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## **The Influence of Beauty-Related YouTube content on Consumers' Purchase Intention**

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kyungji Lee entitled "The Influence of Beauty-Related YouTube content on Consumers' Purchase Intention." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication and Information.

Sally J. McMillan, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Courtney C. Childers, Ronald E. Taylor

Accepted for the Council:

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

**The Influence of Beauty-Related YouTube content on Consumers' Purchase  
Intention**

**A Thesis Presented for the  
Master of Science  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Kyungji Lee  
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## **Abstract**

With the development of the internet, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has been considered a significantly effective tool to appeal to consumers. Many previous studies have investigated eWOM, but most of them focused on textual eWOM. Thus, this study examines eWOM in the context of beauty-related videos on YouTube. The Information Adoption Model is used to test whether those videos influence cosmetics purchase intention of consumers. This study conducted an online survey of 427 female millennials. The collected data was analyzed by Partial Least Square (PLS) regression. The results confirmed that information quality and source credibility were the important determinants of perceived information usefulness which significantly and positively influenced information adoption and purchase intention. Moreover, this study also supported the extended vision about the relationship between information quality and source credibility in the context of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). Based on the results, theoretical and practical implications are highlighted.

*Key words:* Electronic word of mouth (eWOM), YouTube, Information Adoption Model (IAM), information quality, source credibility, purchase intention

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The Internet has changed word-of-mouth (WOM). According to Sun, Youn, Wu, and Kuntaraporn (2006), WOM is a transmission communication of spoken information related to brands, products, and services; it occurs between people who have strong-tied relationships (e.g. friends or relatives) in person. However, since the emergence of the Internet, consumers are able to share their opinions with others without a face-to-face interaction. In addition, due to the characteristics of the Internet, consumers are able to provide and share their opinions related to products with people who are known as well as total strangers. They can also use text as well as video communication that is digitally captured and stored indefinitely. Hence, the online context not only has extended the number of people who can be reached with WOM but also has extended the period of time during which WOM can continue to influence. WOM in the online context has been defined as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (King, Racherla, & Bush, 2014; C. Park & Lee, 2009). Researchers have found that eWOM improves advertising impact on consumers by reaching mass audiences faster and more conveniently with less face-to-face human pressure (Kim, Cheong, & Kim, 2017) and eWOM also has a higher potential to affect consumers' decision-making process than does content produced directly by advertisers (Tang, 2017).

Consumers tend to perceive the user-generated content (UGC) of eWOM as more credible and more useful than producer-generated content because consumers do not perceive that UGC results in commercial gains (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto, & Buultjens, 2009; Purnawirawan, De Pelsmacker, & Dens, 2012; Sun et al., 2006). Additionally, eWOM occurs when consumers

tend to search for information voluntarily. This spontaneous exposure to information related to brands leads consumer not only to accept information related to the brand as less intrusive than producer-generated content but also encourages them to participate in eWOM (Chu & Kim, 2011; Purnawirawan et al., 2012).

Consumers participate in eWOM through various platforms: e-commerce websites, discussion forums, review sites, blogs, and social networking sites (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Chu & Kim, 2011). Researchers have suggested that social media is the ideal tool for eWOM because social media not only reaches thousands of consumers but also leads consumers to participate in the social interactions by sharing their opinions and representing their preference about product-related information (Chu & Kim, 2011; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). Social media or UGC sites have been considered as the appropriate platform of eWOM (Cox et al., 2009; Erkan & Evans, 2016).

Most previous studies focused on the text of eWOM messages in venues such as e-commerce websites, discussion forums, online consumer reviews, and social media (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; King et al., 2014; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). YouTube as one of the popular social media in the world has been used by many global consumers. In a study of social media and eWOM, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) noted that one of the participants preferred Instagram to other social media because of visual elements of Instagram. Nevertheless, visual eWOM has not received much attention from the academic world (King et al., 2014). Therefore, this study investigates whether content on YouTube affects consumers' intentions to purchase particularly in the context of cosmetics products.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### YouTube as eWOM

YouTube (61%) has the second highest global active usage penetrations after Facebook (70%) and 55% of YouTube users access it every day or more than once a day (GlobalWebIndex, 2017; Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2017). YouTube users can create their own videos and share the video with many other people via YouTube as well as other social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Google plus, LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc.) (Oh et al., 2017). Among various content categories on YouTube, the beauty category shows a great growth trend. According to Pixability (September, 2017), YouTube reached 55 billion beauty-related content views in 2016 and was expected to increase to 88 billion content views in 2017. In addition, beauty-related content consists of more than 95% UGC and less than 5% producer-generated content. Hence, YouTube is a powerful eWOM platform in the beauty industry.

According to The Benchmarking Company (2016), 88% of cosmetics consumers spend a half of their time online to find beauty products before deciding on their purchase. Also, 78% of consumers consider social media as the source to easily find personalized information about products; TABS Analytics (2016) reported that YouTube was ranked as the most important social media in helping consumers make buying decisions for cosmetics. This situation may occur because cosmetics are considered as experience goods (Lian & Yen, 2013). Experience goods are defined as a product or service for which quality cannot be observed easily before purchasing and which is evaluated through consumers' experiences (Lian & Yen, 2013; Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014). Purnawirawan et al. (2012) found that consumers perceived UGC

related to experience goods more credible and more useful than producer-generated content. Additionally, McAulay (2017) reported that 80% of participants wanted to see how a YouTube vloggers or Instagram influencers look when they apply makeup products. Also, 78% of the participants were willing to purchase the product when they visually see what it looks like on YouTube vloggers or Instagram influencers' faces (McAulay, 2017). This study further explores the link between purchase intention and eWOM in the context of video social media content related to cosmetic products with the focus on the following broad question: Does beauty-related UGC on YouTube affect the consumers' intention to purchase cosmetics? This study seeks to go beyond that simple question by exploring purchase intention in the context of the Information Acceptance Model.

