

**The influence of the popularity of an unboxing video on the perceived
credibility of the source, the perceived usefulness of the information
and the purchase intention**

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Abstract

We live in an era, in which social media platforms, such as YouTube, provide their users with new ways to communicate with each other and share information. If we take a closer look at the various YouTube channels, we will see that online reviews and unboxing videos are quite popular, especially the videos that present technological goods, such as mobile devices, because these products are essential in our lives. The aim of this study is to investigate if a popular unboxing video affects more positively the perceived credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention compared to an unboxing video, which is not regarded as popular. Unboxing videos seem particularly interesting for this research, since they purport to present the product “as-is” and emulate the effective elements of purchasing – and opening – a new product. Therefore, the question of popularity, in this case, goes beyond the reviewer’s expertise and the reason for focusing specifically on YouTube is because it has not been examined extensively in previous research on the effect of the popularity of the source on the purchase intention.

In order to explore our research questions, we conducted an online experiment, accompanied by a survey. In this experiment, we divided randomly the participants into three groups and we provided them with the same video, but with different numbers of views, subscribers and likes. Our results showed that a popular video review on YouTube affects positively all the dependent variables that we examined with our methodology. Users take into consideration other users’ interactions and they evaluate the YouTubers accordingly. In addition, users are influenced not only by the product related information, but also by the popularity of the source. Therefore, corporations and individuals who are using YouTube for marketing and advertising purposes should take into consideration all these parameters if they are looking for efficient ways in order to promote effectively their products or services.

Keywords: Unboxing videos, engagement metrics, credibility of the source, usefulness of the information, purchase intention

Contents

Abstract	3
1. Introduction	6
1.1. Research Problem and research question	6
1.2. Academic relevance	8
1.3. Social relevance and managerial implications	9
1.4. Chapter outline	10
2. Theoretical framework	11
2.1. Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content (UGC)	11
2.2. Social influence	12
2.3. YouTube, unboxing and engagement metrics	14
2.3.1. YouTube and unboxing videos	15
2.3.2. Engagement metrics	15
2.4. Brand endorsement and video reviews	16
2.5. Perceived usefulness of the information, credibility of the source and purchase intention	18
2.5.1. Perceived credibility of the source	19
2.5.2. Perceived usefulness of the information	22
2.5.3. Purchase intention	24
2.5.4. Other factors affecting the purchase intention	26
2.6. Hypotheses summary	27
3. Research method	28
3.1. Rationale for choosing this research method	28
3.2. Research design	29
3.3. Operationalization	32
3.4. Sampling and data collection	36
3.5. Data analysis	37
3.6. Validity and reliability	38
3.7. Pre-test	39

4. Results	43
4.1. Demographics – Descriptive statistics	43
4.2. Reliability of the scales	46
4.3. ANOVA and t-test results	46
4.3.1. Perceived credibility of the source	47
4.3.2. Perceived usefulness of the information in the video	49
4.3.3. Purchase intention results	51
5. Conclusion	55
5.1. Key findings	55
5.2. Limitations	58
5.3. Directions for future research	60
References	61
Appendix I: Questionnaire	72

1. Introduction

We live in an era, in which social media platforms play a very important role in our lives and provide users with new ways to communicate with each other and share information (Van Dijck, 2009; Welbourne & Grant, 2015). According to these authors, in this digital era, people can communicate with other people from all over the world, participate in discussions, network and, last but not least, share user-generated content. User-generated content is a term used to describe any kind of content such as, Facebook statuses, tweets, photos, videos etc., that was generated by the users of social media and is available to other users, as well (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

One way to understand the invasion of social media in our lives is to look at the statistics, regarding the usage of popular social media platforms. In particular, according to the Chief Executive of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg (2017), the popular social networking site counts two billion people, since last June. Furthermore, YouTube, which is a video sharing platform, is also considered a popular social media platform, with its official statistics revealing that has over a billion users, watching each day a billion hours of video (“YouTube for Press”, ca. 2017). To get a sense of what do those numbers mean, we should take into consideration that the current whole population of the planet is around seven billion (“Current World Population”, 2018), so those platforms, enjoy a remarkable success.

This success led companies and individuals to go online and promote products and services, since according to the literature, people use social media in order to take information about products and services (Kietzmann, 2011; Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015) and they even trust them more than traditional marketing approaches (Zhang et al., 2014). This trend also gave the opportunity to more and more people who have no previous experience with marketing strategies, to create YouTube channels, produce user-generated content and promote products and services (Ferchaud et al., 2018).

1.1. Research Problem and research question

YouTube is a fast-growing platform (Cunningham, Craig & Silver, 2016) and the predictions reveal that it is going to reach 27 million subscribers and around 1,8 billion views in the next five years (“YouTube future projections and statistics”, 2018). At the moment, this platform “reaches more 18-49 year-olds than any broadcast or [c]able TV network” (Smith, 2018, para.5).

If we take a closer look at the various YouTube channels, we will see that online reviews and unboxing videos are quite popular (Ferchaud et al., 2018), especially the videos that present technological goods, such as mobile devices (Pixalibility, 2015), because these products are essential in our lives (Chan, 2013). Review videos provide the viewer with information about a product and they may also contain positive or negative aspects from the experience of the source (Aerts, Smits & Verlegh, 2017). Unboxing videos, which could be also considered as a particular subset of reviews, are a new and intriguing phenomenon, which refers to videos presenting the opening of a box, which contains a new product and a further explanation of the reviewer regarding the characteristics of the product (Craig & Cunningham, 2017).

The popularity of a reviewer on YouTube is depicted by the high number of views, likes and subscribers that he/she has. The objective of this dissertation is to focus on this parameter and find out if the credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information and the purchase intention are affected more positively when the video has a high number of views, subscribers and likes compared to video with a low number of views, subscribers and likes. Unboxing videos seem particularly interesting for this research, since they purport to present the product “as-is” and emulate the effective elements of purchasing – and opening – a new product. Therefore, the question of popularity, in this case, goes beyond the reviewer’s expertise. The reason for focusing specifically on YouTube is because it has not been examined extensively in previous research on the effect of the popularity of the source on the purchase intention, that mostly focused on other types of media (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013).

Another reason is also the fact that these two previous studies (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013) found different results regarding the influence of the popularity on the perceived usefulness of a video. In particular, Mir and Rehman (2013) supported with their research the hypothesis that the high number of views, likes and subscribers affects positively the perceived usefulness of the video, while the research of Yüksel (2016) rejected this hypothesis. The reason that this might happened is because their research methodologies had important limitations. Both of these approaches used similar methodologies, in particular, quantitative surveys, in order to explore their hypotheses and they did not provide any kind of material (video) that the respondents could take into consideration before they answer the questions regarding

the engagement metrics. Moreover, the sample they collected does not represent the whole population who watches video reviews. Yüksel's sample consisted only from women who speak the Turkish language and Mir's and Rehman's sample only from students from a specific institution, since the researchers of the second approach chose to follow a convenience sampling method.

Taking into consideration the above discussion the following research question was formulated.

RQ: To what extent do the engagement metrics of a review video (number of views, subscribers and likes) affect the credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention?

In order to make clear the concepts that are incorporated in this research question, we created the following sub-questions.

SQ1: To what extent do the engagement metrics of a review video (number of views, subscribers and likes) affect the credibility of the source?

SQ2: To what extent do the engagement metrics of a review video (number of views, subscribers and likes) affect the usefulness of the information in the video?

SQ3: To what extent do the engagement metrics of a review video (number of views, subscribers and likes) affect the purchase intention?

In order to explore these relationships, we will conduct an online experiment, accompanied by a survey. In this experiment, we will divide randomly the participants into three groups and we will provide them with the same video, but with different numbers of views, subscribers and likes. One group will see the video with a high number of views, subscribers and likes, the second group will see the video with a low number of views, likes and subscribers and the third group will be a control group, which will see the video with an average number of views, likes and subscribers. In that way, we will be able to investigate more in-depth the extent that the popularity of a video affects the purchase intention.

1.2. Academic relevance

In this section there is a discussion about other approaches around the concepts of this dissertation and there is also an emphasis on the limitations of those approaches, how they are going to be surpassed and what will be the new elements which will be examined here.

Willemsen, Neijens, Bronner and Ridder (2011), discuss the concept of perceived usefulness of an online review, but they examined how this concept is being

affected by the argumentation of the creator of the video. In a similar approach, Rofianto, Kornelys and Rifkhansyah (2017), focus on the influence of argumentation, expertise and trustworthiness of the presenter of the video on the perceived usefulness and the perceived credibility of the source. Both of these approaches, do not emphasize on how the popularity of the source might affect the parameters that they deal with and they also do not connect their approaches with the purchase intention. On the other hand, Lee, Lee & Hansen (2016) and Li et al. (2015) focused on the credibility of the source and on its influence on the purchase intention, but again, both of these approaches did not examine the extent that the popularity of a video may influence the purchase intention. The approaches that we mentioned in the previous section (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013) investigate the relationship between popularity and purchase intention, but as we explained, their methodology has limitations.

All in all, the aim of this approach is to focus on a specific aspect of the online video reviews, use a method which was not implemented in previous studies, but only in the case of online written reviews (Lee, 2009) and contribute to the literature about the influence of social media on the consumer decision-making process.

1.3. Social relevance and managerial implications

YouTube is the second most popular social media platform, with its number of users touching 1/6 of the whole population of the world (Ferchaud et al., 2017). Another interesting parameter about YouTube is the fact that it belongs to Google, one of the most powerful companies in the world. Such a company has a great influence on the society, especially since it continues growing on an environment with regulatory gaps, regarding, for example, the placement of children as unboxers (Craig & Cunningham, 2017).

On the other hand, this research has a managerial relevance, since it might help corporations and individuals who work in the field of marketing and advertising to understand the significance of social media, its effects on specific parts of the consumer decision-making process and become aware also of the influence of the YouTube engagements metrics, such as the number of views, subscribers and likes on the perceived usefulness of the information in the video, the perceived credibility of the source and the purchase intention. The results of this research could be used by the corporations and individuals in order to understand and engage with their audiences

better, promote their products in a more efficient way and target systematically issues related to social media and consumer behaviour.

1.4. Chapter outline

The following parts of this dissertation are structured as follows. In the second chapter, which constitutes the theoretical background of this study, we will discuss the existing literature regarding the topic, we will focus on the variables of our research and we will formulate certain hypotheses, which are based on previous research. To be more specific, we will refer to the changes that social media brought to our lives and we will redefine the concept of social influence in order to meet the implications of this new era. In addition, we will focus on YouTube, which is the video sharing platform being examined and we will explain how this platform gave the opportunity to celebrities and ordinary people to promote effectively products and services. Following, we will discuss what makes a source credible, what makes the information in the video regarded as useful and how are YouTube reviews associated with the consumer decision-making process.

In the third chapter, we will explain precisely the research method, which was chosen in order to investigate our topic and, in particular, we will elaborate on the experimental design, the sampling technique, the operationalization, the data analysis methods and the aspects of validity and reliability. Moreover, we will explain the reasons for conducting a pre-test and we will present the changes that we applied to our questionnaire, before distributing it online.

In the fourth chapter, we will present the results of the statistical analyses, which will be accompanied by tables and interpretations of what we see in each table. The results will contain descriptive statistics about the gender, the age and the social media usage of the respondents. In addition, we will illustrate the results of the reliability analysis and, following, we will provide the results of the analysis of variance and the t-tests, which were conducted in order to test our hypotheses.

The final chapter contains the answers to the research question, a comparison of our findings with the findings of previous studies, the limitations of this approach and suggestions for future research. Last but not least, the questionnaire, which was used in our online experiment is enclosed in the Appendix.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, we are going to discuss the main concepts that consist the theoretical framework of this dissertation. First of all, we will review the general concepts of Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content (UGC) and how they are associated with social influence and consumer behaviour. Following, we will focus on YouTube, which is the social media platform being examined, and, in particular, on product reviews and unboxing videos. Furthermore, we will elaborate on different approaches regarding the definition of the perceived usefulness and the perceived credibility and we will explain the reasons for adopting a certain interpretation of these terms for our research. Last but not least, we will refer briefly to the steps of the consumer decision-making process and we will elaborate on the purchase intention which is also a variable in this research.

2.1. Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content (UGC)

The evolution of the Web is inextricably connected to the technological improvements of the last decades (Obar & Wildman, 2015). Web 2.0, which is the evolution of Web, refers to a new generation of online tools and applications, which gave the opportunity to users to participate actively in online communities, engage and interact with each other and, last but not least, produce and consume user-generated content (Welbourne & Grant, 2016). If we seek to define more precisely the term, we would say that Web 2.0 is the “ideological and technological foundation” of social media, or in other words, the base for the evolution of the different social media platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61).

