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## THE IMPACT OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL COMMERCE ON PURCHASE INTENTION<sup>12</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Social commerce, a subset of e-commerce, allows consumers to interact via social media platforms during online shopping. This study investigates the factors influencing purchase intentions in this context, focusing on product uncertainty, user-generated content (UGC) support, and attitudes toward social commerce. Data were collected through an online survey distributed via WhatsApp, yielding 457 valid responses, and analyzed using AMOS 24. The findings reveal that both product uncertainty and UGC support positively affect purchase intention. Contrary to conventional expectations, product uncertainty was found to enhance, rather than reduce, purchase intentions by stimulating engagement and reliance on social cues. Moreover, attitudes toward social commerce exert both a mediating effect between UGC and purchase intention and a direct positive effect on purchase intention.

**Keywords:** E-Commerce, Social Commerce, Attitude, Purchase Intention

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## **SOSYAL TİCARETE YÖNELİK TUTUMUN SATIN ALMA NİYETİNE ETKİSİ**

### **ÖZ**

Sosyal ticaret, e-ticaretin bir alt kümesi olarak, tüketicilerin çevrimiçi alışveriş sürecinde sosyal medya platformları üzerinden etkileşimde bulunmalarını sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, bu bağlamda satın alma niyetini etkileyen faktörleri incelemekte ve özellikle ürün belirsizliği, kullanıcı tarafından oluşturulan içerik (UGC) desteği ile sosyal ticarete yönelik tutumları odak noktası olarak ele almaktadır. Veriler, WhatsApp üzerinden dağıtılan çevrimiçi bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmış ve 457 geçerli yanıt elde edilmiş, analizler ise AMOS 24 programı kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, hem ürün belirsizliği hem de UGC desteğinin satın alma niyeti üzerinde olumlu etkisi olduğunu göstermektedir. Geleneksel beklenilerin aksine, ürün belirsizliği satın alma niyetini azaltmak yerine artırıcı bir etki göstermiş ve tüketicilerin sosyal ipuçlarına dayanarak etkileşimde bulunmalarını teşvik etmiştir. Ayrıca, sosyal ticarete yönelik tutumlar, UGC desteği ile satın alma niyeti arasındaki ilişkiyi dolaylı olarak aracılık etmekte ve doğrudan satın alma niyeti üzerinde olumlu bir etki göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** E-ticaret, Sosyal Ticaret, Tutum, Satın Alma Niyeti

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid advancement of technology and the pervasive impact of digital transformation (Yoşumaz, 2024), the global retail industry has undergone significant changes, reshaping consumer habits and business models. E-commerce, as a dominant force in this transformation, has evolved through two distinct stages: traditional e-commerce platforms and the emerging paradigm of social commerce. Traditional e-commerce platforms primarily provide direct product or service information, with purchasing decisions largely driven by individual consumers. In contrast, social commerce integrates e-commerce with social media, fostering consumer interaction and embedding online communities into the buying process. This model enriches the shopping experience through personalized recommendations, user-generated content (UGC), and peer interactions, distinguishing it from traditional e-commerce and positioning it as a pivotal force in the future of retail.

The rise of social commerce has been fueled by the widespread adoption of social media platforms and the increasing prevalence of online interactions among users. According to recent statistics, the global social commerce market is projected to grow from USD 492 billion in 2021 to USD 1.2 trillion by 2025, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 31.6% (Statista, 2023). This exponential growth underscores the significance of social commerce as a transformative force in the retail industry. A key characteristic of social commerce is its ability to influence purchasing behavior through UGC and social interactions, such as product reviews, shared experiences, and community recommendations. These elements shape consumer decision-making in ways that traditional e-commerce cannot replicate. For instance, Bai et al. (2015) found that UGC support significantly impacts social support, which in turn directly influences purchase intentions. This highlights the critical role of UGC in reinforcing consumer trust and driving the growth of social commerce.

However, the shift from traditional e-commerce to social commerce has introduced new complexities in consumer behavior. Consumers are no longer passive buyers but active participants in the commerce process, contributing as content generators and information providers. This dynamic shift has made consumer behavior more intricate, particularly in terms of perceived risks and opportunities. One of the main risks in social commerce is the lack of sufficient information about products (Bui & Kettinger, 2013). Product uncertainty can be alleviated through UGC, as user comments, product reviews, and community interactions help clarify product attributes, thereby positively influencing purchase decisions.

Chen et al. (2021) further explored the role of product uncertainty, finding that it strengthens the link between imitation behavior and purchase intention. When product uncertainty is high, consumers tend to rely more on social cues, imitating the actions of others to evaluate ambiguous products. While existing research has highlighted the influence of social commerce on consumer trust, purchase intention, and brand loyalty, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies examining the interplay between attitudes toward social commerce, product uncertainty, and UGC support. Specifically, the mediating role of attitudes toward social commerce in shaping consumer behavior has not been thoroughly investigated. This gap is significant because understanding how attitudes mediate the effects of product uncertainty and UGC support can provide deeper insights into consumer behavior, enabling businesses to develop more effective strategies to enhance consumer engagement and trust.

This study aims to examine the factors influencing the purchase intentions of individuals who engage in shopping through social commerce platforms. In particular, it focuses on the effects of product uncertainty and UGC support on purchase intention, while also investigating the

mediating role of attitudes toward social commerce in these relationships. Accordingly, the study addresses how both product uncertainty and UGC support influence consumer behavior, and analyzes how attitudes toward social commerce function as a mediating variable in these effects. By empirically testing a set of hypotheses, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms shaping consumer decision-making processes within the context of social commerce.