### **Information Adoption Model and Purchase Intention**

With the development of social media, consumers have been exposed to a large amount of eWOM information and affected by that content both intentionally or unintentionally when they make their purchase decisions (Erkan & Evans, 2016). The eWOM influence on consumers' attitudes and behaviors can be different depending on the characteristics of receivers, senders, and content (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008). Therefore, previous researchers studied various eWOM characteristics as predictors of consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Among various approaches to illustrate the influence of eWOM information, a few studies used the Information Adoption Model (IAM) because this model has an ability to explain eWOM information (Cheung et al., 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016).

IAM integrates the adoption models based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)/ Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Sussman

& Siegal, 2003). TRA and TAM are a useful theoretical explanation to understand how people have the behavior intention to adapt messages, but these model cannot answer how individuals are affected by information that they gain (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). To complement this, Sussman and Siegal (2003) applied the ELM. According to the ELM, people can process information in two ways: central and peripheral. In the central route, people consider issue-relevant information and arguments while in the peripheral route people are affected by other factors such as attractiveness or expertise of the communicators (Cacioppo & Petty, 1984; Teng, Khong, & Goh, 2015). Both routes to process information were reflected as two components in IAM: information quality (argument quality/central route) and source credibility (peripheral route). Therefore, IAM assumed that information quality and source credibility as the antecedents of information usefulness (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). While this model can illustrate how information is adopted by consumers, it is not able to explain how this process affects consumers' behavioral intention. Therefore, Erkan and Evans (2016) added purchase intention to examine how this information adoption process influences the behavioral intention of consumers. In other words, Erkan and Evans (2016) suggested that IAM was not appropriate to identify how eWOM influenced the purchase intention of consumers, thus they included consumers' behaviors based on the information that they get via eWOM.

In sum, IAM (Sussman & Siegal, 2003) integrating TAM and TRA explained how consumers adapted information depending on information quality (central route) and source credibility (peripheral route). Erkan and Evans (2016) extended IAM by including consumers' behavior to understand how information adoption affected consumers purchase intention. The model combining IAM and consumers' behavior intention is called as Information Acceptance

Model (IACM). This study uses IACM which is a new model of Erkan and Evans (2016) to confirm the impact of eWOM on consumers' behavioral intention. To apply this new model, this study identifies how consumers accept product information in YouTube content depending on YouTube content quality and source credibility and how the accepted information influenced consumers' intention to buy cosmetic products that appeared in YouTube content. This study builds on the four basic constructions of the Information Adoption model shown below (see Figure 1) and also explores purchase intention as shown in Figure 2.

### ***Information Usefulness, Information Adoption, and Purchase Intention***

The term 'Information usefulness' is derived from the perceived usefulness construct of TAM and defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance (Davis, 1989, p. 320)." Perceived usefulness and the perceived ease of use were the factors to affect attitude toward system use and behavioral intention to use (Davis, 1989; Legris, Ingham, & Collette, 2003). Perceived usefulness was considered as the more important factor to determine the adoption intention than the perceived

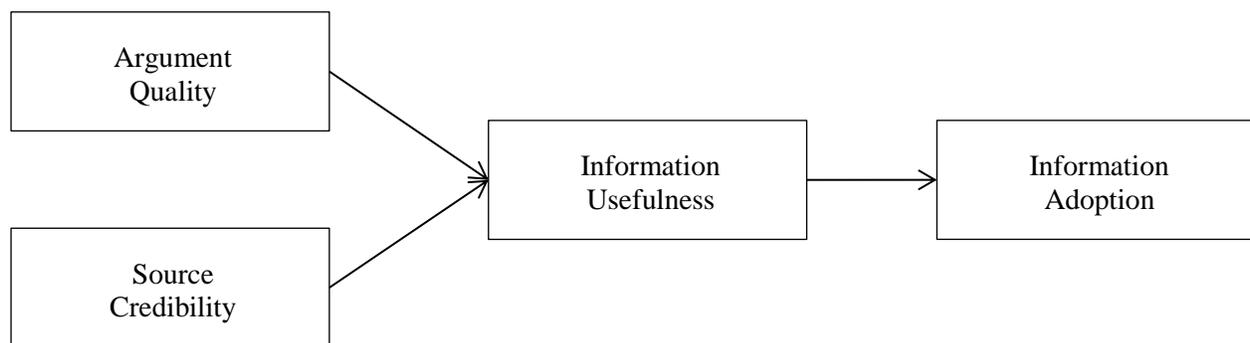


Figure 1. Information Adoption Model (IAM)

*Note.* Adapted from Sussman and Siegal (2003, p. 52)

ease of use; the perceived usefulness impacted on determining intention to use 50% more than perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Thus, Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989) also suggested that perceived usefulness served as the predictor of intention to use. To apply this aspect to IAM, information usefulness can be defined as the degree of the individual's perception that information improves their performances and can be assumed as the predictor of information adoption (Cheung et al., 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

As detailed above, information usefulness has been considered as the determining factor of information adoption and purchase intention because when people think that provided information is useful (information usefulness) and consider the information as the source to make their purchase decisions (information adoption), their purchase intention will increase (Hsu, Chuan-Chuan Lin, & Chiang, 2013; C. Park & Lee, 2009). In this process, information adoption can be defined as the extent to which consumers accept information that motivates them to buy a product (Coursaris & Van Osch, 2016; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). In addition, purchase intention refers to consumer's intention to be willing to purchase a product (Lu et al., 2014). Thus, if people believe that the eWOM information is useful and accept that information, their impression toward objects recommended from the information leads to positive attitudes and behaviors (Purnawirawan et al., 2012). Therefore, this study hypothesizes;

H1: The more consumers adopt information that beauty-related content on YouTube contains, the higher purchase intention consumers have.

