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I wasn't expecting that: How engaging with digital platforms can turn leisure passion into entrepreneurial aspirations

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I Wasn't Expecting That: Turning Leisure Passion into Entrepreneurial Intentions through Engaging with Digital Platforms

INTRODUCTION

Online digital platforms have increasingly become novel contexts for business activities. From musicians to crafters to app developers, creators of all stripes are finding new ways to use online digital platforms not only to express and cultivate their passions (Jeppesen & Frederiksen, 2006; Boudreau & Jeppesen, 2015; Kuhn & Galloway, 2015) but also to monetize their talents and become entrepreneurs in the platform economy (Kim, 2018; Johnson et al., 2022; Florida, 2021). The role of passion in entrepreneurial literature is not new (Cardon et al., 2009, 2013). However, scholars have mostly focused on entrepreneurial passion, which is described as “the determined, optimistic, and persistent desire to succeed at one’s own venture” (Smilor, 1997, p. 342). Nevertheless, besides entrepreneurial passions, other sources of passion can fuel entrepreneurs - e.g., passion for a specific activity, passion for the product or service the business is built to provide, passion for competition, or passion for a social mission (Cardon et al., 2017) – and the role of this distinct forms of passion has been systematically neglected in the literature (for remarkable exceptions see Milanesi, 2018, Warnick et al., 2018, Guercini & Cova, 2018, and Casprini et al., 2019; McSweeney et al., 2022).

In this paper, we introduce the notion of leisure passion, which encompasses individuals' behaviors, actions, and thoughts, experiencing positive feelings and/or emotions in the practice of a hobby or activities done for intrinsic enjoyment, typically during leisure time. Leisure passion falls within what Milanesi (2018) has labeled ‘domain passion’, with the domain being represented by a hobby or a leisure-related activity in specific domains, including general, amateur activities such as dancing, physical activities, cooking, and internet, and online games. We discuss the relationship between leisure passion and the emergence of entrepreneurial processes triggered through the platform addressing the following research question: *how do digital platforms influence the transition from individuals' leisure passion towards the emergence of entrepreneurial intention?* Building upon previous research on passion and digital platforms, we focus our attention on socialization processes, exploring the role of community engagement and endorsement. Our empirical setting is YTTalk forum, the largest digital community for YouTubers, where we tracked the activities of 20,538 users from September 2011 through

March 2020. Drawing on the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software, we proposed a new methodological approach that makes use of used language to infer passion.

Our work contributes to the literature on the role of passion in entrepreneurship by intersecting the ongoing conversation about how digital platforms are transforming the practice of entrepreneurship (Nambisan, 2017; Cutolo & Kenney, 2021). Specifically, our findings develop a picture of passion cultivated in hobbies and leisure time as a potential source of entrepreneurship, showing that community engagement and endorsement are key for favoring the emergence of entrepreneurial intentions in passionate platform participants. Specifically, we show that it is not the intensity and frequency of interactions (number of users' posts), but the positive response of the online community (reactions and comments of appreciation generated by users' posts) having the potential to favor the transition from pure leisure passion towards entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial intention emerges as platform users become aware of the attention and appreciation that they receive (through their posts and their general engagement) from other platform users, realizing that they can appropriate the value they generate for others by monetizing the content produced.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND & HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Today, digital platforms have reshaped the dynamics of value creation, delivery, and capture (Parker et al., 2006; Kenney & Zysman, 2016, 2019), and their ecosystems represent a novel context for entrepreneurship, with peculiar dynamics that contribute to shaping entrepreneurial processes and outcomes (Nambisan, 2017; Cutolo & Kenney, 2021). In addition, they have contributed to the rise of a new generation of entrepreneurs using the platforms to deliver value to a larger target through their products or services. Platform-based entrepreneurship is about leveraging modularity and boundary resources to generate innovation (Tavalaci & Cennamo, 2020), exploiting the intermediary position of the platform to reach customers that wouldn't otherwise be available (Cenamor et al., 2019), and also utilizing new business strategies in order to directly monetize it for resource acquisition (Johnson et al., 2022). The variety and the sheer number of platform entrepreneurs is surprising: Shopify host over 1,000,000 merchants in 175 different countries, 2.5 million creative entrepreneurs sell their handmade goods through the Etsy platform, more than 25 million business profiles are active on Instagram and 31 million creators monetize their channels on YouTube.

