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Intention to Subscribe to YouTube Channels: Trust in Creator and Trust in Content

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A B S T R A C T

This paper examines the features that make a YouTube channel attractive to users. Considering that drawing users' attention is challenging on this platform, where voluminous amounts of videos are available, it is crucial to identify the factors that make users intend to subscribe to a YouTube channel. In this study, we used an online survey to collect data from 1125 respondents and an SEM model using Smart PLS 3.2.8 to analyze it. The results show that integrity and familiarity with a YouTube channel are positively correlated with trust in its creator, which leads to subscribing to the YouTube channel; value and accuracy also positively affect intention to subscribe to a YouTube channel via trust in content. This study enriches the field of research about trust in the creator and trust in content.

Keywords: YouTube, Online Video Streaming, Subscribing, Trust in Creator, Trust in Content

Ⅰ. Introduction

In the past, most information online was presented in the form of text and images. As technology has developed, the presentation of online information has evolved to include video and graphics. The main website for accessing video-based information is YouTube, where an immense amount of information can be found. YouTube is an online video platform where people can upload and watch videos for free. The research firm Statista show that YouTube platform boasts about 2.3 billion active users. People can access YouTube in many different ways, such as smartphones, computers, and tablet PCs. According to Aslam (2019), more than 5 billion different videos on YouTube are watched daily. In addition, 62% of businesses use YouTube, and there are 50 million creators of YouTube videos.

With the advent of smartphones and personal cameras, it has become easier for an individual to record,

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edit, and upload videos onto the internet. With so many videos being uploaded onto YouTube every second, it is difficult for creators to attract viewers. Grabbing the attention of viewers and getting them to subscribe is challenging. Subscriptions to a YouTube channel provide a way for users to bookmark that channel. For the creators of that channel, growing their subscriber base increases advertising revenue and indicates whether the channel is successful. It is important to know what attracts viewers to a certain channel and affects their intention to subscribe to that channel.

Most studies on YouTube subscriptions have focused on the Technology Acceptance Model (Kong et al., 2020) and Post Acceptance Model (Joo, 2020) to elucidate users' behaviour and identify factors that are important for gaining users. In contrast, this paper examines trust in the creator and trust in content as factors attracting YouTube subscribers. These factors have rarely been examined in previous research. Traditionally, marketers have appealed to audiences with their emotions. Marketers attempt to generate trust and build rapport with consumers (Kong et al., 2020). We posit that trust is also crucial for attracting YouTube subscribers.

Our research questions are as follows:

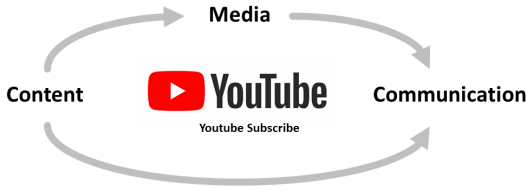
- *What factors contribute to users subscribing to YouTube channels?*
- *What factors affect trust in a YouTube creator and trust in content?*

Ⅱ. Theory and Background

2.1. YouTube

The word 'YouTube' was derived from combining two words, 'you' and 'tube,' the latter of which is an informal term for television. The YouTube platform began its free video uploading and viewing service in 2005. YouTube was originally used to provide videos showing a variety of content; however, it also had the side benefit of enabling social networking by allowing viewers to communicate with each other through the platform. Over time it has established itself as a core online platform that offers an alternative to TV. Most modern users use YouTube for information seeking, entertainment, or solving problems. As YouTube has gained popularity, the terms 'creator' and 'subscriber' have become widely known to the public. For YouTube videos, having more subscribers is a useful indicator of a creator's success and an important component of YouTube channel management.

In the past, research in this area focused mainly on how mass media affected audiences (e.g., Bauer, 1964). More recently, researchers have changed their focus from how the media affects the audience to how the audience uses the media.



<Image 1> YouTube, Content, and Subscribe

2.2. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

In studies of media use, uses and gratifications theory (UGT) is widely heralded as a guiding approach to understanding consumers' needs in using media (Cai and Wohn, 2019). UGT refers explicitly to the motivations underlying media use and the associated satisfaction (Lin and Chen, 2017). According

to Habes (2019), UGT focuses on reasons for using media, treating the media and the public as active agents (i.e., individuals are not passive recipients of the media, but actively consume content based on their specific needs). Motives for use of social media, for example, include searching for companions, relaxing, and learning; people also use social media as a form of escape, out of habit, or for enjoyment (Habes, 2019).

