

## Motivation Analysis and Empirical Postprint of Self-Media Users' Information Sharing Behavior

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### Abstract

[目的/意义] To investigate the motivations of self-media users for sharing information and the influence of personality traits on them, thereby enabling more effective regulation and guidance of self-media users' information behavior. [方法/过程] Grounded in the Big Five personality theory, a self-media user information sharing model was constructed, using WeChat Official Accounts as the research sample, and empirical research was conducted through questionnaire surveys and structural equation modeling. [结果/结论] The effects of the Big Five personality traits on the three categories of information sharing motivations—entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression—are heterogeneous. Overall, self-media users characterized by low emotional stability, low conscientiousness, low agreeableness, low openness, and high extraversion tend to exhibit higher levels of information sharing behavior. The influence of self-media users' information sharing motivations on their information sharing behavior, ranked from strongest to weakest, is: entertainment, social interaction, self-expression.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

#### An Empirical Study on the Motives of Information Sharing among WeMedia Users Based on the Big Five Model

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**Abstract:** [Purpose/Significance] This study investigates the motivations behind information sharing among WeMedia users and the influence of personality factors, aiming to more effectively regulate and guide user information behavior on WeMedia platforms. [Method/Process] Grounded in the Big Five personality theory, we constructed a model of WeMedia user information sharing behavior.

Using WeChat Official Accounts as our research sample, we conducted an empirical study through questionnaire surveys and structural equation modeling. *[Result/Conclusion]* The Big Five personality traits exert varying influences on three types of information sharing motivations: entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression. Overall, WeMedia users with low emotional stability, low conscientiousness, low agreeableness, low openness, and high extraversion are more likely to engage in information sharing behavior. The impact of sharing motivations on actual sharing behavior, ranked from strongest to weakest, is: entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression.

**Keywords:** WeMedia; information sharing behavior; information sharing motivation; structural equation; Big Five personality

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WeMedia (自媒体) represents a new form of media dissemination based on the general public. Unlike traditional media where discourse power is highly concentrated, WeMedia's low entry barriers and strong interactivity have significantly enhanced ordinary users' willingness to share information. By early 2019, WeMedia platforms had attracted considerable attention from capital markets, entering a "red ocean" phase of intense competition. However, due to factors such as low entry barriers, diverse professional backgrounds among practitioners, and the absence of "gatekeepers" to monitor content and dissemination behavior, a series of chaotic phenomena have emerged, polluting the online environment. The report from the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly called for "strengthening internet content construction, establishing a comprehensive online governance system, and creating a clean and healthy cyberspace." Against this backdrop of social upgrading and cyberspace purification in the "Internet Plus" era, regulating WeMedia user information sharing has become urgent.

This study introduces the Big Five personality theory to describe WeMedia users' information sharing motivations through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. This enables regulatory bodies to quickly assess the probability of information sharing behavior among specific users when monitoring and regulating WeMedia platforms, providing a decision-making basis for predicting individual user behavior and implementing targeted interventions.

## 1. Research Status

Current academic research on WeMedia user information behavior, including information sharing and opinion expression, has produced diverse findings encompassing behavioral psychology, communication studies, and social measurement approaches.

### 1.1 Research on WeMedia User Information Sharing Motivations

Compared with traditional public opinion, WeMedia users exhibit more diversified emotional attitudes when sharing information, rather than emphasizing alignment with majority viewpoints. Analyzing the personality components and sharing motivations of WeMedia users allows researchers to extract behavioral patterns from massive amounts of online public opinion data. By obtaining personality trait profiles and assessing specific sharing motivations, regulators can implement targeted guidance for key users, thereby preventing the malignant evolution of online public opinion.