The findings of this study will offer valuable insights for both academic research and business practice. For businesses, understanding the mediating role of attitudes toward social commerce can inform strategies to enhance consumer engagement and trust. For researchers, this study contributes to the evolving literature on social commerce by providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing the interplay between risk factors, opportunity factors, and consumer attitudes. Ultimately, this research aims to advance the field of social commerce and support its continued growth as a transformative force in the global retail industry.

## 2. Literature Review

Social commerce, defined as the process of buying and selling goods or services through social media platforms, has emerged as a dynamic and rapidly growing field that significantly influences consumer behavior. Within this context, numerous studies have explored various factors affecting purchase intentions, including impulsive buying, customer intentions, virtual communities, trust, social support, and hedonic motivation (Abdelsalam et al., 2020; Meilatinova, 2021; Tuncer, 2021; Paramita, 2023).

Abdelsalam et al. (2020) examined factors influencing impulsive buying intentions in social commerce and proposed a framework to manage these factors, highlighting social commerce as an emerging domain warranting further research. Similarly, Meilatinova (2021) revealed that the reputation and information quality of social commerce platforms significantly affect customer satisfaction, repurchase intention, and word-of-mouth communication, underscoring the platforms' role in enhancing customer loyalty.

Liao et al. (2021) investigated the role of social media in fostering commerce by emphasizing the importance of building virtual communities. Their data mining analysis, conducted in Taiwan, demonstrated that recommendation systems effectively increase purchase rates. Wang et al. (2020) discussed how social commerce, distinct from traditional e-commerce, evolves as a new business model centered on community and relationship management, emphasizing the significance of emotional connections between firms and customers.

Tuncer (2021) reviewed the effects of social support, social presence, and trust on participation intentions in social commerce, indicating that emotional and informational support provided via social media positively influences such intentions. Paramita (2023) found trust to be the most critical factor in adopting social commerce for direct transactions, especially in developing countries. Additionally, hedonic motivation was shown to enhance individuals' intentions to use social commerce platforms.

Kara (2012) predicted a rising trend of social commerce success, asserting that integrating e-commerce with social media tools to increase customer engagement would provide firms with a strategic advantage. Durukal et al. (2019) examined the impact of social media marketing activities on electronic loyalty, demonstrating that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and personalized content substantially contribute to customer loyalty. Similarly, Păuceanu et al.

(2023) emphasized social commerce's potential to shape consumer behavior and increase purchase intentions, identifying trust, relationships, and interactions as key determinants.

Within this framework, product uncertainty and user-generated content (UGC) support have emerged as critical variables influencing purchase intentions in social commerce. Chen et al. (2021) found that product uncertainty significantly and positively strengthens the effect of imitation behavior on purchase intention; as product uncertainty rises, buyers tend to rely more on imitation, thereby increasing their purchase intentions. Product fit uncertainty demonstrated a similar effect, whereas seller uncertainty did not significantly impact the imitation–purchase intention relationship. Chen et al. (2024) further investigated perceived product transparency in social commerce, finding it significantly reduces consumers' perceived uncertainty. Moreover, cultural tightness negatively and significantly moderated this relationship, such that in cultures with high tightness, the uncertainty-reducing effect of product transparency is stronger.

User-generated content (UGC) plays a vital role in reducing product uncertainty and enhancing purchase intention. Wang et al. (2025) revealed that informational characteristics of UGC, such as diversity and relevance, indirectly affect purchase intention through perceived value. Normative characteristics, particularly the professionalism of content producers, directly and positively impact purchase intention. Notably, persuasion resistance negatively moderated the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention, highlighting the importance of presenting authentic and unbiased information. Zhuang et al. (2024) examined factors determining UGC popularity and their effects on product uncertainty, finding that information quality and source credibility significantly influence UGC popularity. Furthermore, content structural features such as text length and sentiment intensity showed varying effects depending on product type, while media richness sometimes led to information overload, weakening the effect of text length.

Finally, attitudes toward social commerce have been found to mediate the relationships between product uncertainty, UGC support, and purchase intention (Tuncer, 2021; Paramita, 2023). Positive attitudes toward social commerce environments enhance consumers' purchase intentions and indirectly affect how product uncertainty and UGC influence buying behavior. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively examine the effects of product uncertainty and UGC support on purchase intention within the social commerce framework, with a particular focus on the mediating role of attitudes toward social commerce.

### **3. Theoretical Background**

#### **3.1. Social Commerce**

Social media encompasses a family of platforms and applications designed to facilitate communication, community engagement, content sharing, and collaboration. While individuals primarily use these platforms for interaction, businesses employ them for product promotion, marketing, and monitoring customer feedback. These platforms provide a variety of tools to achieve objectives such as shaping brand perception and gaining customer insights. Over time, the scope of content sharing on social media has expanded beyond text to include audio, visual, and animated formats, with visual and live content becoming increasingly prominent (Gedik, 2020).

Social commerce is a business model that integrates e-commerce with social media, allowing users to interact and market products and services through social platforms. Beyond shopping, it facilitates information sharing and user experiences. With tools enabled by Web 2.0

technologies, users have transitioned from passive consumers to active content contributors, driving the growth of social commerce. (Zhou et al., 2013). Supported by user-generated content (UGC) and social media technologies, social commerce enhances consumers' decision-making processes and shapes their shopping behavior through networked content. Web 2.0 has transformed commerce into user-centered models, with social media emerging as an effective, low-cost marketing tool, particularly benefiting small and medium-sized enterprises (Leong, 2024). Influencer marketing plays a key role, where individuals with significant social media followings shape consumer purchasing decisions by authentically integrating brand promotions into personal content. This strategy fosters consumer trust and brand connection, serving as a credible alternative to traditional advertising. The success of social commerce is measured by indicators such as conversion rates, social media revenue, transaction volume, customer loyalty, and engagement rates, offering businesses valuable insights into the effectiveness of their activities (Vrontis et al., 2021).

