



**A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMER PRE-
PURCHASE COGNITIVE DISSONANCE ON PURCHASE
INTENTION IN SOCIAL E-COMMERCE**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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This Independent Study has been Approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, with the decline in the profitability of traditional content platforms and e-commerce platforms, the business model of “content + transaction” has gradually been favored by enterprises, and social e-commerce platforms continue to increase and dominate in many types of e-commerce enterprises.

Social e-commerce platforms are increasing and dominating among many types of e-commerce enterprises. According to the business model of social e-commerce, social e-commerce platforms first accumulate users through content generation, and then gain profits through commodity trading. The large number of users accumulated in the early stage brings huge profit potential to social e-commerce platforms, but how to transform users into commodity buyers is the key to their success.

As social e-commerce exists in the transaction mode of buying first and experiencing later, consumers are often hesitant to buy when faced with the purchasing situation of separating people from goods, and this phenomenon of purchasing intention without actual purchasing behavior is essentially a manifestation of cognitive dissonance of consumers and is universal in nature. Based on the theory of rational behavior, the theory of planned behavior, and the theory of initial trust, this study investigates the influencing factors of consumers' purchase intention on social e-commerce platforms from the perspective of consumer perception.

Therefore, the following research objectives are proposed: 1. To explore the impact of cognitive dissonance on consumer purchase intention. 2. To explore the impact of seller reputation on consumer purchase intention. 3. To explore the impact of user-generated content on consumer purchase intentions. 4. To investigate the moderating role of seller reputation in the relationship between cognitive dissonance

and purchase intention. 5. To investigate the moderating role of user-generated content in the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention.

This study adopted the quantitative research methods, using a questionnaire survey. The survey subject was clearly defined as consumers who have had social e-commerce shopping experience, and the survey area was set in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai, which has rapid economic development and developed transportation, and people living in this area have rich social e-commerce shopping experience, which is representative. Finally, 260 valid questionnaires were collected. Using correlation analysis and regression analysis, the study tested the hypotheses to find out the key factors affecting the purchase intention. The findings of the study include the following five main points: First, consumer cognitive dissonance has a significant negative effect on purchase intention. Second, seller reputation has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Third, user-generated content has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Fourth, seller reputation has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention. Fifth, there is a significant negative moderating effect of user-generated content on the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention in social e-commerce.

Keywords: purchase intention, cognitive dissonance, seller reputation, user-generated content

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ZENG JIANXIN

DECLARATION

I, ZENG JIANXIN, hereby certify that the work embodied in this independent study entitled “A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMER PRE-PURCHASE COGNITIVE DISSONANCE ON PURCHASE INTENTION IN SOCIAL E-COMMERCE” is result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

(ZENG JIANXIN)

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the past ten years, among many e-commerce companies, social media and information content e-commerce have become the most representative categories. With the popularization of technology products and the improvement of consumer demand, social e-commerce has become the main purchase channel for a large number of consumers (Zhang & Liu, 2022). Our country's social media e-commerce market has received a large amount of capital investment in recent years, and the total number of market transactions has continued to rise.

In 2021, the scale of social media e-commerce transactions in our country reached 2.37857 trillion yuan, an increase of 15.1% year-on-year (iiMedia Research, 2022). With the continuous in-depth integration of social media traffic and e-commerce transactions, it is estimated that the scale of the social media e-commerce industry in our country is expected to exceed 3.41658 trillion yuan in 2023. The above data shows that social e-commerce is in a stage of rapid development and occupies a core position in major types of e-commerce platforms (Li, 2023).

In the decision-making stage before purchasing through social e-commerce, due to the separation of people and goods, consumers are prone to experience cognitive dissonance, which is a common phenomenon (Festinger, 1957). According to iiMedia Consulting's 2022 market and consumer research report on the social retail industry in our country, nearly one-third of customers have the intention to purchase goods on social e-commerce platforms, but ultimately do not complete the transaction (iiMedia Research, 2022). This behavior, where consumers express an intention to buy but do not follow through, reflects an adjustment in purchase intention influenced by cognitive dissonance (Wang & Chen, 2021).

Although the Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that attitudes can predict purchase intentions, in practice, cognitive dissonance often leads to inconsistencies between attitudes and behaviors, thereby affecting purchase intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Research has shown that consumers frequently take measures to reduce cognitive dissonance after experiencing it. In social e-commerce, consumers tend to rely on seller reputation and user-generated content to establish initial trust and mitigate the negative impact of cognitive dissonance on purchase intentions (Xu & Zhang, 2022).

Social e-commerce platforms contain a vast amount of user-generated content, enabling consumers to interact effectively with other users during the purchasing process. Unlike traditional online shopping, social e-commerce allows buyers to access

diverse and comprehensive product information, interact with previous purchasers, seek advice, and gain insights from multiple perspectives (Gao & Wang, 2020). Compared to traditional e-commerce sellers, social e-commerce platforms leverage social media to enhance information display, allowing customers to move beyond company-provided product details (Chen, 2021).

However, in open social networks, the evolution of product sales formats, the increase in online marketplaces, and the expansion and complexity of consumer decision-making present challenges (Tang, 2020). As a result, the applicability of traditional consumer decision-making models in this new environment has become a critical issue in corporate marketing management. Additionally, the rapid growth of social media users has led to an overwhelming increase in information, posing difficulties for consumers in filtering valuable content and trusting online sources (Li & Sun, 2021).

Understanding and predicting consumer purchase intentions remains a top priority in industry practice. This need has given rise to numerous professional market research firms. Many fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies collaborate with such firms to gain a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences, facilitating strategic brand communication and sales channel optimization (Wu & Liu, 2022). Companies conduct user research to identify target customer groups, understand how consumers acquire product information, and evaluate post-purchase satisfaction. These insights enable businesses to allocate resources efficiently, expand market reach, and refine marketing strategies (Yang, 2023).

In recent years, the rise of social media has transformed the e-commerce landscape. More consumers rely on social platforms to research, purchase, and share product experiences (Liu & Xu, 2021). Therefore, identifying target customer groups and effectively leveraging user-generated content have become crucial tasks for corporate marketing departments and market research firms. Efficiently utilizing social media resources to understand consumer behavior, track purchase intentions, and maintain a positive seller reputation presents new challenges for businesses in the digital era (Zhou, 2022).

1.2 Problems of the Study

Cognitive dissonance is prevalent in daily purchasing life. Does it have an impact on consumer purchase intention? Based on the theory of cognitive dissonance and the social e-commerce context, this study analyzes in depth the impact on consumer purchase intention from the aspects of seller reputation and user-generated content. In

this regard, the following research questions are proposed: 1. How does cognitive dissonance influence consumer purchase intention? 2. How does seller reputation affect consumer purchase intention? 3. How does user-generated content impact consumer purchase intention? 4. Does seller reputation moderate the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention? 5. Does user-generated content moderate the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the impact of cognitive dissonance on consumer purchase intention.
2. To explore the impact of seller reputation on consumer purchase intention.
3. To explore the impact of user-generated content on consumer purchase intentions.
4. To investigate the moderating role of seller reputation in the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention.
5. To investigate the moderating role of user-generated content in the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The target of the study is consumers who purchase goods on social e-commerce platforms. The study adopts the quantitative research method, using a questionnaire survey to investigate the effects of pre-purchase cognitive dissonance, seller reputation, and user-generated content on consumer' purchase intention, A questionnaire survey was conducted and a total of 260 valid questionnaire was obtained for data analysis and the moderating effects of seller reputation and user-generated content on the relationship between pre-purchase cognitive dissonance and purchase intention.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretical significance: This study investigates the influencing factors and formation mechanism of consumer purchase intention of social e-commerce from the perspective of consumer perception, and the theoretical significance has the following two main points.

Firstly, the existing relevant e-commerce platforms mainly focus on the cognitive dissonance produced by consumers after purchase, and rarely deal with the cognitive dissonance produced by consumers before purchase. This study supplements and improves the research on pre-purchase cognitive dissonance, and explores the impact

of pre-purchase cognitive dissonance on consumer purchase intention in social e-commerce.

Second, existing studies have explored the influencing factors of purchase intention in social e-commerce from different perspectives. However, existing studies are insufficient to explore the influence of consumer purchase intention from the platform's external manifestations and internal own content. Therefore, this study enriches the research on the influence of consumer purchase intention on social e-commerce from the perspectives of consumer perception and initial trust, and investigates the influence of seller reputation and user-generated content on purchase intention on social e-commerce platforms under cognitive dissonance, as well as their moderating role in the influence of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention.

Practical significance: Through the study of consumer purchase intention in social e-commerce, the impact of content and reputation in social e-commerce is highlighted, which fits the development situation of social e-commerce in the current society and the dilemma faced by the reality of profitability, i.e., how to utilise the value of reputation in terms of the external manifestation of the enterprise, and how to generate more and better content to interact with the user in terms of the enterprise's own internal content. In this regard, enterprises can take corresponding measures to enhance consumer purchase intention and promote the healthy development of social e-commerce enterprises.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

With the help of previous research conducted by academic researchers in the field of psychology and behavior, a review and analysis was conducted to grasp the focus, methodology, and results of research within the field. By reviewing and combining the literature, this study systematically summarizes the current research status in the fields of consumer purchase intention, cognitive dissonance, seller reputation, and user-generated content in social e-commerce, and identifies possible breakthroughs and the research focus and innovations of this study. This study focuses on the mechanism of generating cognitive dissonance of consumers in social e-commerce scenarios, the mechanism of consumers' perception of seller reputation in social e-commerce and trust building, as well as the relationship between user-generated content and consumers' purchase intention.

