UNRAVELING PURCHASE INTENTIONS: THE INTERPLAY OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE, SELLER REPUTATION, AND USER-GENERATED CONTENT IN SOCIAL E-COMMERCE

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ABSTRACT

The "content + transaction" business model has gained popularity in recent years, with social e-commerce platforms dominating the market. These platforms accumulate users through content generation and make profits through commodity transactions. However, converting users into commodity buyers is crucial for their success. Consumer cognitive dissonance, a phenomenon where purchasing intentions are not actual, can lead to hesitant purchasing intentions. The reputation of sellers in social e-commerce affects consumers' initial trust, and high-quality user-generated content can reduce judgment costs and affect consumers' willingness to buy. This paper studies the factors affecting purchase intention on social e-commerce platforms from consumer perception, using theories of rational behavior, planned behavior, and initial trust. The research concludes that consumer cognitive dissonance negatively impacts purchase intention, seller reputation positively impacts it, and user-generated content positively impacts it. Management suggestions for social e-commerce platforms to promote consumer purchase intention include improving seller reputation, strengthening corporate control over user-generated content, and improving user-generated content quality.

Keywords: Purchase intention; Seller reputation; User-generated content

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media and information content e-commerce have become the primary purchasing channels for a large number of consumers due to the popularity of technology products and increasing consumer demand. The scale of e-commerce transactions on social media in my country reached 23785.7 USD billion in 2018, up 15.1% YoY. The integration of social media

traffic and e-commerce transactions is expected to exceed 34165 in 2023. Cognitive dissonance in the decision-making stage before purchasing on social e-commerce platforms is a universal issue, with nearly one-third of customers wanting to consume products but ultimately not purchasing them. Consumers often take measures to reduce cognitive dissonance, such as using seller reputation and user-generated content to enhance trust and reduce the negative impact of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention. Social e-commerce platforms offer more diverse and comprehensive product information, allowing pre-purchasers to get advice from existing purchasers through interactive communication. However, the complexity of decision-making in open social networks makes traditional consumer decision-making models a key issue in corporate marketing management. Understanding and predicting consumer purchasing intentions remains a top priority in industry practice, with professional market research companies and fast-moving consumer product companies working together to understand consumer preferences, brand communication, sales channels, and post-purchase satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Theoretical Basis

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a theory that predicts consumer behavior and intentions. It suggests that an individual's intention to behave is influenced by their attitude towards behavior and social norms (Abdelkader Ali et al., 2024). Behavioral attitude evaluates the good or bad of their behavior, while social norms refer to their perception of what others think. Some studies use TRA as a basis for research, assuming individuals can fully control behavior (Al-Fayad, 2022). However, in an organizational environment, individual behavior may be restricted by conditions like information asymmetry, making it crucial to consider other factors.

Types of behavior suitable for prediction

The rational behavior theory suggests that consumers are rational, allowing for controlled subjective will and prediction of their behavior (Alwahashi & Medjedel, 2024). However, real-life conditions like skills and implementation conditions significantly influence purchasing intentions and behaviors. The theory has been expanded and improved over time, focusing on

personal identity expression, social identity expression, attitude, product enjoyment, expressiveness, ease of use, and usefulness. It has been tested in domestic marketing and has been expanded to include country image as a new variable (Balakrishnan & Foroudi, 2020). The theory of planned behavior provides a theoretical basis for studying complex individual behaviors, highlighting the influence of individuals' abilities, opportunities, and resources. However, the theory can only explain certain behaviors in society and needs to explore other factors. Trust theory, based on Mayer's original theory, posits that initial trust is influenced by factors such as trust tendency, reputation information, and understanding of a corporate website (Bianchi et al., 2019).

A review of research on cognitive dissonance

Cognitive dissonance, first introduced by Leon Festinger in 1957, is a theory that suggests individuals adjust their behavior to achieve consistency when they perceive their attitudes or behaviors as inconsistent (Boehmer & Harrison, 2022). It is applied in marketing, management, and information science, and is categorized into five themes: causes, time point, e-commerce context, measures to alleviate cognitive dissonance, and the relationship between cognitive dissonance and other consumer concepts. Higher degrees of cognitive dissonance can lead to lower consumer satisfaction and involvement, weakening the relationship between satisfaction and repurchase loyalty (Boronat-Navarro & Pérez-Aranda, 2019).

Research review on seller reputation

Social e-commerce, a term coined in 2005, is the integration of internet-based social media and e-commerce, offering a communication channel for merchants, consumers, and users to achieve transaction goals (Bowden & Mirzaei, 2020). It consists of a platform based on big data and a service platform for users to trade products or services online. Social commerce enables consumers to participate in online purchases, share reviews, and form purchase intentions (Canduela et al., 2024). The development of technology has further refined the definition of social e-commerce, focusing on media technology in creating virtual reality social relationships and smooth commercial information flow advertisements. A good corporate reputation can lead to more opportunities and higher price premiums for enterprises (Chaudhary et al., 2024).