### **3.1.1. Purchase Intention in Social Commerce**

Unlike general purchase intention, which is shaped by broad factors such as product quality, brand reputation, and pricing, purchase intention in social commerce is strongly influenced by the unique characteristics of these platforms (Wang & Xie, 2020). These include social interactions, trust in sellers, user-generated content (UGC), peer recommendations, and platform-specific experiences (Onurlubaş, 2023).

During the formation of social commerce purchase intention, users' engagement with comments, reviews, unboxing videos, and peer feedback plays a critical role, as such content reduces product and seller uncertainty while strengthening trust in the transaction process (Tuncer, 2021). Social media features such as likes, shares, and interactive discussions also enhance consumers' sense of community and belonging, which in turn increases their readiness to make purchases via these platforms (Nguyen et al., 2025).

Prior research highlights the importance of these social dynamics. Wang and Xie (2020) demonstrated that positive user reviews on social commerce sites significantly increase purchase intention by improving perceived credibility and reducing uncertainty. Similarly, Onurlubaş (2023) emphasized that within social commerce settings, factors like brand loyalty, product quality perceptions, and community-based trust mechanisms strongly predict purchase intention. Therefore, purchase intention in social commerce should be understood not only as an individual consumer's decision but also as a behavior shaped by the interplay of digital interactions, social influence, and trust-building mechanisms unique to social commerce environments.

### **3.1.2. Product Uncertainty**

Uncertainty refers to a lack of knowledge about the exact future outcome of an event or situation and is a key concept in finance and economics. It introduces risk into economic decision-making processes, as investors and firms are unable to predict future gains or losses, leading to decisions based on incomplete information about complex events. Decision-making becomes challenging when economic agents lack clarity on variables such as prices or earnings. It is important to distinguish between risk and uncertainty: while risk involves known possible outcomes, uncertainty arises when outcomes cannot be predicted. In the context of consumer behavior, when buyers lack information about a product's value, their purchasing decisions are influenced, and uncertainty increases (Guo et al., 2023).

Product uncertainty refers to the inability of online shoppers to fully assess a product's actual features and performance. On digital platforms, factors such as the inability to physically inspect products and the presence of incomplete or insufficient information can make it difficult for consumers to trust products (Bui & Kettinger, 2013). This uncertainty is a significant challenge in online shopping, as consumers cannot be sure whether the product will meet their expectations.

Product uncertainty is generally categorized into two key types: uncertainty regarding product quality and uncertainty about product fit. Product quality uncertainty arises when the seller provides insufficient or misleading information about the product or fails to accurately portray its true condition. This type of uncertainty can significantly undermine consumer trust in the product's quality. On the other hand, product fit uncertainty stems from the inability of consumers to physically interact with the product, making it challenging to assess whether it will adequately meet their requirements (Sun et al., 2022).

Bock et al. (2012) examined product uncertainty as a factor influencing online trust, noting that uncertainty is especially prominent with experience products. In such cases, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), offline trust, and sanctions are more effective in fostering online trust. Pavlou and Dimoka (2008) explored the effects of product uncertainty in online auction markets and found that product uncertainty negatively impacts success measures, such as price escalation rates and transaction efficiency.

Product uncertainty is widely recognized as a critical factor shaping consumer behavior in social commerce. While some studies emphasize that insufficient product information or the lack of direct interaction with sellers may increase perceived risk and discourage purchasing decisions (Bui & Kettinger, 2013; Sun et al., 2022), recent findings reveal a more nuanced relationship. For instance, Chen et al. (2021) demonstrated that as product uncertainty increases, consumers tend to imitate others' purchasing behaviors, which in turn positively affects their purchase intentions. Similarly, Chen et al. (2024) highlighted that perceived product transparency significantly reduces uncertainty and interacts with cultural factors such as cultural tightness, thereby facilitating more favorable consumer responses. These studies suggest that product uncertainty, rather than solely deterring consumers, can stimulate reliance on social cues and community-generated information, ultimately enhancing purchase intention in social commerce contexts.

In addition, consumers' attitudes toward social commerce platforms significantly influence not only their direct purchase intentions but also how they perceive negative factors such as product uncertainty (Tuncer, 2021; Paramita, 2023). Attitude is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral tendencies toward an object (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011; Koç, 2019). Consumers with a positive attitude toward social commerce tend to perceive product uncertainty as a more tolerable factor. Transparent information sharing and community-supported content in social commerce environments positively affect consumer attitudes, which in turn indirectly influence purchase behavior (Chen et al., 2024). Hence, it is posited that a favorable attitude toward social commerce mediates the relationship between product uncertainty and purchase intention, thereby reducing the negative influence of product uncertainty (Sezginer, 2023; Huang et al., 2004).

Building on this theoretical background, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H1a: An increase in product uncertainty positively affects consumers' purchase intention.*

*H1b: Attitude toward social commerce mediates the relationship between product uncertainty and purchase intention.*

### **3.1.3. UGC (User Generated Content) Support**

User-generated content (UGC) refers to consumers' sharing of their opinions, experiences, and thoughts about a product or service and is often described as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). (Burgess et al., 2009). This content is generated by consumers and serves as a key source of information for other potential customers, while also enhancing social interaction. UGC, which can be shared on digital platforms in various formats such as text, video, audio, or visuals, significantly influences consumer behavior because it is perceived as more objective and trustworthy than official marketing materials (Bahtar & Muda, 2016).

UGC support plays a crucial role in companies' marketing strategies. A notable example is Coca-Cola's "Bottle with a Name" campaign, where people shared images of Coca-Cola bottles featuring their names on social media, helping the campaign gain global traction. The main types of UGC support include reviews, opinions, social media posts, blog entries, videos, and forum discussions. For instance, comments and images shared on social media platforms allow other users to gain insights into the product and increase brand awareness (Santos, 2022).