E. Ligon et al. utilized the dictator game model to categorize user sharing motivations in social networks into three types: targeted altruism, constraints, and mutual reciprocity. F. Sabetzadeh et al., from a knowledge-sharing perspective, divided motivations into six categories: personal benefit, altruism, limited cooperation, social investment, social reputation, and group demand satisfaction. N. Park et al. identified four motivations for using Facebook: entertainment, social interaction, information seeking, and care-seeking. Based on uses and gratifications theory, C. S. Lee attributed news-sharing behavior on social media to four motivations: entertainment, social interaction, information seeking, and social status seeking.

### 1.2 Research on Influencing Factors of WeMedia User Information Sharing Behavior

Deng Shengli et al. reviewed how the Big Five personality influences information source selection, evaluation, information needs fulfillment, and information search patterns. Xue Yang et al. examined influencing factors of WeChat user information behavior from the perspective of flow theory, constructing a theoretical model under WeChat marketing environments. Li Fenglin et al. conducted empirical analysis on influencing factors of virtual community information sharing behavior based on Triandis's interpersonal behavior model. Wang Xiwei et al., from an information ecology perspective and using the technology acceptance model, analyzed how perceived information usefulness, self-efficacy, information technology innovativeness, and information environmental interactivity affect WeChat users' information sharing attitudes and subsequent behaviors.

Literature review demonstrates that research on WeMedia user information sharing behavior and motivations has covered platforms including Facebook, WeChat, and Weibo, showing the feasibility of describing user personality traits. However, previous studies have paid limited attention to analyzing personality traits and deconstructing information sharing behavior. This paper builds upon existing research to elaborate on the intrinsic motivations for WeMedia information sharing and the influence of personality traits. We first construct a model of WeMedia user information sharing behavior, then conduct empirical research through questionnaires and structural equation modeling to explore the internal causes of sharing behavior, ultimately providing references for policymakers and

managers in regulating WeMedia user information sharing.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 WeMedia User Information Sharing Motivations

Information sharing (or information exchange) has a long history in information science. Traditionally, it refers to one-to-one data exchange between senders and receivers following certain data protocols. This study defines WeMedia user information sharing behavior as community members exchanging and sharing information and information products within the platform system using available information and transmission technologies. Specific behaviors include forwarding text, images, voice, and video content.

We define WeMedia user information sharing motivation as the reasons why users communicate their views and tendencies about specific information, brands, and services. Synthesizing existing domestic and international research on WeMedia usage motivations, current motivations can be categorized into four types: entertainment, social interaction, self-expression, and information seeking. When limited to information sharing motivations in the WeMedia context, these can be distilled into three categories: entertainment-oriented sharing, social interaction-oriented sharing, and self-expression-oriented sharing.

### 2.2 The Big Five Personality Theory

This study employs the Big Five personality theory from psychology to describe WeMedia user personality traits. In the 1980s, based on the lexical hypothesis, personality traits were condensed into five fundamental factors covering all aspects of personality description. The five factors are: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (often described using its opposite, emotional stability, in some studies).

Openness reflects imagination, emotional depth, creativity, and preference for novelty. Conscientiousness reflects dutifulness, organization, self-discipline, caution, restraint, fairness, and strong planning. Extraversion reflects warmth, sociability, activity, adventurousness, and optimism. Agreeableness reflects altruism, trust, compliance, and modesty. Emotional stability (or neuroticism) reflects hostility, depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and vulnerability.

These five traits effectively explain the internal logic of WeMedia information sharing: users high in openness and extraversion are more likely to share due to their receptiveness to new things and enthusiasm for social interaction; users high in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and emotional stability are less likely to share due to their conservative nature, concern about disagreeing with others, and reluctance to express themselves. By analyzing the comprehensive influence of personality traits on sharing motivations, we can understand users' sharing behavior patterns.

### 3. Model Construction of WeMedia User Information Sharing

Based on communication theory, media users follow an internal mechanism of “personality-motivation-behavior”: personality traits generate diverse motivations and needs for WeMedia information sharing, leading users to select specific media and content to perform sharing behaviors that satisfy their needs.