UGT is the most widely used theoretical framework in communications literature. It investigates the social and psychological needs that motivate audiences to select media (Ko et al., 2005), why consumers use a particular medium, and what functions the media serves (Katerattanakul, 2002). Katz et al. (1973) found that media use stems from a cognitive desire to acquire information and knowledge or expand emotional experiences, to strengthen a person's beliefs and convictions, and to communicate or exchange ideas with others for social purposes. Other reasons for using media include tension relief and escapism. Previously, UGT theory has been used to explain why people use different types of computer-supported technologies continuously, such as the internet, social networking sites (SNS), and online communities (Alhabash et al., 2014; Dholakia et al., 2004; Kang and Cho, 2020; Leung, 2013; Lim and Ting, 2012; Zhong, 2020; Zolkepli and Kamarulzaman, 2015) (<Table 1>).

UGT theory may explain why people would choose to use new media such as YouTube in a changing media environment. Although some people use old media such as television or radio to satisfy their information needs, these same needs can also be

<Table 1> Research Trends in Uses and Gratifications Theory

Researchers	Research Field	Main Focus
Chung et al. (2012)	Social networking websites	Integration of Uses and Gratifications Theory and Social Identity Theory to identify factors that influence the use of SNS and information sharing
Smock et al. (2011)	Facebook	Comparison of general SNS use and specific uses by classifying and measuring the motivations of users who use each specific function provided by Facebook
Quan-Haase and Young (2010)	Facebook, instant messaging	Comparison of satisfaction with Facebook and satisfaction with instant messaging applying Uses and Gratification Theory
Ko et al. (2005)	Internet, advertising	Motivation of advertising in major interactions on the Internet
Stafford et al. (2004)	Internet	Various dimensions of internet use and satisfaction
LaRose and Eastin (2004)	Internet	Proposed new media acceptance model applying the framework of Social Cognitive Theory and Uses and Gratification Theory
Luo (2002)	Online consumer behavior	Effects of information, entertainment, and stimulus factors on web use and satisfaction centering on the mediating effects of attitudes toward websites
Zhong (2020)	Mobile media	Uses and Gratifications Theory as the theoretical basis for creating sophisticated software for mobile media clients
Lim and Ting (2012)	Internet as a shopping channel	Uses and Gratifications Theory as the theoretical basis to understand consumers' attitudes toward and intentions of using the internet as a shopping channel
Kang and Cho (2020)	Video content	Video content, use, satisfaction, motivation, demographic characteristics of the audience, the five directions, and individualism

satisfied with new media such as YouTube. There are many YouTube channels to choose from and various reasons for watching videos on a specific channel. There is abundant UGT research about use of the YouTube platform itself. However, no research has been done about channels within the YouTube platform. In this study, we examine two factors that determine intention to subscribe to a specific channel: trust in the creator and trust in content. Indicators of trust in the creator are integrity and familiarity. Indicators of trust in content are value and accuracy.

2.3. Trust in YouTube Channels

Trust refers to the degree to which the trustee believes and accepts the message presented by the object of trust. Therefore, trust is not an intrinsic property of the object, but a subjective judgment made by the user about the object of trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). According to previous studies, the factors constituting trust are very diverse, including integrity, expertise, value, affinity, and familiarity (Soh et al., 2009). Trust is a major antecedent construct influencing YouTube subscription, as discussed above; the factors that determine the intention to subscribe (IS) to YouTube channels are trust in the creator and trust in the video content. Therefore, this study examines the effects of trust in the creator in terms of two influential factors, integrity and familiarity, and those of trust in content in terms of value and accuracy. We demonstrate the effects of these factors on IS.

2.3.1. Trust in the Creator

There are plenty of research about communicators who disseminate information, but almost no research on the creators of that information. Trust in the information giver implies that the communicator exhibits positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message (Ohaninan, 1990). If viewers of a certain channel have a positive experience with its videos, then trust will be generated toward the channel's creator. When they trust the creator, viewers will enjoy watching the videos posted by that creator. Integrity and familiarity are two factors inherent in the construct of trust in the creator.

Integrity.