UGC support is not only a marketing tool for companies but also a valuable source of information for understanding customer behavior and preferences. Khan et al. (2021) observed that in the tourism industry, UGC has a significant impact on destination images, and tourists often base their travel decisions on reviews from other users. Similarly, Li et al. (2022) highlighted that UGC on e-commerce platforms plays a critical role in reducing purchase risk and providing valuable feedback for businesses.

User-generated content (UGC) is recognized as a critical source of information in consumer decision-making within social commerce platforms. UGC includes comments, images, videos, and reviews based on users' own experiences and is often perceived as more trustworthy and objective than official brand communications (Bahtar & Muda, 2016; Wang et al., 2025). Wang et al. (2025) found that both normative characteristics (e.g., the expertise of content producers) and cognitive characteristics (e.g., content diversity and contextual relevance) of UGC have direct and indirect effects on purchase intention. Additionally, Zhuang et al. (2024) noted that information quality and source credibility are key determinants of UGC popularity, while content structural features exhibit varying effects depending on product type. These findings support the role of UGC in enhancing perceived consumer value and positively influencing purchase intention (Li et al., 2022; Santos, 2022).

The effect of UGC support on purchase intention is also closely related to consumers' overall attitudes toward social commerce platforms. Consumers who perceive social commerce as a trustworthy, transparent, and community-based environment experience stronger effects from UGC (Wang et al., 2025; Paramita, 2023). Tuncer (2021) demonstrated that factors such as social support and trust shape attitudes toward social commerce, which in turn significantly impact participation intentions. Therefore, positive attitudes toward social commerce are expected to indirectly enhance the effect of UGC on purchase intention, indicating that UGC functions not only as an information source but also as a mechanism shaping consumer attitudes (Khan et al., 2021; Gedik, 2020).

Building on this theoretical background, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H2a: User-generated content (UGC) support positively influences consumers' purchase intention.*

*H2b: Attitude toward social commerce mediates the relationship between UGC support and purchase intention.*

### 3.1.4. Attitude Towards Social Trade

Attitude is a multidimensional construct that encompasses individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward a specific object or situation (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011). It consists of three main components: the cognitive dimension, which reflects beliefs and knowledge (e.g., awareness of a product's features); the emotional dimension, which involves positive or negative feelings toward an object; and the behavioral dimension, which indicates the intention to act based on these evaluations (Sezginer, 2023; Koç, 2019). Prior research highlights the importance of attitude in shaping consumer behavior. For instance, Huang et al. (2004) demonstrated that negative attitudes toward gray market products lower consumers' perceptions of price and quality, while Bagram and Khan (2012) emphasized the role of positive attitudes in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Attitude toward social commerce is increasingly influenced by the rise of social technologies and the growing engagement of consumers in digital environments. Gatautis and Medziasiene (2014) emphasized that as social technologies become more widespread, social commerce has gained considerable importance. Their study among Facebook users found that social influence was the most significant determinant of behavioral intention to adopt social commerce, indicating that individuals tend to develop positive attitudes toward such platforms through the impact of their social environment. Effort expectancy had a moderate effect, suggesting that perceived ease of use contributes to these favorable attitudes, while the limited impact of performance expectancy and facilitating conditions implies that such attitudes are not yet fully established. Similarly, Liao et al. (2021) employed data mining techniques to examine the attitudes of Taiwanese social media users toward social commerce. Their findings revealed that users were more inclined to shop on certain platforms, indicating that platform-specific engagement plays a role in shaping attitudes. The study also highlighted that social commerce operators could benefit from understanding user profiles more effectively, although cultural and platform-based limitations offer fertile ground for further research.

Positive consumer attitudes toward social commerce platforms result in increased engagement, higher trust in content, and easier purchase decisions (Tuncer, 2021; Paramita, 2023). These attitudes are shaped by key social commerce components such as community support, review systems, and influencer content. Leong (2024) emphasized that social commerce provides a cost-effective and efficient marketing channel, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, by facilitating consumers' information acquisition processes and promoting the dissemination of positive experiences. Moreover, attitudes are conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, all of which play a decisive role in shaping consumer behavior (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011).

Building on this theoretical background, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H3: Attitude toward social commerce positively affects consumers' purchase intention.*

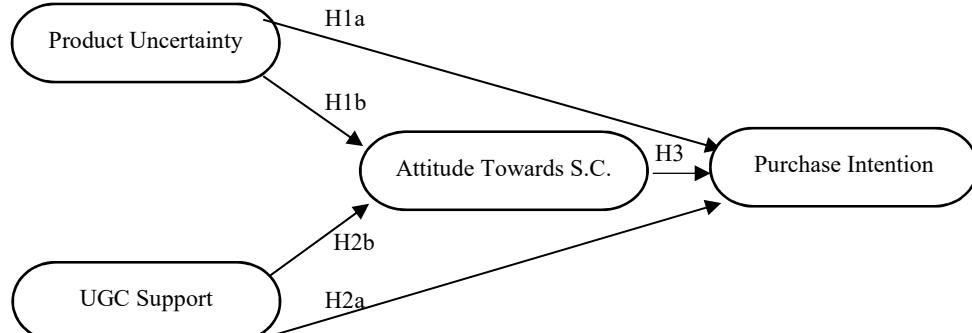
### 3.2. Purpose and Model of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the factors influencing the purchase intentions of individuals who shop through social commerce platforms in the context of e-commerce. Specifically, the study focuses on two critical determinants: product uncertainty and user-generated content (UGC) support. In addition, it examines the role of attitudes toward social commerce as a mediating variable that shapes the relationship between these factors and purchase intention.

The research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how product uncertainty, UGC support, and consumer attitudes interact to influence purchasing behavior in social commerce environments. By addressing these relationships, the study seeks to contribute both to academic literature and to practical applications for businesses aiming to enhance consumer trust and engagement on social commerce platforms.

