

2022-07-28

Construction of Mega Individuals Competency Model in Business Environment: A Grounded Theory Approach

Huang, B

<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/20215>

10.3390/su14159248

Sustainability

MDPI AG

All content in PEARL is protected by copyright law. Author manuscripts are made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the details provided on the item record or document. In the absence of an open licence (e.g. Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher or author.

Article

Construction of Mega Individuals Competency Model in Business Environment: A Grounded Theory Approach

Beilei Huang¹, Jinhua Zhang² and Xiyuan Li^{1,*}
¹ School of Economics and Management, Wuhan University, Wuhan 430072, China; huangbeilei@whu.edu.cn

² Plymouth Business School, University of Plymouth, Plymouth PL4 8AA, UK; jinhua.zhang@plymouth.ac.uk

* Correspondence: lixiyuan@whu.edu.cn

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to explore the new practices derived from the influences of information technology among a certain group, i.e., “mega individuals”. Based on Grounded Theory and interviews from 53 companies, which consist of responses from 56 domestic and international founders, entrepreneurs, professional managers, partners and business elites, this study expounds that “mega individuals”, who constantly develop individual attainment and ability under the influence of business ecosystem evolution, have broken the traditional employment relationship. Through Grounded Theory, the following conclusion can be drawn: “mega individuals” are composed of three key traits: compound ability, collaboration ability and personal intellectual property (IP) know-hows. This research takes the initiative to create the “mega individuals competency model” (MICM) and elaborates on the dynamic capabilities theory to interpret the MICM, dedicated to enriching the dynamic capabilities theory by merging the current rapid and continuous changes in the business world from the promising and potential individual’s perspective.

Keywords: mega individuals; competency model; dynamic capabilities; compound ability; collaboration ability; personal intellectual property



Citation: Huang, B.; Zhang, J.; Li, X.

Construction of Mega Individuals Competency Model in Business Environment: A Grounded Theory Approach. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 9248. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14159248>

Academic Editor: Fernando Almeida

Received: 13 June 2022

Accepted: 26 July 2022

Published: 28 July 2022

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, coinciding with international changes, has become a new normal. The crossover of individuals and the diversification of business and industries have become a trend. Industrial and organizational boundaries under the influences of the Internet are blurring. The control of organizations based on the traditional bureaucratic system is being challenged. More and more enterprises are getting involved in the gig economy, where temporary positions are being replaced by independent contract workers [1], providing new opportunities and possibilities for personal development. On the one hand, more and more individuals are becoming entrepreneurs (or self-employed). On the other hand, at the current stage, employees increasingly emphasize autonomy at work and care more about participating in decision making and reaching self-realization. They hope to establish cooperative relationships with organizations to achieve organizational goals and personal goals simultaneously [2]. Therefore, it is particularly important to cultivate employees’ personal key abilities. Employees’ acquired and optimized abilities can compete more effectively in today’s demanding business environment, and they can become more excellent individuals, helping enterprises to develop continuously [3].

Previous studies [4–6] on individuals focused on the individual characteristics of employees, and there have been relatively few studies on capable individual characteristics such as those of professional managers and business elites. Battilana pointed out that it is individuals who rebuild, change and create new organizations and systems [7]. Organizational competition in the 21st century depends on individuals in organizations, and the top 25% of high-performing individuals may create 50% of the value for the organization [8]. High-performance individuals are an important portion of “mega individuals”, but they

need to be translated into business value [9]. Business value derives more generally from star employees, the values of which most normal individuals do not bear. Meanwhile, groups such as entrepreneurs, professional managers and business elites, who are above-average individuals, are rarely mentioned in current research. A name dedicated to defining capable individuals such as entrepreneurs, professional managers and business elites has still not been standardized. This research defines them as “mega individuals”. It is of great value to introduce the concept of “mega individuals” to better explore their roles in promoting business development. In this case, it is particularly important to pay attention to the development of the emerging practice group—“mega individuals”. What are the qualities of “mega individuals”? How do normal individuals become “mega individuals”? This study discusses these problems in depth.

2. Literature Reviews

2.1. *Mega Individuals*

2.1.1. Background of “Mega Individuals”

In recent years, research on “individuals” has been heating up gradually, while research on “mega individuals” is just emerging. “Mega individuals” [10] were first proposed in the field of communication science to refer to the audience with multiple “part-time identities” that is unprecedentedly empowered in the era of mobile Internet. Later, Zhai noticed that “mega individuals” gain extensive attention from fans in the Internet era when attention is in scarcity [11]. This mainly refers to some independent media users with strong communication power, strong content production power and strong influence. At present, “mega individuals” are mainly discussed in relation to the concepts of communication and marketing. During the research process, this study found that, in management, the concepts related to “mega individuals” also relate to “new individuals” [12,13], “strong individuals” [14], “super managers” [15], “business elites” [16–18], etc. The uncertainty of career paths creates additional identity challenges, and, as a result, the identities of these groups are necessarily more complex than those of roles in traditional organizations [19]. Today, many people are engaged in different aspects of work, and there are mixed roles. Over time, individuals may form a complex, layered work identity [20,21], and these individuals may experience the combination of different jobs to create a career that enhances and promotes a more personalized and authentic work identity [19].

2.1.2. “New Individuals” and “Strong Individuals”

The development and prosperity of the “gig economy” have led to fundamental changes in organizational structure and work execution mode, and individuals are increasingly unconstrained by traditional organizations. These “new individuals” are no longer “loyal members in organizations” [22]. Instead, they feel that they are, to a large extent, a “one-person company” [23], which means that they can sign a contract with many organizations independently or directly provide marketing products and services to the market. These “new individuals” are continuously and simultaneously engaged in a variety of jobs and creating a new career portfolio [19]. Therefore, studies on the development of these groups of individuals as the center of organization theory in the gig economy reveal that these groups are more likely to promote economic prosperity [24]. The abilities and behaviors of this group can be summarized as follows: effective adaptation to interference, persistence, using resources at hand to achieve goals, initiative, development of transferable human capital, image management, relationship management, cognitive-level ambidexterity and learning agility, etc. On 15 July 2020, 13 departments, including the National Development and Reform Commission, the Cyberspace Administration of China and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, for the first time, “encouraged the development of the new individuals economy”, which was the first time that the term “new individuals” was put forward in China [13]. “New individuals”, as a new phenomenon conforming to the development of the digital economy, are the inevitable choice of China’s economic and social digital transformation. The country has fully recognized the significance of the “new individuals” economy and vigorously promoted the

development of “new individuals” [12]. In uncertain environments, what enterprises need to confront is a dynamically changing environment. Chen, a Chinese scholar, put forward “strong individuals”, by summing up “strong individuals” as characterized by the ability to understand oneself and, with the aid of external information, strengthen self-awareness. They are a group who cares about the pursuit of progress and improving themselves to master volumes of knowledge, is good at using the digital technology, knows how to combine self-development with innovation and has a strong sense of creativity, and can achieve success at a faster rate. These people do not accept being stuck in one role for a long time [14].

2.1.3. “Super Managers” and “Business Elites”

Previously, Srivastava et al. proposed and modeled the skills and abilities of “super managers”, who are figures of trust and confidence, fathers of the team, inspiration for the team, firm as well as authoritative and participative and who know how to utilize their man power, as well as figures who possess traits such as a killer instinct and who can create leaders out of eight ability traits among individuals [15]. Earlier, Allen conducted a qualitative study on 70 directors from four or more companies and found that business elites were mainly composed of three types: super-wealth heirs, entrepreneurs and professional managers [16]. Hunt and Boxall reviewed the typical background of business elites, including the following characteristics: having strong academic breadth and depth; rich experience in the field (10 years or more); experience in other fields; and job mobility for promotion [17]. Nakpodia and Adegbite separated business elites from other members by “class affiliation” and defined business elites as a small number of people with great power and influence who occupy a higher position in an organization, and influence was the most important ability trait [18]. They found that business elites have an impact on the effectiveness of corporate governance.

2.1.4. The Rise of “Mega Individuals”

Above all, the background environments for the birth of “new individuals”, “strong individuals” and “mega individuals” are forming almost at the same time [14]. Scholars have analyzed their characteristics, but there is less systemic research available. The existing analyses of capacity failed to differentiate the mega individuals from the ordinary individuals and failed to conduct the profound explanation and elaboration of the connotation [25]. “Super managers” and “business elites” are the products of the era of professional managers [18]. However, these two categories do not cover those termed “mega individuals”. With the development of the Internet era, individuals’ power is rising, and they are not only trying to survive, but looking for ways to grow and learn, making this group more prosperous [24], and the status quo of prosperity is more of a future-oriented psychological state. “Mega individuals” are breaking the traditional employment relationship by establishing their relationship with each other through flexible contracts, common goals and shared-value pursuit. Individuals should adapt to new environments. They need to make changes in their ways of thinking, feeling and acting, promote the applicable ability of career development, give full play to their ability and create social value in collaboration, make full use of the positive aspects for working modes and create satisfying and vibrant work and life modes [26].