2.2 Cognitive Dissonance

Scholars began to focus on the phenomenon of consumer dissonance as early as 1956 in studies in the field of marketing. For a situation where they are faced with multiple goods to choose from, Brehm (1956) suggested that consumers may feel dissonance because they need to make decisions between multiple options. In order to reduce the feeling of dissonance, consumers adopt a number of behaviours to regulate it, the most typical of which is to enhance the perceived value of the goods they have already purchased and reduce the perceived value of the alternative goods. These types of behaviours can help consumers reduce their sense of cognitive dissonance and make their choices more easily and satisfactorily.

Later, the cognitive dissonance theory was widely discussed and applied in psychology. This theory was first proposed by Leon Festinger in 1957. The core idea of this theory is that when an individual recognises that his or her attitudes or behaviours are inconsistent, he or she will feel uncomfortable, and in order to alleviate this, the individual tries to achieve consistency by adjusting his or her attitudes or behaviours.

The application of the cognitive dissonance theory is very wide, and it has been used as the theoretical basis of research and made its own understanding in many fields of education, psychology, management, information science and other related research. In the field of management research, scholars define cognitive dissonance as a sense of falling short of expectations and focus on an overview of the various applications of cognitive dissonance theory, highlighting the relevant concepts, dissonance scenarios,

and research findings. In the field of marketing, Lin et al. (2018) defined cognitive dissonance as the sense of falling short after actually feeling the goods, which is often used to study consumers' post-purchase dissonance and service quality perception, in which the research topic of post-purchase dissonance often refers to consumers' return

The topic of post-purchase disorders often refers to consumers' return behaviour. In the context of organisational change management, Hinojosa et al. (2020) defined cognitive dissonance as resistance, which can be used to explain employees' attitudes and behaviours towards organisational change.

China's research on consumer cognitive dissonance started relatively late compared to relevant foreign studies, and the earliest domestic study originated from Chen Zhixia and Chen Jianfeng, which elaborated on the concept of cognitive dissonance, the way of measuring it, and the explanatory and explained variables of cognitive dissonance, laying the foundation for later related studies. Bai (2013) elaborated on the theory of post-purchase dissonance, which is the term for cognitive dissonance theory in the field of consumer behaviour, and also introduced the widely accepted method of measuring post-purchase dissonance. In addition, Bai (2014) in his related study summarised the cognitive dissonance arising in the field of consumer behaviour into five themes, which are: the reasons for the formation of cognitive dissonance; the time point of cognitive dissonance; cognitive dissonance in the context of e-commerce; the measures related to alleviating cognitive dissonance in consumers; and the link between cognitive dissonance and other consumer concepts. Lin and Yang (2020) defined cognitive dissonance as being triggered by previous relevant experiences, emotions, and intention, causing an individual to have an emotional experience and having an impact on subsequent behavioural intention, and found that cognitive dissonance not only affects consumer decision-making behaviours but also post-purchase self-evaluation. Wang and Tou (2021) defined consumer cognitive dissonance in the field of agricultural products as the inconsistency between self-reported preferences and realistic choices. Referring to Lin and Yang (2020), this study defines cognitive dissonance as the cognitive ambivalence, discomfort, doubt, hesitation, and other emotions that consumers experience due to the separation of people and goods before purchasing goods.

Some studies have shown that cognitive dissonance negatively affects individuals' decision-making and behaviour. When individuals experience cognitive dissonance, their behavioural intentions are also reduced. Tuu and Olsen (2010) focused their study on the following factors: level of cognitive dissonance, level of consumer involvement, consumer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. By investigating Vietnamese consumers'

consumption of “fish”, they found that the higher the level of cognitive dissonance, the lower the level of consumer satisfaction and involvement, and that cognitive dissonance attenuates the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase loyalty through involvement. In addition, Wang et al. (2015) used situational simulation as the main research technique to investigate the effect of cognitive dissonance in the area of consumers' purchase intention for ecological products. It was found that cognitive dissonance negatively affects consumers' intention to purchase ecological products and mediates the effects of individual characteristics, ecological knowledge, perceived utility and price sensitivity. Zhang and Sun (2018) also found that cognitive dissonance mediated the effect of consumer confusion on intention to purchase green branded products in a study related to consumer intention to purchase green branded products, and that consumer confusion increased the degree of cognitive dissonance and decreased intention to purchase. Braun and Schmidmaier (2019) argued that when cognitive contradictions arise, a person usually chooses a product that is similar to his or her own cognitively similar facts to accept and guide behaviour. Jeong et al. (2019) found that users of social network services tend to choose exposure, i.e., to change their original purchase intention, when resolving the uncomfortable psychological state brought about by cognitive dissonance. It has been argued that cognitive dissonance produced by individuals in social e-commerce sites causes distress and exhaustion, which affects the individual's ability to let go of the subsequent behavioural intentions. Dai et al. (2020) found that fatigue, frustration and dissatisfaction caused by cognitive dissonance lead to avoidance, which in social e-commerce specifically manifests itself as withdrawal of purchase intentions. Marikyan et al. (2020) found in a related study of smart home users that cognitive dissonance leads to feelings of anger, guilt, and regret, which are associated with a dissonance-reducing mechanism, which in turn has a significant impact on satisfaction and satisfaction. dissonance reduction mechanisms in turn have an impact on satisfaction and well-being. Suttikun and Meeprom (2021) argued that consumer cognitive dissonance affects subsequent word-of-mouth communication and purchase intentions.

In terms of individual decision-making and behaviour, research also exists to show that cognitive dissonance can produce positive outcomes. Lowry's (2014) study used consumer online shopping as a specific context and found that beliefs about whether to trust or distrust a shopping website throughout the consumption process led to cognitive dissonance, which had a boosting effect on their intention to purchase online. Wheeler and Jones (2006) investigated the behaviour of individuals when using a decision support system through a simulation experiment with business school students in the

role of a bank credit officer. The results showed that when decision support tools are highly interactive, individuals who develop cognitive dissonance are more likely to engage in exploratory behaviour, which can lead to improved decision-making performance. Rees et al. (2013) found that emotionally ambivalent individuals had higher judgement accuracy due to the fact that emotional ambivalence increases the acceptance of alternative choices, which improves judgement accuracy.

2.3 Social E-commerce

The concept of social e-commerce was first introduced in 2005. During the same time period, academics also began to focus their research on social e-commerce by conducting a series of studies on it.

In academic papers, the first formulation of the concept of social e-commerce originated from scholars Jascanu and Nicolau (2007). They defined social e-commerce as the organic integration of Internet-based social media and e-commerce. Social e-commerce establishes a communication channel for all three parties: merchants, consumers, and users, in order to better fulfil the ultimate goal: transactions. Subsequently, the definition of social e-commerce was further modified and improved in the study of Sturiale et al. (2013). Social e-commerce consists of two aspects, one is a social platform based on big data, and the other is a service platform through which users can transact online regarding products or services. With the development of the times, Sturiale et al. (2013) focused their research on the content generated on social media. They consider social e-commerce as a tool that is used by consumers to engage in online purchases of goods, post-purchase reviews and share post-purchase feelings. Some scholars' studies suggest that high commercialisation is the main characteristic of social e-commerce platforms. On social e-commerce platforms, the basic information of goods provided by merchants and the platform side can help consumers form purchase intentions and make purchase decisions. The development of technology has brought a wider range of applications for social media, which led Lin and Featherman (2017) to emphasise social media as a component in their conception of social e-commerce. In the context of the Web 2.0 era, social e-commerce becomes an interactive tool that can enhance online transactions. Hussain et al. (2020) defined social e-commerce as the integration of social media and e-commerce to provide an online shopping platform for potential consumers to talk about their ideas and exchange information related to products. Zheng et al. (2020) considered social e-commerce to refer to the exchange of purchases on the Internet and studied the factors influencing the sale of agricultural products on this platform.

The definition of social e-commerce by Chinese experts and scholars for social e-commerce has achieved detailed completeness and concreteness in the process of its rapid development, which is manifested in the specific pointing out of social e-commerce definition. Some scholars have studied its origins and found that part of social e-commerce is upgraded from traditional e-commerce, adding various forms of network media to the original transaction basis, facilitating its users to make social contacts with other users and freely creating their own feelings about the use of goods. All these contents can enhance consumers' clear perception of their purchase intention in various aspects. In a subsequent study, Zhu and Chen (2016) added further clarification to the previous definition of social e-commerce. These individuals pointed out the presence of media technologies in social e-commerce that are instrumental in creating users' virtual reality social relationships based on the Internet. At the same time, it also guarantees the smooth transport of commercial infomercials in the process. There are two ways in which this e-commerce model markets goods and promotes intention to buy: social interaction; and user-generated content. Zhang and Wei (2019) build on the former study and emphasise that its social attributes can play a supporting role in consumer purchase decisions. Li et al. (2021) agreed on social e-commerce as the e-commerce of content platforms and devoted to studying the transformation mechanism from content producers to commodity buyers. Xiao and Lei (2021) defined social e-commerce as an e-commerce platform with the function of interpersonal interaction through related research.

Therefore, this study adopts Xiao and Lei's (2021) viewpoint and defines social e-commerce as an online platform with both transaction and interpersonal interaction.

