

Consumer Responses to Ads on Digital Video-Sharing Platforms:
The Phenomenon of Intentional Ad-Viewing Behavior

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ABSTRACT

With the popularity of digital videos, digital video-sharing platforms have been receiving attention as a medium that may surpass traditional TV in terms of viewership and as a powerful medium for advertising. Interestingly, on digital video-sharing platforms such as YouTube, consumers sometimes choose to view rather than skip ads in order to support content creators, even if the ads are not relevant to them and they can easily avoid them by clicking on the ‘skip ad’ button. This is a very unique phenomenon that has been hardly observed in any other media platforms, nor has been examined in prior studies. The purpose of this dissertation is two-fold: (1) to investigate whether and to what extent intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is indeed happening on digital video-sharing platforms; and (2) to explore why and when consumers choose to not skip ads for the sake of content creators.

A three-phase study using a multi-method approach was performed. In Phase 1, a preliminary survey was conducted (N = 265) to inform and guide the study design and measurement developments of the next two phases. The results demonstrated that consumers sometimes choose to not skip ads in order to support content creators, which confirms the existence of such a novel ad-viewing behavior.

In Phase 2, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted to further probe: (1) the motivations driving such behavior and (2) potential influencing factors (N = 20). The Phase 2 in-depth interviews suggest three different but interrelated motivations driving intentional ad-viewing as a way of supporting content creators: gratitude to content creators, extrinsic helping motivation with the expectation of reciprocity, and intrinsic helping motivation from empathy.

In Phase 3, which is the main study of this dissertation, an online survey (N = 499) was conducted to formally address the research question and test the hypotheses posed based on the findings of Phase 1 and Phase 2. The results show that amateur content creators and influencers are more likely to generate intentional ad-viewing to support content creators than are professional creators. While helping motivation was not a significant mediator of the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, it was shown to be another significant antecedent of such ad-viewing behavior.

This study contributes to advancing ad avoidance research by establishing the previously unknown phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, and by adopting the perspective of helping behavior that has been hardly used in advertising research. This study also provides important practical implications for advertising practitioners and digital media platform companies: the comparative value of placing ads on digital video-sharing platforms, and the consideration of independent and amateur channels.

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Digital video advertising has been making great strides in recent years and is expected to keep growing at a rapid pace. The U.S. spending on digital video advertising is projected to reach \$58.3 billion in 2023, which is almost twice \$29.8 in 2018 (eMarketer, 2019). Digital video ads, which are defined as video commercials that appear before, during, or after a variety of digital content including streaming videos (IAB, 2018), are placed in various digital media contexts including websites, mobile apps, and game sites.

Amongst these various types of digital media, digital video-sharing platforms, such as YouTube, have gained significant popularity. For example, a recent market report shows that as of 2021, 81% of U.S. adults use YouTube, which is the highest among the social media platforms included in the survey, up from 76% in 2019 (Pew Research Center, 2021). As the popularity of digital video content has rapidly increased, such platforms have received growing attention from advertising practitioners and scholars. In 2022, YouTube is projected to increase to \$6.87 billion in net ad revenues in the U.S. (Schomer, 2020).

Along with the popularity of digital video-sharing platforms, consumers have shifted their video consumption patterns from watching traditional TV to new methods of on-demand digital video content consumption (Pew Research Center, 2017). Digital video-sharing platforms and video consumption through them are distinguished from traditional TV in several ways. First, digital video-sharing platforms provide higher user

control than traditional TV in terms of media content choice. Unlike traditional TV where media content is pushed to mass audiences, digital video-sharing platforms allow individual users to pull their preferred videos at any time they want (Kim, Lee, & Huh, 2017). Second, digital video platforms provide users with the ability to control their ad experience. Whereas traditional TV does not offer any embedded options for viewers to control ads being exposed to themselves, leading consumers to change the channels to avoid unwanted ads, digital video-sharing platforms offer options allowing consumers to control their ad exposure, such as by-default-muting or skipping the ads through one click. Furthermore, while traditional TV content is primarily created by professionals for mass audience consumption, digital video-sharing platforms allow non-professional individuals to actively participate in creating and sharing video content with their peer users.

On digital video-sharing platforms users can actively participate in creating and sharing video content with other users, and they can also get paid when ads placed around their videos play through without being skipped or are watched for at least the first 30 seconds (YouTube, 2021). While some digital video platforms make revenues from content subscription fees or content transactions such as pay-per-view access, many others, including YouTube, generate revenues mainly from selling advertising while providing viewers with free access to videos. On such free video-sharing platforms, the business model usually includes certain types of ad-revenue sharing between the platform company and content creators who posted their videos. For example, YouTube is reported to take approximately 45 percent of every dollar paid by advertisers and give 55 percent of ad revenues to content creators who posted their videos (Moreno, 2019).

These unique characteristics of digital video-sharing platforms seem to elicit a different kind of ad-avoidance/ad-viewing behavior that has not been observed in the other media environments. A particularly interesting phenomenon this researcher has personally observed on digital video-sharing platforms is that consumers sometimes choose to view rather than skip ads, even if the ads are not relevant to them and they can easily avoid them by clicking on the ‘skip ad’ button, to support video creators. Considering that ad avoidance using various technological means, such as ad-blocking software and skip buttons, has become increasingly prevalent (Belanche, 2019; Campbell et al., 2017), this is a very curious type of behavior.

1.2. Research Problem and Purpose

Suppose that you are watching a video posted by someone you follow on a digital video-sharing platform. The person who created and posted the video is a non-professional, ordinary individual like yourself and provides a great deal of useful or interesting content. If a skippable ad appears while you are watching the video, would you avoid the ad by clicking on the skip button? Either way, would you choose to watch rather than skip the ad? Moreover, if the video was created and posted by a social media influencer with millions of followers or a professional entity such as a celebrity or a media company, do you think your reaction to the ads would be different from when you watch videos created by amateur non-professional individuals?

In general, consumers have negative attitudes toward advertising and tend to avoid ads. Ad avoidance is a well-documented topic across various types of advertising media (e.g., Edwards, Li, & Lee, 2002; Ferrera, Michaelidou, Moraes, & McGrath, 2017; Okazaki, Molina, & Hirose, 2012; Speck & Elliot, 1997). Especially with technological

advancement, ad avoidance using various technological means (e.g., ad-blocking software and skip buttons) has become prevalent these days (Bellman, Rossiter, Schweda, & Varan, 2012). As of 2019, 25.8 % of U.S. Internet users are reported to use ad-blocking software on their connected devices, and this rate is expected to grow (eMarketer, 2019).

Interestingly, however, it seems that some viewers choose to watch the ads placed around videos posted on digital video-sharing platforms even when they can easily skip the ads by clicking on the skip button. Comments left by YouTube users provide anecdotal evidence that suggests intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. For example, a comment posted on a popular channel reads, “I am listening thru the ads in the beginning, so you (*the video creator*) make more money you deserve!” Similarly, other viewers of different channels commented, “We should watch all the ads to express our appreciation to the video creator,” and “You (*the video creator*) should put more ads in your videos.”

This is a very interesting and unique phenomenon that has been hardly observed in any other media platforms, nor has been examined in prior studies. Moreover, given that consumers usually avoid ads during their media use, and technological means have made it easy to skip ads (Belanche, 2019; Campbell et al., 2017), it is very intriguing that people choose to watch ads even when they are not interested in them or the advertised products. In addition, while it is observed that intentional ad-viewing seems to be happening on digital video-sharing platforms, due to a lack of research, nothing is known about the extent of this unique behavior nor what might explain why and under what

circumstances individuals choose to watch, instead of avoiding, ads on digital video-sharing platforms.

To explore this emerging phenomenon, the main purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to investigate whether and to what extent intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is actually happening on digital video-sharing platforms; and (2) to explore why and when consumers choose to not skip ads for the sake of content creators. When it comes to the question of why people choose to not skip ads to support content creators, this study focuses on helping motivations because when consumers choose to view ads for the sake of content creators, they do so at the expense of their time to benefit the creators, and this type of actions seem to be related to helping behavior. Thus, the social psychology theory of helping serves as the main theoretical framework guiding this study. In addition to helping motivations, some other individual factors with potential relevance, including media use motivations, will be explored to gain a deeper understanding of what might influence or explain consumers' intentional action not to skip ads for the sake of content creators. Thus, the mass communication theory of uses and gratifications is also applied, and relevant literature is reviewed.

It is important to investigate intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms for several reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, digital video-sharing platforms have become an increasingly important advertising medium. Therefore, examining the unique phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing contributes to the understanding of consumer behaviors in this important media environment. Second, this study contributes to advancing the ad avoidance research by expanding the research boundaries into the previously unknown phenomenon of not avoiding ads intentionally,

which neither ad message factors nor relevance factors explain. Last, by delving deeply into what explains and determines intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, this study provides important implications for advertising theory development as well as advertising practice striving to attract consumers' attention in today's competitive media environment.

1.3. Dissertation Chapters and Organization

The overall structure of this dissertation is as follows. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature on ad avoidance or ad-viewing behavior to properly position the current investigation in the context of prior advertising research, discusses helping theory and reviews research literature on helping behavior and helping motivations, and discusses uses and gratifications theory and reviews relevant research on media use motivations and their influence on consumers' ad responses. Chapter 3 presents this study's research question and hypotheses, which are developed based on theoretical justifications and empirical evidence drawn from the literature review chapter, followed by three separate chapters presenting research methods and data analysis findings. This research project was conducted in three different phases, serving different purposes, and utilizing different methods: (1) preliminary survey; (2) in-depth interviews; and (3) main survey. Chapter 4 describes the methods, data analysis results, and summary of the preliminary survey conducted in Phase 1, and Chapter 5 presents the methods, results, and summary of the in-depth interviews conducted in Phase 2. Chapter 6 describes the methods of the main survey, presents the results of data analysis, and discusses the key findings. Chapter 7, which is the final chapter of this dissertation, summarizes the key findings of this research project, presents general discussions of the findings from all three phases of this

study, and offers theoretical and practical implications. In addition, research limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Literature Review on Ad Avoidance Behavior

Definition and types of ad avoidance

Ad avoidance, which is defined as “all actions by media users that differentially reduce their exposure to ad content” (Speck & Elliott 1997, p. 61), has been a frequent topic in advertising research. Despite the role of advertising as the primary revenue source for media companies, financially supporting consumers’ free or inexpensive access to media content and services (Crampes, Haritchabalet, & Jullien, 2009; Van den Broeck, Poels, & Walrave, 2018), consumers do not welcome but avoid ads during their media use. Because ad avoidance virtually blocks any subsequent advertiser-intended outcomes from happening, it has received extensive attention from both advertising researchers and practitioners.

Types of ad avoidance have been conceptualized in terms of various criteria, such as the use of mechanical tools, consumers’ physical actions, or the involvement of their cognitive effort. For example, Speck and Elliott (1997) categorized ad avoidance in traditional media in terms of mechanical (e.g., switching channels by using a remote control), behavioral (e.g., speaking with other people during commercial breaks), and cognitive ad avoidance (e.g., intentionally ignoring ads). Chatterjee (2008) divided ad avoidance into cognitive versus physical ad avoidance. Ad avoidance can also be classified into cognitive, behavioral, and affective ad avoidance (e.g., Cho & Cheon, 2004; Doodoo & Wen, 2019). However, whereas all other types of ad avoidance involve tangible ‘activities’ which are either cognitive or behavioral to reduce consumers’

exposure to ad content, affective ad avoidance represents ‘attitudes’ toward ads (Youn & Kim, 2019). Therefore, grounded on the definition of ad avoidance proposed by Speck and Elliott (1997), affective ad avoidance can be considered a type of attitudinal reaction to advertising, rather than an action to reduce exposure to advertising.

In sum, ad avoidance has been classified in different ways depending on various aspects, including the characteristics of media in which ads are placed, or the manner in which ad avoidance occurs. Despite the various ways to classify the types of ad avoidance, behavioral versus cognitive ad avoidance are the categories which have been commonly used to classify types of ad avoidance. The classification of behavioral versus cognitive ad avoidance has been applied to various media contexts, ranging from traditional advertising (Cronin & Menelly, 1992; Danaher, 1995) to digital advertising, such as online pop-up ads (Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2002) and social media advertising (Kelly, Kerr, & Drennan, 2010; Youn & Kim, 2019). The following subsections discuss behavioral and cognitive ad avoidance in more detail.

Behavioral ad avoidance

Behavioral ad avoidance represents consumers’ specific actions to control their ad exposures other than lack of attention (Baek & Morimoto, 2012; Cho & Cheon, 2004; Speck & Elliott, 1997). Previous studies also used terms like ‘physical ad avoidance’ and ‘mechanical ad avoidance’ interchangeably with behavioral ad avoidance. Physical ad avoidance refers to consumers’ physical absence from the space where the advertising media is located (Abernethy, 1991; Chatterjee, 2008). For example, earlier studies that compared program-viewing behavior with ad-viewing behavior on TV focused on physical ad avoidance by investigating whether during commercial breaks, consumers

left or stayed in the room where the TV set was placed. On the other hand, mechanical ad avoidance is characterized by the use of technical tools to avoid ads, such as remote controls (Speck & Elliott, 1997) and ad-blocking software (Redondo & Aznar, 2018). Considering that behavioral ad avoidance refers to any behavioral reaction to reduce viewers' exposure to ad content, both physical and mechanical types of ad avoidance are considered behavioral ad avoidance.

Behavioral ad avoidance has been investigated across various media by using various research methods. In the context of traditional media, observations, self-report measures, and electronic measures have commonly been used to examine behavioral ad avoidance. For example, Moriarty and Everett (1994) investigated consumers' TV viewing behaviors using the observational research method and found that the majority of TV viewers switched channels during commercial breaks. Speck and Elliott (1997) used self-report measures asking about consumers' channel switching on TV, or discarding ad inserts, skipping/flipping past ad sections while reading print media. As electronic measures of ad avoidance, people meters have been frequently used to assess consumers' moment-by-moment TV viewing behavior and quantify the extent to which behavioral ad avoidance occurs (Danaher, 1995; Zufryden, Pedrick, & Sankaralingam, 1993).

In the context of digital media, self-report measures and electronic measures have been widely used to examine behavioral ad avoidance. Cho and Cheon (2004) asked participants to report their ad avoidance behavior on digital media, and similarly Redondo and Aznar (2018) examined consumers' use of ad-blocking software on digital media by using self-report measures. On the other hand, Lee, Kim, Yoon, and Park

(2022) examined behavioral avoidance of skippable video ads on an online video content platform by analyzing clickstream data obtained from the video platform.

Cognitive ad avoidance

Cognitive ad avoidance represents consumers' intentional ignoring or inattention to ads (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Speck & Elliott, 1997). Research suggests that cognitive ad avoidance is based on consumers' psychological defense mechanisms toward ads, leading to deliberate ignoring of ads (Seyedghorban, Tahernejad, & Matanda, 2016). That is, unlike behavioral ad avoidance, which involves concrete actions performed to avoid ads, cognitive ad avoidance refers to consumers' cognitive inaction to control their exposure to ads.

Cognitive ad avoidance has been examined by using self-report measures, observation, and biometrical measurement approaches. A majority of the prior studies have examined consumers' cognitive ad avoidance by using self-report measures that ask whether respondents intentionally ignored, tuned out, did not put their eyes on, or paid no attention to ads that they encountered (e.g., Cho & Cheon, 2004; Seyedghorban, Tahernejad, & Matanda, 2016; Speck & Elliott, 1997). Observations have also been widely used in the studies examining cognitive ad avoidance. For example, Krugman, Cameron, and McKearney (1995) observed the amount of time that a viewer's eyes were taken off the TV screen and found that in 67% of the commercial breaks, viewers' eyes were not oriented to the TV screen, which suggests ad avoidance. In recent years, the development of digital technology, such as eye-tracking devices, has provided alternative measurement approaches for assessing consumers' cognitive ad avoidance more accurately. For example, Lee and Ahn (2012) analyzed viewers' eye-movement data

collected by an eye-tracking device and revealed that animated banner ads drew less attention than static ones.

To sum up, ad avoidance has received extensive attention from advertising researchers and practitioners over the past several decades. Although various types of ad avoidance have been categorized and investigated, the most common classification of ad avoidance distinguishes between behavioral and cognitive ad avoidance. Behavioral ad avoidance refers to taking specific actions to control one's exposure to ads (Baek & Morimoto, 2012; Cho & Cheon, 2004; Speck & Elliott, 1997), while cognitive ad avoidance represents intentional inattention to ads (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Speck & Elliott, 1997). Ad avoidance has been examined using various measurement methods. In addition to traditional measurement approaches (e.g., self-report measures, human observation), the development of new technologies has introduced some alternatives, such as electronic measures of eye movement or biometrics, which can measure ad avoidance with higher efficiency and accuracy.

Ad avoidance across various media

Ad avoidance on traditional media

The research literature has explored ad avoidance across various media contexts ranging from traditional media to digital media. Many of the earlier studies examined ad avoidance with a focus on the avoidance of TV commercials because the use of remote controls gave users much more control over their TV viewing and commercial avoidance, and thus raised a significant concern among advertisers and TV networks (Siddarth & Chattopadhyay, 1998). Earlier studies on ad avoidance trace back to the 1960s when scholars investigated the differences between consumers' viewing behaviors of TV

programming and commercials. Many of the earlier studies focused on whether consumers physically left or stayed in the room during commercial breaks and showed that many consumers tended to avoid ads by leaving the room during commercial breaks (e.g., Allen, 1965; Rich, Owens, & Ellenbogen, 1978).

Then, with the prevalent use of remote controls in the 1980s, the research focus shifted to TV commercial avoidance behaviors examining the extent of ad avoidance using such devices and characteristics of consumers who tend to avoid TV commercials more than others. Many studies conducted during this time period focused on the occurrence of ad avoidance using remote controls, such as changing channels (i.e., zapping) and fast-forwarding of ads (i.e., zipping) (e.g., Cronin & Menelly, 1992; Danaher, 1995; Ferguson & Perse, 1993; Heeter & Greenberg, 1985; Kaplan, 1985; Metzger, 1986; Yorke & Kitchen, 1985), the underlying motivations of such behaviors (e.g., Stafford & Stafford, 1996), and its consequences, such as recall and recognition of ads and the advertised brands (e.g., Cronin & Menelly, 1992; Stout & Burda, 1989).

The research showed that consumers tended to avoid a high percentage of TV commercials, and avoidance was more prevalent on TV than other media including radio, newspapers, and magazines (Speck & Elliott, 1997). Regarding TV commercial avoidance, Kaplan's diary-based study (1985) found that viewers zipped more than half of TV commercials they were exposed to, and Yorke and Kitchen (1985) showed that TV viewers fast-forwarded commercials and switched channels pervasively in order to avoid TV commercials. Consistent with these findings, Cronin and Menelly (1992) also revealed that consumers zipped more than 60% of commercials either fully or partially. According to the study findings, most commercials were zipped in an 'avoidance' mode

based on its presence, rather than in a discrimination mode based on the content, which means that consumers fast-forwarded anything they recognized as commercials, regardless of the ad content, and therefore, those commercials had no chance to be viewed.

Whereas most research reported that consumers avoided a great deal of TV commercials, some studies provided somewhat different findings. For example, in the study where people meters were used to examine second-by-second TV ratings, Danaher (1995) showed that, while TV ratings dropped during commercial breaks, the extent of the drop was not as critical as shown in other studies. In spite of different views on the pervasiveness of ad avoidance, research has consistently shown that consumers tend to avoid TV commercials, and the presence of devices that give viewers more control over their media experience is one of the most significant factors influencing ad avoidance on TV (Danaher, 1995; Heeter & Greenberg, 1985).

Ad avoidance on digital media

The development of digital technologies and its implementation in the media sphere has introduced various digital media to our lives, and new forms of advertising have been emerging on digital media platforms. Consumers are known to avoid ads on digital media as they do on traditional media. In a recent survey, 69% of consumers were found to use various strategies to avoid ads, including using ad-blocking technology or paying for ad-free media services (Schomer 2021). As ad avoidance appears as a threat to advertisers even on digital media, ad avoidance research has been extended to new forms of advertising on digital media platforms. Over the last couple of decades, research has explored avoidance of various forms of digital advertising, such as online banners (e.g.,

Edwards, Li, and Lee 2002), personalized digital advertising (e.g., Baek and Morimoto 2012; Li and Huang 2016), and mobile advertising (e.g., Okazaki, Molina, and Hirose 2012).

In particular, as digital video-watching has gained great popularity in recent years, avoidance or viewing behavior of digital video ads, which are the most common form of advertising on digital video-viewing platforms, has been drawing increasing attention. Despite the growing importance and research attention, however, research on digital video advertising avoidance is still quite limited. To the best of the author's knowledge, a total of ten published studies have examined the avoidance or viewing behavior of digital video ads (Belanche, Flavian, & Perez-Rueda, 2017a & 2017b; Campbell, Mattison, Grimm, & Robson 2017; Goodrich, Schiller, and Galletta 2015; Hussain & Lasage 2014; Jeon, Son, Chung, & Drumwright 2019; Joa, Kim, & Ha 2018; Lee, Kim, Yoon, & Park, 2022; Pashkevich, Dorai-raj, Kellar, & Zigmond 2012).

These studies focused primarily on ad characteristics (e.g., ad appeal, arousal, length) or user characteristics (e.g., previous exposure to ads) as potential influencing factors on consumers' ad avoidance or viewing behavior. For example, regarding ad characteristics, Goodrich, Schiller, and Galletta (2015) examined how ad length, message informativeness, and humor in ad messages could affect perceived ad intrusiveness, leading to ad avoidance, and demonstrated that informative and humorous ads were perceived less intrusive than other ads. Hussain and Lasage (2014) investigated the factors influencing consumers' avoidance of online video ads and found that ad avoidance was triggered by a lack of perceived relevance and authenticity, while the interactivity of ads could reduce the occurrence of ad avoidance. Additionally, regarding

user characteristics, Belanche, Flavian, and Perez-Rueda (2017b) identified consumers' previous exposure to ads in the same format and ad avoidance habits as factors influencing their ad avoidance behavior on a digital video-viewing platform. They found that consumers with previous exposure to online video ads and avoidance habits were more likely to avoid video ads that they encountered.

Among the studies mentioned above, seven studies examined consumer responses to 'skippable' video ads in particular (Belanche, Flavian, & Perez-Rueda, 2017a & 2017b; Campbell, Mattison, Grimm, & Robson, 2017; Jeon et al., 2019; Joa, Kim, & Ha 2018; Lee, Kim, Yoon, & Park, 2022; Pashkevich, Dorai-raj, Kellar, & Zigmund, 2012). Skippable video ads, which are commonly observed on digital media platforms, give viewers the option to skip the remaining portion of the ads after a few seconds of ad play and then jump directly to the desired content (Duke, Liu, & Shai, 2021).

Campbell, Mattison, Grimm, and Robson (2017) examined consumers' avoidance of skippable pre-roll video ads, which are placed before the video content that viewers intend to watch. Interestingly, this study revealed that attention-drawing elements in skippable pre-roll ads increased consumers' recognition of advertising, resulting in a higher rate of ad-skipping. In addition, they found that skippable pre-roll ads arousing basic emotions (e.g., disgust, happiness, sadness, surprise, and suspense) or longer ads were more likely to be skipped than other ads. Joa, Ha, and Kim (2018) compared consumers' viewing behavior between skippable and non-skippable pre-roll video ads by conducting a survey-based study. They found that non-skippable ads were viewed more than skippable ones, although the difference was quite small. In a more recent study using a computational research approach, Lee, Kim, Yoon, and Park (2022) examined personal

and situational factors that influence consumers' ad viewing behavior. According to the findings of this study, watching videos of low-goal-oriented-content genres and viewers' age tended to increase acceptance of skippable video ads, which suggests a longer viewing time of skippable ads. The findings also suggest that during working hours or weekdays, or when they use mobile devices, avoidance of skippable ads is more prevalent when viewers encounter skippable video ads.