Participating in a platform-based ecosystem is often highly driven by passion (Kuhn & Galloway, 2015; Boudreau & Jeppesen, 2015; Casprini et al., 2019), as individuals have increasingly started leveraging digital platforms to explore and exploit their passions or combine their careers with more consistent engagement with what they love (Sliter & Boyd, 2014; Caza et al., 2018; Campion et al., 2020). Indeed, digital platforms enable a wide range of social activities, and increasingly they have fostered the emergence of vibrant communities to connect over common interests and cultivate hobbies and passions, whether they are for art, sport, photography or knitting (e.g., Kim, 2018).

More generally speaking - and not only related to digital platforms - passion is defined as a strong inclination towards an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy (Vallerand et al., 2003). Chen et al. (2015) identify three core attributes of passion: (1) passion is accompanied by intense positive feelings; (2) passion regulates individual behavioral tendencies; (3) passion is a target-specific construct. The target-specific nature of passion implies the existence of a specific activity – domain – from which one's affective experiences originate, which is also the target toward which one is motivated to fulfill a persistent effort. For this reason, “entrepreneurial passion”, i.e., passion for activities related to the entrepreneurial process, including identifying and exploring new venture opportunities, founding, and developing new ventures (Cardon et al., 2009), has often been described as the fuel that entrepreneurs need to start their journey and to keep going. Entrepreneurial passion increases entrepreneurs’ dedication and commitment, as well as their persistence in pursuing goals, and also can influence the funding decisions of angel investors and venture capitalists (Vallerand et al., 2003; Cardon et al., 2009; Cardon & Kirk, 2015; Drnovsek et al., 2016). Cardon et al. (2017) uncovered several sources of entrepreneurial passion, including a passion for people involved in the business, a passion for the product or service the business is built to provide, a passion for competition, and a passion for a social mission. While people, products, competition, and social missions are important aspects of entrepreneurship, the experience of passion for these things is noticeably absent from the current literature (for a remarkable exception, see McSweeney et al., 2022).

Recent contributions (e.g., Huyghe et al., 2016; Milanese, 2018) have unveiled another important dimension of passion relevant to entrepreneurship: domain passion. While research on entrepreneurial passion has greatly contributed to the understanding of entrepreneurship, studies on entrepreneurs who are motivated to engage in entrepreneurial activities out of a passion cultivated in hobbies and leisure time, within a specific

knowledge or skill domain – domain passion – are limited (Casprini et al., 2019). Domain passion is defined by Milanesi (2018) as a target-specific passion, that implies the existence of a specific domain that is the origin of one's affective experiences but also the target toward which one is motivated to fulfill a persistent effort. Domain passion encompasses activities practiced as hobbies in leisure time, which we call *leisure passion*. Leisure passion includes both “casual leisure” (Stebbins, 1997), requiring little knowledge or skills and pursued purposes of relaxation, regeneration, or hedonistic enjoyment, as well as other activities/behaviors that are pursued as an expression of ability, purpose, and identity, involving more effortful engagement, challenge, and complexity thus implying more energy and effort, defined as “serious leisure”.

We see leisure passion as an end in itself, that is characterized by love for the sake of the same leisure and for the positive feelings and emotions stemming from its practice. Individuals joining digital platforms are moved by curiosity, the desire to share their emotions and positive feelings, learn from others, and enjoy the contribution that they can offer to the community. Time spent in the engagement in one's hobby is often devoted to the accumulation of knowledge and skills through the practice of the hobby and not motivated by an extrinsic reward (Milanesi, 2018). Leisure passion is, therefore, mainly located in other domains of the actors' existence, namely, consumption instead of production (Guercini & Cova, 2018). In line with this, previous research highlighted that the practice of domain passion does not automatically turn into entrepreneurial behavior (Milanesi, 2018). The antecedent of entrepreneurial behavior, according to The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is represented by entrepreneurial intention. The notion of entrepreneurial intention has been widely studied by the extant literature (Douglas et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial intention is defined as an outcome of a conscious cognitive process that intentionally looks for (and recognize) a fit between resources at hand (knowledge, expertise, competencies, physical and financial resources) and a gap or a demand for something or a problem to be solved (Krueger et al., 2000). As with other domain passions, leisure passion entails an investment (waste) of resources and time to accumulation of knowledge and skills on one's passion and achieve self-satisfying and well-being-related goals, that negatively interfere with the emergence of entrepreneurial intention which is the product of conscious and intentional processes. Therefore, we expect a negative relation between leisure passion and entrepreneurial intention.

Hp1 Leisure passion will be negatively associated with the emergence of entrepreneurial intention.

