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World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development

ISSN online: 1746-0581 - ISSN print: 1746-0573
https://www.inderscience.com/wremsd

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DOI: 10.1504/WREMSD.2026.10081978

Article History:

Received:	26 June 2026
Last revised:	06 August 2026
Accepted:	15 August 2026
Published online:	06 November 2026

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From entrepreneurial competencies to entrepreneurial intention: the double-edged role of perceived SNS characteristics

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Abstract: This study investigates how four dimensions of entrepreneurial competency – technological, marketing, networking, and creative competencies – are associated with entrepreneurial intention and how perceived SNS characteristics shape these relationships. Entrepreneurial competencies are classified into technological, marketing, networking, and creative competencies, while perceived SNS characteristics include interactivity, credibility, enjoyment, and usefulness. Using survey data from 194 undergraduate and graduate students in Korea, exploratory factor analysis, reliability analysis, multiple regression, and moderation analysis were conducted. The findings show that all competency dimensions positively affect entrepreneurial intention. Among SNS characteristics, credibility and enjoyment have significant direct effects, whereas interactivity and usefulness do not. Moderation analysis indicates that credibility strengthens the effect of networking competency, while usefulness strengthens the effect of creative competency but marginally weakens the effects of marketing and networking competencies. The study highlights that SNS effects depend on their fit with specific entrepreneurial competencies.

Keywords: entrepreneurial intention; entrepreneurial competencies; social networking services; perceived SNS characteristics; moderation effect.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Lee, N. and Yoon, S. (2026) 'From entrepreneurial competencies to entrepreneurial intention: the double-edged role of perceived SNS characteristics', *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 22, No. 5, pp.1–26.

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include entrepreneurship, performance management, and efficiency analysis. He has published numerous papers in these fields, including articles in top-tier SSCI-indexed journals.

1 Introduction

Modern societies are facing structural economic problems and increasing instability in the labour market. Unlike in the past, economic growth in Korea no longer generates sufficient employment, leading to what has been described as an era of 'jobless growth' (Song, 2020). Entrepreneurship has long been recognised as an important source of economic growth and job creation, and its significance has continued to increase in advanced economies (Thurik et al., 2008). Accordingly, policymakers around the world have explicitly promoted policies designed to encourage entrepreneurship and new venture creation (Acs et al., 2016; Fotopoulos and Storey, 2019). In particular, startup support programs have been used as a key instrument of active labour market policy. These programs aim directly to reduce unemployment while also contributing to the stimulation of entrepreneurial activity (Bilan and Apostoaie, 2023; Caliendo and Kritikos, 2010; Røed and Skogstrøm, 2014). However, evidence from emerging economies also indicates that entrepreneurial activity can be constrained by unstable economic conditions, limited access to finance, and an insufficiently supportive institutional environment (Ogbolu et al., 2025).

Despite the expansion of such entrepreneurship promotion policies, however, it has repeatedly been noted that the success of a new venture depends not only on institutional support itself, but also, and often more critically, on the competencies and determination of the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial competencies are important factors in firm growth and success (Mitchelmore and Rowley, 2010). Conversely, prior studies have identified a lack of managerial and industry-related experience and insufficient managerial expertise as major causes of business failure (Ooghe and De Prijcker, 2008).

In contemporary entrepreneurship, SNSs are no longer peripheral communication channels. They have become important digital environments in which individuals search for market information, recognise opportunities, communicate with potential customers and partners, and acquire resources (Ceptureanu et al., 2020; Chen and Liu, 2023; Olanrewaju et al., 2020). SNS use has also been associated with the formation of entrepreneurial intention, particularly among younger potential entrepreneurs who frequently rely on digital platforms for information and relationship building (Thi Loan et al., 2024). Recent research further shows that digitalisation has become a strategic imperative for entrepreneurs and small firms. However, the digital transition of local businesses can be hindered by perceived complexity, insufficient training, limited time, and the absence of a coherent long-term digital strategy (Lejuste et al., 2024). At the same time, SMEs that actively use digital platforms and digital marketing strategies have reported better outcomes in revenue, customer satisfaction, cost efficiency, and competitiveness (Kumar et al., 2026). Longitudinal case evidence also suggests that digital business-model innovation develops through iterative learning and adaptive routines rather than through a single act of technology adoption (Cheng et al., 2025).

Digital markets may also accelerate disruptive innovation and reshape competitive conditions, indicating that digital environments are not neutral communication spaces for entrepreneurs (Priyan and Gargate, 2025).

This development creates an important conceptual puzzle. Although individuals may possess technological, marketing, networking, and creative competencies, these competencies may not automatically translate into entrepreneurial intention. Their conversion into entrepreneurial intention may depend on the digital environment in which entrepreneurial information, opportunities, and relationships are accessed. In particular, whether SNSs are perceived as interactive, credible, enjoyable, and useful may shape how effectively individuals recognise and mobilise their competencies for entrepreneurial purposes.

Prior research has generally examined entrepreneurial competencies and SNS-related factors as separate antecedents of entrepreneurial intention. Competency studies have primarily focused on individuals' internal abilities, whereas SNS studies have tended to examine platform use, exposure, or direct behavioural effects (Mallios et al., 2023; Thi Loan et al., 2024). Consequently, it remains unclear whether perceived SNS characteristics merely exert additional direct effects on entrepreneurial intention or whether they also alter the extent to which specific entrepreneurial competencies are translated into such intention. This unresolved interface between internal entrepreneurial competencies and the perceived digital environment constitutes the central research gap addressed in this study. This gap is also relevant to the broader development of digital entrepreneurship research. Recent studies have emphasised that digitalisation and Industry 4.0 are reshaping entrepreneurial activity, while their implications remain embedded in cultural, institutional, and educational contexts (Kaur et al., 2025). A bibliometric review of women's entrepreneurship and digital education likewise identified increasing scholarly attention to the intersection of entrepreneurship, technology, online learning, and data-driven education (Asif et al., 2026).