2.2. Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The dynamic capabilities theory [27] proposed by Teece et al. investigates how an enterprise can generate a new capability through integration, construction and reconfiguration of its internal and external resources and capabilities so that it can quickly adapt to continuous environmental changes. Much of the existing literature focused on how firms develop dynamic capabilities to enable them to achieve long-term sustainable competitiveness. For individuals, this theory is also applicable. Current personal dynamic capabilities mainly involve the skills and abilities required by corporate managers in a dynamic environment [28,29]. Skills and abilities in “new individuals”, “strong individu-

als”, “super managers” and “business elites” have been elaborated on or mentioned. As individuals’ identities are complex, flexible and require rich resources and creativity, new working conditions and structures, which inevitably affect individuals’ ways of thinking and behaviors and their need to develop capacity to cope with the times, need to be further understood and defined [24]. In an ever-changing environment, dynamic capabilities are defined as perception (identifying and evaluating opportunities), capture (creating value with identified opportunities) and transformation (continuous innovation) [30].

The dynamic capability of “mega individuals” is the effective development and implementation of new opportunities. This research paper puts forward the formation of a concept based on the dynamic capabilities theory. It establishes similarity with the skills of managers and entrepreneurs, but it also has the particularity of the current era. This study proposes that the term “mega individuals” connotes people with a type of knowledge to transfer and compound ability [31,32], who can freely collaborate with multiple people and platforms [33] and turn their resources and capabilities into personal IP and business value. We call these people “mega individuals”. Individuals’ dynamic capabilities help them to face unpredictable changes in the market and have a positive impact on organizational sustainability, which is a positive factor for long-term organizational success [29,34].

2.3. Competency Model

An appropriate and reasonable way to identify traits that fit “mega individuals” is based on ability selection. In 1973, McClelland, a Harvard psychologist, gave a clear definition of “ability” and sketched the famous “competency iceberg model”. Although foreign scholars [35,36] have conducted comprehensive and systematic research on competency, competency research is in an ascending stage, and competency definition presents diversity. However, the core connotation composition has not broken through McClelland’s research framework. The main task of competency research is to build competency model. Therefore, many foreign scholars also put forward many different and complex competency models.

A general competency model is commonly used. In the 21st century, research gradually turned to specific industries or enterprises to establish the Competency Management System (CMS) to test and improve the theory of competency model in practice, so as to enhance the knowledge and skills of individuals and organizations with high performance goals. Innovation management has been a hot topic in recent years. Podmetina et al. developed a general open innovation capability model applicable cross-industry [37]; Ling et al. constructed a competency model of innovation and entrepreneurship for teams based on data mining technology, which is composed of entrepreneurial orientation, opportunity ability, relationship and collaboration ability, organizational ability, commitment ability, learning ability, knowledge sharing and innovation ability [38]. These competitiveness dimensions have a positive impact on entrepreneurial performance. In global project management practices, Browne et al. constructed a model of communication competence, namely, input competence, personal competence and output competence, so as to encourage unfettered communication and improve project success [39]. Vatankhah et al. proposed a multi-level enterprise internal capacity model framework, in which enterprise capacity includes resources, activities and knowledge, and the sub-categories of the concept are capacity, cross-functional coordination and cross-functional integration so as to derive and adapt to the needs of each enterprise [40].

In addition, specific competency models are popular for individual abilities. McCartney et al. developed competency models for human resource analysts, including consulting capacity, technical knowledge, data fluency and data analysis, business acumen, research discovery, storytelling and communication [41], to provide an experience-driven competency model for the emerging role of human resource analyst. For hospital managers, evidence-based management ability is neglected. Daouk et al. developed a competency model based on evidence-based management (EBMgt) for evidence-based driven managers [42], whose four dimensions are technical, cognitive, interpersonal and intrinsic. In the context of the global financial crisis, Brits and Veldsman designed and verified a

comprehensive and global central bank governor capacity model, making contributions to improving the efficiency of central banks [43].

In view of the emerging group of “mega individuals”, it is necessary to extract the typical characteristics of “mega individuals” on this basis, which can distinguish them from ordinary individuals, expand the selection range of competency elements, reflect the diversity of competency connotation and also create and supplement the continuously expanding literature of commercial groups.

3. Methodology

Based on the Grounded Theory method, this study aimed to explore the connotation and characteristics of “mega individuals” and construct the competency model of “mega individuals” so as to expand the existing dynamic capability theory and provide theoretical guidance for understanding this new group in the business ecology to better promote the development of the business environment.

3.1. Research Sampling

In order to deeply study “mega individuals”, on the basis of previous literature, this research selected 56 interviewees who have stronger composite ability and who are entrepreneurs, professional managers, partners and business elites from 53 companies at home and abroad working in industries such as venture capital, Internet, media, education consulting, artificial intelligence and others and conducted face-to-face communications or online meetings to obtain a real description of the abilities of mega individuals.

The average age of the 56 interviewees for modeling was 43 years old. Among them, 34 were male, accounting for 60.7%, and 22 were female, accounting for 39.3%. There were 32 respondents with bachelor’s degrees, accounting for 41.1%, and 33 respondents with master’s degrees or above, accounting for 58.9%. There were 12 respondents in the venture capital industry, 9 respondents in Internet, 8 respondents in media, 4 respondents in both education data and e-commerce, 3 respondents in both food service and artificial intelligence, 2 respondents each in architectural design, foreign trade, medical instruments and cosmetic medicine and 1 person in legal service, and the others were in corporate consultancy, physical distribution, petrochemical engineering and healing drug industries. These research samples were mainly distributed in domestic cities, i.e., Beijing (22), Shanghai (7), Hangzhou (4), Wuhan (3), Wenzhou (3), Shenzhen (2), Nanjing (2), Xi’an (2), Ningbo (1), Xiamen (1), Suzhou (1), Nanning (1), Changde (1), Chengdu (1), Shijiazhuang (1) and Zhangzhou (1), and foreign cities such as Irvine (1), Manchester (1) and Vancouver (1). The research samples and basic information are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of research participants.

| Code | Enterprise Type | Gender | City | Position | Age | Education | Working Years | Marital Status | Use |
|------|----------------------|--------|------------|-----------------|-----|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------|
| VC1 | VC Service | male | Wenzhou | Vice President | 36 | BD | 12 | Married | modeling |
| LS1 | Legal Service | male | Wuhan | Senior Partner | 50 | BD | 30 | Married | modeling |
| I1 | Internet | male | Manchester | Founder | 38 | Ph.D. | 7 | Married | modeling |
| M1 | Media | female | Beijing | Vice President | 40 | BD | 17 | Single | modeling |
| VC2 | VC Service | male | Beijing | Partner | 33 | BD | 13 | Single | modeling |
| CS1 | Corporate Consultant | male | Beijing | Founder | 38 | MD | 17 | Married | modeling |
| VC3 | VC Service | female | Shenzhen | Founder | 40 | EMBA | 16 | Single | modeling |
| EC1 | E-Commerce | male | Beijing | Vice President | 41 | MD | 17 | Married | modeling |
| I2 | Internet | male | Beijing | Cofounder | 37 | MD | 13 | Married | modeling |
| BD1 | Architectural Design | female | Beijing | Deputy Director | 40 | BD | 12 | Single | modeling |
| MI1 | Medical Instrument | female | Irvine | Vice President | 37 | Ph.D. | 7 | Single | modeling |
| ED1 | Education Data | female | Beijing | Founder | 39 | BD | 15 | Single | modeling |

Table 1. Cont.

| Code | Enterprise Type | Gender | City | Position | Age | Education | Working Years | Marital Status | Use |
|------|---------------------------|--------|--------------|-------------------|-----|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------|
| M2 | Media | female | Beijing | Director | 28 | MD | 5 | Single | inspection |
| I3 | Internet | male | Beijing | Vice President | 39 | BD | 15 | Married | modeling |
| VC4 | VC Service | male | Chengdu | Founder | 37 | BD | 16 | Married | modeling |
| M3 | Media | male | Beijing | Founder | 49 | Ph.D. | 24 | Married | modeling |
| AI1 | Artificial Intelligence | female | Shanghai | Cofounder | 43 | MD | 20 | Married | modeling |
| I4 | Internet | male | Beijing | Founder | 45 | EMBA | 21 | Married | modeling |
| FS1 | Food Service | male | Shanghai | Cofounder | 32 | BD | 12 | Single | inspection |
| EC2 | E-Commerce | male | Hangzhou | Founder | 41 | BD | 20 | Married | modeling |
| CM1 | Cosmetic Medicine | female | Beijing | Vice President | 35 | MD | 12 | Married | modeling |
| I5 | Internet | male | Beijing | Vice President | 46 | BD | 26 | Married | modeling |
| PD1 | Physical Distribution | male | Shijiazhuang | Founder | 57 | BD | 36 | Married | modeling |
| I6 | Internet | male | Hangzhou | Director | 34 | BD | 13 | Single | inspection |
| EC3 | E-Commerce | male | Nanjing | Founder | 56 | MD | 33 | Married | modeling |
| VC5 | VC Service | male | Shanghai | Founder | 46 | MD | 23 | Married | modeling |
| M4 | Media | female | Hangzhou | Founder | 47 | BD | 26 | Married | modeling |
| AI2 | Artificial Intelligence | male | Suzhou | Founder | 36 | Ph.D. | 9 | Single | modeling |
| VC6 | VC Service | male | Vancouver | Founder | 42 | MD | 22 | Married | modeling |
| M5 | Media | female | Xi'an | Partner | 39 | BD | 17 | Married | inspection |
| VC7 | VC Service | male | Shenzhen | Founder | 42 | BD | 22 | Married | modeling |
| M6 | Media | female | Beijing | Founder | 43 | BD | 23 | Married | modeling |
| FT1 | Foreign Trade | female | Hangzhou | Vice President | 59 | BD | 38 | Married | modeling |
| FS2 | Food Service | male | Shanghai | Partner | 57 | BD | 36 | Married | modeling |
| ED2 | Education Data | female | Zhangzhou | Founder | 37 | BD | 16 | Married | inspection |
| PE1 | Petrochemical Engineering | male | Shanghai | Dean | 50 | Ph.D. | 30 | Married | modeling |
| CM2 | Cosmetic Medicine | female | Beijing | Partner | 37 | BD | 16 | Married | inspection |
| VC8 | VC Service | male | Ningbo | Partner | 55 | BD | 34 | Married | modeling |
| MI2 | Medical Instrument | male | Beijing | Partner | 39 | BD | 16 | Married | modeling |
| FT2 | Foreign Trade | female | Wenzhou | Founder | 31 | BD | 11 | Single | inspection |
| M7 | Media | female | Beijing | Founder | 48 | BD | 28 | Married | modeling |
| I7 | Internet | male | Beijing | Founder | 54 | Ph.D. | 29 | Married | modeling |
| ED3 | Education Data | female | Shanghai | Vice President | 43 | BD | 22 | Single | inspection |
| VC9 | VC Service | female | Wuhan | Cofounder | 47 | MD | 23 | Married | modeling |
| HD1 | Healing Drug | male | Xi'an | Founder | 56 | MD | 34 | Married | modeling |
| ED4 | Education Data | female | Xiamen | Vice President | 39 | MD | 16 | Single | modeling |
| I8 | Internet | female | Beijing | Founder | 44 | BD | 24 | Married | modeling |
| VC10 | VC Service | male | Beijing | Managing Director | 36 | MD | 14 | Married | modeling |
| VC11 | VC Service | female | Shanghai | President | 52 | BD | 22 | Married | modeling |
| I9 | Internet | male | Beijing | General Manager | 36 | MD | 14 | Single | inspection |
| AI3 | Artificial Intelligence | male | Wenzhou | President | 60 | Ph.D. | 38 | Married | modeling |
| VC12 | VC Service | male | Nanjing | Partner | 45 | MD | 21 | Married | modeling |
| FS3 | Food Service | male | Changde | partner | 40 | BD | 18 | Married | modeling |
| EC4 | E-Commerce | male | Wuhan | General Manager | 34 | BD | 13 | Single | inspection |
| BD2 | Architectural Design | female | Nanning | Founder | 57 | BD | 37 | Married | modeling |
| M8 | Media | male | Beijing | Cofounder | 40 | BD | 20 | Married | inspection |