3.2 Engagement and Endorsement in digital platforms communities: turning leisure passion into entrepreneurial intentions

“When I started my journey on Youtube, I didn't plan on making it a career. I thought I would make a few videos about what I endured while I was in prison and how I pulled myself out of addiction. My plan was simple, make seven videos that will be left up to help inspire others. It didn't take long for me to fall in love with creating content. In 4 months time I gained 3000 subscribers and that was very exciting to me! While that may not seem like a lot to some, it meant everything to me. Those 3000 subscribers came each week to the comment section to cheer me on, give me advice, recommend different channels and ask me meaningful questions that would inspire me to film more videos”.

As the story of this YouTuber illustrates, pathways toward entrepreneurial activities can be triggered somehow by engagement with the digital communities supported by platforms. Indeed, as aggregators, digital platforms foster “the engagement of a greater number and diverse set of people in all stages of the entrepreneurial process” (Nambisan, 2017, p. 1032), and the ease of interaction renders entrepreneurial processes and outcomes more fluid and collective (Nambisan, 2017; von Briel et al., 2018). Furthermore, participation in the communities sponsored by digital platforms gives fast access to an immense social and human capital, in the form of information and technical resources, but also encouragement and feedback, which is crucial to support the unintentional transition into entrepreneurship (Eckhardt et al., 2018; Kim, 2018).

The centrality of social engagement as an initiator of the process of entrepreneurial emergence is extensively discussed in the literature (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), but typically building an appropriate network and promoting fruitful interaction with its members requires significant time and effort (Autio et al., 2013). Conversely, the digital nature of online platforms, built upon a technological infrastructure that offers communication, collaboration, and/or computing capabilities to support interaction, exponentially elevates the frequency and intensity of social interaction while virtually eliminating its cost. In this regard, crowdsourcing and crowdfunding platforms allow entrepreneurs to connect and engage with a community of potential customers and investors on a global scale (Taeuscher, 2019; Taeuscher et al., 2020).

Among the resources provided, digital platforms make available online spaces that members can use for communication and conversation. These digital spaces foster and support the emergence of online

communities, groups, and subgroups of individuals brought together by a shared interest that use the platform ‘to interact and create user-generated content that is accessible to all community members while cultivating communal culture and adhering to specific norms’ (Rotman & Preece, 2010). For instance, Etsy connects more than 2 million crafters, offering “groups” and “forums” where members get together, share information, and support each other (Kuhn & Galloway, 2015).

Moreover, the purpose of engagement in platform communities varies substantially. In their study on Etsy sellers, Kuhn and Galloway (2015) find evidence that members with a clear intent to succeed commercially tend to place more value on assistance concerning commercial-oriented issues, while those animated by a desire to express themselves creatively on the platform are more prone to emphasize the psychosocial support that comes from the other members. Similarly, Kim (2018) shows that members of a digital community of knitters seek feedback to mitigate the fear of negative audience reactions to their ideas and encourage them to enhance their self-confidence. In both cases, interaction with the other members of the community has the power to shape individual attitudes and behaviors.

By favoring exposure to socialization processes with unprecedented scope and scale, we hold that digital platforms can play a major role in triggering the transition from leisure passion to entrepreneurial intentions. Indeed, when individuals’ engagement with something they like or are passionate about is intensively socialized, the frequent interactions, fueled by the passions binding all the different members of the platform community, galvanize the users and generate spillovers (Guercini & Cova, 2018). Consequently, individuals become increasingly aware that their initial leisure-driven forms of engagement are of interest to a multitude of people. In this process, the variety of purposes and interests of the community members play a crucial role, as the great variation in the knowledge and interest determines the kind of interaction and assistance that community members are more prone to offer. Indeed, exchanges with the community can generate feedback about an idea, advice on how to turn their leisure passion into a business, or even a sense of friendship (Kim, 2000; Autio et al., 2013; Kuhn & Galloway, 2015; Kim, 2018; Bellesia et al., 2019).

Through intense and high-frequency socialization offered by the platform, individuals become aware that their domain passion is creating value for others, and thus they intentionally start thinking about how to appropriate it (Autio et al., 2013; Eckhardt et al., 2018). This is the moment in which domain passion (leisure passion) turns into an entrepreneurial intention. Based on this, we postulate:

H_p.2a The interaction between leisure passion and community engagement will be positively associated with the emergence of entrepreneurial intention