The creator is a professional with a public image that exhibits a certain degree of integrity. Integrity is one of the characteristics of trustees which affect trust (Mayer et al., 1995). Keller (2001) said that trust in corporate brands is determined by their credibility, honesty, and trustworthiness. A YouTube channel can be seen as a company that produces products for marketing purposes. Viewers are the equivalent of customers, and subscribing to a channel equates to the action of buying a product. According to a study by Lee (2017), social media influencers have the same status as celebrities. Influencers can be referred to as information givers. Influencers, including YouTube creators, need competence and integrity to attract the attention of viewers. According to O'Neil-Hart and Blumenstein (2016), nowadays, YouTube creators are more influential than traditional celebrities. Viewers evaluate creators in terms of consistency, reliability, and honesty; the results of these evaluations will determine the creator's image.

Familiarity.

Familiarity is established by the frequency and depth of interaction. Many researchers have identified the frequency of interaction with the same service provider as one factor influencing relationships

(Gremler et al., 2001). A sense of closeness to a YouTube creator will result in a bond between them. According to Miller and Berg (1984), the closer the relationship to the other and the longer we know the other, the more likely we will be to have detailed and extensive knowledge of that other's desires and preferences. A bond may be formed to the extent that this knowledge results in a connection between viewers (i.e., customers) and channel creators (i.e., sellers). This sense of familiarity will determine the popularity of the creator.

2.3.2. Trust in Content

YouTube videos provide messages and information. The higher the viewer's trust in a video's message, the greater the acceptability of the message. If viewers are satisfied with what they see on a channel's videos, they will eventually begin to trust its content. Some viewers may not like the creator, but they may like the messages they receive through the videos. In a marketing sense, trust in information affects the consumer's acceptance of the product and the purchase decision; consumers are less suspicious of information when they perceive its source as highly reliable (Sparkman and Locander, 1980). Great content engenders trust, increasing the probability of subscribing. Value and accuracy are two factors inherent in the construct of trust in content.

Value.

Several studies have demonstrated that the truth of advertising content and usefulness of information are important variables explaining consumer attitudes toward advertisements. In addition, information usefulness has a positive influence on attitude toward mobile advertising (Han and Kamber, 2006). Advertising in marketing can be compared to videos on YouTube. Channel creators try to promote their videos to viewers by providing valuable content that is worth watching. Viewers can choose which videos they want to watch based on the value they perceive within the videos' content. Users select only the information that is useful and informative to them. The more relevant information a channel can provide to viewers, the higher the perceived usefulness of that information will be.

Some studies have shown that the more informative a website is, the more positive one feels towards the website (Oh, 2005). We posit that this also holds true for videos on YouTube. There are many videos on YouTube, and it can be challenging for viewers to choose which ones to watch. When viewers like videos and value their content, they will continue to watch such videos and may even subscribe to the channel.

Accuracy.

Internet users go through a decision-making process, evaluating, selecting, and correcting information based on whether the information provided to them is accurate, suitable, and easy to understand (Shelby, 1998). Social media and social networks provide vast amounts of information that is rapidly disseminated to multiple users. Therefore, it is obviously important for information providers to provide accurate information that people need. However, with so much information out there, people may have trouble finding the right information source. Consequently, internet users tend to skim various pages to find the information they need rather than reading thoroughly (Madu and Madu, 2002). Similarly, with so many channels and so much contents on YouTube, viewers may be reluctant to expend effort to shift through all those videos. Therefore, channels must provide accurate content to capture viewers' attention and

communicate the information they need.

2.4. Intention to Subscribe (IS)

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) states that intentions are the principal precedent of actual behaviors since intentions reflect a person's willingness to behave in a particular way. Previous literature has found a correlation between these two variables (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000), as the first one (intention) provides a strong indicator of how a customer will eventually behave (Casaló et al., 2011). In SNS, users follow a brand community account, which helps to develop and sustain a community focused on a topic of interest. Friends or fans of a particular brand community on a SNS expose themselves voluntarily to the available information (Chu and Kim, 2011).