To address this research gap, this study examines how technological, marketing, networking, and creative competencies are associated with entrepreneurial intention. It further investigates whether perceived SNS characteristics – interactivity, credibility, enjoyment, and usefulness – have direct relationships with entrepreneurial intention and condition the relationships between each competency dimension and entrepreneurial intention. By integrating individual competencies with perceptions of the digital environment, this study seeks to clarify the mechanism through which entrepreneurial competencies are translated into entrepreneurial intention in an increasingly SNS-mediated entrepreneurial context.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Social cognitive theory as an integrative framework

Social cognitive theory provides an integrative framework for explaining how personal factors and environmental conditions jointly shape human motivation and behaviour. The theory explains human functioning through triadic reciprocal causation, in which personal factors, environmental influences, and behaviour interact with and influence one another (Bandura, 1986; Wood and Bandura, 1989). Accordingly, individuals do not

make behavioural decisions solely on the basis of their personal attributes but also evaluate whether their capabilities can be exercised effectively under the opportunities and constraints provided by the surrounding environment.

Recent empirical research supports this person–environment perspective in digital and entrepreneurial settings. Basalamah and Basalamah (2025) found that technology readiness mediates the relationships of organisational culture and digital leadership with employee skill development during digital transformation. Similarly, El-Kassrawy et al. (2026), drawing on social cognitive theory, showed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy is related to innovative behaviour through entrepreneurial passion and that self-leadership conditions this relationship. These studies indicate that capability-related personal factors are more likely to be translated into motivational or behavioural outcomes when supportive individual and environmental mechanisms are present.

Social cognitive theory further emphasises that the motivational consequences of personal capabilities depend partly on the environment in which those capabilities are exercised. SNSs constitute an increasingly important digital environment in which potential entrepreneurs search for information, identify opportunities, communicate with customers and partners, and access entrepreneurial networks and resources (Ceptureanu et al., 2020; Chen and Liu, 2023; Olanrewaju et al., 2020). Prior research has also shown that social media use can be associated with entrepreneurial preparation, investment decisions, and entrepreneurial intention (Chen and Liu, 2023; Thi Loan et al., 2024). In this study, interactivity, credibility, enjoyment, and usefulness are therefore conceptualised as individuals' perceptions of the SNS environment rather than as objective technological properties of specific platforms. These perceptions indicate whether individuals regard the SNS environment as supportive of reciprocal communication, trustworthy information acquisition, sustained engagement, and efficient task performance (Davis, 1989; Li and Suh, 2015; van der Heijden, 2004; Yuan et al., 2024).

Based on the person–environment interaction proposed by social cognitive theory, entrepreneurial intention can be understood as a motivational outcome associated with both capability-related personal resources and perceived environmental conditions. This framework suggests that entrepreneurial competencies and perceived SNS characteristics may each be directly associated with entrepreneurial intention, while perceived SNS characteristics may also condition the extent to which specific competencies are translated into entrepreneurial intention. Accordingly, social cognitive theory provides a common theoretical foundation for integrating entrepreneurial competencies, perceived SNS characteristics, and entrepreneurial intention within a single research model (Lent et al., 1994; Zhao et al., 2005).

2.2 Entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention

From a social cognitive perspective, entrepreneurial competencies represent personal capability-related factors that influence how individuals evaluate their ability to undertake entrepreneurial tasks. Stronger competencies can increase perceived control over opportunity recognition, problem solving, market analysis, relationship building, and idea development, thereby reducing the perceived difficulty and uncertainty associated with entrepreneurship. Accordingly, technological, marketing, networking, and creative competencies are expected to be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Technological competency refers to the ability to effectively use technological knowledge to assimilate, utilise, adapt, and transform existing technologies (Kim, 1997). Fawaid et al. (2022) reported that technological competency has a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, Zarefard and Beri (2017) found that knowledge and technological competencies among entrepreneurial competencies significantly influence both necessity-based and innovative entrepreneurial intention.

Marketing competency is defined as an integrative process through which a firm uses its overall knowledge, skills, and resources to add value to products and services in response to market conditions and to meet competitive demand (Day, 1994). Akinkuolie et al. (2024) reported that marketing competency significantly affects university students' entrepreneurial intention, while Suratno et al. (2024) found that marketing competency has both direct and indirect effects on students' entrepreneurial intention. The importance of market-analysis competency is also illustrated by research on young consumers. Pathak and Malakar (2024) found that willingness to pay a premium for green products varies according to environmental concern and consumer characteristics, including education, occupation, and income, demonstrating the need to identify heterogeneous customer preferences and market segments.

Networking competency refers to a firm's ability to develop and utilise relationships with organisations or firms within a network (Walter et al., 2006). RAI and SHEELAM (2025) reported that perceived networking competency positively affects entrepreneurial intention. Igwe et al. (2020) also found that networking competency has a significant positive effect on social entrepreneurial intention.

Creative competency can be understood as an integrative concept involving the interaction among an individual's ability to generate novel and useful outcomes, the creative process, and the surrounding environment (Plucker et al., 2004). Zampetakis et al. (2011) showed that higher levels of creativity are associated with stronger entrepreneurial intention among young people, and Zhang et al. (2022) found that social creativity has a significant positive effect on university students' entrepreneurial intention. More recently, Martínez-Martínez et al. (2025) reported that creativity significantly influences entrepreneurial intention and exerts a relatively stronger effect than other competencies.

The broader entrepreneurship and innovation literature also supports the importance of capability-related personal and organisational resources. Ruan et al. (2025) identified innovativeness, sociability, and decisiveness as salient characteristics among mainland Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs in Malaysia. At the firm level, Matta and Verma (2025) showed that innovation capability mediates the relationship between internal and external sources of innovation and firm competitiveness. Manchanda and Prakash (2025) similarly found that firm capabilities and competitive advantage partially mediate the relationships among entrepreneurial orientation and SME performance. In addition, longitudinal evidence from Vietnamese manufacturing SMEs indicates that process innovation is associated with greater productivity gains than product modification or product innovation in a factor-driven economy (Brambini-Pedersen et al., 2026).