Beyond the frequency of engagement, the socialization process in a community also relates to the reactions from other members (Kim, 2018). Indeed, while community engagement catches the time and effort devoted to the interaction with other members, hence the proactiveness of individual users, the latter captures the momentum generated by individual activity within the community and the appreciation for specific content. Literature offers various evidence that passionate hobbyists can evolve into business owners after being promoted by external audiences' positive evaluations. Demetry (2017), for instance, shows that for part-time chefs experimenting with pop-up restaurants as spaces for serious leisure, external validation from the local culinary community acts as a powerful stimulus to consider the transition to full-time business. This suggests that the positive response to user's engagement (positive reactions, feedback and comments of appreciation generated by users' posts) can be equally important in favoring users' awareness that, through the practice of their hobbies in their leisure moments, they can generate value for others and that this value can be appropriated and generate economic transactions (can be monetized). This process is coherent with the idea of entrepreneurship as an emergent process (Gartner et al., 1992, 1994; Lichtenstein et al., 2006) and business creation as the result of a series of actions, rather than a one-time act (Demetry, 2017; Ruef, 2010). Based on this reasoning, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H_p.2b The interaction between leisure passion and community endorsement will be positively associated with the emergence of entrepreneurial intention

4. METHODS

4.1 Research Setting

To investigate the link between passion, community engagement, and the emergence of entrepreneurial intentions, this paper looks at the passionate creators on the YouTube platform (Johnson et al., 2022). For this study, we reviewed the discussions of one of the main online YouTubers' forum. With 103,170 members,

YTTalk is the largest online community of video creators focused on discussing anything YouTube- related. The forum was made to provide content creators with the opportunity to find a place where discuss with others who share the same passions, develop a sense of companionship but also share and seek tips to make a channel grow. The forum is organized into four main sections, each one consisting of several sub-sections. For example, the “YTTALK COMMUNITY” section is divided into “*News and Announcements*”, “*YTTalk Support and Suggestions*”, “*Useful Site Information*”, “*Introduce Yourself*”.

Three main features of our setting are crucial for studying how passion turns into entrepreneurial intention through community engagement. First, the guidelines of online communities require members to create a thread to introduce themselves to fellow members of the community before actually posting anything on forums. Through this introduction, users unravel who they are, why they decided to become content creators and the reasons why they joined the Yttalk community. Second, keeping track of user level of contribution in an online forum is relatively easy. Indeed, both the volume of posts and the level of engagement generated by these posts are displayed next to each user’s profile, along with other information, such as when the user joined the forum, the location, and the typology of channel. Third, there is a specific sub-section of the forum, “*YouTube Video Monetization & Partnership Forum*”, where users can discuss how to monetize their YouTube videos here and seek and share advice on how to effectively make money from their videos. Creating a thread in this section can be taken as a formal expression of an entrepreneurial intention. For instance, consider this point raised by one of the users: “*Does anyone know if there are any partners making enough money through AdSense to live on what they make? I find this quite interesting to learn, and I am sure there are people here that would be too, who wouldn't want to live off making videos and be self-employed in an industry/ hobby we all love?*”. Similarly, in a different thread directly inquiring about general tips, one user wrote “*Are you trying to make a living from Youtube? If yes, dedicate yourself to it.*”.

This study is based on a unique dataset built following a two-step approach. First, we collected all the introductory messages created from September 2011 to March 2020, and then we checked where these users wrote a post in the “*YouTube Video Monetization & Partnership Forum*” section during the period of observation, and then we measured the level of engagement of all the users in our sample. The final population consists of 20,538 users of the Yttalk community.

4.2 Measures

4.2.1 *Dependent variable*

Entrepreneurial intention

The main independent variable used to test our hypotheses is the manifestation of entrepreneurial intention. We build a binary variable that takes value 1 if a user posted a thread in the *YouTube Video Monetization & Partnership Forum* section during the period of observation, and 0 if not. During the study period, 9.2 percent of the forum members (2,448 individuals) wrote a post in this section, manifesting thus their clear entrepreneurial intention.

4.2.2 *Independent Variable*

Leisure Passion

There has been a great deal of inconsistency in how scholars measure passion in entrepreneurship literature (Newman et al., 2019). Most empirical studies adopt different self-reported measures, but there is no consensus on a unique measure. Some research uses other-reported scales, and recently also, experimental approaches have been adopted to articulate passion in written text and video pitches (Cardon et al., 2013; Murnieks et al., 2016; Li et al., 2017). In this work, we attempt to propose a novel approach to measure leisure passion that leverages linguistic features from forum users' introductory messages. Indeed, words are closely linked to measures of people's social and psychological attitudes, as 'language is the most common and reliable way for people to translate their internal thoughts and emotions into a form that others can understand' (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010, p. 25).

Consistently with previous research that views passion as a positive attitude and strong interest in a specific activity (e.g., Perttula & Cardon, 2012; Chen et al., 2015), to create our measure, we combined two linguistic dimensions, namely the focus of users' introduction on the forum and the emotional tone of the message. We used the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) program for our analysis, a computer-aided text analysis software extensively used to investigate several cognitive, behavioral, and emotional meanings of words (Pennebaker et al., 2001; Meoli et al., 2019; Weseman & Wincent, 2021). LIWC has been developed to analyze large textual dataset on a word-by-word basis, computing the percentage of words in the text that belong to specific categories elaborated by the developers. These categories – more than 80 in the latest version

of the software – describe both personality dimensions (e.g., affect, cognition), standard linguistic features (e.g. verbs, pronouns, articles), and personal concerns (e.g. work, home, leisure activities).