H2: The more consumers consider information contained in beauty-related content on YouTube useful, the more they adopt information.

Information usefulness, the predictor of information adoption and purchase intention is influenced by two factors; information quality (central route) and source credibility (peripheral route) (Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

### ***Information Quality (Argument Quality)***

The information quality, central route, influence the degree of informational impact (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Thus, information quality can determine how much persuasive power eWOM information has (Cheung et al., 2008). Because anyone can provide information about products, services, or brands in the online environment, the amount of eWOM information has increased, but researchers have found that the information quality inevitably decreases (Cheung et al., 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016). To influence the consumers' decision making positively, high quality information should be provided (Matute, Polo-Redondo, & Utrillas, 2016; D.-H. Park, Lee, & Han, 2007). The information quality can be divided into four dimensions; relevance, timeliness, accuracy, and comprehensiveness (Cheung et al., 2008; Matute et al., 2016; Tang, 2017; Yu & Natalia, 2013).

Relevance, the first element of information quality, is related to time because consumers need to find appropriate information as quickly as they spend (Cheung et al., 2008). For this reason, consumers prefer relevant information (Yu & Natalia, 2013). It means that if the content provides information which consumers are looking for, consumers satisfy and adapt information to decide their purchase (Filieri & McLeay, 2014). Second, timeliness is the extent to which information is current, timely and up-to-date. According to Cheung and Thadani (2012), the timelier the recommendation is, the more consumers perceive the recommendation as useful. The third element is information accuracy which refers to the consumers' perception of whether the

information is correct or not (Yu & Natalia, 2013). Nelson, Todd, and Wixom (2005) also mentioned that information accuracy means information is correct, unambiguous, and objective as well as meaningful and believable. Information accuracy was discovered to predict information adoption when consumers read online reviews (Filiari & McLeay, 2014). Lastly, comprehensiveness relates to completeness (Cheung et al., 2008). Jin, Cheung, Lee, and Chen (2009) mentioned that completeness was one of the characteristics of information quality. According to Cheung and Thadani (2012), two-sided communication, one of the eWOM characteristics, improves the completeness of information. Therefore, prior studies included this element as one of information quality (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006; Cheng & Ho, 2015; Cheung et al., 2008; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Yu & Natalia, 2013). Hence, when eWOM information is up-to-date, reliable, relevant, and in-depth, and when it includes all necessary values, consumers seem to accept information as useful to make their buying decisions (Matute et al., 2016). According to Erkan and Evans (2016), information quality is positively associated with information usefulness which increases the purchase intention. Therefore,

H3: The higher information quality, the more consumers perceive beauty-related content on YouTube to be useful.

### ***Source Credibility***

Credibility has been defined as the believability of information or its sources to affect consumers attitude as well as their behavioral intention in the decision making process (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013). Focusing on sources providing information, source credibility refers to the degree of receiver's perception that they believe message source is trustworthy (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). The previous studies considered source credibility as an important characteristic of

eWOM because the eWOM information is provided by anonymous people. In the online environment, people tend to evaluate source credibility subjectively because consumers do not have enough cues (acquaintance with sources, opportunities to judge a source's facial expression and clothing, etc) to interpret sources' opinions (Ayeh et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2017). Thus, most of the studies seem to agree that source credibility includes trustworthiness and expertise which can be considered depending on consumers' subjective perceptions or visual features (star ratings, characteristics of reviewers, a price of products) (Ayeh et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2017; Willemsen, Neijens, Bronner, & De Ridder, 2011).

According to Ayeh et al. (2013), trustworthiness refers to the consumers' trust for the source's intent to provide mostly valid information contrary to expertise defined as the degree that consumers are convinced that the source provides valid information. Thus, trustworthiness relates to intention whereas expertise has the association with the source itself. Both components were measured by consolidating them in source credibility as well as considering them separately. In terms of trustworthiness, Hsu et al. (2013) discovered this component significantly affected information usefulness and purchase intention. Especially, although trustworthiness cannot influence purchase intention due to the low blogger reputation, trustworthiness has a critical effect on information usefulness, thus it affects the intention indirectly. Expertise also functions as the critical role in influencing information usefulness. Kim et al. (2017) reported that the higher the perceived expertise is, the more persuasive the message is. In other words, a source's higher expertise increases individual's belief about information usefulness. Therefore, it is natural that integrated source credibility is considered as "a fundamental cue in the decision-

making process that impacts not only individuals' overall attitude [of using UGC] but also their [purchase] intention" (Ayeh et al., 2013, p. 444). Hence, this study hypothesizes:

H4: The higher perceive source credibility, the more consumers perceive beauty-related content on YouTube to be useful.

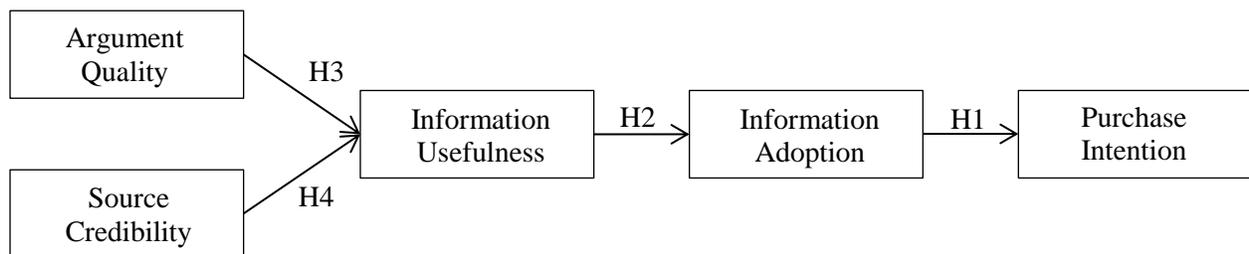


Figure 2. Information Adoption Model (IAM) with purchase intention

*Note.* Adapted from Erkan and Evans (2016, p. 50)