Research Overview of User-Generated Content

Web 2.0 introduced user-generated content, a concept that has gained academic attention since 2016. This content, organized and published on the internet, impacts purchase intention, loyalty, and satisfaction in social e-commerce (Chen et al., 2023). Scholars have identified five characteristics of user-generated content: credibility, usefulness, entertainment, information content, and frequency of use. Social influence theory analyzes the informational and normative influence of user-generated content, focusing on opinion leaders on social e-commerce platforms. Companies should actively manage user-generated content to highlight product evaluation and strengthen mutual trust (Choi et al., 2024).

A review of research on consumer purchasing intention

Consumer purchase intention is the subjective desire to buy a product or service, with a strong correlation between willingness to buy and purchase decisions (Fernández et al., 2022). Factors such as quality and reputation significantly influence purchase decisions. In mobile e-commerce, online purchase desire is interpreted in combination with specific situations (Gistri et al., 2019). Scholars should pay attention to consumer behavior patterns to stimulate their desire to buy. Social e-commerce platforms, with user-generated content and friendly online communication, can enhance guided impulse shopping and consumption intentions (Gong et al., 2022).

In short, previous studies on social e-commerce, seller reputation, user-generated content, and consumer purchase intention have produced comprehensive results (Goswami & Jaiswal, 2023). However, there is a lack of research on the relationship between pre-purchase cognitive dissonance and purchase intention, and the mechanism of its influence is still unclear (Sarwar & Khan, 2022). Previous studies have explored the impact of different factors on purchase intention, but they are scattered and lack a comprehensive framework (Hengboriboon et al., 2022). Furthermore, few kinds of literature use social e-commerce as a research context to explore the regulatory role of seller reputation and user-generated content on purchase intention when users experience cognitive dissonance (Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2022).

3. MODEL CONSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Cognitive dissonance is a significant factor in consumers' purchasing intentions in social e-commerce (Ip et al., 2024). This dissonance can lead to fatigue, frustration, and dissatisfaction, which can result in users withdrawing purchase intention (Jufri et al., 2022). Trust theory suggests that a company's reputation can affect consumer trust, leading to increased product recognition and purchase behavior (Kasuma et al., 2020). A higher seller reputation can also increase purchase intention. Research shows that consumers are more likely to choose reputable platforms and trust sellers with high credibility (Kaur et al., 2023). A good seller reputation can limit the negative impact of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention (Kim et al., 2019). User-generated content, which is an internal part of the enterprise, also affects consumer behavior (Mohamed Sadom et al., 2023). When consumers experience cognitive dissonance, they often use user-generated content to reduce the dissonance and increase their willingness to buy (Gulzar et al., 2024). This study believes that better the detrimental effect of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention may be mitigated by user-generated material (Nazlan et al., 2024).

Drawing on the aforementioned material, this study develops a theoretical model within the framework of social e-commerce, as shown in Figure 1, from the perspectives of internal and external management of firms (Nickerson et al., 2022).

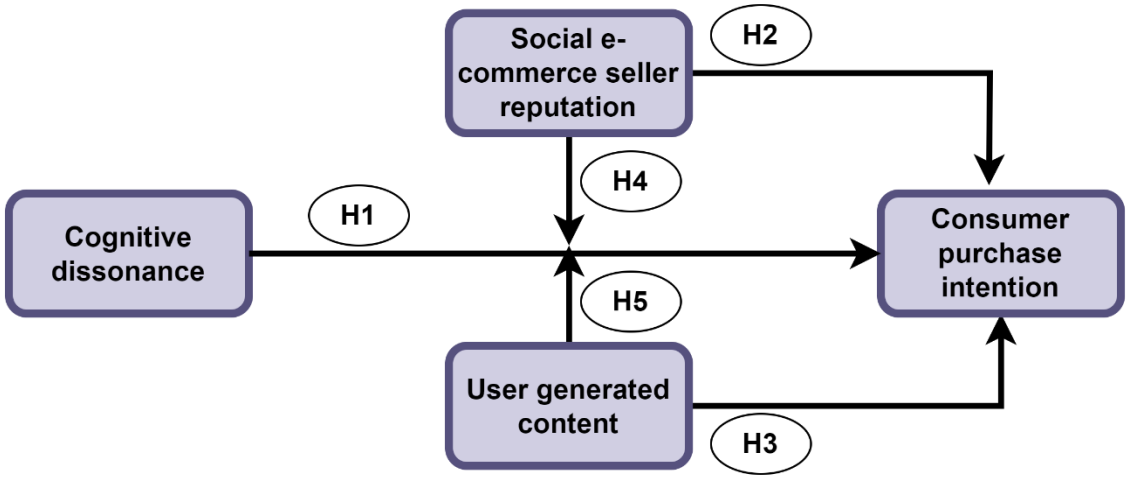

Figure 1: Research model of this paper

Research Hypothesis

The impact of cognitive dissonance on consumer purchase intention

Cognitive dissonance theory argues that buyers encounter pre-purchase cognitive discomfort while attempting to make purchases on social e-commerce platforms (O'Donnell et al., 2023). This dissonance can lead to withdrawal decisions to maintain original cognition and postpone or not purchase (Padival et al., 2019). Studies have shown that cognitive dissonance influences consumer purchasing decisions, word-of-mouth communication, and purchase intention. This study considers the unique nature of social e-commerce, where consumers need to purchase products before experiencing them, highlighting the potential for cognitive dissonance before purchasing (Pentz et al., 2020).