On the other hand, user-generated content (UGC) is a term used to describe any kind of content that was generated by social media users and is available to other social media users (Bruns, 2016). Since this definition is generic, it is important to elaborate on the prerequisites that the content should have in order to be considered as user-generated. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, user-generated content, or user-created content, as it written in this approach, requires three basic elements to be considered as such. First of all, it has to be shared on the Web and it has to be accessible to everyone or, at least, to some selected users. In addition, it should illustrate that it was generated with a creative effort and, last but not least, it has to be produced by people who are not expecting profits from this and who are not using the web as a part of their job (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Taking into consideration the topic of this research, it is important to examine how user-generated content is related to the consumer decision-making process. First of all, user-generated content plays a remarkable role in the pre-purchase steps of the consumer decision-making process. Consumers, before the actual purchase of a product or service, seek for information around the product or service they want to buy and they also evaluate the alternatives they have for this product or service based, not only on the opinion of their close environment and the traditional media apperceptions, as it happened in the past, but also on their online search for information (Smith, Fischer & Yongjian, 2012). For instance, online written and video reviews are considered as user-generated content and they are a rich domain, which provides consumers with valuable information regarding their future purchase decisions (Cheung, Lee & Rabjohn, 2008). According to Chua and Barnejee (2016), online reviews from people who are not using social media for marketing purposes and have already made the same purchase decision, constitute one of the most significant sources of information. Consumers tend to trust other consumers more, compared to other external sources, such as traditional media and advertisements, because their opinion is perceived as sincere and dependable. Such perceptions stem from the belief that consumers will not have anything to earn by expressing publicly their opinions and because of this they are free to discuss both the positive and the negative aspects of a product (Aerts, Smits & Verlegh, 2017).

2.2. Social influence

The fact that social media enable their users to engage with other people from all over the world, obligates us to redefine the concept of social influence, in order to meet the implications of the new era. According to the literature, social influence refers to the fact that people may reconsider a decision and/or change their opinion or behaviour, because they are influenced by other people (Chen, Mao & Liu, 2014; Guadagno & Cialdini, 2010). Usually, people are being influenced by their close environment, such as their family, friends, fellow-students or their colleagues. The power of this influence is inextricably linked to the relationship between people and their environment (Risselada, Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2014). In other words, if someone, for instance, has a close relationship with his parents, it is quite possible that he will make decisions, which might be affected by his parents' opinion (Sheldon, 2002). In the relationship that we described, the person who performs actions in order to influence

someone else is called influencer, and the person who is affected by these actions is called influencee (Risselada, Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2014).

During the last decade, which is marked by the noticeable success of many different social media platforms, one of the outcomes was that the social influence has attained a wider dimension, because individuals have the opportunity to reach a mass amount of information online and they can connect in a time and cost-efficient way to a much wider audience, which did not exist, at least at this extent, before the rise of social media (Peng et al., 2017). In other words, in this era, people are not only affected by their friends, family and colleagues, but they are also affected by the plethora of the online information, which is a paramount factor in the consumer decision-making process, because it intervenes in all the steps of the pre-purchase process (Tanford & Montgomery, 2014).

Defining further the term social influence, we see that there are three types of social influence: conformity, obedience and compliance (Xie et al., 2016; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). In our approach, we will elaborate on conformity, because as it will be explained, it is connected to our case, and we will also briefly refer to the other two aspects of social influence. First of all, conformity refers to the alteration in the opinion, feeling or behaviour of people because they want to belong to a group, so they are willing to change their mindset in order to belong to that group (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Deutsch and Gerard (1955) explained that there two types of conformity motivations: the informational conformity motivations and the normative conformity motivations. The informational conformity motivations are “based on the desire to form an accurate interpretation of reality and behave correctly” and the normative conformity motivations are “based on the goal of obtaining social approval from others” (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004, p. 606). According to the literature, both of these motivations might be anticipated on social media (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Kuan, Zhong & Chau, 2014). In order to explain how these motivations are related to social media, we will refer to a previous research, which has similarities with our approach. To be more specific, Kuan, Zhong and Chau (2014), did an experiment in order to investigate the relationship between this kind of motivations and purchase intention. In particular, they used as a material for their experiment, group deals from online group-buying platforms and they examined if the number of likes (popularity) of a deal, would increase the purchase intention of the deal. The objective that they wanted to investigate with their experiment was that if

people see that a deal has a great number of likes, it might be quite possible that they will also buy the deal. The results of their research revealed that informational and normative conformity motivations can have an influence on the purchase intention.

Obedience, on the other hand refers to the change in the behaviour of people, which has been caused by a direct request from someone else, who could be regarded as an authority figure. One example, which refers to obedience and is used in the literature, is the experiment of Milgram. Milgram (1963) investigated that at under certain circumstances we may all be capable of behaving in a way, which might be caused by our obedience to an authority figure. Last but not least, compliance refers to the fact that people are urged to respond to a request in a certain, desired, way. For example, “the request may be explicit, as in the direct solicitation of funds in a door-to-door campaign for charitable donations, or it may be implicit, as in a political advertisement that touts the qualities of a candidate without directly asking for a vote” (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004, p. 592). In our approach, both of these types of social influence, will be not taken into consideration, because neither the unboxer nor the researcher will force the respondents to follow a certain trend, or even to respond that they will buy the product.

Concluding the social influence discussion, YouTube as a platform has specific features, which enhance the interaction of users, and, as a consequence, they are a contributing factor, which leads to social influence. YouTube offers broadcasting tools to its users, which do not require special technical skills in order to be used (Anderson, 2017). With these tools, users can create a personal profile, upload user-generated content, interact with other users and also seek information about products and services (Fan & Gordon, 2014). Focusing on the interactions, we will see that the interface of the platform has many different features, such as the number of likes, the numbers of subscribers, the like and dislike options, and, of course, the comments. All these features enable users to participate in the online community and interact with each other, influencing in that way other users and, also, being influenced at the same time.

2.3. YouTube, unboxing and engagement metrics

In this section, we will review briefly YouTube’s history, explain the procedure of unboxing and also specify the engagement metrics, which will be the ones examined during our experiment.

2.3.1. YouTube and unboxing videos

YouTube, which was founded in 2005, is now the most popular video sharing platform (Ferchaud et al., 2017). In 2006, Time Magazine declared it as the invention of the year, given that its growth increased sharply in that year. At the same year, the ownership of the company changed, as YouTube was purchased by Google (Cool et al., 2017). Its official statistics reveal that it has over a billion users, watching each day a billion hours of video (“YouTube for Press”, ca. 2018). To get a sense of what do those numbers mean, we should take into consideration that the current whole population of the planet is around seven billion (“Current World Population”, 2018), so this social media platform enjoys a remarkable success, and this is a fact, which makes it an interesting domain for further research. YouTube, also, covers a wide range of topics, given that there are 18 different categories of videos (science and technology, music, cars etc.), based on their content (Bärtl, 2018). When users want to upload their own videos, they have to create a channel, which is their own space, where they will upload their videos. By doing so, they offer other users the opportunity to watch more than one of their videos and therefore, the source can gain subscribers, views and likes (Bärtl, 2018).

Unboxing, on the other hand, is a very new phenomenon referring to videos with people who open a box with a new product and discuss its characteristics. This trend is very popular the last years, because it gave the opportunity to various non-traditional media-affiliated people to go online and share their experience. For the purpose of this study, unboxers are people who purchased a product and they create videos of unpacking that product and discussing its characteristics (Craig & Cunningham, 2017). This allows us to include in the conceptualization any person performing such video, regarding on skill and audience. On the one hand, we can see small scale ‘home’ videos with several views. Of course, there are also popular professional unboxers, who collaborate with companies in order to promote a product. In our study, we will use an unboxer who is not well known, so that we can present him in the experiment both as popular and as non-popular, by manipulating his engagement metrics.

2.3.2. Engagement metrics

The popularity of a video on YouTube is being indicated and measured by the YouTube metrics (Smith, 2017). Practitioners suggest that there is a plethora of YouTube metrics, such as the number of views, likes and dislikes (Forno, 2017).

Some of them, such as the number of likes, can be seen by users, while others, such as the total watch time of different videos in the same channel, are available only to the owners of the channels, through analytics' tools. In this dissertation, we will focus on the metrics, which are located on the frame of a video and can be glanced easily by the viewer. From these indicators the viewer perceives if a video is popular or not and this perception has an influence on the purchase intention (Mir & Rehman, 2013, Yüksel, 2016).

Each of these indicators explains different aspects of the popularity of the video. To be more specific the number of views represents the extent to which the owners of a channel/video achieve to make their videos well known. Furthermore, the number of subscribers of the channel, denotes how many people who watched videos from this channel chose to subscribe and receive updates about the content of the channel (Cheng & Ho, 2015). Last but not least, the number of likes stands for the extent to which the source created a positive attitude about it to the user. (VanMeter, Grisaffe & Chonko, 2015). The combination of these three metrics signs if a source is popular or not.

2.4. Brand endorsement and video reviews

Web 2.0 and social media have created a revolution in the way that people search online for information (Van Dijck, 2009; Welbourne & Grant, 2015). Under these circumstances, companies have realized that it will be profitable to take advantage of the new opportunities that the social media and the Web 2.0 services provided them with and they went online by creating websites with information about their products, online shopping services and social media pages in different platforms (Berthon et al., 2012). In other words, companies operated new tactics and strategies in order to exploit the features of the different social media platforms in order to promote more effectively their products and services (Lee & Koo, 2012).

One of these tactics incorporates brand endorsement on social media (Wei & Lu, 2012; Lee, Park & Han, 2011). To be more specific, professionals in the field of marketing had to adapt their marketing strategies to the new media context, which shows that social media is an inextricable part of our lives and a contributing factor of social influence (Lu, Chang & Chang, 2014; De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Kuan, Zhong & Chau, 2014). During the last years, marketers have reached different types of endorsers in order to implement efficiently their marketing strategies in this new context. If we take into consideration the case of our

experiment, we will see that among the different types of endorsers who are reviewing and promoting technology goods on YouTube, we may come across celebrity endorsers, social media influencers and, last but not least, ordinary, next-door people, who have purchased a product and they want to share their experience by uploading a video review of the product.

There is a debate, though, which has stimulated the interest of both marketers and academics regarding the appropriateness of each type of brand endorser. As a prologue to this debate we would say that there is no single answer to which type of endorser is the most suitable for each social media campaign. A celebrity endorser is defined as a person, who is widely recognizable, such as an actor, a singer, a footballer and so on (McCracken, 1989). Marketing professionals make agreements with celebrities and they use them in advertisements of different products and services. The rationale here is that the popularity, which the celebrity enjoys because of his job, can be transferred to the brand. As a consequence, the brand will get more popular, as well, and this will lead the consumers to purchase it (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1989).

On the other hand, there are also social media influencers, who also, according to the marketers and the literature, can affect the consumer decision-making process. Social media influencers are defined as people, who have a broad influence, a wide network and a significant presence on social media (Hesse, 2015). According to the literature, social media and the electronic word of mouth, in general, have empowered consumers, mainly because they gave them the opportunity to share online their satisfaction or dissatisfaction about a product or service, and, this also had as a consequence that almost everyone can become a social media influencer (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2016; Uzunoğlu & Misci Kip, 2014). One of the most popular examples of people, who started as amateurs on YouTube and now are considered as powerful influencers, is that of PewDiePie (originally named: Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg), who, in 2010, registered on YouTube and started creating amateur commentaries about video games. Now he is one of the most popular YouTubers and in 2016, Time Magazine declared him as one of the most influential people in the world (Beers Fägersten, 2017). From a different standpoint, this example indicates, that Web 2.0 services and social media, was not only an opportunity that marketers took advantage of it in order to promote products and services efficiently, but also for individuals who found a way to start their careers in the field of advertising.

Last but not least, online reviews have also an influence on the consumer decision-making process. Online written reviews, also known as online consumer reviews, are a new sort of electronic word of mouth, which provides users with information about a product or service, or they even contain comments about the satisfaction/dissatisfaction of a user, based on personal usage experience (Cui, Lui, & Guo, 2012). Online reviews are an emerging phenomenon that, according to the literature, has a great influence on the consumer decision-making process (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). First of all, a reason that they can strongly affect the purchase decision is because they are not created for marketing purposes and they are regarded as more honest, credible and impartial, compared to traditional advertising, because they may evaluate both the positive and the negative aspects of a product, since their creators do not have any incentive to promote it (Cui, Lui, & Guo, 2012). In addition, online reviews have an influence on the consumer decision-making process, because numerous of them can be found easily on different social media platforms, with a simple online search (Mir & Rehman, 2013). Traditional advertising and sponsored online content can also reach its target audience, but consumers tend to compare what they receive from companies with what is being recommended by other consumers in online reviews (Spry, Pappu, & Bettina Cornwell, 2011). So, even if someone comes across an online advertisement, its influence might be limited, because the user has the opportunity to examine the credibility of this source, by searching more extensively for information regarding this product, or by taking into consideration online written and video reviews.