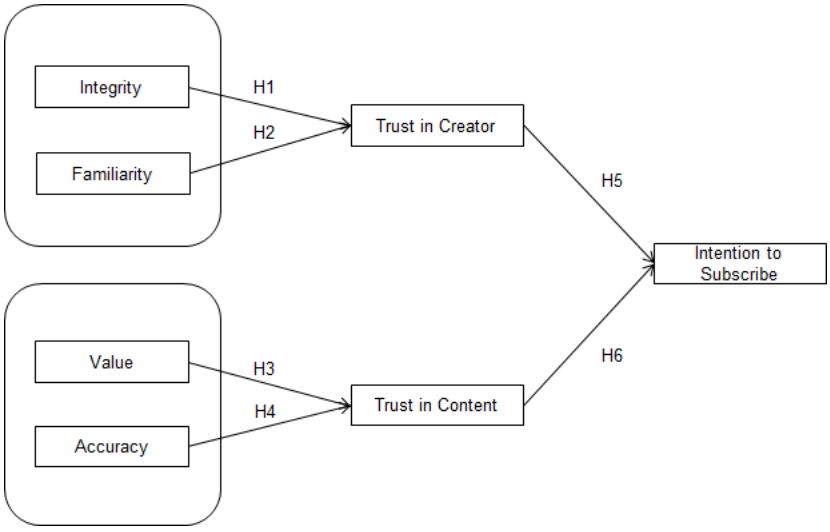
IS, also known as intention to follow, entails clicking the subscription button to follow a specific YouTube channel. By subscribing to a given channel, viewers get notified when new videos have been uploaded onto the channel.

Ⅲ. Research Model and Hypotheses

<Figure 1> provides a graphic representation of our research model, including all constructs and factors under investigation in this study, along with the hypotheses that will be outlined in this section.

3.1. Integrity, Familiarity → Trust in the Creator

Previous research shows that the most critical factor for predicting trust is integrity (Moorman et al., Zaltman, 1992). Garbarino and Johnson (1999) empirically demonstrated that, among 'strong relationship' customers, there was a positive relationship between familiarity with performers in a theatrical context and the consumer's level of trust of the organization. Another study by Cheskin Research and Sapient Responses (1999) indicated no strong correlation between simple site usage and trust. Instead, familiarity was found to be a more meaningful indicator of brand trust. We posit that subscribers' trust in a YouTube creator, based on the YouTube channel creator's integrity and familiarity,



<Figure 1> Research Model

is closely related to IS. Integrity of and familiarity with YouTube creators are key antecedent factors that reduce negative bias toward YouTube creators and make viewers perceive their content as trustworthy (Anderberg and Morris, 2006; Gilmore and Pine, 2007).

We hypothesize that these two factors, the integrity of and familiarity with YouTube creators, can bring positive responses that improve a channel's credibility and increase subscribers' satisfaction. From this, it can be inferred that the integrity of and familiarity with YouTube creators will positively affect trust in them. Therefore, we state the following hypotheses:

H1: Integrity has a positive effect on trust in YouTube creators.

H2: Familiarity has a positive effect on trust in YouTube creators.

3.2. Value, Accuracy → Trust in Content

The value of social media platforms such as YouTube is that they can deliver content to many people, facilitate continuous communication in a friendly and credible way, and build trust through active two-way communication (Lee, 2010). Trust in the videos provided by a YouTube channel may also develop. Consumers are more interested when information givers provide information that is appealing to them. Valuable, high-quality video content generates trust in the information contained in the videos (Kwak, 2013). Noh (2011) confirmed that three types of perceived value (psychological value, functional value, economic value) have a positive influence on trust. We posit that the higher the perceived value to the consumer, the higher the reliability of the provided content. Previous researchers (Bucy, 2003; Johnson and Kaye, 1998; Song, 2007) also stated that accuracy of information leads to increased trust and relationships amongst people.

Jeung and Kim (2018) examined the relationship between the quality of video content and trust as perceived by subscribers; that study attempted to elucidate the factors affecting users' intention to subscribe to the YouTube beauty channel. The quality of the YouTube videos, that is, the value perceived by the subscribers and the accuracy of the information, had a positive effect on subscribers' satisfaction, and that satisfaction was associated with trust in the video content. Based on the discussion above, we infer that the value and accuracy of its videos will positively affect trust in a given YouTube channel. Therefore, the following hypotheses were established:

H3: Value has a positive effect on trust in content.

H4: Accuracy has a positive effect on trust in content.

3.3. Trust → Intention to Subscribe

Trust in an information giver has been proposed to influence positive intention to follow that individual's advice (e.g., McKnight et al., 2002). McKnight et al. (2002) found positive effects of trusting beliefs and trusting intention on following an online vendor's advice. Trust leading to intention to follow has been proven in the marketing world, and YouTube algorithms are designed to bring about specific marketing and advertising outcomes. Ridings et al. (2002) found that the higher the level of trust in a virtual community, the greater the intention to share information and accept the information provided by other virtual community members. Previous research also found that trust impacts intention to use social media (Munoz-Leiva et al., 2012). We there-

fore posit that trust will lead viewers to follow or subscribe to a given YouTube channel.

