, the tendency to new experiences) contribute to intrinsic motivation, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation positively lead to autopreneurship intention. Also, these results align with the results of the study by Ghorbani and Kulubandi (2014), which showed that the personality traits of entrepreneurs affect entrepreneurial motivation.

The result obtained from testing the third hypothesis showed that personality traits significantly affect a tendency to digital autopreneurship. These results align with the results of the study conducted by Ispir et al. (2019), which showed a significant relationship between personality traits, the tendency to entrepreneurship, and the career adaptability scores of students. Also, these results are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Taheri et al. (2019), which showed that each of the six personality variables studied in the form of a path analysis regression model has affected the mentioned process both directly and indirectly and interactively, while explaining the personality factors.

These results are also in line with the results of the study conducted by Mohammadi et al. (2011), which showed that there is a significant relationship between women's personality traits and their tendency to entrepreneurship as well as the results of the study conducted by Ahmadi et al. (2011), which showed that personality traits are correlated with entrepreneurship. The result of the fourth and fifth hypotheses showed the significance of the relationship between personality traits and extrinsic motivation in creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship and the lack of a significant relationship between personality traits and intrinsic motivation and creating a tendency to digital autopreneurship, which is in line with the results of the study



conducted by Yeh et al. (2020), which showed that the effect of extrinsic motivation on digital autpreneurship is twice more than intrinsic motivation.

## 6. Recommendations

Marketers should identify Internet celebrities or online personalities who are becoming stars. A small investment in the initial stage of celebrities' Instagram pages can lead to profitability in the future. Also, through external incentives, marketing professionals can encourage regular users and followers to produce videos, content, and other activities. Managers and admins of social media pages should also encourage the creation of content by Internet celebrities since, by increasing the followers of a page, Instagram social media pages will be more profitable.

Marketing managers should provide solid training to develop the capabilities of active and famous people as the first step in becoming a digital autopreneur. They should support users who have problems doing educational activities and encourage them to continue working. Since extrinsic motivation affects digital autopreneurship among Instagram users, admins and marketers should not expect these entrepreneurs to become experts and experienced in this area without rewards. Some of the variables that are known as mediating variables and affect the relationship between motivation and tendency to be entrepreneurs include characteristics such as entrepreneurship education (for example, duration of education), differences of users in terms of different characteristics (for example, gender, family background, and marital status) and cultural values (e.g., power gap).

Thus, it is recommended to investigate the effect of these characteristics as mediating variables in future studies and then test them with samples from different countries and cultures to determine the generalizability of the present study model. This model should also be tested on other social media. In this regard, the social media matrix is proposed to classify social media in two dimensions. One dimension is based on profiles and content-based and personalized messages such as Telegram and WhatsApp. Another dimension is message broadcasters such as Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube and four categories resulting from social media relationships (Facebook and LinkedIn), self-media (Twitter and Weibo), and creative media (YouTube and Flickr).



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