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

The impact of seller reputation on consumer purchase intention

The initial trust theory suggests that a positive seller reputation in social e-commerce can boost user trust and influence their behavior (Prodanova & Chopdar, 2024). Research shows that a positive reputation can make users more confident in the products they are about to buy. In online retail environments, consumers face greater risks and are more likely to choose reputable platforms. Therefore, a strong seller reputation positively impacts purchase intention (Rana & Arora, 2022).

In summary, this study presents a hypothesis on the correlation between the reputation of a seller and the intention of consumers to make a purchase in the setting of social e-commerce.:

H2： Purchase intention is significantly influenced favorably by the reputation of the seller.

User-generated Content's Effect on Customers' Intention to Purchase

Research indicates that user-generated content on social e-commerce platforms aids consumers in making clear purchase intentions (Salam & Bajaba, 2022). The diversity and quality of this content positively influence purchasing behavior. It reduces time spent on screening and provides additional information, enhancing the product experience (Wan et al., 2023). Companies should actively manage user-generated content to highlight product evaluation and strengthen trust (Sarwar et al., 2024). Research shows that content producer recommendations increase consumer likelihood to buy a product (Wang, 2020).

In summary, this paper proposes a hypothesis on the relationship between user-generated content and consumer purchase intention in the context of social e-commerce:

H3：Purchase intention is significantly positively impacted by user-generated content.

The moderating role of the reputation of the seller

Research shows that a company's reputation directly impacts product perception, with high-reputation merchants perceived as better and better-resolved issues. Platform-based e-commerce reputation affects subsequent purchase intentions (Salam & Bajaba, 2022). Adjusting product perception can reduce cognitive dissonance, as consumers take measures to reduce dissonance (Shaukat et al., 2024). A good seller reputation can limit cognitive dissonance's impact on purchase intention, and Belief in retailers has the potential to decrease cognitive dissonance before to a purchase and boost purchase intent. In conclusion, this study puts out a theory on how seller reputation affects the connection between buy intention and cognitive dissonance in social e-commerce:

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

The moderating role of user-generated content

This paper discusses the impact of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention, arguing that it can be mitigated by user-generated content. Research suggests that consumers adjust pre-purchase cognitive dissonance by browsing user-generated content, leading to a higher willingness to buy recommended products (Zhao et al., 2020). Social e-commerce platforms, which provide a friendly atmosphere for community communication, can also reduce cognitive dissonance by promoting purchase intention (Sarwar et al., 2023). The paper hypothesizes that the association between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention is significantly moderated negatively by user-generated material. In conclusion, the following theories are put out in this research on the effect of user-generated material on cognitive dissonance and purchase intention:

H5: The association between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention is significantly moderated negatively by user-generated material.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive Statistics

This paper analyzes data from a sample of American 260 respondents, revealing that males make up 53.46% of the sample, while women make up 46.54%. Most respondents are under 18 years old, with 66.5% aged 20 and over. The majority have a bachelor's degree, followed by junior college and high school. A master's degree or above is the most common. The largest group of respondents has a disposable income of 5000 or more than USD, accounting for 56.9%, followed by 1000-3000 USD and 3000-5000 USD.

Table 1: Sample statistical characteristics

Demographic characteristics	**Index**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Gender	Male	139	53.46
	Female	121	46.54
Generation	18 Under 18 years old	24	9.2
	18~24	72	27.7
	24~30	98	37.7
	30 Age over	66	25.4
Education level	High school and below	58	22.3
	Specialist	85	32.7
	Undergraduate	90	34.6
	Master's degree and above	27	10.4
Disposable Income	1000 Below USD	15	5.8
	1000-3000 USD	66	25.4
	3000-5000 USD	31	11.9
	5000 USD or above	148	56.9

Reliability Analysis

Data table 2 The results of data analysis showed that the overall cognitive dissonance measurement items Cronbach the coefficient is 0.894, indicating that its overall reliability level has reached a high level, exceeding 0.7 the overall value of the seller reputation measurement item Cronbach the coefficient is 0.833, exceeded 0.7 the overall standard value of the user-generated content measurement item Cronbach the coefficient is 0.925, exceeded 0.7 the overall purchase intention measurement item Cronbach the coefficient is 0.824, exceeded 0.7 the standard value of the whole Cronbach the coefficient is 0.750, exceeded 0.7 therefore, this study can conclude that all measurement items have high reliability and can be used to effectively measure the respondents.

Table 2: Reliability test results

Variable	**Number of items**	**Cronbach's coefficient**
Overall	20	0.750
Cognitive dissonance	5	0.894
Seller reputation	5	0.833
User Generated Content	5	0.925
Purchase Intention	5	0.824

According to Table 3, The data analysis of each item's CITC Values are higher than 0.5 In addition, the study found that even if any of the measurements were removed, Cronbach the coefficient would also decrease, indicating that the measurement items of each dimension have high internal consistency and the reliability of the questionnaire is high, meeting the requirements for the next step of data analysis.