Source: data compiled by research author.

3.2. Research Design

In this study, text data were obtained in various ways. For the interviewees who were available to meet in the same region, face-to-face communications were adopted in this study. For the interviewees who were not available to meet, from overseas or other cities in China, online meeting communications were adopted in this study.

The interview outline was as follows: Firstly, the introduction. Along with entering into the digital and the knowledge economy era, organizational boundaries are blurring; individual power is on the rise. We call this group of individuals, who drive the organization's growth and metamorphosis and can become the "engine" of organizational learning and growth, "mega individuals". Research on the connotation and traits of "mega individuals" can help individuals to improve, prompting organizations to gain new momentum. Secondly, interview questions. Questions included: In the Internet era, do you think individuals have changed greatly? Please specify 1 to 3 changes. In the era of digital and knowledge economy, what characteristics do you think individuals should have in order to become "mega individuals"? Please list 3 to 10 specific abilities that you think are typical of "mega individuals" and explain them in detail. What else do you think you need to do to become a true mega individual?

In order to ensure the effective recovery of materials, this study first invited two interviewees interested in the topic, an enterprise founder and a partner, to participate in preliminary interviews to ensure the effectiveness of the guidance and the interview outline, the introduction and design of questions and the precise expression style and words in the interviews to allow respondents to understand easily and clearly. Afterwards, according to the results of these two interviews in the process, this study revised the interview outline. Again, a professor of human resource management was invited to review the questionnaire and make professional adjustments. After pre-interview and questionnaire revision, the validity of the interview was ensured.

Based on Grounded Theory, this study analyzed the connotation and characteristics of "mega individuals" in business communities. Of the 56 interviewees, the text data of 45 were used for theoretical modeling, and the text data of the other 11 interviewees were used to test the saturation of the theory.

4. "Mega Individuals" Competency Model (MICM)

After the interview data were obtained from unstructured or semi-structured interviews, this paper sorted the characteristics of "mega individuals" in several stages, including open coding, spindle coding, selective coding and saturation testing, and built a theoretical framework model of mega individuals' competence. According to the three-stage coding analysis, this paper identified the trait dimensions of "mega individuals", namely, composite ability, cooperation ability and personal branding ability, which provide a comprehensive reference for the recognition of the emerging group of mega individuals.

4.1. Open Coding

Open coding is to encode and label interviewee data word by word to generate initial concepts and form concept categories. We sorted out the content of "mega individuals" mentioned by the subjects into relevant materials according to connotations and traits. The first step was to label: we numbered the respondents' sample according to the enterprise type; for example, we coded the first respondent in venture capital industry as VC1; we coded the first respondent in Internet domain as I1 and so on. Afterwards, the original statement was labeled with the encoding method of "sample numbering—question numbering—statement number". For example, code VC1-2-3 means the first respondent in the venture capital industry answered question 2 in statement 3. In the end, we found 443 original statements, mainly describing the abilities of "mega individuals".

The second step was double-blind coding. We adopted the following double-blind method; the 443 original statements obtained were coded. In this process, two doctoral graduate students majoring in human resource management input all data according to

their original condition to avoid influences from researchers' personal bias or viewpoints. In accordance with the principle of maximum likelihood, the two researchers gave the same words a shared primary code. This study had 211 primary codes (aax). Then, this study eliminated codes relating to traits shared by ordinary people, such as positive values, inner drive, learning ability and so on, since they do not represent the mega individuals' real qualities. Next, following the principle of similar meaning, namely, the principle of the same or similar meaning, the two researchers collated and summarized 211 primary codes independently to form codes (ax), i.e., 113 in total.

Miles and Huberman believed that an acceptable level of the codes' internal consistency is up to 80% [44]. Therefore, in the third step, in this study, the coding consistency of the two researchers was calculated to be 94, and the consistency test result was $94/113 = 83.18\%$: a result meeting the acceptable standard.

In the fourth step, we further summarized and refined the 94 codes. After eliminating the infrequent and inconsistent codes, we ended up with 58 initial concepts (Ax).

In the fifth step, this study divided the categories. The 58 initial concepts were reclassified into 11 different categories, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Category of initial concepts.

| Coding | Category | Initial Concepts |
|--------|--------------------------|---|
| B1 | Comprehensive quality | A9 A generalist; A20 Knowledge structure diversification; A13 Transferable ability; A35 Organic combination of theory and practice; A41 A versatile person; A27 Problem-solving ability; |
| B2 | Long-termism | A30 Years of business reputation and credibility; A14 Continuous output value; A51 Sustainable development; A57 Stands the test of time; |
| B3 | Autonomous coordination | A50 Non-leadership and non-controlling team members; A11 Mutual trust and respect; A60 Team members have common goals and mutual recognition; A26 Team members form synergy, and things can run by themselves; |
| B4 | Coping with uncertainty | A28 Deals with dynamic complexity; A43 Nothing out of nothing; A49 Quickly adapt to the changes of the times; A91 Accept and respond to change; A62 Buckling force; A85 Ability to work under pressure; |
| B5 | Influence power | A1 Soul leader; A6 Carry authority; A72 Self-made traffic; A15 Link cross-boundary resources; A19 Well-connected; A86 Infectious; A64 Key opinion leader; A88 Example power; A75 Cohesive force; |
| B6 | USB-type survivability | A52 Independent; A77 Master multiple functions; A33 Go beyond what you're good at; A70 Ability to replicate skills and experience across industries and posts; A65 Slash youth (young generation with multiple skills or job title); |
| B7 | Commercial value | A2 Shorten the time that the brand occupies the user's mind; A4 Uses personal IP to drive product and enterprise IP; A67 Mega individuals are products that sells itself first; A40 Realize effective business realization; A54 Ability to liquidate; A45 Enjoy creating value; |
| B8 | Integration of resources | A31 Identify resources, link resources, and mobilize resources; A7 Mutual assistance to achieve maximum work efficiency; A58 Draw on external momentum; A53 Learn from each other internally; A66 Strong coordination ability; |
| B9 | Personality label | A93 Core competence presentation; A6 Exclusive personalization tag; A55 First impression; A34 Uniqueness; A59 Personal charm; |
| B10 | Negotiating ability | A22 Communication ability; A68 Effective communication; A78 Insight into real needs; A25 Communication is clear and "visible"; |
| B11 | Systematic thinking | A44 Understand the inner (underlying) logic of things; A8 Good at finding problems from different perspectives; A76 See the essence, target straightly to the core; A80 Break the inherent mode of thinking. |

Source: data compiled by research author.

4.2. Spindle Coding

Focusing on the characteristics of “mega individuals”, this study tried to establish effective logical relations among different conceptual categories through the process of principal axis coding on the basis of open coding. Finally, three main category relations were obtained in this study, as shown in Table 3. Specifically, they included compound talents, collaboration ability and personal branding ability.