To take into account the target-specific nature of passion, we wanted to identify those users with a stronger focus on leisure activities and hobbies. We expect that this will be reflected in greater use in the self-introductory message of words from the LIWC *Leisure* category (e.g. cook, chat, movie). In addition, LIWC produces a direct measure of the emotional inclination of the writer, which relates to how positive/negative the tone is according to the words used (Pennebaker et al., 2001; Boyd & Pennebaker, 2015). By combining the two values, we conceptualized and operationalized leisure passion as an intense positive feeling towards leisure activities. More formally, we normalized the leisure and the emotional tone and then multiplied the two scores. Table 1 presents examples of high and low-passionate introductions.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Community engagement and endorsement

In order to grasp the dual dimension of socialization processes in a platform community, namely the frequency of engagement and the community response generated, we build two separate measures.

-*Community Engagement*: the number of posts per day produced by each user in the period of observation.

-*Community Endorsement*: the number of positive reactions – expressed as likes and positive emoticons - these posts have generated (a metric called *Reaction score* in the forum).

4.2.3 Control Variables

We also included several controls for factors that may influence the emergence of entrepreneurial intention, namely *Channel type*, *Location*, *Numbers of years in the community*, and *introduction length* (measured in total number of words). Table 2 presents the main descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for all the variables. As expected, the correlation matrix highlights a high correlation between Community Engagement and Community Endorsement (0.906). In order to avoid multicollinearity issues, we used the logarithmic transformation of Community Endorsement – a count variable with overdispersion (Hair et al., 2010), and then we performed a

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis. Table 2 also reports bivariate tests comparing differences between members who manifested their intention to monetize their channel and those who did not for each of the reported variables. Individuals who manifested an entrepreneurial intention resulted in a significantly lower level of leisure passion ($p < 0.001$). Consequently, bivariate statistics for leisure passion showed evidence in support of the negative relationship hypothesized between leisure passion and entrepreneurial intention. Moreover, bivariate comparisons show a positive and significant difference between individuals who did and did not manifest an entrepreneurial intention on the forum when considering community engagement and endorsement ($p < 0.001$).

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

We used a series of logit regression models reported in Table 3 (we obtained substantially similar results when we estimated probit and linear probability models with identical controls; these models are available upon request.)

5. FINDINGS

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Individual VIF scores varied from 1 to 4.44 (interaction term between community engagement quality and leisure passion) over the regressions, suggesting multicollinearity was not a concern in our analysis (Hair et al., 2015). First, for H1, we examined the main effect of leisure passion on the emergence of entrepreneurial intention (Model 1), after controlling for the user's channel type, country of origin, and years spent on the forum. For simplicity, although all these controls are included in our analyses, we do not report or discuss many of their effects. In line with extant research (Autio et al., 2013; Eckhardt et al., 2018), we find that participation in the platform community is positively associated with the emergence of entrepreneurial intention: the longer a user participates in the forum community, the higher is the likelihood to manifest an entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.444$, $p < 0.001$). As hypothesized, we find that users with a stronger leisure passion are less likely to manifest in the forum the intention to monetize their YouTube channel ($\beta = -0.930$, $p < 0.001$). *Ceteris paribus*,

a one-standard-deviation increase in leisure passion reduces the probability of manifesting an entrepreneurial intention in the forum by 7.8%.

Model 2 introduces the interaction between leisure passion and community engagement to test Hypotheses 2a and 2b. We did not find a direct effect of Community engagement on entrepreneurial intention, and the interaction term between Community engagement and leisure passion is not statistically significant. This indicates that the frequency of interaction with other community members is not a relevant factor in explaining the emergence of entrepreneurial intention, hence Hypothesis 2a is not supported. The Community Endorsement coefficient is instead positive and significant ($\beta = 0.490$, $p < 0.001$): consistently with previous research (Demetry, 2017; Kim, 2018), we found that appreciation and positive comments from other members of the community are positively associated with the emergence of entrepreneurial intention as they are important sources of encouragement and support. Next, we address hypothesis 2b, which concerns interactions of leisure and the endorsements resulting from this engagement. The interaction term between Community Endorsement and leisure passion is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.459$, $p = 0.013$). This indicates that the positive reaction to the interactions with other community members is relevant in explaining the emergence of entrepreneurial intention; hence, Hypothesis 2a is supported. To elucidate the practical implications of our findings, for a one standard deviation increase in the level of endorsement generated by users' engagement (approximately 5 positive reactions more during the period of observation), the likelihood that an individual with average leisure passion manifested an entrepreneurial intention increased by roughly 98.6 %¹. To facilitate interpretation, in Figure 1, we graphically illustrate the interaction effect between community endorsement and leisure passion on the predicted probability of developing entrepreneurial intentions during the observation period.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

