

## **FACTORS AFFECTING PURCHASE INTENTION IN YOUTUBE VIDEOS\***

Hale Fulya YÜKSEL<sup>†</sup>

### **Abstract**

YouTube is one of the new social media platforms that has received minimal research related to consumer purchase behavior. This paper aims to identify the factors that affect purchase intention of consumers who watch product related YouTube videos. Online questionnaires for consumers who watch make-up / beauty videos on YouTube are used to investigate the hypotheses. Structural equation modeling approach is used to explore the relationships in the model with a total of 8685 valid questionnaires. The findings reveal that product related videos on YouTube are important for influencing consumers' purchase intentions. In addition, several factors affect purchase intention on different levels. This study is one of the rare studies that combine YouTube videos and their effects on purchase intention and by using YouTube videos, this study extends previous research on purchase intention related to other social media platforms. Also it introduces new factors that are specific to YouTube.

**Keywords** Purchase intention, user-generated content, YouTube, make-up / beauty channels, structural equation modeling.

### **YOUTUBE VİDEOLARINDA SATIN ALMA NİYETİNİ ETKİLEYEN FAKTÖRLER**

### **Özet**

YouTube, tüketici satın alma davranışı ile alakalı çok az sayıda çalışmaya konu olmuş yeni sosyal medya platformlarından biridir. Bu çalışma, YouTube'da ürünlerle alakalı videolar izleyen tüketicilerin satın alma niyetini etkileyen faktörleri belirlemeyi hedeflemiştir. Hipotezleri test etmek için YouTube'da makyaj / güzellik videosu izleyen tüketicilere online olarak anket uygulanmıştır. Modeldeki ilişkiler yapısal eşitlik modellemesi yaklaşımı kullanılarak, geçerli 8685 adet anket formu ile incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları, ürünlerle alakalı YouTube videolarının tüketicilerin satın alma niyetini etkilemede önemli olduğunu göstermiştir. Buna ek olarak, birçok faktörün satın alma niyetini farklı derecelerde etkilediği görülmüştür. Bu çalışma, YouTube videolarının satın alma niyetine etkilerini inceleyen nadir çalışmalardan biridir ve diğer sosyal medya platformlarıyla satın alma niyetini birleştiren çalışmalara yeni bir açılım getirmektedir. Ayrıca bu çalışma YouTube videolarına has olan yeni faktörler de önermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Satın alma niyeti, kullanıcı-yaratımlı içerik, YouTube, makyaj / güzellik kanalları, yapısal eşitlik modellemesi.

### **Introduction**

The development of the Internet and social media provided new platforms for marketers to build their marketing strategies and influence consumers' purchase decisions. Social media websites such as blogs are now used as communication and advertising tools by marketers (Bouhleb et al., 2010) for the purpose of listening to what consumers are saying about the products and also for interacting with them (Saxena, 2011).

Consumers seek for advices on social media before making purchase decisions (Hsu et al., 2013) and they usually rely on user generated content in their decisions (MacKinnon, 2012). Most of them trust word of mouth on the Internet more than company-generated contents

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<sup>†</sup> Afyon Kocatepe University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, halefulyayuksel@gmail.com

(MacKinnon, 2012) because user generated content includes both positive and negative evaluations of users about a product (Park et al., 2007).

Many researchers investigated the effects of different social media platforms on consumers' purchase behaviors from different perspectives (Bouhleb et al., 2010; Hsu and Tsou, 2011; Hsu et al., 2013; Mir and Zaheer, 2012; Park et al., 2007; Saxena, 2011) but there are a limited number of studies regarding video sharing websites and especially YouTube (Mir and Rehman, 2013). When talking about video sharing websites, YouTube is the first platform that comes to mind. The fact that YouTube is owned by Google and YouTube videos are listed on top in Google searches, distinguishes this platform from others (Cingı, 2015). Since lots of user generated content is uploaded on YouTube every day and some of it is product related, YouTube has become one of the platforms that consumers search for product information before making purchase decisions. Therefore, it is important for marketers to determine which factors affect consumers' purchase intentions in YouTube videos.

The aim of this study is to contribute to literature of consumer behavior by examining the effects of user-generated content in YouTube videos on consumers' purchase intentions, and determining the factors that has an influence on purchase intention. Also, the results will have implications for marketers which will be mentioned in the last section.