Taken together, these competency dimensions provide individuals with different but complementary forms of perceived capability for undertaking entrepreneurial activities. Consistent with social cognitive theory, stronger capability-related personal factors are expected to enhance individuals' confidence in managing entrepreneurial tasks

and to make entrepreneurship appear more feasible. Therefore, each dimension of entrepreneurial competency is expected to be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H1a: Technological competency will be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H1b: Marketing competency will be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H1c: Networking competency will be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H1d: Creative competency will be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

2.3 Perceived SNS characteristics and entrepreneurial intention

Social cognitive theory emphasises that individuals' motivation is shaped not only by personal capabilities but also by how they perceive the surrounding environment. In the present study, SNS characteristics represent perceptions of a digital environment that can provide information, social interaction, experiential stimulation, and task-related support for potential entrepreneurial activity. SNSs function as platforms that support information search and relationship building (boyd and Ellison, 2007), and they have been found to facilitate interaction and participatory behaviour among users (Lampe et al., 2013). Prior research has shown that the interactivity of SNSs positively affects user engagement intention and behavioural intention (Kim and Ko, 2012; Liu and Shrum, 2002). Credibility has also been identified as an important factor influencing information acceptance and attitude formation (Cheung and Thadani, 2012). In addition, enjoyment has been found to affect immersion and continuance intention in platform use (van der Heijden, 2004), while usefulness has been presented as a key variable in predicting individual behavioural intention (Davis, 1989). Related digital-platform research has applied the revised UTAUT2 framework to examine platform-selection determinants together with demographic moderators, further demonstrating that perceived platform characteristics may operate differently across user groups and usage contexts (Mishra et al., 2025). Meanwhile, the use of SNSs has been reported to play an important role in the entrepreneurial preparation process by supporting opportunity recognition, access to market-related information, and interaction with customers (Ceptureanu et al., 2020; Olanrewaju et al., 2020). These studies indicate that various SNS characteristics can enhance individuals' access to information and recognition of opportunities, thereby positively contributing to the formation of entrepreneurial motivation and intention.

From a social cognitive perspective, these perceived SNS characteristics may function as environmental cues that shape whether entrepreneurship is regarded as accessible, trustworthy, engaging, and practically manageable. Interactivity may facilitate reciprocal communication, credibility may reduce uncertainty regarding entrepreneurial information, enjoyment may sustain engagement with entrepreneurial content, and usefulness may enhance the perceived efficiency of entrepreneurial preparation. These environmental perceptions may therefore be associated with entrepreneurial intention, although their effects may differ across dimensions.

Hypothesis H2a: Perceived interactivity of SNSs will be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H2b: Perceived credibility of SNSs will be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H2c: Perceived enjoyment of SNSs will be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H2d: Perceived usefulness of SNSs will be positively associated with entrepreneurial intention.

2.4 The moderating role of perceived SNS characteristics

A central proposition of social cognitive theory is that personal factors and environmental conditions operate interdependently. Therefore, entrepreneurial competencies may not be translated into entrepreneurial intention to the same extent under all digital conditions. Even when individuals possess strong entrepreneurial competencies, their willingness to act on those competencies may depend on whether the SNS environment is perceived as supportive of information acquisition, relationship building, idea exploration, and entrepreneurial decision-making.

Prior studies have suggested that interactivity is a key attribute of online environments because it enables two-way communication, active user control, and participation (Liu, 2003; Yuan et al., 2024). Credibility refers to the extent to which recipients perceive information as trustworthy based on the expertise and reliability of the information provider (Li and Suh, 2015; Ohanian, 1990). Enjoyment has been identified as a factor associated with users' responses to advertising and content, as well as the formation of positive attitudes in SNS environments (Harb et al., 2019; Maria Soares and Carlos Pinho, 2014). Usefulness refers to the extent to which a system or platform contributes to the quality of decision-making and the efficiency of task performance (Davis, 1989).

The moderating perspective therefore captures a person–environment contingency. Interactivity may enable individuals to mobilise their competencies through reciprocal communication, whereas credibility may determine whether information and relationships obtained through networking are regarded as dependable entrepreneurial resources. Enjoyment may sustain engagement with opportunities to apply entrepreneurial competencies, while usefulness may facilitate the practical application of those competencies. Accordingly, perceived SNS characteristics may strengthen or weaken the relationships between specific entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention. The contingent role of environmental conditions has also been reported in recent innovation and entrepreneurship research. Yuan et al. (2025) found that technological advancement and sustainable-development orientation strengthen the relationship between green patents and new product development. Tokaji et al. (2025) likewise reported that communication and adaptation to globalisation condition the relationship between sustainability practices and organisational adaptability among Japanese firms. Although these studies examine firm-level outcomes, they support the broader proposition that the value of an existing capability or resource depends on the environment in which it is applied.

Hypothesis H3a: Perceived interactivity of SNSs will moderate the association between technological competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H3b: Perceived interactivity of SNSs will moderate the association between marketing competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H3c: Perceived interactivity of SNSs will moderate the association between networking competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H3d: Perceived interactivity of SNSs will moderate the association between creative competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H4a: Perceived credibility of SNSs will moderate the association between technological competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H4b: Perceived credibility of SNSs will moderate the association between marketing competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H4c: Perceived credibility of SNSs will moderate the association between networking competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H4d: Perceived credibility of SNSs will moderate the association between creative competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H5a: Perceived enjoyment of SNSs will moderate the association between technological competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H5b: Perceived enjoyment of SNSs will moderate the association between marketing competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H5c: Perceived enjoyment of SNSs will moderate the association between networking competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H5d: Perceived enjoyment of SNSs will moderate the association between creative competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H6a: Perceived usefulness of SNSs will moderate the association between technological competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H6b: Perceived usefulness of SNSs will moderate the association between marketing competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H6c: Perceived usefulness of SNSs will moderate the association between networking competency and entrepreneurial intention.