Table 3: All variables CITC and reliability coefficient

Measuring dimensions	**Item number**	**The corrected items are equal to the total Related CITC）**	**After deleting the item Cronbach Alpha**	**Cronbach Alpha**

Cognitive Dissonance	CD1	. 724	. 852	0.894
	CD2	. 714	. 852	
	CD3	. 674	. 837	
	CD4	. 683	. 857	
	CD5	. 687	. 853	
Seller Reputation	SR1	. 697	. 762	0.833
	SR2	. 665	. 785	
	SR3	. 677	. 737	
	SR4	. 738	. 942	
	SR5	. 787	. 935	
User Generated Content	UGC1	. 774	. 917	0.925
	UGC 2	. 757	. 918	
	UGC 3	. 755	. 929	
	UGC 4	. 822	. 917	
	UGC 5	. 732	. 923	
Purchase Intention	PI1	. 644	. 714	0.824
	PI2	. 619	. 718	
	PI3	. 656	. 718	
	PI4	. 785	. 938	
	PI5	. 761	. 938	

Validity Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Principal component analysis is used in the research to evaluate the reliability of a questionnaire scale. The sample is relevant for factor analysis, as shown by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.865. The scale was confirmed to be significant by the Bartlett sphericity test, showing its passivity. After analyzing the data using the maximum variance rotation approach, it was shown that 66.232% of the variation is explained by the initial eigenvalue of the first component. The loading matrix shows that each item of cognitive dissonance contributes more than 0.5,

indicating its potential for regression analysis. The results indicate the scale's suitability for factor analysis, with high validity and reliability of extracted factors.

Table 4: Cognitive Dissonance Scale KMO Value and Bartlett Sphericity test

Sampling is a sufficient KMO measure		. 874
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximate Chi-Square	581.069
	Degrees of Freedom	5
	Significance	. 000

Table 5: Total variance explained by factors

Number	**Initial eigenvalues**			**Extract Sum of Squares Load**		
	total	**% of variance**	**accumulation%**	**Total**	**% of variance**	**accumulation%**
1	3.316	66.232	66.232	3.316	66.232	66.232
2	. 479	9.671	75.821			
3	. 445	8.633	84.345			
4	. 432	8.515	92.767			
5	. 368	7.234	100.000			

Table 6: Factor component matrix

	Ingredients
	1
CD1	. 834
CD2	. 809
CD3	. 813
CD4	. 817
CD5	. 823

The seller reputation scale has a KMO value of 0.718, surpassing the 0.7 Seller reputation Bartlett scale. The sphericity test has a significance of 0.000, indicating its credibility. The maximum variance rotation method reveals that the first factor explains 73.765% of the total

variance, indicating a factor should be extracted. The loading matrix shows that each item contributes more to factors, indicating the factor can effectively represent the variable in regression analysis. The seller reputation scale is suitable for factor analysis and extraction due to its high validity and reliability.

Table 7: Seller Reputation Scale KMO Value and Bartlett Sphericity test

Sampling is a sufficient KMO measure		. 718
Bartlett's test of sphericity	**Approximate Chi-Square**	276.869
	Degrees of Freedom	5
	Significance	. 000

Table 8: Total variance explained by factors

Number	**Initial eigenvalues**			**Extract Sum of Squares Load**		
	total	**% of variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	2.321	73.765	73.765	2.321	73.765	73.765
2	. 431	14.108	87.873			
3	. 373	12.127	100.000			
4	. 382	12.658	73.241			
5	. 361	13.118	72.441			

Table 9: Factor component matrix

	Ingredients
	1
SR1	. 837
SR2	. 851
SR3	. 837
SR4	. 829
SR5	. 815

The experimental results show that the user-generated content rating scale passes the Bartlett Spherical test with a KMO value of 0.957, exceeding 0.7. The sphericity test significance level is 0.000, lower than 0.05. The user-generated content rating scale is suitable for factor analysis using the maximum variance rotation method. The initial eigenvalue accumulation of the first factor is 66.015%, indicating high validity. The analysis suggests that a factor can effectively represent user-generated content variables for linear regression analysis.

Table 10: User-generated content scale KMO Value and Bartlett Sphericity test

Sampling is sufficient KMO measure		.957
Bartlett's test of sphericity	**Approximate Chi-Square**	1547.261
	Degrees of Freedom	5
	Significance	.000

Table 11: Total variance explained by factors

become point	**Initial eigenvalues**			**Extract Sum of Squares Load**		
	total	**% of variance**	**Cumulative %**	**total**	**% of variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	5.941	66.015	66.015	5.941	66.015	66.015
2	. 514	5.713	71.728			
3	. 453	5.032	76.760			
4	. 396	4.395	81.155			
5	. 380	4.218	85.373			

Table 12: Factor component matrix

	Ingredients
	1
UGC1	. 825
UGC2	. 813
UGC3	. 812
UGC4	. 838

UGC5	. 789

The study found that the purchase intention rating scale has a KMO value of 0.718, exceeding the reference value. The sphericity test's significance level is 0.000, indicating it passes the Bartlett Spherical test. The analysis of the factor analysis using the maximum variance rotation method revealed a total variance of 70.715%, recommending the extraction of only one factor. The validity of each question revealing purchase intention is high, indicating that a factor can effectively represent the variable and be applied to linear regression analysis.