## **Chapter 3**

### **Method**

#### **Participant**

To investigate whether beauty-related videos on YouTube influence consumers' cosmetics purchase intention, this study conducted an online survey of female YouTube users in the age range of 18 to 34 because 62% of female millennials watch YouTube videos related to beauty and style while each other content on YouTube has less than 10% of YouTube content views of female millennials (OpenSlate, 2016). In addition, according to Krista McAulay (2017), millennial women in the age range of 18 to 34 tended to trust beauty brands and their products through accessible online reviews on various social media: YouTube, Instagram, and blogs. McAulay (2017) also reported that 78% of the millennials agreed that their purchase intention of cosmetics would be increased if they watched recommendation videos from YouTube or Instagram beauty gurus in which the gurus tried beauty products on their faces. Therefore, the researcher conducted the online survey of female millennials using a commercial panel of YouTube users who watch beauty videos.

#### **Procedure**

The questionnaire was delivered to participants online. After the researcher qualified the survey participants as user of YouTube beauty videos, they answered 15 close-ended questions to identify their YouTube usage behaviors, to understand the factors influencing their purchase intentions such as information quality (argument quality), source credibility, perceived information usefulness, and information adaptation, and to gain their demographic information. The survey was implemented anonymously by allocating a random code to each participant.

Participants took from 5-10 minutes to answer questions divided into three parts: screening questions, questions related to five variables, and demographic questions. The first part of the questionnaire is to check participants YouTube usage behaviors and to define the appropriate respondents. Then the appropriate respondents scored how much they agree with the questions related to five variables: information quality, source credibility, information usefulness, information adoption, and purchase intention.

### **Measures**

This study measured five variables based on several previous studies; information quality, source credibility, information usefulness, information adoption, and purchase intention. To identify the relationship among five variables, this study conducted a survey with close-ended questions. Participants rated all variables on a seven-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). These were explained below and detailed in Table 1.

#### ***Information Quality***

Information quality consisted of four dimensions; relevance, timeliness, accuracy, and comprehensiveness. These dimensions were identified in the previous studies (Cheung et al., 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Tang, 2017). In the survey, information quality included “[The information about products which are shared by beauty content videos on YouTube...] I think it is relevant”, “I think it is appropriate”, “I think it is up-to-date”, “I think it is timely”, “I think it is accurate”, “I think it is reliable”, “I think it is comprehensive”, and “I think it is sufficient breadth and depth.”

### ***Source Credibility***

Source credibility was divided into two essentials; trustworthiness and expertise (Cheung et al., 2008). The items were “[YouTubers who provide information about the product via beauty content on YouTube...] I think they are trustworthy”, “I think they are reliable”, “I think they are experts in evaluating the quality of cosmetics”, “I think they are experts in evaluating the quality of cosmetics.”

### ***Information Usefulness***

Information usefulness was defined as the degree of the people’s perception that information improves their performances and assumed as the predictor of information adoption. To measure information usefulness that consumers perceived, this study refined the studies of Erkan and Evans (2016) and Sussman and Siegal (2003); “I think it is useful”, “I think it is informative”, “I think it is valuable.”

### ***Information Adoption***

According to Coursaris and Van Osch (2016) and Sussman and Siegal (2003), information adoption referred to the extent to which consumers accepted information that motivated them to buy a product. Therefore, this study implemented the survey with several questions (Erkan & Evans, 2016); “The beauty content on YouTube makes easier for me to make my purchase decision”, “The beauty content on YouTube enhances my effectiveness in making your purchase decision.”

### ***Purchase Intention***

Purchase intention was defined as the consumer’s intention to be willing to purchase a product (Lu et al., 2014). To define the purchase intention after watching the videos about

cosmetic products, the survey included four questions: “[After considering information about cosmetic products which are shared by beauty YouTubers on YouTube...] it is very likely that I will buy the product”, “I will purchase the product next time I need a product”, “I will definitely try the product”, “I will recommend the product to my friends.”

Table 1.  
*Measure*

Variable	Items
<b>Information quality</b> (Cheung et al., 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Tang, 2017)	The information about products which are shared by beauty content videos on YouTube...  Relevance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think it is relevant.</li> <li>• I think it is appropriate.</li> </ul> Timeliness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think it is up-to-date.</li> <li>• I think it is timely.</li> </ul> Accuracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think it is accurate.</li> <li>• I think it is reliable.</li> </ul> Comprehensiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think it is comprehensive</li> <li>• I think it is sufficient breadth and depth.</li> </ul>

Table 1 Continued.  
*Measure*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Items</b>
<b>Source credibility</b> (Cheung et al., 2008; Sussman & Siegal, 2003)	<p>YouTubers who provide information about the product via beauty content on YouTube...</p> <p>Trustworthiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think they are trustworthy</li> <li>• I think they are reliable.</li> </ul> <p>Expert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think they are knowledgeable in evaluating the quality of cosmetics.</li> <li>• I think they are experts in evaluating the quality of cosmetics.</li> </ul>
<b>Information usefulness</b> (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Sussman & Siegal, 2003)	<p>The information about products which are shared by beauty content videos delivered by beauty YouTubers...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think it is useful.</li> <li>• I think it is informative.</li> <li>• I think it is valuable.</li> </ul>
<b>Information adoption</b> (Erkan & Evans, 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The beauty content on YouTube makes easier for me to make my purchase decision.</li> <li>• The beauty content on YouTube enhances my effectiveness in making my purchase decision.</li> </ul>
<b>Purchase intention</b> (Erkan & Evans, 2016)	<p>After considering information about cosmetic products which are shared by beauty YouTubers on YouTube...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is very likely that I will buy the product.</li> <li>• I will purchase the product next time I need a product.</li> <li>• I will definitely try the product.</li> <li>• I will recommend the product to my friends.</li> </ul>