Hypothesis H6d: Perceived usefulness of SNSs will moderate the association between creative competency and entrepreneurial intention.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research model

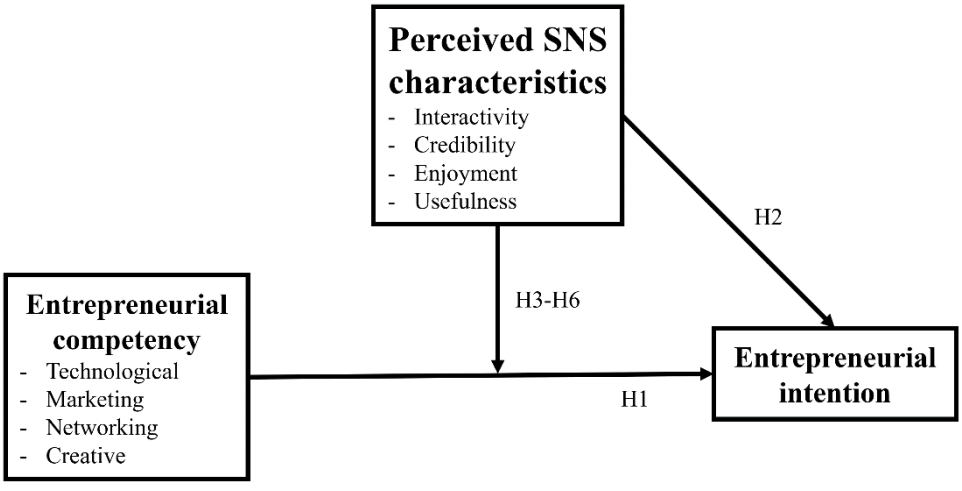
This study empirically examines the effect of entrepreneurial competencies on entrepreneurial intention and analyses the roles played by perceived SNS characteristics

as both direct and moderating variables in this process. Entrepreneurial competencies are composed of technological, marketing, networking, and creative competencies. Prior studies have suggested that these competencies are key internal factors not only in entrepreneurial performance, but also in the formation of entrepreneurial intention.

Grounded in social cognitive theory, this study views entrepreneurial intention as a motivational outcome shaped by both capability-related personal factors and perceived environmental conditions. Entrepreneurial competencies represent personal resources that support the performance of entrepreneurial tasks, whereas perceived SNS characteristics represent individuals' evaluations of the digital environment in which entrepreneurial information, opportunities, and relationships are accessed. The research model therefore examines not only their respective relationships with entrepreneurial intention but also their interaction.

Accordingly, this study classifies perceived SNS characteristics into four dimensions: interactivity, credibility, enjoyment, and usefulness. It then examines both the direct effects of these characteristics on entrepreneurial intention and their moderating effects on the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention. Based on this theoretical discussion, the research model shown in Figure 1 was established.

Figure 1 Research model



3.2 Measurement development and operational definitions

To test the hypotheses, the questionnaire consisted of measurement items adapted from established scales in prior studies. The entrepreneurial competency items were adapted from Chandler and Jansen (1992), Spencer et al. (1994), Wind (2005), and Kenny and Fahy (2013), while entrepreneurial intention was measured using items adapted from Ha (2012) and Kim and Yang (2020). The items measuring perceived SNS characteristics were adapted from Moon and Kim (2001), Park (2008), Kim and Park (2019), and Lee (2021). The wording of the original items was adjusted to fit the context of university

students, entrepreneurial activities, and SNS use. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Entrepreneurial competency types were divided into four sub-variables: technological competency, marketing competency, networking competency, and creative competency. Technological competency was measured using items designed to assess an individual's ability to solve technical problems, apply new technologies, and use knowledge acquired through their major or learning experiences. Marketing competency was measured through items assessing the ability to analyse target markets, compare and evaluate competing products, explore effective promotional strategies, and improve activities by incorporating feedback. Networking competency was measured using items designed to evaluate the ability to build collaborative relationships with various stakeholders related to entrepreneurship, interact with external experts such as professors and mentors, and actively develop networks necessary for entrepreneurial activities. Creative competency was measured through items assessing the ability to continuously generate new ideas and to think about, recognise, perform, and improve tasks from novel and original perspectives.

Perceived SNS characteristics were measured using four sub-variables: interactivity, credibility, enjoyment, and usefulness. Interactivity was measured through items reflecting the extent to which respondents perceived SNSs as enabling message exchange among users, comments on posts, immediate feedback, and participation. Credibility was measured using items designed to assess the extent to which information provided through SNSs was perceived as truthful, clearly sourced, and free from falsehood or distortion. Enjoyment was measured through items assessing the degree to which respondents experienced pleasure and interest while using SNSs, and the extent to which their curiosity or exploratory interest was stimulated. Finally, usefulness was measured using items designed to assess the extent to which SNSs were perceived as providing the information users needed at the appropriate time, reducing time and effort, and offering practical value overall.

In this study, entrepreneurial intention was measured using items that captured respondents' desire to start a new business rather than remain employees, their level of interest in and search for entrepreneurship-related information, their willingness to choose entrepreneurship even when risk is involved, and their confidence in carrying out entrepreneurial activities in the future.