In sum, ad avoidance has been a critical concern for both advertisers and media companies not only because advertising is a primary revenue source for media companies but also because it completely blocks the possibilities for advertisers to communicate with consumers. Especially, the advent of remote control and digital technology provides consumers with greater control over their media use, which consequently aggravates the concerns about ad avoidance. To understand the extent of ad avoidance and influencing factors and to develop strategies to reduce ad avoidance, a great deal of research has been conducted in the various contexts of media, ranging from traditional media to tech-enabled digital media. The following section discusses various factors influencing ad avoidance by reviewing the extant research literature.

Factors influencing ad avoidance

Previous research has identified a variety of factors that influence ad avoidance or ad viewing. The specific factors that have frequently been investigated can be classified into: 1) advertising factors, such as ad elements, placement, and length; 2) relevance between ads and consumers, including personal relevance and ad-task relevance; and 3) consumer characteristics, such as demographics, attitudes toward ads and media, and consumers' media use experiences.

Influence of the advertising factors on ad avoidance

A great deal of research has examined how various message elements of ads, such as visual features and message characteristics, and ad placement, can influence consumers' ad avoidance or ad-viewing behavior. A vast majority of them have examined the effects of attention-drawing tactics, such as color, size, animation effects, on consumers' attention. This line of research generally suggests that consumers tend to pay more attention to pictures and larger-sized elements than texts and smaller-sized elements in ads respectively (e.g., Pieters & Wedel, 2004; Rosbergen, Pieters, & Wedel, 1997). While these message elements have been found to increase visual salience and therefore consumers' attention, some features, such as animated effects or longer video ads, seem not effective in decreasing ad avoidance. For example, previous research shows that animated banner ads tend to receive less attention than static ones (Lee & Ahn, 2012), and longer video ads with a runtime indicator are more likely to be skipped than shorter video ads (Jeon et al., 2019). This can be explained by the fact that consumers find ads including attention-grabbing elements annoying, and that they can easily avoid those unwanted ads on digital media platforms.

The type of ad messages is another factor that may influence ad avoidance or ad-viewing behavior. Prior research distinguishes two types of ad messages: entertainment and information (Woltman Elpers et al., 2003). Whereas information in ads refers to the presence of information about products or brands, entertainment in ads represents ad content inducing pleasure or some other positive emotions, even if viewers have no intention to purchase the advertised products or brands (Teixeira, Picard, & Kaliouby, 2014). Entertainment in ads, as a feature to grab viewers' attention, has been examined as

a factor that can reduce consumers' ad avoidance behavior (e.g., Joa, Kim, & Ha, 2018; Teixeira, Picard, & Kaliouby, 2014). For example, Teixeira, Picard, and Kaliouby (2014) investigated how the entertainment value of advertising would influence consumers' ad viewing behavior. By using a face-tracking system to identify participants' smiles on their faces, they showed that the entertainment level of ads was positively associated with consumers' intention to fully view rather than avoid the ads. Additionally, in the study that compared the effects of entertainment versus relevance on ad-viewing behavior on YouTube, Joa, Kim, and Ha (2018) showed that the entertainment value of ads acted as a stronger predictor of ad-viewing behavior than relevance.

Ad placement is another factor that has received significant attention in the contexts of TV commercials (e.g., Cronin & Menelly, 1992) and digital video advertising (e.g., Brechman, Bellman, Robinson, Rask, & Varan, 2016; Krishnan & Sitaraman, 2013; Kumar, Tan, & Wei, 2020). Research shows that TV commercials placed at the end of programs are more likely to be avoided than those in other places, which is called the effect of "end of program zip" (Cronin & Menelly, 1992). For example, in the survey study where consumer actions taken in the middle of the program and at the end were compared, Yorke and Kitchen (1985) revealed that the occurrence of ad avoidance was higher during the end-of-the-program commercial breaks than mid-program commercial breaks. Similarly, Cronin and Menelly (1992) analyzed TV viewers' behaviors, which were video-recorded in a natural setting, and found that ads in the last commercial break starting at the end of programs showed the highest avoidance rate, while the first ad placed in the first commercial break was less likely to be avoided.

Moreover, some studies conducted in the context of digital video viewing examined consumers' avoidance of pre-roll, mid-roll, and post-roll ads, which respectively refer to video ads playing before, during, and at the end of the videos that viewers intend to watch (Li & Lo, 2015). By analyzing the ad completion and abandonment rates of 65 million viewers watching videos and ads on a digital video-sharing platform, Krishna and Sitaraman (2013) found that mid-roll ads were watched more than pre-roll or post-roll ads. However, in the survey-based study about the factors encouraging individuals to watch video ads on YouTube, Joa, Kim, and Ha (2018) found that on YouTube, video ads placed before the intended videos were viewed more than those placed during or after the videos viewers intended to watch. As such, the findings about the effects of the ad placement factor on ad avoidance are not consistent. Having said that, this line of research points at the fact that ads placed at the end of the intended content tend to be avoided more than other ads. Moreover, previous research has examined the effects of attention-drawing factors in ads and the placement of advertising. In the context of pre-roll skippable video ads, Campbell, Mattison, Grimm, and Robson (2017) showed that the use of attention-drawing tactics could promote consumers' ad skipping behavior because when consumers see those tactics, they are more likely to recognize the pre-roll videos as advertising and choose to skip them in order to jump to their desired content.

Influence of ad-consumer relevance on ad avoidance

Relevance between ads and consumers has also received extensive research attention as a factor that may influence ad avoidance. Based on the definition of perceived relevance as the extent to which individuals perceive an object to be related to

themselves in terms of fulfilling their needs, goals, and values (Celsi & Olson, 1988), relevance has been examined in terms of personal relevance, which is also commonly represented by product involvement (e.g., Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983; Van den Broeck, Poels, & Walrave 2018; Walrave et al., 2018) and context relevance, such as ad-task relevance or goal-impediment (e.g., Bang, Kim, & Choi, 2018; Cho & Cheon, 2004; Li, Yuan, & Liu, 2017).

Personal relevance, such as product involvement, has been heavily examined in advertising research and shown to function as an important factor that influences consumers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to ads (e.g., Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983), and also reduces ad avoidance (e.g., Lee & Lumpkin 1992; Rau, Liao, & Chen, 2013). Research has shown that personalization of advertising can increase the perceived personal relevance of an ad, leading to more positive outcomes of ads (De Keyzer, Dens, & De Pelsmacker, 2015). For example, Baek and Morimoto (2012) investigated ad avoidance in the context of personalized media, such as e-mail, postal direct mail, telemarketing, and text messaging, and showed that perceived ad personalization decreased ad avoidance. Similarly, in a more recent study conducted in the context of social media platforms, Keyzer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2021) examined the effects of ad personalization on consumers' intention to interact with the ads and confirmed that perceived ad personalization increased perceived personal relevance to ads, resulting in higher intention to click on the ads. However, in a survey study that examined the effects of personal relevance and entertainment value of advertising on consumers' ad-viewing behavior on YouTube, Joa, Kim, and Ha (2018)

demonstrated that, compared to personal relevance with ads, entertainment value of advertising functioned as a stronger predictor of ad-viewership.

Context relevance, which refers to the relevance between ads and consumers' media use motivations, has also been investigated as a potential factor that may influence consumers' ad avoidance (e.g., Bang, Kim, & Choi, 2018; Cho & Cheon, 2004; Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2002). With regard to ad-task relevance, previous studies have demonstrated that consumers who perceived an ad as interfering with their goals are more likely to avoid the ad (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2002), and identified perceived goal impediment as one of the most critical antecedents of ad avoidance. Bang, Kim, and Choi (2018) showed that irrelevance between ads and consumers' intended tasks, which means strong impediment to viewers' goals, increased the occurrence of ad avoidance, especially when viewers use the media content with information-seeking motivation. Similarly, Lee, Kim, Yoon, and Park (2022) examined the relationship between consumers' media use motivations and their ad-viewing behavior. Based on the analysis of click-stream data of consumers' ad and content viewing behavior on an online platform, they found that consumers watching content with low goal-oriented motivations (i.e., surf motive) were more likely to view rather than avoid skippable video ads than those with high goal-oriented motivation (i.e., research motive).

Influence of consumer factors on ad avoidance

Some characteristics of consumers as ad recipients have also been found to influence their ad avoidance or ad-viewing behavior. First, consumers' demographics, such as age, gender, and income, have been shown to predict ad avoidance or ad-viewing behavior. For example, in the study investigating ad avoidance behavior on various

traditional media, Speck and Elliott (1997) found that younger and higher-income consumers were more likely to avoid TV commercials, while those who are older, more educated, and with more income showed higher avoidance of newspaper ads. In the survey study that explored zapping behavior on television, Heeter, Bradley, and Greenberg (1985) showed that males, younger adults, or children were more likely to avoid ads while watching TV than other consumers. Similar findings were also found in the context of digital video viewing: Older consumers and females were more likely to watch video ads for a longer time than their younger and male counterparts (Belanch et al., 2017).

Consumers' attitudes toward ads or attitudes toward media have also been identified as important factors influencing ad avoidance or ad-viewing behavior. For example, Speck and Elliott (1997) showed that consumers who had more negative attitudes toward TV commercials (i.e., unbelievable, annoying, a waste of time) were more likely to avoid TV commercials, and those with more positive attitudes toward newspapers were less likely to avoid newspaper ads.

Moreover, the changing role of consumers on digital media platforms seems to be another important factor that may influence ad avoidance or ad-viewing behaviors. According to a study that examined consumers' video ad viewing behaviors on YouTube, viewers with experiences as 'prosumer' content creators showed higher levels of ad viewing than viewers without such experiences (Joa, Kim, & Ha, 2018). Originally referred to as proactive consumers, prosumers in the context of digital video-sharing platforms represent those who not only consume content available on the platforms but also actively produce their own content (Ha & Yun, 2014; Joa, Kim, & Ha, 2018).

Considering the unique characteristics of digital video-sharing platforms where media users can create as well as consume video content, consumers' experiences of content creation has been proposed as another important factor that might facilitate ad-viewing behavior on such platforms. However, few studies have investigated its relationship with ad-viewing behavior.

Taken together, ad avoidance or ad-viewing behaviors across traditional and digital media have been an important topic in advertising research. Previous research has identified various factors influencing consumers' ad avoidance or ad-viewing behavior, with foci on advertising factors, ad-consumer relevance, and consumer factors. However, despite the growing popularity of digital video-sharing platforms, only limited scholarly attention has been paid to viewing and avoiding behaviors of skippable video ads, which is a common form of advertising on such platforms. Especially considering the unique characteristics of digital media platforms where users can actively create as well as consume media content, the phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing on digital video-sharing platforms calls for an investigation, particularly in relation to users' roles as creators and their relationship with other users.

The following section of this chapter will discuss helping motivation as a potential driver for intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms. A review of relevant research literature regarding helping behavior, and factors driving such behavior will be provided.

2.2. Literature Review on Helping Behavior

Definition of helping

To explain the emerging phenomenon of viewing ads intentionally to support content creators, this study focuses on the helping motivation as the primary theoretical mechanism. In general, helping behavior refers to intentional actions to assist others (Weinstein & Ryan 2010), and it is typically considered a broad, nonspecific term referring to a wide range of acts to benefit others (Schroeder & Graziano, 2015). Although a significant amount of research has examined helping, prosocial, and altruistic behavior, there is little consensus about how to define these relevant types of behaviors and how to distinguish them from each other, leaving these concepts often used interchangeably (Dovidio, 1984).

Despite no consensus on the definitions of helping, prosocial, and altruistic behavior, various conceptualizations suggest that these concepts are distinct from each other. Prosocial behavior refers to any behavior that is valued by societies (Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981). Based on this definition, any actions valued by societies, such as being friendly to strangers or cooperating with others, can be considered prosocial behavior. In contrast, helping behavior is more specifically defined as any acts voluntarily performed with the intent to benefit others (Dovidio, 1984). It should be noted that helping behavior is an intentional action carried out in order to benefit others. Given that an action performed for benefiting others is valued by societies, helping behavior can be considered a subcategory of prosocial behavior (Dunfield, 2014).

While definitions vary, altruistic behavior can be defined as action performed in order to benefit others without any expectation of reward from external sources (Macaulay & Berkowitz, 1970). Whereas helping behavior may or may not involve the helper's anticipation of external rewards (Dovidio 1984), altruism does not involve such

anticipation. Bar-Tal and Raviv's (1982) definition of altruistic behavior as "voluntary and intentional behavior for its own end to benefit a person as a moral conviction in justice and without expectations for external rewards" (p.199) suggests the key difference between helping and altruistic behavior in terms of anticipation of external reward. Moreover, altruism involves an ultimate goal of increasing others' welfare (Batson & Coke, 1981). In other words, altruistic behavior represents a special type of helping which involves no direct anticipation of rewards from external sources and a motivation to increase others' welfare as an end-state goal (Batson & Coke, 1981).

To summarize, helping refers to any intentional behavior performed to benefit others with or without anticipation of external rewards. While prosocial, helping, and altruistic behaviors are often used interchangeably in research, they are conceptually distinct from each other. Whereas prosocial behavior is a general term referring to any actions valued by societies, helping behavior is considered as a subcategory of prosocial behavior, which refers to intentional action to benefit others. In addition, while helping behavior may or may not involve anticipation of external rewards, altruistic behavior is performed without any anticipation of external rewards but only for others' benefit. Thus, altruistic behavior can be considered a specific type of helping behavior.

Helping behavior research in various disciplines

Helping has a long theoretical history. Since the late 1800s when Charles Darwin argued that the act of helping others while sacrificing themselves happened in nature, helping has gained significant scholastic attention (Dovidio, 1984). As helping occurs in numerous life contexts where humans interact with one another, this topic has been

examined in a variety of contexts and environments across various disciplines, including, but not limited to, psychology, management, marketing, and communication.

In psychology, early studies on helping behavior focused on the influence of social norms, such as reciprocity or social responsibility, on helping. For instance, Gouldner (1960) suggested the existence of a universal norm of reciprocity, which stipulated that people should help back and not harm others who helped them. Research shows evidence supporting Gouldner's claim that people feel obligated to return benefits they receive from others (e.g., Deckop, Cirka, & Andersson, 2003; Uehara 1995) and provides background for social exchange in helping behavior. The norm of social responsibility explains that people should help others in need even if it costs them, and has served as a theoretical foundation in many research studies on helping behavior.

Building on the earlier studies focusing on the norms of helping, numerous studies have investigated helping behavior in the contexts of various forms of human activities. Especially, an extensive amount of research has been devoted to examining a variety of factors that promote or inhibit helping behavior, ranging from personal characteristics to situational factors. Scholars in the field of personality psychology tend to pay more attention to the helper's personality traits, such as self-concept of kindness, as a predictor of helping behavior (Lefevor & Foweres, 2016). On the other hand, social psychologists have examined various situation-specific factors, such as one's interpretation of a situation as an emergency situation (Darley & Latane, 1968), helper-recipient relationship (Rutkowski, Gruder, & Romer, 1983), and perceived responsibility to help, which is influenced by the presence of others (Blair, Thompson, & Wuensch, 2005), and found significant influences of these factors on helping behavior. With the

perspective of helping as a social behavior where two or more persons interact, social psychology has laid theoretical foundations for helping behavior research, which has been applied to research in various disciplines.

Applying the substantial theory development on helping undertaken in the social psychology field, helping behavior research has been conducted in many applied disciplines in order to explain helping behavior that occurs in the discipline-specific contexts. In management, for example, helping behavior research has primarily examined helping as a type of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which refers to individuals' discretionary behavior that is not explicitly recognized by formal rewards but promotes organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988). As a distinct dimension of OCB, helping conceptually refers to an employee's voluntary actions to assist other coworkers with task-related issues (Mossholder, Richardson, & Settoon, 2011). Helping research conducted in the field of management focuses on a specific type of helping behavior performed at workplaces and investigates factors facilitating employees' helping other employees, which ultimately promotes organizational effectiveness.

In the marketing field, helping behavior theory has been applied to examine consumer behavior performed with the intent to support companies or peer consumers. Many studies in this context have demonstrated that word-of-mouth (WOM) is performed with the intent to help others (Alexandrov, Lilly, & Babakus, 2013), and that consumers spread positive WOM as a way of helping the company experiencing a negative event (Meyer, Huber, & Huber, 2019) and negative WOM about products or companies to help other consumers' purchase decisions (Alexandrov, Lily, & Babakus, 2013).

In the communication and information science fields, helping behavior in the online context has received significant research attention, as the advent of digital technology has expanded the sphere where humans interact and communicate with one another. Research in these disciplines has investigated such topics as people's online knowledge sharing (Davenport et al., 1998; Hsu & Lin, 2008) and exchanging information and advice in virtual communities (Chan & Li, 2010) with a focus on users' reciprocal relationship. Examining the emerging phenomenon of intentionally choosing to not skip skippable ads to support and help content creators, the current research is situated in this research stream.

Motivational orientations of helping

Various motivations may lead individuals to help others. As discussed before, helping behavior may or may not involve anticipation of external rewards (Dovidio, 1984), which suggests that helping can be driven by either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Therefore, helping can be classified into two broad categories depending on its driving motivations: intrinsically motivated helping and extrinsically motivated helping (Tang et al., 2008).

Intrinsically motivated helping: Empathy

Intrinsic motivation refers to performing an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than from the desire for any separate benefits (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When intrinsically motivated, people act for the pleasure or enjoyment entailed by performing the activity itself, rather than for any material or social rewards from external sources. Applying this concept to the context of helping, helping motivated by intrinsic value refers to providing aid to other individuals without expecting any external rewards, other

than psychological rewards, such as enjoyment, stemming from performing the activity itself (Schwartz & Howard, 1982).

Empathy is one of the primary motivational constructs underlying intrinsically motivated helping (Batson, 2011; Hoffman, 1981). Empathy, which is defined as “an other-oriented emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need” (Batson, Lishner, & Stocks 2015, p. 259), is an emotional response to someone else’s situation rather than their own (Hoffman, 1981). Empathetic concerns stem from one’s capacity to value the other’s welfare, which humans normally develop at a very early age (Baton, Lishner, & Stocks, 2015). If people incorporate someone else’s welfare into their own value structures, they can imagine the situation of the other in need, leading to empathetic concerns. When people witness another’s suffering, they feel emotion congruent with the perceived welfare of someone in need, such as sympathy, sorry, or concern for another’s distress, which is considered empathy (Batson, Lishner, & Stocks, 2005).

Empathy-Altruism model formulated by Batson (2011) posits feelings of empathy for others produce an altruistic motivation to increase others’ welfare. In other words, empathy motivates helping with an ultimate goal of increasing others’ welfare and removing the empathy-inducing needs, regardless of the rewards one can get from it. Given that empathy-based helping is carried out only for increasing others’ benefit, without any anticipation of the external benefits from it, empathy produces intrinsically motivated helping.

Empirical evidence supporting that empathy increases helping with an ultimate goal of increasing others’ welfare is considerable (Batson, Klien, Highberger, & Show,

1995; Krebs, 1975; McAuliffe, Forster, Philippe, & McCullough, 2018; Stocks, Lishner, & Decker, 2009; Vitaglione & Barnett, 2003). The extant literature suggests that empathic concern toward the help recipients predicted helping behavior for the target, which supports the Empathy-Altruism model. Moreover, individuals are shown to help others whom they feel empathy toward, even in cases where providing more support to them can be considered immoral. Grounded on the Empathy-Altruism model, Batson, Klien, Highberger, and Show (1995) revealed that individuals who felt empathy allocated more resources to those whom they felt empathy toward than others, while participants in another group made relatively fair decisions of resource allocation. The findings of this study confirmed a strong tendency that individuals help others whom they feel empathy toward.

A more recent study in the online setting also provides supporting evidence of empathic concern increasing helping behavior. McAuliffe, Forster, Philippe, and McCullough (2018) asked participants to read letters that other participants wrote about things happening in their lives and then voluntarily send a message in response to the letter, if they desired. The results showed that empathic concern was positively related to the odds of responding to the letter and the quality of social support they provided in the note.

In sum, applying the Empathy-Altruism model, research has demonstrated that empathy for others in need produces helping motivation to increase others' welfare regardless of the helpers' own benefits. Empathy-based helping is motivated by intrinsic value, as it is performed without any external benefits for the helpers.

Extrinsically motivated helping: Reciprocity

Extrinsic motivation refers to performing behavior in order to gain some separable outcomes from it (Ryan and Deci 2000). Simply put, extrinsic motivation is behavior driven by external rewards, which can be tangible (i.e., money or grades) or intangible (i.e., social rewards such as fame or compliments from others). In the context of helping, people who help others with anticipation of monetary rewards or praise, rather than the enjoyment from performing the activity itself, are extrinsically motivated. In some cases, people may help others with anticipation that the recipient will repay by doing something that benefits them in the future. As such, helping with anticipation of future benefit (e.g., the recipient will reward the helper) is motivated by extrinsic values.

Reciprocity is a critical extrinsic motivator that has been proposed to drive helping. Gouldner (1960) proposed a norm of reciprocity, which posits that when others help us, we should not harm but help them in return. While reciprocity has been defined differently in various disciplines, it can be interpreted as a kind of quid pro quo behavior (Frazier & Roday, 1991).

The concept of reciprocity is developed based on the notion of how social exchange is made through interpersonal behavior. As Social Exchange Theory posits, relationships evolve over time, and a stable relationship among humans is driven by exchange (Homans, 1958). To build and sustain a stable relationship, individuals must abide by rules of exchange, which is based on the norm of reciprocity. As Gouldner (1960) noted, reciprocity is motivated by individuals' egoistic desires, which suggests that individuals tend to reciprocate good deeds in order to increase the chances of receiving benefits in the future. That is, individuals might help others with the

expectation of receiving benefits, such as being helped or building good relationships with others.

Research evidence shows that helping could occur when individuals strategically respond to the future benefit of reciprocal helping. For example, when a future benefit of helping is unlikely, reciprocal helping behavior tends to decrease (Simpson & Willer, 2008). Similarly, in the context of employee helping, employees are more likely to engage in helping behavior when they believe that they would likely receive help from their coworkers in an unspecified future date (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001). Thus, the conceptualization of reciprocity and empirical evidence support the idea that reciprocity-based helping is motivated by extrinsic values.

A number of studies have demonstrated that reciprocity influences helping behavior (Deckop, Cirka Lynne, & Andersson 2003; Goranson & Berkowitz, 1966; Simpson & Willer, 2008). For example, Goranson and Berkowitz (1966) investigated whether prior help that a person received would influence their willingness to help. This study found that individuals who received prior help from their supervisor were more willing to work hard for the sake of their supervisor than those who were denied help. Additionally, the results indicated that people showed higher willingness to help others when the prior help was voluntary than compulsory.