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Demographics and Descriptive Statistics

A total of 587 respondents were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk)-a crowd-sourcing internet marketplace that allows researchers to draw samples online; The total number did not include the participants deemed ineligible by the screening questions because they could not complete the survey. However, 60 questionnaires were invalid; The answered age of some participants was higher than the age range of 18 to 34 at the end of the survey even though they answered 'yes' to a screening question. Thus 427 questionnaires were analyzed for female millennials and ranging from 18 to 34 in age and their average age is 27.8 years old (SD=3.984) (see Table 2). Most of respondents were White and/or Caucasian (non-Hispanic) (n=275, 61.4%) followed by Black or African American (n=55, 12.3%) Hispanic (n=47, 10.5%), Asian (n=45, 10%), American Indian or Alaska Native (n=23, 5.1%), and other (n=3, 0.7%) (Table 3). The education levels of the respondents consisted of 'Did not complete high school (0.2%)', 'high school (11.7%)', 'some college (29.3%)', 'Bachelor's degree (45%)', 'Master's degree (11.9%)', 'Ph.D. (1.2%)' (see Table 3). Also, the respondents tend to watch general YouTube videos for 9.8 hours per week. Of almost 10 hours, they spend 3.9 hours per week to consume cosmetics videos on YouTube. In other word, respondents tended to spend 40% of their average viewing time of YouTube consuming videos related to cosmetics. Additionally, the longer participants watched YouTube, the longer they consume beauty-related videos on YouTube ( $r = 0.753$ ). Also, the duration of viewing time had positive association with purchase intention (see Table 4).

Table 2.  
*Sample characteristics: age, viewing time of general videos/ cosmetics videos on YouTube*

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Age</b>	27.8	30	3.984
<b>Viewing time of general YouTube videos (hour)</b>	9.79	5	10.04
<b>Viewing time of cosmetics YouTube videos (hour)</b>	3.95	1	5.34

Table 3.  
*Frequencies and percentages of race/ethnicity and education level*

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	American Indian or Alaska Native	23	5.1%
	Asian	45	10%
	Black or African American	55	12.3%
	White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	275	61.4%
	Hispanic	47	10.5%
	Other	3	0.7%
	<b>Education Level</b>	Did not complete high school	1
High school		50	11.7%
Some college		125	29.3%
Bachelor's degree		192	45%
Master's degree		51	11.9%
Ph.D. degree		5	1.2%
Other		3	0.7%

Table 4.  
*Correlations between viewing time and purchase intention*

		<b>VT1</b>	<b>VT2</b>	<b>PI1</b>	<b>PI2</b>	<b>PI3</b>	<b>PI4</b>
<b>VT1</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.753**	.156**	.137**	.167**	.179**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.001	.004	.001	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	4292 7.030	17187.0 16	863.8 88	766.8 48	977.9 95	1135.6 09
<b>VT2</b>	Pearson Correlation	.753* *	1	.218**	.221**	.242**	.230**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1718 7.016	12148.6 85	643.0 02	655.0 19	754.7 17	779.72 3
<b>PI1</b>	Pearson Correlation	.156* *	.218**	1	.734**	.646**	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000		.000	.000	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	863.8 88	643.002	715.0 30	528.5 62	487.7 10	506.75 2
<b>PI2</b>	Pearson Correlation	.137* *	.221**	.734**	1	.623**	.555**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.000		.000	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	766.8 48	655.019	528.5 62	725.7 61	474.0 23	458.95 6

Table 4 Continued.

*Correlations between viewing time and purchase intention*

		<b>VT1</b>	<b>VT2</b>	<b>PI1</b>	<b>PI2</b>	<b>PI3</b>	<b>PI4</b>
<b>PI3</b>	Pearson	.167*	.242**	.646**	.623**	1	.656**
	Correlation	*					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000		.000
	Sum of Squares	977.9	754.717	487.7	474.0	798.1	568.90
	and Cross-products	95		10	23	55	6
<b>PI4</b>	Pearson	.179*	.230**	.617**	.555**	.656**	1
	Correlation	*					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	Sum of Squares	1135.609	779.723	506.7	458.9	568.9	942.17
	and Cross-products			52	56	06	8

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Note.* VT1 (YouTube viewing time), VT2 (beauty-related YouTube video viewing time), PI1(Purchase Intention 1-It is very likely that I will buy the product), PI2 (Purchase Intention 2- I will purchase the product next time I need a product), PI3 (Purchase Intention 3-I will definitely try the product), PI4 (Purchase Intention4-I recommend the product to my friends)

## **Measurement Model**

The model was evaluated by using the Partial Least Squares (PLS). PLS was defined as a latent structural equation modeling technique which has been applied to study a customer satisfaction (Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, & Lauro, 2005). This study used “Smart PLS” to analyze data by using the Partial Least Square (PLD) path modeling.

### ***Convergent Validity***

Convergent Validity consists of the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) to judge how items are theoretically associated with each other or whether they are in the same measurement or not. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the critical values of CR and AVE were 0.70 and 0.50, thus if CR and AVE of each variable are over the acceptable value of CR and AVE, each variable is related to each other. Fornell and Larcker (1981) also mentioned if the value of Cronbach’s Alpha is over 0.60, the variable would have a fulfilled reliability. As shown in Table 5, CR of each variable was more than 0.90 and CR values of all variables were in the range of 0.907 to 0.930. In the case of AVE, the score of each variable was more than 0.50 and AVE values of all variables were included in the range of 0.585 to 0.869. All variables fulfilled the recommended level thus the convergent validity is achieved. In addition, each value of the variables is over 0.80, thus all variables seem to have high internal consistencies. Moreover, the factor loading 0.7 means a high indicator reliability, but an item with the factor loading in the range of less than 0.7 can be considered to remove to increase AVE. Among all items, Comprehensiveness 2 has the low score (0.591), but it is not necessary to be removed because AVE of information quality fulfills the recommended level (more than 0.50).