The research model was developed based on empirical findings from prior studies examining consumer behavior in social commerce contexts (Chen et al., 2021; Tuncer, 2021; Wang et al., 2025). The relationships among the variables were established in accordance with the theoretical arguments and empirical evidence presented in these studies.

Based on the conceptual model presented in Figure 1, the study investigates the direct and indirect effects of these constructs. The model highlights the mediating role of attitudes toward social commerce while illustrating the pathways through which product uncertainty and UGC support affect purchase intention.



**Figure 1.** Research Model

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Population and Sample of the Study

The population for this research consists of 28.4 million internet users who shop online in Turkey as of 2023 (TÜİK, 2024; Paradergi, 2023). A quantitative research method was employed, and data were collected using a questionnaire. The data collection process was conducted online by uploading the survey instrument to Google Forms. The survey was distributed to 5,000 individuals via the social media platform WhatsApp between May 3 and July 3, 2024, using the convenience sampling method. A total of 457 valid responses were obtained. The collected data were then analyzed using AMOS 24 software. The compliance of this study with ethical rules was approved by Kütahya Dumlupınar University Ethics Committee with the decision dated 29.04.2024 and numbered 2024/04.

#### 4.2. Data Collection Tool

In this study, a questionnaire developed on Google Forms was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire consists of five sections: The first section collects demographic information such as gender, age, education level, monthly income, number of monthly purchases made through social commerce, and city of residence. The second section includes a 4-question scale on product uncertainty adapted from Chen et al. (2021). The third section assesses UGC support with a 5-question scale developed by Bai et al. (2015). The fourth section assesses attitude towards social trade using a 7-question scale with the first three questions adapted from Um (2019) and the remaining four questions adapted from Cabı (2015). The fifth section includes a 4-question scale on purchase intention adapted from Bai et al. (2015). The items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), to 5 (strongly agree).

#### 5. Findings

Findings regarding demographic data are as in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants**  
**Demographic Characteristics**

	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	294	64.3
Woman	163	35.7
<b>Age</b>		
16-26	230	50.3
27-37	94	20.6
38-48	97	21.2
49-59	30	6.6
60 and over	6	1.3
<b>Education Status</b>		
Primary Education	25	5.5
High School	179	17.3
Associate Degree	79	16.75
Bachelor	240	52.5
Master's Degree	51	11.2
PhD	25	5.5
<b>Monthly Income of Your Family TL</b>		
17.000 under	212	46.4

17.001-30.000	80	17.5
30.001-50.000	108	23.6
50.001-75.000	40	8.8
75.000 and above	17	3.7
<b>Monthly Number of Transactions Made on the Internet (Shopping)</b>		
1-3	275	60.2
4-7	113	24.7
8-11	41	9
12-15	10	2.2
16 and above	18	3.9

**Table 2.** Province of Residence of Participants

Province of Residence									
Adana	3	Bilecik	6	Gaziantep	1	Kırklareli	1	Osmaniye	2
Afyonkarahisar	4	Bitlis	1	Giresun	1	Kırşehir	1	Rize	1
Aksaray	1	Bolu	2	Hatay	1	Kocaeli	12	Sakarya	2
Ankara	26	Bursa	29	İstanbul	25	Konya	17	Şanlıurfa	3
Antalya	4	Çanakkale	3	İzmir	10	Kütahya	205	Şırnak	1
Ardahan	1	Çankırı	7	Kahramanmaraş	2	Malatya	2	Tekirdağ	2
Aydın	2	Düzce	4	Kars	1	Manisa	3	Tokat	1
Balıkesir	18	Edirne	3	Kastamonu	1	Mardin	4	Uşak	4
Bandırma	1	Erzincan	2	Kayseri	18	Mersin	1		
Bartın	2	Eskişehir	13	Kırıkkale	2	Muğla	1		

In Table 1 and Table 2, 35.7% of the participants were female (163 people) and 64.3% were male (294 people), making a total of 457 participants. The age distribution showed that 50.3% (230 people) were between 16-26 years old, 20.6% (94 people) were between 27-37, 21% (97 people) were between 38-48, 6.6% (30 people) were between 49-59, and 1.3% (6 people) were 60 years or older. In terms of education, 5.5% (25 people) had primary education, 17.3% (79 people) had a high school education, 16.75% (79 people) had an associate degree, 52.5% (240 people) had a bachelor's degree, 11.2% (51 people) had a master's degree, and 1.3% (6 people) had a doctorate. Regarding income, 46.4% (212 people) earned less than 17,000 TL, 17.5% (80 people) earned between 17,001-30.000 TL, 23.6% (108 people) earned between 30.001-50.000 TL, 8.8% (40 people) earned between 50.001-75,000 TL, and 3.7% (17 people) earned 75,000 TL or more. Regarding monthly transactions through social commerce, 60.2% (275 people) made 1-3 purchases, 24.7% (113 people) made 4-7 purchases, 9% (41 people) made 8-11 purchases, 2.2% (10 people) made 12-15 purchases, and 3.9% (18 people) made 16 or more purchases. The participants were from 48 different provinces of Turkey.