Table 3. Main categories formed by spindle coding.

| Coding | Main Categories | Corresponding Category | Connotation of the Relationship |
|--------|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| C1 | Compound ability | B1 Comprehensive quality | Qualities that make up the “mega individuals” are an important dimension conforming to the interdisciplinary talented qualities, professional accomplishment and the ability of comprehensive quality. In any organization, its value can come in USB-type survival ability, able to quickly understand things’ internal logics, find problems, solve problems and have a strong ability to resist setbacks. All of the above-mentioned abilities help them to adapt to environmental changes in response to uncertainty. |
| | | B6 USB-type survivability | |
| | | B11 Systematic thinking | |
| | | B4 Coping with uncertainty | |
| C2 | Collaboration | B8 Integration of resources | Another important dimension of “mega individuals” is the quality of collaboration. Through effective communication, we can understand the real needs, link and integrate cross-border resources and cooperate with them freely so that members in different positions can do their best and so that the team can form synergy. |
| | | B3 Autonomous coordination | |
| | | B10 Negotiating ability | |
| C3 | Personal IP | B9 Personality label | Another important dimension that constitutes the characteristics of “mega individuals” is personal branding capacity. Individuals have long termism. Through continuous output, exclusive personalized labels are established to make them have the commercialization value and finally form personal branding influence. |
| | | B5 Influence power | |
| | | B7 Commercial value | |
| | | B2 Long-termism | |

Source: data compiled by research author.

4.3. Selective Coding

According to the open coding, spindle coding and related analysis, the core issue of this study was the main category of “mega individuals” traits. According to the different concepts and categories to which codes belonged in the above-mentioned open coding, the conceptual model of “mega individual” traits and “mega individual” competency was constructed in this study, as shown in Figure 1.

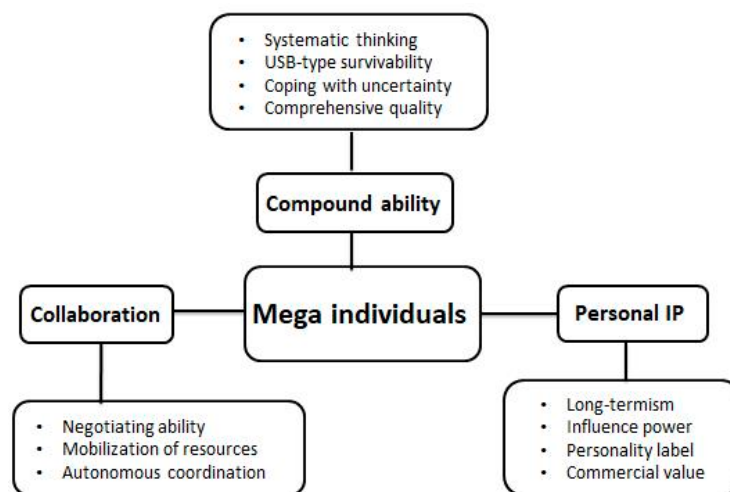


Figure 1. Construction of “mega individuals” competency model (source: created by the author of the research).

5. Findings and Discussions

By applying the dynamic capability theory to interpret the trait dimensions and “mega individuals” competency model constructed above, it was found that the competency model of “mega individuals” consists of three trait dimensions, that is, compound ability, collaboration and personal IP. The research on the competency model does not improve with the reform of organizational structure. With the changes of individuals, competency surpasses the development of individual and organizational competency, becoming a networked development [45]. The competency model clearly shows the core competitiveness that “mega individuals” should possess in order to achieve certain goals or accomplishments. It can distinguish “mega individuals” from ordinary individuals, which can also continuously improve the applicability and effectiveness of the competency model. The specific model is explained as follows.

5.1. Compound Ability

Comprehensive quality, USB-type survivability, system thinking and ability to cope with uncertainty form the dimension of “compound ability” in the ability traits of “mega individuals”, as shown in Figure 2. “Compound ability” includes complex knowledge, complex ability, complex thinking and other aspects, including interdisciplinary knowledge fusion, technology integration and cross-border thinking. Existing dynamic competence theory only emphasizes individual knowledge skills and learning ability [31], and the “mega individuals” compound ability not only contains the knowledge skills and learning ability, but also contains larger development. In the global information age, in cooperation with any organizations and platforms, becoming the social value node and having the survival ability like a USB stick can help individuals to quickly understand the internal logics of things, find problems, solve problems and resist setbacks so as to better deal with uncertain environmental changes. “Mega individuals”, when “reacting to the uncertainty”, compared with the ordinary people, have the ability to accept and adapt to changes in the environment, dealing with dynamic complexity and having strong dynamic ability [46]; it is relatively easy for them to gain and sustain competitive advantages in order to create new opportunities out of nothing and enter into new domains.

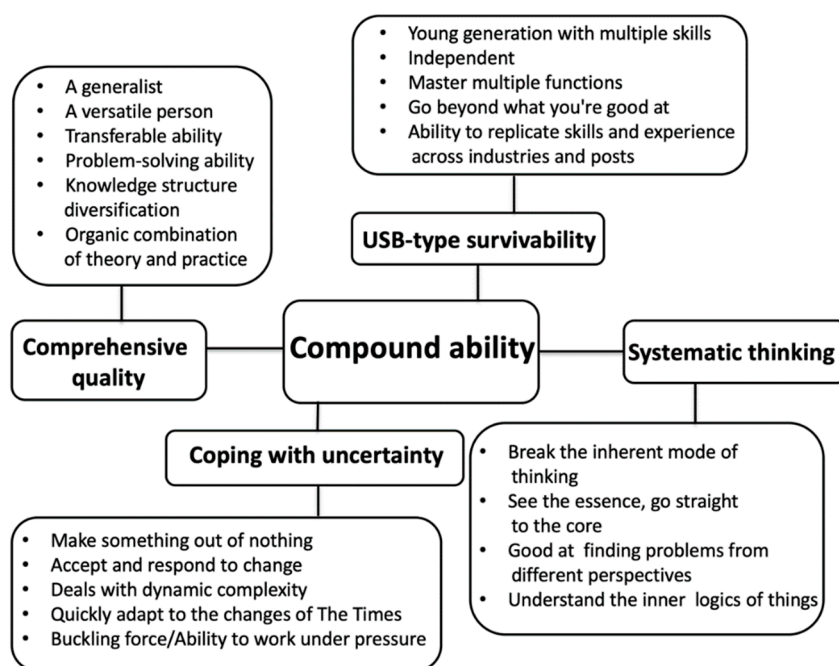


Figure 2. Traits of “mega individuals” framed by compound abilities (source: created by the author of the research).

5.1.1. Comprehensive Quality

Comprehensive quality is reflected in compound ability; Liang and Li proposed that comprehensive quality mainly refers to ideological and moral quality, cultural quality, professional quality, psychological quality and physical quality, etc. [47,48]. The present study shows emphasis on transferable ability and problem-solving ability: general professional skills. It is the ability to reuse and, ultimately, upgrade the ability to solve problems. For example, some respondents expressed the following views:

“As long as they have the transferable ability and keep building their own ‘ability barriers’ in ‘cross domains’, they will make breakthroughs in their way of thinking and will not be overturned by the times” (VC3-1-27).

“In an organization, everything we do is to achieve organizational goals, and the ability to solve problems, no matter how hard, how difficult, how complex, how dangerous the job is, the highly valued talents holding these traits are needed talents in an organization” (MI1-1-15).

5.1.2. USB-Type Survivability

USB sticks, which store a lot of useful information, work and “survive” pretty well wherever they go. Having the survival ability of a USB stick means that individuals no longer depend on a company or institution for survival but sell their time and skills flexibly through an Internet platform or sharing platform to gain profits and build their own circle of contacts, personal IP and influence power. The value appeal of “USB-type survivability”, which is the same as the state of “slash”, is the product of the rapid development of information technology in the Internet era. Individuals decide their time arrangement in a more liberal work mode, stimulate creativity and realize greater value of life. In the interviews, many interviewees strongly agreed with the new concept of survival born in a new economic form in recent years:

“As long as you have a competitive advantage, whether it is unique resources, endowments, scarce knowledge, skills, experiences, higher work efficiency, more creative product or service design, you will get more opportunities for cooperation and enlarging living space” (I3-2-5).

“The advantage of USB survivors is that they are able to spot opportunities first and their minds are not limited” (M3-2-7).

5.1.3. Systemic Thinking

Systemic thinking emphasizes understanding and solving problems as a whole, while opposes discuss wholeness in general [49]. Therefore, it is particularly important to see the essence and go straight to the core, which are of particular importance. The premise is that these individuals can tear down the wall of the thinking and break the inherent thinking mode; the second point is the need to find the underlying logics among things, propose solutions and analyze problems from a different perspective in order to find a better solution and realize upgrades of their life operating systems. For example, the views expressed among respondents included:

“Systemic thinking can break out of the old stereotype of thinking, see the whole picture, and see the structure and logic behind things, so that we can solve complex problems in real life” (M8-3-11).

“Master systemic thinking means bearing the eyes that can see through the systemic rules of things” (VC11-3-3).

5.1.4. Coping with Uncertainty

Uncertainty refers to the inability of people to make a unique description and prediction of the state of things or the running results of events [50]. Uncertainty, essentially, unpredictability, is more serious than “risk”. Compared with ordinary people, being able to

accept and deal with changes in the environment, dealing with dynamic complexity, having the strong ability of dynamic individuals [46] and gaining and sustaining competitive advantage is relatively easy for “mega individuals”. In order to create new opportunities out of thin air, opening up new “territory” at the same time, they also must possess a strong ability to withstand pressure and stumbles, which is more critical for the “compound ability” of “mega individuals”. This view was expressed by the following respondents:

“In business management, multiple factors intertwine, resonate or rise and fall in a changing way, which put “mega individuals” under great pressure. The biggest challenges are complexity, uncertainty and conflict” (VC9-3-23).