#### 3.1 Emotional Stability and Information Sharing Motivation

Neuroticism in the Big Five describes the tendency toward negative emotions. This study uses its opposite, emotional stability, to describe this personality trait. Emotionally stable individuals are calm and rational, while those low in emotional stability experience greater psychological pressure and high emotional volatility. Research by Lei Li et al. on adolescents found that emotional stability not only significantly negatively affects internet addiction but also moderates the positive relationship between preference for internet social services and internet addiction.

Based on these findings, we propose: - H1a: Emotional stability negatively affects entertainment-oriented sharing motivation - H1b: Emotional stability negatively affects social interaction-oriented sharing motivation - H1c: Emotional stability negatively affects self-expression-oriented sharing motivation

#### 3.2 Conscientiousness and Information Sharing Motivation

Conscientiousness describes the degree of self-control and self-management. Highly conscientious individuals are cautious and planful, while those low in conscientiousness are careless and weak in planning. Research by Wan Chenxi indicates that conscientiousness is significantly positively correlated with self-efficacy, altruism, and reputation pursuit.

Based on these findings, we propose: - H2a: Conscientiousness negatively affects entertainment-oriented sharing motivation - H2b: Conscientiousness negatively affects social interaction-oriented sharing motivation - H2c: Conscientiousness negatively affects self-expression-oriented sharing motivation

#### 3.3 Agreeableness and Information Sharing Motivation

Agreeableness describes individuals’ attitudes toward others. Highly agreeable individuals are understanding and hold optimistic views of human nature, while those low in agreeableness are more suspicious and pessimistic. Xie Zhou’s research on WeChat “likes” found that agreeableness negatively correlates with instrumental and habitual motivations.

Based on these findings, we propose: - H3a: Agreeableness negatively affects entertainment-oriented sharing motivation - H3b: Agreeableness positively af-

ffects social interaction-oriented sharing motivation - H3c: Agreeableness negatively affects self-expression-oriented sharing motivation

### 3.4 Openness and Information Sharing Motivation

Openness describes cognitive style. Highly open individuals think abstractly and have broad interests, while those low in openness are more practical and traditional. Guo Ying's research found that WeChat users' openness is significantly positively correlated with motivations to "use new functions to satisfy curiosity," number of WeChat contacts, and likelihood of commenting on others' status updates.

Based on these findings, we propose: - H4a: Openness positively affects entertainment-oriented sharing motivation - H4b: Openness positively affects social interaction-oriented sharing motivation - H4c: Openness positively affects self-expression-oriented sharing motivation

### 3.5 Extraversion and Information Sharing Motivation

Extraversion describes the need for interpersonal interaction. Highly extraverted individuals are socially enthusiastic and energetic, while those low in extraversion are quiet and introverted. Zhao Yawen et al.'s research on personality traits and WeChat "likes" found that highly extraverted users enhance self-identity and personal value through likes and are more enthusiastic about real-life social interaction.

Based on these findings, we propose: - H5a: Extraversion positively affects entertainment-oriented sharing motivation - H5b: Extraversion positively affects social interaction-oriented sharing motivation - H5c: Extraversion positively affects self-expression-oriented sharing motivation

By definition, information sharing motivations positively affect sharing behavior. Therefore: - H6: Entertainment-oriented sharing motivation positively affects sharing behavior - H7: Social interaction-oriented sharing motivation positively affects sharing behavior - H8: Self-expression-oriented sharing motivation positively affects sharing behavior

The final model includes five exogenous latent variables (the Big Five personality traits) and three endogenous latent variables (entertainment-oriented, social interaction-oriented, and self-expression-oriented sharing motivations).

## 4. Empirical Research Analysis

### 4.1 Questionnaire Design

Focusing on the WeChat Official Accounts environment, we designed a questionnaire combining Big Five personality traits and information sharing motivations using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1). The questionnaire comprised three sections: 40 items for the Big

Five personality traits (8 per factor) and 10 items for sharing motivations (3-4 per motivation). After pilot testing to address unclear wording and technical terms, the formal questionnaire was distributed. Sample items are shown in Table 1 .