To conclude, a decade ago, researchers supported that celebrities were efficient in order to promote a product or service. It was reasonable, since the social media usage was limited, and it was not common for users to share online their opinion about a product or service. On the other hand, in our era, researchers have found that consumers trust more the user-generated content which is shared online from people who have made the same purchase decisions and there are also researchers who support that social media influencers have a greater influence on the consumer decision-making process, compared to celebrities.

2.5. Perceived usefulness of the information, credibility of the source and purchase intention

In this section, we are going to elaborate on the three main concepts, which we are seeking to explore if they are affected by the popularity of a YouTube video. In

particular, we are focusing on the perceived trustworthiness and the perceived expertise of the source, which are two of the three dimensions of the credibility of the source and we also explain the reasons for not taking into consideration the third dimension, which is the perceived attractiveness of the source. Following, we are discussing different approaches regarding the perceived usefulness of information and we are explaining the reasons for adopting a specific definition of this term. Last but not least, we will refer to the purchase intention and how it is affected by online video reviews.

2.5.1. Perceived credibility of the source

According to the literature, the credibility of the source is a term which refers to the judgment of the receiver that the source has or has not some kind of special knowledge on the issue that he/she presents (Ohanian, 1990). In other words, it is possible that a presenter in a video is trustworthy and/or an expert on his field, but he is not perceived as such by the viewer. On the other hand, a presenter might not have a lot of knowledge of the product, but it is still possible that the viewer perceives him as credible, since that depends on what the viewer judges as credible or not (Cheng & Ho, 2015).

The credibility of the source is a topic, which is extensively discussed in the literature since the 1960s (Hewgill & Miller, 1965). During this period, the credibility of the source was measured with many different scales, which, amongst others, included safety, objectivity, dynamism, authoritativeness, expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990). However, Ohanian (1990) explains in her research that the scales, which were used until that period, were not suitable in order to measure the credibility of the source, because they were inconsistent and the reliability tests regarding them, were not presented in almost none of the previous studies, which Ohanian reviewed. Therefore, she proposed a new model with three dimensions, which is widely used in marketing and communication related studies until now, indicating that its scales still measure what they are supposed to measure (Ayeh, 2015; Muda, Musa & Putit, 2017). From the wide variety of the scales, which were previously mentioned, Ohanian focused on expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness and concluded that these three dimensions constitute a sufficient, reliable and valid model, which can measure the credibility of the source (Figure 1).

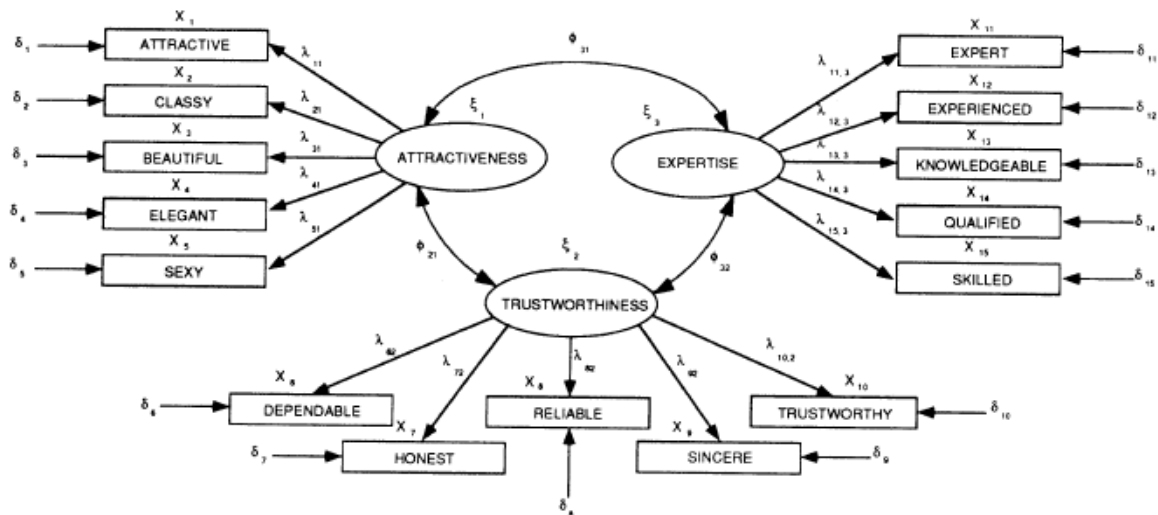


Figure 1. The three dimensions of the source credibility model (Ohanian, 1990)

The first dimension of the model refers to the trustworthiness of the source and as it is shown in the model, it examines if the source is perceived as “dependable”, “honest”, “reliable”, “sincere” and “trustworthy” (Ohanian, 1990). Brand ambassadors should be perceived as trustworthy in order to promote a product or service effectively. The relationship between the trustworthiness and the effective promotion of a product or service lies in the fact that trustworthiness is inextricably connected to persuasion, so the more trustworthy is an endorser, the more possible is to convey effectively his/her messages (Spry, Pappu & Bettina Cornwell, 2011). These authors explain that in the case of celebrity endorsers, companies seek to find the appropriate celebrities for each campaign, because they want to connect their brand with people who are perceived as trustworthy and whose lifestyle is consistent with the purpose of the campaign. As an example, which supports this finding, they use the well-known actress, Cate Blanchett. They argue that, since this actress has expressed her interest about serious environmental issues and since she has supported solutions regarding them, she might be considered an appropriate brand endorser for brands that want to promote their environmental-friendly profile (Spry, Pappu & Bettina Cornwell, 2011).

In the case of online reviews, it should be mentioned that users have the opportunity to choose whether they want to see a review from a celebrity or from other consumers, who have done the same or a similar purchase and they review online the product. Regarding this, previous research has shown that online reviews from ordinary people, who have made the same or a similar purchase are considered as trustworthy because the reviewers can explain both the positive and the negative

aspects of the problem, without being biased, because of their relationship with a company (Zhang et al., 2014). Bringing back YouTube to this discussion, we should mention that this platform provides its users with features, such as the “like” button or the place under the video, where users can leave a comment and share their thoughts about the video.

On the other hand, the second dimension of the model refers to the expertise of the source and as it is illustrated in the model, it explores if the source is perceived as “expert”, “experienced”, “knowledgeable”, “qualified” and “skilled” (Ohanian, 1990). In the case of reviewing consumer electronics, which is the one that we investigated with our methodology, the concept of expertise plays an important role, since the reviewers deal with specific characteristics of electronic devices and they provide their viewers with the opportunity to discuss, compare and contrast issues regarding the product characteristics and the brand name (Rahim et al., 2016). Again, it should be mentioned, that the interactive interface that YouTube offers to its users has an influence on the perceived expertise of the source. For instance, users have the power to reward the reviewer with a “like” if they perceived him/her as knowledgeable or they can post a comment, which will inform other users that the reviewer is an expert in his/her field. Of course, when users think that the reviewer is not knowledgeable, they can share a negative comment regarding his/her review.

The last dimension of the model refers to the attractiveness of the source and as it is presented in the model, it investigates if the source is perceived as “attractive”, “classy”, “beautiful”, “elegant” and “sexy”. In general lines, previous research has shown that when a brand endorser is beautiful, chic and stylish, he/she can be perceived as more credible (Joseph, 1982). Joseph’s (1982) study reviewed previous experimental approaches and concluded that attractive endorsers are more likely to lead consumers to change their opinion about a product or service compared to endorsers, who are not perceived as attractive. More recent research, also confirms the findings that an attractive source, is also considered as more credible, compared to a source, which is not perceived as attractive (Seiler & Kucza, 2017). This last dimension, however, does not always affect the credibility of the source, because there are advertisements and video reviews, in which the source is not physically present. Especially, in the case of unboxing, there are videos, in which the unboxers are not in the front of the camera and they only lend their voice to the video. Heather (2014) explains this trend and in order to enhance her argumentation, she uses as an

example the unboxing of a chocolate egg, in which the unboxer is not physically present. She supports that even if the unboxer is not present, the video managed to achieve a remarkable success, reaching more than 40 million views. This clarification is important for our approach, because we also used an unboxing video with a reviewer, who is not physically present in the video. Therefore, we will not measure the attractiveness of the source in our approach, but we will incorporate questions, regarding the expertise and the trustworthiness of the source.

To sum up, the perceived credibility of a source is affected by the trustworthiness of the source, the expertise and the attractiveness. When a reviewer is perceived, for example, as reliable, dependable, knowledgeable and attractive we can assume that he/she is also perceived as a credible source (Ohanian, 1990). In the case of YouTube, users have the opportunity to make positive and negative comments about the credibility of the source, they can reward the reviewers with a like or they can subscribe to a reviewer's channel, if they liked his/her video and these interactions may have an influence on the perception that other users have about the credibility of a source (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013). YouTube gives also its users the opportunity to filter their search results and see first the videos with the highest amount of views and then the less popular. Therefore, it would be interesting to provide our participants with exactly the same unboxing video, but in three different versions (with different engagement metrics) and explore if they will evaluate the reviewer as more credible when his/her video has a high number of views, likes and subscribers compared to a video with a low number of views, likes and subscribers. Taking into consideration the previous discussion, we can add the following hypothesis in our research.

H1: An unboxing video with a high number of likes, views and subscribers affects the credibility of the source more positively compared to a video with a low number of likes, views and subscribers.

2.5.2. Perceived usefulness of the information

According to the literature, the usefulness of information is a term, which refers to the expectation of people that a specific kind of information would help them boost their job performance (Davis, 1989). This definition has been adopted in previous studies which deal with the influence of online reviews on the purchase intention (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013). However, if we take into consideration the research of

Hsu, Lin and Chiang (2013), which refers the influence of online written reviews on the purchase intention, we see that it is important to redefine the term to *perceived usefulness*, so that it has a meaning related to the specific object we are dealing with, which is about the influence of online video reviews.

In order to redefine the meaning of usefulness, we should keep in mind the two of the five steps of the consumer decision-making process: search for information and evaluation of alternatives (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the digital era that we live, there are many ways to search for information. For example, consumers have the opportunity to search online for information and they can also compare and contrast information, in a time and cost-efficient way, from a plethora of online sources (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In addition, as we have already discussed, consumers tend to search for information in online reviews, because it is a way to find information about a future purchase from other consumers who have reviewed impartially both the positive and the negative aspects of a product (Hsu, Lin & Chiang, 2013). The third step of the consumer decision-making process is the evaluation of alternatives, which also refers to the fact that consumers search for information regarding products and services and evaluate if there is another product, which meets their needs, probably in a lower price (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Taking these steps into consideration, in our case, the meaning of the usefulness refers to the perception of the viewers that the YouTube review is a convenient source of valuable information regarding the product, which could make their purchase easier (Hsu, Lin & Chiang, 2013).

The perceived usefulness of the information in an online review is a topic, which has not been extensively discussed in the literature, so far. Previous research has shown that the popularity of a blogger affects positively the perceived usefulness of the information in an online written review (Hsu, Lin & Chiang, 2013). In the case of the online video reviews, though, the two previous studies have found contradicting results regarding the influence of the popularity of the source on the perceived usefulness of the information (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013). In particular, Mir and Rehman (2013) supported with their research the hypothesis that the popularity of an online video review has an influence on the perceived usefulness of the information. On the other hand, the research of Yüksel (2016), which refers to the one of Mir and Rehman (2013), rejects this hypothesis and does not provide any insights regarding this important difference in the findings between these two approaches.

All in all, the perceived usefulness of the information in a video is affected by the quality and the quantity of the information, which is incorporated in the video (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013). In the case of mobile devices, we assume that when a reviewer discusses in detail the characteristics of a mobile device and he/she compares it to other products of competitor brands, the user will perceive the information as useful for his/her purchase. YouTube, though, as we discussed, gives the opportunity to its users to make comments below the video, reward the YouTubers with a like, or even subscribe to their channel and these interactions may affect the usefulness of the information in the video. Since the topic is not extensively examined in the literature and the previous approaches have found contradicting results, it would be interesting to provide our participants with exactly the same review, with the same information about a mobile device, but with different engagement metrics and examine if they will evaluate the information in the video as more useful when the video has a high number of likes, views and subscribers compared to a video with a low number of views likes and subscribers. Taking into consideration the previous discussion, we can add the following hypothesis in our research.