## **1. Conceptual Framework**

### ***1.1. Purchase Intention***

According to the theory of reasoned action (TRA), behavioral intention is defined as the subjective probability of a person to perform a specific action and intention is the most prominent factor in defining behavior (Davis, 1986). In consumer purchase behavior studies, purchase intention is defined as consumers' intention to buy a product in the future (Hsu and Tsou, 2011; Saxena, 2011).

Purchase intention can be used to predict real purchase behavior; therefore it has attracted a lot of interest by researchers (Hsu and Tsou, 2011). There are several studies related to the factors that affect consumers' purchase intention for online platforms such as websites (Lee, 2009; Park et al., 2007), social network sites (Mir and Zaheer, 2012), and blogs (Bouhleb et al., 2010; Hsu and Tsou, 2011; Hsu et al., 2013; Saxena, 2011); but only one related study is found for YouTube (Mir and Rehman, 2013). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors related to YouTube videos that affect consumers' purchase intentions; and purchase intention is defined as consumers' intention to buy the products after watching YouTube videos in which the products are mentioned or reviewed.

### ***1.2. User-Generated Content (UGC)***

Providing users to interact with each other over the Internet has created the first signs of the transition to Web 2.0 (MacKinnon, 2012). Web 2.0 is also known as the "YouWeb" because it invites everyone to interact with the virtual universe and contribute to its content via its user controlled platforms (Van Dijck, 2007). Web 2.0 platforms introduce an alternative media experience to people where the rules are set by themselves (Jarrett, 2008) and this allows users to generate and share content freely. Today, people are not going on the Internet to search for information, they live their lives on the web (Levy, 2006).

OECD defines user-generated content (also known as user-created content) as " i) content made publicly available over the Internet, ii) which reflects a certain amount of creative effort, and iii) which is created outside of professional routines and practices." (Wunsch-

Vincent and Vickery, 2007). According to Moens et al. (2014), UGC denotes “any form of content such as blogs, wikis, discussion forums, posts, chats, tweets, podcasting, pins, digital images, video, audio files, and other forms of media that was created by users of an online system or service, often made available via social media websites”.

In 2006, user-generated content became a trend and companies started to use its power by letting consumers to generate content about their products (Barnes and Hair, 2009). Traditional company-generated contents (CGC) such as banners, e-mail marketing, and company blogs are directly created and managed by companies (Jonas, 2010) whereas user-generated contents are created by consumers (Burgess et al., 2009). UGC is thought to be more credible than CGC for purchase decisions because UGC includes consumers’ honest evaluations and experiences about a product’s both positive and negative aspects (Park et al., 2007). Other studies also confirmed that consumers find UGC more trustworthy than CGC (Cheong and Morrison, 2008; Jonas, 2010) and individuals who produce UGC on the Internet are seen as opinion leaders by many consumers (MacKinnon, 2012).

### **1.3.YouTube**

Video sharing websites provide their users low cost broadcasting tools which are easy to use and which allow them to share their content on personal profiles and interact with other users (Rigby, 2008). One of the most popular video sharing sites is YouTube, which was founded in 2005. YouTube has reached incredible growth in the number of users and videos, and Time magazine declared it as the invention of 2006 (Jarrett, 2008).

According to a survey in 2009 by Pew Research Center, 69% of American internet users have watched or downloaded online videos (Purcell, 2010). A report from Cisco reveals that one third of the 50 most visited websites are video sharing websites with YouTube being the most highly visited one (Snelson, 2011).

The nature of YouTube is clearly defined by its slogan “Broadcast Yourself” which focuses on users with a “do it yourself” approach and allows them to create and broadcast UGC (Jarrett, 2008). Personal profiles of YouTube users are called “channels” (Miller, 2011) and users can choose to share UGC publicly or only with their friend circle (Lange, 2008). Becoming a YouTube user and creating a channel provides features such as commenting to videos, subscribing and following other channels, customizing the experience by creating playlists, etc. (Sahlin and Botello, 2007).

YouTube allows consumers to define their relationships with products or brands freely and in a creative way (Pace, 2008); and millions of internet users have become self-broadcasting consumers (Harris, 2012). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate how broadcasted UGC on YouTube affects purchase intention of consumers.