Table 5.  
*Convergent Validity (Factor loading, CR, and AVE)*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor loading</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Information Quality</b> (Argument Quality) (M= 5.5035, SD= 0.91979, $\alpha= 0.879$ )	Relevance1	0.826	0.918	0.585
	Relevance2	0.791		
	Timeliness1	0.781		
	Timeliness2	0.771		
	Accuracy1	0.810		
	Accuracy1	0.781		
	Comprehensiveness1	0.740		
	Comprehensiveness2	0.591		
<b>Source Credibility</b> (M= 5.2664, SD= 1.05984, $\alpha= 0.863$ )	Trustworthiness1	0.866	0.907	0.710
	Trustworthiness2	0.892		
	Expert1	0.833		
	Expert2	0.775		
<b>Information Usefulness</b> (M= 5.7744, SD= 0.98600, $\alpha= 0.874$ )	IUseful1	0.902	0.923	0.799
	IUseful2	0.919		
	IUseful1	0.902		
<b>Information Adoption</b> (M= 5.6674, SD= 1.12095, $\alpha= 0.849$ )	IAdoption1	0.931	0.930	0.869
	IAdoption2	0.933		
<b>Purchase intention</b> (M= 4.9315, SD= 1.16375, $\alpha= 0.876$ )	PI1	0.886	0.915	0.729
	PI2	0.866		
	PI3	0.852		
	PI4	0.807		

*Note.* M = mean, SD = Std. deviation,  $\alpha$  = Chronbach's Alpha, CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted

### *Discriminant Validity*

Discriminant validity explains how different measurement each variable has compared to other variables. This validity was estimated from each of the square roots of AVE; if the score of the correlations between variables is not higher than 0.85 and is not greater than the other correlation coefficients, the discriminant validity would be acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kline & Santor, 1999). As presented in Table 6, the discriminant validity achieved the recommended level.

Table 6.  
*Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)*

	<b>Information Quality</b>	<b>Source Credibility</b>	<b>Information Usefulness</b>	<b>Information Adoption</b>	<b>Purchase Intention</b>
<b>Information Quality</b>	0.765				
<b>Source Credibility</b>	0.807	0.842			
<b>Information Usefulness</b>	0.836	0.743	0.894		
<b>Information Adoption</b>	0.707	0.678	0.725	0.932	
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	0.574	0.647	0.551	0.610	0.854

*Note.* These scaled variables that combine all of the related items.

### ***Measurement Model Evaluation***

To answer whether beauty-related UGC on YouTube affects the consumers' intention to purchase cosmetics, this study formulated four hypotheses based on the model. The result of PLS regression analysis stated that all four hypotheses were supported by statistically significant findings.

As presented in Table 7, information adoption is positively associated with purchase intention with path coefficient 0.610 and t-value 17.351 ( $p < 0.001$ ). Information adoption explains 37.2% of purchase intention. Moreover, as shown in Figure 3, information adoption is positively influenced from information usefulness which explains 52.5% of the variance in information adoption. Thus, if consumers consider information delivered through beauty-related YouTube useful, consumers would adopt information to consider their cosmetic purchase; H2 had 0.725 path coefficient with 21.851 t-value ( $p < 0.001$ ) which mean that information usefulness has a significant association with information adoption. Further, information quality and source credibility have a positive relationship with information usefulness. Specifically, information quality has a bigger influence on information usefulness than source credibility; the path coefficient of information quality (0.676, t-value 13.166,  $p < 0.001$ ) is higher than that of source credibility (0.197, t-value 3.766,  $p < 0.001$ ); both dependent variables explained 71.2% of the variance on information usefulness.

Furthermore, the goodness-of-fit indices estimated how the model fitted the data. This study used standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and normed-fit index (NFI). SRMR is the revised version of root mean square residual and in the range from 0 to 1; if the score is less than 0.05, a model is considered as the well-fitted model, but if it is higher than 0.08, the

model would not be acceptable (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). NFI is also in the range of 0 to 1; if the value is greater than 0.9, the model is considered as a good-fit model (Hooper et al., 2008). However, the values of these indices for this model are 0.063 (SRMR) and 0.818 (NFI); it means the model is not good enough fit. The reason may be because of the relationship between information quality and source credibility. According to the additional analysis of this model, source credibility has a strong association with information quality (path coefficient 0.812, t-value 43.528,  $p < 0.001$ ). It indicates that source credibility is considered as the dependent variable which affects information quality, not information usefulness.

Table 7.  
Hypothesis Tests Summary

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	Mean	Std. Deviation	T statistics	P values
<b>H1</b>	Information Adoption → Purchase Intention	0.610	0.611	0.035	17.351	0.000
<b>H2</b>	Information Usefulness → Information Adoption	0.725	0.722	0.033	21.851	0.000
<b>H3</b>	Information Quality (Argument Quality) → Information Usefulness	0.676	0.677	0.051	13.166	0.000
<b>H4</b>	Source Credibility → Information Usefulness	0.197	0.196	0.052	3.766	0.000

*Note.* Path coefficient matches the standardized regression coefficients such as the  $\beta$  weights (Carey, 1998).