H2: An unboxing video with a high number of likes, views and subscribers affects the usefulness of the information more positively compared to a video with a low number of likes, views and subscribers.

2.5.3. Purchase intention

According to the theory of reasoned action, behavioural intention is described as the probability that a person will accomplish a specific task and the intention is the most outstanding parameter which exemplifies behaviour (Davis, 1986). In our approach, though, purchase intention will refer to the probability that a consumer has to buy a product and it is a very important aspect of the retail process as it can predict the real sales of a product (Baker, Donthu & Kumar, 2016).

As previous research shows, all the steps of the pre-purchase process can be affected by external stimuli such as advertising and social media marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2016) and since we live in the era of Web 2.0, consumers tend to search information for products and services online and they even trust more reviewers who do not create video and written reviews for marketing purposes (Chua & Barnejee, 2015).

Bringing back YouTube reviews to this discussion, we should focus on all the parameters, which might influence the purchase intention. Previous research about

online video reviews, has shown that apart from the popularity of the source, which might lead consumers to buy the reviewed product, there are other parameters, such as the valence of the video and the video characteristics, which might also lead the consumers to buy the reviewed product (Aerts, Smits & Verlegh, 2017).

To begin with, it is up to the reviewer if he/she chooses to argue for or against the quality of the product. There are video reviews, in which the reviewer explains in detail the characteristics of a product. On the other hand, there are also reviews, in which the reviewer makes comments about the product, uses arguments for and against the quality of the product, compares it with other products or even evaluates if the product is worth being purchased. This kind of positive or negative argumentation is called valence (Aerts, Smits & Verlegh, 2017). In our experimental design though, argumentation will be not taken into consideration, because we will provide the three different groups with a video with the same content and without a strong opinion, positive or negative about the product, because we want to focus on the influence of the popularity of the source on the purchase intention.

Furthermore, the characteristics of a video, such as the overall quality of the image and the sound, along with the duration of the video, may have an influence on the purchase intention information (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013). In recent years, it becomes common that even ordinary, next-door people, are trying to create videos, which look professionally made since they can use mobile phones and laptops which can produce high-quality videos with their cameras. This case, combined with basic editing skills, has helped amateur users on YouTube to increase their videos' engagement, because they are uploading videos, which have a good quality of image and sound (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009). Again, since the video, which was provided to the three different groups has the same quality of image and sound, and also the same length, this parameter will be not taken into consideration.

To conclude, in our study, we will investigate whether the popularity of the video, as it is indicated by the number of views, likes and subscribers has an influence on the purchase intention. We will provide the participants with the same video, but in three different versions with different engagement metrics and we will explore the influence of the popularity on the purchase intention. This issue has not been discussed extensively in the literature, so it would be interesting to incorporate it in our research, by formulating the following hypothesis.

H3: An unboxing video with a high number of likes, views and subscribers affects the purchase intention more positively compared to a video with a low number of likes, views and subscribers.

2.5.4. Other factors affecting the purchase intention

When consumers want to buy a new mobile device, they will be not only affected by YouTube reviews, but there are also other factors, which might intervene in the relationship that we are seeking to explore. These factors are the perception of the brand, the price and the technical characteristics of a mobile device (Rahim et al., 2016). These factors are important for consumers who want to buy a new mobile device and will allow us to understand better some of the results of our study.

According to the literature, consumers take into consideration the brand before they purchase a product. Each brand represents a different symbol, which differentiates one product from the other. The aim of each brand is, first of all, to make the consumers identify with it and, in addition, to make them be loyal to it (Davvetas & Diamantopoulos, 2017). In our study, it is important to know if the respondents are interested in Samsung, which is the brand that we will use in our experiment. If they are not interested to buy a Samsung mobile device, they will probably answer in the questions regarding the purchase intention, that they are not interested, for example, to go to a store in order to try this device, and they are also not interested to buy it, at all. Therefore, estimating the brand preference, allows us to understand and explain the results regarding the purchase intention.

In addition, the price of a mobile device plays an important role, which can affect the purchase intention (Beneke et al., 2014). Consumers might have a specific amount of money that they want to allocate in the purchase of a mobile device. Of course, there are, also, consumers, who do not take into consideration this parameter, but in our research, it is important to know the amount of money that the respondents could allocate in the purchase of a mobile device. Again, if the amount of money that they want to allocate in the purchase of a new mobile device is significantly lower than the price of the device being reviewed, it will be inevitable that they will respond that they are not interested to buy the mobile device.

Last but not least, the technical characteristics of a mobile device, might also affect the purchase intention (Rahim et al., 2016). According to these authors, we live in an era of continuous technological improvements in the field of mobile devices, and consumers tend to purchase devices, which can accomplish a wide variety of

tasks, such as to take professional photos, or a big storage that could enable the device to run simultaneously different applications. If the participants are not interested in this type of mobile devices, they might choose a cheaper one and, therefore, they will be an appropriate sample for our study.

All these factors are taken into consideration when a consumer wants to buy a mobile device and they can affect the purchase intention. Incorporating them into our study, will allow us to explain the results regarding the purchase intention.

2.6. Hypotheses summary

As we discussed above, YouTube is a very popular video sharing platform and it is expected to grow more in the next five years. More and more people, who have no previous experience with marketing and advertising prefer this platform in order to share their experience and the previous research shows that this kind of content has a strong influence on the viewers (Riboni, 2017). Consumers are affected by the perceived usefulness of the information in the video, by the perceived credibility of the source, by the positive/negative approach of the source regarding the product and these factors might lead them to formulate an opinion for or against a product. What has not been examined is if all these parameters are being influenced by the popularity of the source and, finally, if the popularity can lead consumers to a positive attitude towards a purchase or not. The experimental design in the next chapter will, thus, explore whether the engagement metrics of a YouTube video have an influence on the perceived credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention.

3. Research method

In this chapter, we are going to discuss the chosen research method. We will elaborate on the rationale behind using an experimental design, on the minimum number of the respondents that we need, on the sampling technique, on the operationalization, on the data analysis methods, and, last but not least, on the aspects of validity and reliability.

3.1. Rationale for choosing this research method

The research question which was mentioned in the previous chapters “To what extent do the engagement metrics of a review video affect the credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention?” will be answered by means of quantitative methods and, in particular, by an online experiment, which will be accompanied by a questionnaire.

This specific method was considered an appropriate research method for this dissertation, as it allowed the researcher to gather a big amount of data from respondents who live in different countries, in a cost and time efficient way (Wimmer and Dominick’s, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This, also, addressed the generalization issues highlighted in previous research on the topic, which as we mentioned, focused on specific countries (Yüksel, 2016) or they implemented purposive sampling (Mir & Rehman, 2013). Moreover, it should be stated that this method provided the researcher with standardized answers, which were easy to compare (Saunders et al., 2007). Furthermore, in our case, conducting an online experiment, helped the researcher to reach respondents from Web 2.0 platforms, which are regarded as a suitable and rich domain (Wright, 2005). The reason that it is considered as such is because the people who are watching YouTube videos are also people who, in general, make use of the Web 2.0 platforms (Bärtl, 2018), so seeking for them online is considered as more appropriate, compared to the offline approach. So, this method enabled the researcher to reach a significant number of participants who are watching review videos, and sample easily from within the defined population. On the other hand, an experiment allowed the researcher to manipulate the independent variables and explore how they affect the dependent variables (Winer, 1997). In our case, we manipulated the popularity of the source, in order to investigate if a popular source affects the credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention more positively compared to a non-popular source.

3.2. Research design

Before we proceed with specific details about the sampling technique, the operationalization and the methods of data collection and analysis, it is important to explain precisely the different types of software, which assisted us to conduct the experiment. In addition, we will offer information about the overall design of the experiment, and the part of the pre-test, which was necessary for this approach.

First of all, there are two basic parts in this experiment: a video and a questionnaire. The questionnaire was created with Qualtrics, which is an advanced and credible research platform with free access for the students of the Erasmus University. In this questionnaire, we incorporated a video that the participant had to see in order to answer the items regarding the credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information and the purchase intention. The reasons for incorporating the video inside the questionnaire is that it required even less effort from the participant to access it and that the participant would be not distracted by other videos, or elements of a YouTube page. It was important to formulate the experiment as short and effortless for the respondent as possible, so that we could receive answers to all of our questions, without, at the same time, underestimating the research objectives. Furthermore, adding the video inside the questionnaire allowed us to perform the manipulation described below, since this eliminated the reliance on YouTube's interface, which we couldn't control. In other words, we simulated the platform into the questionnaire, so that each group could see the same video, with the number of likes, views and subscribers that we wanted them to see and with the same background information, such as the related videos.

The respondents were randomly divided into three different groups in order to minimize the possibility that participants with specific characteristics (e.g. people who watch frequently videos on YouTube), will be assigned to the same group (Table 1). A non-random choice would affect the outcomes of the survey and that is a case, which must be avoided (Keppel, 2004). In our case, Qualtrics has a specific feature, which is called "randomizer" and allowed the researcher to assign the respondents into three different groups. Moreover, Qualtrics enabled the researcher to choose to assign the same number of respondents in each group.

Table 1. The three different groups

Group A	Group B	Group C
This group watched the video with the high numbers of views, likes and subscribers.	This group watched the video with the low numbers of views, likes and subscribers.	This group watched the video with the average number of views, likes and subscribers.

Eventually, each different group, watched one different version of the video, with a frame that simulates the YouTube platform. Group A saw a video with a high number of likes, subscribers and views (Figure 2). Group B saw a video with a low number of likes, subscribers, views (Figure 3). Group C, was a control group, which saw an average amount of likes, subscribers, views (Figure 4). Taking this into consideration, this approach followed a between-subjects design.



Figure 2. The video with the high number of view, likes and subscribers (screenshot by the author).



Figure 3. The video with the low number of views, likes and subscribers (screenshot by the author).

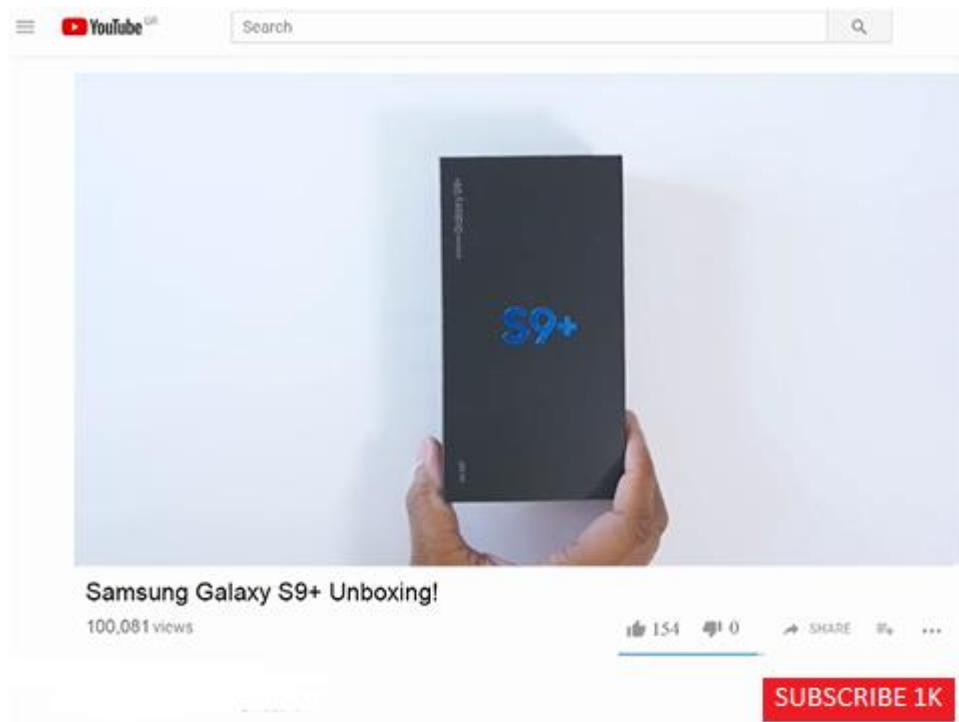


Figure 4. The video with the average number of views, likes and subscribers (screenshot by the author).