## **2. Hypothesis Development**

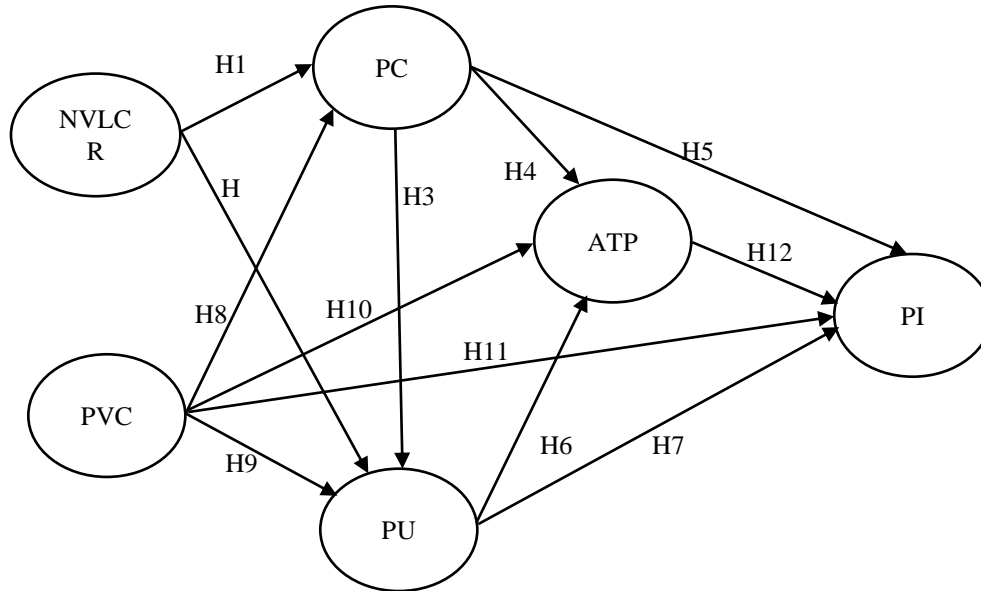
In this study, five factors are considered to have an effect on purchase intention. Relevant literature about these factors are explained in detail below. The research model and all of the hypotheses are shown in Figure 1.

### **2.1.Number of views, likes, comments and replies (NVLCR)**

Consumers’ perceptions about a content can be influenced by interactions of other users. Comments on an online content about a product may be perceived as a sign of product

popularity and can affect purchase intentions (Lee, 2009). For consumers who find online information credible, number of comments increases the credibility of those information (O'Reilly and Marx, 2011). YouTube users who seek user-generated content also take into account the comments and the number of comments increase the credibility and usefulness of the videos (Mir and Rehman, 2013).

**Figure 1. Proposed research model**



Ratings are also important for evaluating the credibility of online contents (Flanagin et al., 2011). While, number of likes affects the credibility of contents in forums (O'Reilly and Marx, 2011); this effect also applies to YouTube videos and the number of likes increases the popularity of videos leading to increased credibility and usefulness (Mir and Rehman, 2013).

Lastly, as proposed by Mir and Rehman (2013) the number of users who view the content on YouTube is important in the perception of credibility and usefulness. Moreover, it is proposed that the number of replies to the comments by the video owner may also affect the perception of credibility and usefulness of the information given in the video. Therefore it is hypothesized:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The number of views, likes, comments and replies positively affects perceived credibility of the information in the videos.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The number of views, likes, comments and replies positively affects perceived usefulness of the information in the videos.

### **2.2. Perceived credibility of the information in the videos (PC)**

In general, credibility of a source can be defined as the positive features of the source that influence the receiver to accept the message (Ohanian, 1990). Credibility is a concept which is defined by the judgment of the reader (Freeman and Spyridakis, 2004) and studies in literature show that rather than being a source, platform or message feature, it depends on the

receiver's perceptions (Johnson et al., 2008). Perceived credibility is the trust dimension that affects the adoption of a message in a positive or negative way and it can bring changes in consumers' attitudes (Bouhleb et al., 2010). The adoption of information according to the source credibility is also applicable for online environments (Cheung et al., 2009).

For user-generated contents, credibility can be considered as the credibility of the content generator (Burgess et al., 2009). User-generated contents are considered as independent and objective sources because of the perception that they are not managed by companies and no monetary bond exists (Jonas, 2010). UGC is perceived as more trustworthy than seller-generated content because from a user's perspective it states honest evaluations with both positive and negative sides (Park et al., 2007).