The concept of reputation was originally derived from implicit incentives in economics, which were designed to encourage agents to behave in a motivated manner. An agent who operates with integrity will develop a good reputation in the consumer market. A good reputation will bring more opportunities and the possibility of higher price premiums to the firm.

Although scholars have conducted a lot of research on corporate reputation, a clear and common definition has not yet been developed. Therefore, scholars have put forward their own ideas from different research perspectives to explain the meaning of corporate reputation. Weigelt and Camerer (1988) stated that corporate reputation usually refers to a set of attributes directly related to the company's business behaviour in the past. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) state that corporate reputation is the result of customers' originating from the company's firms in the industry's corresponding Wartick (1992) suggests that corporate reputation usually refers to how well a

company's stakeholders perceive that the company is meeting the overall needs and expectations of all stakeholders. Herbig and Milewicz (1995) state that corporate reputation is often used as a proxy for the perception of different stakeholders of a firm's needs and expectations. Herbig and Milewicz (1995), on the other hand, expressed corporate reputation as the overall perception of different stakeholders of a firm's behaviour in the past.

Based on the past research of scholars, Fombrun (1995) gave his own definition that corporate reputation is the perceived attractiveness of a firm based on its past behaviours and future expectations when consumers compare it with other competing firms. This definition has been endorsed by many scholars after it was proposed. Schwaiger (2004), on the basis of previous scholars' research, proposed that corporate reputation has two dimensions: cognitive and affective.

The rapid development of social e-commerce platforms has led scholars' attention to focus on the issue of online corporate reputation. Considering the characteristics of social e-commerce reputation, the research and analysis should be specifically analysed from two dimensions: collective reputation and individual reputation. For social e-commerce reputation, Wang and Zhang (2017) proposed four aspects of social-based e-commerce reputation. Wang and Song (2021) pointed out that platform-based e-commerce reputation has a dual nature, and its components include overall platform reputation and seller group reputation. Zhang and Wang (2022) argued that platform-based e-commerce reputation is the overall feeling and evaluation of consumers about shopping at platform-based e-commerce. Wang et al. (2022) followed Wang and Zhang and split seller group reputation into product reputation and shop reputation. This study adopts Wang and Zhang's (2017) definition of reputation and has the overall platform reputation and seller group reputation together to form social e-commerce reputation.

2.4 Seller Reputation

Scholarly research on traditional firms has shown that there is a direct relationship between corporate reputation and a firm's attractiveness; the higher a firm's reputation, the more likely that external talent will be attracted to join the firm, and that it will maintain a high level of loyalty after becoming an internal employee. On the consumer side, a high reputation reduces perceived risk, increases purchase intentions and creates brand loyalty. In addition, studies have also shown that good reputation can effectively improve the financial performance of firms, for example, high reputation firms can usually obtain better financing conditions and lower financing costs. In addition to the direct effects, different reputations have correlation effects with each other. Studies

have shown that there is a mutually supportive effect between the reputation of a retail shop and the reputation of a retail group. The reputation of a retail shop can increase the reputation of a retail group, which in turn increases the sales of the group's individual brands, and the positive effect of shop reputation on private label reputation has also been confirmed. Therefore, firms need to be aware of the interactions between different reputations in order to better manage their reputational assets.

In the e-commerce domain, reputation is a very important factor for consumers. The nature of e-commerce lies in the fact that payment is made before delivery, which leads to greater risky fluctuations in the transaction process for customers, such as the quality of the delivered goods, the integrity of the seller, and so on. Therefore, consumers can use reputation as a key tool in the pre-selection process to identify sellers. This move can effectively reduce the risks associated with social e-commerce. Researchers have also focussed on the impact of seller reputation and purchase intention, with Walsh and Beatty (2007) showing that highly reputable sellers can attract more consumers to make shopping transactions rather than increase revenue by raising prices. Jiang et al. (2011) found that in C2C shopping context, consumers are more willing to choose reputable sellers to conduct transactions during the shopping process. Li et al. (2018) found that consumers face increased purchase risks in online retail environments, and are more inclined to choose reputable platforms to complete their purchasing behaviour. Wang and Guo (2020) argued that seller reputation can effectively reduce consumers' choice difficulties and improve decision-making accuracy. Zhang et al. (2021) found that reputation-induced consumer trust in merchants has a positive effect on purchase intention.

2.5 User-generated Content

In 2004, the Internet launched Web 2.0, which, unlike Web 1.0, emphasises human-centredness and gives users the opportunity to create information in this environment. It gives users the opportunity to create information in this environment. The flow of information is no longer unidirectional, but has evolved into a two-way transmission between users based on the Internet.

The flow of information is no longer unidirectional, but has evolved into a two-way transmission between users based on the Internet, and the concept of user-generated content was born in this link.

In 2006, the concept of user-generated content began to enter the academic field of vision, and its value and impact in the development of the Internet has attracted extensive attention from scholars. With the increase of academic attention, the

controversy over user-generated content has also increased, and the academic community has not been able to form a unified definition of user-generated content. In Shim and Lee's (2009) study, the focus is placed on the creators of user-generated content. They clearly point out that the producers of user-generated content should be the general public that exists in the Internet, and the content produced by authoritative administrators cannot be classified. Hsu (2020) argued that the focus of user-generated content is on self-publishing and on the influence of other users on the content. Chinchanchokchai et al. (2020) found that non-general user-generated content causes consumer avoidance.

While research on user-generated content is in full swing abroad, Chinese scholars have also conducted a lot of research on this concept. In Zhao et al.'s (2012) study, the scope of user-generated content is so broad that it can stand in for any form of original content such as graphics, audio and video. These contents are organised and created on the Internet and also published on the Internet. Based on the perspective of content producers, the study by Men et al. (2015) stated that the process of user-generated content refers to the processing of the original information using one's own smart device and then publishing it on the Internet for viewing, communicating, and sharing by other users on the same platform. Gao's (2019) definition of user-generated content emphasises that it is non-professional individuals and groups. They share content on various internet platforms from which users in the platforms can obtain favourable information that is useful to them. Zhu et al. (2023) define user-generated content as user-made content that can be viewed by consumers through the platform.

In social e-commerce, user-generated content, as an important part of its social attributes, has a great impact on subsequent users' purchase intention, loyalty, and satisfaction. Therefore, scholars have extensively investigated user-generated content in social e-commerce in order to further understand its influence mechanism.

Currently, studies have shown that browsing user-generated content on social e-commerce platforms has become an important part of the consumer purchase process and has a great impact on purchase intention. From the perspective of social e-commerce platforms, Xu et al. (2018) suggest that they should make full use of the unique advantages of user-generated content to carry out accurate marketing for users. Specifically, it can be expressed as follows: using big data for analysis, accurately placing relevant user-generated content and product recommendations for user groups with consumption intention, and promoting the completion of the closed loop of purchase. This is an important reflection of the commercial value of user-generated content in social e-commerce. Zhang and Wang's (2021) study, on the other hand, stood

from the perspective of consumers, and they argued that the rich user-generated content provided by social e-commerce platforms can help consumers gain a deeper understanding of the products in a faster and more comprehensive way, including the quality of the goods, user evaluations, brand characteristics, and word-of-mouth image. Yi et al. (2019) emphasised that companies should actively manage user-generated content in order to highlight the real evaluations of the products, to strengthen mutual trust. Reich and Maglio (2020), through a study of the Sephora retailer's website, found that consumers were more likely to purchase a product if it was recommended by a user content producer who had (or had not) made a purchase mistake.

Some scholars have summarised user-generated content characteristics into five dimensions relating to its credibility, usefulness, entertainment, informativeness and frequency of use. Together, these form specific user-generated content that has an impact on the purchase intentions of other consumers. Some scholars define user-generated content by taking the process of user-generated content as an entry point and considering its dynamic and static aspects. Considering the specificity of social e-commerce, Wang and Chen's (2018) study, from a static perspective, refined the information characteristics of user-generated content into: the degree of completeness of the information contained, the degree of exhaustiveness of the attribute descriptions, and so on, so as to assess the quality of the information contained therein; from the dynamic point of view, such as the sense of belonging generated by the question-and-answer, like, and attention exchanges, and so on, is an important feature, which embodies a two-way sense of interaction and a sense of information circulation. The sense of circulation of information. Some scholars have also highlighted three aspects of user-generated content: reliability, professionalism, and social interactivity, which are confirmed through a series of experiments. Social influence theory has also been applied by scholars to explore user-generated content, focusing on analysing its informational and normative influences. Zhou et al. (2018) provided further explanatory notes on this concept, pointing out that informational features include the quality of information, the interactivity of information, and normative features include interpersonal communication and interaction, and the quantity of information. Wang et al. (2018) agreed and expanded on this. In their study, informational features were contextualised, and consumers would refer to the information posted on their platforms by other consumers who had already purchased the product before they formed a purchase intention, which involved the experience of using the product and information about the product itself, as a basis for their own purchase decision. The normative feature is crystallised as a certain degree of identification with the user-generated

content of social e-commerce platforms, which influences consumers' purchase intention through the psychology of following the herd. Wang et al. (2021) focus their attention mainly on the opinion leaders that exist on social e-commerce platforms. They argue that the information posted by these opinion leaders has a stronger influence and is more representative than general user-generated content. Accordingly, they defined the characteristics of user-generated content in social e-commerce as three dimensions, namely: information quality, information presentation, and information expression.