In order to create this video, an unboxer who is not a celebrity, but a consumer who reviews products on YouTube, was contacted and agreed to unbox a new

Samsung mobile device. It should be mentioned, that the rationale for choosing the unboxer was that we wanted a source, who was not already popular, so that we could present him both as popular and as non-popular, by manipulating the number of likes, views and subscribers. Furthermore, it was important to incorporate in the review a recently launched device, so that we will not filter out respondents, who own this product. The unboxer asked for a sample to see exactly how we would make use of his content, so, after sending a sample to him the procedure is the following.

Photoshop CC18 and Premiere Pro CC18, were used to simulate the video within a frame, in a way it would appear on the real platform. Taking a print-screen from the original video on YouTube and applying it on Photoshop, we made the three different versions, which had a different number of views, likes and subscribers. After finishing this procedure, we applied the altered pictures into the editing software and the original video on a second layer.

Before watching the video, the respondents had to answer certain questions about their demographics, their social media usage and also about brand endorsement and brand preferences. These questions consist the pre-stimulus part of the questionnaire, which helped the researcher to receive answers from respondents, who are an appropriate sample for this research and allowed for eliminations from the procedure from respondents, who are not using social media or who are not using, particularly, YouTube, because, these respondents might not know the concepts under research¹. After watching the video, the respondents had to answer specific questions related to the concepts of this study, which are explained in detail in the operationalization unit. So, taking this into consideration, our dependent variables were measured only after the video.

3.3. Operationalization

The role of the questionnaire was to gather valid and reliable data from the answers of the respondents in order to investigate the influence of the independent variable (perception of the popularity) on the dependent variables (usefulness of the source, credibility of the source and purchase intention). The questions were divided into different blocks and they were merely adopted from previous research².

¹ The prerequisites for our participants will be explained in detail in the “sampling and data collection” section.

² Appendix I contains the full questionnaire.

The first block of questions contained demographic questions about the gender, the age, the education level and the continent of residence of the respondents. Demographic questions are considered to be easy questions and a smooth introduction to the survey. Moreover, they helped the researcher to identify if he reached a suitable sample, as in previous research related to the topic, the respondents were Turkish women (Yüksel, 2016) or students from a specific school (Mir & Rehman, 2013). The rationale behind these demographic questions is that we did not want to bring the respondent in a difficult position, therefore we chose four answers for the question regarding the gender, in order to satisfy all the different standpoints regarding the gender identification (Devor, 2007) and we also provided the respondent with the option “other” in the question regarding the level of education.

The second block incorporated questions regarding social media usage. These questions ensured us that the participants were an appropriate sample for the survey. At this point, it is important to explain that if the participants responded in a question that they have never used any social media platform at all, or they have never watched videos on YouTube at all, they were redirected in the last page of the questionnaire, as they could not be considered as appropriate respondents for this survey. The reason for not being appropriate respondents is that if they do not watch videos on YouTube, they might not be aware of the way that this video sharing platform works, and/or they would not take into consideration the popularity of the source, as it is portrayed by the number of likes, views and subscribers. Qualtrics allowed us to implement this selection via its “skip logic” function. Another important issue that should be explained in this part, is regarding the question about the different social media platforms. In the questionnaire, we asked the respondents, which social media platforms they are using. This question assured the researcher that the respondents watch videos on YouTube and, as a consequence, that they consisted an appropriate sample. The clarification here is that the categorization of the different social media platforms is a topic, which is not extensively discussed in the literature, because of its young age. Many researchers divide social media platforms into different categories (Mangold and Faulds 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Fischer and Reuber 2011). For this question, we based the answers on the categorization of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and we also used examples for each category from the taxonomy of Solis (2013), since both of these two approaches are used in many recent studies (Fotis, 2015).

The next part of the questionnaire helped the researcher to investigate the debate, which was discussed in the literature, about the placement of celebrities and ordinary people as endorsers. For instance, we asked if the respondents prefer to see reviews from celebrities or from other consumers. These questions are also important because they enabled the researcher to proceed with further analyses, for example to examine the relationship between social media usage and brand endorsement, or the relationship between the level of education and brand endorsement. In addition, these questions, apart from their scientific relevance, they can provide valuable insights for the companies and individuals in order to understand and engage with their audiences better, promote their products in a more efficient way and target systematically issues related to social media and consumer behaviour.

The fourth section explored whether the respondents had an existing preference for a particular brand. The product reviewed in the video is a Samsung mobile device. There might be respondents, who are loyal to a specific brand, such as Apple, and they might not be interested in purchasing a mobile device, which belongs to a different brand. It is important here to state, that the choice of the answers was not random, since we took into consideration the most popular brands (Piejko, 2017; Bhasin, 2018; “Top 5 best-selling smartphone brands in the world”, 2018; Romero, 2017). Moreover, we asked the respondents about the amount of money that they could allocate in the purchase of a mobile device, because if they want a cheaper mobile device, they might not be affected by the video, since they might be not willing to buy the mobile device in any case. These are the last questions of the pre-stimulus part of the questionnaire and they allowed the researcher to investigate whether other parameters, such as the preference for a certain brand or the budget that the respondents want to allocate in the purchase of a mobile device, affected the overall results.

At this point, each of the respondents was assigned in a different group. Each group contained the same video, but as it was previously shown, each video had a different number of views, likes and subscribers. After watching the video, the participants were asked if they own the mobile device, which was involved in the video or if they knew the presenter of the video. It is necessary to ask these questions, because in case that the respondent owns the mobile device, it would be unreasonable to measure his/her intention to buy it. In addition, if the respondents knew the unboxer, they might be influenced by previous experience with him and provide us

with biased answers. Again, if they answered positively, they were redirected to the last page of the questionnaire. In addition, we asked a question to see if the treatment/manipulation that we conducted worked. If the respondents could recall the number of views, likes and subscribers that means that they paid attention to these engagement metrics. If they did not pay attention to the engagement metrics, that means that our manipulation did not work for them and their answers were not affected by the popularity of the source. In this case, if the answer was that they could not recall the number of likes, views and subscribers or if they provided us with a wrong answer, we did not use their data in the analysis. In this section, we also asked the respondents, if they were able to watch the video until the end. It is important for our research to see the whole video, so that they could provide us with answers regarding our dependent variables. In order to maximize the probability to watch the video, we added a brief reminder before the video, which denoted that the participants should see it all, because they will be asked questions about it.

After watching the videos and answering the filter and manipulation check questions, the respondents had to continue with answering the questions about the dependent variables of this research. The first variable which was examined was the credibility of the source, and the questions which were used in this block, were adopted from previous research (Ohanian, 1990). Credibility is a term which refers to the judgment of the receiver that the source has or has not some kind of special knowledge on the product that he/she presents. Moreover, the receiver judges if the source is sincere in what he/she transmits. According to previous research, credibility has three dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. As we mentioned, in the literature review part, we are researching the trustworthiness and the expertise of the source and not the attractiveness, since the reviewer is not physically present on the video, but we only hear his voice. Moreover, it must be stated, that although these questions were first used in 1990, they have been adopted, tested and retested in many studies regarding the credibility of the source, so the fact that they are derived from a research, which was conducted nearly three decades ago, was not disheartening, because they are regarded as scales, which still measure what they are supposed to measure (Ermeç Sertoglou, Catli, & Korkmaz, 2014; Gaur, Tiwari, & Bathula, 2012; Mashwama, Chiliya, & Chikandiwa, 2014). For example, in this part we asked the participants if they perceived the unboxer as “reliable”, “trustworthy”, “sincere”, “dependable” and “expert”. The rationale in this part was to ask the same questions

regarding the two dimensions of credibility, which are expertise and trustworthiness, but in a different way.

The next block of questions examined the usefulness of the information in the video. The meaning of the usefulness refers to the perception of the viewer that the video is a convenient source of valuable information regarding the product, which could make his/her purchase easier. The questions, which were used in this block, were adopted from previous research (Yüksel, 2016; Bouhlel et al., 2010; Mir & Rehman, 2013; Hsu et al., 2013). For instance, we asked if the participant perceived the information of the video as “useful”, “valuable”, “effective” or “efficient” in order to make a purchase. The rationale in this part is, again, to ask the same questions regarding the usefulness of the source, but in a slightly different way.

The last part of the questionnaire incorporated questions about the purchase intention, which were used in the research of Yüksel (2016) and were adopted from previous approaches (Hsu & Tsu, 2011; Saxena 2011). Purchase intention refers to the probability that a consumer has to buy a product and it is a very important aspect of the retail process as it can predict the real sales of a product. Our questions asked the participants if after watching the video they “consider”, “intend”, “think” to buy the product. In other words, we asked the same question, with different phrasing and the respondents answered these questions on a Likert scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”.

3.4. Sampling and data collection

The prerequisites for the sample were that we needed people who are aged between 18 and 49, since this is the age group, which is the most active on YouTube (Smith, 2018). Moreover, we needed participants who speak the English language, because the questionnaire and the video were in this language, and, last but not least, we needed people who watch YouTube reviews and unboxing videos of mobile devices. This sampling procedure addresses the generalization issues highlighted in previous research on the topic (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013). In order to reach this target group, we shared the link of the questionnaire in different forums which deal with mobile devices and tech reviews, such as HowardForums, Cnet, Techist, Cellphoneforums and so on. The choice of these online communities was not random, but it was based on the fact that these communities have a great number of visitors (Scott-Briggs, 2017). The average number of responses was checked on a daily basis, until a sufficient sample size was reached. Since we saw that the number of responses

was not sufficient, we also posted the link of the questionnaire on forums such as Reddit, which has more than 330 million visitors (“Join the Conversation”, ca. 2018) and deals with a variety of technology and review topics (Kumar et al., 2018).

According to the official methodological guide of the faculty, it is obligatory for an experiment to have (at least) three groups with (at least) 30 respondents per group. However, according to a power analysis calculation, as described by Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang (2009), for a one-way analysis of variance the minimum sample should be at least 53 participants per group, so the aim was to find at least 159 participants, who will be divided randomly into three groups. It should be stated here that we also needed these respondents to answer all of the questions, so since Qualtrics gives this opportunity we also checked on a regular basis if the respondents answered all the questions in order to be sure that we had a sufficient number of responses.

3.5. Data analysis

The questionnaire was distributed online from the 20th of April until the 2nd of May and after we collected the answers from 681 respondents we exported the file with the data from Qualtrics and we imported it to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). First of all, we cleaned the data and we removed the responses, which did not meet the prerequisites for age and YouTube usage. In addition, we removed from the analyses the respondents who answered that they did not watch the video, because it was necessary to do so in order to proceed with answering the questions regarding the dependent variables. Moreover, we removed the respondents who answered that they own the mobile device, because it could not be reasonable to measure their purchase intention, since they already owned this mobile device. Last but not least, we removed the respondents who answered that they know the unboxer, because we did not want to examine answers from respondents who had previous experience with the unboxer. After these eliminations, and provided that no outliers were spotted, we proceeded with the descriptive statistics and the demographics. This part of the analysis revealed the percentages of men and women, their age distribution and their social media usage.

Following, since we are dealing with an experiment with three different groups, it was necessary to conduct the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to see if there are important differences (statistically significant) between the groups. The analysis of variance is the appropriate method of analysis when we want to compare

the means of more than two different groups and explore if the manipulation led to significantly important differences regarding the answers about the dependent variable (Keller, 2014; Salkind, 2010). After conducting the one-way analysis of variance, we proceeded with the t-test between the different groups, in order to see exactly which group differs from the other.

3.6. Validity and reliability

In terms of validity, we can say that the questions we have chosen can measure exactly what they are supposed to measure. The majority of the questions of the questionnaire and the scales were adopted from previous research, were tested and re-tested and they had a high value of Cronbach's Alpha (α) of at least 0.7 (Yüksel, 2016), which is necessary according to Creswell and Creswell (2018). Moreover, by using questions about the product and the unboxer we can ensure that the respondents have no previous experience with them and minimize the threats to our internal validity.

It should be mentioned, though, that when conducting an experiment, there are several factors, which can be a threat to the internal and external validity, but our methodology helps significantly in minimizing those threats. First of all, the fact that we have created a simulation of the YouTube platform allows us to perform the manipulation described above, since this eliminates the reliance on YouTube's interface, which we cannot control and does not give the opportunity to the participant to be distracted from other videos, within the platform. In addition, by providing the respondents with the three versions of the same video, allowed us to explore if the manipulation leads to significantly different results among the three groups. Moreover, by choosing carefully the respondents and filtering out those, who cannot be regarded as an appropriate sample, we minimized the possibility that they will give biased answers either because they are not interested in review and unboxing videos.