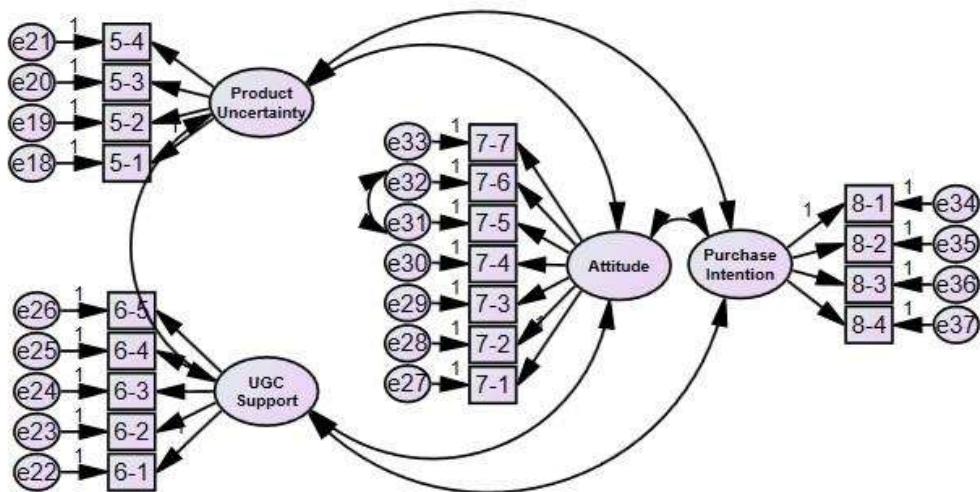
**Table 3.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Standardized Weights	Regression Load	Factor Load	AV E	CR
<b>Product Uncertainty</b>				
PU1		.659		
PU2		.830	0.52	0.81
PU3		.699	5	5
PU4		.700		
<b>UGC Support (User Generated Content)</b>				
UGC1		.787		
UGC2		.831		
UGC3		.815	0.56 8	0.86 6
UGC4		.583		
UGC5		.724		
<b>Attitudes Towards Social Trade</b>				
ATST1		.797		
ATST2		.687		
ATST3		.816		
ATST4		.821	0.57 9	0.90 5
ATST5		.779		
ATST6		.728		
ATST7		.685		
<b>Purchase Intention</b>				
PI1		.780		
PI2		.809		
PI3		.565	0.51 9	0.80 9
PI4		.704		

Table 3 presents the results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as well as convergent and discriminant validity tests conducted on the scales used in the study. To improve the fit indices, modification indices obtained from the CFA results were examined. Based on this examination, a correlation was identified between the observed variables e18 and e19 under the same latent construct. For all items, standardized path coefficients were found to be 0.50 or higher.

Convergent validity indicates that items in the scale should strongly relate to their respective factors and form a structure that aligns with a particular factor. Discriminant validity, in contrast, ensures that items belonging to one factor exhibit minimal correlation with items from other factors. To evaluate convergent validity, two main conditions must be met: Composite Reliability (CR) values should be higher than Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, and

the AVE should exceed 0.5. The AVE for a factor is calculated by dividing the total of the squared loadings of its items by the number of items. For discriminant validity, the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) must be less than the AVE, the Average Shared Variance (ASV) should be smaller than the MSV, and the square root of the AVE should surpass the correlation coefficients between factors (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017).



CMIN=580,093; DF=163; CMIN/DF=3,559; p=,000; RMSEA=.075; CFI=.914; GFI=.888

**Figure 2.** Structural Equation Model Fit Index Analysis

**Table 4.** Fit Index Values Used in the Structural Equation Model

Index	Good Fit	Acceptable Compliance	Model Fit Value	Compliance Status	Source
<b>X<sup>2</sup>/df</b>	<.3	<.3-.5	3.559	Acceptable Compliance	Gürbüz, 2021
<b>GFI</b>	>.90	>.85	0.888	Acceptable Compliance	Browne & Cudeck, 1993
<b>CFI</b>	>.95	>.90	0.914	Acceptable Compliance	Gürbüz, 2021
<b>RMSEA</b>	<.05	<.08	0.075	Acceptable Compliance	Browne & Cudeck, 1993
<b>NNFI</b>	>.95	>.90	0.900	Acceptable Compliance	Gürbüz, 2021
<b>SRMR</b>	<.05	<.08	0.0568	Acceptable Compliance	Gürbüz, 2021

CMIN( $\chi^2$ )=580.093 (p<0.05), df=163

When the structural model and test values of the research in Figure 2 and Table 4 are examined, it is seen that  $\chi^2=580.093$  df=163, (P = 0.00),  $\chi^2/sd = 3.559$ , GFI = 0.888, NNFI = 0.900, CFI = 0.914, SRMR = 0.0568, RMSEA = 0.075. When the fit indices of the model are evaluated in general, it can be said that the model is acceptable.

**Table 5.** Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

	CR	AV E	MS V	AS V	A	PU	UGC	PI
<b>Attitude (A)</b>	0.90 5	0.57 9	0.40 2	0.26 4	<b>0.761*</b>			
<b>Product Uncertainty (PU)</b>	0.81 5	0.52 5	0.10 3	0.04 8	0.056**	<b>0.725*</b>		
<b>UGC Support (UGC)</b>	0.86 6	0.56 8	0.40 4	0.24 5	0.634**	0.193**	<b>0.753*</b>	
<b>Purchase Intention (PI)</b>	0.80 9	0.51 9	0.38 8	0.26 2	0.623**	0.321**	0.544**	<b>0.721*</b>

\*AVE Square Root Values

\*\*Correlation between Variables Significant at 0.01 Level

When examining the convergent validity values in Table 5, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct are as follows: product uncertainty (0.525), UGC support (0.568), attitude towards social commerce (0.579), and purchase intention (0.519). Since all AVE values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.5, convergent validity is confirmed. The Composite Reliability (CR) values are as follows: product uncertainty (0.815), UGC support (0.866), attitude towards social commerce (0.905), and purchase intention (0.809). Since all CR values are above the acceptable level of 0.7, it can be concluded that the scales meet the desired conditions for reliability (Akbiyik & Coşkun, 2013). Regarding discriminant validity, the results indicate that it is ensured because the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) and Average Shared Variance (ASV) values are smaller than the AVE values. Additionally, the square root of the AVE values is greater than the highest correlation value between all the dimensions, confirming the discriminant validity. To examine the presence of common method bias, a latent common method factor was included in the measurement model using AMOS 24. All observed variables were allowed to load on both their respective theoretical constructs and the common method factor. The standardized loadings on the method factor ranged from (0.115) to (0.392), with an average loading of approximately (0.20). In line with the recommendations of Podsakoff et al. (2003), the standardized loadings on the common method factor ranged from 0.115 to 0.392, with an average of approximately 0.20. These results indicate that common method variance is minimal and does not pose a meaningful threat to the validity of the study.