Table 1 Structure of questionnaire items

Variable		*Num. of items*	*Source*
Entrepreneurial competency	Technological	4	Chandler and Jansen (1992); Kenny and Fahy (2013); Spencer et al. (1994); Wind (2005)
	Marketing	4	
	Networking	4	
	Creative	4	
Entrepreneurial intention		4	Ha (2012); Kim and Yang (2020)
Perceived SNS characteristics	Interactivity	4	Kim and Park (2019); Lee (2021); Moon and Kim (2001); Park (2008)
	Credibility	4	
	Enjoyment	4	
	Usefulness	4	

3.3 Research subjects and data collection

This study employed non-probability convenience sampling to recruit undergraduate and graduate students in Korea. Eligible participants were individuals who were currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate programme, had experience using at least one SNS platform, and voluntarily agreed to participate. Students were eligible regardless of whether they had previous entrepreneurial experience or had participated in entrepreneurship education, because the study aimed to examine entrepreneurial intention among a broad potential-entrepreneur population.

University and graduate students were selected because entrepreneurial intention concerns the conscious consideration of entrepreneurship before actual venture creation, and students constitute an important group of potential entrepreneurs who are in the process of developing career preferences and evaluating entrepreneurship as a possible career option. Student samples have therefore been widely employed in entrepreneurial intention research, particularly when the objective is to examine the cognitive and motivational antecedents of future entrepreneurial behaviour.

Research on young people's entrepreneurial perceptions further supports the examination of entrepreneurial cognition before actual venture creation. Sengupta et al. (2025) showed that young women evaluate entrepreneurial success through multiple psychological, social, and economic dimensions, including autonomy, accomplishment, prosperity, and social impact. Moreover, higher education institutions are important actors in entrepreneurial ecosystems because they provide knowledge exchange through consultancy, collaborative research, continuous professional development, commercialisation, and open innovation communities (Boodai and Boodai, 2025).

In the Korean context, previous studies have also examined entrepreneurial intention and its contingent relationships using university student samples. For example, Yue et al. (2014) analysed entrepreneurial intention and the moderating roles of nationality and academic major using 164 Korean university students, while Kim et al. (2026) examined mediation and moderation relationships involving entrepreneurial intention using 110 Korean university students.

The anonymous online survey was conducted over approximately three weeks from October to November 2025. The Google Forms questionnaire was distributed through email, KakaoTalk, and text messages. Before beginning the survey, participants were informed of the research purpose, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of their responses, and their right to discontinue participation. Electronic informed consent was obtained before access to the questionnaire.

A total of 236 responses were collected. After excluding insincere responses, 194 valid responses were selected as the final sample and used for the analysis. All questionnaire items were required in Google Forms, and therefore no missing values remained in the final dataset. No separate attention-check item was included; response quality was assessed using completion-time and response-pattern criteria.

4 Empirical results

4.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the survey items measuring entrepreneurial competencies, entrepreneurial intention, and perceived SNS

characteristics, and the reliability of each factor was examined. Principal component analysis was used, and Varimax rotation was applied to identify the factor structure. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity. For entrepreneurial competencies, the KMO value was 0.876, indicating a high level of sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). These results suggest that the data were appropriate for factor analysis.

The exploratory factor analysis of entrepreneurial competencies showed that the items for technological competency, marketing competency, networking competency, and creative competency were clearly loaded onto four distinct factors, consistent with the theoretical structure. The reliability coefficients were 0.876 for technological competency, 0.802 for marketing competency, 0.820 for networking competency, and 0.901 for creative competency. All values exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 2 Factor analysis results of entrepreneurial competencies

Items	*Factor 1*	*Factor 2*	*Factor 3*	*Factor 4*	*Cronbach's α*
Technological1	0.844	0.150	0.103	0.124	0.876
Technological2	0.863	0.164	0.124	0.166	
Technological3	0.826	0.185	0.107	0.177	
Technological4	0.720	0.021	0.153	0.257	
Marketing1	0.125	0.811	0.151	0.144	0.802
Marketing2	0.193	0.736	0.125	0.066	
Marketing3	0.017	0.667	0.191	0.312	
Marketing4	0.222	0.674	0.144	0.247	
Networking1	0.063	0.544	0.624	0.606	0.820
Networking2	0.038	0.558	0.618	0.064	
Networking3	0.192	0.103	0.789	0.198	
Networking4	0.210	0.182	0.784	0.189	
Creative1	0.188	0.189	0.106	0.858	0.901
Creative2	0.138	0.145	0.169	0.889	
Creative3	0.187	0.173	0.109	0.870	
Creative4	0.260	0.173	0.128	0.676	

For entrepreneurial intention, the KMO value was 0.806, and Bartlett's test was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The analysis extracted a single clear factor, which was named entrepreneurial intention. The factor loadings were sufficiently high, supporting the construct validity of the measurement items. The reliability coefficient for entrepreneurial intention was also high ($\alpha = 0.906$).

Table 3 Factor analysis results of entrepreneurial intention

Items	*Factor 1*	*Cronbach's α*
Entrepreneurial intention1	0.905	0.906
Entrepreneurial intention2	0.845	
Entrepreneurial intention3	0.921	
Entrepreneurial intention4	0.860	

For perceived SNS characteristics, the KMO value was 0.832, and Bartlett's test was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The analysis extracted four factors corresponding to interactivity, credibility, enjoyment, and usefulness. The items for each construct were clearly loaded onto their respective factors, indicating that the factor structure was conceptually distinct. The reliability coefficients were 0.896 for interactivity, 0.805 for credibility, 0.853 for enjoyment, and 0.830 for usefulness, all exceeding the threshold of 0.70.