On the other hand, it is important that our results are replicable and repeatable (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In order to achieve this, before we conducted the experiment, we examined in detail every part of the research method in order to ensure that the methodology is consistent and that could provide, in the future, other researchers with the same results, under the same conditions. In addition, a pre-test was conducted in order to investigate if the questions which were adapted from previous research, could also work for our experimental design and if, in general, the respondents understood each item in the questionnaire. Only after having strong

evidence that the methodology is consistently designed, we proceeded with the data collection. Moreover, after collecting the sample, the statistical analyses gave us information about the reliability of our measurement.

3.7. Pre-test

A pre-test was conducted on the 9th and 10th of April in order to see if the respondents understand the questions that are incorporated in the questionnaire, to minimize the sampling errors and increase the response rates (Hilton, 2015; Drennan, 2003). In addition, the pre-test helped the researcher to calculate the time needed to answer the whole questionnaire and compare this estimation with the time that Qualtrics indicated for the procedure. It is important to give the respondents, in the first page of the questionnaire, a realistic estimation about the time that they need in order to complete the questionnaire, because if they do not receive a realistic estimation, they might quit the questionnaire, before fully completing it. Moreover, the pre-test was valuable in order to examine the consistency of the research design, because the respondents had the opportunity to discuss with the researcher each question separately (Greco & Walop, 1987).

The pre-test was conducted offline with purposive sampling. The reason for choosing it was to reduce the time period, which is demanded for the pre-test. Moreover, conducting the pre-test offline with the presence of the researcher, gave the opportunity to the respondents to express their concerns and discuss their difficulties in real time, while answering the questions. For the offline pre-test, 21 respondents were contacted, and they provided their responses to the questionnaire, separately, one after the other, without having the opportunity to share their concerns with each other, but only with the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher, asked questions to the respondents, even when they found it easy to answer the items in the questionnaire, because this would help to explore that the respondents, indeed, understood the items and that the items also measured, what they were supposed to measure. The combination of endorsing the respondents to think aloud and, also, asking them questions about the content of the questionnaire is a consistent method of pretesting, which is valuable in order to formulate the final design, which will be later distributed online (Jobe & Mingay, 1989).

Regarding the sample, it should be mentioned, that the prerequisites were to find people who are watching videos on YouTube, so that they could have an idea of the basic concepts of the experiment and we also, tried to reach people with different

ages, nationalities and education backgrounds, so that we could examine if people with different characteristics could interpret our questions, as we wanted to do. Therefore, a message was shared on a popular social media page on Facebook, which is called “Commodity Market Rotterdam” and also on the personal social media pages of the researcher. This message kindly asked for voluntary participation in this experiment and we managed to gather 21 participants, with a wide distribution in regard to their ages, nationalities and education. In particular, for the pre-test a sample of 10 men and 11 women was reached, with 6 people aged 18 – 24, 9 people aged 25 – 30, 5 people aged 31 – 36 and 1 person aged 43 – 48. Within this sample, there were 9 different nationalities from four different continents and with an educational background, which varied from people who have finished the high school to people who obtain a master diploma. Furthermore, it should be also mentioned that each of the participants had accounts on different social media platforms and they were also familiar with the YouTube metrics and the existence of product reviews and unboxing videos.

Following, it is important to highlight the problems, which were anticipated in each block of questions and how they were solved for the final version of the questionnaire. To begin with, in the demographic questions, in the questions regarding the social media usage, the brand endorsement and the preference of the brand, the respondents answered easily, without facing any complications. Some remarks in the demographic questions were that in the question regarding the gender all the respondents identified themselves as males or females, and some respondents instead of answering which education level they have already finished, they answered which level of education they were currently enrolled in. Literature suggests that two answers in the question concerning the gender are not enough (Devor, 2007) and since the pre-test sample consisted by a small number of respondents it was not considered necessary to limit the answer choices in this question. On the other hand, it was necessary to change the question regarding the education level and, in particular, it was necessary to add in bold letters the word “already”, so that the question could make clearer that we are asking for the education level that the respondent has already finished. Furthermore, two of the participants faced with difficulty the question about the different social media platforms, because they did not understand the difference among the different social media categories. For example, one of the respondents asked the researcher, about the difference between “social networking platforms” and

“forums”. At this point, it was regarded as necessary to add next to each social media category, examples of specific platforms which fall under it. For instance, next to “social networking sites”, we added in parentheses the names of popular social networking sites, such as Facebook.

After these blocks of questions, the participants were asked to watch the video which presented the unboxing and the review of a new Samsung mobile device. As we explained, Qualtrics gives the researcher the opportunity to divide the participants randomly and evenly into three groups. No one of the participants knew the unboxer, nor they owned the mobile device, so it proved to be a good decision to choose a new mobile device and an unboxer, who is not famous. On the other hand, though, what was problematic at this part of the experiment, was the fact that some of the participants did not watch the full video and/or did not watch carefully the video. At this point, Qualtrics gives the opportunity to the researcher to hide, for a certain time period, the button which leads the respondent to the next question. Therefore, we revealed the “next” button to the respondent towards the end of the video. However, since this choice might create the impression to the respondent that the questionnaire platform has technical issues, it is important to state kindly, before the video, that it is important to watch it all and only after doing so, the respondents could proceed to the next questions.

The last parts of the questionnaire contained the dependent variables of our research and the participants, in general lines, did not anticipate any problems answering them. During these blocks of questions, the participants were asked if they could formulate an opinion about the usefulness and the credibility of the source and they were also asked how they could define these two terms. These questions were asked in the start of each respective block, so that the respondents could not make use of the elements which were included in the items to persuade the researcher that they know what each term is. The outcome was that the respondents, could easily provide the researcher with answers, which were close to the terms, as they are defined in the literature review part. However, the problems which were anticipated here were, primarily, in relation to the scales and there were also problems regarding the questions about the purchase intention, because they were quite similar. To be more specific, some of the respondents said that they would prefer a wider scale so that they could answer easier in these three blocks of questions. On the other hand, there were respondents who answered easily, but they expressed that a smaller scale, would not

be a problem in order to answer the questions. In order to solve this case, we preferred to maintain a scale with seven answers for the actual research, as this was the case for the pre-test, as well. In addition, about the purchase intention questions, we chose to leave aside some of the questions, which were created by the researcher and we used the questions from the previous research of Yüksel (2016) which had slight differences from one another.

To conclude, the changes which were implemented in order to reach the final version of the questionnaire were that we highlighted that we need the education level that the respondent had already completed, and we also explained further each social media category by adding in parentheses the names of popular platforms. In addition, we added a message, which kindly asked the respondent to watch carefully the full video and we revealed the button of the next question only towards the end of the video. Last but not least, we changed the questions regarding the purchase intention, by including more items from previous research and we maintained a Likert scale with seven answers to all the questions regarding the dependent variables.

4. Results

The following chapter illustrates the results of the statistical analyses, which were conducted in order to investigate the overall research question which is “To what extent do the engagement metrics of a review video (number of views, subscribers and likes) affect the credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention?”. The first results, which will be reported in the next pages, consider descriptive statistics regarding the gender, the age and the social media usage. Following, we are examining the reliability of the items which were used in the questionnaire. As we previously mentioned, we adopted questions from previous studies and after the pre-test we applied changes to their wording and their scales. Therefore, before proceeding with the one-way analysis of variance and the t-tests, it is necessary to report the results of the reliability tests regarding our key measures (credibility of the source, usefulness of the information, purchase intention). After reporting the reliability for each block of questions, we will present the one-way analysis of variance and the results of the t-tests and we will answer the three hypotheses, which were mentioned in the theoretical framework.

4.1. Demographics – Descriptive statistics

The questionnaire was distributed online from the 20th of April until the 2nd of May and we collected data from 681 respondents. However, 59.5% of the respondents were excluded from the analyses and the reason is that they were filtered out, during the survey, because they provided responses, which did not allow us to consider them as the appropriate respondents for this research.

First of all, 43.4% of the respondents were filtered out of the survey, because they did not watch the video with the unboxing of the Samsung Galaxy mobile device. In addition, 6% of the respondents were filtered out of the survey, because they answered that they do not use any social media platforms and 0.9% were filtered out, because they answered that they do not watch videos on YouTube. Furthermore, 4.7% of the respondents were excluded from the analyses, because they were out of the 18-49 age spectrum that we are examining. Last but not least, 2.2% of the respondents were excluded because they answered that they own this mobile device and 2.3% were excluded because they answered that they know the presenter in the video.

After these eliminations we reached a sample which consisted of 275 respondents. The following tables illustrate descriptive statistics regarding the gender, the age and the social media usage.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics – Gender

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	133	48.4
Female	134	48.7
Other	6	2.2
Prefer not to say	2	0.7
Total	275	100

Table 2 indicates that we managed to reach a balance between the male respondents, who consisted 48.4% of the sample and the female respondents, who consisted 48.7% of the sample. The other two answer choices cover 2.9% of the sample and they are in line with previous research, which illustrates that only two answer choices are not adequate to satisfy all the different standpoints regarding gender identification.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics – Age

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
18-24	112	40.7
25-30	82	29.8
31-36	42	15.3
37-42	28	10.2
43-48	11	4
Total	275	100

In table 3, we can see that the highest number of respondents, with 40.7%, was aged between 18 and 24 years. The second largest group, with 29.8%, was aged 25 to 30 years. The other three age categories count for 29.5%. These numbers might, also,

be an indication that younger ages, make more frequent use of the different social media platforms compared to the older ages.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics – YouTube usage per week

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Daily	162	58.9
4-6 times a week	48	17.5
2-3 times a week	43	15.6
Once a week	22	8
Total	275	100

Table 4 manifests that 58.9% of the respondents use the video sharing platform daily, 17.5% four to six times a week and 15.6% two to three times a week. Only 8% of the respondents answered that they watch videos on YouTube once a week. These numbers confirm the remarkable success of YouTube, which was also discussed in the theoretical framework and reveal that we reached people, who use YouTube frequently, so they are able to analyze the interface of the platform.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics – YouTube usage per day

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
More than 3 hours	62	22.5
From 1 to 3 hours	144	52.4
Less than 1 hour	69	25.1
Total	275	100

In line with the previous results, Table 5 also shows that we reached people who use YouTube frequently, since 74.9% of the respondents answered that they use the video sharing platform more than one hour per day and only 25.1% responded that they use the platform less than one hour per day. This table provides, also, evidence that our sampling technique addressed the generalization issues highlighted in previous research of the topic.

Based on the descriptive statistics, we can see that the data was normally distributed, thus we can proceed with the one-way analysis of variance and the t-tests.

4.2. Reliability of the scales

Before we proceed with the main analyses of this study, it is important to present the results of the reliability tests for our key measures and also explain how we computed our new variables.

Table 6

Cronbach's Alpha for the key measures

	<i>N</i> of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Credibility	5	.91
Perceived Usefulness	3	.92
Purchase Intention	3	.83

The reliability analyses for the items measuring the perceived credibility of the source, the perceived usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention revealed that we achieved a high level of internal consistency. In particular, the Cronbach's Alpha for the five items measuring the perceived credibility of the source is 0.91, for the three items measuring the perceived usefulness of the information in the video is 0.92 and for the three items measuring the purchase intention is 0.83. Each item within these blocks of questions could be regarded as highly reliable and it was not considered necessary to delete any of them, because this would not improve significantly the Cronbach's Alpha.

Taking this into consideration, we computed the means of the scales for each block of questions, we created new variables for the credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention and we used these variables in the one-way analysis of variance and the t-tests.

4.3. ANOVA and t-test results

In order to investigate our three hypotheses, we conducted three one-way analysis of variance tests. Since all the one-way analysis of variance tests revealed that there is at least one mean comparison between the groups, which is statistically significant, we also conducted t-tests to explore, which group differs significantly from the other. For each dependent variable, we will present the one-way analysis of variance and, following, the t-tests.

In order to understand the results, which are presented in the following pages, it is important to mention that the scales which were used for each question, are the

following: “Strongly agree” (1), “Agree” (2), “Somewhat agree” (3), “Neither agree nor disagree” (4), “Somewhat disagree” (5), “Disagree” (6), “Strongly disagree” (7). Moreover, we should notice that we will include in the one-way analysis of variance the participants, who did not pay attention to the numbers of likes, views and subscribers, because it would be interesting to see how they scored compared to the other three groups. However, these responses will be not included in the t-tests, because we want to explore the differences among the participants who paid attention to the engagement metrics.