2.6 Purchase Intention

Consumer intention to buy refers to the subjective idea that consumers are willing to buy a certain commodity, which can also be understood as the possibility of consumers making a purchase decision in the future.

Research has been conducted to validate the relationship between consumers' intention to buy and purchase decision, and concluded that there is a strong correlation between consumers' intention to buy and purchase decision. Good quality and word-of-mouth, as important factors influencing consumers' intention to buy, play a significant role in stimulating purchase decisions. In the field of m-commerce, consumers' intention to buy is interpreted in the context of a specific situation: the desire to buy online. Zubcsek et al. (2017) argued that the consumer's behavioural patterns need to be paid attention to by scholars, which can reflect the consumer's preference for goods, and take a targeted approach to stimulate the desire to buy. In the social context, Huang et al. (2020) defined consumers' intention to buy as a probability that describes the likelihood of a user purchasing a product or service in this context. When determining whether to buy a certain product or service, consumers will compare objective factors such as price, quality, and functionality with their subjective psychological expectations to determine whether they can make a final consumer decision.

Users in social e-commerce are no longer just searching for a single product. In addition to viewing user-generated content, multiple and friendly online exchanges with others in the app can enhance the user's guided impulsive consumption and shopping desire. Social commerce platforms are rich in user-generated content with informative product descriptions and new media campaigns, all of which continue to influence users' intention to spend.

2.7 Theory of Reasoned Action

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is an important theory that explains and predicts consumer behaviour and intention.

TRA is an important theory for explaining and predicting consumer behaviour and intention, which was first proposed by American scholars Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. According to the theory, the prediction of an individual's real behaviour can be based on his or her intention to act as the main indicator. The influencing factors of this indicator involve two aspects: the individual's attitude towards behaviour; and social norms. Attitude towards behaviour refers to the individual's evaluation of the goodness or badness of a particular behaviour, which is constrained by the individual's confidence in the likely outcome of the behaviour and his or her assessment of the final outcome. Social norms refer primarily to one's perception of what the majority of important people think one should or should not do with the behaviour. Some studies have used the theory of rational behaviour as a theoretical basis for their research, with the idea that an individual's intention to act is seen as an important factor in determining whether or not the behaviour will ultimately take place. Attitudes towards personal behaviour and social norms are the two dominant types of factors in an individual's intention to act, and both are positively correlated with it.

Implicit in the theory of rational behaviour research is the assumption that the individual has complete control over his or her behaviour. In an organisational setting, individual behaviour is limited by a variety of conditions, and sometimes it is not possible to make decisions entirely on one's own. For example, when shopping for a particular product, the buyer may not be able to form a clear intention to buy due to asymmetric information conditions, which in turn may lead to restricted shopping behaviour. Therefore, when predicting and analysing the consumer behaviour of users, it is necessary to consider the impact of other factors on behaviour.

Consumers are treated as rational actors under the study of the theory of rational behaviour, based on the premise that the theory generally emphasises that the subject's will can be controlled by the subject of the study, which in turn predicts and analyses the manner in which he or she will behave. However, considering from the perspective of real life, consumers' choices are limited by many conditions, such as: skills, implementation conditions, etc., which largely affect consumers' purchasing intentions and behaviours. Therefore, the theory has certain shortcomings when used to explain the field of consumer behaviour.

Nonetheless, the theory of rational behaviour continues to be used as a foundational theory in recent research, for example, in studies addressing consumer behaviour. In the field of marketing psychology, various categories of products have been used as research objects by researchers to verify the reliability of the basic theory, and the theory has been enriched and expanded on the current basis. Some scholars

have expanded the basic theory by evaluating the psychology of consumer behaviours of Chinese and Western customers in choosing fast food restaurants, taking into account the past behaviours of the performers and using them as a prerequisite for their intention to do so. Other scholars have expanded and evolved the theory of rational behaviour on this basis.

Their findings show that personal identity expression as well as social identity expression play a key role in consumer behaviour. In a study related to mobile communication services, Nysveen et al. (2005) proposed that attitude is a limiting factor as a prerequisite in the theory of rational behaviour. The results of the study show that there are two paths that influence behavioural intentions: firstly, the perception of the hedonic, expressive, easy-to-use and usefulness of a product has a direct effect on behavioural intentions; and secondly, there is an indirect effect on behavioural intentions through the indirect effect of attitudes. Based on the research on the purchase of pirated software, Aleassa et al. (2011) tested the validity of the theory of rational behaviour and proposed the necessity of adding moderating variables. Luo et al. (2021) applied the theory of rational behaviour to analyse the factors of individuals' online rumour sharing behaviour.

In the field of the Chinese marketing industry, research experts have tested the effectiveness and applicability of the rational behaviour theory in relation to various consumer contexts. Yu et al. (2008) assessed and explored the reality and development trend of the theory of rational behaviour and its extended research work. Li et al. (2009) empirically tested the rational behaviour theory by introducing country image as a new variable under the conditions of the existing theory. Finally, the research on consumer behaviour based on rational behaviour theory is reviewed by Luo and Chi (2016).

2.8 Theory of Planned Behaviour

Perceived behavioural control is a variable added by the theory of planned behaviour to the original Theory of rational behaviour, with the aim of exposing the three main factors that influence behavioural intentions, namely attitudes, social norms and perceived behavioural control. The expectancy theory, as the root of the theory of planned behaviour, observes and explains individual behaviour from the perspective of signal analysis and processing. The theory of rational behaviour has an underlying assumption that people are in complete control of their behaviour, but in fact, objective factors also influence the person's control over their own behavioural performance. Therefore, applying the concept of rational behaviour in isolation to interpret individual behaviour is likely to result in reduced explanatory power.

Attitudes are individuals' positive or negative evaluations of the outcome of their behaviour and are primarily influenced by the overall benefits and consequences of the behaviour. Expectations of important people about the behaviour of individuals constitute a factor of social norms, which are also influenced by personal beliefs and motivations. Perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's perceived level of control over his or her behaviour, with an individual's level of control over behaviour and behavioural facilitation being the main influences on this concept. The theory of planned behaviour also suggests that behavioural intentions are a key determinant of an individual's behaviour. In the theory of planned behaviour model, there is a hierarchical link between the factors.

Perceived behavioural control is added to the theory of planned behaviour as a control variable to better explain the influence of external factors on an individual's behaviour, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing behavioural intentions, which is what differentiates it from the Theory of Rational Behaviour. Perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's perception of resource availability and the probability of success in adopting a particular behaviour. When an individual perceives that resources are abundant and the probability of success is high, his or her behavioural intention will become stronger and vice versa. For studying more complex individual behaviours, the theory of planned behaviour provides the theoretical foundation and analytical framework. At the same time, the theory of planned behaviour has been widely used in the fields of consumer attitude change and new product launch.

The perspective of the theory of behaviour can be summarised as follows: in addition to behavioural intentions, individuals' abilities, opportunities and resources also influence their actual behaviour. Perceived behavioural control presents the reality of social individuals to some extent and can be used as a proxy variable to predict individual behaviour. The three key elements that directly influence an individual's behavioural intentions are attitude, social norms and perceived behavioural control. The more positive an individual's attitude is, the more recognition they will receive from key individuals, the more perceived behavioural control these individuals will have and the stronger their behavioural intentions will be.

Since its introduction, the theory of planned behaviour has been analysed through continuous empirical research in academia, and has gained wide recognition and is regarded as an effective theory for explaining individual behaviour. However, doubts about the theory still exist. In order to eliminate these doubts, many scholars have

continuously developed and improved this theory. Some scholars have suggested that there are other factors, such as moral obligation, that also affect behavioural intentions.

In order to explore the formation of intention to act comprehensively, individual's past behaviours have been researched by some scholars as influencing factors and have been confirmed to some extent. Therefore, in the theoretical model of planned behaviour, scholars introduced past behaviour as an indicator for predicting future behaviour in order to make the model more accurate and reliable. Ajzen (1991) also added past behaviour as a core indicator to the scientific model of planned behaviour. However, the theory of planned behaviour can only explain some behaviours in society and is not universal, thus it has certain shortcomings and other factors need to be explored to complete the additional explanation of the theory. Some scholars have found that in some special environments, one or two of these three variables can be selected to complete the prediction of behavioural intentions, and its reliability does not decrease due to the reduction of variables. Rhodes and Courneya (2011) also pointed out that some unexplained behavioural variations can arise in the actual purchasing situations of consumers. Such situations are often treated as random errors, but this will lead to some other unmeasurable factors being ignored in the experiment, so such situations should be handled appropriately in the experiment, analysed and measured as much as possible, and the theory should be continuously improved.

Based on the extensive absorption and reference to the research results of other scholars, Ajzen and his collaborators have repeatedly revised and improved the theoretical model of planned behaviour in order to better explain the formation and change of individual behaviour. In order to better achieve the purpose of the study, the researchers, in addition to conducting research observations on the three variables of behavioural intentions, also added the concept of cognitively grounded beliefs to their observations, which are usually interpreted as: behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs. On this basis, scholars have proposed a variety of new ideas that continue to improve the scientific validity of the theoretical model of planned behaviour and enhance the rigour of the experiments. In addition to this, Ajzen has further explored the relationship between intention and behaviour, pointing out that the relationship between the two is not always static. The quantitative research of these people proves that intention and behaviour are still at a distance from each other, and that there may be three other crucial concepts in the middle of this: intention to implement, commitment and conscientiousness. Intention to implement can create a commitment that motivates an individual to take a certain action with self-awareness.