Research also provides empirical evidence that reciprocity drives helping behavior in the realm of digital media. To explain helping behavior in online communities, two different types of reciprocity have been suggested: ex-post versus ex-ante reciprocity (Li, Shankar, & Stallaert, 2020). Whereas ex-post reciprocity refers to behavior of individuals who received help from others in the past and pay back by

helping others at present, ex-ante reciprocity refers to helping others in expectation of future help from others. A study that examined knowledge sharing in virtual communities as a type of helping behavior revealed that people tended to share knowledge when they expect others to share knowledge in the future as well as when they received help from the knowledge shared by others (Li, Shankar, & Stallaert, 2020). The findings of this study suggest that helping behavior in online communities can be strongly driven by reciprocity, especially reciprocity based on both anticipations of future benefit and results of the previous benefit.

In conclusion, the helping behavior literature suggests that helping can be motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic values. Guided by the Empathy-Altruism model and the Social Exchange Theory, empirical evidence suggests that empathy and reciprocity, which are the critical drivers of helping, elicit helping behavior motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic values respectively.

Factors influencing helping

The existing literature on helping behavior suggests a variety of factors influencing helping, ranging from situational factors to individuals' dispositional factors. With regard to various situational factors, the social context of helping, especially the presence of bystanders and similarities between the help and the helped, has been proved to influence helping behavior.

First, a variety of studies indicate that a larger number of bystanders can decrease individuals' intention to help. For example, a study using intervention in a street violence scenario showed that the presence of a large number of bystanders around the scene decreased individuals' intervention to help (Levine & Crowther, 2008). The effects of the

presence of others on helping can be explained by diffusion of responsibility (Darley & Latane, 1968). If a person believes that there is someone else who can offer help, then the person would feel less responsible because the one in need will be more likely to be helped by someone other than themselves.

The presence of others exerts influence on helping behavior even in a non-face-to-face situation. Blair, Thompson, and Wuensch (2005) conducted a study where participants received an email asking for a small favor while indicating how many others were contacted for the same request. The result demonstrated that the greater number of others were indicated to have been contacted, the less likely the participants were willing to help (Blair, Thompson, & Wuensch, 2005), which supports the notion of diffusion of responsibility.

Second, the similarity between the helper and the recipient has been found to enhance helping behavior. Research evidence shows that people are more willing to help someone who is similar to themselves. Various types of helper-recipient similarities have been examined to predict helping behavior. For example, research has examined similarities in terms of physical appearance (Krebs, 1975), race (Wegner & Crano, 1975), ethnicity (Harris & Klingbeil, 1976), social status (Goodman & Gareis, 1993), and names (Guéguen, Pichot, & Le Dreff, 2006). A recent study has shown that the effect of similarity on helping holds true even in the context of computer-mediated communication. In Guéguen, Pichot, and Le Dreff's study (2006), where participants received an email asking for a favor, some people received emails from a hypothetical person who had the same surname as theirs, while others did not. The results of the study showed that similarity between the helper and the recipient in terms of identical surnames

increased the compliance rate to the request and decreased the latency time of the participant's response.

The similarity effects in helping can be explained by the arousal of empathy. Similarities between people make the arousal of empathy toward people in need more likely, and empathy leads to the expression of helping behavior (Krebs 1975; Yinon, Sharon, & Malkiman, 1982). In other words, people tend to feel empathetic toward those who have something in common with themselves, and consequently, would more likely to offer help to them.

Intentional ad-viewing as helping behavior

Previous research that examined helping behavior in various contexts guide the predictions about intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Above all, intrinsic motivation for helping, which is based on empathetic concerns for others, can be applied to intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Even if consumers can easily skip ads, they might choose to watch rather than skip the ads for the sake of content creators, in order to, for example, provide monetary reward to content creators who share videos with others for free. In addition, given that consumers cannot watch the videos that they seek to watch during ads play, their decision to watch ads to support content creators can be considered intrinsically motivated helping.

Intentional ad-viewing on digital video-sharing platforms can be considered extrinsically motivated helping behavior as well. While consumers watch ads to provide monetary rewards to content creators who share their videos with others for free, they might also choose to watch ads because they want to reciprocate the time and efforts that content creators put into creating and sharing videos. Additionally, they might watch ads

in the hope that their ad-viewing can encourage content creators to keep sharing videos with other users, and consumers can continue to watch free videos on digital video-sharing platforms. Therefore, intentional ad-viewing to support content creators can be extrinsically motivated by reciprocity, which is the expectation of separable benefits.

Moreover, literature regarding factors on helping behavior in the context of this study allows more predictions concerning what may foster or deter intentional ad-viewing. Given that people feel less responsible for helping others when many potential helpers are around, individuals might feel less responsibility to help content creators if there are a large number of followers on the video channel, as other followers or viewers might help provide monetary rewards to content creators by watching ads placed around the creators' videos. Therefore, amateur content creators, who have fewer followers than influencers or professional creators such as celebrities, are more likely to elicit intentional ad-viewing than other types of creators. In addition, considering that people tend to help others who are similar to themselves, users of digital video-sharing platforms might be more willing to help amateur content creators, who are ordinary individuals like other users.

In sum, the likelihood and extent of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms can be explained by both intrinsic and extrinsic helping motivations. Consumers might choose to not skip ads out of empathy toward content creators as well as expectations for reciprocity where they expect their helping would continue to enable the creators to share videos that they like and appreciate for free. However, such helping motivation-driven intentional ad-viewing behaviors are not likely to occur equally across all content creator types. Guided by the research

examining the presence of others and similarities between the helper and the person in need and related theoretical explanations, it can be predicted that consumers would be more likely to intentionally view ads to support amateur content creators, who have fewer followers and higher similarities with themselves, than other types of creators, such as influencers and professional content creators. These predictions will be developed into formal hypotheses in the next chapter. Before we move onto the hypothesis development, the next section discusses media use motivations as another key influencing factor that moderates the helping motivation-driven intentional ad-viewing behaviors and presents the uses and gratifications theory and relevant literature review.

2.3. Media Use Motivation and Its Role in Consumers' Reaction to Ads

The previous sections reviewed literature on ad avoidance across traditional media and digital media and also discussed helping as potential driving motivation for intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Building on the discussions in the previous sections, the current section will discuss the potential moderating influence of media use motivations on intentional ad-viewing, guided by the uses and gratifications theory.

Uses and gratifications theory and media use motivation

The uses and gratifications theory, which sheds light on the importance of individuals' media use motivation, provides a useful theoretical lens for understanding media users' differential reactions to ads. The uses and gratifications theory explains various motivations for media use from an audience-centered perspective. The basic premise of the uses and gratifications theory is that individuals' media use behavior is purposeful and goal-directed behavior driven by specific needs and desires at any given

moments (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). Specifically, individuals as active agents seek particular media content in order to gratify their specific needs and desires, rather than passively accepting media content given to them. Unlike many other mass media theories focusing on the functions of media, the uses and gratifications theory is concerned more with people's motivations for media use than with what media do to people (Rubin, 2002).

Motivations for media use and the gratifications that media provide to individuals have been classified in several different ways. Over time, the uses and gratifications research has developed expansive typologies encompassing a variety of media functions and audience gratifications, including the one suggested by McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972). In a model of media-person interactions, McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) proposed a media gratifications typology consisting of four categories that capture a wide range of gratifications: diversion (emotional release or escape from the constraints of everyday routine), personal relationships (companionship and social utility), personal identification (reality exploration), and surveillance (information seeking). Based on this model, McQuail (1983) later classified the common reasons for media use into four categories: information, entertainment, personal identity, and social interaction.

Later, along with the introduction of various new media, the specific functions of media and the gratifications consumers gain from media use have become diversified with additional motivation dimensions. For example, with regard to the motivations for Internet use, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) identified interpersonal utility, passing time, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment as the five primary motives. Similarly, the web motivation inventory developed by Rodgers, Wang, Rettie, and Alpert

(2007) proposed four specific motivations which can drive Internet use: researching, shopping, surfing, and communicating. Regarding digital video-sharing platform use in particular, Shao (2009) identified information seeking, entertainment, and social connections with others as the primary motives.

While a variety of uses and gratifications dimensions have been proposed in the research literature, different dimensions of motivations for media use and gratifications gained from media use can be largely classified into two higher-level categories: more goal-oriented and less goal-oriented dimensions. For instance, as Levy and Windahl (1984) claimed, while individuals sometimes actively seek information to satisfy their needs and desires, they at times use media in a more passive way, just for diversion or to pass the time. In this example, when people use media for the purpose of information-seeking, their media use tends to be more active and motivated by a more goal-oriented purpose. On the other hand, when they use media to pass time and for diversion, their media use might be somewhat more passive, and the motives for media use can be considered relatively less goal-oriented.

Rubin's (1984) distinction of media use motivations also reflects the perspective of the goal-orientedness of media activities. Guided by the uses and gratifications theory, Rubin (1984) classified media use motivation into instrumental use and ritualized use of media. Instrumental use refers to an intentional, more goal-oriented use of media to gratify informational needs or desires. As instrumental use of media is performed with a specific goal, this type of media use tends to involve greater activity and affinity for particular content than the media in general. On the other hand, ritualized media use focuses more on habitual and less goal-oriented media use for diversionary needs or

desires, such as time consumption or relaxation. As ritualized media use is habitual use of media, it tends to involve greater affinity for the media in general than particular content on it. The pursuit of instrumental needs requires media users to be in a more active mode in terms of information processing than when they are pursuing ritualized needs, while ritualized media use is considered a ‘time killing’ activity (Rubin & Perse, 1987, p. 59), which is associated with lower levels of user involvement.

Taken together, the use and gratification theory posits that media users are active in their selection of the media they consume and use. Based on this audience-centered perspective, various motives for media use have been identified. Additionally, the distinction between instrumental versus ritualized media use has been suggested, based on the view of the different goal-orientedness of media use activities.

Relationship between media use motivations and ad outcomes

The uses and gratifications theory has been applied to advertising research to examine the influence of consumers’ media use motivations on their reactions to ads they encounter during their media use session. Media use motivations influence various user behaviors on the particular media consumed at any given moment (e.g., Wise, Kim, & Kim, 2009). Individuals’ responses to ads that they encounter are one such behavior that can be influenced by their motivations for media use.

Previous studies have examined relationships between individuals’ media use and their responses to ads with a primary focus on the goal impediment (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Lee, Kim, Yoon, & Park, 2022; Li, Edwards, & Lee 2002; Seyedghorban, Tahernejad, & Matanda, 2016). As discussed earlier, motivations and gratifications of media use vary in terms of their goal-orientedness (Rubin, 1984), and the goal-orientedness of different

media use can influence individuals' reactions to ads. That is, when consumers encounter ads while using media for a more goal-oriented purpose, they are more likely to perceive the ads impede their pursuit of the goal, leading to more negative responses to ads, such as ad avoidance. In contrast, if they encounter an ad while using media for a less goal-oriented purpose, they are less likely to perceive the ads as an impediment to the goal that can be achieved by the intended media use, resulting in more positive responses to ads, such as less avoidance of ads. Similarly, Rodgers and Thorson (2000) also claimed that Internet users with highly goal-oriented purposes are more likely to perceive online ads as an impediment to their tasks and thus negatively respond to online ads, compared to low goal-oriented users pursuing entertainment.

Empirical evidence that supports the relationship between individuals' goal-oriented media use and their responses to ads is considerable (Cho & Cheon, 2004; Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005; Lee, Kim, Yoon, & Park, 2022; Seyedghorban, Tahernejad, & Matanda, 2016). For example, Cho and Cheon (2004) showed that goal-oriented Internet users were more likely to perceive ads as an impediment to the goals they intend to achieve through media use. The perceptions of ads as an impediment to their goals would, in turn, make them feel that the ads are more intrusive, resulting in negative responses to ads, such as ad avoidance.

Similarly, in the study that replicated and extended Cho and Cheon's (2004) study, Seyedghorban, Tahernejad, and Matanda (2016) examined the effects of various media use motives on ad avoidance on the Internet. They found that perceived goal impediment was positively associated with ad avoidance, and also this relationship was stronger among more goal-oriented users than less goal-oriented users. In other words,

highly goal-oriented media users, who used the Internet for researching or shopping, were more likely to avoid ads when they perceived the ads as a goal impediment, compare to less goal-oriented users.

The significant relationship between media use motives and ad-viewing behavior was also confirmed in the digital video-sharing platform context, where a variety of video content across different genres is actively shared and viewed by users. On digital video-sharing platforms, video genres associated with low goal-oriented motives (e.g., surf motive) were found to increase individuals' acceptance of skippable ads, while the genres associated with highly goal-oriented motives (e.g., research motive) appeared not to have any significant influence on the acceptance of skippable ads (Lee, Kim, Yoon, & Park, 2022). That is, the finding suggests that individuals who use digital video-sharing platforms with relatively lower goal-oriented motives tend to choose to view more skippable ads than would those with higher goal-oriented motives.

In sum, based on the uses and gratifications theory, various motivations for media use have been identified, which can be classified into broad categories regarding the goal-orientedness of media activities. Research has shown that different motivations for media use can influence individuals' responses to ads in various media contexts: Less goal-oriented media users would likely to have more positive reactions to ads and are less likely to avoid ads than would relatively highly goal-oriented media users. This line of research offers justifications for developing a prediction that consumers' video-watching motivations would likely to play a significant role in intentional ad-viewing behaviors. This prediction, along with the other hypotheses, are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES

Based on the review of literature and theoretical discussions on ad avoidance, helping behavior, and media use motivations, this study proposes one research question and four hypotheses to explore the new phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. The research question is posed to explore the extent to which intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is happening. In addition, the hypotheses predict: (1) effects of the creator type on intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, (2) mediating effects of helping motivation, (3) moderating effects of video-watching motivation on the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing, and (4) moderating effects of knowledge of the ad-revenue-sharing business model.

Prevalence of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators

Despite ample research that examined the factors influencing consumers' ad avoidance and viewing, no prior research has examined intentional ad-viewing as a way of supporting content creators. While anecdotal evidence points to the existence of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms, the extent of this unique behavior occurring on digital video-sharing platforms is still unknown. Therefore, prior to delving into the motivations and factors influencing such behavior, it is important to investigate the extent to which consumers choose to not skip ads in order to support content creators. To investigate whether the phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing is actually happening and the prevalence of such behavior, this study poses the following research question:

RQ1: To what extent do consumers intentionally view, rather than skip, skippable video ads to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms?

Relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing and the mediating role of helping motivation

As observed in some of the comments left on digital video-sharing platforms, if indeed consumers sometimes choose to not skip ads to help content creators earn money from the ads placed around their videos, such a behavior can be considered a type of helping behavior. No previous research has investigated helping motivation as a potential factor driving consumers' ad-viewing behavior or decreasing ad avoidance. Nonetheless, given the unique characteristics of digital video-sharing platforms, where ordinary people actively create and share their own videos with their peer users free of charge and many of them make a living by doing so (Burgess & Green, 2018), helping motivations might explain this new phenomenon where consumers voluntarily and intentionally view ads to help their peer users.

Based on the helping behavior literature and relevant empirical research evidence, which was discussed in depth in the previous chapter, this study proposes content creator type as the key antecedent determining helping-motivated intentional ad-viewing. The relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing can be explained and justified by two mechanisms: similarities between the helper and the helped, and the presence of others.

First, similarities between the helper and the helped can function as a possible source of empathy, which in turn, enhances helping behavior (Krebs 1975; Yinon, Sharon, & Malkiman, 1982). Prior studies have examined the helper-recipient similarity

in terms of sex (Olesker & Balter, 1972), ethnicity (Harris & Klingbeil, 1976), and name (Gueguen, Pichot, & Le Dreff, 2006) and found that the similarity enhances helping behavior. On digital video-sharing platforms, both typical users and amateur content creators have some similarities with each other as ordinary media users, which is distinct from social media influencers or professional creators. Based on the similarity, users might feel more empathy toward amateur creators than the professional types of creators, leading to greater willingness to help them by watching ads placed around videos created by amateurs than influencers or professional creators.

The second potential mechanism is the size of the crowd surrounding the helping recipient. Research has demonstrated that a larger number of bystanders can decrease the individuals' intention to help in various contexts because the presence of others diffuses individuals' responsibility to help and thus decreases helping behavior (Blair, Thompson, & Wuensch, 2005; Darley & Latane, 1968; Levine & Crowther, 2008). Applying this finding to the context of the current study, it is expected that individuals would be more willing to help content creators who have fewer channel subscribers or viewers than those with a large number of subscribers or viewers. On digital video-sharing platforms, social media influencers who have a sizeable network of followers (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017) and professional creators such as celebrities and media companies tend to have large numbers of subscribers or viewers than do amateur creators. Seeing the large number of viewers watching videos created by social media influencers or professional creators, one might think that many other viewers would likely support the creators by not skipping ads, leading to feeling less responsibility to help the creators by intentional ad-viewing. On the other hand, when seeing a small number of viewers, which is

common for most amateur creators, consumers might feel more responsibility to help the creators by not skipping ads.

Based on the literature on helping behavior, it is predicted that the video creator type will influence consumers' intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. That is, people would be more likely to view rather than skip ads when they watch videos created by amateurs than other professional types of creators. This relationship between video creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators would be mediated by the viewers' helping motivations, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Thus, it is hypothesized:

H1: Video creator type will influence viewers' intentional ad-viewing on digital video-sharing platforms. Specifically, videos created by amateur creators will be more likely to generate such behavior than videos created by influencers or professional creators.

H2: The relationship between video creator type and intentional ad-viewing behavior will be mediated by helping motivations.

Moderating role of media use motivation

Based on the uses and gratifications theory and research, this study proposes consumers' motivation for video-watching as a key moderator influencing the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. According to the uses and gratifications theory, individuals actively seek particular media and content to gratify their specific needs and motives rather than passively accept media content given to them (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974). Based on this user-centered perspective, research has identified various motives for media use. For example, the use

of digital video-sharing platforms, which is the context of the present study, was found to be driven by three specific motives, including information seeking, entertainment, and social connections (Shao, 2009). These different motivations for media use and gratifications gained from media use can be classified into more goal-oriented versus less goal-oriented motivations, depending on whether media use is performed to achieve a specific goal or for diversionary needs or desires (Rubin, 1984).

Guided by the uses and gratification theory, a stream of advertising research has examined the influence of media use motivations on consumer reactions to ads, in terms of ad avoidance. As shown in Cho and Cheon's study (2004), media users with more goal-oriented motives tend to perceive ads as an impediment to their intended media use more than less goal-oriented Internet users, resulting in higher ad avoidance. Similarly, on digital video-sharing platforms, individuals watching videos associated with low goal-oriented motives (e.g., surf motive) showed greater acceptance of skippable ads than those watching videos associated with highly goal-oriented motives (e.g., research motive) (Lee, Kim, Yoon, & Park, 2022).

Applying these findings to the context of the current study, different motives for media use are expected to influence the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Specifically, the relationship between video creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support creators would likely be stronger when consumers watch videos with less goal-oriented motives than more goal-oriented motives. For instance, when people watch videos to seek specific information (i.e., more goal-oriented motive), the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing would be weaker than when they watch videos for entertainment or companionship (i.e.,

less goal-oriented motive). Based on the uses and gratifications theory and relevant research evidence, this study poses the following hypothesis:

H3: The relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing will be moderated by individuals' video-watching motivations. Specifically, the relationship will be stronger among viewers who watch videos with less goal-oriented motivation than those with more goal-oriented motivation.

Moderating effect of knowledge of the ad-revenue-sharing business model

Another moderator considered in this study is consumers' knowledge of digital video-sharing platforms' ad-revenue-sharing business model, because of the unique nature of such a business model and limited and uneven knowledge about it among ordinary consumers. Business models in the media market can be divided into two categories: ad-supported free media versus subscription-based paid media. Free media platforms generate revenues from advertising and provide users with free access to their content, while paid media do not place ads and charge users a subscription fee to access their content (Dietl, Lang, & Lin, 2013).

Digital video-sharing platforms operate primarily based on an ad-supported business model. While they rely on advertising as a primary source of revenue, these platforms are distinct from the other ad-based media in that digital video-sharing platforms share ad revenues with content creators, rather than taking all the ad revenue. Digital video-sharing platforms are the space where user-generated content is shared, and thus the entire business is built based on user participation. For this reason, both digital video-sharing platforms and content creators share the ad revenues paid by advertisers, whereas the ad revenues in most other media solely go to the media companies. Indeed,

an ad-revenue-sharing model is a unique business model employed by most digital video-sharing platforms.

Knowledge about the ad-revenue-sharing model of digital video-sharing platforms would be the prerequisite for intentional ad-viewing driven by helping motivations.

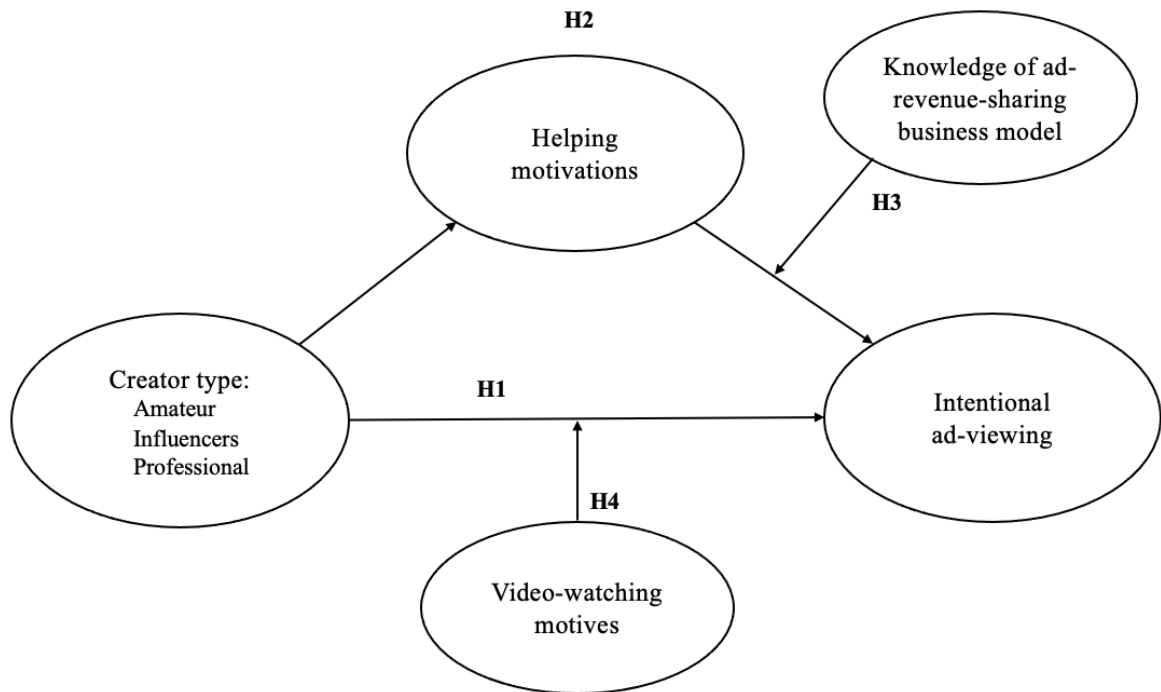
Without knowing that content creators can earn money based on the ad view counts, consumers will not be able to make a connection between their behavior of skipping or not skipping ads and financial benefits to content creators. If individuals are aware of the business model of digital video-sharing platforms, where video creators as well as media platforms can receive monetary rewards from consumers' ad-viewing, their helping motivations are more likely to result in the expression of helping behavior, which is intentional ad-viewing. On the other hand, if individuals do not have sufficient knowledge of the ad-revenue-sharing business model, they would not be able to make a connection between not skipping ads and revenues gained by video creators and thus, the relationship between helping motivation and intentional ad-viewing would be unlikely. Given that the ad-revenue-sharing model is relatively new and not commonly observed on other media except digital video-sharing platforms, consumers' knowledge of this business model might be limited and uneven across different population segments. Thus, the following hypothesis is posed:

H4: Knowledge of the ad-revenue-sharing business model of digital video-sharing platforms will moderate the relationship between helping motivations and ad-viewing behavior. Specifically, the relationship between helping motivations and intentional ad-viewing will be stronger among viewers who have greater

knowledge of the ad-revenue-sharing business model than those who have less or no such knowledge.