4.3.1. Perceived credibility of the source

The following tables illustrate descriptive statistics about the perceived credibility of the source and the results of the one-way analysis of variance, which was conducted for the four different groups. In addition, we are reporting the results of the t-tests for each possible combination of the groups that paid attention to the numbers of views, likes and subscribers.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics – Perceived credibility of the source

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Group A (high numbers)	3.01	0.94	83
Group C (average numbers)	3.48	1.02	75
Group B (low numbers)	4.05	1.45	85
Group D (did not pay attention to the numbers)	3.39	0.85	32
Total	3.51	1.20	275

Note. Lower scores indicate that the unboxer is more credible, because value (1) was assigned to “Strongly agree” and value (7) was assigned to “Strongly disagree”.

As we can see in Table 7, the participants who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers, perceived the unboxer as more credible ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.94$) compared to the participants, who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.02$). In addition, the participants who watched the video with the average numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the unboxer as more credible ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.02$) compared to the participants who watched the video with the low numbers of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.45$). Interesting in this table is the fact that the group which did not pay attention to the numbers of views, likes and subscribers has a mean

($M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.85$), that is close to the mean of the group with the average number of views, likes and subscribers ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.02$).

Table 8

ANOVA results – Perceived Credibility of the source

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Corrected Model	46.02	3	15.34	11.94	.000	.12
Intercept	2,840.15	1	2,840.15	2,209.70	.000	.89
4 Groups	46.02	3	15.34	11.94	.000	.12
Error	348.32	271	1.29			
Total	3,773.60	275				
Corrected Total	394.34	274				

The one-way analysis of variance (Table 8) reveals that there is at least one mean comparison between the groups that has a statistically significant difference: $F(3, 271) = 11.94$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$. In other words, the analysis of variance shows that at least two of the groups differ significantly regarding their perception about the credibility of the source and around 12% of the variance in the perceived credibility of the source is attributable to the manipulation (different number of likes, views and subscribers).

In order to provide an answer to our hypothesis, which is “an unboxing video with a high number of likes, views and subscribers affects the credibility of the source more positively compared to a video with a low number of likes, views and subscribers”, we conducted t-tests for the three possible combinations of groups. The t-tests showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the means of each possible pair of groups. In particular, the people who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the unboxer as more credible ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.94$) than the people who watched the video with the low number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.02$), $t(144.91) = -5.52$, $p < .001$. In addition, the people who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the unboxer as more credible ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.95$) than the people who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.02$), $t(156) = -3$, $p = .003$. Last but not least, the people who watched the video with the average numbers of likes, views and subscribers

perceived the unboxer as more credible ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.45$) than the people who watched the video with the low number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.02$), $t(150.59) = 2.92$, $p = .004$.

All in all, after conducting the one-way analysis of variance for the four different groups and the t-tests for the groups that paid attention to the numbers of likes, views and subscribers, we reached the following conclusion. First of all, the analysis of variance revealed that there is at least one mean comparison which has a statistically significant difference. In particular, after conducting the t-tests, we concluded that the participants who watched the video with the high number of likes, views and subscribers and the participants who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers perceived the unboxer as more credible compared to the participants who watched the video with the low numbers of likes, views and subscribers. In addition, the participants who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the unboxer as more credible compared to the participants who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers. Given that all these differences are statistically significant, the first hypothesis is accepted.

4.3.2. Perceived usefulness of the information in the video

The following tables present descriptive statistics about the perceived usefulness of the information in the video and the results of the one-way analysis of variance, which was conducted for the four different groups. Moreover, we are reporting the t-tests for each possible combination of the groups that paid attention to the numbers of views, likes and subscribers.

Table 9

Descriptive statistics – Perceived usefulness of the information in the video

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Group A (high numbers)	2.84	0.93	83
Group C (average numbers)	3.36	1.24	75
Group B (low numbers)	3.93	1.64	85
Group D (did not pay attention to the numbers)	3.33	1.57	32
Total	3.37	1.40	275

Note. Lower scores indicate that the information in the video is more useful, because value (1) was assigned to "Strongly agree" and value (7) was assigned to "Strongly disagree".

Table 9 illustrates that the participants who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the information in the video as more useful ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.93$) compared to the participants, who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.24$). In addition, the participants who watched the video with the average numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the information in the video as more useful ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.24$) compared to the participants who watched the video with the low numbers of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.64$). In this case, we also see that the respondents who did not pay attention to the numbers of views, likes and subscribers have a mean ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.57$) that is close to the mean of the group that watched the video with the average number of views, likes and subscribers ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.24$).

Table 10

ANOVA results – Perceived Usefulness of the information in the video

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
Corrected Model	50.75	3	16.92	9.39	.000	.09
Intercept	2,647.90	1	2,647.90	1,470.11	.000	.84
4 Groups	50.75	3	16.92	9.39	.000	.09
Error	488.11	271	1.80			
Total	3,670.44	275				
Corrected Total	538.87	274				

The one-way analysis of variance (Table 10) indicates that there is at least one mean comparison between the groups that has a statistically significant difference: $F(3, 271) = 9.39$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$. In other words, the analysis of variance shows that at least two of the groups differ significantly regarding their perception about the usefulness of the information in the video and around 9% of the variance in the perceived usefulness of the information in the video is attributable to the manipulation (different number of likes, views and subscribers).

In order to provide an answer to our hypothesis, which is “an unboxing video with a high number of likes, views and subscribers affects the usefulness of the information in the video more positively compared to a video with a low number of likes, views and subscribers”, we conducted t-tests for the three possible combinations

of groups. The t-tests revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the means of each possible pair of groups. To be more specific, the people who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the information in the video as more useful ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.93$) than the people who watched the video with the low number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.64$), $t(133.99) = -5.35$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, the people who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the information in the video as more useful ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.93$) than the people who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.24$), $t(136.66) = -2.95$, $p = .003$. Lastly, the people who watched the video with the average numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the information in the video as more useful ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.24$) than the people who watched the video with the low number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.64$), $t(154.63) = 2.53$, $p = .013$.

So, to conclude, after conducting the one-way analysis of variance for the four different groups and the t-tests for the groups that paid attention to the numbers of likes, views and subscribers, we reached the following conclusion. First of all, the one-way analysis of variance revealed that there is at least one mean difference which is statistically significant. In particular, after conducting the t-tests we concluded that the participants who watched the video with the high number of likes, views and subscribers and the participants who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers perceived the information in the video as more useful compared to the participants who watched the video with the low numbers of likes, views and subscribers. Furthermore, the participants who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers perceived the information in the video as more useful compared to the people who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers. Since all these differences are statistically significant the second hypothesis is accepted.

4.3.3. Purchase intention results

The following tables present descriptive statistics about the purchase intention and the results of the analysis of variance, which was conducted among the four different groups. In addition, we are reporting the t-tests for each possible combination of the groups that paid attention to the numbers of views, likes and subscribers.

Table 11

Descriptive statistics – Purchase Intention

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Group A (high numbers)	4.88	1.32	83
Group C (average numbers)	5.20	1.24	75
Group B (low numbers)	5.72	0.95	85
Group D (did not pay attention to the numbers)	4.91	1.40	32
Total	5.23	1.25	275

Note. Lower scores indicate that the respondents were more willing to purchase the mobile device, because value (1) was assigned to "Strongly agree" and value (7) was assigned to "Strongly disagree".

In Table 11, we can see that the participants who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers were more willing to purchase the Samsung device ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.32$) compared to the participants, who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.24$). In addition, the participants who watched the video with the average numbers of likes, views and subscribers were more willing to purchase the Samsung mobile device ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.24$) compared to the participants who watched the video with the low numbers of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 0.95$). In this case, we see that the respondents who did not pay attention to the numbers of likes, views and subscribers have a mean ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.40$) that is close to the mean of the group that watched the video with the high numbers of views, likes and subscribers ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.32$).

Table 12

ANOVA results – Purchase Intention

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Corrected Model	33.58	3	11.19	7.72	.000	.08
Intercept	6,272.01	1	6,272.01	4,328.48	.000	.94
4 Groups	33.58	3	11.19	7.72	.000	.08
Error	392.68	271	1.45			
Total	7,952.67	275				
Corrected Total	426.26	274				

The one-way analysis of variance (Table 12) indicates that there is at least one mean comparison between the groups that has a statistically significant difference: $F(3, 271) = 7.72, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .08$. In other words, the analysis of variance shows that at least two of the groups differ significantly regarding their intention to purchase the Samsung mobile device and around 8% of the variance in the purchase intention is attributable to the manipulation (different numbers of likes, views and subscribers).

In order to provide an answer to our hypothesis, which is “an unboxing video with a high number of likes, views and subscribers affects the purchase intention more positively compared to a video with a low number of likes, views and subscribers”, we conducted t-tests for each possible combination of the three groups. In this case, two of the t-tests showed that there is a statistically significant mean difference and one t-test showed that the mean difference is not statistically significant. To be more specific, the people who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers were more willing to purchase the Samsung mobile device ($M = 4.88, SD = 1.31$) than the people who watched the video with the low number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 5.71, SD = 0.95$), $t(148.98) = -4.70, p < .001$. Furthermore, the people who watched the video with the average numbers of likes, views and subscribers were more willing to purchase the Samsung mobile device ($M = 5.20, SD = 1.24$) than the people who watched the video with the low number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 5.71, SD = 0.95$), $t(137.52) = 2.90, p = .004$. The last t-test though, which was conducted for the groups that watched the video with the high numbers of views, likes and subscribers and the average numbers of views, likes and subscribers, showed that there is no statistically significant difference between these two groups. The people who watched the video with the high numbers of likes, views and subscribers were more willing to purchase the Samsung mobile device ($M = 4.88, SD = 1.31$) than the people who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers ($M = 5.20, SD = 1.24$), $t(155.66) = -1.58, p = .118$, but this difference is not statistically significant.

To sum up, after conducting the one-way analysis of variance for the four different groups and the t-tests for the groups that paid attention to the numbers of likes, views and subscribers, we reached the following conclusion. First of all, the one-way analysis of variance revealed that there is at least one mean difference which is statistically significant. In particular, after conducting the t-tests we concluded that

the participants who watched the video with the high number of likes, views and subscribers and the participants who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers were more willing to buy the Samsung mobile device compared to the participants who watched the video with the low numbers of likes, views and subscribers. There was no statistically significant difference, though, between the participants who watched the video with the high number of likes, views and subscribers and the participants who watched the video with the average number of likes, views and subscribers. Therefore, the third hypothesis is partially accepted.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the influence of the engagement metrics of a YouTube video (number of likes, views and subscribers) on the perceived credibility of the source, the perceived usefulness of the information in the video, as well as, the purchase intention. After conducting the online experiment, which was accompanied by a questionnaire, we examined the responses regarding the three dependent variables through a quantitative approach. The objective of the data analysis was to investigate the overall research question, which was: “To what extent do the engagement metrics of a review video (numbers of views, likes and subscribers) affect the credibility of the source, the usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention?”.

In the following pages, we will answer the main research question and the three sub-questions, we will compare our findings with the findings of previous studies, we will refer to the limitations of our approach and, last but not least, we will provide suggestions for future research.

5.1. Key findings

To begin with, the first research objective of this study was to explore the influence of the engagement metrics on the perceived credibility of the source. As we discussed in the theoretical framework, the credibility of the source is a term, which refers to the judgment of the receiver that the source has or has not some kind of knowledge on the issue that he/she presents (Ohanian, 1990). This author’s research explains that the credibility of the source consisted of three different components: the expertise of the source, the trustworthiness of the source and the attractiveness of the source. In our approach, we provided our respondents with a video review, in which the unboxer was not physically present, so we examined with our questions only the two of the three parameters of the perceived credibility of the source: the expertise and the trustworthiness.

Our results revealed that a video with a high number of views, likes and subscribers affects more positively the perceived credibility of the source, compared to a video with an average number of views, likes and subscribers. In addition, a video with an average number of views, likes and subscribers affects more positively the perceived credibility of the source compared to a video with a low number of views, likes and subscribers. In other words, our results show that the people who are watching video reviews on YouTube take into consideration the popularity of the

source and how he/she is perceived by other users. As a consequence, they tend to evaluate the credibility of the source not only based on the trustworthiness and the expertise, but also based on the number of views, likes and subscribers that he/she has and they perceive the source as more credible when the video has a high number of views, likes and subscribers. From these findings, we can argue that the people who are uploading video reviews on YouTube, should devote time not only to expand their expertise on the topics that they deal with, but also to enhance the engagement in their channels, if they want to be perceived as more credible than other users. From a different standpoint, we can also support the claim that corporations and individuals, who work in the field of marketing and advertising, should take into consideration the parameter of the popularity of a YouTuber, before they offer him/her a project, because it has an influence on the perceived credibility of the source.