The sources that are more credible are more successful in developing positive attitudes (Chu and Kamal, 2008). Mir and Zaheer (2012) proved that perceived credibility of UGC on social media sites affects the attitude toward product related UGC positively. Also, perceived credibility has been found to have a positive effect on purchase intention (Hsu and Tsou, 2011; Wang et al., 2006) and perceived usefulness (McKnight and Kacmar, 2007; Mir and Rehman, 2013; Wang et al., 2006) for online environments. In this study perceived credibility of the information in the videos is defined as the degree of consumers' belief about the credibility of the information for their purchases. It is hypothesized that:

H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived credibility of the information in the videos positively affects perceived usefulness of the information in the videos.

H<sub>4</sub>: Perceived credibility of the information in the videos positively affects attitude toward purchase.

H<sub>5</sub>: Perceived credibility of the information in the videos positively affects purchase intention.

### ***2.3. Perceived usefulness of information in the videos (PU)***

According to Davis (1989, p.320) perceived usefulness is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance", and it is related to the expectations that a person hopes to get in the end (McKnight and Kacmar, 2007). Pavlou and Fygenon (2006) defined perceived usefulness of the information from websites as the belief that those information will enhance efficiency in obtaining product information. A study related to blogs (Bouhleb et al., 2010) reveals that perceived usefulness is related to the advantages of using blogs and these advantages can be preventing waste of time and accessing extra information and different perspectives about products.

According to Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), perceived usefulness affects attitudes (Mir and Rehman, 2013). Bouhleb et al. (2010) supports this hypothesis for blogs by showing that perceived usefulness has an effect on attitude toward the blog. Hsu et al. (2013) also found that the usefulness of blog recommendations has a direct effect on attitudes and an indirect effect on purchase intention. In a study of web service acceptance, Yang et al. (2010) showed that perceived usefulness has both a direct effect on usage intention and also an indirect effect through attitude.

In the current study, perceived usefulness of information in the videos is defined as the perception of consumers that watching YouTube videos will enhance their purchase performance. It is hypothesized that:

H<sub>6</sub>: Perceived usefulness of information in the videos positively affects attitude toward purchase.

H<sub>7</sub>: Perceived usefulness of information in the videos positively affects purchase intention.

#### ***2.4. Perceived video characteristics (PVC)***

Specific features of YouTube videos may have an effect on purchase intentions. First of all, the quality of the video is a factor that influences purchase decisions (Satgunam et al., 2010) and high quality videos increase user engagement (Dobrian et al., 2013). Secondly, the perception about the length of the video may also be a factor. The results of an analysis on mostly shared Top 50 YouTube videos reveal that the average length for marketing videos is 3-3.5 minutes; but the wish to share depends more on the strength of emotions that the video elicits from the viewer (Jarboe, 2012). Therefore, not the exact length of the video but the perception of it may be a factor that affects attitudes and purchase intentions. Finally, the preparation and presentation of the content is also considered to be influential for consumer purchase intentions. Because, these can affect the level of information the consumers obtain and lead to attitude formation. Therefore it is hypothesized that:

H<sub>8</sub>: Perceived video characteristics positively affect perceived credibility of the information in the videos.

H<sub>9</sub>: Perceived video characteristics positively affect perceived usefulness of the information in the videos.

H<sub>10</sub>: Perceived video characteristics positively affect attitude toward purchase.

H<sub>11</sub>: Perceived video characteristics positively affect purchase intention.

#### ***2.5. Attitude toward purchase (ATP)***

Attitude can be defined as positive or negative feelings and evaluations of a person towards performing a specific behavior (Mir and Rehman, 2013) or positive or negative orientation of the consumer towards a product or brand (Bouhleb et al., 2010). According to the theory of reasoned action, attitude toward behavior is one of the key functions in determining behavioral intention (Saxena, 2011) and it is verified that increased attitude results in increased behavioral intention (Bouhleb et al., 2010; Hsu et al., 2013; Mosavi and Ghaedi, 2012).

There are several studies supporting the relationship between attitude and intention. Yang et al. (2010) found that attitude toward web-based services positively affects the intention to use those services. Hsu and Lin (2008) proposed that attitude has a positive effect on the intention of users to join a blog. Saxena (2011) showed a positive and significant effect of attitude toward blogs on intention to use blogs. Mir and Rehman (2013) proved a positive link

between consumers' attitude toward UGC on YouTube and intention to use these UGC for purchase decisions. According to Bouhleb et al. (2010) consumers' attitudes affect online purchase intentions and consumers who have a positive attitude toward blogs tend to make real purchases.