Figure 1 presents the research model including all the hypotheses.

Figure 1. Research model



CHAPTER 4.

PHASE 1: PRELIMINARY SURVEY

As previously discussed, intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is a new phenomenon that has never been observed on any media other than digital video-sharing platforms and has not been examined in previous research. Therefore, to achieve the research objectives, this dissertation project took an exploratory research approach utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

First, in Phase 1, a preliminary survey was conducted online with a sample of YouTube video viewers. The primary function of the preliminary survey was to inform and guide the study design and measurement developments of the next two phases. This survey explored: (1) the extent to which consumers choose to not skip ads on digital video-sharing platforms to support content creators; (2) driving motivations of such intentional ad-viewing; and (3) predictors of such behavior.

In Phase 2, based on the findings from the preliminary survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with YouTube users to obtain more in-depth information about the driving motivations and influencing factors of intentional ad-viewing and also to discover additional preliminary insights to inform the main study's design and measurement development.

In Phase 3, which is the main study of this research project, an online survey was conducted to formally address the research question and test the hypotheses. Each phase's method and data analysis results are presented in a separate chapter, and the current chapter presents the preliminary survey method and findings.

4.1. Method

An online survey was conducted with a sample of U.S. adults who watch YouTube videos at least once a week. Among many digital platforms that allow consumers to view and share videos, YouTube was selected for two reasons. First, YouTube is the most dominant player in the market of video-sharing platforms with a 90% of market reach in the United States (Statista, 2019), and its users encompass all age groups (Pew Research Center, 2019). Second, YouTube offers skippable ads, which allow consumers to skip ads after the first five seconds of ad playing. The presence of skippable ads allows us to examine what makes consumers intentionally choose to view ads even when they have an option to skip them.

A voluntary sample was recruited from Amazon MTurk, and a total of 357 individuals responded to the survey invitation and attempted to participate. Those who self-identified as non-users of YouTube ($n = 4$) or reported using YouTube less than once a week ($n = 19$) were screened out. Additional 53 participants failed to complete the survey, resulting in 281 completed responses and a completion rate of 84.1%. The respondents who completed this survey received monetary compensation of \$1 for their participation.

Questionnaire and measures

The survey questionnaire included questions measuring: frequency of watching YouTube videos, frequency of various activities on YouTube, most frequently-watched video type, experience of not skipping ads and reasons for it, intentional ad-viewing to support content creators and reasons for it, knowledge of YouTube's business model,

experience of monetizing own videos, and demographics (gender, age, race, education, and annual household income). See Appendix for the full questionnaire.

Frequency of watching YouTube videos. To assess the frequency of watching YouTube videos, the question asked, “On average, how often do you watch YouTube videos?” on a 5-point scale (1 = Once a month or less, 5 = Almost every day) with a midpoint of “About once a week.”

Frequency of various activities on YouTube. The frequency of engaging in each of the following activities was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = never, 5 = always): (1) watching amateur videos, (2) watching professional videos, (3) posting their own videos, (4) posting others’ videos, (5) posting their own comments, and (6) reading others’ comments.

Frequently-watched video type. First, respondents answered whether they subscribed to any YouTube channels (Yes / No) as well as the number of subscribed channels. They were, then, asked to think of one particular channel they watched most frequently among the channels to which they subscribed and to identify the type of videos posted on the most-watched channel by selecting one of the following categories: 1 = Average YouTube user like myself, 2 = Professional entity, 3 = Other.

Experience of not skipping ads. To assess respondents’ experience of not skipping ads, respondents were presented with the following description: “While watching videos posted on the YouTube channel you mentioned, you may have seen video ads that include a ‘Skip Ad’ button, allowing viewers to skip the ad by clicking on it after five seconds of ad play.” Then, it was asked, “Have you ever chosen not to click on the ‘skip ad’ button and watch the ad?” (Yes / No).

Reasons for not skipping ads. To understand the reasons for not skipping ads, respondents were prompted to think about situations where they did not click on the ‘skip ad’ button and asked, “What are some reasons for you not to skip the ads? Please explain the reasons in your own words.” The responses to this question were collected as open-ended data.

Intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. To measure intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, first, the following background information was presented: “The following paragraph describes YouTube advertising. Please read it carefully and answer the following questions.”

On YouTube, video creators can choose to monetize their videos and place ads in their videos. If they want to earn money by allowing ads to be placed in their videos, video creators take a split of ad revenue, meaning that they earn more money when more people watch the ads without skipping them. For this reason, some viewers on YouTube intentionally watch skippable ads, rather than skipping them, to help or reward some video creators they like or follow.

Then, the question asked, “Have you ever chosen not to skip ads and watch them to help or reward a video creator?” (Yes / No).

Reasons for intentional ad-viewing. Respondents who answered “Yes” to the previous question regarding their intentional ad-viewing to support content creators received the following question: “Could you briefly describe the situation where you chose not to skip an ad to help or reward a video creator? That is, what drove you to take such an action?” The answers were collected in an open-ended form.

Knowledge of YouTube’s business model. Respondents were asked if, before taking this survey, they had been aware that YouTube users might earn money based on the view counts of ads placed around their videos (Yes / No).

Experience of monetizing own videos. To measure respondents' experience of monetizing their own videos, they were asked, "Have you ever tried to earn or earned money from posting videos on YouTube?" (Yes / No).

4.2. Data Analysis and Results

Sample characteristics and descriptive statistics

After excluding data from 16 respondents who did not fill out or provided irrelevant answers to all of the open-ended questions, the remaining 265 cases were analyzed. The characteristics of the 265 respondents are presented in Table 1. Their mean age was 36 years (SD = 11.4), ranging from 20 to 76 years of age. In terms of gender and race, 66.8% of the sample were male, and 76.6% were White. Additionally, 64.5% reported having a bachelor's degree or higher education level, and the median annual household income was \$35,000 – 49,999. Among the respondents, 93.6% (n = 248) reported subscribing to at least one video channel on YouTube, and the average number of subscribed channels was 24.1 (SD = 27.3). Among those subscribing to at least one channel, 64.5% of the respondents (n = 160) reported that their most frequently watched channel was by everyday individuals, and 34.3% (n = 85) reported that professional entities ran the most frequently watched channel. About three-quarters of the respondents (74.0%, n = 196) reported that they knew that content creators could earn money when viewers watch ads placed around their videos.

Table 1. Preliminary survey sample profile (n = 265)

		n	%
Age	(Mean) 36.10 (SD) 11.37		
Gender	Male	177	66.8
	Female	86	32.5
	Other	2	0.8
Education	Some high school	7	2.6
	High school graduate	23	8.7
	2-year degree	17	6.4
	Some college	45	17.0
	Bachelor's degree	141	53.2
	Professional/graduate degree	30	11.3
Income	Below \$15,000	13	4.9
	\$15,000 – 19,999	21	7.9
	\$20,000 – 29,999	48	18.1
	\$35,000 – 49,999	57	21.5
	\$50,000 – 74,999	60	22.6
	\$75,000 – 99,999	36	13.6
	\$100,000 – 199,999	26	9.8
	\$200,000 or higher	4	1.5
Race	American Indian or Alaska native	2	0.8
	Asian	15	5.7
	Black or African American	24	9.1
	Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	18	6.8
	Middle Eastern or North African	1	0.4
	White	203	76.6
	Other	2	0.8

Regarding the frequency of various activities on YouTube, which was measured on a 5-point scale, the mean scores were: watching everyday individuals' videos (M = 3.90, SD = .87); reading others' comments (M = 3.59, SD = .96); watching videos created by professional entities (M = 3.23, SD = 1.02); uploading others' videos (M = 2.09, SD =

1.39); and uploading videos created by themselves ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.24$). The descriptive statistics of these activities are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the frequency of activities on YouTube (N = 265)

	Amateur video watching		Professional video watching		Uploading own videos		Uploading others' videos		Posting comments		Reading comments	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Never	3	1.1	10	3.8	129	48.7	144	54.3	62	23.4	6	2.3
Rarely	13	4.9	55	20.8	59	22.3	30	11.3	62	23.4	26	9.8
Sometimes	57	21.5	92	34.7	41	15.5	30	11.3	59	22.3	83	31.3
Often	126	47.5	78	29.4	16	6.0	41	15.5	53	20.0	105	39.6
Always	65	24.5	29	10.9	19	7.2	19	7.2	28	10.6	44	16.6
(Mean)	3.90		3.23		2.00		2.09		2.71		3.59	
(SD)	0.87		1.02		1.24		1.39		1.31		.96	

Data analysis results and key findings

Intentional ad-viewing on digital video-sharing platforms

More than half of the respondents (55.2%, $n = 137$) reported that for various reasons, they had an experience of watching or at least not skipping ads placed on the YouTube channel that they watched most frequently. Of the 137 respondents who had the experience of not skipping ads, 57.7% ($n = 79$) identified that the channel was owned by amateur, everyday individuals like themselves, while 32.1% ($n = 44$) said that professional entities ran the channel. Concerning intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, which is the main question of this study, 34.7% of the respondents ($n = 86$) answered that they had intentionally watched or not skipped ads, instead of clicking on the 'skip ad' button, to support content creators.

Reasons for not skipping skippable ads

Multiple open-ended questions captured the reasons for the respondents' not skipping ads in general or intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. To analyze the open-ended data, the investigator read all the open-ended responses and developed categorization schemes. Regarding the reasons for not skipping ads in general, three themes were identified, including (1) ad-message-related reasons, (2) wanting to support the content creator; and (3) no particular reason but simply ignoring or forgetting to skip. Under each theme, 15 specific reasons were discovered, and they are presented in Table 3. Among the 136 respondents who provided the reasons for not skipping ads in general on their most frequently watched channel, 79 (58.1%) provided a single reason, and the rest provided multiple reasons. Most of the respondents mentioned ad-message-related reasons (98.58%, n = 134), such as "The ad looked interesting," "I liked the ad," and "The advertised product was relevant to me." Approximately 19% (n = 26) of the reasons belonged to the "wanting to support the video creator" category, including "I wanted the video creator to get more money" and "To support the channel I like."

Table 3. Reasons for not-skipping ads in general on the most frequently watched channel (N = 136)

	n	%
Ad-message-related reasons		
Ads were interesting/I liked the ads	46	33.8
Advertised products were relevant to me	34	25.0
Ads made me curious about it	23	16.9
Ads drew my attention	13	9.6
Funny/entertaining ads	12	8.8
To learn more about the product	6	4.4
Wanting to support the content creator		
Want the content creator to get more money	17	12.5
To support the channel that I like	6	4.4
To support small channels to survive	2	1.5
Because I watched videos for free	1	0.7

Ignoring or forgetting to skip		
Didn't mind the ads	8	5.9
Didn't pay attention to the ads	5	3.7
Failed to skip them	5	3.7
Too lazy to skip them	1	0.7
Other	5	3.7

Regarding the reasons for intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, which is the main focus of this study, the responses were classified into 13 different reasons, presented in Table 4. A total of 83 respondents answered the question regarding intentional ad-viewing to support the content creators. Of these respondents, 65 (78.3%) provided single answers, and 18 (21.7%) mentioned multiple answers. The most frequently mentioned reason was “to reward creators’ time and efforts” (16.9%, n = 14), followed by “the ads were interesting / entertaining / or relevant to me” (14.5%, n = 12), “because the videos/channels were great” (12.0%, n = 10), and “to support small channels that need money” (12.0%, n = 10).

Table 4. Reasons for intentional ad-viewing to support content creators (N = 83)

	n	%
To reward creators’ time and efforts	14	16.9
Ads are interesting/entertaining/relevant to me	12	14.5
The videos/channels are great	10	12.0
To help small channels that need money	10	12.0
To support or make them happy	10	12.0
I like the video creators	10	12.0
It is an easy way to support creators	8	9.6
It is the only way that creators can get paid	6	7.2
To support channel/creators’ cause	5	6.0
Ads are short enough	5	6.0
I want them to continue to make more videos	5	6.0
Other	2	2.4

Predictors of not-skipping or intentional ad-viewing

To explore significant predictors of not-skipping ads in general and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, logistic regression analyses were performed with each type of behavior as a dependent variable. The first logistic regression analysis was performed to predict not-skipping ads in general, with the following predictor variables entered using the forward method: (1) frequency of watching YouTube videos, (2) frequency of various activities on YouTube, (3) type of most frequently-watched videos (dummy-coded with 1 indicating “videos by everyday individuals”), (4) knowledge of YouTube’s business model (dummy-coded with 1 indicating “yes”), (5) experience of monetizing videos, and (6) demographics (age, gender, race, education, and income).

The results, presented in Table 5, revealed that the frequency of reading others’ comments ($\beta = .352$, $p = .018$), experience of monetizing own videos ($\beta = 1.363$, $p = .001$), and age ($\beta = .034$, $p = .008$) were significantly and positively related to not-skipping ads in general. The results suggest that YouTube users who are relatively older, who more frequently read comments attached to videos, and who have experience making money off their videos are more likely not to skip ads.

Table 5. Logistic regression predicting not-skipping ads in general

Predictors of not-skipping ads	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.
Frequency of reading comments	.352	.149	5.560	.018
Experience of monetizing videos	1.363	.398	11.723	.001
Age	.034	.013	7.042	.008
Cox & Snell R ²	.118			
Model Statistic	-2LL = 303.88; $\chi^2 = 30.21$; $df = 3$; $p < .001$			

Another logistic regression analysis was performed with the dependent variable of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators and the same set of potential predictors

mentioned above. The results (see Table 6) indicated that frequency of posting comments in response to videos ($\beta = .492, p < .001$), knowledge of YouTube’s business model ($\beta = .791, p = .035$), and experience of monetizing own videos ($\beta = 1.233, p = .001$) were significantly and positively related to intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. The results show some interesting differences in the predictors of not-skipping ads for any reason in general and predictors of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. YouTube users who are aware of YouTube’s ad-revenue-sharing model, who frequently post comments, and who have experience making money off their videos are more likely to view ads to support content creators.

Table 6. Logistic regression predicting intentional ad-viewing

Predictors of intentional ad-viewing	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.
Frequency of posting comments	.492	.125	15.565	< .001
Knowledge of business model	.791	.374	4.464	.035
Experience of monetizing videos	1.233	.384	10.333	.001
Cox & Snell R ²	.159			
Model Statistic	-2LL = 257.24; $\chi^2 = 40.83$; df = 3; p < .001			

4.3. Summary of Key Findings

Despite some anecdotal evidence of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, no prior research has examined, and nothing is known about this type of behavior. To bring attention to this emerging phenomenon and establish a preliminary understanding, an exploratory survey was conducted in Phase 1 with YouTube users. The results show that about one-third of the respondents indicated having the experience of intentional ad-viewing to support certain content creators, which confirms the existence of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms.

The reasons for ad-viewing in general or intentional ad-viewing to support content creators varied but were linked to ad message factors (e.g., ad salience or ad relevance). Both reasons justify future research on how ad message factors influence ad avoidance and ad viewing (Bang, Kim, & Choi, 2018; Belanche, Flavián, & Pérez-Rueda, 2017). Having said that, it is still noteworthy that, without prompting, non-negligible percentages of the survey respondents reported that they did not skip ads because they wanted to support the content creators or offer monetary rewards for the creators' time and effort in creating the videos.

This study also identified some factors that influence intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. The results indicate that individuals who are relatively older, who more frequently read comments attached to videos, and who have experience making money off their videos are more likely to not skip ads. Regarding intentional ad-viewing as a way of supporting content creators, which is the main question of this study, those who are aware of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing business model, who frequently post comments, or who have experience of making money off their videos are more likely to intentionally view ads to support content creators. Building on the previous findings that people active in video-sharing and video-viewing were more willing to watch ads on YouTube for many different reasons (Joa, Kim, & Ha, 2018), the present study demonstrates that individuals who have made money off their videos are more likely to support other content creators by watching ad placed around their channels.

To summarize, the preliminary survey of this research project confirms that the new phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is emerging on digital video-sharing platforms and also explores some reasons and predictors of such

behavior. Although the findings of this survey provide some preliminary understanding of intentional ad-viewing as a way of supporting content creators, many things are still unknown about this phenomenon. Given the popularity of digital video-sharing platforms and the novelty of this intriguing ad-viewing behavior which was not observed in traditional media, it is worth further investigating this phenomenon. Building on the findings of the preliminary survey, Phase 2 of this research project was designed to gain more in-depth understanding of the driving motivations and potential influencing factors of the intentional ad-viewing behavior. The next chapter describes the method used in Phase 2 and presents data analysis results.

CHAPTER 5.

PHASE 2: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Phase 1 explored consumers' intentional ad-viewing behavior on digital video-sharing platforms and demonstrated that consumers sometimes choose to not skip ads in order to support content creators. In addition, the preliminary survey conducted in Phase 1 identified some significant predictors of such behavior. By providing the empirical evidence of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, the preliminary survey invited research attention to this particular type of ad-viewing behavior, which has never been studied before and is an emerging phenomenon on digital video-sharing platforms.

Building on the preliminary evidence of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, Phase 2 was conducted to further probe: (1) the motivations driving such behavior and (2) potential influencing factors. By delving deeply into what explains and determines intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms, Phase 2 aims to discover additional preliminary insights regarding the phenomenon and to inform the Phase 3 main study's design and measurement development. This chapter describes the method employed in Phase 2, followed by the results and discussions.

5.1. Method

A series of one-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted to take a deeper look at the driving motivations of intentional ad-viewing. The interviews were conducted with participants selected based upon the following criteria: (1) age 18 or older; (2) residing in the United States; (3) watching YouTube videos at least once a week, and (4) having

watched avoidable ads on YouTube intentionally. The interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached, resulting in a total of 20 interview sessions. The participants included 7 men and 13 women whose ages ranged from 19 to 43 years old. Their demographic characteristics are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Basic demographics of in-depth interview informants

	Gender	Age		Gender	Age
1	Female	35	11	Male	19b
2	Male	36	12	Male	25
3	Female	22	13	Female	25
4	Female	21a	14	Female	39
5	Female	21b	15	Female	33
6	Female	21c	16	Male	31
7	Female	28	17	Female	31
8	Male	19a	18	Female	30
9	Female	21d	19	Male	43
10	Male	23	20	Female	42

Participants were recruited through: (1) the investigator’s personal contacts; (2) an online invitation posted on a subject pool at the University of Minnesota, and (3) referrals from people who already participated in this study. The interviews took a form of a one-on-one conversation between the investigator and each informant. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, all the interviews were conducted virtually on Zoom, which is an online conferencing platform. The interviews were performed with the video and audio on and also audio-recorded upon participants’ consent. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, and each participant received a \$40 gift card afterwards.

Based upon the literature on ad-avoidance, ad-viewing, and helping behavior, as well as the preliminary survey findings, a semi-structured interview guide was constructed (see Appendix). The questions explored participants’ perceptions of

avoidable ads they encountered during YouTube use, their experiences of, and motivations for, viewing ads intentionally, knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing model, and perceptions of different types of content creators. The analysis of the interview data was inductive and interpretive, which involved transcribing all the interview recordings, and reading the transcripts multiple times. NVivo version 1.4 was used to code the transcribed data and identify the patterns that emerged.

5.2. Data Analysis and Results

Intentional ad-viewing on YouTube to support content creators

The participants usually skip ads in videos they watch on YouTube. However, they reported that they do watch ads occasionally when they are “interesting,” “relevant,” “entertaining,” or “new” to them, which is consistent with the findings in previous ad-avoidance research (Baek & Morimoto, 2012). Interestingly, they also reported that they choose not to skip ads intentionally to support content creators. Approximately half of them spontaneously mentioned that they watched ads to support content creators they like. Further, all but two were aware that watching ads on YouTube benefits the creators, and mentioned watching ads placed around the videos of creators they want to support even when the ads were not relevant or interesting.

The frequency of viewing ads intentionally to support content creators varied, and ranged from “rarely” to “about 90% of the time.” The data also revealed that viewing ads intentionally to support content creators was more common among participants in their 20s or younger. This appears to be attributable to different levels of awareness of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing business model. In summary, while intentional ad-viewing was not common, it still occurs, not only because of the ads' characteristics, but

also viewers' interest and willingness to support content creators, and is more prevalent among younger individuals who are more knowledgeable about digital video-sharing platforms' business model. The following quotes illustrate these patterns.

Sometimes I will watch it because I know that YouTubers do get revenue from it. If I like their content, I want to support them ... It really depends, I would say, on my mood and then also the situation and who the content creator is. (Female, age 21a)

If it's a YouTuber who I do really enjoy, who doesn't have a ton of ads in his videos, I watch them. (Female, age 22)

Motivations behind intentional ad-viewing to support content creators

The data analysis revealed three primary motives for intentional ad-viewing to support content creators: (1) expression of gratitude or reward to them; (2) extrinsic helping motivation expecting reciprocity; and (3) intrinsic helping motivation out of empathy.

Expression of gratitude or reward

Viewers' desire to express their appreciation or to reward the content creators whom they like and watch frequently appears to be key motivation driving consumers' intentional ad-viewing to support them. Participants of both genders and all age groups expressed gratitude for the high-quality free videos and also recognized that the video creators spend a great deal of time and effort in making them. With awareness of YouTube's unique characteristics that rely heavily upon users' participation, participants believed that creators deserved to make money from their videos. Because the videos they enjoy are provided for free, participants want to reward the video creators by watching ads placed in the videos, which is an easier way to support the creators than

making donations or purchasing products that the video creators sell or advertise. This motivation is elaborated in the following excerpts:

The creators, you can tell, put so much into it and are really humble or care a lot about their audience. That would be one of those creators where I definitely want to support. I think it goes both ways. Or, where I'm very appreciative of the content that they post, because they're essentially, even though they get paid, they're doing it for free. (Female, age 21b)

I just try to support them because that is how they survive. I think it's just fair. If I watch their content, then I also let the video ad play ... If I don't pay for their content, I can't just be watching for free. I better pay something in return so I can pay them back with my attention. (Male, age 36)

If it's somebody that I want to support, if it's a channel that I regularly watch, then I consider that I'm using their service. I don't want to just take from them without giving back. If it's somebody I've only watch one video, I would definitely not watch the ads. If it's somebody I've watched many of their ads, I would generally try to watch the advertisement just as long as it's not too long. (Male, age 43)

Extrinsic helping motivation expecting reciprocity

The second major motivation that seemed to drive intentional ad-viewing to support content creators was extrinsic helping motivation based upon viewers' expectation of reciprocity. The participants reported this universally, regardless of gender or age. Extrinsic motivation is a determinant of actions for the performer's own benefit (Tang et al., 2008). Many participants believed that viewing ads would allow and encourage content creators to keep producing videos that are useful or entertaining. Thus, participants tend to choose not to skip ads in expectation that content creators will reciprocate their support by continuing to share more videos that will benefit them. This is illustrated in the following comments.