In traditional media, editors and journalists played a role in managing the quality of content information, but consumers who subscribe to a YouTube channel perform this role of evaluating content provided by YouTube creators. From the viewpoint of creators, trust in them and their videos is important to maintain continuous subscribing and keep users watching (Westerman et al., 2014). Unfortunately, however, many YouTube creators provide exaggerated content and misinformation to induce subscriptions, thereby diminishing trust in creators and their videos, and this decline in trust is a factor that reduces IS (Chapple and Cownie, 2017).

Koo (2019) confirmed that trust in video content and YouTube creators had a positive effect on IS. Gong and Alin (2020) also found that YouTube content quality and trust in video creators positively affected information acceptance. Therefore, based on the findings of these previous studies, we posit that trust in YouTube videos and YouTube creators will positively affect IS. Therefore, we present the following hypotheses:

H5: Trust in the creator has a positive effect on intention to subscribe.

H6: Trust in content has a positive effect on intention to subscribe.

Ⅳ. Research Method

The definitions of the variables are as follows:

Integrity is defined as the belief that a person acts in a consistent, reliable, and honest manner when fulfilling promises (Hong and Cho, 2011). Familiarity is a sense of bonding and closeness with the viewer feels toward the creator. Value is how useful and informative the content is for the viewer. Accuracy is the exact degree to which information provided is what viewers are looking for (Wang and Strong, 1996). Trust in the creator develops when a communicator's positive characteristics affect the receiver's acceptance of the creator's message (Ohaninan, 1990). Trust in content occurs when viewers have positive feelings toward the message and information of the videos provided by a channel. Finally, intention to subscribe is viewers' willingness to follow a certain channel on YouTube.

Questions on the survey represented all these constructs. The items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, scored as follows: one is 'strongly disagree,' and seven is 'strongly agree.' The survey was conducted in Korean and translated to English.

4.1. Measures

A survey was conducted to determine the extent to which factors representing our two constructs affected intention to subscribe to a YouTube channel. The items in the survey are listed in <Table 2>.

4.2. Pilot Test

A pilot study was conducted to determine the usability of the survey instrument. The survey was administered to 33 respondents who access YouTube daily. When the respondents finished completing the survey, they gave feedback and identified problems they faced in responding to the questions. Based on this feedback, the survey items were edited without losing the meaning of the constructs.

4.3. Data Collection

The survey was conducted online via Google Forms

<Table 2> Survey Items

Variable	Item	Source
Integrity	1. I think that this channel's creator usually fulfills its commitments. 2. I think that the information offered by this channel's creator is sincere and honest. 3. I think that this channel's creator does not make false statements.	Hong and Cho (2011)
Familiarity	1. I feel a sense of closeness with the creator of this channel. 2. I feel a sense of intimacy with the creator of this channel. 3. I think I have something in common with the creator of this channel.	Ng (2013); Lee et al. (2015)
Value	1. This video's content gives useful information. 2. This video's content is worthwhile. 3. This video's content is helpful to me.	Oh (2012)
Accuracy	1. The content provided by videos on this channel is accurate. 2. Information on this channel's video content is error-free. 3. The source of content in videos on this channel can be identified.	Wang and Strong (1996)
Trust in Creator	1. I think the creator of this channel is sincere. 2. I think the creator of this channel is honest. 3. I think the creator of this channel is reliable. 4. I think the creator of this channel is trustworthy.	Chung and Cho (2017)
Trust in Content	1. The content of this video is reliable. 2. The content of this video is emotionally compelling. 3. The content of this video is accurate.	Chung et al. (2007)
Intention to Subscribe (IS)	1. I have the intention to visit this YouTube channel in the near future. 2. I predict that I will subscribe to this YouTube channel. 3. I will probably look for new content published on this YouTube channel.	Casalo et al. (2017)

to test the hypotheses (<Table 2>). People aged 20 to 50 answered questions regarding their experience with YouTube. Data was collected from December 3, 2019, to December 10, 2019, 7 days total, and respondents participated voluntarily in the survey. The respondents were asked to think of recent videos that they had watched more than 3 times on a certain channel to which they had not yet subscribed and answer based on their experiences with those videos. The survey link was distributed in university classrooms and to friends and acquaintances who use the YouTube platform to watch videos online. Since people use both PCs and smartphones to watch YouTube, the online survey was made using Google Forms. To ensure fairness and remove any potential burden, the questionnaire was answered anonymously. In total, 1136 complete surveys were collected, and after filtering out invalid answers, data for 1125 valid surveys was available.