## 4.2 Sample and Method

We distributed 400 online questionnaires, receiving 395 responses. After screening, 317 valid questionnaires remained (80.25% validity rate). The sample comprised slightly more males (50.16%) than females (49.84%). The largest age group was 18-25 years (41.64%), and the most common education level was bachelor's degree (65.93%). The vast majority (97.16%) had followed WeChat Official Accounts, primarily subscription accounts (83.28%). The most common sharing frequency was weekly (49.84%). Detailed demographics are shown in Table 2 .

## 4.3 Reliability and Validity Testing

We conducted factor analysis using SPSS 22.0. The KMO measure was 0.972 ( $>0.9$ ), indicating suitability for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2 = 22760$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming significant correlations among variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs exceeded 0.8, demonstrating internal consistency (Table 4 ).

## 4.4 Parameter Estimation and Hypothesis Testing

We used structural equation modeling with SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 22.0 for confirmatory factor analysis. All factor loadings exceeded 0.7, so all 50 items were retained. Model fit indices are shown in Table 5 , and standardized coefficients are presented in Figure 2 [Figure 2: see original paper]. The model demonstrated good fit ( $\chi^2/df = 2.974$ , RMSEA = 0.074, CFI = 0.886, TLI = 0.926, IFI = 0.916).

Of the 18 initial hypotheses, 13 were supported at the 5% significance level, 2 received partial support, and 3 were unsupported. Compared with initial assumptions, 12 hypotheses showed consistent results, 3 showed opposite results, and 3 had non-significant path coefficients (Table 6 ).

## 5. Discussion and Analysis

Most hypotheses in the WeMedia user information sharing model received empirical support. We discuss results based on the "personality-motivation" and "motivation-behavior" components.

### 5.1 Big Five Personality Influences on Sharing Motivations

**Emotional Stability:** Standardized estimates for effects on entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression motivations were -0.273, -0.208, and -0.176

respectively ( $p = 0.09, 0.20, 0.46$ ). Results show negative effects, consistent with H1a, H1b, and H1c. Emotionally stable users have calmer psychological states and lower need to seek identity through WeMedia, resulting in weaker sharing motivations and behaviors. Platforms should monitor users with low emotional stability, as their sensitive and vulnerable traits make them more susceptible to negative, irrational information during crises. Timely responses addressing their emotional needs can effectively regulate and guide their behavior.

**Conscientiousness:** Standardized estimates were  $-0.318, 0.164, \text{ and } 0.298$  ( $p = 0.011, 0.152, 0.008$ ). Conscientiousness negatively affects entertainment motivation but positively affects self-expression motivation, consistent with H2a but opposite to H2c. Highly conscientious users share less for entertainment but more for self-expression, possibly due to self-absorption traits combined with their rigorous, truth-seeking nature, making them less likely to share negative or irrational information. For low-conscientiousness users, platforms should focus on debunking rumors promptly to reduce the spread of unverified information, while accelerating real-name registration systems to hold rumor-mongers legally accountable.

**Agreeableness:** Standardized estimates were  $-0.270, 0.130, \text{ and } -0.192$  ( $p = 0.021, 0.188, 0.069$ ). Agreeableness negatively affects self-expression motivation, positively affects social interaction motivation, and has an uncertain effect on entertainment motivation, consistent with H3b and H3c but opposite to H3a. Highly agreeable users, being gentle and conflict-averse, show lower self-expression motivation but higher social interaction motivation, demonstrating a “conformity” tendency that homogenizes with mainstream opinions. Low-agreeableness users express more extreme views with fewer concerns about mainstream opinions. Platforms should identify low-agreeableness users through profiling and text analysis to assess whether their divergent views risk polarizing toward negative, irrational directions, thereby preventing malignant evolution of public opinion.