6. DISCUSSION

Although digital platforms have increasingly become an avenue for individuals to turn their passions into a business, little is known about how leisure passion, a passion for leisure activities and hobbies, leads to the emergence of entrepreneurial intention. We seek to elucidate this process through an analysis conducted

¹ Calculated using the *margins* command on Stata: results show an increase in predicted probabilities of manifesting entrepreneurial intention (for an individual with average level of leisure passion) from 7.5 % to 14.7%.

on the forum posts of 20,538 YouTube content creators. We unravel that a passion cultivated in leisure time is not directly conducive to entrepreneurial intentions, but platforms can favor this transition by escalating socialization processes among participants. Our results suggest that this unintentional emergence is not triggered by the frequency of engagement, rather, it is influenced by the positive reactions generated by the interaction among participants. Indeed, when passionate creators receive positive responses from other members of the community to their posts, this positive interaction is likely to lead leisure passion to develop into an entrepreneurial intention. This paper has implications for different streams of studies.

First, we aim to contribute to the literature on passion in entrepreneurship. Although there are some exceptions (e.g. Milanesi, 2018; McSweeney et al., 2022), prior research on this topic has been primarily focused on entrepreneurial passion. We introduce the novel concept of leisure passion to explore the relationship between engaging in entrepreneurial activities and passion cultivated in hobbies and leisure time. More specifically, our work sheds light on the process through which leisure passion leads to the development of entrepreneurial intentions in the age of digital platforms. We show that passion for leisure activities is detrimental to developing entrepreneurial intentions unless an individual can share and socialize this passion with other members of the platform's community. Specifically entrepreneurial intentions tend to materialize when engagement with the community generates positive reactions from the other members.

Second, at a methodological level, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first attempt to use a computational linguistic approach to measure passion from the way people introduce themselves in a specific context. Extant research shows that communicating passion is crucial for entrepreneurs to convince investors, partners, and customers, and language is the most effective vehicle to convey this passion (Warnick et al., 2018). We believe that the proposed approach could be easily adapted to study entrepreneurial passion, by focusing on the use of positive tones in the language toward other specific dimensions such as, for instance, inventing, founding, or developing a new venture.

Third, we contribute to the ongoing debate on how digital platforms shape entrepreneurial processes and outcomes (Nambisan, 2017; Cutolo & Kenney, 2021). We suggest that passion is an underappreciated dimension in the experience of platform entrepreneurs. Furthermore, we propose a novel relationship between platforms and entrepreneurship, showing how digital platforms' influence over entrepreneurial agency goes beyond offering resources and providing novel opportunities to entrepreneurs. On top of offering

opportunities to experiment with new business models and contributing to the rise of a new generation of entrepreneurs using the platforms to deliver value to a larger target through their products, services, and content (Johnson et al., 2022), we illuminate how digital platforms can favor unintentional entrepreneurship by offering individuals the possibility to cultivate their passion, to being immersed into a community that provides continuous feedbacks and facilitating and accelerating socialization processes.

Finally, we contribute to the stream of literature discussing the emergent nature of entrepreneurship (Shah & Tripsas, 2007; Demetry, 2017). As a result of technological advancements, evolving workplace norms, and changing attitudes toward career and personal aspirations, individuals now have the opportunity to pursue their interests in a novel fashion, leading to an increase in unintentional entrepreneurship as people transform their passions into businesses. While the critical importance of communities as a source of feedback and support has been largely acknowledged (Autio et al., 2013; Kuhn & Galloway, 2015), our work sheds light on how digital platforms can accelerate and magnify the power of socialization processes. We show that the mechanisms leading to the emergence of entrepreneurial intention are not activated identically for the frequency of interaction with and the reaction from the community. When a passion is socialized through a digital platform and generates consensus and appreciation, creators are more likely to consider the possibility of becoming entrepreneurs and monetizing their channel. Those who joined the platform with no monetizing orientation, through the platform, become aware (without doing any market research, without proactively searching for any additional information) of the value that they can create for other users. This is likely to influence an individual's self-efficacy and unintentionally raise entrepreneurial potential.