Ⅴ. Data Analysis

5.1. Sample Demographic Information

Demographic information about respondents to our survey is provided in <Table 3>. Of the 1125 respondents, 608 (53.6%) were male, and 517 (46.4%) were female. Most of the respondents were in their 20s (62.4%) and had a university-level education.

The duration of time the respondents used YouTube was evenly distributed, and most of the respondents used YouTube less than 2 hours daily (80.8%); 1103 out of 1125 people did not use YouTube Premium,

<Table 3> Sample Demographics

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	608	53.6	53.6	53.6
	Female	517	46.4	46.4	100
Age	20-25	360	32	32	32
	26-30	337	30.4	30.4	62.4
	31-35	135	12	12	74.4
	36-40	169	15.2	15.2	89.6
	41-45	67	6.4	6.4	96
	46-50	57	4	4	100
Education	≤ High school graduate	90	8	8	8
	Undergraduate degree	304	27.2	27.2	35.2
	Bachelor's degree	349	31.2	31.2	66.4
	Graduate degree	158	14.4	14.4	80.8
	> Master's degree	224	19.2	19.2	100
Occupation	Student	439	39.2	39.2	39.2
	White-collar worker	405	36	36	75.2
	Self-employed	108	9.6	9.6	84.8
	Government employee	9	0.8	0.8	85.6
	Unemployed	82	7.2	7.2	92.8
	Other	82	7.2	7.2	100
YouTube Usage Experience	< 2 years	338	29.6	29.6	29.6
	2-4 years	338	29.6	29.6	59.2
	4-6 years	144	12.8	12.8	72
	6-8 years	162	14.4	14.4	86.4
	> 8 years	143	13.6	13.6	100
YouTube Usage Time (Daily)	< 1 hour	531	47.2	47.2	47.2
	1-2 hour(s)	378	33.6	33.6	80.8
	2-3 hours	144	12.8	12.8	93.6
	3-4 hours	63	5.6	5.6	99.2
	> 4 hours	9	0.8	0.8	100
YouTube Premium Usage	Yes	198	17.6	17.6	17.6
	No	927	82.4	82.4	100
Number of Channels Subscribed To	< 5	371	32.8	32.8	32.8
	5-10	351	31.2	31.2	64
	10-15	162	14.4	14.4	78.4
	15-20	54	4.8	4.8	83.2
	> 20	187	16.8	16.8	100

which is a service in which people pay monthly to skip advertisements before watching a YouTube video or play the video in the background while using a smartphone. Respondents who use the paid service could be considered heavy users of YouTube; however, not many respondents in our sample used the paid service (1.96%). As for subscriptions, 32.8% of the respondents subscribed to fewer than five channels, and 16.8% subscribed to more than 20 channels.

Secondly, respondents were asked to think of a channel to which they had not yet subscribed on which they had watched videos at least three times. Such videos may have been found through a keyword search; therefore, the results regarding these videos could have been skewed or different from the results regarding videos on subscribed channels. Respondents' answers were categorized based on number of subscriptions, as follows: channels that have 500,000 to 1,000,000 subscribers (37.6%) and channels with less than 500,000 (30.4%). Respondents watched videos in the categories of Entertainment (38.4%), Games (13.6%), Music/Dance (11.2%), Food and Cooking (8.8%), Sport (5.6%), Vlog (3.2%), and Other (19.2%) (<Table 4>).

5.2. Measurement Model Analysis

In order to analyze the data via the SEM model, we used Smart PLS 3.2.8. Convergent validity and discriminant validity were examined based on the measurement model. Convergent validity refers to the correlation between items. The larger the value

<Table 4> YouTube Usage Behavior

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid Percentage (%)	Accumulated Percentage (%)
Number of Subscribers	< 500,000	342	30.4	30.4	30.4
	500,000-1,000,000	423	37.6	37.6	68
	1,000,000-1,500,000	180	16	16	84
	1,500,000-2,000,000	99	8.8	8.8	92.8
	2,000,000-2,500,000	45	4	4	96.8
	2,500,000-3,000,000	18	1.6	1.6	98.4
	> 3,000,000	18	1.6	1.6	100
Video Category	Game	153	13.6	13.6	13.6
	Music/Dance	126	11.2	11.2	24.8
	Entertainment	432	38.4	38.4	63.2
	Food/Cooking	99	8.8	8.8	72
	Vlog	36	3.2	3.2	75.2
	Sport	63	5.6	5.6	80.8
	Other	198	19.2	19.2	100