He (*a content creator*) was just like, "It really helps. The more you guys watch this, the more money I make, which is the more money I can put into content, which will make the content better." It gives you an incentive to do this to help him out to in the long run make it better for us. (Male, age 19b)

I think that the trade-offs, as in the cost of watching the ad is less than what is gained if the ads do make a difference to the YouTuber. (Female, age 31)

It's supporting the information she shares and wanting her to be able to keep continuing to share the information that she's learned. (Female, age 42)

Intrinsic helping motivation out of empathy

In addition to the extrinsic helping motivation, intrinsic motivation seems to play an additional role in viewing ads intentionally to support content creators. Intrinsic motivation is defined as performing an action because of genuine concern for people, with no expectation of any reward from it, except the enjoyment derived from the activity itself (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). Some participants reported with or without prompting that they sometimes watched ads to support content creators because they felt empathetic toward them and wanted to make them feel good. It is noteworthy that participants in their 30s or 40s tended to mention such intrinsic motives voluntarily and more directly, while younger participants indicated this motive only when asked about it directly. Empathy refers to "... a vicarious emotional response to the perceived emotional experiences of others" (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972, p. 525), and simply put, it means understanding and responding to others' emotional states. This empathy-based intrinsic motivation is described in the quotes below:

I care that they're doing something that I'm not doing. I'm not putting content out there or sharing myself or putting myself publicly anywhere ... Maybe it is empathy ... I just like a little cheerleader. I just want everyone to be successful and be happy. (Female, age 42)

That is just something to make them happy ... I know YouTube does make arrangements for paying them in terms of how many people are watching their videos. I think it's also one way of just making them happy. (Male, age 36)

Influencing factors: Perceptions of different types of content creators

Amateur vs. professional creators

In addition to the primary motives for intentional ad-viewing discussed above, I discovered certain additional factors that catalyze such motives. Perceptions of different types of content creators appear to be one of those factors. When prompted, the participants drew clear distinctions between amateur and professional creators and expressed different perceptions of the two that affected their ad-viewing behavior. Specifically, while they indicated that they would choose to watch ads to support amateur creators, who are ordinary individuals like themselves, they reported that they would not watch professional creators' ads (e.g., media corporations or celebrities). The participants seemed to perceive that professional creators have more commercial intentions for their videos and make a lot of money already, while they believed that amateur creators share their videos from relatively pure intentions and cannot make as much money as professional creators. This perception is illustrated in the quotes below:

Usually, I watch probably 80% of the ads (*to support creators*) ... but I don't do it for the media outlets, they don't deserve my time in that way. If it's a big media conglomerate, I won't watch the ad, I don't care if they get that money. (Female, age 31)

(*Amateur*) individuals still have some of their true identity. I think their passion is a big part that still drives them. When you cross over into the professional line, it sometimes becomes too much about money and image. (Female, age 21b)

When asked whether content creators' number of followers influenced their decision to watch ads to support them, the participants reported that they were more willing to support channels with a smaller number of subscribers than larger channels because they felt that smaller channels needed the advertising money more. Some of

them mentioned that they would feel less obligated to watch ads or less guilty skipping ads if the video channel had millions of followers or views, as shown in the following excerpts:

For smaller channels, particularly, I will watch almost any ad even if it's the same ad and I have to watch it 10 times in the video. (Female, age 31)

The YouTubers that I know who put the six ads in the 15-minute video, they're the ones who already have three million subscribers, so I don't care about that. If it's a smaller YouTuber like under 500,000 subscribers, there's one video at the beginning and then maybe one in the end, then I'll watch the one in the beginning. (Female, age 22)

Perceptions of social media influencers

While most participants expressed unwillingness to support professional creators with large numbers of followers, their perceptions of social media influencers, even those with very large followers, differed significantly from those of professional creators. Social media influencers are online personalities who have a large number of followers on whom they exert a significant effect (Lou & Yuan, 2019). When asked about social media influencers specifically, the participants described them as a mixture of amateur and professional creators. However, with respect to their intention to support influencers, many participants, particularly those in their 20s or younger, perceived that they are more like amateurs than professional creators, and hence, they are more willing to view ads to support them. This pattern was more pronounced among participants who had observed the growth of certain influencers since the beginning and developed long-lasting relationships with them. As described in the following comments, although some influencers have millions of followers, participants who had watched them since the early days were still willing to support them by watching ads around their videos.

Content creators with a lot of followers, they started from a very small following and grew their content, and because of that, I feel people feel like they grew up with the content creator. Like Katy Bellotte, I've watched her for so long ... so maybe feel like a relationship because you have watched that person go through college and get the first job and stuff. (Female, age 25)

... for the ones that I watched grow over the last couple of years, they've taken on professional production teams out of necessity, because they have grown so much, definitely. Absolutely, I still will (*watch ads*). Most of the time I still will, too ... Something like a branded channel, I wouldn't ever watch theirs. If it's an actual person and, or team behind it, then definitely I want to support that. (Female, age 33)

Influencing factors on intentional ad-viewing to support content creators

Parasocial relationship

When participants described their intentional ad-viewing experiences, many indicated that they felt personally connected with the content creators they liked, which represents a parasocial relationship, which refers to an enduring, unilateral intimacy that users develop toward media performers based upon repeated encounters (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Describing the video channels that they watch frequently, most participants mentioned spontaneously that they felt personally connected to the creators.

Such parasocial relationships with content creators seem to have a moderating effect on intentional ad-viewing, such that individuals are more likely to watch ads placed around videos with whose creators they feel personally connected. Particularly, relatively younger participants and those who follow lifestyle videos described their relationships with the content creators on a more personal level, while parasocial relationships' influence on intentional ad-viewing was not prominent among participants in their 30-40s. Further illustration is presented below:

There are some YouTubers that I've followed for years, and I know that they don't know me, but I'm so used to seeing them and I follow them on Instagram

too. They are like my imaginary friends ... I would perceive them as day-to-day other humans, like friends. I feel closer to them. (Female, age 21c)

I feel like I know him on a more personal level, almost. He has a webcam on him, and he talks to us, like, looks at the camera, and tells us about his day or whatever it is ... Maybe the relationship between the viewers and the video creator is really important, too. It impacts people's ad-viewing behavior. (Male, age 19b)

Knowledge about the ad-revenue-sharing model

As mentioned earlier, all but two participants knew that content creators could earn money if viewers watch, rather than skip, ads placed around their videos. Most participants volunteered their knowledge about the ad-revenue-sharing model when they answered questions about their experience viewing ads. Compared to older participants, individuals in their 20s or younger had greater knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing model. This age difference in their answers was also observed in the participant recruiting process. While those in their 20s or younger who responded to the study invitation clearly understood the meaning of "ad-viewing to support content creators", most of those in their 30s or 40s did not.

The difference in the frequency of viewing ads intentionally to support content creators between the relatively younger and older appears to be attributable to their different extent of knowledge about video-sharing platforms' unique ad-revenue-sharing model, together with other factors, such as parasocial relationships. This pattern is described in the following excerpts:

A lot of them (*my friends*) know that some money goes to the creators ... I don't think they know the percentages. (Male, age 19b)

I think most people (*my age*) who use YouTube as frequently as I do are pretty aware of it. But I don't know about my parents. (Female, age 21b)

Until recently, I wasn't really aware that people who are creating content can earn money by people watching the ads. (Female, age 42)

Participants learned about the ad-revenue-sharing model from various sources, including: (1) Content creators who talk about their revenue sources on YouTube or ask their viewers to watch ads to support them; (2) viewer comments on YouTube that encourage other viewers to watch ads to support content creators, and (3) offline conversations with friends. Indeed, many creators upload videos that explain their revenue sources and ask viewers to watch ads to support them. Many participants mentioned learning about the ad-revenue-sharing model from such videos and believed that the creators' requests to watch ads for them is reasonable and appropriate. One of the participants said that after a content creator described the ad-revenue-sharing model, he uninstalled ad blockers because he wanted to support the creator by watching ads, as shown in the following comment.

I learned about it from the creators themselves who have said something about it ... I felt like that was a reasonable request to ask. They're producing this product, asking people to just watch the ads ... Actually, what I used to do is I had an ad blocker on my browser ... Then once I found out that the ads help them, then I thought about it a little bit, then I decided just to get rid of ad blocker and just skip ads as necessary. (Male, age 43)

Although most participants were aware that content creators could make money if ads around their videos play through, they did not know the exact percentage of advertising revenues creators receive. When informed that video creators receive approximately 50 to 55% of YouTube ad revenues (Moreno 2019), most participants were surprised, but it did not decrease their willingness to watch ads to support them. Instead, after learning about the percentage, participants expressed even greater

willingness to watch ads. It appeared that, while viewers were willing to, and did, watch ads to support or help content creators, they were unsure whether and to what extent their behavior actually helped them. Therefore, the fact that video creators receive a large percentage of the ad revenues seems to relieve their skepticism about the usefulness of their intentional ad-viewing behavior, and thus encourages them to continue watching ads to support the creators, which is illustrated in the following comments:

I feel like I would more because I feel like the creators deserve more than what the YouTube does. (Male, age 19b)

That (*about 55% for creators*) seems like it would make it even more worthwhile to watch it through ... I'm not operating from a place of like, "Oh, they only deserve a certain amount of money, and I'm not going to inconvenience myself beyond that." There are a handful of channels I want to support, so I will probably continue doing so. (Male, age 31)

It's a lot ... That almost makes me want to watch the ads more. I think that influences me to maybe help them more by just having them on. (Female, age 39)

5.3. Summary of Key Findings

Through in-depth interviews, Phase 2 qualitatively explored the emerging phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing on video-sharing platforms to support creators, key motivations that determine this behavior, and potential influencing factors. The results suggest that, while ads are skipped in most cases, viewers on digital video-sharing platforms sometimes watch, rather than skip, ads that are interesting, relevant, or new. Notably, the participants of the interviews reported watching ads intentionally not only when they encounter ads that are eye-catching, relevant, or interesting, but also because they want to support or help content creators they like.

The findings of the in-depth interviews offer additional evidence confirming the previously-unknown phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators

and provide novel insights into the motivations that drive this behavior and potential influencing factors. With respect to motivations driving such an ad-viewing behavior, this study suggests three different but interrelated motivations: gratitude to content creators, extrinsic helping motivation with the expectation of reciprocity, and intrinsic helping motivation from empathy. First, even when the ads are not relevant or interesting, viewers' desire to express gratitude to or reward content creators appears to motivate them to not skip ads. Second, the motivation to provide monetary incentives and encouragement, so creators continue to produce beneficial content emerged as the extrinsic helping motivation with the expectation of reciprocity. Third, viewers' intrinsic helping motivation derived from empathy for content creators as humans was also found to motivate intentional ad-viewing.

Among potential influencing factors, the type of content creators and parasocial relationships between the creators and viewers seem to be important factors that deserve further research attention. The potential influences of these factors may be associated with, and explained by helping behavior theory, which suggests a significant association between similarity and empathy and helping behavior (Goodman & Gareis, 1993). Consumers may feel greater empathy for amateur creators, who share common characteristics with them and to whom they can relate more than professional creators. In addition, guided by helping behavior theory, a YouTube channel's number of viewers may also affect intentional ad-viewing. Research has suggested that helping behavior is less likely to occur when many other people can offer help than when only a few can (Garcia, Weaver, Moskowitz, & Darley, 2002). Therefore, if consumers notice that there are many other followers or viewers who could help content creators, they might expect

someone else to do so, which would decrease their intentional ad-viewing. Moreover, an individual can play multiple roles on digital video-sharing platforms as a content creator, poster, and viewer. This suggests the possibility that a viewer may become a video poster at another time, and thus, they may feel more empathy for amateur content creators and a stronger motivation to help them.

Another meaningful insight is potential generational differences among media users with respect to the extent of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. In a survey study that compared media users divided according to newspapers, TV, and the Internet, van der Goot et al. (2018) suggested generational differences in media use patterns and attitudes toward ads. The age differences found in this study can be explained as generational differences between those who usually consume media content and those who are engaged actively in producing and sharing content and more knowledgeable of content creators' contributions and ad-revenue-sharing on social media platforms. This study's findings are consistent with Joa et al.'s (2018) study that showed that individuals with prosumer experience on YouTube are more willing to watch ads.

The findings from the Phase 2 in-depth interviews inform the study design and measurement development for Phase 3, the main survey. The following chapter describes how the main survey was designed and conducted in Phase 3 and presents findings.

CHAPTER 6.

PHASE 3: MAIN SURVEY

In Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this research project, it has been demonstrated that the phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is emerging on digital video-sharing platforms. In addition, those preliminary studies have identified potential driving motivations and influencing factors of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Based on the preliminary findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2, the main study's design and measurement instrument were developed to formally test this study's hypotheses and to address the research question about the extent to which such behavior is happening on digital video-sharing platforms.

6.1. Method

An online survey was conducted with a sample of 520 respondents recruited through the Qualtrics Panel. The survey method was selected over the other research methods that were considered, such as an experiment, mainly for two reasons. First, intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is an emerging phenomenon that has never been studied before, and therefore nothing is known about such a phenomenon. As the first research study to investigate the phenomenon, the current study aims to provide an initial understanding of intentional ad-viewing and should be exploratory in nature to a certain extent. Second, related to the first reason, this study intends to explore intentional ad-viewing in the real world. Therefore, rather than manipulating the creator type, which is one of the key variables in this study, this study intends to investigate how individuals' perceived creator types of their favorite channels are associated with their ad-viewing as

a way of helping content creators. Thus, to gain a better understanding of the new phenomenon based on consumers' actual experiences, a survey was conducted in Phase 3.

Based on the findings from the preliminary online survey and in-depth interviews, which were conducted in Phase 1 and Phase 2, the sample inclusion criteria for the main study were set as follows: (1) adults aged 18 to 64 living in the United States; (2) using YouTube at least five days per week; (3) subscribing to at least one channel on YouTube; and (4) NOT using YouTube Premium, which is a paid service allowing ad-free access to video content on YouTube. Consistent with the preliminary studies, YouTube was selected as the digital video-sharing platform in which the study data collection was conducted due to its dominant market share and prevalent use across different population segments (Pew Research Center, 2021), and because it serves skippable video ads.

The age range of 18 to 64 years old was selected based on a recent survey report about Americans' social media use. According to Pew Research Center (2021), adults between the age of 18 and 64 showed high percentages of YouTube use, while those aged 65 or over showed a substantial drop in YouTube use. Specifically, 95% of the U.S. adults 18-29 years old, 91% of those 30-49 years old, and 83% of those 50-64 years old reported using YouTube. However, among people aged 65 or older, only 49% reported using YouTube, which shows a substantial difference from the younger age groups. Thus, this study was conducted with the age group of 18 to 64 years old. In addition, to represent the general U.S. population age distribution, respondents were recruited based on the following age quota: Age 18 to 24 (13%), 25 to 40 (42%), 41 to 56 (26%), and 57

to 64 (19%), which was determined based on the U.S. census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Regarding the frequency of YouTube use, this study was conducted with relatively heavier users who use YouTube five days or more per week. It is reported that 59% of U.S. adults use YouTube every day (Pew Research Center, 2021). Given that intentional ad-viewing to support content creators seems to be just emerging rather than a widely prevalent phenomenon, relatively heavier users who use YouTube at least five days a week, compared to light to occasional users, should be a better population target to investigate the driving motivations of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators.

Individuals registered on Qualtrics' market research panel were invited to this study in various ways including emails and in-app applications. Participation in this study was completely voluntary. However, respondents who did not meet the inclusion criteria mentioned above were not allowed to participate in the survey and those who failed to pass the two attention-check questions included in the questionnaire were removed. Respondents who successfully completed the survey received financial incentives provided by Qualtrics.

Questionnaire structure and measures

Screening questions

In order to check the qualifications of respondents, four screening questions were asked. First, a close-ended question asked about respondents' YouTube use (Yes/No). Second, a close-ended question about the frequency of YouTube use in a typical week was asked with seven response options (1 = About one day per week or less; 7 = Almost every day). Third, an open-ended question was asked about how many YouTube video

channels that they subscribed to. Respondents were asked to type in the number of channels they subscribed to. The last question asked whether or not they used a paid service for ad-free viewing on YouTube (i.e., YouTube Premium) (Yes/No).

From the preliminary research findings, it was discovered that intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms tend to occur in situations where video viewers and creators have a bond. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to measure this study's key variables in such a context to investigate this type of intentional ad-viewing behavior and driving motivations. Before the main questions were presented, respondents were asked to type in the name of one particular YouTube video channel that they liked the most and watched frequently during the past one month, and then answer the rest of the questions based on their experience of watching the particular channel. Throughout the questionnaire, respondents were reminded multiple times that their answers should be based on their experiences on the particular favorite channel they named at the beginning.

The main body of the questionnaire included measurements for the following key variables: the video creator type, ad-viewing experience, experience of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, helping motivations, knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing business model, video-watching motivations. The following potential confounding factors were also measured: attitude toward YouTube ads in general, experience of video monetization, and demographics. The full questionnaire is presented in Appendix.

Measures for key variables

Creator type. Respondents were asked to select one of the four response options describing the type of the video creator of their favorite video channel. The statement “The videos in your favorite video channel are created by...” was followed by four response options: (1) Ordinary YouTube users like me; (2) Influencers who gained fame by uploading content on social media and have a large number of followers; (3) Professional entities like TV show producers, professional entertainers, sport players, journalists, or media companies, and (4) Other. The description of influencers was adapted from the definition by Lou and Yuan (2019). To help respondents’ understanding of different creator types, several examples of each creator type were included in the options (1), (2), and (3). In addition, respondents who selected the response option (4) were asked to specify the nature of the video creator.

Ad-viewing experience. Respondents were prompted with a definition of skippable ads, followed by a question “While watching videos on your favorite channel named earlier, have you ever NOT clicked on the ‘Skip Ad’ button appearing on ads?” Two response options were provided for this question: (1) I have experience of NOT clicking on the ‘Skip Ad’ button; and (2) I always skip ads by clicking on the ‘Skip Ad’ button when available. While respondents who selected (1) for this question proceeded to the questions about intentional ad-viewing to support content creators and their helping motivations for such behavior, respondents who selected (2) skipped those questions.

Intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Respondents were prompted to imagine skippable ads appearing while they were watching their favorite video channel. After that, they received an open-ended question about how many times out of

10 they would let the ads play for each of the reasons presented in the subsequent statements. A total of eight different reasons for not skipping ads were presented with “ ___ out of 10 skippable ads were not skipped” followed by: (1) because the ads were about the products or brands that interested me; (2) because the visuals or sounds of the ads drew my attention; (3) because the ads were entertaining to watch; (4) for the sake of the video creators (e.g., to support or help the video creators); (5) because it felt like a hassle to click on the skip button; (6) because I just ignored the ads; (7) because I missed the opportunity to click on the ‘Skip Ad’ button; and (8) because of some other reasons than the listed ones (Specify). Respondents were asked to enter any number between 0 and 10 for each statement. Statements (1) to (7) were presented in a randomized order, while Statement (8) was fixed to be presented at the end.

Helping motivations. The questions measuring helping motivations were presented to respondents who entered any number between 1 and 10 for the Statement 4 of the question about intentional ad-viewing. The helping motivations measurements included three different dimensions: gratitude, reciprocity, and empathy. Respondents were presented with the statement “While watching my favorite video channel, I would sometimes not click on the ‘Skip Ad’ button but let skippable ads play because” followed by various reasons representing each dimension of the helping motivation. They indicated the extent to which each statement applied to them on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all applicable to me; 7 = very much applicable to me). Specific measurement items representing each helping motivation dimension are as follows.

First, gratitude was measured by four items: (1) I felt grateful to the creator of the video channel; (2) I wanted to express gratitude to the video creator for creating and

sharing the videos I enjoyed; (3) I appreciated the videos; and (4) I wanted to support the video creator. The first three items were adapted from a previous study (Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechkoff, & Kardes, 2009) and the last item was created for this study.

Second, reciprocity, which is a type of extrinsic motivation to help, was assessed by four items, which consist of two items modified from previous studies' measurement (Chiang & Hsiao, 2015; Kankanhalli, Tan, & Wei, 2005), and two items created for this study. The items assessing reciprocity were: (1) I wanted to watch more videos created by the video creator in the future; (2) I believed not skipping ads would be mutually helpful to the video creator and me as a viewer; (3) I believed not skipping ads could help the video creator financially so that they would produce more videos that I could enjoy; and (4) I wanted to encourage the video creator to continue producing more videos that I could enjoy.

Last, empathy, which is a type of intrinsic motivation to help, was measured by three items adapted from the previous study (Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987) and two additional items developed for this study. The following items were used: (1) I felt sympathetic toward the video creator; (2) I was moved by the videos; (3) I felt compassionate toward the video creator; (4) I wanted to be kind to the video creator; and (5) I empathized with the video creator putting their work out in the world.

Knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing business model. To measure respondents' knowledge about YouTube's business model that shares ad revenues with content creators, respondents were presented with six statements and asked to select all the statements they believed to be true. The six statements were developed for this study based on YouTube's webpage about their advertising formats (YouTube, n.d.). The set of

six statements consists of one false statement “Video creators can earn money whenever ads are placed around their YouTube videos” and five true statements listed as follows:

- (1) Video creators are paid by YouTube based on how many people watched their videos;
- (2) Video creators can make money when viewers subscribe to their channel;
- (3) Video creators can earn money through sponsorship deals with companies;
- (4) Video creators can earn money when viewers watch ads placed around their videos without skipping them, and
- (5) Video creators can earn money when viewers click on ads placed around their videos and are directed to the advertiser’s website.

The statements were presented in a randomized order. The number of correct answers was summed up to create the knowledge score.

Video-watching motivations. Motivations of watching videos posted on the favorite channel were assessed in three different dimensions: information-seeking, entertainment, and companionship purposes. Respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement starting with “I watch my favorite video channel ...” and followed by various motivations. The items measuring video-watching motivations were taken from previous studies (Bondad-Brown, Rice, & Pearce 2012; Hanson & Haridakis, 2008) and modified to fit the context of this study. First, information-seeking motivations were measured by five items: (1) to search for information; (2) because I can learn about how to do things I haven’t done before; (3) because it helps me keep up with current issues or events; (4) because I can get information for free; and (5) because it is easier to get information from it. Second, entertainment motivations were measured by five items: (1) because it amuses me; (2) because it gives me something to occupy my time; (3) because it is enjoyable; (4)

because I just like to watch it; and (5) because it passes time especially when I am bored. In addition, companionship motivations were assessed by two items: (1) because it makes me feel less lonely; and (2) so I don't have to be alone. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

Measures for potential covariates

Attitude toward YouTube ads. To measure respondents' attitude toward YouTube advertising in general, nine items taken from a 33-item-measure by Pollay and Mittal (1993) were used with a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree).

Experience of video monetization. Experience of video monetization on YouTube was measured by a single item question, "Have you ever earned or tried to earn money from posting videos on YouTube?" with a binary response option (Yes/No).