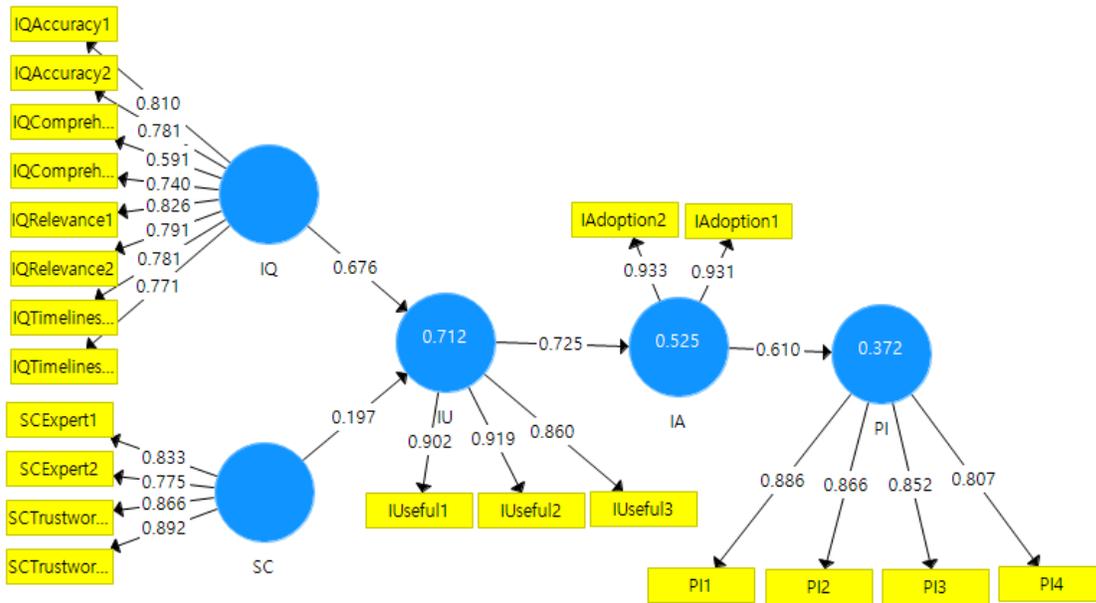


Figure 3. Research Model Results

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

YouTube as an appropriate platform of eWOM has not been explored although various platforms (e.g., e-commerce websites, discussion forums, review sites, blogs, and social networking sites) have consolidated its position as an effective tool to lead consumers' purchase intentions. Thus, this study tested the influence of beauty-related YouTube videos on purchase intentions by applying the Information Adoption Model (IAM) (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Sussman & Siegal, 2003); this study explored information quality (argument quality), source credibility, information usefulness, information adoption, and purchase intention. The structural equation model (Partial Least Squares, PLS) showed that all of the hypotheses were supported: 1) information adoption has positive association with purchase intention 2) information usefulness is significantly related to information adoption 3) information quality (argument quality) positively affects information usefulness 4) source credibility influences information usefulness positively. This study suggests theoretical and practical implications that the results implied and states limitations of this study and the future research suggestions.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study identified the application possibility of IAM to the influence of beauty-related videos on YouTube as an eWOM platform. As the previous studies presented, this study supported the relationship among information usefulness, information adoption, and purchase intention (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Jin et al., 2009; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). In this relationship among three variables, information usefulness has been considered as an important predictor of the other two variables (Erkan & Evans, 2016). In addition, this information usefulness is

evaluated based on the content of the message and source characteristics (King et al., 2014); IAM used information quality as the content of the message and source credibility as a source characteristic.

Jin et al. (2009) mentioned that information quality and source credibility affected information usefulness which had the significant association with information adoption. Information quality has been considered as the factor which affects consumers' purchase decisions of products and services in a computer-mediated environment because this variable improves consumers' perceptions toward the content of the messages that impact their purchase intentions (Cheung et al., 2008; Matute et al., 2016). Likewise, this study also identified information quality had the potentiality for consumers to perceive information embedded in a message useful; if consumers consider information useful, they would use the information to determine their purchase. According to the results, source credibility also was viewed as a determinant of perceived information usefulness as the results of the previous study which mentioned that consumers tended to be concerned about source credibility when they evaluated information related to products and services which they would buy; eWOM occurred from strangers that cause the concern over the source credibility (Cox et al., 2009).

However, this study presented different degrees to which each dependent variable (information quality and source credibility) affected information usefulness even though both determinants had the predicted positive relationship with information usefulness. Information quality had a bigger impact on information usefulness than source credibility. In this respect, Sussman and Siegal (2003) asserted that source credibility functioned as an additional argument factor which would affect information quality as well as a peripheral cue. Bhattacharjee and

Sanford (2006) added that information quality and source credibility were not exclusive. Also, they reported that consumers tended to view both variables as an issue-relevant argument because they sometimes used both central and peripheral routes when they accepted information. This aspect may relate to the initial support for that consumers focus on characteristics of the central route requiring the high elaboration processing because it usually occurs when consumers have the high level of the elaboration (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Willemssen et al., 2011). In this context, this study may not only extend the discussion about the relationship between information quality and source credibility as determinants of perceived usefulness but also imply that beauty-related YouTube videos would be influenced by the other peripheral cues such as source similarity, source affinity, and source reputation investigated by the previous studies (Cheung et al., 2008; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Filieri & McLeay, 2014; D.-H. Park et al., 2007).

### **Practical Implications**

This study suggests several practical implications for cosmetic-relevant practitioners. Currently millennials account for the highest portion of valuable consumers with a great economic power, thus many industries have targeted them as their consumers. Moreover, they tend to use various digital communication tools; especially, they consume social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and so on. Millennials with these characteristics are producers as well as consumers of eWOM and are more likely to believe user-generated content (UGC) of eWOM rather than producer-generated content.