## 5.1. Findings Related to Testing the Research Hypotheses

In this research, the mediating role of a variable was analyzed using the framework proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) for testing indirect effects. This approach consists of four essential steps: first, the independent variable must have a significant impact on the dependent variable (path c); second, there must be a significant relationship between the independent variable and the mediator (path a); third, when both the independent variable and the mediator are included in the model, the mediator should significantly influence the dependent variable; and finally, if the inclusion of the mediator eliminates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (path c'), this indicates full mediation. A reduction in the strength of this relationship implies partial mediation, whereas no change signifies the absence of mediation. To validate the significance of the mediation effect, both direct and indirect effects were analyzed using the

bootstrap method with 5000 resampling iterations. The confidence interval (CI) approach was applied, and if the CI includes zero, it indicates that there is no mediation effect.

**Table 6.** H1a and H1b Hypothesis Structural Model Test Results

Result Variables	Attitude Towards S. T.		Purchase Intention	
	$\beta$	SH	$\beta$	SH
Product Uncertainty (path c)			0.393*	
R <sup>2</sup>			0.072	0.103
Product Uncertainty (path a)	0.066*	0.063		
R <sup>2</sup>		0.003		
Product Uncertainty (path c')			0.341*	
Attitude towards S. T. (path b)			0.059	0.623*
R <sup>2</sup>			0.055	0.469
<b>Indirect Impact</b>				0.041* (-0.069-0.147)
* $<0.001$				

**Goodness of Fit Values:**  $\chi^2=277.742$ , (p=0.00), Df=86,  $\chi^2/Df=3.230$ . GFI=0.925, CFI=0.943, NFI=0.920. NNFI=0.931, RMSEA=0.070. SRMR=0.0459 (Meets the compliance criteria).

**c path:** Direct effect path between product uncertainty and purchase intention.

**c' path:** Indirect effect path between product uncertainty and purchase intention.

**a path:** Path between product uncertainty and attitude towards social trade.

**b path:** Path between attitude value towards social trade and purchase intention.

According to the findings presented in Table 6, the total effect of product uncertainty on purchase intention was statistically significant and positive ( $\beta = 0.393$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the H1a hypothesis is supported. Furthermore, product uncertainty was found to have a significant and positive effect on attitude toward social commerce ( $\beta = 0.066$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Finally, the effect of attitude toward social commerce on purchase intention was also significant and positive ( $\beta = 0.623$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

In the mediation analysis, the indirect effect of product uncertainty on purchase intention through attitude toward social commerce was calculated as 0.041. The 95% confidence interval obtained through the bootstrap method was [-0.069, 0.147]. Since this interval includes zero, the indirect effect was not found to be statistically significant. Therefore, the mediating role of attitude toward social commerce in this relationship could not be confirmed, and the H1b hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, hypothesis H1a is accepted, while hypothesis H1b is rejected.

According to the findings in Table 7, the total effect of user-generated content (UGC) support on purchase intention was found to be statistically significant and positive ( $\beta = 0.495$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Accordingly, the H2a hypothesis is supported. A significant and positive relationship was also observed between UGC support and attitude toward social commerce ( $\beta = 0.932$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Additionally, the effect of attitude toward social commerce on purchase intention was found to be statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.477$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 7.** H2a and H2b Hypothesis Structural Model Test Results

Result Variables	Attitude Towards S. T.		Purchase Intention	
	$\beta$	SH	$\beta$	SH
UGC Support (path c)			0.495*	0.050
R <sup>2</sup>				0.293
UGC Support (path a)	0.932*	0.096		
R <sup>2</sup>		0.401		
UGC Support (path c')			0.374*	0.098
Attitude towards S. T. (path b)			0.477*	0.067
R <sup>2</sup>				0.426
<b>Indirect Impact</b> (0.285-0.627)				0.445*
* $<0.001$				

**Goodness of Fit Values:**  $\chi^2=406.150$  ( $p=0.00$ ),  $Df=100$ ,  $\chi^2/Df=4.061$ ,  $GFI=0.900$ ,  $CFI=0.925$ ,  $NFI=0.904$ ,  $NNFI=0.910$ .  $RMSEA=0.082$ ,  $SRMR=0.0573$  (Meets the compliance criteria).

**c path:** Direct influence path between UGC support and purchase intention.

**c' path:** Indirect effect path between UGC support and purchase intention.

**a path:** Indirect effect path between UGC support and purchase intention.

**b path:** Indirect effect path between UGC support and purchase intention.

In the mediation analysis, the indirect effect of UGC support on purchase intention through attitude toward social commerce was calculated as 0.445. The 95% confidence interval obtained through the bootstrap method was [0.285, 0.627], which does not include zero. Therefore, the indirect effect is statistically significant, confirming the mediating role of attitude toward social commerce in the relationship between UGC support and purchase intention. Based on these findings, both H2a and H2b hypotheses are supported.

**Table 8.** H3 Hypothesis Structural Model Test Results

Hypothesis	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	$\beta$	S.E	C.R	P
H3	Purchase intention	Attitudes towards S.T.	0.574	0.051	11.273	0.000

**Goodness of Fit Values:**  $\chi^2=183.643$ , ( $p=0.00$ ),  $Df=42$ ,  $\chi^2/Df=4.372$ ,  $GFI=0.933$ ,  $CFI=0.948$ ,  $NFI=0.933$ ,  $NNFI=0.931$ ,  $RMSEA=0.086$ ,  $SRMR=0.0466$  (Meets the compliance criteria).