Table 4 Factor analysis results of perceived SNS characteristics

Items	*Factor 1*	*Factor 2*	*Factor 3*	*Factor 4*	*Cronbach's α*
Interactivity1	0.848	0.031	0.095	0.090	0.896
Interactivity2	0.875	0.063	0.129	0.186	
Interactivity3	0.821	0.015	0.126	0.166	
Interactivity4	0.866	0.002	0.151	0.071	
Credibility1	0.092	0.832	0.140	0.069	0.805
Credibility2	0.021	0.898	0.068	–0.024	
Credibility3	–0.121	0.863	0.093	0.094	
Credibility4	0.119	0.501	0.080	0.289	
Enjoyment1	0.230	0.164	0.761	0.296	0.853
Enjoyment2	0.243	0.159	0.784	0.175	
Enjoyment3	0.162	0.009	0.774	0.284	
Enjoyment4	–0.030	0.115	0.800	0.180	
Usefulness1	0.188	0.140	0.363	0.649	0.830
Usefulness2	0.073	0.170	0.158	0.761	
Usefulness3	0.187	0.009	0.177	0.823	
Usefulness4	0.107	0.071	0.303	0.763	

Overall, these results indicate that the survey items used in this study adequately reflected their intended constructs and that the variables demonstrated sufficient discriminant structure and internal consistency. The exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis confirmed consistency between the theoretical structure and the empirical results, supporting the use of these variables in the subsequent regression and moderation analyses.

The hypotheses were tested using observed composite scores in multiple and moderated regression models rather than latent-variable structural equation modelling. Accordingly, CFA-based model-fit indices, CR, AVE, and HTMT were not calculated. Prior to estimating the regression models, multicollinearity was examined using variance

inflation factors, and all VIF values remained below the conventional threshold, indicating no serious multicollinearity problem. To maintain the readability and compact presentation of the regression tables, the full VIF statistics and exact *p*-values were not separately tabulated. Instead, the tables report coefficients, t statistics, model statistics, and conventional significance levels, from which the statistical significance of each estimate can be evaluated.

4.2 The effect of entrepreneurial competencies on entrepreneurial intention

Table 5 presents four separately estimated regression models, each examining the association between one entrepreneurial competency dimension and entrepreneurial intention while controlling for age, degree, and SNS usage time. Because the four competency dimensions were entered into separate models rather than simultaneously, the coefficients and adjusted R-squared values are interpreted within each model and are not used to claim their relative or unique explanatory power.

The coefficient results showed that technological competency had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention (Coef. = 0.154, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the ability to solve technical problems and apply practical technological knowledge strengthens the intention to start a business. Marketing competency also had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention (Coef. = 0.339, $p < 0.01$), showing a statistically significant positive association with entrepreneurial intention. This indicates that competencies related to market analysis, customer understanding, promotion, and strategy development play a central role in forming entrepreneurial motivation. Networking competency also had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention (Coef. = 0.151, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that access to information and collaborative relationships through personal networks can reinforce the willingness to pursue entrepreneurship. Finally, creative competency had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention (Coef. = 0.335, $p < 0.01$), indicating that the ability to generate new ideas and solve problems from diverse perspectives contributes to stronger entrepreneurial intention.

Table 5 The effect of entrepreneurial competencies on entrepreneurial intention

Variables	*H1a*		*H1b*		*H1c*		*H1d*	
	Coef.	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*
Technological	0.154	2.10**						
Marketing			0.339	5.02***				
Networking					0.151	2.09**		
Creative							0.335	4.81***
Cons.	–0.418	–1.11	–0.265	–0.75	–0.335	–0.90	–0.314	–0.89
Obs.	194		194		194		194	
F	2.30		4.81		2.29		4.56	
Adj R^2	0.0571		0.1509		0.0569		0.1424	

Note: Control variables: age, degree, SNS usage time; *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

4.3 The effect of perceived SNS characteristics on entrepreneurial intention

Table 6 presents four separately estimated regression models for interactivity, credibility, enjoyment, and usefulness. Because these SNS characteristics were examined in separate models, the results indicate whether each characteristic is individually associated with entrepreneurial intention but do not establish their relative or unique explanatory power.

More specifically, interactivity did not have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. This suggests that communication or immediate feedback experiences within SNSs do not necessarily lead directly to entrepreneurial intention. In contrast, credibility had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention (Coef. = 0.281, $p < 0.01$), showing the strongest effect among the four SNS characteristics. This indicates that the more users trust the accuracy, sources, and evaluations of SNS content, the stronger their intention to start a business becomes. Enjoyment also had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention (Coef. = 0.202, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that perceiving SNSs as enjoyable and interesting platforms contributes to the formation of positive attitudes and behavioural intention toward entrepreneurship. By contrast, usefulness did not have a statistically significant effect, indicating that the practical information or efficiency provided by SNSs may not directly translate into entrepreneurial intention.

Table 6 The effect of perceived SNS characteristics on entrepreneurial intention

Variables	*H2a*		*H2b*		*H2c*		*H2d*	
	Coef.	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*
Interactivity	0.112	1.50						
Credibility			0.281	3.88***				
Enjoyment					0.202	2.85***		
Usefulness							0.025	0.35
Cons.	–0.331	–0.88	–0.293	–0.81	–0.352	–0.96	–0.277	–0.73
Obs.	194		194		194		194	
F	2.04		3.58		2.75		1.78	
Adj R^2	0.0462		0.1074		0.0755		0.0352	

Note: Control variables: age, degree, SNS usage time; *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

4.4 The effect of perceived SNS characteristics on the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention

Before constructing the interaction terms, all entrepreneurial competency and perceived SNS characteristic variables were mean-centred. For each SNS characteristic, four separate moderated regression models were estimated. Each model included one mean-centred entrepreneurial competency, the mean-centred SNS characteristic, their product term, and the control variables of age, degree, and SNS usage time. Mean-centring was applied to facilitate the interpretation of the lower-order coefficients and to reduce nonessential multicollinearity associated with the interaction terms.

The moderating effects of perceived SNS characteristics on the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention were analysed as follows. First, the moderating effect of interactivity was examined. The interaction terms between interactivity and the four dimensions of entrepreneurial competency were not statistically

significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that interactivity moderates the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intention was not supported.