YouTube videos are typical UGC of eWOM. YouTube, especially, serves as the powerful eWOM platform in the cosmetic industry because consumers tend to watch beauty-related videos

on YouTube to get helpful information before they decide their cosmetics purchases. Therefore, in this study's context, the practitioners can build platforms to support effective eWOM. These days, many brands collaborate with beauty gurus on social media, especially Instagram and YouTube because female millennials tend to be inclined to buy products and services which they have shown via influencers of YouTube. When the managers choose which beauty gurus are appropriate to promote their products, information quality and source credibility of the beauty gurus would be the essential standards. According to the results of this study, information quality has a strong influence on information usefulness. Even though source credibility has the weak association with information usefulness, the results suggest source credibility contribute to enhancing information quality. If targeted consumers of a brand have the high level of elaboration, these relationships are the necessary standard.

Additionally, the more purchase intentions the participants of this study have the longer beauty-related videos viewing time they have. This implies that the practitioners should consider heavy YouTube users as their core target audiences because heavy users have the higher potential of not only information adoption but also purchase intentions.

### **Limitations and Future Research Suggestions**

This study has several limitations. First, the goodness-of-fit of the model is not enough to approve it as the well-fitted model; the model of this study satisfied the minimum criteria of SRMR while it did not meet the standard of NFI. This would be affected by the relationship between information quality and source credibility; source credibility may be considered as the determinant factor of information quality as the previous studies presented (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). In addition, the model of this study did not consider

the level of the elaboration. The results of this study indicated that the relationship among information quality, source credibility, and information usefulness would be affected by the level of the elaboration. However, this study did not examine that relationship. Hence, further research can investigate the influence of YouTube UGC on the purchase intention by using IAM with different peripheral cues (e.g., source attractiveness, source similarity, source affinity, source reputation, etc.) as well as with the moderators of the relationships between the dependent variables and information usefulness which reflect the level of the elaboration.

Second, the respondents would be problematic. The questionnaire of this study spread via Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk). Mturk is a convenient and cost-saving data collection service, but it has the potential to recruit inattentive respondents because an online survey is self-administered. Hence, this study may be affected by the respondents who increase noise. Therefore, future research should consider using the Instructional manipulation check (IMC) – a new methodological tool to screen inadequate respondents (Berinsky, Margolis, & Sances, 2014; Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009).

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## Appendix

Appendix A  
Survey Questionnaire

**INTRODUCTION**

Hello, I am Kyungji Lee, a Master's student concentrating in Advertising at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. This study is about the behaviors of female Millennials who consume beauty content on YouTube.

**INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY**

This survey will take about 15 minutes of your time.

**RISKS**

There are no foreseeable risks greater than those encountered in everyday life involved with participating in this research.

**BENEFITS**

Participants will benefit from the results of this study that aim to understand the effect of beauty-related YouTube content on their decision-making in their cosmetic purchase.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your answers are anonymous and will **ONLY** be used for an academic Master's thesis.

**COMPENSATION**

After you complete the survey, you will be paid for your participation at \$ 0.80.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact my adviser, Sally McMillan, at 476 Communications & University Extension Bldg. and 865-974-5097.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-7697.

**PARTICIPATION**

You do not have to participate in this study. If you do not wish to answer the survey, you can withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. In this case, your responses will not be processed unless you submit the survey upon completion.

By beginning the survey, you are confirming that you are age 18 or older and that you provide your informed consent for study participation.

**\*\*Please ANSWER the next questions.**

**1. Are you a woman in the age of 18-34?**

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

**2. Are you a YouTube User?**

- 3) Yes
- 4) No

**3. Have you ever watched cosmetics user-generated YouTube videos?**

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

**4. How much time do you spend per week on YouTube? \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week.**

**5. How much time do you spend per week to watch cosmetics videos on YouTube?  
\_\_\_\_\_ hours per week.**

**6. When I think about the product-related information which is shared by cosmetics user-generated videos on YouTube...**

	Strongly disagree ←————→ Strongly agree						
I think it is relevant	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is appropriate	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is up-to-date	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is timely	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is accurate	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is reliable	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is comprehensive	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is sufficiently broad and deep	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

**7. When I think about YouTubers who provide information about user-generated content related to cosmetic products on YouTube...**

	Strongly disagree ←————→ Strongly agree						
I think they are trustworthy	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think they are reliable	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think they are knowledgeable in evaluating the quality of cosmetics	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think they are experts in evaluating the quality of cosmetics.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

**8. When I think about the beauty product information that is shared by cosmetic user-generated content videos delivered by YouTubers...**

	Strongly disagree ←————→ Strongly agree						
I think it is useful	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is informative	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I think it is valuable	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

**9. The cosmetic user-generated videos on YouTube...**

	Strongly disagree ←————→ Strongly agree						
Make easier for me to make my purchase decision	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Enhance my effectiveness in making my purchase decision	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

**10. After considering information about cosmetic products which are shared by beauty YouTubers on YouTube...**

	Strongly disagree ←————→ Strongly agree						
It is very likely that I will buy the product	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I will purchase the product next time I need a product	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I will definitely try the product	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
I recommend the product to my friends	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

**\*\*Please ANSWER the next question.**

**11. Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Please identify your race (ethnicity)**

**(Please check all that apply)**

- 1) American Indian or Alaska Native
- 2) Asian
- 3) Black or African American
- 4) White/Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
- 5) Hispanic
- 6) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

**13. The highest level of education you completed**

- 1) Did not complete high school
- 2) High school
- 3) Some College
- 4) Bachelor's Degree
- 5) Master's Degree
- 6) Ph.D. degree
- 7) Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Vita**

Kyungji Lee was born on May 20, 1990 in Republic of Korea (ROK). She earned her bachelor's degree of Journalism, Advertising, and Public Relations from Dankook University in 2015. In 2016, she was accepted in the College of Communication and Information at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and has been pursuing her Master's degree in Advertising. Recently, she accepted for the admission to Strategic Communication track of the Media Research and Practice doctoral program in the College of Media, Communication and Information at the University of Colorado at Boulder and continue a career in academia. She hopes to become a researcher who keep asking and answering questions concerned with the understanding of the relationship between human and media.