In this study, attitude toward purchase is defined as consumers' thoughts, feelings and beliefs toward purchasing a product after watching YouTube videos. It is hypothesized that:

H<sub>12</sub>: Attitude toward purchase positively affects purchase intention.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Research Setting and Sample**

This study adopted a quantitative approach by using online questionnaires to explore the effects of YouTube videos on purchase intention and to identify the factors influencing this relationship. Two vloggers (Ayşegül Kaplan and Aslı Özdel) who own a YouTube channel related to make-up / beauty and have a large number of followers (128653 and 100276 respectively by 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 2015) were engaged in the study. The questionnaire links were placed in the description box of their videos which they talked about their favorite make-up and beauty products (the links for the videos are [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz-Q9F\\_xDMI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz-Q9F_xDMI) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBJex57vQ3o> respectively). In their videos, they asked their followers to fill in the questionnaires. For both videos, the links were active for one week and a total of 11084 responses were collected (7565 and 3519, respectively). After elimination of irrelevant responses, 8685 questionnaires were used in the analyses. Of the 8685 participants, all were female and age groups were represented as follows: %80.3 for ages 18-25, %13.5 for ages 26-30, %4.1 for ages 31-35, and 2.1 for ages 36 and over. Most of them were highly educated (%85.4 had at least a bachelor's degree).

#### **3.2. Questionnaire Design**

The scale from Freeman and Spyridakis (2004) was used for measuring "perceived credibility of the information in the videos". The items for "perceived usefulness of the information in the videos" were prepared based on studies by Bouhleb et al. (2010), Davis (1989), Hsu et al. (2013), Mir and Rehman (2013), and Venkatesh and Davis (2000). The items for "attitude toward purchase" were adapted from Hsu et al. (2013), Saxena (2011), Hsu and Lin (2008). For "purchase intention", the scales proposed by Hsu and Tsou (2011), and Saxena (2011) were used. The items for "the number of views, likes, comments and replies" and "perceived video characteristics" were developed by the researchers since no relevant scales were found in literature. The items are included in the Appendix and they were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

### **4. Results**

SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 19.0 were used for the statistical analysis. As recommended by Fabrigar et al. (1999), the data set was randomly split into two groups and the first set was used for explanatory factor analysis to finalize the model items and to evaluate the reliability and validity. After finalizing the measurement model items, the second data set was used to

perform confirmatory factor analysis and to evaluate the hypotheses in the structural equation model.

**4.1.Explanatory Factor Analysis**

An explanatory factor analysis was performed using maximum likelihood approach and promax rotation (Gaskin, 2016). One item that was not loaded under any of the factors (PC5) and one item that was loaded very low (<0.4) under the factor (NVLCR4) were removed. The remaining items were loaded under six factors as proposed by the measurement model and explained 68% of the total variance. The results of KMO and Bartlett’s tests revealed a good fit (KMO value=0.941; Bartlett’s test chi-square=87147.5, df=325, p=0.000).

The reliability of the measurement items were measured with Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient and for all factors the values ranged from 0.757 to 0.949; exceeding the 0.70 recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Convergent validity was provided since the items related to a factor were loaded under the same factor and all the factor loadings were greater than 0.50 as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Discriminant validity was also provided since all the items were only loaded under one factor and the correlations between factors were lower than 0.70. These results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Item statistics, Cronbach’s Alpha values and factor correlations for explanatory factor analysis**

Factor	Item	Mean	SD	Factor Loading	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6
NVLCR (1)	NVLCR1	3.088	1.333	0.696	0.757	1.000	0.256	0.237	0.304	0.263	0.251
	NVLCR2	3.022	1.328	0.848							
	NVLCR3	2.427	1.219	0.593							
PC (2)	PC1	3.560	0.952	0.571	0.826	0.256	1.000	0.603	0.408	0.411	0.463
	PC2	2.702	0.988	0.608							
	PC3	3.266	0.940	0.857							
	PC4	3.286	0.923	0.852							
PU (3)	PU1	4.248	0.915	0.827	0.949	0.237	0.603	1.000	0.553	0.619	0.589
	PU2	4.329	0.870	0.838							
	PU3	3.996	1.027	0.787							
	PU4	4.123	0.959	0.876							
	PU5	4.111	0.989	0.942							
	PU6	4.132	0.998	0.933							
PVC (4)	PVC1	3.997	1.007	0.890	0.865	0.304	0.408	0.553	1.000	0.545	0.528
	PVC2	3.979	1.008	0.945							
	PVC3	3.688	1.169	0.669							
	PVC4	3.531	1.180	0.594							
ATP (5)	ATP1	3.917	1.034	0.691	0.935	0.263	0.411	0.619	0.545	1.000	0.636
	ATP2	4.064	1.035	0.900							
	ATP3	4.008	1.047	0.969							
	ATP4	3.999	1.027	0.885							
PI (6)	PI1	4.042	0.962	0.669	0.923	0.251	0.463	0.589	0.528	0.636	1.000
	PI2	3.712	1.066	0.821							
	PI3	3.822	1.041	0.914							
	PI4	3.833	1.014	0.909							
	PI5	3.912	0.981	0.799							