This commitment increases the individual's sense of responsibility and the stability of his or her behaviour, making it more likely that he or she will put it into practice.

Mayer (1995) was the first to propose the original theory of trust, defining trust as a behaviour that is based on a person's beliefs about another person's characteristics and their intention to rely on them to perform important and specific activities. Building on Mayer's research, McKnight and Cummings (1998) extended the original trust model. In their study, they found that consumers' initial trust is influenced by a number of factors in the formation of their initial trust, and among these factors are dominated by: propensity to trust, trust in reputational information, and the process of learning about a company's website. They also categorised initial trust into beliefs and motives, trust beliefs include benevolence, competence, honesty and predictability. McKnight and Choudhury (2002) argued that trust is an important prerequisite for a consumer's intention to transact with an unknown supplier online, and that this trust can help the consumer to overcome perceived risks and hesitations about the company's website. Therefore, building initial trust with consumers is an important strategic goal for companies. Kim (2008) argues that when consumers' trust in a particular merchant increases, this positive emotion directly affect their intention to purchase. Trust can influence online purchase decisions in two ways. First, trust moderates the effect of risk on consumers' purchase intention in situations where consumers have to take risks but do not have full control over the outcome. As trust increases, consumers may perceive less risk compared to the absence of trust. Second, consumers' intention to engage in transactions with online vendors is directly related to their trust and beliefs.

In the above studies related to theoretical foundations, the theory of planned behaviour further refined and developed the theory of reasoned behaviour, and the initial trust theory constructed a framework for the study of pre-purchase cognitive dissonance and consumers' intention to purchase. As a result, this paper asserts that individual behavioural intentions can be studied at the group level through logic, with trust as the main bridge, and argues that the theory of rational behaviour, the theory of planned behaviour, and the theory of initial trust can be used to explain social e-commerce consumers' purchase intention, laying a theoretical foundation for the study.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

From the perspective of internal and external management of enterprises, this study constructs a theoretical model in the context of social e-commerce.

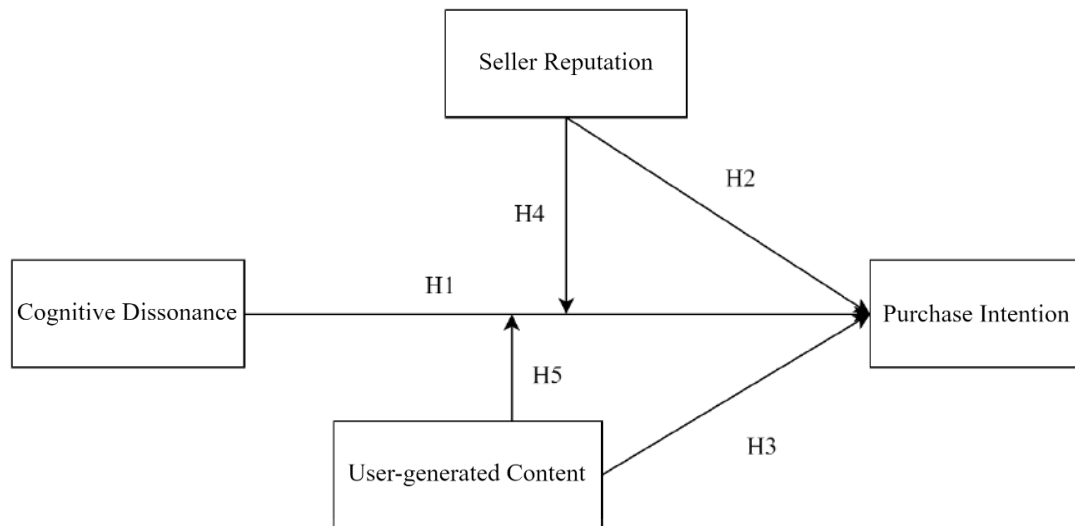
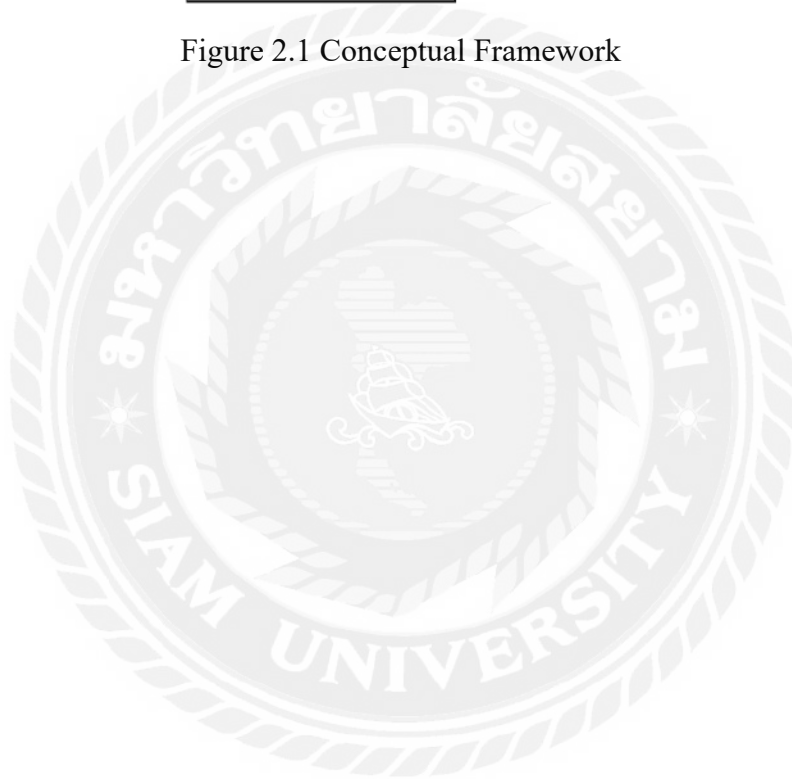


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study used the quantitative research method to deeply explore the social e-commerce transaction situation, and the research subjects were consumers who have had social e-commerce shopping experience. The survey area was set in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai, which has rapid economic development and developed transportation. People living in this area have rich experience in social e-commerce shopping, which is representative to a certain extent. This study collected 305 valid questionnaires. Among them, 45 were invalid, and the final valid questionnaire was 260. SPSS was used for data analytics.

3.2 Questionnaire Design

3.2.1 Cognitive Dissonance

The concept of cognitive dissonance is derived from the theory of cognitive dissonance in the field of psychology, and is often described as the sense of loss that a buyer feels when his or her expectations of a good are not met by the actual good. Some scholars have also included their own factors in the consideration of cognitive dissonance, pointing out that cognitive dissonance arises from the contradiction of cognitive factors, giving people an uncomfortable and discordant feeling.

This study draws on and refers to previous scholars' mature cognitive dissonance measurement scales to measure cognitive dissonance from two dimensions: product and emotion, and proposes five items, as shown in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1 Cognitive Dissonance Measurement Scale

Variable	Measurement Item
Cognitive Dissonance	I have conflicting thoughts about making a purchase on a social e-commerce platform.
	I have a strong emotional experience of both approval and disapproval of purchasing this item.
	Compared to what I expected, it would make me a bit uncomfortable psychologically if I made a purchase decision.
	Compared to what I expected, making a purchase decision would make me feel a little depressed.
	I am hesitant to make a purchase decision.

3.2.2 Seller Reputation

Reputation has different connotations and definitions in traditional business and e-commerce environments. The new form of reputation is not just about the credibility of the business or seller, but more about what is formed based on individual trust and interaction. Therefore, in order to better understand reputation in the e-commerce environment, research scholars have re-edited the concept of reputation from trust theory.

This helps to use reputation to reveal the real meaning of reputation in the e-commerce environment, and provides a new perspective and theoretical basis for related research. Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa (2004) conducted an extensive study on corporate reputation developed on the Internet and defined it as the degree of attention a company receives from customers, the performance of a company's honest operation, and developed a sophisticated measurement scale. In terms of research design, this study considered the social e-commerce context and based on this, designed the items for measuring seller reputation, drawing on Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa's (2004) well-established research design, as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Seller Reputation Measurement Scale

Variable	Measurement Item
Seller Reputation	I think the social e-commerce platform has a high credit rating.
	I think the response to the reviews of the products of this social e-commerce platform is good.
	I think the platform is more highly regarded compared to other platforms in the same industry.

3.2.3 User-generated Content

This study refers to Gao (2019) definition of user-generated content, emphasising that it is non-professional individuals and groups. They share content on various internet platforms from which users in the platforms can derive favourable information that is useful to them. Drawing on Vickery et al.'s (2004) study on media content characteristics, this study measures user-generated content on social e-commerce platforms through three dimensions: credibility, usefulness, and influence of opinion leaders. Among them, credibility measures the authenticity of user-generated content, drawing on the maturity scale in Gao's (2019) study; usefulness measures the quality of user-generated content, drawing on the maturity scale in Qiu et al. (2008) and Hale (2016); and opinion leader's influence measures the ability of user-generated content to influence, drawing on the maturity scale in Meng (2012), as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 User-Generated Content Measurement Scale

Variable	Measurement Item
User-Generated Content	I think users of social e-commerce platforms post information about products and other things to help others understand the products better.
	I think social commerce platform users are reputable.
	The information shared about products is generally reliable.
	The information shared provides insights into different aspects of the product.
	The content shared was helpful in increasing my understanding of the product.
	The shared content helped me to understand the expertise in the related field .
	Opinion leaders on social e-commerce platforms are leaders in this product space.
	I think opinion leaders have experience in buying and using this product.
	Opinion leaders usually pay a lot of attention to this product.