Table 13: Purchase intention scale KMO Value and Bartlett Sphericity test

Sampling is sufficient KMO measure		. 718
Bartlett's test of sphericity	**Approximate Chi-Square**	231.311
	Degrees of Freedom	5
	Significance	. 000

Table 14: Total variance explained by factors

Number	**Initial eigenvalues**			**Extract Sum of Squares Load**		
	Total	**% of variance**	**Cumulative %**	**total**	**% of variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	2.124	70.715	70.715	2.124	70.715	70.715
2	. 454	15.139	85.945			
3	. 422	14.055	100.000			
4	. 415	13.988	83.763			
5	. 413	13.944	82.834			

Table 15: Factor component matrix

	Ingredients
	1
PI1	. 851
PI2	. 846

PI3	. 829
PI4	. 837
PI5	. 828

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

This article uses Amos 29 statistical software is used to perform confirmatory factor analysis. There are many model fitting indicators. This paper refers to the evaluation indicators currently commonly used in this field and selects CMIN/DF, GFI, RMSEA, NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI The degree of model fit was judged and the four-factor model of this paper was plotted. As table 16 and Figure 2. As shown in the table 16. It can be seen that the fit index of this model is CMIN/DF for 0.938, which is less than the judgment standard value 3 RMSEA=0.000, which is less than the judgment standard value 0.10 NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI, GFI the values are higher than the judgment standard value 0.9. Research shows that, TLI, CFI, IFL the value may be greater than 1, the conclusion still holds the data show that the model has a good fit and can be used to test the model hypothesis.

Table 16: Model fit test results

Fit index	**CMIN**	**CMIN/DF**	**GFI**	**RMSEA**	**NFI**	**IFI**	**TLI**	**CFI**
Model Value	155.102	0.938	0.945	0.000	0.962	1.002	1.003	1.003

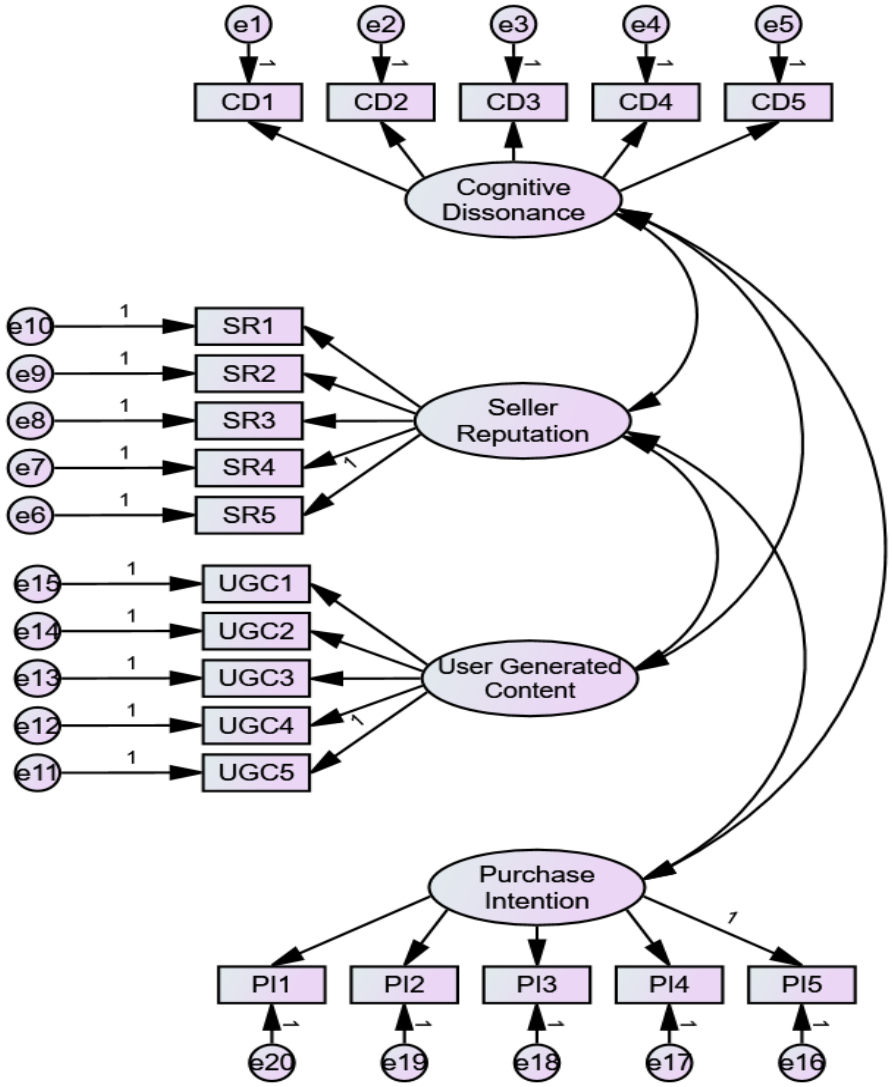

Figure 2: Four-factor model

Common method bias analysis

(Ibáñez-Sánchez et al., 2022) pointed out that for the problem of common method bias, the power of the factor method is very low. CFA the label variable method has higher detection power. Therefore, this paper adopts CFA the label variable method tests the common method

bias of the questionnaire by placing all measurement items (i.e., measurement scale items corresponding to all factors) in one factor and then analyzing it in table 17. As can be seen CMIN/DF = 3.967, higher than the value of the judgment standard; RMSEA = 0.127, higher than the value of the judgment standard; GFI The scale data of this investigation cannot be concentrated into a single component, as shown by the value being less than the judgment standard value of 0.9. The findings demonstrate that hypothesis testing may be done and that there is no significant common method bias issue in the empirical data of this work.