SD: Standard deviation,  $\alpha$ : Cronbach’s Alpha,

**4.2.Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

To confirm the adequacy of the measurement model, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed with the second data set. According to the existing thresholds (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2011; Marsh et al., 1986), the model exhibited adequate fit to the data as the



results in Table 2 show. Every path in the measurement model was statistically significant ( $t > 1.96$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ).

**Table 2. Goodness of fit statistics for the measurement model**

	$\chi^2 / df$	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	GFI	AGFI
<b>Measurement Model</b>	4.761	0.029	0.028	0.988	0.985	0.976	0.969

Before proceeding with the structural model, reliability and validity of the measurement model were checked again. Reliability was assured since composite reliability (CR) values were higher than 0.70 recommended by Hair et al. (2010) (Table 3). To control the convergent and discriminant validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) values must be higher than 0.50 for each construct and the square root of the AVE values must be higher than the correlation between the constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, Hair et al., 2010). According to the results that are shown in Table 3, square roots of AVE values were lower than the correlations confirming that discriminant validity is provided. For convergent validity, only the AVE value for NVLCR was slightly lower than 0.50. In this case, as proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), if CR value is higher than 0.60 then it can be said that convergent validity is not deteriorated. Therefore, both convergent and discriminant validity were provided for the confirmed model.

**Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis statistics**

	Mean	SD	CR	AVE	NVLCR	PC	PU	PVC	ATP	PI
NVLCR	2.870	1.048	0.713	0.467	<b>0.683</b>					
PC	3.187	0.764	0.805	0.512	0.327	<b>0.715</b>				
PU	4.138	0.881	0.947	0.748	0.284	0.655	<b>0.865</b>			
PVC	3.783	0.928	0.848	0.593	0.356	0.432	0.654	<b>0.770</b>		
ATP	4.009	0.955	0.928	0.763	0.317	0.530	0.669	0.552	<b>0.874</b>	
PI	3.856	0.906	0.925	0.712	0.290	0.505	0.627	0.542	0.689	<b>0.844</b>

Square root of AVE for each construct are shown on the main diagonal with bold. SD: Standard deviation; CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average Variance Extracted

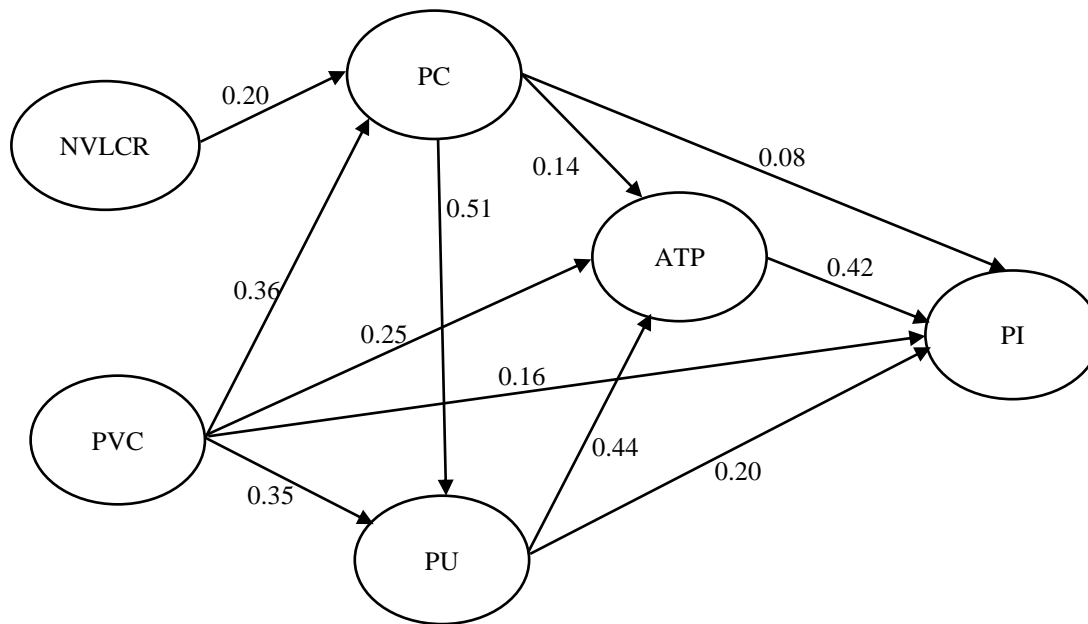
### 4.3. Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was examined using the maximum likelihood estimation procedure. The path between NVLCR and PU was found insignificant, so this path was removed and the model was tested again. The results exhibited adequate fit to the data as the results in Table 4 show. Figure 2 shows the path estimates of the research model, and all structural path estimates in the final model were statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 4. Goodness of fit statistics for the structural model**