Table 7 The moderating effect of interaction

Variables	*H3a*		*H3b*		*H3c*		*H3d*	
	Coef.	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*
Technological	0.146	1.94*						
Marketing			0.339	4.84***				
Networking					0.127	1.70*		
Creative							0.349	4.88***
Interaction	0.089	1.19	0.763	1.08	0.087	1.16	0.0775	1.10
Technological*Interaction	–0.036	–0.50						
Marketing *Interaction			–0.016	–0.22				
Networking *Interaction					0.061	0.73		
Creative *Interaction							–0.086	–1.24
Cons.	–0.461	–1.22	–0.289	–0.81	–0.369	–0.99	–0.349	–0.99
Obs.	194		194		194		194	
F	2.03		4.04		2.07		4.03	
Adj R^2	0.0555		0.1476		0.0573		0.1473	

Note: Control variables: age, degree, SNS usage time; *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Second, the analysis of the moderating effect of credibility showed a meaningful result. The interaction between networking competency and credibility had a significant positive moderating effect (Coef. = 0.232, p < 0.01). This means that when the perceived credibility of SNS characteristics is higher, the positive effect of networking competency on entrepreneurial intention becomes stronger. In contrast, the interactions between credibility and technological, marketing, and creative competencies were not statistically significant.

Table 8 The moderating effect of credibility

Variables	*H4a*		*H4b*		*H4c*		*H4d*	
	Coef.	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*
Technological	0.142	1.98**						
Marketing			0.335	4.87***				
Networking					0.196	2.70**		
Creative							0.318	4.55***
Credibility	0.290	3.93***	0.279	4.09***	0.191	2.48**	0.235	3.30***
Technological*Credibility	–0.053	–0.79						
Marketing *Credibility			–0.005	–0.07				

Table 8 The moderating effect of credibility (continued)

Variables	*H4a*		*H4b*		*H4c*		*H4d*	
	Coef.	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*
Networking *Credibility					0.232	2.67***		
Creative *Credibility							0.039	0.61
Cons.	–0.421	–1.16	–0.268	–0.79	–0.458	–1.29	–0.324	–0.94
Obs.	194		194		194		194	
F	3.42		5.78		4.07		5.13	
Adj R^2	0.1213		0.2140		0.1489		0.1904	

Note: Control variables: age, degree, SNS usage time; *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Third, the moderating effect of enjoyment was not statistically significant. None of the interaction terms between enjoyment and the four entrepreneurial competency dimensions showed a significant moderating effect. However, enjoyment itself had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention, suggesting that the enjoyment and interest experienced during SNS use contribute directly to the formation of entrepreneurial intention rather than moderating the effects of entrepreneurial competencies.

Table 9 The moderating effect of enjoyment

Variables	*H5a*		*H5b*		*H5c*		*H5d*	
	Coef.	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*
Technological	0.147	2.02**						
Marketing			0.306	4.45***				
Networking					0.117	1.62		
Creative							0.328	4.74***
Enjoyment	0.218	3.02***	0.135	1.95*	0.178	2.49**	0.189	2.78***
Technological *Enjoyment	–0.063	–0.94						
Marketing *Enjoyment			0.038	0.61				
Networking *Enjoyment					–0.071	–1.13		
Creative *Enjoyment							–0.022	–0.36
Cons.	–0.488	–1.32	–0.341	–0.96	–0.344	–0.93	–0.370	–1.06
Obs.	194		194		194		194	
F	2.79		4.37		2.65		4.55	
Adj R^2	0.0925		0.1611		0.0861		0.1684	

Note: Control variables: age, degree, SNS usage time; *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

Finally, the moderating effect of usefulness was examined. The interaction between creative competency and usefulness had a significant positive moderating effect (Coef. = 0.153, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that when SNSs are perceived as more useful, the effect of creative competency on entrepreneurial intention becomes stronger. Meanwhile, the interactions between marketing competency and usefulness (Coef. = –0.092, $p < 0.10$) and between networking competency and usefulness (Coef. = –0.122, $p < 0.10$) showed marginally significant negative moderating effects. These results suggest that higher perceived usefulness of SNSs may weaken the positive effects of marketing and networking competencies on entrepreneurial intention, although these findings should be interpreted with caution because they were significant only at the 10% level. The interaction between technological competency and usefulness was not statistically significant.

Table 10 The moderating effect of usefulness

Variables	*H6a*		*H6b*		*H6c*		*H6d*	
	Coef.	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*	*Coef.*	*t*
Technological	0.158	2.13**						
Marketing			0.321	4.67***				
Networking					0.132	1.80*		
Creative							0.323	4.68***
Usefulness	0.040	0.54	0.002	0.03	0.042	0.58	0.036	0.52
Technological *Usefulness	–0.001	–0.02						
Marketing *Usefulness			–0.092	–1.68*				
Networking *Usefulness					–0.122	–1.72*		
Creative *Usefulness							0.153	2.45**
Cons.	–0.404	–1.06	–0.276	–0.78	–0.282	–0.76	–0.214	–0.61
Obs.	194		194		194		194	
F	1.89		4.22		2.17		4.38	
Adj R^2	0.0483		0.1549		0.0627		0.1614	

Note: Control variables: age, degree, SNS usage time; *p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01.

5 Discussion and conclusion

This study examined how entrepreneurial competencies influence entrepreneurial intention and investigated the role of perceived SNS characteristics as both direct and moderating factors in this relationship. In particular, this study was designed based on the view that perceived SNS characteristics are not merely a matter of usage frequency or exposure level, but rather cognitive factors related to how individuals perceive and use entrepreneurial information and relationships through SNSs. To this end, entrepreneurial competencies were classified into technological, marketing, networking, and creative

competencies, while perceived SNS characteristics were divided into four dimensions: interactivity, credibility, enjoyment, and usefulness. After theoretically defining each construct, this study proposed a research model and hypotheses and conducted an empirical analysis.

The results showed that entrepreneurial competencies had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. This finding suggests that individuals with higher levels of technological, marketing, networking, and creative competencies are more likely to perceive entrepreneurship as a feasible and controllable activity. In other words, entrepreneurial competencies may enhance confidence across the overall process of entrepreneurial preparation, including opportunity recognition, problem solving, and resource acquisition, and such self-efficacy may lead to stronger entrepreneurial intention. Since entrepreneurship involves substantial uncertainty and risk, a positive perception of one's own competencies appears to reduce psychological barriers and strengthen expectations regarding the feasibility of entrepreneurial action.