Demographics. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents' age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, and annual household income were measured. Age was measured by an open-ended question, "What is your age in years?" Gender was measured by the question "What is your gender?" followed by response options: (1) male, (2) female, and (3) other. Race was measured by a close-ended question, "Which of the following best describes your ethnicity/race?" with the following response options: (1) White, (2) Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish, (3) Black or African American, (4) Asian, (5) American Indian or Alaska Native, (6) Middle Eastern or North African, (7) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and (8) Other [Specify]. Education was measured by asking "What is your highest level of education?" The response options were: (1) Less than high school, (2) Completed some high school, (3) High school graduate or

equivalent, (4) Business, technical, or vocational school (2-year degree), (5) Some college, but no 4-year degree, (6) Bachelor's degree, and (7) Professional or graduate degree. Household income was measured by asking "What is your combined annual household income, meaning the total pre-tax income from all sources earned in the past year?" The response options were: (1) \$14,999 or less; (2) \$15,000 to \$19,999; (3) \$20,000 to \$34,999; (4) \$35,000 to \$49,999; (5) \$50,000 to \$74,999; (6) \$75,000 to \$99,999; (7) \$100,000 to \$199,999; and (8) \$200,000 or more.

6.2. Data Analysis and Results

Sample characteristics

Five respondents who named general genres (e.g., Classic rock, Mukbang, Political, outdoor cooking, and YouTube music), instead of the particular channels that they liked and watched frequently, were excluded from the data analysis. In addition, 16 respondents who selected "other" for the creator type of their favorite channels were also excluded because the content creator type could not be specified for hypothesis testing. As a result, data collected from 499 respondents were used in the data analysis.

The sample showed an average age of 40 years, ranging from 18 to 64 years (SD = 13.26). Women (58.9%) slightly outnumbered men. The sample was predominantly White (71.1%) in terms of race and ethnicity. More than half of the respondents had post-secondary education (66.3%), and 37.9% of the respondents reported having an annual household income of \$50,000 or higher. Table 8 shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 8. Main survey sample profile (N = 499)

	n	%
Age		
(Mean)	40.18 years	
(SD)	13.26 years	
Gender		
Men	204	40.9
Women	294	58.9
Other	1	0.2
Race		
White	355	71.1
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	21	4.2
Black or African American	84	16.8
Asian	26	5.2
American Indian or Alaska native	3	0.6
Middle Eastern or North African	1	0.2
Other	9	1.8
Education		
Less than high school	7	1.4
Completed some high school	19	3.8
High school graduate or equivalent	142	28.5
Business, technical, or vocational school	59	11.8
Some college, but no 4-year degree	138	27.7
Bachelor's degree	101	20.2
Professional or graduate degree	33	6.6
Income		
\$14,999 or less	80	16.0
\$15,000 to \$19,999	49	9.8
\$20,000 to \$34,999	95	19.0
\$35,000 to \$49,999	86	17.2
\$50,000 to \$74,999	83	16.6
\$75,000 to \$99,999	60	12.0
\$100,000 to \$199,999	41	8.2
\$200,000 or more	5	1.0

Regarding the creator type of their favorite YouTube channel, 227 respondents (45.5%) indicated amateur creators' channels, followed by 162 respondents (32.5%)

indicating channels created by influencers and 110 respondents (22.0%) saying channels created by professional entities.

Variable computation and reliability tests

Intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. As described earlier, intentional ad-viewing to support content creators was assessed by an open-ended question asking respondents to indicate how many times out of 10 they encountered skippable ads they would not skip the ads for different reasons. Respondents were allowed to type in any number ranging from 0 to 10. One of the reasons was “for the sake of the video creators (e.g., to support or help the video creators)” and the response to this question was analyzed in two different ways. First, by distinguishing non-zero answers from zeros, a dichotomous variable was created, which indicates whether or not respondents had any experience of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Specifically, any numbers between 1 and 10 were re-coded as ‘1’, indicating the respondents had an experience of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. On the other hand, the value ‘0’ indicates the respondents had no experience of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Second, another continuous variable was created with the number that each respondent entered to this question to indicate the extent of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators.

Helping motivations. A summated score for each of the helping motivation dimensions (i.e., gratitude, reciprocity, and empathy) was computed by averaging the measurement items within each dimension. The gratitude variable was computed by averaging the four items measuring gratitude (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .919$), a summated score for reciprocity was also calculated by averaging the four items measuring reciprocity

(Cronbach's $\alpha = .884$), and the empathy score was computed by averaging the five items measuring this dimension (Cronbach's $\alpha = .886$). In addition, the overall helping motivation score was also created by computing the grand mean of all 13 items measuring helping motivations (Cronbach's $\alpha = .954$).

Knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing model. Responses to the six questions measuring respondents' knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing model were re-coded into '1' indicating a correct answer or '0' indicating an incorrect answer. The number of correct answers was counted to form a knowledge score.

Video-watching motivations. Video-viewing motivations were measured in three different dimensions: information-seeking, entertainment, and companionship. Before creating a summated variable, a factor analysis was conducted using a varimax rotation. The analysis revealed the presence of three components with eigenvalues exceeding 1, as shown in Table 9. Thus, based on the results of the factor analysis, the three distinctive dimensions of video-viewing motivations were confirmed. Summated scores of video-watching motivations were computed for each of the three motivation dimensions (information-seeking, entertainment/pastime, and companionship) by averaging the measurement items within each dimension. Cronbach's alpha tests demonstrated acceptable measurement reliability for all three dimensions: Information-seeking (Cronbach's $\alpha = .903$); entertainment/pastime (Cronbach's $\alpha = .779$); and companionship (Cronbach's $\alpha = .922$).

Table 9. Factor analysis of video-watching motivations (N = 179)

Video-watching motivations	Factor loading		
	1	2	3
Information-seeking			
to search for information	.891	-.016	.136
because I can learn about how to do things I haven't done	.768	-.040	.045
because it helps me keep up with current issues or events	.856	-.007	.016
because I can get information for free	.854	.051	.106
because it is easier to get information from it	.886	.053	.116
Entertainment			
because it amuses me	-.101	.660	.014
because it gives me something to occupy my time	.041	.639	.487
because it is enjoyable	.055	.759	-.254
because I just like to watch it	.017	.752	.002
because it passes time especially when I am bored	-.070	.678	.392
Companionship			
because it makes me feel less lonely	.151	.009	.921
so I don't have to be alone	.161	.026	.898

Attitude toward YouTube advertising. A summated score was computed by averaging the nine items measuring attitude toward YouTube advertising in general. A Cronbach's alpha test showed acceptable measurement reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .763$).

RQ1: The extent of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators

When asked whether they had ever not skipped skippable ads during video-watching on their favorite YouTube channel, 179 respondents (35.9%) reported that they sometimes did not skip ads for various reasons, while the rest of the respondents (64.1%) always skipped ads. In particular, 111 respondents (22.2%) indicated that they would let the ads play, rather than skipping them, in order to support content creators, and that they would likely do this about three times on average out of 10 skippable ads ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 3.32$). Table 10 presents descriptive statistics of various reasons for not skipping ads as indicated by how many times out of 10 skippable ads the respondents chose not to skip for each of the reasons.

Table 10. Reasons for not skipping ads (N = 179)

	M	SD
<i>[] out of 10 ads were not skipped ...</i>		
Because the ads were about interesting products or brands	3.74	3.22
Because the ads were entertaining	3.47	3.36
For the sake of video creators	2.82	3.33
Because the visuals or sounds drew my attention	2.76	3.09
Because I just ignored the ads	2.73	3.16
Because I missed the opportunity to the skip button	2.29	2.87
Because it is a hassle to click the skip button	1.60	2.53
For other reasons	1.01	2.57

The results indicate that the majority of YouTube users tend to skip ads all the time. However, it is noteworthy that about one-third of respondents sometimes do not skip ads even if they can easily skip them just by clicking on the ‘skip ad’ button. What is more interesting is that close to a quarter of the survey respondents indicated that they did not skip ads for the sake of content creators. When asked how many times out of 10 skippable ads they would choose to not skip for the sake of video creators, the respondents with experience of not skipping ads indicated that about 2.8 out of 10 ads are not skipped for this reason. Consistent with the findings from Phase 1, this result confirms the emerging phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms.

Hypothesis testing

Checking for potential control variables

Prior to hypothesis testing, a series of one-way ANOVAs and chi-square tests were carried out to check for potential confounding factors that should be controlled for.

The variables included in these analyses are attitude toward YouTube ads, activities on YouTube (e.g., the experience of video monetization), and demographics (i.e., age, gender, race, education, and income). Among them, the variables of gender, race, education, and income were recoded into fewer categories because some cells of these variables had less than five respondents. Specifically, gender was recoded into women versus non-women, race was recoded into white versus non-white, and education was recoded into less than bachelor's degree versus bachelor's degree or higher. Income was recoded into three categories: \$49,999 or lower; \$50,000-99,999; and \$100,000 or higher.

The results showed that the differences in respondents' age among viewers of amateur creators ($M = 40.0$, $SD = 13.37$), influencers ($M = 37.8$, $SD = 12.79$), and professional creators ($M = 44.22$, $SD = 12.86$) were statistically significant ($F(2, 496) = 8.07$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .032$) in the whole sample ($N = 499$). However, age differences across creator types were non-significant in the subsample of respondents with experience of not skipping ads ($N = 179$) ($F(2, 108) = 1.970$, $p = .146$, partial $\eta^2 = .888$). Thus, age was treated as a control variable in the analyses with the whole sample of 499 respondents, while the age variable was not controlled for in the analyses with the subsample of 179 individuals. Other than age, no other variables showed significant difference across creator types. Therefore, no additional variable was treated as a control variable in the hypothesis testing. The following subsections present the results of the hypothesis testing.

H1: Relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators

H1 proposed a relationship between video creator type and viewers' intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Specifically, H1 predicted that amateur creators' videos would be more likely to generate intentional ad-viewing to support the creators than videos by influencers or professionals. As discussed earlier, the dependent variable (respondents' intentional ad-viewing to support content creators) took two different forms: (1) a categorical variable with the values of engaging and never engaging in the behavior of not skipping ads to support content creators; and (2) a continuous variable indicating the degree of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Hypothesis testing was performed separately for each of these two variables.

H1 testing with the whole sample (N = 499)

H1 was first tested with the whole sample of 499 respondents. As mentioned earlier, because age was significantly different across creator types, it was entered as a control variable in this analysis. Hierarchical logistic regression was performed to examine the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators as a categorical variable while controlling for age. The variable of age was entered in the first block using the forward method, and the dummy variables created for creator type were entered in the second block also using the forward method. As presented in Table 11, the results show that, after controlling for age, creator type was not significantly related to whether or not the respondents intentionally viewed ads to support content creators, when it was analyzed with the whole sample.

Additionally, in order to test H1 with the continuous dependent variable of intentional ad-viewing, a one-way ANCOVA was conducted. The independent variable was creator type, and the dependent variable was the number of times out of 10 skippable

ads that the respondents did not skip ads to support content creators. Respondents' age was entered as the covariate in this analysis. The results show that the difference across different creator types in the degree of intentional ad-viewing was not significant ($F(2, 175) = 2.832, p = .062, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .031$). Thus, the analysis of the whole sample did not show evidence supporting H1. However, the non-significant result might have something to do with the nature of the whole sample predominantly lacking any experience of not skipping ads for whatever reasons. Therefore, to further test H1, another set of analyses was conducted with a subsample of respondents with experience of not skipping ads for various reasons.

Table 11. Hierarchical logistic regression analysis for the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing (N = 499)

Predictors	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	SE	Wald	Exp (B)	B	SE	Wald	Exp (B)
Age	.000	.008	.001	1.000	.003	.008	.092	1.003
Amateur					.037	.242	.023	1.038
Professional					-.465	.322	2.084	.628
Cox & Snell R	.000				.006			
Model statistics	-2LL = 528.92; $\chi^2 = .001, df = 1, p = .969$				-2LL = 525.83; $\chi^2 = 3.095, df = 2, p = .377$			

H1 testing with the subsample of respondents with experience of not skipping ads (N = 179)

First, a chi-square test was conducted with the categorical dependent variable of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. As presented in the crosstabulation below (see Table 12), intentional ad-viewing tends to happen more frequently on amateur creators' video channels (72.4%) than channels operated by influencers (66.7%) and

professional creators (39.2%). The chi-square test result shows that the differences in intentional ad-viewing across the creator types were statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 14.21$, $df = 2$, $p = .001$).

Table 12. Descriptive statistics of intentional ad-viewing by creator type (N = 179)

Creator type	Yes		No		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%		
Amateur	55	72.4	21	27.6	3.24	3.17
Influencer	38	66.7	19	33.3	3.11	3.61
Professional	18	39.1	28	60.9	1.76	3.01
Total	111	62.0	68	38.0	2.82	3.33

Second, a one-way ANOVA was conducted with the continuous dependent variable of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Consistent with the results with the categorical dependent variable, the mean score of intentional ad-viewing was greater among viewers of amateur creators' videos ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 3.17$), followed by influencers ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 3.61$) and professional creators ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 3.01$). This test result confirmed that the differences in intentional ad-viewing across creator types were statistically significant ($F(2, 176) = 3.217$, $p = .042$, partial $\eta^2 = .035$). A post hoc analysis using LSD post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean difference between amateurs and professional creators was statistically significant ($p = .017$) and the mean difference between influencers and professional creators was also statistically significant ($p = .040$), but the mean scores for amateurs and influencers were not significantly different ($p = .819$).

Therefore, among the subsample of respondents with experience of not skipping ads on digital video-sharing platforms, H1 predicting the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing is partially supported, while it was not supported with the

whole sample. The results indicate that among individuals having experience of not skipping ads, video creator type is an important antecedent determining their intentional ad-viewing behavior to support content creators. Specifically, amateur videos and influencer videos are more likely to generate intention ad-viewing in order to support the content creators than professional videos. The rest of the hypotheses are tested with the subsample of individuals with experience of not skipping ads for the sake of creators.

H2: Mediating role of helping motivations (N = 111)

H2 predicted that the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing would be mediated by helping motivations. H2 was tested with the subsample of 111 respondents with experience of not skipping ads for the sake of content creators and only for the continuous dependent variable because the categorical dependent variable was a constant in this subsample.

As described earlier, helping motivations were measured in three different dimensions: gratitude, reciprocity, and empathy. Descriptive statistics for helping motivations indicated 5.50 as the mean score of the gratitude dimension of helping motivation (SD = 1.51), 5.21 for reciprocity (SD = 1.53), and 4.89 for empathy (SD = 1.54). Correlation analysis showed a high level of correlation between gratitude and empathy ($r = .789, p < .001$), between gratitude and reciprocity ($r = .886, p < .001$), and between empathy and reciprocity ($r = .766, p < .001$). Based on the high correlations among the three dimensions of helping motivations, a summated variable of helping motivation was used in hypothesis testing.

The mediating influence of helping motivation on the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing was tested using Baron and Kenny's mediation test

approach (1986). According to Baron and Kenny, a mediation relationship can be confirmed by demonstrating that: (1) the independent variable influences the mediator, (2) the mediator influences the dependent variable, and (3) the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable after controlling for the mediator is not significant. Applying this approach, H2 was tested in three steps. First, an ANOVA was performed to test the relationship between creator type and helping motivation. The result showed that helping motivation was not significantly different across creator types ($F(2, 108) = .254, p = .776, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .005$). Second, to test the relationship between helping motivation and intentional ad-viewing, a linear regression analysis was conducted. The result of the regression showed that helping motivation was significantly related to intentional ad-viewing ($b = .886, p < .001$), and the regression model explained 14.5% of the variance in the dependent variable. Last, an ANOVA was conducted to test the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing after controlling for helping motivation. The result showed that the mean difference in the degree of intentional ad-viewing across creator types was not significant ($F(2, 107) = .001, p = .999$).

Thus, based on Baron and Kenny's approach (1986), the mediation relationship proposed in H2 was not supported. This indicates that, while creator type is significantly related to intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, the relationship is not mediated by helping motivation. However, helping motivation was found to be significantly related to intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, which suggests that, while helping motivation is not significantly different across creator types, it functions as another antecedent of the dependent variable. The stronger the helping motivation, the more likely consumers would choose to not skip ads to support creators.

H3: Moderating role of video-watching motivations (N = 111)

H3 predicted that video-watching motivations would moderate the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing. To be more specific, the relationship was expected to be stronger among individuals who watch videos with less goal-oriented motivations than those with more goal-oriented motivations.

Descriptive statistics for video-watching motivations indicate that viewing motivations for respondents' favorite YouTube videos are primarily for entertainment ($M = 6.04$, $SD = .84$), followed by information-seeking purposes ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.51$) and companionship ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.89$). A regression analysis was conducted to test H3 with the subsample of people who sometimes do not skip ads for the sake of content creators. For the categorical variable of creator type, two dummy-coded variables (amateurs and professionals) were created. The dummy-coded variables of creator type and the interaction terms of creator type and video-watching motives were entered using the enter method.

The result of the regression analysis presented in Table 13 showed that none of the interaction terms of creator type and video-watching motives are significant predictors, suggesting that video-watching motives do not moderate the relationship between creator types and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. That is, when consumers watch YouTube videos, the likelihood of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators was not influenced by their video-watching motivations. Thus, H3 was not supported.

Table 13. Regression for testing moderating effect of video-watching motivations (N = 111)

Predictors	B	SE	Beta	t	sig.
Amateur	-.355	.676	-.056	-.526	.600
Professional	-.659	1.248	-.077	-.528	.599
Amateur x info-seek	.393	.437	.088	.901	.370
Amateur x entertainment	.386	.441	.086	.875	.384
Amateur x companion	.525	.383	.135	1.372	.173
Professional x info-seek	.899	.915	.123	.982	.328
Professional x entertainment	1.002	.953	.137	1.052	.295
Professional x companion	-.076	1.102	-.010	-.069	.945
Model statistics	F (8, 102) = .951, MS = 9.541, p = .479				

H4: Moderating role of knowledge of YouTube’s ad-revenue-sharing model (N = 111)

H4 predicted that knowledge of YouTube’s ad-revenue-sharing model would moderate the relationship between helping motivation and intentional ad-viewing. Specifically, the relationship between helping motivation and intentional ad-viewing was expected to be stronger among individuals who have more knowledge of the ad-revenue-sharing model than those who have less or no such knowledge. H4 was tested with a subsample of 111 respondents with experience of not skipping ads for the sake of content creators. The mean score of knowledge of YouTube’s ad-revenue-sharing model among the subsample of 111 respondents was 3.46 (SD = 1.46).

To test the moderation hypothesis, a linear regression was conducted with helping motivation, knowledge of YouTube’s ad-revenue-sharing model, and the interaction terms of those two variables as predictors. The dependent variable was the continuous variable of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. The predictor variables were entered in the same block using the enter method. As presented in Table 14, the

regression analysis revealed that the interaction between helping motivations and knowledge was statistically non-significant ($p = .815$). Therefore, no evidence was found supporting H4. This result indicates that knowledge of YouTube’s ad-revenue-sharing model does not moderate the relationship between helping motivation and intentional ad-viewing.

Table 14. Regression for testing moderating effect of knowledge of ad-revenue-sharing model (N = 111)

Predictors	B	SE	Beta	t	sig.
Helping motivation	.955	.479	.431	1.995	.049
Knowledge of ad-revenue-sharing model	.077	.698	.036	.111	.912
Helping x knowledge	-.032	.135	-.093	-.234	.815
Model statistics	$R_{adj}^2 = .123$; $F(3, 107) = 6.124$, $MS = 53.713$, $p < .001$				

6.3. Summary of Key Findings

The main survey to address the research question and test the hypotheses was conducted with a sample of 499 YouTube users. The results of the survey data analysis revealed that nearly a quarter of the survey respondents had the experience of intentionally not skipping ads in order to support their favorite video content creators. This result confirms that the phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators does indeed exist on digital video-sharing platforms, and the extent of this type of behavior among digital video-sharing platform users seem to be substantial.

To understand the nature and mechanism of such a fascinating phenomenon, this study examined content creator type as the main antecedent of intentional ad-viewing to

support content creators and tested helping motivation as the mediator. The results show that among people with experience of not skipping ads to support content creators, the existence and the extent of intentional ad-viewing significantly differ across creator types. Specifically, amateur content creators and influencers are more likely to generate intentional ad-viewing to support content creators than are professional creators.

The mediation analysis, which tests the role of helping motivation in explaining the significant relationship between content creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, shows that helping motivation was not a significant mediator. However, it was found to be another significant antecedent of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators: Higher helping motivation was more likely to generate intentional ad-viewing to support content creators.

In addition, this study examined the moderating effect of video-watching motives on the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. However, unlike the investigator's prediction, no evidence was found supporting such a relationship. Moreover, this study also investigated how individuals' knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing model influences the relationship between their helping motivation and intentional ad-viewing. However, the analysis results indicate that knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue-sharing model does not play a significant moderating role in the relationship between helping motivation and intentional ad-viewing.

CHAPTER 7.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

7.1. Summary of Key Findings

With the popularity of digital videos, digital video-sharing platforms have been receiving attention as a medium that may surpass traditional TV in terms of viewership and as a powerful medium for advertising (eMarketer, 2019). Digital video-sharing platforms are distinct from traditional TV in many ways. As such, viewers' behavior on such platforms might not be the same as those on traditional TV. Intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is one such behavior that has never been observed in the traditional TV context but seems to be emerging on digital video-sharing platforms. Considering that consumers usually avoid ads during their media use and that technological means to avoid ads are prevalent (Bellman, Rossiter, Schweda, & Varan, 2012), the possibility that consumers might intentionally choose to watch ads for the sake of content creators, even when the ads are not relevant and easily skippable, makes this phenomenon particularly intriguing and worthy of investigation.

This study is the first attempt to systematically investigate intentional ad-viewing to support content creators and the key influencing factors of this unique ad-viewing behavior. By conducting three-phase research using a multi-method approach, this study explored whether and to what extent this phenomenon exists on digital video-sharing platforms, and why and in what situations consumers would choose to watch ads to support content creators even when the ads are not relevant or appealing to them. The main findings of this study indicate: (1) the existence of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators; (2) creator type as the key antecedent of this type of ad-viewing

behavior; and (3) helping motivation as another predictor of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators.

First, results from both qualitative and quantitative studies revealed that the phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is indeed occurring on digital video-sharing platforms, and this type of ad-viewing behavior is clearly distinguished from previously known ad-viewing behaviors induced by personal relevance or attention-getting message features. Given that no previous studies have examined intentional ad-viewing as a way of helping and supporting content creators and nothing is known about such a phenomenon, this study's findings offer important new insight into this emerging phenomenon and open a new research avenue.

Second, this study showed that the type of content creators is an important antecedent of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Unlike traditional media and many digital media contexts, digital video-sharing platforms offer both professionally-created content and amateur creators' user-generated content, and consumers would likely choose to skip or watch ads with the intention to help or support content creators depending on the creator type. This study's findings reveal that amateur creators and influencers are more likely than professional creators to induce intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Considering that amateur creators are ordinary individuals similar to other users and that influencers started as amateur creators and then gained their fame on social media, this finding is consistent with helping behavior research that demonstrated the effects of helper-recipient similarity (Gueguen, Pichot, & Le Dreff, 2006; Krebs, 1975).

The effects of the presence of others on helping behavior (Blair, Thompson, & Wuensch, 2005) also explain this finding. Consumers might feel more empathy for amateur content creators, who are their peer users on digital video-sharing platforms and have a small number of viewers or subscribers than other types of creators such as influencers or professional content creators. Interestingly, though, this study found that consumers tend to demonstrate a similar likelihood to not skip ads to support both amateur and influencer creators. Thus, further research should be performed to investigate the reason why consumers show a similar level of likelihood of not skipping ads for the sake of amateur creators and influencers.