Goodness of Fit Indices	$\chi^2 / df$	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	GFI	AGFI
<b>Structural Model</b>	4.798	0.03	0.03	0.988	0.985	0.976	0.969

**Figure 2. Final structural model**



According to the results, the number of views, likes, comments and replies had a positive effect on perceived credibility of the information ( $\beta_1=0.20$ ) whereas it didn't have a significant effect on perceived usefulness of the information in the videos. Therefore H1 was accepted and H2 was rejected.

Perceived credibility of the information was found to have a strong positive effect on the perceived usefulness of information ( $\beta_3=0.51$ ). In addition, it also had a significant positive effect on attitude toward purchase ( $\beta_4=0.14$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta_5=0.08$ ). Therefore, H<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> were accepted.

Perceived usefulness of the information had a significant positive effect on attitude toward purchase ( $\beta_6=0.44$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta_7=0.20$ ) leading to the acceptance of H<sub>6</sub> and H<sub>7</sub>.

Perceived video characteristics were found to have a significant and positive effect on all of the hypothesized structures ( $\beta_8=0.36$ ,  $\beta_9=0.35$ ,  $\beta_{10}=0.25$ , and  $\beta_{11}=0.16$  for PC, PU, ATP, and PI respectively). Therefore, H<sub>8</sub>, H<sub>9</sub>, H<sub>10</sub> and H<sub>11</sub> were accepted.

Lastly, attitude toward purchase had a strong positive effect on purchase intention ( $\beta_{12}=0.42$ ) which led to the acceptance of H<sub>12</sub>.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Considering all the results, it is seen that product related user generated content on YouTube affects purchase intention of consumers significantly and the degree of influence changes due to some factors. The current study focused on the videos that are shared in make-up / beauty channels on YouTube and aimed to assess the influence of several factors on purchase intention of consumers.

According to the results, the highest influence was seen between perceived credibility and perceived usefulness leading to the conclusion that people evaluate the information given in the videos as useful when they perceive that information as credible. This conclusion is also supported by previous research (McKnight and Kacmar, 2007; Mir and Rehman, 2013; Wang et al., 2006). As mentioned before, credible sources help developing positive attitudes (Chu and Kamal, 2008) and perceived credibility has a positive effect on attitude (Mir and Zaheer, 2012) and purchase intention (Hsu and Tsou, 2011). This study confirms previous findings by showing the significant effect of perceived credibility of the information in YouTube videos on attitude toward purchase and purchase intention.

Previous research has shown that the number of views, likes and comments has a positive effect on perceived credibility (Flanagin et al., 2011; Mir and Rehman, 2013; O'Reilly and Marx, 2011) which is also confirmed in the current study. But NVLCR was found to have no effect on perceived usefulness in this study which contradicts to the results proposed by Mir and Rehman (2013). It can be concluded that the interactions of other users can influence a consumers' perception of credibility of the information when watching a product related YouTube video, but this effect is not significant on the perception of usefulness of the information.

In line with previous research (Bouhlel, 2010; Hsu et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2010), the results of the current study confirms that perceived usefulness of the information given in YouTube videos is significantly important in determining consumers' attitudes toward purchase and purchase intentions. Consumers will consider YouTube contents useful if they think those information given in the videos will enhance their purchase performance and reduce the risk in making decisions, so the perception of usefulness will have an effect on attitude and intention toward purchase.

This study introduced a factor that is specific to YouTube videos. Perceived video characteristics were found to have a significant effect on perceived credibility, perceived usefulness, attitude toward purchase and purchase intention. It can be concluded that the quality and duration of the video as well as the preparation and presentation of the content are important factors which influence purchase decisions of consumers.