3.2.4 Consumer Purchase Intention

Previous studies on consumer purchase intention by researchers have been diverse and wide-ranging. Same as traditional e-commerce, in social e-commerce, the concept of consumer purchase intention is unchanged and remains as the degree of consumer intention to purchase a product in the future, an indicator that reflects the likelihood of consumers purchasing the product in the future. This study designed three questions to measure purchase intention, as shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Consumer Purchase Intention Measurement Scale

Variable	Measurement Item
Purchase Intention	I would be willing to buy the products shared by users of this social e-commerce platform.
	I would buy relevant products from this social e-commerce platform if I wanted to.
	I would consider buying from this social e-commerce platform if I have a corresponding shopping need.

3.3 Hypothesis

H1: Cognitive dissonance has a significant negative impact on purchase intention.

H2: Seller reputation has a significant positive impact on purchase intention.

H3: User-generated content has a significant positive impact on purchase intention.

H4: Seller reputation has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention.

H5: User-generated content has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention.

3.4 Sampling and Data Collection

This study aimed to explore the social e-commerce transaction situation in depth, the survey subjects were consumers who have had social e-commerce shopping experience. The survey area was set in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai region, the region's rapid economic development and transport development, people living in the region have a wealth of experience in social e-commerce shopping, with a certain degree of representativeness. The online questionnaires were widely distributed through WeChat circle of friends, Xiaohongshu private messages, Shake private messages and other channels, and the data were collected online by snowballing to ensure the representativeness and reliability of the samples.

When the questionnaire was distributed, different methods were used to ensure the accuracy of the respondents and the validity of the questionnaire, such as one-on-one distribution. In order to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the questionnaires in this study, a series of safeguards were adopted for the questionnaires distributed in the posting and questionnaire mutual community. Through publicity and forwarding, etc., this research finally collected 305 valid questionnaires. Among these questionnaires, 45 were invalid, mainly due to the existence of obvious irrationality, such as incomplete filling, logical errors, etc. The final number of valid questionnaires was 260, which were used for the data analysis of this study.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis is the process of summarising, describing and interpreting a data set, usually including important characteristics such as central tendency, dispersion, skewness, kurtosis, etc. of the data. These statistical indicators can be used to describe the basic situation of the data in order to better understand the nature, patterns and anomalies of the data set. In academic research, descriptive statistical analysis is often used as an important step in data preprocessing. By analysing the central tendency and dispersion of the data, it can find out the outliers, missing values, duplicated values and other problems in the data, and then take corresponding

measures to clean up and deal with the data to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data.

3.5.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Reliability refers to the consistency of results obtained when a measurement tool is used at different times or by different measurers. In order to assess the reliability of a measurement tool, the following methods are usually used: Internal consistency: the internal consistency of a measurement tool is assessed by calculating the correlation of the indicators in the tool. The most common method is the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which ranges from 0 to 1, with larger values indicating higher reliability of the instrument. Test-retest reliability: The test-retest reliability of a measurement tool is assessed by repeating the measurement in the same set of samples. The most commonly used methods are Pearson's correlation coefficient or Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, and the closer the value is to 1, the higher the reliability of the measurement tool. Validity refers to the ability of a measurement tool to accurately measure the desired concept or variable, and is one of the most important indicators for assessing the quality of a measurement tool. Validity analysis can help researchers assess whether a measurement tool can effectively measure the concept or variable under study and how it relates to other related concepts or variables, so as to improve the accuracy and credibility of the study. In this context, construct validity refers to whether the measurement tool can correctly measure the desired concept or variable. The construct validity of a measurement instrument is assessed through methods such as factor analysis or structural equation modelling.

3.5.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to assess the relationship between two or more variables, which helps the researcher to understand the degree, direction and strength of correlation between variables. Correlation analysis is usually used to discover the correlation between variables, help researchers to make variable selection, explore causality, etc., and has a wide range of applications. The correlation coefficient is a statistical measure of the degree of correlation between two variables. Generally speaking, the value of correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1, the closer the absolute value is to 1, the stronger the correlation is, and the closer the absolute value is to 0, the weaker the correlation is.

3.5.4 Regression Analysis

Through regression analysis, the relationship between variables can be studied and predicted, and the independent variables that have the greatest influence on the dependent variable can be identified for prediction and decision making. The role of

regression analysis can be explained in the following ways: exploring the relationship between variables: through regression analysis, it is possible to study the relationship between variables and find out the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, and then to understand the mechanism of their influence; prediction and simulation: based on the results of regression analysis, it is possible to carry out prediction and simulation, and through the establishment of regression models, it is possible to predict the future results and to carry out decision-making and planning; diagnosis and improve the model: regression analysis can also be used for model diagnosis and improvement.

3.6 Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Scale

3.6.1 Reliability Analysis

According to the results of the data analysis in Table 3.5, the study found that the overall Cronbach's coefficient for the cognitive dissonance measure was 0.872, which indicates that its overall reliability level reached a high level and exceeded the standard value of 0.7. The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the seller reputation measure was 0.822, which exceeded the standard value of 0.7. The overall Cronbach's Alpha for the User-Generated Content measure is 0.936, which exceeds the standard value of 0.7. The overall Cronbach's coefficient for the purchase intention measure is 0.793, exceeding the standard value of 0.7. The overall Cronbach's Alpha is 0.750 which exceeds the standard value of 0.7. Therefore, this study can conclude that all measurement items have high reliability and can be used for valid measurement of the respondents.

Table 3.5 Results of Reliability Test

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Overall	20	0.750
Cognitive Dissonance	5	0.872
Seller Reputation	3	0.822
User-generated content	9	0.936
Purchase intention	3	0.793

3.6.2 Validity Analysis

Starting from the data in Table 3.6, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value for the Cognitive Dissonance Scale was found to be 0.874, which is greater than 0.80, indicating that the characteristics of the sample are sufficiently relevant for factor analysis. In addition, the Bartlett's Spherical Test found that the significance of the scale was 0.000, which is less than the standard value of 0.05, and this data suggests that the

Cognitive Dissonance Scale passes the test and supports the use of factor analysis for the next test.

Table 3.6 Cognitive Dissonance KMO and Bartlett's Test^a

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.874
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	581.069
	df	10
	Sig.	0.000

According to the results of data analysis, the KMO value of seller reputation scale is 0.718, which is greater than 0.7. The significance of seller reputation is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 after Bartlett's spherical test, indicating that the scale has credibility, and at the same time, it is suitable for the next step of analysing and processing by using factor analysis.

Table 3.7 Seller Reputation KMO and Bartlett's Test^a

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.718
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	276.869
	df	3
	Sig.	0.000

Based on the results of the statistical analysis of the data, the following experimental conclusions are obtained: the KMO value of the user-generated content scale is 0.960, which has exceeded the reference value of 0.7; and the significance level of the Bartlett's ball test of the user-generated content scale is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05, which proves that the scale successfully passes the Bartlett's ball test. Based on the combined analysis of KMO value and Bartlett's test significance level, the user-generated content rating scale is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3.8 User-generated Content KMO and Bartlett's Test^a

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.960
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1538.070
	df	36
	Sig.	0.000

Based on the statistical analysis results, the following experimental conclusions were obtained: The KMO value of the purchase intention assessment scale is 0.709, exceeding the reference value of 0.7. Furthermore, the significance level of Bartlett's test of sphericity for the purchase intention assessment scale is 0.000, which is below 0.05. This indicates that the assessment scale successfully passed Bartlett's test of sphericity. Based on the comprehensive analysis of the KMO value and the significance level of Bartlett's test of sphericity, the purchase intention assessment scale is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3.9 Purchase Intention KMO and Bartlett's Test^a

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.709
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	231.311
	df	3
	Sig.	0.000



Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

After data collection, this study firstly carried out descriptive statistical analysis of the data to understand the basic characteristics of the sample. The descriptive statistics are shown in Table 4.1. From the results of statistical analysis, it can be found that, in terms of gender, 52.3% of the sample were male and 47.7% were female. For the age composition of the respondents, the results show that the majority of the respondents were under 30 years of age, with the highest percentage of 65.4 per cent of the respondents being between 18 and 30 years of age. In addition, 9.2 per cent of the respondents were under 18 years of age, while 25.4 per cent of the total sample were over 30 years of age. In terms of educational attainment, the largest number of respondents were those with a bachelor's degree, accounting for 34.6%. This was followed by college education with 32.7 % and high school and below with 22.3 %. Lastly, there were respondent with a master's degree or above, accounting for 10.4%. In terms of disposable income, the largest number of respondents are those with more than 5,000 yuan, accounting for 56.9%. Lastly, respondents with 3,000-5,000 yuan accounted for 11.9 %, and less than 1,000 yuan accounted for 5.8 %.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Demographic characteristics	Subject	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	136	52.3
	Female	124	47.7
Age	Below 18	24	9.2
	18~24	72	27.7
	24~30	98	37.7
	Above 30 years old	66	25.4
Education	High school and below	58	22.3
	College	85	32.7
	Bachelor degree	90	34.6
	Master and above	27	10.4
Disposable Income	Below 1000 yuan	15	5.8
	1000-3000 yuan	66	25.4
	3000-5000 yuan	31	11.9
	Above 5000 yuan	148	56.9

4.2 Validation Factor Analysis

This study used Amos statistical software to conduct validation factor analysis, model fit indicators are very many. This study refers to the current evaluation indicators commonly used in the field, selected CMIN/DF, GFI, RMSEA, NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI to judge the degree of model fit, while drawing the four-factor model of this paper, as shown in Table 4.2. As shown in Table 4.2, the fit index of this model, CMIN/DF, is 0.946, which is less than the judgement standard value of 3; RMSEA = 0.000, which is less than the judgement standard value of 0.10; the values of NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI, and GFI are all higher than the judgement standard value of 0.9. Wu's (2010) study indicated that the values of TLI, CFI, and IFL may be greater than 1, and the conclusion still stands. The data showed that the model had good goodness of fit and was able to perform model hypothesis testing.