Although the predicted mediation effect of helping motivation was not supported, findings from both qualitative and quantitative research data demonstrate a significant influence of helping motivations on intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. The qualitative in-depth interview data revealed three specific dimensions of helping motivations connected to intentional ad-viewing to support content creators: gratitude, empathy, and reciprocity. Then, the main survey data demonstrated that helping motivation was positively related to intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. However, helping motivation was not significantly different across different creator types, which raises questions about the underlying mechanism of the connection between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Further studies are warranted to examine these two antecedents and the mechanisms through which they determine and influence consumers' decision to not skip ads to support content creators.

This study also investigated whether video-watching motives moderate the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators.

Unlike the prediction, video-viewing motives appeared to not moderate the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators. Given the previous study results showing the relationship between media-use motives and consumer reaction to ads (e.g., Lee, Kim, Yoon, & Park, 2022), this finding is unexpected. It might be because most of the previous studies were conducted in the context of traditional media, while this study was conducted in the context of digital video-sharing platforms, which have been growing in popularity during the past couple of years. Therefore, further research is warranted to investigate the effects of media-use motives on individuals' reactions to ads.

Moreover, this study examined the potential moderating role of consumers' knowledge of YouTube's ad-revenue sharing model on the relationship between helping motivation and intentional ad-viewing. Unlike the investigator's prediction, knowledge of the ad-revenue-sharing model appeared not to moderate the relationship between helping motivations and intentional ad-viewing.

Overall, although the hypotheses of this study were proposed based on the results of the preliminary studies (i.e., Phase 1 and Phase 2) as well as relevant research literature, the main survey results did not provide evidence supporting some of the hypotheses. This might be because of the difference in the study sample's frequency of YouTube use. While the preliminary survey and the in-depth interviews were conducted with samples of individuals who use YouTube at least one day per week, the main survey was conducted with a sample of individuals who use YouTube at least five days per week, who are considered relatively heavy users. Data variance in the key variables among the heavier YouTube users is expected to be lower than among the general

population, and this might have influenced the results of the hypothesis testing, leaving some of the hypotheses unsupported in the main survey.

7.2. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study contributes to advancing ad avoidance research in several ways. First of all, this study established the new phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, which is a previously unknown phenomenon. Consumers sometimes choose to not avoid ads in order to support content creators, even when the ads are not personally relevant or beneficial to them. By showing the emerging phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, this study opens new research avenues on intentional ad-viewing within the ad avoidance research stream. The results of this study encourage further investigation into this new type of ad-viewing behavior and its antecedents, as well as motivating factors that drive individuals to engage in this behavior.

Second, this study examined the phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing by applying helping behavior theory. Helping behavior has been actively studied in social psychology and it has been applied in many other disciplines to examine helping among employees (Tang et al., 2008), spreading word-of-mouth about products (Alexandrov, Lilly, & Babakus, 2013), and knowledge sharing in online communities (Chan & Li, 2010; Hsu & Lin, 2008). However, to the best of the investigator's knowledge, the perspective of helping behavior has never been applied to advertising research, meaning that this is the first advertising study where helping behavior serves as the theoretical framework to explain consumers' reactions to ads. By adopting a new perspective that has been hardly used in advertising research, this study attempts to provide a better

understanding of intentional ad-viewing on digital video-sharing platforms, which is distinct from consumers' reactions to ads on traditional media.

This study also provides important practical implications for advertising practitioners and digital media platform companies. First, based on the results of this study that confirms the phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators on digital video-sharing platforms, it is recommended that advertisers should consider the comparative value of placing ads on digital video-sharing platforms, where individuals serve as content creators as well as content consumers. Considering that users would likely perceive amateur creators as their peer users who are similar to themselves, they are more likely to watch, rather than skip, ads in order to support content creators.

Second, this study suggests that consumers are more willing to support small, independent, amateur channels than large professional channels by watching ads placed around those channels, leading to intentional ad-viewing. Thus, advertisers should give a careful consideration to the value of placing their ads around small, independent, amateur channels. While channels run by large media companies or well-known figures, such as celebrities or influencers with a huge number of followers tend to elicit high reach and frequency of ads, this study suggests the potential value of ads placed around small, independent, amateur channels. Considering that large professional channels are likely to have a greater number of viewers or subscribers than smaller channels run by ordinary people, doing so might result in smaller potential ad impression numbers, but it could generate higher actual ad-viewing numbers, which might lead to better advertising effectiveness.

Third, as suggested in the qualitative research data, if consumers are adequately informed about the nature of the ad-revenue-sharing business structure of digital video-sharing platforms and the mechanism and extent of financial gains by content creators, they might be more willing to watch ads to help and support video creators they care about and even change their habitual avoidance of advertising by, for example, uninstalling ad blocking software. Therefore, media platform companies might want to consider informing their users about the fact that content creators can receive monetary rewards based on the view count of ads placed around their channels. In doing so, they can encourage media users to watch rather than avoid ads when the ads are placed around videos created by those whom the consumers care about and feel connected to.

7.3. Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

Despite the meaningful new insights, interesting findings, and implications provided by this study, it also has several limitations calling for readers' caution in interpreting the findings. First, because this study is based on surveys and in-depth interviews, it should be noted that the results do not provide any causal testing for the relationships between the predictors and intentional ad-viewing to support video creators. While the survey method was selected over other research methods in order to better explore why and when such behavior occurs based on viewers' actual experiences, the findings of this study should be interpreted as exploratory rather than conclusive.

Second, this study was conducted with relatively heavy users of YouTube. Given the novelty of the intentional ad-viewing phenomenon, it was a well-justified decision to conduct this study with such users. However, it should be noted that heavy users' perceptions of ads, knowledge of the ad-revenue-sharing model, and ad-viewing behavior

might be different from those of light to occasional users and the general population, and this may consequently affect the generalizability of the research findings to the whole population of digital video-sharing platform users. In addition, it should be noted that data variance among heavy users might be lower than among users across various use frequencies, leading to an impact on the study findings.

Third, the results of this study are based on consumers' self-report data, rather than behavioral data. Study participants answered the survey questionnaire based on their recall and reflections of their ad-viewing behaviors on a particular video channel that they named as their favorite. Although both self-report and behavioral measures are the most popular methods to investigate individual differences, one caveat is that it might be possible that self-report data relying on study participants' recall might be incorrect sometimes, which might have affected the results of this study.

The limitations of this study and the scarcity of relevant research suggest directions for future research. First, it is recommended that the phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing be further investigated using different research method. For example, obtaining and analyzing digital video-sharing platform users' clickstream data of skippable ads would offer additional insight on this study's topic and expand our understanding.

Second, whereas this study examined consumers' ad-viewing behavior only on YouTube, future research should expand the scope of research into other platforms. Although YouTube was selected in this study over other digital video-sharing platforms due to its high penetration rate (Pew Research Center, 2021) as well as its frequent serving of skippable video ads, the findings might not be generalized to other digital

video platforms. By expanding the scope of research context into other types of digital platforms where individuals actively share and consume user-generated content, future research is expected to identify additional elements of platforms that may increase or decrease consumers' intentional ad-viewing to support content creators.

Third, while this study confirms the emerging phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators and provides a general understanding of such a phenomenon, it does not tell us about the effectiveness of ads that consumers choose to watch to support content creators. For example, if individuals just let the ads play without paying attention to them, can such ad exposure generate advertiser-expected outcomes? One plausible possibility is mere exposure effect stemming from intentionally not skipping ads to help and support content creators. Mere exposure effect theory posits that simple exposure to a stimulus can increase positive affect or decrease negative affect toward it (Zajonc, 1968). Thus, future research is warranted to examine whether intentional ad-viewing for the sake of content creators elicits positive or negative outcomes of ads, and also to compare the effectiveness to other types of ad-viewing driven by different motivations and for different reasons. The insight gained from such research will provide important theoretical and practical implications for advertising and media practitioners.

Fourth, future studies should identify additional factors that may influence consumer choice to view ads to support content creators. Although this study examined one mediating factor and two moderating factors for the relationship between creator type and intentional ad-viewing, not all of the hypotheses were supported. This study also

controlled for the effects of covariates, such as age, but more factors should be investigated in a relationship with intentional ad-viewing.

For example, the potential effects of parasocial relationships toward content creators on intentional ad-viewing to support content creators would be an interesting topic for future research. According to the in-depth interview findings of this study and some previous research literature, it seems that parasocial relationships toward content creators might play a significant role in consumers' decision to watch ads in order to support content creators. Also, considering that digital video-sharing platforms provide on-demand content, in which individuals search and view the content of their choice, the effects of parasocial relationship on ad-viewing behavior is especially worth investigating. Additionally, each individual might value their time and money differently, and therefore, the relative valuation of time versus money might influence their decision to watch ads to support content creators compared to donating money to support them. Thus, future research should investigate the relationship between these factors and intentional ad-viewing to support content creators.

To conclude, this dissertation study explored the new phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators, where consumers voluntarily and intentionally watch ads for the sake of content creators. Findings from this three-phase research project suggest that the new phenomenon of intentional ad-viewing to support content creators is currently emerging on digital video-sharing platforms, and intentional ad-viewing is more likely to occur when consumers watch videos created by amateur creators or influencers rather than professional creators, and when they have stronger helping motivation. Given the growing popularity and unique characteristics of digital video-sharing platforms,

future research should pay special attention to this intriguing ad-viewing behavior that emerges on such platforms.

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Appendix A. PRELIMINARY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

<p><u>Study design</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection: Online survey (MTurk) • Respondents: U.S. adults who 1) watch YouTube videos at least once a week and 2) subscribe to at least one channel on YouTube (N=300) • Compensation: \$1/participant
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SQ1: Do you use YouTube?
 1) Yes
 2) No (→ DISQUALIFIED)

SQ2: How often do you watch YouTube videos?
 1) Once a month or less (→ DISQUALIFIED)
 2) Twice or three times a month (→ DISQUALIFIED)
 3) About once a week
 4) A few times a week
 5) Almost everyday

SQ3: Do you subscribe to any video channels on YouTube?
 1) Yes
 2) No (→ DISQUALIFIED)

[page break]

Q1. When you use YouTube, how often do you do the following?

	Never 1	Someti- mes 2	About half the time 3	Most of the time 4	Always 5
Watch videos posted by everyday individuals					
Watch videos posted by professional entities (e.g. corporations)					
Upload videos created by myself					
Upload videos created by others					
Post comments about videos					
Read comments left by others					

[page break]

Q2. How many YouTube channels would you say you subscribe to? Enter the number of channels you subscribe to.

[] channels

Q3. Among the channels you subscribe to, think of **one particular YouTube channel you watch most frequently**. To the best of your ability, please explain the nature of the videos posted on this channel on the following items: 1) channel name (as you can remember); 2) types of video content (e.g. make-up tutorial, television show, music video etc.); 3) the channel owner (brief description of who the owner is); and 4) additional information you want to add, if any.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

Instruction: Please answer the following questions (Q4 through Q7) thinking about the YouTube channel you mentioned above.

Q4. **Thinking of the YouTube channel you mentioned above**, which of the following best describes the channel owner?

- 1) Regular YouTube user like me (e.g. user-generated content created by peer users)
- 2) Professional entity (e.g. media company, brand, corporate or non-profit organization, etc.)
- 3) Other [Specify: _____]

[Q5-Q7]

While watching videos posted on the YouTube channel you mentioned above, you may have seen video ads that include a "Skip Ad" button, which allows viewers to skip the ad by clicking on it after 5 seconds of ad play. Please answer the following questions about this type of ads.

Q5. Have you ever chosen to NOT click on the "Skip Ad" button and watch the ad?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No (→ Go to Q8)

Q6. Please think about situations where you did NOT click on the "Skip Ad" button on skippable ads. What are some reasons for you NOT to skip the ads? Please explain the reasons in your own words.

Q7. When you chose NOT to click on the "Skip Ad" button, how much attention do you think you paid to the ads?

Not at all					Full attention
1	2	3	4	5	

[page break]

[Q8-Q12]

The following paragraph describes YouTube advertising. Please read it carefully and answer the following questions.

On YouTube, video creators can choose to monetize their videos and place ads in their videos. If they want to earn money by allowing ads to be placed in their videos, video creators take a split of ad revenue, meaning that they earn more money when more people watch the ads without skipping them. For this reason, some viewers on YouTube voluntarily watch skippable ads, rather than skipping them, to help or reward some video creators they like or follow.

Q8_1. When talking about using YouTube with someone such as your friends or family, have any of them mentioned that they choose to watch skippable ads?"

- 1) Yes (Go to Q8_3)
- 2) No
- 3) Can't recall

Q8_2. If you haven't heard about this, have you at least seen someone make a decision to not push the "Skip Ad" button?"

- 1) Yes
- 2) No (Go to Q9)
- 3) Can't recall (Go to Q9)

Q8_3. Could you briefly describe the situation of voluntary ad viewing that you observed or heard of?

Q9. Have you ever chosen NOT to skip ads and watch them to help or reward a video creator?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No (→ Go to Q10)

Q9_1. Could you briefly describe the situation where you chose not to skip an ad to help or reward a video creator? That is, what drove you to take such an action?

Q10. Before reading the description above, did you know that video creators could earn money based on the number of ad viewing?

- 1) Yes (→ Go to Q12)
- 2) No

Q11. After learning that video creators can earn money based on the number of ads viewed, do you think your ad viewing behavior on YouTube would change in the future? How?

Q12. Have you ever tried to earn or earned money from posting videos on YouTube?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

[page break]

[Demographics]

DQ1. What is your gender?

- 1) Male
- 2) Female
- 3) Other

DQ2. What is your age? [] years old

DQ3. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity?

- 1) White
- 2) Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- 3) Black or African American
- 4) Asian
- 5) American Indian or Alaska native
- 6) Middle Eastern or North African
- 7) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- 8) Other [Specify:]

DQ4. What is your highest level of education?

- 1) Less than high school
- 2) Completed some high school
- 3) High school graduate or equivalent
- 4) Business, technical, or vocational school (2-year degree)
- 5) Some college, but no 4-year degree

- 6) Bachelor's degree
- 7) Professional or graduate degree

DQ5. What is your combined annual household income, meaning the total pre-tax income from all sources earned in the past year?

- 1) Less than \$14,999
- 3) \$15,000 to \$19,999
- 4) \$20,000 to \$34,999
- 5) \$35,000 to \$49,999
- 6) \$50,000 to \$74,999
- 7) \$75,000 to \$99,999
- 8) \$100,000 to \$199,999
- 9) \$200,000 or more

Appendix B. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Interviewees: a total of 20 (up to 30) U.S. adults aged 18-49 who have not skipped ads during their YouTube use
(People who did not skip ads for non-ad-related reasons are preferred)
- Recruiting: purposive sampling
- Duration: approximately 50-60 minutes per session

A. Warming up: General information on video-sharing platform use [5 minutes or less]

1. Introduction of interviewer, study purpose, and logistics (audio recording)
2. Let participants know that they will be asked some questions about thoughts and experience about YouTube use

B. Use of YouTube [8-10 minutes]

1. **Frequency:** (a) *How many days* per week would you say you use YouTube? (b) On a typical day, *how many minutes* would you say you spend watching videos on YouTube?
2. **Typical use:** Tell me a little about your typical use of YouTube. Specifically, (a) *when* do you watch videos on YouTube (e.g. while commuting, eating...), (b) *which devices* do you use?
3. **Video content:** (a) *What kinds of videos* do you usually watch on YouTube? (b) Could you explain more on whether you prefer watching videos from media corporations (e.g. TV shows, movies) or videos created by “everyday” YouTube users? (Or, without asking this question directly, this can be answered while interviewees talk about the question 3a)
4. **Video viewing motives:** (a) Thinking about the last few times you used YouTube, what do you think is the *main purpose* behind your use of YouTube? (e.g. Is it for information, entertainment, just killing time etc.?) (b) Why do you watch YouTube to pursue the needs you mentioned, rather than other media platforms (especially traditional media sources like TV and radio)?
5. **Subscription:** (a) Do you subscribe to any channels on YouTube? (b1) Why or (b2) why not? (e.g. you like the content and want to keep up with new videos in specific topics)
IF SUBSCRIBE: (c) How many channels do you subscribe to and (d) What are some reasons why you think you subscribe to some of those channels? (e) How frequently and (f) when (in what situations) do you usually watch these channels? (How many channels of them do you watch regularly, at least twice a month?) (g) What do you enjoy most about watching videos from the channels you most often turn to? (Which subscribing channels do you watch the most, and what are they about?)

IF NOT: (h) What videos (video channels or *specific* YouTubers' videos) do you watch the most on YouTube? (i) How frequently and (j) when (in what situations) do you usually watch these videos? (k) What do you enjoy most about watching videos from the specific YouTubers you most often turn to?

6. **Other activities:** (a) Have you ever uploaded your own videos, or videos created by others? IF YES: (b) How often do you upload those videos and (c) what types of videos would you say your usually upload? (d) why did you want to post those videos? IF NO: (e) any specific reasons?
- (f) Have you ever posted comments on a video? IF YES: (g) How often would you say you post comments? (h) What kinds of comments do you usually leave? (i) What do you think motivates you most when choosing to write a comment? (e.g. to share information, feel like the channel is a community, let the youtuber know that I like the video); IF NO: (j) Any specific reasons?
- (k) Do you read comments on YouTube? IF YES: (l) What are the reasons you think you read the comments? (e.g. get information about the videos, or feel like being a part of community with other video viewers etc.) IF NO: (m) Any specific reasons?

C. Advertising on video-sharing platforms [15 minutes]

[Questions 1-2 should be quick because it is a warm-up question before discussing their responses to ads]

1. **Ad attitude:** As you know, YouTube incorporates ads into their website. (a) Thinking about your recent experience, are there some types of ads shown on YouTube that you find particularly more enjoyable or tolerable? (b) Can you elaborate on that? (c) Any types that are particularly more annoying? (d) Why? (e) Do you think that ads on YouTube are more (or less) annoying than ads typically shown on TV? (f) Can you elaborate on why you think that?
2. **Ad avoidance** *[show examples of skippable video ads, if necessary]:* On YouTube, some video ads give you the 'skip ad' button, which allows you to skip the ad after the first 5 seconds, while others have no such button and you can't skip the ad. (a) When you see the 'skip ad' button on a video, what do you usually do? (e.g. usually skip the ads, watch them, or just leave it play without paying much attention)
- IF PLAY AD: (b) Thinking back on the last few times where you encountered a skippable ad on YouTube, what did you do when the "skip ad" button came up? (e.g. did you click on the 'skip ad' button *immediately*, after watching the ad for a few seconds, or just leave it play?) (c) Why do you think you *[enter behavior here]*?
3. **Voluntary viewing:** (a) Would you say that you've ever *intentionally* chose not to skip and watched video ads on YouTube, even after the "skip ad" button appeared, and you were able to click on it? (b) Can you recall why you did that?

(c) Would you say you've ever ended up not skipping the ads *unintentionally or by accident*? (d) Did you pay attention to the ad or just leave it play? (e) Can you describe the situation when that happened? (f) When you decided not to skip an ad, how much does the ad length impact your decision? What is the length of ads that you would not mind watching or leaving them play?

4. **Video preference and ad viewing:** *[the specific channels or videos they mentioned before can be used here]* (a) When you watch videos from your favorite channels/videos you particularly like, do you think your reaction to ads placed in the videos tend to be different than when viewing other videos? IF BEHAVIOR DIFFERS BETWEEN VIDEO TYPES (preferred videos vs. non-preferred videos; informative vs. entertaining): (b) Why do you think that is? (c) Do you tend to skip or avoid ads more or less than when you're watching videos from someone you don't subscribe to or don't care much about? (d) Do you think your response to the ads would differ depending on the purpose of video viewing, for example, when you watch videos to get some information or just for entertainment? (e) What are the reasons for that?

D. Helping motives [12 minutes]

1. **Helping experience:** (a) Have you ever tried to *help* the video posters or *provide something back* to the video posters because you found the shared videos particularly *beneficial or enjoyable*? (b) Can you recall the specific actions you have taken to try to reward or help the video creator? (e.g. share/recommend the video with others, subscribe to the channel, watch the ads, or even donate money etc.) (c) Have you ever *watched ads or not skipped ads* to support or reward YouTubers? (d) Did you do that to help them, to pay them back for the videos you liked, or for another reason? (e.g. because the channel could use money, the channel is like a community and you wanted to support the channel or the video creator, because it is an easy way to support/donate them, because the video creators put a lot of time and efforts on their videos: *These examples will not be provided to the interviewees but will be used as a guidance for the interviewer*). (d) What other actions have you considered or might take in the future to reward or help?
2. **Helping intention:** (a) If you HAVE NOT experienced it (i.e. not skipping ads to support the video posters, not because of your interest in the ad), would you want to help or do something for the video posters in the future? Are there some examples where you might feel you want to help or reward a particular YouTuber? (b) When you find a YouTube video is very informative, fun, or beneficial in any way, what kinds of feelings or thoughts would you say you have about the video creators/posters? (c) Would you be willing to watch ads to help or reward the YouTuber? (d) Why/why not?

3. ***Difference between video types:*** (a) Do you think you're more or less willing to help or reward video posters who are professional vs. regular people (*Interviewees may talk about influencers here*) ? (b) Any difference in your reaction to ads between while watching professional videos (e.g. created by broadcasting companies, brands) and amateur videos (created by peer users)? (c) Can you explain the difference?
4. ***Video sharing motives:*** (a) Many people (non-professionals) and companies (e.g. brand, broadcasting companies) upload videos on YouTube. Why do you think they upload the videos? (e.g. make money, interact with others etc.) (b) Do you think there are different motives between regular people and corporations in why they upload video content?
5. ***Perceptions about influencers:*** (a) How about videos created by so-called influencers, who started as an amateur YouTuber just like you but now have a lot of subscribers? (b) Do you think you're more or less willing to help or reward video posters who are influencers with many subscribers vs. regular YouTubers, by watching ads placed around their videos? Any difference in your reaction to ads placed around the videos? (c) Can you explain the difference? (e.g. I don't skip the ads because I like the influencer/the videos; I skip the ads because they are already earning a lot of money by placing product placements etc.)
6. ***Other things that may influence their ad viewing:*** (a) Any other things that may influence your decision to watch or skip ads? (e.g. ad location, length etc.) (b) Do you think that your ad viewing behavior would differ depending on your video viewing motives? For example, would you skip ads more (or less) when you watch a video for an information seeking purpose than when you watch it for fun? Please tell me about your experience if any.

E. Business model & ad revenues [7 minutes]

1. ***Business model:*** [*These questions will be briefly asked as a transition to the following questions*] (a) Do you know some of those who post videos on YouTube make money from them? (b) How do you think the video posters make money? (e.g. video play count, subscriber numbers etc.)
2. ***Ad revenue:*** (a) Before having this interview, did you know that video posters can earn money depending on how many times ads in their videos play and are viewed by people? (b) Did you know that YouTube and video posters share the advertising revenue? IF THE INTERVIEWEE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE BUSINESS MODEL: (c) Knowing this, would your behaviors/reactions to ads placed in videos posted by your favorite YouTubers be different going forward? (d) How and (e) why would your behavior/reaction change?
3. ***Multi-Channel Networks:*** (a) Have you heard that there are companies/programs that provide YouTube video creators with services for producing video content, placing ads, and more opportunities to make revenues, and take some portion of

the revenue? (b) Do you know any YouTubers partnering with this type of companies? (c) How do you feel or think about the YouTube video creators working with these companies? (d) Do you think you are more or less willing to help or reward video posters working with such companies? (e) Why?