**Openness:** Standardized estimates were  $-0.112, 0.275, \text{ and } -0.234$  ( $p = 0.393, 0.018, 0.053$ ). Openness negatively affects entertainment and self-expression motivations, positively affects social interaction motivation, and shows opposite results to H4a and H4c. This may be because both openness and sharing motivations are affected by unknown factors (possibly age), or their relationship is moderated by variables such as age. Overall, low-openness users have stronger sharing motivations and should be prioritized for monitoring.

**Extraversion:** Standardized estimates were  $1.738, 0.840, \text{ and } 1.191$  (all  $p < 0.001$ ). Extraversion shows extremely significant positive effects on all sharing motivations, consistent with H5a, H5b, and H5c. Extraversion is the most influential factor among the Big Five. Highly extraverted users, due to their enthusiasm for social interaction and self-presentation, have stronger sharing motivations and are more likely to engage in sharing behavior.

Overall, WeMedia users with low emotional stability, low conscientiousness, low

agreeableness, low openness, and high extraversion exhibit strong sharing motivations and should be the primary focus of platform regulation.

## 5.2 Effects of Sharing Motivations on Sharing Behavior

Standardized estimates for entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression motivations were 0.469, 0.172, and 0.146 ( $p < 0.001, 0.043, 0.206$ ). All three motivations significantly positively affect sharing behavior, consistent with H6, H7, and H8. Entertainment-oriented motivation is the most common and influential, followed by social interaction and self-expression motivations (Figure 3 [Figure 3: see original paper]).

However, from a regulatory perspective, entertainment-driven sharing is less likely to evolve into public opinion crises and should not be the primary focus. In contrast, social interaction and self-expression motivations, though weaker in effect, involve user groups more prone to viewpoint polarization and negative opinion evolution, warranting greater regulatory attention.

## 6. Summary and Outlook

This study's theoretical contribution lies in analyzing WeMedia user information sharing behavior through a "personality-motivation-behavior" framework, providing a new perspective for research. Findings indicate: (1) Big Five personality traits differentially affect three types of sharing motivations; (2) Users with low emotional stability, low conscientiousness, low agreeableness, low openness, and high extraversion show strong sharing motivations and should be prioritized for regulation; (3) Motivations' influence on behavior ranks as: entertainment, social interaction, then self-expression.

Practically, this study employs structural equation modeling and questionnaires with WeChat Official Accounts to empirically test the theoretical model, describing personality characteristics of high-probability sharers and offering recommendations for regulating and guiding healthy platform development.

Limitations include: (1) Some hypotheses were not fully supported (e.g., the opposite effect for openness), suggesting future research should incorporate control variables like age, occupation, and education; (2) The online questionnaire sample consisted mainly of university students, limiting generalizability. Future research should sample diverse populations, conduct comparative studies, and add moderating variables to improve model robustness.

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**Author Contributions:**

Huang Wei: Research conceptualization and design, manuscript revision, final approval;  
Zhu Zhenyuan: Manuscript drafting and revision;  
Xu Ye: Literature collection, data collection, manuscript revision.

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**An Empirical Study on the Motives of Information Sharing among WeMedia Users Based on the Big Five Model**

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**Abstract:** *[Purpose/significance]* This article examines the information sharing motives of WeMedia users by analyzing users' personality factors, thereby enhancing the efficiency of supervision and regulation of user information behavior on the WeMedia platform. *[Method/process]* Based on the Big Five model, this article constructed the information sharing model of WeMedia users. Using WeChat users as a sample, this article conducted empirical study through questionnaires and structural equation modeling. *[Result/conclusion]* The relationships between 5 personality factors and 3 kinds of information sharing motives: entertainment, social needs and self-expression vary. Users with low emotional stability, low conscientiousness, low agreeableness, low openness, high extraversion would have higher probability of information sharing. The influences of information sharing motives and information sharing behavior rank as: entertainment, social needs then self-expression.

**Keywords:** WeMedia; information sharing; information sharing motives; structural equation; Big Five model

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

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