Table 17: Common method bias test results

Fit index	**CMIN**	**CMIN/DF**	**GFI**	**RMSEA**	**NFI**	**IFI**	**TLI**	**CFI**
Model Value	683.863	3.967	0.842	0.127	0.957	1.003	1.003	1.003

Correlation Analysis

This research investigated the relationship between cognitive dissonance, seller reputation, user-generated content, and buy intention using the correlation coefficient analysis approach. According to table 18's analysis results, there was a significant positive correlation (r = 0.832) between seller reputation and purchase intention, a significant negative correlation (r = -0.828) between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention, and a significant positive correlation (r = 0.894) between user-generated content and purchase intention. In addition, 0.01 at the significance level of the values of the correlation coefficients are all statistically significant.

In this study, by using the above results can be obtained by using the correlation coefficient analysis method to test the correlation of sample data. These results will be helpful for subsequent regression analysis and provide a rigorous basis for understanding the formation of purchase intention.

Table 18: 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	- .828**	. 821**	. 894**	1

Hypothesis Testing

Cognitive Dissonance and Purchase Intention: A Regression Analysis

Purchase intention serves as the explained variable in this study's regression analysis, while cognitive dissonance serves as the explanatory variable. Regression analysis that is quantitative, to explore the causal relationship and mechanism of action between variables. Specific regression analysis parameters are shown in the table below table 19 The model regression coefficients are shown in the following table 20. According to the table 19 the results, adjusted 0.713, F=613.861, the significance level is 0.000, less than 0.05, reaching a significant level. The data show that the regression equation is statistically significant, and cognitive dissonance can explain purchase intention70.3 % the change.

Table 19: Regression analysis parameters of cognitive dissonance and purchase intention

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Error in standard estimates	F	Significance
1	. 828[a]	. 704	. 713	.44121	613.861	. 000[b]

Based on Table 20. Consequently, the standardized coefficient of cognitive dissonance has an absolute value of 0.828, which is more than zero. The regression coefficient of the independent variable has a significance test value of -24.747, with a significance value of 0.000, indicating a significant level. Purchase intention is significantly harmed by cognitive dissonance, as shown by the negative standardized regression coefficient. It is determined that H1: Cognitive dissonance significantly reduces buying intention.

Table 20: Regression coefficients of cognitive dissonance and purchase intention

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standard coefficient	t	Significant	Collinearity statistics	
		B	Standard error				Tolerance	VIF
1	(constant)	. 626	. 088		63.878	. 000		
	Cognitive dissonance	- . 845	. 034	- . 828	- 24.747	. 000	1.000	1.000

Regression Analysis of Seller Reputation and Purchase Intention

The purpose of this study's regression analysis is to investigate the causal link and mechanism between the variables by using seller reputation as the explanatory variable and buy intention as

the explained variable. The specific regression analysis parameters are shown in the table below table 21. The model regression coefficients are shown in the following table 22. According to the table 21. The results, adjusted R^2 0.683, F = 532.321, the significance level is 0.000, less than 0.05, reaching a significant level. The data show that the regression equation is statistically significant and seller reputation can explain purchase intention.68.3%The change.

Table 21: Seller reputation and purchase intention regression analysis parameters

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Error in standard estimates	F	Significance
1	. 821[a]	. 673	. 683	.46344	532.321	. 000[b]

Based on Table 22. Consequently, the significance test of the regression coefficient of the independent variable t value is 23.151, and the absolute value of the standardized coefficient of seller reputation is 0.832 greater than 0., the significance value is 0.000, reaching a significant level. The positive standardized regression coefficient shows that seller reputation has a significant positive impact on purchase intention. H2: Seller reputation has a significant positive impact on purchase intention" is established.

Table 22: Regression coefficient table of seller reputation and purchase intention

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standard coefficient	T	Significant	Collinearity statistics	
		B	Standard error				Tolerance	VIF
1	(constant)	. 764	. 124		6.142	. 000		
	Seller reputation	. 759	. 034	. 821	23.151	. 000	1.000	1.000

Regression analysis is used in this research to investigate the causal link and mechanism between the variables. User-generated content is used as the explanatory variable and purchase intention is used as the explained variable. The specific regression analysis parameters are shown in the table below table 23. The model regression coefficients are shown in the following table 24. According to the table 23. The results, adjusted R 0.792, F = 984.152, the significance level is 0.000, less than 0.05, reaching a significant level. The data show that the regression equation is statistically significant and seller reputation can explain purchase intention.79.1% the change.

Table 23: Regression analysis parameters of user-generated content and purchase intention

Model	**R**	**R square**	**Adjusted R square**	**Error in standard estimates**	**F**	**Significance**
1	. 894[a]	. 792	. 792	. 36944	984.152	. 000b

Based on Table 24. Consequently, the significance test of the regression coefficient of the independent variable t Value is 31.381, the significance value is 0.000, achieving a significant level, and the absolute value of the standardized coefficient of user-generated content is 0.894, higher than 0. Purchase intention is significantly positively impacted by user-generated content, as seen by the positive standardized regression coefficient. It is determined that H3: User-generated material significantly increases purchasing intention.