“Calmly facing setbacks and pains at work is not only a kind of endurance for difficulties, but also a survival skill” (I8-1-6).

“Mega individuals should have the ability to make something out of nothing, from zero to one, whereas a successful person might be from one to 100. That’s the essential difference” (AI13-1-9).

It is worth noting that the characteristics of “mega individuals” under the framework of compound ability in this study were confirmed by the research of Yu, Liu, Zhang and Li [51–53]. However, coping with uncertainty was rarely mentioned in previous literature, especially in the emergence of “black swan” events. This research can help to expand cognitive boundaries, enhance anti-strike ability and turn unfavorable situations into opportunities (VC9-3-28).

5.2. Collaboration

The integration of resources, autonomous coordination and negotiation ability form the “collaboration” dimension are some of the ability traits of “mega individuals”, as shown in Figure 3. Collaboration is the ability to work with others to achieve common goals. Typical behaviors include using effective relationship skills, listening and respecting others, focusing on things rather than on people and considering the consequences on others [54]. Through effective communication [55], “mega individuals” can discern real needs and link and integrate cross-border resources. For example, Barney converted individual resources into organizational resources and made use of them [56]. This gives the organization sustainable competitive advantage, allows the members in different positions do their best, releases the maximum internal strengths, and gives the team synergy and maximizes work efficiency.

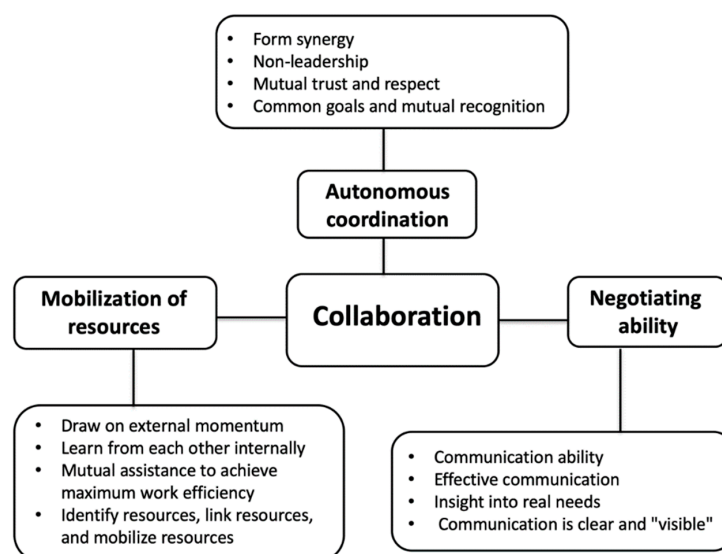


Figure 3. Traits of “mega individuals” framed by collaboration (source: created by the author of the research).

5.2.1. Integrating Resources

Barney proposed the path of resource integration, that is, identifying resources, attracting resources and converting individual resources into organizational resources and making use of them to give the organization sustainable competitive advantage [56]. In this way, the integration of resources is meaningful for contributing to the organization's excess performance. The interviewees in this study took the organization as the boundary which distinguishes internal and external behaviors in resource integration. For example, EC2-5-32 and I5-5-22 believed that "we should learn from each other internally and take advantage of the situation externally". This is related to the opinion of Ge and Dong, who divided resource integration into two processes: resource identification and acquisition and resource allocation and leverage [57]. EC2-5-41 agreed on the need to identify and acquire resources but put more emphasis on "integrating resources". In addition, the respondents constructively suggested that "**mega individuals**" should also have "strong coordination ability".

"Mega individuals should be able to think from the perspective of the overall picture and serve the overall situation with creative thinking" (VC5-5-14).

5.2.2. Autonomous Coordination

The concept of "synergy" proposed by German theoretical physicist Hermann Haken is essentially the formation process of a system moving from disorder to order [58]. This phenomenon was verified by many of our research subjects, for example, FT1-6-11; "mega individuals" can coordinate relationships among themselves, have strong cohesion in the project, can form a joint force and, finally, make the organization run smoothly. Among the interviewees, most people agreed that the relationship between "mega individuals" is not leadership, that is to say, "leadership" is not the most obvious characteristics of "mega individuals", and they emphasized the relationship of "equality". This view was expressed by the following respondents:

"Respect is fundamental to mega individuals' collaboration, and trust is built to enable effective communications" (CM2-4-25).

"The cooperation between 'mega individuals' is not 'I lead you' nor 'I order you'; instead, they recognize and appreciate each other, i.e. it is equal for co-creation of the relationship; people share the same goals and work together to achieve the goals" (HD1-4-32).

5.2.3. Negotiation Ability

Business negotiation is an indispensable part of commercial activities, and negotiation ability is a necessary ability for every business operator involved in the business. The strength of this ability determines the number of benefits obtained or supported in the trading center [59]. To complete the negotiation, it is not enough to only rely on one ability, but individuals must have a variety of comprehensive abilities. In the data collection process of the study, many research subjects strongly recognized this conclusion and also proposed that, in addition to "communication ability", what is more important is "understanding the needs of the other party involved".

"In a negotiation, it's not enough to listen carefully. You need to fully understand the other person's goals, interests and values, and identify them in your mind so that you can engage in a more constructive negotiation" (VC10-1-9).

Business negotiations are often very difficult and sometimes even impossible to achieve. Some respondents even said it was important to be "adaptable" as well as "clear and visible".

"It is also a test of the mega individuals' ability to act on their own and close a deal by making clear and visible the signals that have been analyzed and processed by the brain" (AI3-1-18).

5.3. Personal IP

Personality labels, influence power, commercial value and long termism form the “personal IP” dimension in the competence traits of “mega individuals”, as shown in Figure 4. “Mega individuals” build a personal label through continuous output, which Professor Donald Sexton, former dean of Columbia University’s International Business School, describes as “the art of occupying the mind” because the trust, professionalism and charisma of the “mega individuals” can help to improve consumers’ purchasing intention relating to the recommended products or services [60]. Therefore, personal IP has the value of commercial realization and ultimately forms personal influence. The formation of personal IP is the result of long termism, which can be transformed into a symbol after a period of practices. For “mega individuals”, once their “personal IP” is formed, it is easier to link with people, build trust, create premium and produce value-added, intangible assets.

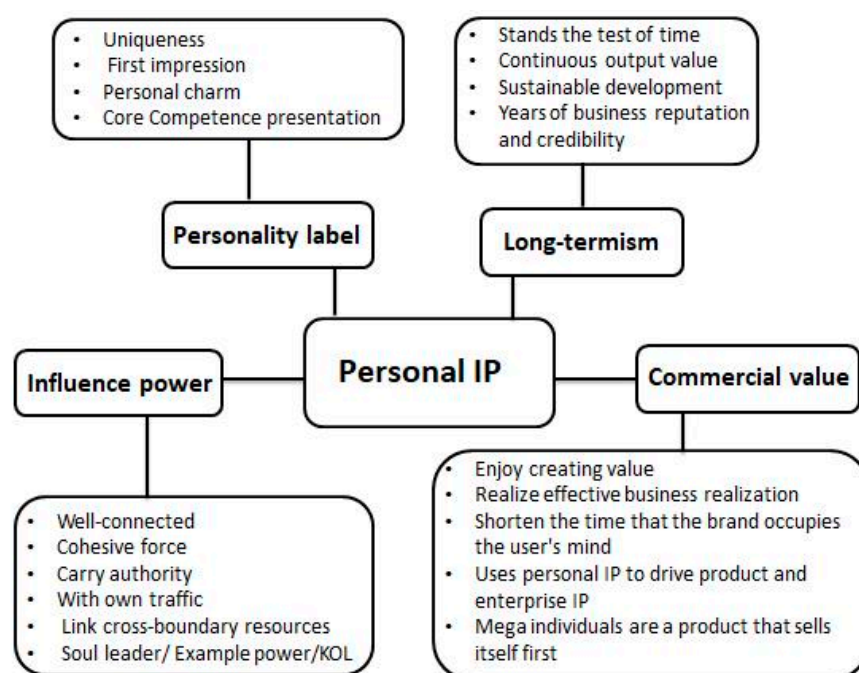


Figure 4. Characteristics of “mega individuals” framed by personal IP (source: created by the author of the research).

5.3.1. Personality Label

According to previous literature, the maturity of the Big Five personality traits [61,62] means that positive personality labels tend to lead to more positive outcomes, and such labels undoubtedly lead to better “first impressions”; as M1-4-15 put it: “the priming effect significantly increased the probability of being kind to each other in future interactions”. Differences in genes and environment, as well as individual autonomy, determine the “uniqueness” of an individual. “Uniqueness means easy to be remembered, and the brain always samples unique things as a memory priority” (VC4-4-8).

Regarding the understanding of “personality label”, the interviewees expressed the following viewpoints:

“Personality labels are personal tags that users like, approve of and accept” (PD1-4-17).

“Personality labels will not only make users like, ‘love me, love my dog’ and buy their products, but also increase the credibility of their products” (FT1-4-27).

“Without the personality, the label has no soul” (VC6-4-6).

“Charisma” is defined as a flair for drama that includes the desire and ability to communicate emotions and thus inspire others [63]. This conclusion was echoed by many

of the participants who claimed: “personal attractiveness has a strong influence on social status” (MI2-4-11). However, there are still few studies on personal charm in academic circles [64], so it is worthy of further research.