On the other hand, it is important to mention that our findings about the perceived credibility of the source are in line with previous research on the topic (Yüksel, 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013). These two approaches revealed that the engagement metrics have an influence on the perceived credibility of the source. However, their findings cannot be generalized to the whole population that watches video reviews on YouTube and the reason is that they did not seek to find the people who watch this kind of user-generated content. As we discussed, Yüksel's (2016) sample consisted only of Turkish women and Mir and Rehman's (2013) sample only of students of a certain institution, since they followed an offline questionnaire and a purposive sampling technique. In comparison, with our methodology, we managed to reach a sufficient sample of people who are watching video reviews on YouTube, we provided them with the same video in three different conditions and we shed more light regarding the influence of the popularity of the source on the perceived credibility by finding that in our three conditions the highest the numbers of the views, likes and subscribers, the more credible the source was perceived.

The second research objective of this study was to investigate the influence of the engagement metrics on the perceived usefulness of the information in the video. In the theoretical framework, we discussed different approaches regarding the term and we concluded that the meaning of the perceived usefulness, in our case, refers to the perception that the YouTube review is a convenient source of valuable information regarding a product, which could make its purchase easier (Hsu, Lin & Chiang, 2013).

Our findings revealed, as in the previous concept, that the viewers evaluate the

usefulness of the information in the video by taking into consideration other users' interactions, which are portrayed in the case of YouTube by the numbers of views, likes and subscribers. Our hypothesis, which was supported by our results, was that the viewers could perceive the information in the video as more useful, when the video itself has a high number of views, likes and subscribers compared to a video with a low number of views, likes and subscribers and the rationale behind this was that the viewers could be influenced by other users' interactions.

In this case, it should be noticed that previous studies have found contradicting results regarding the influence of the engagement metrics of a YouTube video on the perceived usefulness of the source (Mir & Rehman, 2013; Yüksel, 2016). In particular, Mir & Rehman (2013) supported with their research the hypothesis that the number of views, likes and subscribers affects positively the perceived usefulness of the source, while this hypothesis was rejected in Yüksel's (2016) research. As we mentioned, the previous studies had certain limitations, which we managed to surpass with our approach and our findings revealed that the viewers are affected by the interactions of other users and they tend to evaluate the usefulness of the information in a video as more useful, when the video has a high number of likes, views and subscribers compared to a video with a low number of likes, views and subscribers, although the information in the three videos was exactly the same.

The last research objective of this study was to examine the influence of the engagement metrics of a YouTube video on the purchase intention. In the theoretical framework, we explained that the purchase intention refers to the probability that a consumer has to buy a product and it is an important aspect of the retail process, as it can predict the real sales of a product (Davis, 1986; Baker, Donthu & Kumar, 2016). In our experiment, we incorporated a video review of a recently launched mobile device and we asked the respondents to see the video and respond if they were willing to go to a store to try this mobile device and if they were intended to buy it.

Our results showed that a video with a high number of views, likes and subscribers and a video with an average number of views, likes and subscribers affect the purchase intention more positively compared to a video with a low number of views and subscribers. In comparison, within this sample, the results showed that there is no statistically significant difference between the participants who watched the video with the high number of views, likes and subscribers and the video with the average number of views, likes and subscribers. From these results, we assume that

the numbers, which were used for the video of the average popularity (around 100,000 views, 1,000 subscribers, 100 likes), consist a threshold that must be exceeded in order to lead to a significant difference in the purchase intention. In other words, our results indicate that the intention to buy the mobile device, which was incorporated in the video, has stabilized over a certain number of views, likes and subscribers and a more popular video did not lead to a significant change in the participants' behaviour.

These results are in line with previous research on the topic (Yüksel 2016; Mir & Rehman, 2013), which indicates that the engagement metrics of a YouTube video have an influence on the purchase intention. However, the interesting finding in our results, which adds to the previous research regarding this topic, is that the purchase intention is not increasing significantly as the number of likes, views and subscribers gets higher, but it remains relatively stable after a certain threshold. Again, it should be specified that, in previous studies, the researchers followed similar methodologies (quantitative surveys) and they did not provide any kind of material (video) that the respondents could take into consideration before they answer the questions (Yüksel, 2016; Mir's and Rehman, 2013). Moreover, the sample they collected does not represent the whole population who watches video reviews. So, in our approach, by designing an online experiment and manipulating the engagement metrics in the same video, we found that the engagement metrics have an influence on the purchase intention and we can generalize these results to the whole population that watches review and unboxing videos on YouTube.

Considering all the results, we have to say that a popular video review on YouTube affects positively all the dependent variables that we examined with our methodology. Users take into consideration other users' interactions and they evaluate the YouTubers accordingly. In addition, users are influenced not only by the product related information, but also by the popularity of the source. Therefore, corporations and individuals who are using YouTube for marketing and advertising purposes should take into consideration all these parameters if they are looking for efficient ways in order to promote effectively their products or services.

5.2. Limitations

The findings of this study contribute to the literature about the influence of social media on the consumer decision-making process and yield new insights on the influence of the popularity of a review video on the perceived credibility of the

source, the perceived usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention. However, as with any experimental research, our approach has specific limitations, which should be mentioned.

First of all, there are limitations which have to do with the video that we incorporated into the survey. Although the video was only four minutes, we cannot be sure that the participants watched it carefully, since their motives to watch it are different in an experimental design than the motives in real life. In other words, when someone wants to buy a new mobile device, he/she has the opportunity to search for information online, watch/read many different reviews and examine carefully the usefulness of the information and the credibility of a source. In our case, we cannot be absolutely sure that the respondents watched carefully the video, because we did not seek to reach people who want to buy this specific mobile device. However, by distributing the link of the online questionnaire in different tech forums, we managed to reach people who are interested in discussing issues regarding mobile devices and who watch/read tech reviews. Related to this, is, also, the limitation regarding the incorporation of a specific YouTube channel, while there are several different channels on YouTube, but it was not possible to incorporate in the survey, many different videos, or to create many different groups, which would watch videos from different channels.

In addition, there are limitations, which have to do with the choice of the engagement metrics. As we mentioned in the theoretical framework, there is a plethora of YouTube metrics and some of them can be seen by users. In our study, we chose only the views, likes and subscribers and we excluded the dislikes and the comments, which might also have an influence on the perceived credibility of the source, the perceived usefulness of the information in the video and the purchase intention. In the case of dislikes, we provided the users with the same number in all three versions and we did not change this number, because we examined the positive influence that these numbers have on our dependent variables. Furthermore, we did not incorporate the number of the comments in our study, because users might not only pay attention to the number, but they may also look thoroughly at them in order to see if they are positive or negative. Taking this into consideration, it was not feasible to simulate the comments under the video, so we excluded them from the simulation of the platform.

5.3. Directions for future research

YouTube is a rather popular social media platform, which has not been extensively discussed in the literature, because of the young age of the platform in question. Previous studies did not elaborate on the influence of the popularity of a source on its credibility, on the usefulness of the information in the video and on the purchase intention. Future studies could repeat the current research and see if they manage to reach similar results. It could be advisable, also, to use the questions and the scales of our questionnaire, since they were highly reliable. Moreover, we would strongly recommend that the researchers seek for respondents, who are watching the specific type of content that will be examined, so that their results represent the whole population. One way to reach successfully the suitable respondents is by distributing the link of the questionnaire in popular forums that deal with topics relevant to the material of the experiment.

In order to expand the current work, we could advise researchers to use different YouTube channels and divide the participants into more groups. For instance, if they choose to incorporate three different channels, they can divide the participants into nine different groups, which will watch different versions of the same video as we did. In addition, it could be interesting to examine the popularity of the source with more than three different versions of the same video. In that way, they may reach a conclusion regarding the threshold, over which the change in viewer's behaviour remains stable. In this case, though, researchers should take into consideration that they need more time in order to reach a sufficient sample, since they will need a significantly higher number of respondents compared to this study.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

Welcome message

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey, which is about online reviews. This survey is part of research conducted by a Media & Business student from the Erasmus University of Rotterdam and it should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

If you want to proceed in answering the questions in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue your participation at any time without penalty.

Last but not least, be assured that all the answers that you provide will be anonymous and your personal information will be kept strictly confidential.

Risks of taking part in this survey

At this point, it is important to state that there are no risks associated with participating in this research.

Communication with the researcher

If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, or you are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact the researcher in this email: 466558pt@eur.nl

A. Demographic Questions

D1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other (please specify) _____
- Prefer not to say

D2. What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-30
- 31-36
- 37-42
- 43-48
- 49+

D3. In which continent do you currently reside?

- Asia
- Australia
- Africa
- America
- Europe

D4. What is the highest level of education that you have *already* completed?

- High school
- Bachelor
- Master
- PhD
- Other (Please specify) _____

B. Social media usage

SMU1. Do you use any social media platforms?

- Yes
- No

(Condition: If “no” is selected, the participant is redirected to the end of the survey)

SMU2. Which social media platforms do you use? (you may choose more than one option)

- Video sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo)
- Social networking platforms (e.g. Facebook, Myspace, Hi5)
- Blogs, Micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter, Tumblr)
- Forums (e.g. Reddit, Techist)
- Other social media platforms (please specify) _____

SMU3. Do you watch videos on YouTube?

- Yes
- No

(Condition: If “no” is selected, the participant is redirected to the end of the survey)

SMU4. What type of YouTube videos do you watch? (you may choose more than one option)

- Product review videos / Unboxing videos
- Educational videos
- Beauty and make-up videos
- Gaming videos
- Play-lists with your favorite songs
- Other

SMU5. How many times a week do you watch YouTube videos?

- Daily
- 2-3 times a week
- 4-6 times a week
- Once a week
- Never

(Condition: If “never” is selected, the participant is redirected to the end of the survey)

SMU6. How many hours per day do you watch YouTube videos?

- More than 3 hours
- From 1 to 3 hours
- Less than 1 hour

C. Brand endorsement

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

BE1. I prefer watching video reviews on YouTube from celebrities.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

BE2. I prefer watching video reviews on YouTube from ordinary people.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

BE3. It is more likely that I would consider buying a product which is presented in a video review by a celebrity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

BE4. It is more likely that I would consider buying a product which is presented in a video review by ordinary people.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

BE5. I believe that video reviews on YouTube from celebrities have an influence on my purchase decisions.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

BE6. I believe that video reviews on YouTube by ordinary people have an influence on my purchase decisions.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

D. Brand preference

BP1. Imagine that you want to buy a new mobile device. Which of the following brand, would you take into consideration? (you can choose as many brands as you want)

- Samsung
- Apple
- Xiaomi
- LG
- Huawei
- Lenovo
- Other (please specify) _____

BP2. How much money could you allocate to the purchase of a new mobile device?

- Less than 200 euros
- 200-400 euros
- More than 400 euros

E. Videos

Group A watched the video with the high number of views, likes and subscribers.

Group B watched the video with the low number of views, likes and subscribers.

Group C watched the video with an average number of views, likes and subscribers.

F. Filter questions and manipulation check

F1. Were you able to watch the full video?

- Yes
- No (Please, specify the reason) _____

(Condition: If “no” is selected, the participant is redirected to the end of the survey)

F2. How many views, subscribers and likes did the video have?

- Around 1.000.000 views, 100.000 subscribers and 10.000 thousand likes
- Around 1000 views, 100 subscribers and 10 likes
- Around 100.000 views, 1.000 subscribers and 100 likes
- I did not pay attention / I do not remember

F2. Do you own the product you just saw in the video?

- Yes
- No

(Condition: If “yes” is selected, the participant is redirected to the end of the survey)

F3. Do you know the presenter of the video?

- Yes
- No

(Condition: If “yes” is selected, the participant is redirected to the end of the survey)

G. Credibility of the source

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the unboxer.

CR1. I think that the unboxer is reliable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

CR2. I think that the unboxer is trustworthy.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

CR3. I think that the unboxer is an expert.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

CR4. I think that the unboxer is sincere.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

CR5. I think that the unboxer is dependable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

H. Usefulness of the information

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the information in the video.

US1. I think that the information about the product is useful for my purchase.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

US2. I think that the information about the product is valuable for my purchase.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

US3. I think that the information about the product is efficient for my purchase.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I. Purchase Intention

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

PI1. After watching the video, I would consider going to a store in order to try this Samsung mobile device.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

PI2. After watching the video, I believe that I will purchase this Samsung mobile device.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

PI3. After watching the video, I am sure that I will purchase this Samsung mobile device.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

J. End of Survey

ES1. What do you think the researcher of this study is examining? (if you want, you may proceed without answering this question)

- If you have any idea, please share your thoughts here:

Thanks for your time!

Please be assured that all the answers you provided will be kept strictly confidential.

If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, or you are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact the researcher in this email: 466558pt@eur.nl