Limitations & Future research

The present study is not free from limitations. First of all, it remains to be seen if the dynamics we observed among YouTube creators are generalizable across other entrepreneurial contexts. Future research could explore the relationship between leisure passion and the emergence of entrepreneurial intentions in other communities, including physical communities, and not necessarily limited to online digital platforms. Although leisure passion is an important driver for participating in different communities, not all settings possess the hyper-socializing characteristics of an online digital platform. Hence, we anticipate that the negative relationship between leisure passion and the emergence of entrepreneurial intentions would also hold in other empirical

settings. However, we believe that the effect of community engagement and endorsement may differ in other contexts. As online platforms function as catalysts that expedite the socialization process leading to the emergence of entrepreneurial intentions in passionate hobbyists, future research could investigate the role of contextual variations in the nature of community engagement and endorsement. For example, exploring scenarios where community engagement becomes more challenging or requires more time to exert any effect on individuals.

A second related, limitation concerns the multifaceted nature of community engagement and endorsement. A more direct analysis of the posts' content or the network of interactions within the community could help us gain a more nuanced understanding of the role of platform communities. Who are the individuals most likely to generate consensus and favor the emergence of entrepreneurial intentions? Are they more or less experienced with regard to the individual baseline? How about the contents of their reactions? Do they explicitly suggest the possibility of monetization? Are they already involved in entrepreneurship? Do they provide specific insights and feedback that may trigger entrepreneurial orientation?

Last and not least, timing is an interesting issue to be analyzed in other contexts. As we clearly mentioned, socializing is important for innovation to occur in general and even out digital platforms. Nevertheless, platforms reduce the time for socialization, making it possible to reach a great number of users and receive a great amount of responses in limited time. In our data, the average time spent on the forum before manifesting an entrepreneurial intention is 77 days. How long does the socialization process leading to entrepreneurship take to be effective in other contexts?

We hope this article, including its novel data and methodological approach, can stimulate further research on the role of platforms in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes and, more in general, the fundamental role of passion in entrepreneurship.

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Fig 1: The interaction between Community Endorsement and Leisure Passion in the formation of Entrepreneurial Intentions