Table 4.2 Model Fit Test Results

Fit Index	CMIN	CMIN/DF	GFI	RMSEA	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Model Value	155.102	0.946	0.945	0.000	0.962	1.002	1.003	1.003

4.3 Common Method Deviance Analysis

The study by Tang and Wen (2020) pointed out that for the common method bias problem, the Harman one-factor method has low testing power and the CFA labelled variable method has high testing power. Therefore, in this study, CFA Labeled Variable Method is used to test the existence of common method bias in the questionnaire by putting all the measurement items (i.e., all the factors corresponding to the measurement scale question items) inside a single factor and then analysing them. From Table 4.3, it can be seen that CMIN/DF = 3.958, which is greater than the judgement standard value of 3; RMSEA = 0.106, which is greater than the judgement standard value of 0.10; and the value of GFI is lower than the judgement standard value of 0.9, which indicates that the data of the scale of the current study could not be focused into one factor. The results show that the empirical data in this study do not have serious common method bias problems and can be tested for hypothesis testing.

Table 4.3 Model Fit Test Results

Fit Index	CMIN	CMIN/DF	GFI	RMSEA	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Model Value	672.863	3.958	0.842	0.106	0.960	1.002	1.002	1.002

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Person correlation coefficient analysis was used in this study with the aim of exploring the correlation between cognitive dissonance, seller reputation, user-generated content and purchase intention.

The results of the analysis in Table 4.4 indicate a significant negative correlation between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention ($r = -0.839$), a significant positive correlation between seller reputation and purchase intention ($r = 0.820$), and a significant positive correlation between user-generated content and purchase intention ($r = 0.890$). In addition, the values of the correlation coefficients were all statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance.

In this study, the results are obtained by using Person correlation coefficient analysis to test the correlation of the sample data. These results help in the subsequent regression analysis and provide a rigorous basis for understanding the formation of purchase intention.

Table 4.4 Correlation between Variables

	Cognitive Dissonance	Seller Reputation	User-generated Content	Purchase Intention
Cognitive Dissonance	1			
Seller Reputation	-.821**	1		
User-generated Content	-.897**	.877**	1	
Purchase Intention	-.839**	.820**	.890**	1

4.5 Hypothesis Test

4.5.1 Regression analysis of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention

In the regression analysis of this study, cognitive dissonance is taken as an independent variable and purchase intention as a dependent variable, and regression analysis is carried out to explore the causal relationship and the mechanism of action between the variables. The specific parameters of the regression analysis are shown in Table 4.5 below, and the model regression coefficients are shown in Table 4.6 below.

According to the results in Table 4.5, the adjusted R-square is 0.703, $F=612.870$, and the significance level is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and reaches the significant level. The data indicates that the regression equation is statistically significant and cognitive dissonance explains 70.3 per cent of the change in purchase intention.

Table 4.5 Regression Analysis of Cognitive Dissonance and Purchase Intention

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Error in standard estimation	F	Significance
1	.839 ^a	.704	.703	.44121	612.870	.000 ^b

According to the results in Table 4.6, the absolute value of the standardised coefficient of cognitive dissonance is 0.839, which is greater than 0. The t-value of the significance test of the regression coefficient of the independent variable is -24.756, and the significance value is 0.000, which reaches the significant level. From the negative standardised regression coefficient, it can be seen that cognitive dissonance has a significant negative effect on purchase intention. H1 is established.

Table 4.6 Regression Coefficients of Cognitive Dissonance and Purchase Intention

Model		Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	Significance	Covariance statistic	
		B	Standard Error				Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.616	.088		63.878	.000		
	Cognitive Dissonance	-.845	.034	-.839	-24.756	.000	1.000	1.000

4.5.2 Regression Analysis of Seller Reputation on Purchase Intention

In the regression analysis of this study, seller reputation is taken as an independent variable and purchase intention as a dependent variable, and regression analysis is carried out to explore the causal relationship and the mechanism of action between the variables. The specific parameters of the regression analysis are shown in Table 4.7 below, and the model regression coefficients are shown in Table 4.8 below.

According to the results in Table 4.7, the adjusted R-square is 0.672, F=531.301, and the significance level is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and reaches the significant level. The data indicates that the regression equation is statistically significant and that seller reputation explains 67.2 per cent of the variation in purchase intention.

Table 4.7 Regression Analysis of Seller Reputation and Purchase Intention

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Error in standard estimation	F	Significance
1	.820 ^a	.673	.672	.46344	531.301	.000 ^b

According to the results in Table 4.8, the absolute value of the standardised coefficient of seller reputation is 0.820, which is greater than 0. The t-value of the significance test of the regression coefficient of the independent variable is 23.050, and the significance value is 0.000, which reaches the significant level. From the positive standardised regression coefficient, it can be seen that seller reputation has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. H2 is established.

Table 4.8 Regression Coefficients of Seller Reputation and Purchase Intention

Model		Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	Significance	Covariance statistic	
		B	Standard Error				Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.763	.124		6.142	.000		
	Seller Reputation	.779	.034	.820	23.050	.000	1.000	1.000

4.5.3 Regression Analysis of User-Generated Content on Purchase Intention

In the regression analysis of this study, user-generated content is taken as an independent variable and purchase intention as a dependent variable, and regression analyses are conducted to explore the causal relationship and the mechanism of action between the variables. The specific parameters of the regression analysis are shown in Table 4.9 below, and the model regression coefficients are shown in Table 4.10 below.

According to the results in Table 4.9, the adjusted R-square is 0.791, $F=984.051$, and the significance level is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 and reaches the significant level. The data indicates that the regression equation is statistically significant and that seller reputation explains 79.1 per cent of the variation in purchase intention.

Table 4.9 Regression Analysis of User-generated Content and Purchase Intention

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Error in standard estimation	F	Significance
1	.890 ^a	.792	.791	.36944	984.051	.000 ^b

According to the results in Table 4.10, the absolute value of the standardised coefficient of user-generated content is 0.890, which is greater than 0. The t-value of the significance test of the regression coefficient of the independent variable is 31.370, and the significance value is 0.000, which reaches the significant level. From the positive standardised regression coefficient, it can be seen that user-generated content has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. H3 is established.

Table 4.10 Regression Coefficients of User-generated Content and Purchase Intention

Model		Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	Significance	Covariance statistic	
		B	Standard Error				Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.232	.108		2.141	.033		
	Seller Reputation	.232	.030	.890	31.370	.000	1.000	1.000

4.5.4 Moderating Effect Analysis of Seller Reputation

The moderating effect is concerned with the effect of the interaction between the moderating variable and the independent variable on the dependent variable. This study uses stratified regression to test the moderating effect of seller reputation between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention. Model 1 includes cognitive dissonance as the independent variable in the regression analysis, model 2 includes the moderator variable seller reputation in the regression analysis on the basis of model 1, and model 3 includes the interaction term between cognitive dissonance and seller reputation in the regression analysis on the basis of model 2. The results of the specific regression analyses are shown in Table 4.11.

According to the data in Table 4.11, after adding the moderating variable seller reputation in Model 2, the explained R-square of the increase is 0.053, and the significance $P=0.000$; Model 3 adds the interaction term of cognitive dissonance and seller reputation than Model 2, and the explained R-square of the increase is 0.018, and the value of the change in the sig. F is lower than 0.05, which can indicate that there is the existence of a moderating effect of seller reputation. H4 has been further validated and H4 is established.

Table 4.11 Moderating Effect of Seller Reputation on Cognitive Dissonance and Purchase Intention

Model	R	R ²	R ² after adjustment	Error in standard estimates	Change statistics				
					R ² change	F change	Df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
1	.839	.704	.703	.44121	.704	612.870	1	258	.000
2	.870	.757	.755	.40029	.053	56.440	1	257	.000
3	.880	.775	.772	.38612	.018	20.209	1	256	.000

4.5.5 Moderating Effect Analysis of User-generated Content

Finally, with cognitive dissonance as the independent variable, model 1 incorporated cognitive dissonance as the independent variable for regression analyses, model 2 incorporated the moderator variable user-generated content on top of model 1 for regression analyses, and model 3 incorporated the interaction term between cognitive dissonance and user-generated content on top of model 2 for regression analyses. The results of the specific regression analyses are shown in Table 4.12.

As shown in the data in Table 4.12 below, after adding the moderating variable user-generated content in Model 2, the explained R-square of the increase is 0.097, and the significance $P=0.000$; Model 3 adds the interaction term of cognitive dissonance and user-generated content than Model 2, and the explained R-square of the increase is

0.005, and the sig.F change value is lower than 0.05, which can indicate that the moderating effect of user-generated content exists. Hypothesis H5 was further verified and hypothesis H5 was established.