Among the perceived SNS characteristics, credibility and enjoyment were positively associated with entrepreneurial intention, whereas interactivity and usefulness showed no statistically significant direct associations. The positive association of credibility suggests that trustworthy SNS information may reduce uncertainty surrounding entrepreneurial opportunities and market conditions. When users perceive SNS-based information as accurate and dependable, they may regard entrepreneurship-related information as more actionable and relevant to future entrepreneurial decisions. The positive association of enjoyment may reflect the role of pleasant and interesting SNS experiences in sustaining users' attention and repeated engagement with entrepreneurial content, cases, and networks.

The non-significant result for interactivity requires a more differentiated interpretation. Although interactivity enables rapid feedback and reciprocal communication, the frequency or immediacy of communication does not necessarily indicate that the exchanged information is relevant to entrepreneurship. SNS interaction may often be social or recreational rather than directed toward opportunity recognition, resource acquisition, or venture preparation. Therefore, interactivity alone may be insufficient to shape a high-commitment decision such as entrepreneurship. Its influence may depend on whether the interaction also provides credible information, meaningful contacts, or concrete entrepreneurial opportunities. Similarly, perceived usefulness may facilitate information acquisition and task efficiency without directly increasing an individual's willingness to undertake the uncertainty and risk associated with venture creation.

Credibility positively moderated the association between networking competency and entrepreneurial intention. Networking competency enables individuals to establish contacts and gain access to advice, information, opportunities, and potential resources. However, access to a network does not necessarily mean that the information and relationships obtained through that network can be used for entrepreneurial decision-making. Their entrepreneurial value depends partly on whether they are perceived as trustworthy and dependable. This interpretation is consistent with research on very small enterprises showing that collaborative entrepreneurial action requires not only access to potential partners but also sufficient collaboration capacity and trust among participants (Calmé et al., 2026). When SNS-based information and contacts are considered credible, individuals with strong networking competency may be more confident that their networks can provide valid market information, reliable advice, and meaningful

entrepreneurial opportunities. Credibility may therefore convert network access into a more actionable entrepreneurial resource, strengthening the association between networking competency and entrepreneurial intention. This finding supports the social cognitive view that the motivational role of an individual capability can depend on the perceived quality of the environment in which that capability is exercised.

Usefulness displayed different interaction patterns across the entrepreneurial competency dimensions. Its positive interaction with creative competency suggests that individuals with stronger creative competency may benefit more when SNSs are perceived as practically useful. Creative competency involves generating, developing, and refining new ideas, while useful SNS environments can provide timely information, diverse examples, customer responses, and tools for evaluating those ideas. Perceived usefulness may therefore complement creative competency by helping individuals translate creative ideas into more concrete entrepreneurial possibilities.

By contrast, the negative interactions of usefulness with marketing and networking competencies reached only the 10% significance level. These results should therefore be treated as marginal and exploratory patterns rather than as robust evidence that SNS usefulness weakens the roles of marketing and networking competencies. One tentative explanation is that useful SNS platforms may provide market information, customer feedback, and access to potential contacts even to individuals with relatively lower marketing or networking competency. In this sense, perceived usefulness may partially substitute for some functions normally supported by these competencies, reducing differences in entrepreneurial intention across competency levels. However, the present study did not directly measure such a substitution mechanism, and this interpretation should therefore be examined in future research rather than treated as a definitive conclusion.

This study contributes to entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship research by integrating capability-related personal factors with perceived digital environmental conditions. From a social cognitive perspective, the findings suggest that SNS perceptions do not operate uniformly; rather, their relevance depends on the specific competency with which they are combined. Credibility appears to make networking resources more actionable, whereas usefulness complements creative competency, while interactivity shows neither a direct nor a moderating association. The theoretical contribution therefore lies in identifying competency-specific person–environment relationships rather than treating SNSs as a single and uniformly beneficial entrepreneurial resource.

From a managerial and educational perspective, entrepreneurship support should be differentiated according to participants' competency profiles. Because credibility strengthens the role of networking competency, universities and incubators should provide source-identified and mentor-verified SNS content and train participants to assess the reliability of online information and contacts. Networking education should also focus on selecting appropriate platforms for specific purposes, such as mentor search, investor contact, peer collaboration, and customer feedback, rather than simply increasing the number of online connections. For participants developing creative competency, SNSs can be used for trend exploration, idea generation, prototype presentation, and early customer validation. Digital-marketing training should additionally cover customer segmentation, content planning, platform analytics, and campaign evaluation. Finally, because interactivity alone was not significant, support

programmes should emphasise structured and goal-oriented activities, such as expert feedback and customer-validation sessions, rather than merely encouraging more frequent SNS communication.

Despite these implications, this study has several limitations. First, the sample was composed primarily of undergraduate and graduate students. Although students represent an important potential-entrepreneur population, the findings may not be generalisable to individuals who are actively preparing or operating businesses. Future studies should replicate the analysis with non-student samples, including nascent entrepreneurs and existing business owners. Second, all variables were measured through self-reports at a single point in time. The results therefore indicate associations rather than causal or temporal relationships. Longitudinal studies should examine whether entrepreneurial competencies and SNS perceptions are associated with subsequent entrepreneurial behaviours, such as opportunity exploration, business planning, venture entry, and business continuation. Third, future research should supplement self-reported perceptions with objective SNS usage traces, including posting activity, engagement records, network expansion, and exposure to entrepreneurial content. Finally, because this study did not distinguish among individual SNS platforms, future studies should examine whether the observed relationships differ across professional-networking, visual-content, video-sharing, and community-based platforms.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2024S1A5C2A02046448).

Declarations

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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