is, the higher the validity. Through the convergent validity test, loading path values, composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's α and average variance extracted (AVE) were determined. Factor loading is the degree of correlation between variables and constructs. Statistically significant values are greater than 0.7 (Gefen and Straub, 2005). Values for CR and Cronbach's α must be greater than 0.7 to be considered significant (Hair et al., 1998). AVE values must be greater than 0.5 to be considered significant (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Most CR values in our sample exceeded 0.9, all AVE values exceeded 0.7, and Cronbach's α values exceeded 0.7; thus, we conclude that the analysis has high internal consistency (<Table 5>).

Next, we assessed the discriminant validity of the measurement model by comparing the square root of the AVE with correlations between constructs. The square root of the AVE must be greater than 0.7 and larger than the correlations between constructs in order for the model to be valid. <Table 6> shows that all of these conditions are satisfied.

5.3. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Smart PLS 3.2.8 was used to test the structural model on which this research is based. Bootstrapping of 500 subsamples was performed to test the sig-

<Table 5> Convergent Validity Test Results

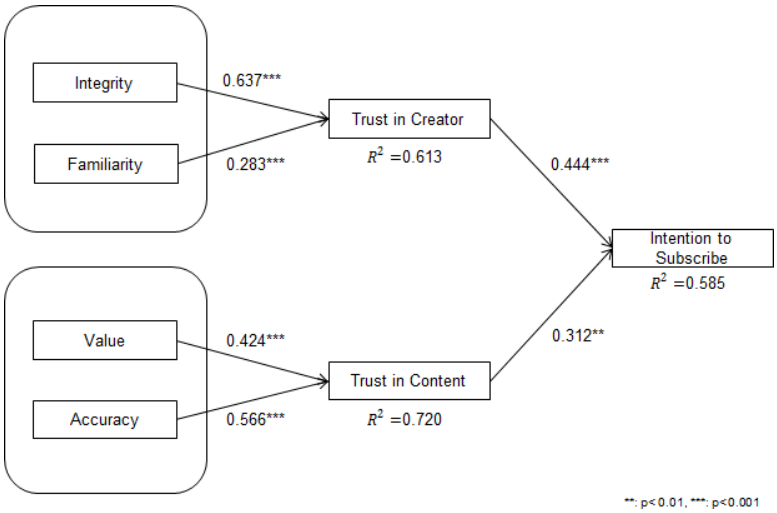
Variable		Factor Loading	T-values	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
Integrity (INT)	INT1	0.849	20.591	0.816	0.930	0.888
	INT2	0.945	81.227			
	INT3	0.914	66.462			
Familiarity (FAM)	FAM1	0.943	70.503	0.810	0.927	0.883
	FAM2	0.950	94.862			
	FAM3	0.800	15.264			
Value (VAL)	VAL1	0.849	26.269	0.793	0.920	0.871
	VAL2	0.906	55.013			
	VAL3	0.915	51.604			
Accuracy (ACC)	ACC1	0.900	48.244	0.703	0.876	0.788
	ACC2	0.855	18.741			
	ACC3	0.754	11.010			
Trust in Creator (TCR)	TCR1	0.779	17.809	0.817	0.947	0.923
	TCR2	0.928	61.362			
	TCR3	0.953	91.951			
	TCR4	0.945	78.738			
Trust in Content (TCO)	TCO1	0.926	70.165	0.771	0.909	0.848
	TCO2	0.769	15.952			
	TCO3	0.928	75.201			
Intention to Subscribe (IS)	IS1	0.852	27.959	0.754	0.902	0.837
	IS2	0.890	33.652			
	IS3	0.864	22.884			

<Table 6> Discriminant Validity Test Results

	Mean	SD	ACC	FAM	INT	IS	TCO	TCR	VAL
ACC	4.720	1.422	**0.839**	-	-	-	-	-	-
FAM	3.576	1.715	0.379	**0.900**	-	-	-	-	-
INT	5.019	1.223	0.632	0.351	**0.903**	-	-	-	-
IS	5.077	1.531	0.452	0.449	0.575	**0.869**	-	-	-
TCO	4.997	1.291	0.761	0.531	0.687	0.666	**0.878**	-	-
TCR	4.858	1.341	0.620	0.507	0.736	0.711	0.759	**0.904**	-
VAL	5.101	1.377	0.460	0.420	0.420	0.589	0.684	0.484	**0.891**