Table 4.12 Moderating Effect of User-generated Content on Cognitive Dissonance and Purchase Intention

Model	R	R ²	R ² after adjustment	Error in standard estimates	Change statistics				
					R ² change	F change	Df1	Df2	Sig. F Change
1	.839	.704	.703	.44121	.704	612.870	1	258	.000
2	.895	.801	.799	.36248	.097	125.231	1	257	.000
3	.898	.806	.803	.35870	.005	6.445	1	256	.012

4.6 Hypothesis Test Results

After the regression analysis, all the hypotheses of this study were tested, and the specific test results are summarised in Table 4.13:

Table 4.13 Hypothesis Test Results

No.	Content	Test results
H1	Cognitive dissonance has a significant negative effect on purchase intention.	Establish
H2	Seller reputation has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.	Establish
H3	User-generated content has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.	Establish
H4	Seller reputation has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention.	Establish
H5	User-generated content has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention.	Establish

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

First, in the social e-commerce environment, the seller's cognitive dissonance before the actual purchase has a negative impact on their purchase intention. Social e-commerce is the same as traditional e-commerce, and there is still a logical link of paying first and then experiencing the product. This segmentation property often results in consumers often not being able to fully understand the purchased product before purchasing, resulting in a large gap between consumers' cognition of the product before purchasing and the actual performance of the product, resulting in cognitive dissonance and inability to make purchasing decisions. The specific manifestation is that consumers take ways to change their behavior or change their cognition in order to reduce the sense of dissonance.

Second, the reputation of sellers in the social e-commerce environment has a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention. This study shows through data that a seller's good reputation will promote purchases when other conditions are consistent. At the same time, when consumers experience pre-purchase cognitive dissonance, seller reputation can also control its impact on purchase intention well. Scholars in the field of marketing have conducted sufficient research on seller reputation and achieved rich research results. Its research involves consumer purchasing behavior, satisfaction, loyalty, etc. This paper verifies the impact of seller reputation in the social e-commerce context and has been confirmed. The research results show that when the seller's reputation is high, customers show higher trust in all aspects of the product, and the perception level of product quality is also improved, thereby enhancing the propensity to buy goods. Based on the initial trust theory, this paper analyzes the indirect impact of seller reputation on consumers' purchase intention, and finds that consumers can adjust their purchase intention by changing the quality perception of the product. This conclusion has also been verified in the actual purchase situation of social e-commerce. Higher seller reputation indicates that consumers can give merchants more trust, thereby narrowing the gap between product cognition and their own cognition, and reducing the negative impact of cognitive dissonance. The final conclusion shows that seller reputation can attenuate the effect of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention, and the feasibility of this influence mechanism is demonstrated through sufficient verification.

Third, user-generated content positively affects the purchase intention and plays a moderating role in the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase

intention. User-generated content contains a large amount of information with reference significance, and it is easier to describe the product from the consumer side and be adopted by other buyers. The quality of the marketing content unilaterally disseminated by sellers in the traditional e-commerce model varies. The asymmetry of information has caused buyers to lose trust in this relevant information, and the probability of adopting relevant information and becoming their own consumption reference materials has gradually decreased. In social e-commerce, users can generate a large amount of real information independently, and at the same time are not controlled by sellers. They can speak at will, which can not only promote other buyers to obtain valuable consumption reference materials, but also help sellers to obtain the most authentic buyer feedback and adjust product marketing strategies in a timely manner. Consumers want a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of the true value of consumer goods before purchasing.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Study

Starting from the influencing mechanism of consumer purchase intention, this study conducts empirical research from a relatively novel perspective, which verifies the establishment of the model of this study. However, there are some shortcomings in this study, including the limitations of sample selection, the limitations of user-generated content feature refinement, and the limitations of the research context. These shortcomings limit the credibility and generalisability of the results of this research and need to be further expanded and improved in future research.

Firstly, the sample selection of this study has certain limitations. Although the currently selected research object has involved most of the applicable groups of social e-commerce, it does not fully represent the entire user group of social e-commerce. Future research can focus on expanding the groups covered by the sample, so that the data collected can better represent the whole group and improve the applicability of the study. The target population of this study is Chinese consumers, and the cognitive dissonance problem in social e-commerce among consumers from other countries and its impact on consumption intention are not covered in this study. Future research can also incorporate cultural differences into the scope of the study to comparatively analyse the intention and behavioural performance of consumers from different countries.

Secondly, there are some limitations in the refinement of user-generated content characteristics in this study. In this study, four dimensions were extracted, starting from the characteristics of user-generated content and opinion leaders. Although the

reliability and validity tests of the user-generated content meet the standards, and the degree of consistency and reliability is relatively high, if we look at the results from a more rigorous perspective, we will find that the dimensions involved in the measurement tool may not be very comprehensive, and the number of measurement items for each dimension is not sufficient. In addition, there may be a certain degree of overlap in the measurement of the dimensions, which may affect the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the characterisation of user-generated content. Therefore, a more comprehensive and precise assessment is needed when extracting the core features of user-generated content. This will help to ensure that the conclusions we draw are more accurate and will also improve the quality and reliability of the measurement tool. It should be noted that we should adopt a more scientific and systematic approach when conducting this process in order to better understand the impact of user-generated content on consumer purchase intention and on consumer purchase intention in the context of cognitive dissonance, and to better explain the mechanism by which consumer purchase intention is affected.

Finally, the research context of this study needs to be further expanded. The research context of this paper is social e-commerce, and all the research hypotheses are based on this context. However, in daily life, consumers face many shopping scenarios, and social e-commerce is only one of them, and O2O shopping and crowdfunding product purchases also have an impact on consumer purchase intention. Whether the influencing factors and mechanisms involved in this study can continue to be generated for other shopping scenarios needs to be further explored by scholars. In future studies, researchers combine various factors such as technological development and consumer preferences and habits to select more practically meaningful research contexts in order to more accurately understand the influencing factors of consumer purchase intention in different contexts, so as to make the research conclusions more generalisable. Therefore, future research needs to consider choosing a wider range of contexts and a more diverse range of participants in order to fully take into account the diversity and complexity of consumer purchase intention.

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Appendix

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey amidst your busy schedule. This questionnaire is about your purchasing experiences on social e-commerce platforms. Your responses are critical to this research. There are no right or wrong answers, and the results will be used solely for academic purposes. Your data and personal information will be strictly confidential, so please answer without concern. Completing the questionnaire takes approximately 3–5 minutes. Thank you for your participation, and we wish you good health and happiness!

Examples of social e-commerce platforms: Pinduoduo, Douyin E-commerce, Kuaishou E-commerce, Xiaohongshu, etc.

Part 1: Purchase Decision Survey

Regarding your recent purchase decision on social e-commerce platforms:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Ratings range from “**Strongly Disagree**” to “**Strongly Agree**” to reflect your level of agreement.

Table A1: Cognitive Dissonance Survey

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
X1	My thoughts when purchasing on social e-commerce platforms are contradictory (to buy or not to buy).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
X2	I experience strong emotions of approval and disapproval while deciding to purchase this product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
X3	Compared to my expectations, making the purchase decision makes me feel slightly uncomfortable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
X4	Compared to my expectations, making the purchase decision makes me feel somewhat frustrated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
X5	I feel hesitant about making the purchase decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Table A2: Seller Reputation Survey

No. Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe the social e-commerce platform has a high credibility rating.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think the product reviews on this social e-commerce platform are generally positive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compared to other platforms in the industry, this platform has greater attention.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Table A3: User-Generated Content Quality Survey

No. Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe users on the social e-commerce platform share product information to help others better understand the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think users on the social e-commerce platform are credible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The shared product information is generally reliable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The shared information provides perspectives on different aspects of the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The shared content is helpful for enhancing my understanding of the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q6	The shared content helps me learn professional knowledge in the relevant field.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q7	Opinion leaders (bloggers, influencers, KOLs) on social e-commerce platforms have leadership in this product field.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q8	Opinion leaders (bloggers, influencers, KOLs) have experience in purchasing and using this product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q9	Opinion leaders (bloggers, influencers, KOLs) consistently focus on similar products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Table A4: Consumer Purchase Behavior Survey

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q10	I am willing to buy products shared by users on this social e-commerce platform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q11	If I want to buy related products, I will choose this social e-commerce platform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q12	If I have a relevant shopping need, I will consider purchasing from this social e-commerce platform.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part 2: Personal Information

1. Your gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. **Your age:**
- ☐ Under 18
 - ☐ 18–24
 - ☐ 24–30
 - ☐ Over 30
3. **Your education level:**
- ☐ High school or below
 - ☐ Associate degree
 - ☐ Bachelor's degree
 - ☐ Master's degree or above
4. **Your monthly disposable income:**
- ☐ Below ¥1,000
 - ☐ ¥1,000–¥3,000
 - ☐ ¥3,000–¥5,000
 - ☐ Above ¥5,000
5. **Your frequently used social e-commerce platforms:** *(Select all that apply)*
- ☐ Pinduoduo
 - ☐ Taobao Live (Live module only, not other traditional modules)
 - ☐ Xiaohongshu
 - ☐ Kuaishou E-commerce
 - ☐ JD Live (Live module only, not other traditional modules)
 - ☐ Douyin E-commerce
 - ☐ Dianping
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____
6. **Your occupation:**
- ☐ Student
 - ☐ Employee
 - ☐ Freelancer