Table 24: Regression coefficients of user-generated content and purchase intention

	Model	**Unstandardized coefficients**		**Standard coefficient**	**t**	**Significant**	**Collinearity statistics**	
		B	Standard error				Tolerance	VIF
1	(constant)	. 232	. 108		2.141	. 033		
	User Generated Content	. 928	. 030	. 894	31.381	. 000	1.000	1.000

Analysis of the moderating effect of seller reputation

The moderating impact of seller reputation on the link between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention is investigated in this research using hierarchical regression. The primary variable in the research is cognitive dissonance, while the moderating variable is seller reputation. The findings indicate that the detrimental effect of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention is less pronounced when the moderating variable is included. The moderating influence of seller reputation is schematically diagrammed in the research using basic slope analysis. It is shown that the association between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention is significantly moderated negatively by seller reputation.

Table 25: The moderating effect of seller reputation on cognitive dissonance and purchase intention

Model	**R**	**R square**	**After adjusted R square**	**Standard Estimate Error**	**Change Statistics**				
					R square Change	**F Change**	**Df 1**	**Df 2**	**Sig.F Change**
1	.828[a]	0.704	0.713	0.44121	. 704	612.87	1	258	. 000
2	.870[b]	0.757	0.755	0. 40029	. 053	56.44	1	257	. 000
3	.880[c]	0.775	0.772	0. 38612	. 018	20.209	1	256	. 000
4	.863[e]	0.767	0.759	0.39943	.011	21.019	1	25.9	. 000
5	.	0.749	0.738	0.41210	.012	22.128	1	25	. 000

	872 f							.7	

Figure 3: The moderating effect of seller reputation on cognitive dissonance and purchase intention

Analysis of the Moderating Effect of User-Generated Content

The study analyzed the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention using regression analysis. It included cognitive dissonance as an independent variable and user-generated content as a moderator. The results showed that when user-generated content was high, the negative impact of cognitive dissonance on purchase intention was less significant. This supports the hypothesis that user-generated content has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention. The data suggests that user-generated content can play a significant role in influencing purchase intentions.

Table 26: The moderating effect of user-generated content on cognitive dissonance and purchase intention

Mo	**R**	**R**	**After**	**Standard**	**Change Statistics**			

del		squar e	adjusted R square	Estimate Error	R square Change	F Chang e	Df 1	Df 2	Sig.F Change
1	. 82 8	. 704	. 713	0.44121	. 704	612.87	1	25 8	. 000
2	. 89 5	. 812	. 799	. 36248	. 097	125.23 1	1	25 7	. 000
3	. 89 8	. 806	. 803	. 35870	. 005	6.445	1	25 6	. 012
4	. 88 7	. 811	. 798	. 37572	. 006	6.325	1	25 7	. 011
5	. 89 6	. 810	. 797	. 37621	. 007	6.521	1	25 4	. 013

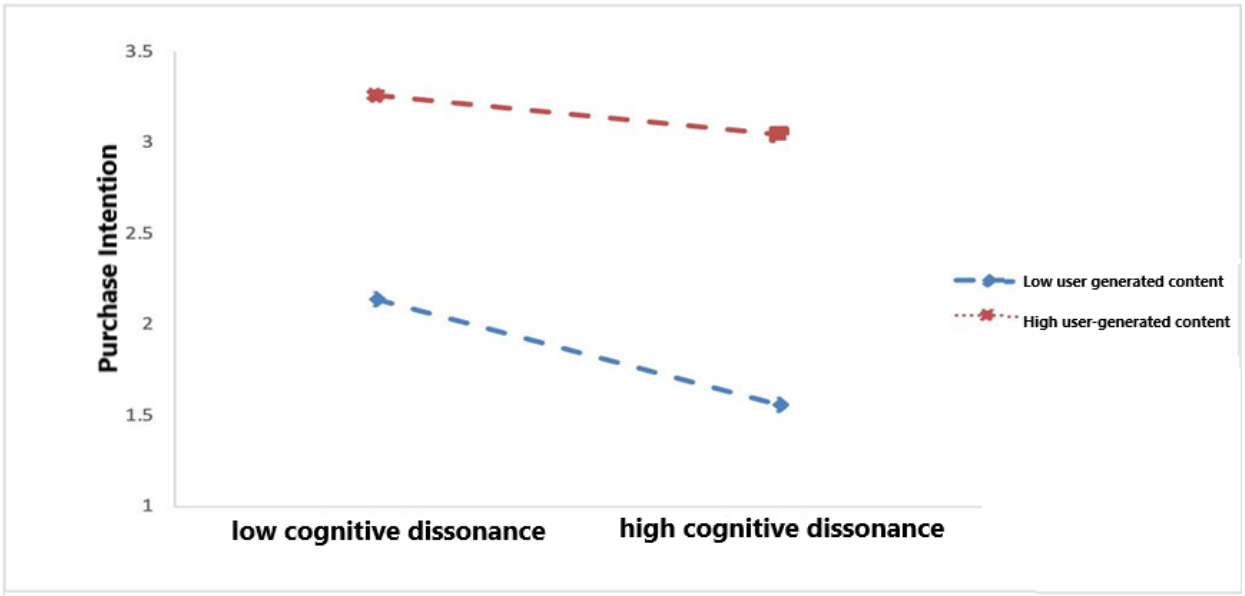

Figure 4: The moderating effect of user-generated content on cognitive dissonance and purchase intention