5.3.2. Personal Influence Power

Personal influence power is the embodiment of human ability; the end result is usually characterized by personal power. This kind of power is not mandatory [65] but is “might power”. For example, the respondents interpreted that “authority is the power based on trust that can recall the spontaneous obedience among others, i.e., on the basis of justice, reason and necessity to ‘obey voluntary’” (I5-4-5).

“Mega individuals” are like “key opinion leaders”, who are active in interpersonal communication networks and often provide information, opinions or suggestions to others and exert personal influence on them [66]. In the survey, three respondents expressed their views:

“In a limited group, opinion leaders’ messages and opinions are more likely to be accepted and recognized by the majority of members. Positive, creative ‘Key Opinion Leaders’ are better for business development” (LS1-4-13).

“The power of example, like herding effect, can have a strong demonstration effect” (VC12-4-6).

“Organizations need more than one ‘spiritual soul’ in order to have strong vitality and creativity” (BD2-4-9).

The Internet has become a universal media orgy, connecting people, ideas, data and materials in new ways. Individuals can publish information through new media, and “sharing” has become easy and massive on a global scale. One respondent believed that:

“Personal influence enables people to generate traffic, link to cross-boundary sources, and expand their networks” (AI3-4-11).

5.3.3. Long Termism

For long termism, Jacques’ “judgment time distance method” and Hofstede’s “long-term orientation” both offered explanations. Jacques proposed, from the perspective of time horizon capability, that, as with any decision, its decision-making effect needs to be manifested after a period of time [67]. Hofstede believed, from a long-term perspective, in a tendency to judge individual behavior in a future-oriented way [68]. This study fused the views of Jacques and Hofstede and was more inclined to share Jacques’ opinion. Long termism not only insists on a long-term direction, but, more importantly, it requires long-term verification of decisions. In the current study, the majority of respondents agreed that “mega individuals” should make long-term investments to build stronger barriers. The final effect takes a long time to verify. The longer judgment time is taken, the greater the relative importance of “mega individuals”. As Bezos, Amazon’s founder, wrote in his first letter to shareholders when the company went public in 1997: it’s all about long-term value. This is “long termism”. Four respondents highlighted the following points:

“Long-termism stands the test of time and is lifelong growth for individuals” (VC11-4-15).

“Long-termism will give organizations an inexhaustible motivation for sustainable development” (FT1-4-22).

“It requires persistence and focus, continuous output of value, flexibility in the process of resistance, and how to solve the problem” (MI2-4-25).

“Only by letting others really benefit from their own in the years of reputation management, will see the accumulated contacts increase; insisting on being at the right moment, and temporarily giving up their own interests will finally help themselves harvest more returns” (M7-4-23).

5.3.4. Business Value

In this study, business value was crucial, and it is one of the important characteristics that distinguishes “mega individuals” from ordinary individuals. Mega individuals’ strong personal IP makes them commercially valuable. In the era of mobile Internet, one can “realize effective business value” after creating one’s own personal IP. Eiling Gu, the freestyle skier of the Beijing Winter Olympics, and Bingtian Su, the “Asian Flying Man”, and so on have won more than 20 brand endorsements with their outstanding achievements in sports, providing rich cases for personal business value. The carriers of commercial value can be individuals or concrete things. The commercial value of individuals is the ability to attract commercial resources (such as investment and users) and drive the development of related industries. Some respondents agreed with this opinion. One respondent believed that “mega individuals turn themselves as ‘products’ that be promoted and sold first” (HD1-4 -31).

After the formation of a personal IP, it can promote better development of enterprises or organizations. For example, two respondents explained the role of personal IP as follows:

“It can shorten the time for brands to occupy the users’ mind” (I8-4-6).

“Personal IP can drive the development of product IP and enterprise IP” (VC11-4-23).

When “mega individuals” have a personal IP, it can be divorced from the traditional employment relationship. Details are as follows:

“Individuals can use their skills and services in exchange for their own value and freedom to create value without being tied to a restricted employment relationship” (VC8-4-33).

6. Saturation Tests

In order to test whether the theoretical model of “mega individuals” constructed in this study was saturated, the reserved interview data of 11 interviewees were coded. Considering the excessive text content and limited contents development in the research, interview data of partners in the CM2 medical beauty industry were taken as an example for saturation tests. When problems are encountered in the workplace, mega individuals should have the ability to find the problem, target the key issue and solve the problem immediately (B1 Comprehensive quality—A27 Problem-solving ability). In the face of a society with increasing uncertainty, individuals’ strengths are limited; if they can learn to mobilize resources (B8 Integration of resources—A31 Identify resources, link resources, and mobilize resources) and gather more like-minded people (B3 Autonomous coordination—A11 Mutual trust and respect), the chances of success will increase. “In an era of personality diversity, a tag without personality meaning is not good, especially with the advent of the era of IP, which means the arrival of the personified tag (B9 Personality label—A6 Exclusive tag with personalization). More people under the influence and more values run on others, being an example in the eyes of others, the IP value comes out naturally (B5 Influence power—A88 Example power)”. Through the open coding of the text data of the remaining 11 respondents, the results showed that the categories in the model were enriched, and no new important categories and relationships were found. At the same time, the analysis and comparison of the four main categories did not find any new components. Therefore, this study believes that the “mega individuals” competency model is theoretically saturated.

7. Conclusions and Implications

“Mega individuals” are born against the background of the new technological revolution and digital intelligence economy and are the product of the rise of individuals. In the evolving business ecosystem, individuals need to constantly develop their own literacy and ability to adapt to changes and development of the social environment. The main conclusions of our research into “mega individuals” were as follows.

Firstly, this study used a qualitative research method to define the connotations of the term “mega individuals” through grounded theory with data collection from 56 interviewees who are entrepreneurs, professional managers, partners, business elites, etc.

It clearly pointed out the distinction between “mega individuals” and “new individuals”, “strong individuals”, “super managers” and “business elites”. Secondly, on the basis of the existing individual competency model, this study constructed the competency model of “mega individuals”, that is, “mega individuals” are composed of compound ability, collaboration and personal IP: three characteristic dimensions. Thirdly, under the guidance of the theory of individual dynamic ability, this study provided a deep analysis of the ability of “mega individuals” and ordinary individuals and especially pointed out that compound ability is not only an individual’s knowledge skills and learning ability but also an embodiment of comprehensive quality and the ability to deal with uncertainty in a timely fashion. Based on the premise of respect and equality, the synergy between “mega individuals” is formed, and the goal is finally achieved. Personal IP needs a certain period of time to reach accumulated effect, but its implicit value cannot be ignored. Finally, this study pointed out that “mega individuals” break the traditional employment relationship, constantly develop their own literacy and ability under the evolving business ecology, give play to individual unique value, improve organizational performance in collaboration with others, create social value and contribute to the economic and social development of new demographic dividends.

7.1. Theoretical Implications

First, this study systematically analyzed compound ability from four perspectives. Throughout the existing literature on complex ability training, discussions stayed on a knowledge and skills level. When it came to a complex way to improve the capacity, studies only involved discussions in a broad manner. At present, in the research, the cultivation of compound ability still concentrates on the reform of the cultivation mode in colleges and universities, and exploration is conducted rarely in practical work. There is no comprehensive description on the compound capability system. On this basis, this study combined this comprehensive research with the actual case of “mega individuals” to make a systemic analysis of compound talents and their abilities composition. In addition to knowledge skills and learning ability in individual dynamic ability, the research on “mega individuals” emphasized transferable ability and problem-solving ability, which are general skills separate from professional skills and reusable abilities. Finally, the ability to solve problems was constantly emphasized. In the new form, individuals decide their own time arrangement in a more liberal work mode, creativity is stimulated and greater value of life is realized; these individuals can break the inherent thinking mode to look at problems from a different perspective, find a more optimized solution path and realize upgrades of life operating systems. In previous literature, dealing with uncertainty was rarely mentioned; especially in the face of “black swan” events, mega individuals can expand cognitive boundaries, enhance their abilities to resist blows and possibly turn the situation into an opportunity. In this study, specific evaluation criteria for compound ability provide theoretical guidance for talent selection and training in human resources practice.

Secondly, this study emphasized the importance of collaboration and explained the collaboration relationship. Collaboration capability is mentioned in existing dynamic capability theory [69]. The relationship among individuals is a cooperative relationship which is mainly developed by external partners to realize the common goal of a project and discover and solve problems in the collaboration process. However, this study found that the relationship among “mega individuals” is cooperative, not only involving the collaboration between “mega individuals” and external individuals, but also internal cooperation. More specifically, in this study, the internal and external behaviors in resource integration were distinguished. In addition to identifying and acquiring resources, more emphasis was placed on “integrating resources”. The relationship of “equality” was emphasized among “mega individuals”. The research especially pointed out that the relationship is not leadership, that is to say, “leadership” is not the most obvious trait of “mega individuals”. In addition to the communication ability in the negotiation scenarios, the trait of “mega individuals” is more focused on the strain ability. Collaboration needs to

be externalized by interactions, and it needs to reflect the sharing and pooling of individual knowledge, skills and efforts. In addition, the evidence model of collaboration evaluation is not unified; that is, it has not been determined to evaluate collaboration. The innovation model among “mega individuals”, as well as the theory and practice of these individuals’ collaboration, needs to be further studied and discussed.