<Table 7> Structural Model Test Results

Paths	Path Coefficients	Standard Deviations	T-values	*P*-values	Hypotheses
INT → TCR	0.637	0.056	11.412	$p < 0.001$	H1 Supported
FAM → TCR	0.283	0.065	4.362	$p < 0.001$	H2 Supported
VAL → TCO	0.424	0.063	6.733	$p < 0.001$	H3 Supported
ACC → TCO	0.566	0.061	9.352	$p < 0.001$	H4 Supported
TCR → IS	0.444	0.123	3.594	$p < 0.001$	H5 Supported
TCO → IS	0.312	0.116	2.695	$p < 0.01$	H6 Supported



<Figure 2> Results

nificance of path coefficients. The results show that hypotheses H1-H6 were all supported and that Integrity ($p < 0.001$) and Familiarity ($p < 0.001$) had positive effects on trust in the creator. Value ($p < 0.001$) and Accuracy ($p < 0.001$) had positive effects on trust in content. Trust in the creator ($p < 0.001$) and trust in content ($p < 0.01$), in turn, had positive effects on IS (<Table 7>).

<Figure 2> provides a graphic representation of the results of hypothesis testing using our research model.

Ⅵ. Conclusion and Discussion

YouTube is the most frequently accessed video streaming website in the world. For channel creators, it is crucial to have as many subscribers as possible and to gain more viewers and, thus, more advertising revenue. In this study, trust in the creator and trust in content were examined to determine what makes viewers subscribe to a specific channel. People who use YouTube daily were asked about their intention to subscribe to a channel via a survey. We predicted that high integrity of and familiarity with the creator would result in trust in the creator, and that having valuable and accurate content would result in trust in content. Having trust in the creator and trust in the content would then, in turn, influence the intention to subscribe. The results of our analysis show that creators' honesty and high moral principles (i.e., their integrity) positively affected trust in the creator. Viewers' sense of familiarity with or closeness to the creator also had a positive effect on trust in the creator. When the content of the videos on a given channel provided valuable information that helped viewers, they trusted that content. Error-free and accurate content also gained trust. For a channel to be successful and to have many subscribers, trust must be gained through the integrity of and familiarity with the creator and the content must be valuable and accurate.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

Most studies using Uses and Gratification Theory are about adapting to a certain media; in this study, we focus instead on YouTube channel use and willingness to subscribe. This is one of the first studies about intention to subscribe written from a UGT perspective. In addition, the role of trust in intention to subscribe has never been researched before, especially with a focus on YouTube. As far as we know, this paper is the first study to examine trust in the creator and trust in content in the unique context of YouTube. Thus, this UGT-based study enriches our knowledge about trust.

6.2. Practical Implications

More and more YouTube channels are being created every day, both corporate and individual. For channel creators, it is important to know how to gain more subscribers. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are powerful marketing tools. These social media have different characteristics and ways to promote themselves. Therefore, applying the same research method to all social media may not be possible. This study focuses on YouTube, the most widely used marketing channel and the world's most popular video website. The results of this study provide new practical insights into IS in the context of YouTube.

To develop a YouTube channel and gain subscribers, it is important to know how to attract those subscribers. As a creator, having integrity and providing a sense of familiarity could attract viewers and encourage subscription. Creating valuable content that has accurate information will also make the channel more successful. These characteristics will improve the image of the individual or company that runs a YouTube channel, influencing audiences positively and ensuring the channel's success.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study include the representation of the subjects of the survey. People in their teens and over 50s, who use YouTube a lot, did not participate in the survey. The general distribution of the research results therefore had some limitations. All age groups widely use YouTube, but in this study, 64.2% of respondents were in their 20s and 30s. Reasons for using YouTube and users' personalities all differ depending on the age group. Analyzing data from different age groups could help future research to be more meaningful. Second, our focal constructs, trust in the creator and trust in content, were each measured using only two factors. More factors representing different kinds of trust can be examined in the future. Also, intention to subscribe can be measured not only in terms of trust, but through other constructs as well. Future studies could investigate these other variables. Finally, our research did not distinguish between personal channels and corporate channels, which have different characteristics. The creator might be more important for personal channels, while content could be more important for corporate channels, or vice versa.

In future research, differences in characteristics between individual and corporate channels could be investigated.

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