Lastly, the current study found that consumers' attitude toward purchase significantly affected purchase intention. Consumers who gain a positive attitude toward the products by watching product related make-up/beauty videos on YouTube showed a higher intention to purchase those products. This finding is consistent with other studies which showed the significant effect of attitude on intention (Bouhlel, 2010; Hsu and Lin, 2008; Saxena, 2011).

### **Implications for Marketers**

Competition among companies are heating up day by day and marketers are looking for alternative ways to attract consumers. YouTube has become one of the new social media platforms that brands and companies use to promote their products. Therefore, it will be useful for them to identify the factors that affect purchase intention of consumers who watch product related YouTube videos; and this thought created the starting point of this study.

The overall results of this study indicate that consumers are influenced by the product related information in YouTube videos, especially when this information is generated by users rather than companies. For this reason, it is important for brands and companies to deliver their marketing messages through ordinary users. Strategic alliances between companies and opinion leaders in the YouTube world can be formed to carry out marketing efforts. Product replacements in the videos, sending the channel owner some of the products free for their review or even paying them to promote their product can provide alternative marketing ways for companies. Of course, if the owner of the video is paid by the company, then this should be stated in the video for the sake of ethics. The issue of ethics will be an important subject in the near future because of the increasing use of YouTube videos by companies for marketing purposes.

### **Limitations and Future Research Possibilities**

There are several types of channels on YouTube and to facilitate the data collection, only make-up / beauty channels are taken into consideration in this study. Two of the selected channels are included in the process and since these channels generally appeal to women, only women responses were included in the analyses. Therefore, the results may not represent the whole population. Further research may focus on different types of channels and men's reaction to videos. Moreover, ethics will be an important subject for companies when using YouTube channels to promote their products; and future research may focus on this topic. In conclusion, despite its limitations, this study is thought to provide a new perspective on the subject and become an inspiration for future research.

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#### **Appendix. Questionnaire Items**

The final items that are used in hypothesis testing are marked with \*.

##### ***The number of views, likes, comments and replies (NVLCR)***

**NVLCR1\***. If the video is viewed by many people, it affects my perspective on the information given in the video.

**NVLCR2\***. If the video is liked by many people, it affects my perspective on the information given in the video.

**NVLCR3\***. If many people comment on the video, it affects my perspective on the information given in the video.

**NVLCR4**. If vlogger often answers the comments, it affects my perspective on the information given in the video.

##### ***Perceived credibility of the information in the videos (PC)***

**PC1\***. I think that the product information given in the video is credible.

**PC2\***. I think that the product information given in the video is expert.

**PC3\***. I think that the product information given in the video is trustworthy.

**PC4\***. I think that the product information given in the video is accurate.

**PC5**. I think that the product information given in the video is biased (reverse coded).

##### ***Perceived usefulness of information in the videos (PU)***

**PU1\***. I think that the product information given in the video makes my purchase easier.

**PU2\***. I think that the product information given in the video provides useful information for my purchase.

**PU3\***. I think that the product information given in the video is valuable for my purchase.

**PU4\***. I think that the product information given in the video is a convenient source of information for my purchase.

**PU5\***. I think that the product information given in the video makes my purchase more effective.

**PU6\***. I think that the product information given in the video makes my purchase more efficient.

##### ***Perceived video characteristics (PVC)***

**PVC1\***. If the content of the video is well-prepared, it affects my perspective on the information given in the video.

**PVC2\***. If the content of the video is well-presented, it affects my perspective on the information given in the video.

**PVC3\***. If the shooting quality of the video is good, it affects my perspective on the information given in the video.

**PVC4\***. If the length of the video is adequate, it affects my perspective on the information given in the video.

*Attitude toward purchase (ATP)*

**ATP1\***. After watching the video, I think positively toward purchasing.

**ATP2\***. After watching the video, I like purchasing.

**ATP3\***. After watching the video, I feel good about purchasing.

**ATP4\***. After watching the video, my attitude toward purchasing is positive.

*Purchase Intention (PI)*

**PI1\***. Given the chance, I would consider purchasing the products that are mentioned in the video in the future.

**PI2\***. It is likely that I shall actually purchase the products that are mentioned in the video in the near future.

**PI3\***. Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase the products that are mentioned in the video.

**PI4\***. I will try the products that are mentioned in the video in the future.

**PI5\***. I intend to consider the products that are mentioned in the video in my future purchases.