According to the findings in Table 8, the path coefficient between attitude towards social trade and purchase intention is statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.574$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This indicates that attitude towards social commerce has a positive effect on purchase behavior. Therefore, hypothesis H3 is accepted.

**Table 9.** Overall Results of the Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Result
H1a	Accepted
H1b	Rejected
H2a	Accepted
H2b	Accepted
H3	Accepted

## 6. Discussion, Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

### 6.1. Discussion and Conclusions

This study examined the key factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions in the context of social commerce, with particular attention to product uncertainty, user-generated content (UGC) support, and attitudes toward social commerce. The findings highlight the critical role these variables play in building consumer trust and enhancing purchase intentions in social commerce environments.

The results demonstrate that product uncertainty is a significant factor in understanding consumer behavior. As hypothesized in H1a, the findings indicate that an increase in product uncertainty positively affects consumers' purchase intentions. In social commerce platforms, where physical inspection of products is not possible, limited product descriptions, ambiguous visuals, or incomplete information do not necessarily discourage consumers; instead, they may stimulate curiosity, engagement, and exploratory behavior, ultimately enhancing purchase intention (Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021). These results are consistent with prior research demonstrating that under certain conditions, product uncertainty can encourage exploratory behaviors and stimulate engagement in social commerce contexts (Xu et al., 2024). This finding diverges from the conventional assumption in the literature that higher product uncertainty reduces purchase intention.

This positive relationship may be explained by consumers' increased reliance on social cues and community feedback in uncertain situations. Chen et al. (2021) demonstrated that as product uncertainty increases, consumers tend to imitate others' purchasing behaviors, which positively influences their decisions. Similarly, Chen et al. (2024) highlighted that perceived product transparency interacts with cultural factors, such as uncertainty avoidance, shaping how consumers respond to uncertain product information. These findings suggest that product uncertainty, rather than solely acting as a deterrent, can under certain conditions encourage engagement and stimulate purchase intentions in social commerce contexts.

On the other hand, UGC support exerts both a direct and an indirect positive influence on purchase intention through attitudes toward social commerce. This indicates that user reviews and experience-sharing are perceived by consumers as reliable sources of information, resulting in a social proof effect. As noted by Wang et al. (2025), informative attributes of UGC, such as content diversity and relevance, enhance perceived value and strengthen purchase intentions. However, it is important to consider the moderating role of persuasive resistance in this relationship. To be effective, UGC must be perceived as authentic, unbiased, and free from exaggeration. Zhuang et al. (2024) further support this notion by highlighting that aspects such as content length and emotional intensity play a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions. These findings suggest that not only the presence but also the quality of UGC significantly affects consumer behavior.

Finally, the study found that positive attitudes toward social commerce significantly increase consumers' purchase intentions. This finding reinforces previous research (Huang et al., 2004; Bagram & Khan, 2012) that identified attitudes as a key determinant of consumer behavior. Furthermore, the mediating role of attitudes in the relationship between UGC support and purchase intention suggests that fostering favorable attitudes may enhance the effectiveness of social commerce marketing strategies. Comparative studies suggest that attitudes may differ

across markets due to cultural and technological factors, emphasizing the importance of localizing social commerce strategies (Gibreel et al., 2018).

Overall, the findings indicate that product uncertainty, when leveraged appropriately, can stimulate consumer engagement, while enhancing product information transparency, encouraging high-quality user-generated content, and developing positive consumer attitudes remain essential strategies for social commerce platforms. For businesses seeking to gain consumer trust and boost purchase intentions, these elements may serve as fundamental components for achieving competitive advantage.

User-generated content (UGC) plays a crucial role in the Turkish market, where peer evaluations and community feedback are highly influential. Encouraging the sharing of reviews, ratings, and unboxing videos helps increase trust and consumer engagement. Strategies such as gamification and reward systems can be used to foster user participation, while collaboration with influencers and interactive features like live sessions and Q&A platforms further enhance consumer-brand relationships. Localization efforts such as using the Turkish language in customer support and collaborating with local influencers are essential for building stronger connections with the target audience.

Based on the study findings, several managerial implications can be proposed. First, companies can leverage product uncertainty strategically to increase consumer engagement, curiosity, and purchase intention. For instance, instead of providing exhaustive product details upfront, businesses may consider offering tiered information disclosure, where basic details are presented initially and additional specifications are revealed through interactive elements or user inquiries. Furthermore, strategically managing the amount of product information on websites, neither too sparse nor overwhelming, can stimulate consumer curiosity while encouraging reliance on user-generated content and peer recommendations for validation. Second, companies should implement structured programs to support and promote UGC. Third, building active and engaging online communities will help foster trust and brand loyalty. Finally, adapting marketing strategies to the cultural and linguistic context of Turkish consumers is key to long-term success.

## 6.2. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The sample mainly consists of younger and digitally literate individuals, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The focus on the Turkish market also restricts applicability to other cultural or economic contexts. Additionally, self-reported data may be subject to biases such as social desirability or recall errors.

Future research should include cross-cultural comparisons to understand differences in social commerce behavior, assess the relative effectiveness of influencer-generated versus user-generated content, and employ longitudinal methods to track behavioral changes over time. Including more diverse demographic groups such as older individuals and rural populations would also enhance the generalizability of the results.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the significant impact of product uncertainty, UGC support, and consumer attitudes on purchase intention in social commerce. Businesses can strengthen trust and promote loyalty by strategically leveraging product uncertainty,

encouraging user participation, and implementing culturally appropriate, consumer-focused strategies.

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