F. Wrap up [3 minutes]

1. Further questions / Wrap up

In-depth Interview Guide

- Interviewees: a total of 20 (up to 30) U.S. adults aged 18-49 who have not skipped ads during their YouTube use
(People who did not skip ads for non-ad-related reasons are preferred)
- Recruiting: purposive sampling
- Duration: approximately 50-60 minutes per session

A. Warming up: General information on video-sharing platform use [5 minutes or less]

3. Introduction of interviewer, study purpose, and logistics (audio recording)
4. Let participants know that they will be asked some questions about thoughts and experience about YouTube use

B. Use of YouTube [8-10 minutes]

7. **Frequency:** (a) *How many days* per week would you say you use YouTube? (b) On a typical day, *how many minutes* would you say you spend watching videos on YouTube?
8. **Typical use:** Tell me a little about your typical use of YouTube. Specifically, (a) *when* do you watch videos on YouTube (e.g. while commuting, eating...), (b) *which devices* do you use?
9. **Video content:** (a) *What kinds of videos* do you usually watch on YouTube? (b) Could you explain more on whether you prefer watching videos from media corporations (e.g. TV shows, movies) or videos created by “everyday” YouTube users? (Or, without asking this question directly, this can be answered while interviewees talk about the question 3a)
10. **Video viewing motives:** (a) Thinking about the last few times you used YouTube, what do you think is the *main purpose* behind your use of YouTube? (e.g. Is it for information, entertainment, just killing time etc.?) (b) Why do you watch YouTube to pursue the needs you mentioned, rather than other media platforms (especially traditional media sources like TV and radio)?
11. **Subscription:** (a) Do you subscribe to any channels on YouTube? (b1) Why or (b2) why not? (e.g. you like the content and want to keep up with new videos in specific topics)

IF SUBSCRIBE: (c) How many channels do you subscribe to and (d) What are some reasons why you think you subscribe to some of those channels? (e) How frequently and (f) when (in what situations) do you usually watch these channels? (How many channels of them do you watch regularly, at least twice a month?) (g) What do you enjoy most about watching videos from the channels you most often turn to? (Which subscribing channels do you watch the most, and what are they about?)

IF NOT: (h) What videos (video channels or *specific* YouTubers' videos) do you watch the most on YouTube? (i) How frequently and (j) when (in what situations) do you usually watch these videos? (k) What do you enjoy most about watching videos from the specific YouTubers you most often turn to?

12. **Other activities:** (a) Have you ever uploaded your own videos, or videos created by others? IF YES: (b) How often do you upload those videos and (c) what types of videos would you say your usually upload? (d) why did you want to post those videos? IF NO: (e) any specific reasons?
- (f) Have you ever posted comments on a video? IF YES: (g) How often would you say you post comments? (h) What kinds of comments do you usually leave? (i) What do you think motivates you most when choosing to write a comment? (e.g. to share information, feel like the channel is a community, let the youtuber know that I like the video); IF NO: (j) Any specific reasons?
- (k) Do you read comments on YouTube? IF YES: (l) What are the reasons you think you read the comments? (e.g. get information about the videos, or feel like being a part of community with other video viewers etc.) IF NO: (m) Any specific reasons?

C. Advertising on video-sharing platforms [15 minutes]

[Questions 1-2 should be quick because it is a warm-up question before discussing their responses to ads]

5. **Ad attitude:** As you know, YouTube incorporates ads into their website. (a) Thinking about your recent experience, are there some types of ads shown on YouTube that you find particularly more enjoyable or tolerable? (b) Can you elaborate on that? (c) Any types that are particularly more annoying? (d) Why? (e) Do you think that ads on YouTube are more (or less) annoying than ads typically shown on TV? (f) Can you elaborate on why you think that?
6. **Ad avoidance** *[show examples of skippable video ads, if necessary]:* On YouTube, some video ads give you the 'skip ad' button, which allows you to skip the ad after the first 5 seconds, while others have no such button and you can't skip the ad. (a) When you see the 'skip ad' button on a video, what do you usually do? (e.g. usually skip the ads, watch them, or just leave it play without paying much attention)

IF PLAY AD: (b) Thinking back on the last few times where you encountered a skippable ad on YouTube, what did you do when the “skip ad” button came up? (e.g. did you click on the ‘skip ad’ button *immediately*, after watching the ad for a *few seconds*, or just leave it play?) (c) Why do you think you [*enter behavior here*]?

7. **Voluntary viewing:** (a) Would you say that you’ve ever *intentionally* chose not to skip and watched video ads on YouTube, even after the “skip ad” button appeared, and you were able to click on it? (b) Can you recall why you did that? (c) Would you say you’ve ever ended up not skipping the ads *unintentionally or by accident*? (d) Did you pay attention to the ad or just leave it play? (e) Can you describe the situation when that happened? (f) When you decided not to skip an ad, how much does the ad length impact your decision? What is the length of ads that you would not mind watching or leaving them play?
8. **Video preference and ad viewing:** [*the specific channels or videos they mentioned before can be used here*] (a) When you watch videos from your favorite channels/videos you particularly like, do you think your reaction to ads placed in the videos tend to be different than when viewing other videos? IF BEHAVIOR DIFFERS BETWEEN VIDEO TYPES (preferred videos vs. non-preferred videos; informative vs. entertaining): (b) Why do you think that is? (c) Do you tend to skip or avoid ads more or less than when you’re watching videos from someone you don’t subscribe to or don’t care much about? (d) Do you think your response to the ads would differ depending on the purpose of video viewing, for example, when you watch videos to get some information or just for entertainment? (e) What are the reasons for that?

D. Helping motives [12 minutes]

7. **Helping experience:** (a) Have you ever tried to *help* the video posters or *provide something back* to the video posters because you found the shared videos particularly *beneficial or enjoyable*? (b) Can you recall the specific actions you have taken to try to reward or help the video creator? (e.g. share/recommend the video with others, subscribe to the channel, watch the ads, or even donate money etc.) (c) Have you ever *watched ads or not skipped ads* to support or reward YouTubers? (d) Did you do that to help them, to pay them back for the videos you liked, or for another reason? (e.g. because the channel could use money, the channel is like a community and you wanted to support the channel or the video creator, because it is an easy way to support/donate them, because the video creators put a lot of time and efforts on their videos: *These examples will not be provided to the interviewees but will be used as a guidance for the interviewer*). (d) What other actions have you considered or might take in the future to reward or help?

8. **Helping intention:** (a) If you HAVE NOT experienced it (i.e. not skipping ads to support the video posters, not because of your interest in the ad), would you want to help or do something for the video posters in the future? Are there some examples where you might feel you want to help or reward a particular YouTuber? (b) When you find a YouTube video is very informative, fun, or beneficial in any way, what kinds of feelings or thoughts would you say you have about the video creators/posters? (c) Would you be willing to watch ads to help or reward the YouTuber? (d) Why/why not?
9. **Difference between video types:** (a) Do you think you're more or less willing to help or reward video posters who are professional vs. regular people (*Interviewees may talk about influencers here*) ? (b) Any difference in your reaction to ads between while watching professional videos (e.g. created by broadcasting companies, brands) and amateur videos (created by peer users)? (c) Can you explain the difference?
10. **Video sharing motives:** (a) Many people (non-professionals) and companies (e.g. brand, broadcasting companies) upload videos on YouTube. Why do you think they upload the videos? (e.g. make money, interact with others etc.) (b) Do you think there are different motives between regular people and corporations in why they upload video content?
11. **Perceptions about influencers:** (a) How about videos created by so-called influencers, who started as an amateur YouTuber just like you but now have a lot of subscribers? (b) Do you think you're more or less willing to help or reward video posters who are influencers with many subscribers vs. regular YouTubers, by watching ads placed around their videos? Any difference in your reaction to ads placed around the videos? (c) Can you explain the difference? (e.g. I don't skip the ads because I like the influencer/the videos; I skip the ads because they are already earning a lot of money by placing product placements etc.)
12. **Other things that may influence their ad viewing:** (a) Any other things that may influence your decision to watch or skip ads? (e.g. ad location, length etc.) (b) Do you think that your ad viewing behavior would differ depending on your video viewing motives? For example, would you skip ads more (or less) when you watch a video for an information seeking purpose than when you watch it for fun? Please tell me about your experience if any.

E. Business model & ad revenues [7 minutes]

4. **Business model:** [*These questions will be briefly asked as a transition to the following questions*] (a) Do you know some of those who post videos on YouTube make money from them? (b) How do you think the video posters make money? (e.g. video play count, subscriber numbers etc.)
5. **Ad revenue:** (a) Before having this interview, did you know that video posters can earn money depending on how many times ads in their videos play and are

viewed by people? (b) Did you know that YouTube and video posters share the advertising revenue? IF THE INTERVIEWEE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE BUSINESS MODEL: (c) Knowing this, would your behaviors/reactions to ads placed in videos posted by your favorite YouTubers be different going forward? (d) How and (e) why would your behavior/reaction change?

6. **Multi-Channel Networks:** (a) Have you heard that there are companies/programs that provide YouTube video creators with services for producing video content, placing ads, and more opportunities to make revenues, and take some portion of the revenue? (b) Do you know any YouTubers partnering with this type of companies? (c) How do you feel or think about the YouTube video creators working with these companies? (d) Do you think you are more or less willing to help or reward video posters working with such companies? (e) Why?

F. Wrap up [3 minutes]

2. Further questions / Wrap up

Appendix C. MAIN SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Block1: Screening questions

S1. Do you watch videos on YouTube?

- 1) yes 0) no (→ **Disqualified**)

S2. How often do you usually watch videos on YouTube?

- 1) About 1 day per week or less frequently (→ **Disqualified**)
2) 2 days per week (→ **Disqualified**)
3) 3 days per week (→ **Disqualified**)
4) 4 days per week (→ **Disqualified**)
5) 5 days per week
6) 6 days per week
7) everyday

S3. Roughly how many video channels do you subscribe to on YouTube?

_____ channels (→ **Respondents who enter “0” will be disqualified**)

S4. Do you use YouTube Premium service?

- 1) yes (→ **Disqualified**) 0) no

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Block 2. Most frequently watched YouTube channel

<Favorite channel>

In this survey, we will ask some questions about your video-viewing experience on YouTube. Please answer the questions based on your own thoughts and experience on YouTube. There are no right or wrong answers.

Q1. Think of ONE YouTube channel which is your favorite and you watched quite frequently during the past one month. In the blank below, please type in the name of the video channel. If you want to check your YouTube account to answer this question, please feel free to do so.

Channel Name: _____

For the following questions, **please answer them while thinking about your favorite video channel that you named above.**

<Channel Use>

Q2. Approximately, how many hours *per week* do you spend watching the specific channel mentioned above?

_____ hours

Q3. For how long have you been watching the video channel?

For example, if you have been watching the video channel for about 6 months, please enter “0” for years and “6” for months.

_____ year(s) and _____ month(s)

<Video Type> Definition of Influencers (Lou & Yuan, 2019)

Q4. How would you characterize the videos of that channel? Please select one option that you think best describes the videos.

The videos in that your favorite video channel are created by:

- 1) Ordinary YouTube users like me (e.g., user-generated content created by peer users or everyday individuals)
- 2) Influencers who gained fame by uploading content on social media and have a large number of followers
- 3) Professional entities like TV show producers, media personalities, professional entertainers, professional sport players, journalists, or media companies (e.g., broadcast clips, movies, or news programs created by media companies or videos created by celebrities)
- 4) Other (Specify: _____)

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Block3: Ad-viewing behavior

While watching videos on YouTube, you might have seen ads that play either before or during a video and offer the ‘Skip Ad’ option. These ads are called “skippable ads”. This section asks you some questions about your experiences with skippable ads. Please answer the questions in this section while thinking about your experience of encountering this type of ads when you were watching your favorite video channel that you named earlier.

<Experience of intentional ad-viewing>

Q5. While watching videos on your favorite channel named earlier, have you ever NOT clicked on the ‘Skip Ad’ button appearing on skippable ads?

- 1) I have experiences of NOT clicking on the ‘Skip Ad’ button. (→ **Continue on Q6**)
- 2) I *always* skip ads by clicking on the ‘Skip Ad’ button when available (→ **Skip to Q7**)

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<Reasons for intentional ad-viewing>

Q6. Suppose that skippable ads appeared 10 times while you were watching your favorite channel and you let them play. Based on your ad-viewing behavior on that channel, how many times out of the 10 would be because of each of the following reasons?

For example, if about 8 out of 10 times you would let skippable ads play because you're interested in the products or brands featured in the ads, please enter "8" next to Statement #1 like so. If any of these statements isn't a reason you watch a skippable ad, please enter "0" in front of that statement.

[Randomize #1-7; Fix #8 Fixed]	
1) ___ of 10 skippable ads not skipped	because the ads were about the products or brands that interested me.
2) ___ of 10 skippable ads not skipped	because the visuals or sounds of the ads drew my attention.
3) ___ of 10 skippable ads not skipped	because the ads were entertaining to watch.
4) ___ of 10 skippable ads not skipped	for the sake of the video creators (e.g., to support or help the video creators) (→Only respondents who enter other than a 0 will answer questions in Block 4)
5) ___ of 10 skippable ads not skipped	because it felt like a hassle to click on the skip button.
6) ___ of 10 skippable ads not skipped	because I just ignored the ads.
7) ___ of 10 skippable ads not skipped	because I missed the opportunity to click on the 'Skip Ad' button.
8) ___ of 10 skippable ads not skipped	because of some other reason than the listed ones (Specify: _____)

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<Timing of ad-skipping>

Q7. When you skip ads while watching your favorite channel named earlier, how soon after the 'Skip Ad' button appears do you usually click on the button?

- I click on the 'Skip Ad' button:

As soon as watching ads it appears end 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 After almost to the

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Block 4: Helping motivation [Presented to those who put a non-0 for Statement #4 of Q6]

In the previous section, you indicated you sometimes let skippable ads play (namely, you don't click on the 'Skip Ad' button) for the sake of the video creators. The following questions ask about your thoughts and feelings in such a situation.

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Below are statements describing some possible thoughts and feelings that YouTube users like you might have when they let skippable ads play, instead of skipping them, for the sake of the video creators. For each of the statements, please indicate the extent to which it applies to you. To answer these questions, please keep thinking of your favorite video channel named earlier.

Q8. While watching my favorite video channel, I would sometimes not click on the “Skip Ad” button but let skippable ads play because:

[Randomize the order of the question groups A, B, and C]

A. <Gratitude> #1-3: Adapted from Paltimer et al (2009)

	[Randomize #1-4]						
	Not at all applicable to me				Very much applicable to me		
1) I felt grateful to the video creator of the video channel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2) I wanted to express gratitude to the video creator for creating and sharing the videos I enjoyed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) I appreciated the videos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) I wanted to support the video creator.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B. <Reciprocity – extrinsic>

#1-2: Adapted from Kankanhalli et al., 2005; #3-4: Chiang & Hsiao, 2013; #5-6: new

	[Randomize #1-6]						
	Not at all applicable to me				Very much applicable to me		
1) I wanted to watch more videos created by the video creator in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2) I believed not skipping ads would be mutually helpful to the video creator and me as a viewer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) I believed not skipping ads could help the video creator financially so that they would produce more videos that I could enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) I wanted to encourage the video creator to continue producing more videos that I could enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C. <Empathy – intrinsic> #1-3: Adapted from Batson et al. (1987); #4-5: New

	[Randomize #1-5]						
	Not at all applicable to me				Very much applicable to me		
1) I felt sympathetic toward the video creator.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2) I was moved by the videos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) I felt compassionate toward the video creator.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) I wanted to be kind to the video creator.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5) I empathized with the video creator putting their work out into the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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Block 5: Video viewing motives

Below are some statements that might describe why people watch YouTube videos. Thinking about **your favorite video channel named earlier**, please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements about why you watch the video channel.

<Motivations of YouTube video-viewing>

Adapted from Bondad-Brown, Rice, & Pearce (2012); Hanson & Haridakis (2008)

Q9. I watch my favorite video channel ...

[Randomize A, B, & C]	Strongly disagree							Strongly agree
A. Information-seeking [Randomize #1-4]								
1) To search for information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2) because I can learn about how to do things I haven't done before	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3) because it helps me keep up with current issues or events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4) because I can get information for free	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5) because it is easier to get information from it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
B. Entertainment/pass time [Randomize #1-5]								
1) because it amuses me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2) because it gives me something to occupy my time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3) because it is enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4) because I just like to watch it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5) because it passes time especially when I am bored	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
C. Companionship [Randomize #1-2]								
1) because it makes me feel less lonely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2) so I don't have to be alone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Block 6: Control variables

<Parasocial relationship toward video creators> (Adapted from Rubin & Perse, 1987)

Q10. Below are some statements that might describe people's feelings toward their favorite YouTubers. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement. Please keep thinking of your favorite video channel named earlier and how you feel toward the video creator.

	[Randomize #1-10]	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	
1)	The video creator of this YouTube video channel makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2)	I see the video creator of this YouTube video channel as a natural, down-to-earth person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3)	I look forward to watching more videos from the video creator of the YouTube channel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4)	If the video creator of this YouTube channel appeared on another video, I would watch that video.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5)	The video creator of this YouTube channel seems to understand the kinds of things I want to know.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6)	If I saw a story about the video creator of this YouTube channel in a news article or magazine, I would read it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7)	I miss seeing the video creator of this YouTube channel when he or she is ill or on vacation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8)	I would like to meet the video creator of this YouTube channel in person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9)	I would feel sorry for the video creator of this YouTube channel if he or she made a mistake.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10)	I find the video creator of this YouTube channel to be attractive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<Attitudes toward video ads on YouTube>

Q11. The following questions ask your opinions about **video ads on YouTube in general.** These questions are NOT about any particular videos or ads. Please rate video ads on YouTube in general on the following attributes.

Based on a 33-item-measure used in Pollay and Mittal (1993)

	[Randomize #1-8]	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	
--	-------------------------	-------------------	--	--	--	--	----------------	--

1) Video ads on YouTube are essential.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2) Video ads on YouTube are a valuable source of information about products/services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) Video ads on YouTube tell me which brands have the features I am looking for.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) Quite often video ads on YouTube are amusing and entertaining.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5) Sometimes video ads on YouTube are more enjoyable than other media content.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6) My general opinion of video ads on YouTube is unfavorable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7) I consider video ads on YouTube unwelcome interruptions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8) Video ads on YouTube are not important issue for me, and I am not bothered about them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9) Overall, I like video ads on YouTube.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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Block 7: Knowledge of ad-revenue-sharing model

Q12. Do you think YouTube video creators make money from sharing their videos?

- 1) Yes 0) No (→ **Skip to the next question block.**)

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Q13. How do you think YouTube video creators make money? Below are some possible ways they might make money. Please select all that you believe are correct.

[Randomize #1-7]

- 1) Video creators are paid by YouTube based on how many people watched their videos.
- 2) Video creators can make money when viewers subscribe to their channel.
- 3) Video creators can earn money whenever ads are placed around their YouTube videos.
- 4) Video creators can earn money through sponsorship deals with companies.
- 5) Video creators can earn money when viewers watch ads placed around their videos without skipping them.
- 6) Video creators can earn money when viewers click on ads placed around their videos and are directed to the advertiser's website.

7) Video creators don't get paid if viewers skip ads by clicking on the 'skip ad' button.

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Block 8: Ad-viewing intention

On YouTube, video creators can earn money depending on the view counts of ads placed around their videos. To be more specific, if viewers do not click on the 'Skip Ad' button on the ad, then the video creator can take a 55% share of ad revenues.

Knowing this, please answer the following questions.

<Time vs. money>

Q14. If you can choose to either watch ads OR donate money to provide financial support or incentive to the video creator of your favorite video channel, would you rather watch some ads or donate some money?

- 1) I would rather watch some ads.
- 2) I would rather donate some money.
- 3) I would do both.
- 4) I would do neither.

<Valuation of time>

Q15. How much money would one minute of your time watching ads to support a video creator you care about be worth to you? In other words, how much would you be willing to donate to the video creator, instead of watching ads for one minute?

___ dollar(s) ___ cent(s)

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In the following section, you will be presented with two scenarios of YouTube use and then asked to answer questions. Please keep the fact mentioned before in your mind when you answer the questions.

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<Ad-viewing Intention 1>

[Scenario 1]

You have watched a YouTube channel of amateur musicians. On that YouTube channel, the amateur musicians regularly upload videos of their performance. You watch the videos quite often because you enjoy their music and admire the musicians' passion. While watching the amateur musicians' videos, several skippable ads appear, from which the amateur musicians can earn money if the ads are not skipped.

Q16. To support the video creators (i.e., amateur musicians), how often would you be willing to watch those ads? Please indicate out of 10 exposures to skippable ads on this channel, how often you would NOT skip them to help the video creators (Each ad lasts about 30 seconds.)

I would NOT click on the 'Skip Ad' button _____ out of 10 times.

<Ad-viewing Intention 2>

[Scenario 2]

You have watched how-to videos about home décor on a YouTube channel. On this channel, the video creator who is a design student shares a lot of useful tips and information about how to repair and decorate homes. You watch these videos not only when you need specific information, but also when you have free time, as the videos are informative and fun to watch. While watching the videos on this channel, several skippable ads appear, from which the video creator can earn money if the ads are not skipped.

Q17. To support the video creator, how much would you be willing to watch those ads? Please indicate that out of 10 exposures to skippable ads on this channel, how often you would NOT skip them to help the video creator? (Each ad lasts about 30 seconds.)

I would NOT click on the 'Skip Ad' button _____ out of 10 times.

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Video-sharing activities

The following questions are about your own experiences of sharing videos on YouTube.

Q18. How often do you post videos on YouTube? Select one that best fits your thought.

- 1) once every week or more frequently
- 2) a few times per month
- 3) once every month
- 4) every 2 months
- 5) every 3 months or less frequently

Q19. Have you ever earned or tried to earn money from posting videos on YouTube?

- 1) Yes
- 0) No

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Demographics

D1. What is your gender?

- 1) Male
- 2) Female
- 3) Other

D2. What is your age in years? [] years old

D3. Which one of the following best describes your race or ethnicity?

- 1) White
- 2) Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- 3) Black or African American
- 4) Asian
- 5) American Indian or Alaska native
- 6) Middle Eastern or North African
- 7) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- 8) Other (Specify: _____)

D4. What is your highest level of education?

- 1) Less than high school
- 2) Completed some high school
- 3) High school graduate or equivalent
- 4) Business, technical, or vocational school (2-year degree)
- 5) Some college, but no 4-year degree
- 6) Bachelor's degree
- 7) Professional or graduate degree

D5. What is your combined annual household income, meaning the total pre-tax income from all sources earned in the past year?

- 1) Less than \$14,999
- 2) \$15,000 to \$19,999
- 3) \$20,000 to \$34,999
- 4) \$35,000 to \$49,999
- 5) \$50,000 to \$74,999
- 6) \$75,000 to \$99,999
- 7) \$100,000 to \$199,999
- 8) \$200,000 or more

----- End of Questionnaire -----