Thirdly, this study also extended the role of personal IP to complement the existing dynamic theory. Personal IP is not mentioned in the current theory of individual dynamic capability. Therefore, the results of this study are a supplement to the theory of dynamic capability, that is, the ability of “mega individuals” to create IP value, i.e., having the brand effect becomes an important indicator. In the era of individual rise, everyone is unique. Standing out from the crowd to create personal IP is becoming the main theme of the era of connection. From “organized individuals” to “personal IP”, the penetration of the mobile Internet is embodied increasingly by discrete pieces of the network and by the continuous forming of many centers and many new connections. This research mainly selected personal IP rather than personal brand for discussion. On the one hand, relevant studies were primarily on personal brand, and research regarding personal IP focused on the transmission and marketing category and relatively little in the management research category. In the present study, “long termism” and “business value” were rarely mentioned. For “mega individuals”, long-term investment should be made, especially to measure the effect of a decision or the correctness of a decision, and it is necessary to wait patiently for a long time to build stronger decisions [69]. At the same time, it is also necessary to have a long-term oriented attitude and have confidence and expectations for the future [68]. In addition, in this study, commercial value, which is also one of the important characteristics distinguishing “mega individuals” from ordinary individuals, was shown to be crucial. The strong personal IP of “mega individuals” enables them to have sufficient commercial value. In the era of mobile Internet, one can “realize effective business realization” after creating one’s own IP. On the other hand, personal IP precedes brand, and brand value comes from the influence of personal IP. If the two can complement each other, it gives the maximum result. This study believes that personal IP has more research value in the formation of “mega individuals”. It is worth noting that, if the negative impacts of the personal IP of the “mega individuals” emerge, the reputation, integrity and brand image of the “mega individuals” and the organization which they belong to are irreparably damaged.

7.2. Practical Implications

This study provides practical guidance for the construction of the competency model of “mega individuals” so that individuals can develop into “mega individuals” in reality.

First, it involves the effective development and implementation of new opportunities by individuals. Organizations are constantly adapting to new situations to ensure sustainable development or innovative development, which requires individuals to have the ability to understand new environmental requirements, and individual dynamic abilities help individuals to face unpredictable changes in the market. In recent years, the use of the theory of dynamic capabilities to update resources and capabilities to adapt to changing business environments has received much attention. However, few researchers analyzed individual dynamic capabilities to ensure business sustainability. The logical chain of “integrating resources—especially acquiring, integrating, resetting and releasing resources—to cope with or create market changes” presented in this study conforms to the basic view of dynamic capability theory, and this study can be applied to the actual work of individuals.

Second, this includes understanding the changes in the new work form, developing the ability to cope with changes and even creating the right survival experience in these conditions. In view of the mega individuals’ compound ability, for new career development in an organizational environment where more survival needs are required, individuals usually need to constantly improve their own quality, not only compounding professional quality and individual comprehensive qualities, but also acquiring the capa-

bilities to react in uncertain environments in rapid response and jump out of dilemmas. In view of collaboration ability, more emphasis among “mega individuals” was given to the equal relationship that releases organizations’ internal energy to the maximum level, eventually achieving the goals established. In the process, it is necessary to test whether the “mega individuals” have an altruistic mentality, hold a big picture and view and put “things” first rather than “people” first as a thinking pattern. For personal IP, the previous outstanding people are buried in doing things well without paying enough attention to building systemic personal IP. This study emphasized that, when a personal IP has commercial value, the brand is an intangible asset for the organization. The competency model of “mega individuals” is to help individuals continuously improve themselves and make progress. If they want to succeed in the future, they must do their best. In the personalized, uncertain and multidimensional world in the future, the potential returns are also worthy of efforts.

Third, demonstration effect promotes social development. When individuals set up more “models” and “examples”, more demonstration effect can be established, which helps to form the obvious guidance role in organization. With the increasing dynamic characteristics of the external environment, new technologies and new business formats have gradually emerged, and a large number of new employment forms and employment methods have emerged. Individuals need to learn new skills, overcome inertia, integrate resources to identify new market changes and opportunities and be able to make a greater commitment to society and the environment, which also contributes to the social development process.

7.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study makes some contributions to the body of knowledge, there are limitations which should be considered as directions for future research.

First, there were limitations to the interview samples. The commencement of the research on the connotation and characteristics of “mega individuals” adopted Grounded Theory to ensure that the research method and procedure was scientific, but the respondents’ evaluations and understandings of “mega individuals” were subjective. In addition, this study used the induction method, and, in the process of understanding and judging, inevitably, the study exhibited subjectivity to some extent. Additionally, this study involved venture capital services, Internet, media, education consulting, electricity, food industry, artificial intelligence, architectural design, foreign trade, medical equipment, medical beauty, etc. The main research subjects were Chinese and ethnic Chinese. In future research, more data collection among respondents from different countries and from many more industries is needed to enlarge the sample size. It would also make “mega individuals” more visible and give a clearer picture of what “mega individuals” are capable of.

Second, the adoption of the qualitative research method limited results. Qualitative research is to explore specific events or problems and carry out a detailed and systematic process. Qualitative research can fill up the defects of quantitative research and excavate, in depth, the reasons underlying the phenomenon. However, the analysis of samples the qualitative research methods cannot represent the whole picture. The 65 respondents in this study may be defective for drawing conclusions. This is the shortcoming of adopting this research method. Therefore, scale design and empirical tests should be carried out in a follow-up study so as to further verify the conclusions and improve the applicability of the conclusions.

Third, an in-depth study of the interaction of traits related to “mega individuals” is still required. According to the collected data, this study explores the connotation and characteristics of “mega individuals”. However, considering the material and development of the study, detailed analysis on the interactions among the three features was not conducted. In subsequent studies, different dimensions of the research direction and exploration of the mechanism of traits could be developed.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization B.H.; methodology, B.H. and J.Z.; validation, B.H. and J.Z.; data curation, X.L. and J.Z.; writing, B.H.; review and editing, J.Z., X.L. and B.H.; supervision, X.L.; project administration, X.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Economics and Management School of Wuhan University Ethics Committee has reviewed that the design specification, research content and process of the project comply with the ethical requirements for human biomedical research issued by the state, and agreed to implement the project as planned. Approval number: NO. WHURB-131491.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The study did not report any data.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

References

1. Kalleberg, A.L.; Dunn, M. Good jobs, bad jobs in the gig economy. *LERA Libr.* **2016**, *20*, 10–13.
2. Luo, W.H.; Song, J.W. The social responsibility of management academic research in the Context of change. *J. Manag.* **2018**, *15*, 9. (In Chinese)
3. Direction, S. Employee creativity and organizational innovation: Factors which drive enhancement. *Strateg. Dir.* **2022**, *38*, 29–31.
4. Asgari, E.; Hunt, R.A.; Lerner, D.A.; Townsend, D.M.; Hayward, M.L.A.; Kiefer, K. Red giants or black holes? The antecedent conditions and multilevel impacts of star performers. *Acad. Manag. Ann.* **2021**, *15*, 223–265. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
5. Wang, Y.; Guo, Y.R.; Luo, W.H. The Connotation and Diversity of Employee Challenge Behavior from the Perspective of Follow ability: A Qualitative Exploration. *China Hum. Resour. Dev.* **2017**, *7*, 38–48. (In Chinese)
6. Van Hoorn, A. Organizational culture in the financial sector: Evidence from a cross-industry analysis of employee personal values and career success. *J. Bus. Ethics* **2017**, *146*, 451–467. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
7. Battilana, J. Agency institutions: The Enabling Role of individuals' social position. *Organization* **2006**, *13*, 653–676. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
8. Aguinis, H.; O'Boyle, E., Jr. Star performers in twenty-first century organizations. *Pers. Psychol.* **2014**, *67*, 313–350. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
9. Trkman, M.; Trkman, P. A framework for increasing business value from social media. *Econ. Res.-Ekon. Istraž.* **2018**, *31*, 1091–1110. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
10. Qu, H.; Yu, G.M. "Mega-individuals" and Niche Time and Space: A New Perspective of Media Consumption Research. *J. Commun. Stud.* **2017**, *12*, 51–61. (In Chinese)
11. Zhai, K. An Analysis of the Communication Phenomenon of "Mega individuals" in the Era of Short Video. *Young Journal.* **2019**, *9*, 3. (In Chinese)
12. Wan, X.Y. The Arrival of the New Individual Economy Has Changed Us: Taking College Students' Entrepreneurship and Employment as an Example. *Int. Public Relat.* **2020**, *12*, 397–398. (In Chinese)
13. Chen, C.H.; Yin, J. Where is the new individual economy? *People's Forum* **2021**, *1*, 19–23. (In Chinese)
14. Chen, C.H. *Value Symbiosis: Organization Management in the Digital Era*; Posts and Telecommunications Press: Beijing, China, 2021. (In Chinese)
15. Srivastava, A.; Prasad, A.; Mishra, N. Leadership—A journey from a 'Manager' to a 'SuperManager'. *Int. J. Leadersh.* **2016**, *4*, 1–9.
16. Allen, M.P. Continuity and change within the core corporate elite. *Sociol. Q.* **1978**, *19*, 510–521. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
17. Hunt, J.; Boxall, P. Are top human resource specialists' strategic partners'? Self-perceptions of a corporate elite. *Int. J. Hum. Resour. Manag.* **1998**, *9*, 767–781. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
18. Nakpodia, F.; Adegbite, E. Corporate governance and elites. *Account. Forum* **2018**, *42*, 17–31. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
19. Caza, B.B.; Moss, S.; Vough, H. From synchronizing to harmonizing: The Process of authenticating multiple Work identities. *Adm. Sci. Q.* **2018**, *63*, 703–745. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
20. Caza, B.B.; Wilson, M.K. Me, myself, and I: The benefits of multiple work identities. In *Exploring Positive Identities and Organization: Building a Theoretical and Research Foundation*; Roberts, L.M., Dutton, J.E., Eds.; Psychology Press: New York, NY, USA, 2009.
21. Caza, B.B.; Creary, S. Identity work emerging professions. In *Cheltenham, UK: Perspectives on Contemporary Professional Work: Challenges and Experiences*; Wilkinson, A., Hislop, D., Couplands, C., Eds.; Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham, UK; pp. 259–285.
22. Whyte, W.H. *The Organization Man*; Simon & Schuster: New York, NY, USA, 1956.
23. Lane, C.M. *A Company of One: Insecurity, Independence and the New World of White-Collar Unemployment*; Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY, USA, 2011.
24. Ashford, S.J.; Caza, B.B.; Reid, E.M. From surviving to thriving in the gig economy: A research agenda for individuals in the new world of work. *Res. Organ. Behav.* **2018**, *38*, 23–41. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