Hypothesis Testing Results

After regression analysis, all the hypotheses of this study were tested. The specific test results are summarized in Table 27 As shown:

Table 27: Hypothesis test results of this study

Assumption No.	Content	Test result
H1	Cognitive dissonance has a significant negative impact on purchase intention	Supported
H2	Seller reputation has a significant positive impact on purchase intention	Supported
H3	User-generated content has a significant positive impact on purchase intention	Supported
H4	Seller reputation has a significant negative impact on the relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchase intention regulation.	Supported
H5	User-generated content has a significant impact on th relationship between cognitive dissonance and purchas intention negative regulatory effect	Supported

5. CONCLUSION

Research Conclusions and Discussion

The study explores the influence of pre-purchase cognitive dissonance on purchase intention in social e-commerce. It reveals that seller reputation positively influences consumers' willingness to buy, but can control its impact when pre-purchase cognitive dissonance occurs. User-generated content also positively affects purchase intention and mediates between cognitive dissonance and intention. In social e-commerce, users can independently produce real

information, allowing other buyers to adopt product descriptions. This allows sellers to obtain authentic feedback and adjust marketing strategies. However, user-generated content can contain negative reviews due to poor service experiences, but high-quality products can spread due to positive reviews and recommendations. The informative nature of user-generated content encourages buyers to change their cognitive dissonance, promoting their willingness to consume.

Management Recommendations

This paper explores the mechanisms of consumers' purchase intention under pre-purchase cognitive dissonance in social e-commerce platforms. To improve consumers' willingness to buy, sellers need to maintain their store's reputation in the industry. Platforms should strengthen the management and supervision of sellers, establish a credibility evaluation system, formulate clear seller rules, and strengthen the crackdown on counterfeit goods. Sellers should focus on building their credibility, improving service quality, and actively maintaining their reputation. To improve the reputation of sellers, platforms should focus on the management and maintenance of user-generated content. Platforms should establish a sound user-generated content management mechanism, establish an incentive mechanism for user-generated content creation, improve readability and interactivity of user-generated content, and use data analysis technology to mine and analyze user-generated content feedback, behavior, and preferences. This will help reduce consumers' pre-purchase cognitive dissonance and increase their willingness to buy on social e-commerce platforms.

Research limitations and future research directions

This paper investigates the influencing mechanism of consumer purchase intention using a novel perspective. However, it has limitations, such as sample selection limitations, user-generated content feature extraction limitations, and the research context. The sample selection is limited to American consumers, and the feature extraction of user-generated content has limitations. The measurement tool's dimensions may not be comprehensive, and there may be overlap between dimensions, affecting the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the feature extraction. A more scientific and systematic approach is needed to understand the impact of user-generated content on consumer purchase intention and cognitive dissonance. The research context needs to be expanded to include other shopping scenarios, such as shopping and crowdfunding purchases.

Future studies should combine technological development and consumer preferences to select more practical research situations, ensuring the credibility and universality of the research results. Therefore, future research should consider a wider range of situations and more diverse participants.

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Measurement Scale

Variable	Codes	Measurement items	Source
Cognitive Dissonance	CD1	I have conflicting thoughts when purchasing on social e-commerce platforms	(Balakrishnan & Foroudi, 2020)
	CD2	I have strong emotions both for and against purchasing this product	
	CD3	Compared to my expectations, making a purchase decision would make me feel a little uncomfortable	
	CD4	Compared to what I expected, making a purchase decision would make me feel a little depressed	
	CD5	I am undecided about making a purchase decision	
Seller Reputation	SR1	I think this social e-commerce platform has a high credit rating	(Boronat-Navarro & Pérez-Aranda, 2019)
	SR2	I think the social e-commerce platform product reviews are very good	
	SR3	I think this platform has more attention than other platforms in the same industry.	
	SR4	The seller's positive reputation on this social e-commerce platform increases my confidence in making a purchase from them.	
	SR5	I am more likely to buy from a seller with a high reputation score, even if I experience some doubts about the product.	

User-generated content	UGC1	I think that users on social e-commerce platforms post information about products and other things in order to help Others better understand the product	(Bowden & Mirzaei, 2020)
	UGC2	I think that users of social e-commerce platforms are trustworthy.	
	UGC3	The product information shared is generally reliable	
	UGC4	The information shared provides different perspectives on the product	
	UGC5	The content shared helps me to understand the product better.	
Purchase Intention	PI1	I would be willing to buy products shared by users of this social e-commerce platform	(Wang, 2020)
	PI2	If I want to buy related products, I will buy them on this social e-commerce platform.	
	PI3	If I have corresponding shopping needs, I will consider buying on this social e-commerce platform	
	PI4	I am likely to purchase products from this social e-commerce seller based on their reputation and the user-generated content I've seen.	
	PI5	The positive reviews and high seller reputation on this social e-commerce platform increase my intention to make a purchase.	