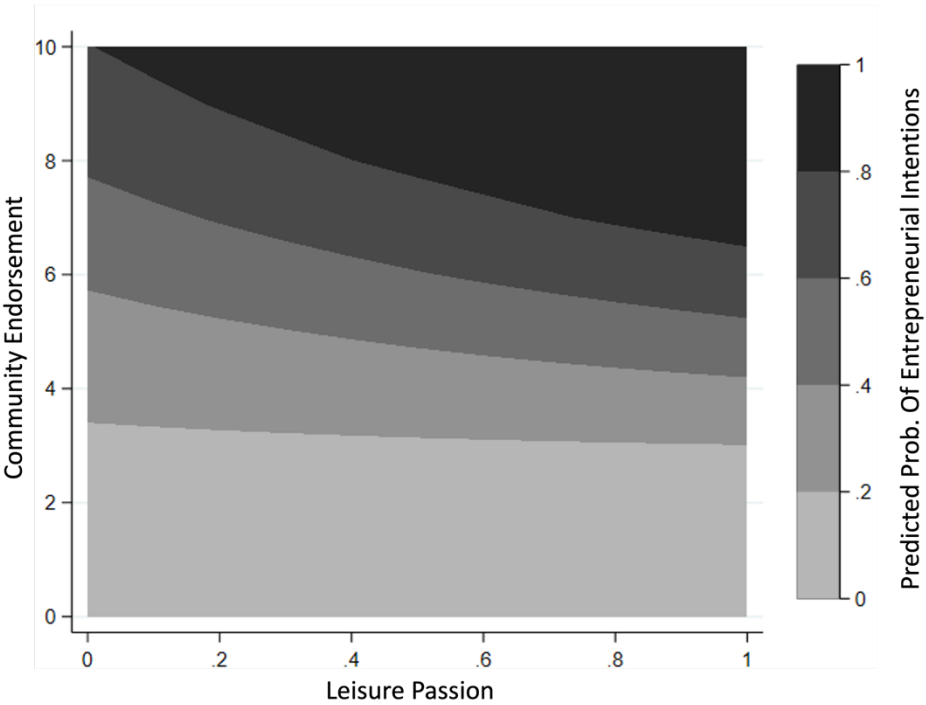


Table 1: Leisure passion – Different Examples

	Introduction message on the forum
<p>High Leisure passion (2.s.d above mean)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just having fun recording some game play and checking out what you other gamers are all about. I'm a big sports game fan especially basketball. • My name's Brandon, I'm 19 years old I started a YouTube channel for fun because I enjoy playing videos games. I'm here to make new friends, that's also enjoy playing video games and just having fun.
<p>Moderate Leisure passion (mean)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm a new channel, ever since I was 4 my dream was to be a Youtuber and I'm hoping to start my journey with this post. I broke my arm when I was 5 playing football (still got the game winning touchdown though). I grew up watching YouTube! I'm a very epic gamer and I'm working on a very BIG EPIC PROJECT. God is the way †! I'm also looking for a collab! • Hi all, I'm just a regular guy, who loves to make music, lift heavy things and eat loads of calories. I joined this forum, to learn more about YouTube, and hopefully pick up some momentum on the channel. As the name implies, I have Dreads & I lift, so have a look at the content if you're into fitness. Take care
<p>Low leisure passion (2 s.d. below mean)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings all, I go by the name of xxx or simply just K (Kay). I currently reside in the United Kingdom. Not too long ago I started a YouTube page due to me being disappointed in seeing very few put out the content I make. I look forward to being a part of this forum. • Hello, my name is Jamison. In my previous life I was a web designer and developer, but I couldn't sit at a desk anymore so now I'm a wood worker and custom design/builder. I'm here to learn and grow my channel.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

Binary and Categorical Variables

	<i>All users</i>				Ent. Intention Yes	Ent. Intention no	Bivariate test			
<i>Entrepreneurial intention</i>	9.17 % (Yes) 90.83% (No)									
Number of observations	20,538				2,087	18,451				
Channel Type										
Entertainment	13.48 %				4.17 %	14.53 %				
Games	9.38 %				10.69 %	9.23 %				
Animals	0.29 %				0.62 %	0.25 %				
Travel	1.17 %				1.72 %	1.11 %				
Games	44.21 %				46 %	44 %				
People	12.05 %				11.84 %	12.07 %				
Howto	2.99 %				3.69 %	2.91 %				
Education	1.5 %				1.72 %	1.48 %				
Comedy	3.93 %				4.89 %	3.82 %				
Music	4.59 %				6.18 %	4.41 %				
Film	3.1 %				3.74 %	3.02 %				
Sports	1.01 %				1.1 %	1 %				
News	0.23 %				0.19 %	0.23 %				
Tech	1.31 %				2.3 %	1.2 %				
Autos	0.65 %				1.05 %	0.61 %				
Nonprofit	0.08 %				0.05 %	0.09 %				
Shows	0.03 %				0.05 %	0.03 %				
Continuous Variables	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	T	p-value
Leisure passion	0.158	0.098	0	1	0.147	0.094	0.160	0.098	5.435	0.000
Community Engagement	0.034	0.22	0	18.396	0.153	0.616	0.021	0.097	-26.44	0.000
Community Endorsement	30.228	407.167	0	29202	178.232	1184.9	13.487	151.795	-17.652	0.000
Years on the platform	5.059	1.799	0.068	8.614	6.104	1.406	4.940	1.800	-28.561	0.000
Introduction lenght(# words)	133.557	110.152	21	1905	139.132	123.167	132.927	108.568	-2.439	0.015

Notes: T-test values are reported in the case of continuous variables.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix (continue)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. <i>Entrepreneurial Intention</i>	1					
2. <i>Leisure passion</i>	-0.038	1				
3. <i>Community Engagement</i>	0.119	-0.008	1			
4. <i>Community Endorsement</i>	0.180	-0.020	0.906	1		
5. <i>Years on the platform</i>	0.189	-0.029	0.047	0.034	1	
6. <i>Introduction length (# of words)</i>	0.022	-0.163	0.026	0.044	-0.050	1

Table 3: Logistic Regression Models (Coefficients reported)

	Model 1		Model 2	
	b	p-value	b	p-value
Leisure passion	-0.930 (0.267)	0.000	-1.143 (0.423)	0.007
Community Engagement			0.169 (0.274)	0.537
Leisure passion* Com. Engagement			-1.069 (1.312)	0.415
Community Endorsement (log)			0.490(0.033)	0.000
Leisure passion* Com. Endorsement			0.459(0.184)	0.013
Years on the platform	0.444 (0.017)	0.000	0.417 (0.018)	0.000
Introduction length (log)	0.152 (0.035)	0.000	-0.118 (0.039)	0.002
Country		Yes		Yes
Channel type		Yes		Yes
Constant	-6.547 (0.035)	0.000	-5.847 (0.263)	0.000
Log Likelihood		-6047.057		-5307.976
Pseudo R-squared		0.1004		0.2103
Wald χ^2		1027.14 (89)		2164.84 (93)

Note: N= 20,385; Robust Standard Errors in parenthesis