25. Zheng, X. Path exploration of incorporating new individual economy into government statistics. *Chin. J. Stat.* **2021**, *6*, 69–71. (In Chinese)
26. Spreitzer, G.; Sutcliffe, K.; Dutton, J.; Sonenshein, S.; Grant, M. A Socially Embedded Model of Jupiter at work. *J. Organ. Sci.* **2005**, *16*, 537–549. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
27. Teece, D.J.; Pisano, G.; Shuen, A. Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strateg. Manag. J.* **1997**, *18*, 509–533. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
28. Kucel, A.; Robert, P.; Buil, M.; Masferrer, N. Entrepreneurial Skills and education: Job matching of higher education graduates. *Eur. J. Educ.* **2016**, *51*, 73–89. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
29. del Mar Alonso-Almeida, M.; Buil-Fabrega, M.; Bagur-Femenias, L.; Aznar-Alarcon, J.P. Shedding light on sustainable development and stakeholder engagement: The role of individual dynamic capabilities. *Sustain. Dev.* **2017**, *25*, 625–638. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
30. Teece, D.J. Dynamic capabilities: Routines versus entrepreneurial action. *J. Manag. Stud.* **2012**, *49*, 1395–1401. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
31. Buzzao, G.; Rizzi, F. On the conceptualization and measurement of dynamic capabilities for sustainability: Building Theory through a Systematic literature Review. *J. Bus. Strategy Environ.* **2021**, *30*, 135–175. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
32. Laaksonen, O.; Peltoniemi, M. The essence of dynamic capabilities and their measurement. *Int. J. Manag. Rev.* **2018**, *20*, 184–205. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
33. Mandal, S. The influence of dynamic capabilities on hospital-supplier collaboration and hospital supply chain performance. *Int. J. Oper. Prod. Manag.* **2017**, *37*, 664–684. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
34. Buil-Fabrega, M.; Alonso-Almeida, M.; Bagur-Femenias, L. Individual dynamic managerial capabilities: Influence over environmental and social commitment under a gender perspective. *J. Clean. Prod.* **2017**, *151*, 371–379. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
35. Goleman, D. The new competency: Matching the right people to the right jobs. *Psychol. Today* **1981**, *15*, 35.
36. Spencer, L.M.; Spencer, S.M. *Competence at Work Models for Superior Performance*; John Wiley and Sons: New York, NY, USA, 2008.
37. Podmetina, D.; Soderquist, K.E.; Petraite, M.; Teplov, R. Developing a competency model for open innovation: From the individual to the organisational level. *Manag. Decis.* **2018**, *56*, 1306–1335. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
38. Ling, Z.; Zengrui, T.; Metawa, N. Data mining-based competency model of innovation and entrepreneurship. *J. Intell. Fuzzy Syst.* **2019**, *37*, 35–43. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
39. Browne, W.; Dreitlein, S.; Ha, M.; Manzoni, J.; Mere, A. A Competency Model of Global Project Communications. *J. Mark. Manag.* **2016**, *7*, 67–76.
40. Vatankhah Barenji, R.; Hashemipour, M.; Guerra-Zubiaga, D.A. A framework for modelling enterprise competencies: From theory to practice in enterprise architecture. *Int. J. Comput. Integr. Manuf.* **2015**, *28*, 791–810. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
41. McCartney, S.; Murphy, C.; McCarthy, J. 21st Century HR: A competency model for the emerging role of HR Analysts. *Pers. Rev.* **2020**, *50*, 1495–1513. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
42. Daouk-Oyry, L.; Sahakian, T.; Van de Vijver, F. Evidence-based management competency model for managers in hospital Settings. *Br. J. Manag.* **2021**, *32*, 1384–1403. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
43. Brits, D.W.; Veldsman, T.H. A global central banker competency model. *SA J. Hum. Resour. Manag.* **2014**, *12*, 14. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
44. Miles, M.B.; Huberman, A.M. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Source Book*; SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 1994.
45. Zhao, S.M. *Research on The Professionalism Competence of Managers in China Beijing*; Peking University Press: China, Beijing, 2008. (In Chinese)
46. Wu, L. Applicability Of Marginal Productivity to Marginal Productivity on Marginal Productivity. *J. Bus. Res.* **2010**, *63*, 27–31. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
47. Liang, C.J.; Zhang, M.M.; Chen, X.M. An Analysis of the Path to Improve the Comprehensive Quality of Postgraduates in the New Era. *J. Guangdong Norm. Univ. Technol.* **2021**, *42*, 7. (In Chinese)
48. Li, T.S. The Concept and Implementation Strategy of Quality Education in Postgraduate Training. *Acad. Degrees Postgrad. Educ.* **2001**, *23*, 30–34. (In Chinese)
49. Miao, D.S. Systems Thinking and Complexity Research. *J. Syst. Dialectics* **2004**, *12*. (In Chinese)
50. Henry, N.; Li, P.P. *Uncertain Science and Uncertain World*; Li, P.P., Translator; Shanghai Century Publishing Group: Shanghai, China, 2005. (In Chinese)
51. Yu, X.F.; Liu, F. Research on the cultivation of compound talents in science and engineering colleges. *China Adult Educ.* **2008**, *22*, 2. (In Chinese)
52. Zhang, Q.J. The reform of compound talents training in colleges and universities: Logic, practice and reflection. *Mod. Educ. Manag.* **2020**, *4*, 47–53.
53. Li, J.M. The transformation of higher education from the perspective of interdisciplinary studies. *Jianghai J.* **2012**, *6*, 228–233.
54. Wang, T.; Zhao, S.M. The Situation and Extended Sense of Employment Relations of Chinese Firms under Transitional Economy. *Reform* **2010**, *7*, 6. (In Chinese)
55. Brock, D.; Abu-Rish, E.; Chiu, C.R.; Hammer, D.; Wilson, S.; Vorvick, L.; Zierler, B. Republished: Interprofessional education in team communication: Working together to improve patient safety. *Postgrad. Med. J.* **2013**, *89*, 642–651. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
56. Barney, J.B. A Resource-based Perspective For Strategic Management Research? Yes. *Acad. Rev. Manag.* **2001**, *26*, 41–56.
57. Ge, B.S.; Dong, B.B. Resource integration process and venture performance: Based on the contingency model of resource integration capability. In Proceedings of the 2008 International Conference on Management Science and Engineering, Long Beach, CA, USA, 10–12 September 2008; pp. 291–297.

58. Hermann, H.; Ling, F.H. *Synergetics of Nature Composition*; Ling, F.H., Translator; Shanghai Translation Publishing House: Shanghai, China, 2013. (In Chinese)
59. Liza, M. On business negotiation ability. *J. Henan Univ. Technol.* **1999**, *76*, 61–63.
60. Weismueller, J.; Harrigan, P.; Wang, S.; Soutar, G.N. Influencer endorsements: How advertising disclosure and source credibility affect consumer purchase intention on social media. *Australas. Mark. J.* **2020**, *28*, 160–170. [[CrossRef](#)]
61. Goldberg, L.R. The development of markers of the Big-Five factor structure. *Psychol. Assess.* **1992**, *4*, 26–42. [[CrossRef](#)]
62. John, O.P.; Srivastava, S. The big five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research*, 2nd ed.; Pervin, L.A., John, O.P., Eds.; Guilford: New York, NY, USA, 1999; pp. 102–138.
63. Friedman, H.; Riggio, S.R.; Casella, E.D. Nonverbal skill, personal charisma. *Personal. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **1988**, *14*, 203–211. [[CrossRef](#)]
64. Verčič, A.T. Personal charisma: Immediate or gradual? How long does it take to judge? *Public Relat. Rev.* **2014**, *40*, 609–611. [[CrossRef](#)]
65. He, G.B.; Zhang, P. The Role of individual influence in group Decision-making integration: An extension of SDS Theory. *Acta Psychol. Sin.* **2004**, *1*, 37–43. (In Chinese)
66. Katz, E.; Paul, F.L. *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications*; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 2017.
67. Jaques, E. Taking time seriously in evaluating jobs. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* **1979**, *57*, 124–132.
68. Hofstede, G. What did GLOBE really measure? Researchers' minds versus respondents' minds. *J. Int. Bus. Stud.* **2006**, *37*, 882–896. [[CrossRef](#)]
69. Mousavi, S.; Bossink, B. Corporate-NGO partnership for environmentally sustainable innovation: Lessons from a cross-sector collaboration in Aviation Biofuels. *Environ. Innov. Soc. Transit.* **2020**, *34*, 80–95. [[CrossRef](#)]