ROAS 5900 & INTR 5330 Case Study 2: Questionaire Design Practice and Analysis

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1 Introduction

In an increasingly fast-paced world, consumers are constantly seeking ways to purchase products that align with their preferences in a more convenient, speedy, and accurate manner. However, despite the abundance of online platforms and advanced algorithms, many still face challenges in finding the perfect product quickly. To address these challenges, this research aims to explore expert insights on how to enhance the consumer shopping experience. Through surveys and interviews with industry professionals and subject matter experts, we will investigate the key factors that influence purchasing decisions and identify opportunities to streamline the process. This study seeks to develop actionable strategies to make product discovery and purchase not only faster but also more personalized, improving overall consumer satisfaction.

2 Background Recapping: Online Shopping in China

China has one of the most dynamic and expansive online shopping markets in the world. As of 2024, it is the largest e-commerce market globally, with billions of transactions occurring annually. The rapid growth of this sector has been driven by several factors including widespread internet penetration, mobile payment innovations, a well-established logistics infrastructure, and the rise of consumerism among the country's burgeoning middle class.

China's e-commerce market has experienced exponential growth over the past decade. In 2023, the market size surpassed \$2.5 trillion, accounting for nearly half of global online retail sales. This expansion is largely due to the increasing internet penetration rate in China, which was over 1 billion internet users in 2022, and the rapid adoption of mobile technologies. Chinese consumers are highly accustomed to purchasing goods online, from daily necessities to luxury products. Several dominant players define China's e-commerce landscape, each offering different experiences, in detail:

- Taobao and Tmall (Alibaba Group): Taobao is China's largest consumer-to-consumer (C2C) platform, known for its vast product selection and user-driven marketplace. Tmall, Alibaba's business-to-consumer (B2C) platform, hosts brand stores and official retailers, attracting consumers looking for authentic and high-quality products. Together, they account for over 50% of China's e-commerce market share.

- JD.com (Jingdong): JD.com is a major competitor to Alibaba, known for its B2C model and strong logistics network. JD primarily focuses on electronics, home appliances, and high-end goods, offering same-day or next-day delivery in many areas, which has made it a popular choice for quality-conscious buyers.

- Pinduoduo: Pinduoduo (PDD) has rapidly gained market share with its unique group-buying model that encourages users to team up with friends or family to receive discounts. Targeting lower-income consumers and rural areas, Pinduoduo offers lower prices on everyday goods, making it particularly appealing for value-conscious shoppers.

- Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book): A mix of social media and e-commerce, Xiaohongshu is a platform where users share product reviews, beauty and fashion tips, and shopping experiences. It has a strong influence on younger consumers, especially women, who seek authentic user-generated content to guide their purchases.

Online shoppers in China exhibit a wide range of behaviors and preferences that are shaped by various factors such as convenience, product availability, and social influence. In general, shoppers tend to engage with online platforms in ways that fit their lifestyles, whether that means prioritizing price, convenience, or specific product categories. Many may rely on mobile devices for purchases, appreciate discounts or special deals, and may make decisions influenced by recommendations or reviews. However, these traits can vary widely depending on the individual, with some focusing more on detailed research before purchases, while others may make more impulsive decisions.

3   Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to gather insights from experts on how to make the shopping experience more convenient, faster, and accurate. The research process will consist of two main phases: a survey and expert interviews.

Interviewing   In this part, we will conduct expert interviews to gather insights on efficient shopping strategies, particularly focusing on platforms like Taobao. The interviews will explore the experts' shopping habits, their methods for quickly finding desired products, how they assess product quality through reviews, and strategies for maximizing savings during promotions. This will help us understand how experienced shoppers make more informed and faster decisions while navigating online platforms.

Questionnaire.   In this part, we will use **Indirect Scaling** methods to explore what kinds of shopping apps online shoppers like most. At the same time, **Likert Scales** was used in this study to explore the detailed performance of subjects' online shopping search habits.

3.1   Interviewing

Discuss the Efficient Shopping Strategies on Taobao.

1. Introduction: The purpose of this interview is to understand efficient shopping strategies on Taobao, which can help newcomers quickly find suitable products.

2. Shopping Habits and Preferences:

- **Q**:How many years have you been using Taobao?
  A: I've been using Taobao for over seven years.

- **Q**:How often do you shop on Taobao every month?
  A: Sometimes I shop multiple times a day, but on average, I shop at least 30 times a month.

- **Q**:What types of products do you mainly purchase?
  A: I primarily buy clothing, beauty products, and daily necessities.

3. Efficient Shopping Techniques:
3.1 How to Quickly Find Products.

- **Q**: How do you usually find the products you want to buy? (e.g., search keywords, use filters, category navigation)
  A: If I already know what type of product I want, I first visit the stores I follow because I'm generally satisfied with their products. If I can't find what I like, I use the search bar and look through suggested terms. I try to choose flagship stores or stores certified by Tmall for reliability.

- **Q**: For those unfamiliar with Taobao, what's the best way to quickly locate suitable products?
  A: For beginners, I recommend searching directly for the category of product they want and focusing on flagship stores and Tmall-certified stores. This helps the platform learn your preferences, so it can recommend similar stores or products in the future.

3.2 Price Comparison and Promotions.

- **Q**: Do you compare prices across platforms? How do you typically do that? (e.g., price comparison tools, tracking promotions on various platforms)
  A: I generally compare prices between Taobao and JD, though JD has fewer categories. When I'm feeling lazy, I don't bother comparing. I've used price comparison tools before, but I find them cumbersome, so I rarely use them now.

- **Q**: How do you maximize savings during promotions like Double 11 or 618?
  A: I make use of coupons, especially those that can be stacked, like discounts for beauty, fashion, or electronics products. Combining purchases to meet the conditions for larger discounts is one of the best ways to save. Additionally, I check out live streams for extra coupons or join stores offering discounts for buying multiple items.

3.3 Evaluations and User Feedback.

- **Q**: How do you usually judge the quality of a product? How much do reviews and user questions influence your decisions?
  A: I first check if the product is certified. If it's not, I rely on reviews. If there are many reviews with authentic pictures, and it doesn't look like fake reviews, I trust them more.

- **Q**: Any tips for determining if reviews are trustworthy? What do you focus on in reviews?
  A: I look at whether all the reviews have polished, overly perfect photos. Too many positive reviews with flawless pictures usually indicate fake reviews. I pay special attention to reviews with pictures and follow-up comments to get a sense of how the product performs over time. I also look at critical reviews to see if their complaints are something I can tolerate.

3.4 Time Management in Shopping.

- **Q**: How much time do you usually spend shopping? If you're short on time, what strategies do you use to shop quickly?
  A: If it's a low-priced item, I can complete a purchase within 5 minutes. But if it's an expensive item and I'm unsure, I might spend several hours comparing and searching. When I'm in a hurry, I skip price comparison and head straight for a flagship store, preferably one I've purchased from before, and focus on stores with many reviews.

4. Special Function:
4.1 Taobao Recommendations.

- **Q**: Do you often use Taobao's personalized recommendations like "You May Like"? How helpful are they for you?
  A: I occasionally browse through the recommendations, but I don't rely heavily on them. Sometimes the recommendations come after I've already purchased an item, so it doesn't add value. For example, after buying a phone, it might recommend phone cases instead of other phones.

- **Q**: For newcomers, how can they effectively use personalized recommendations to find good products?
  A: For those unfamiliar with Taobao, the recommendations may initially be off-target. I suggest browsing and saving items to your wish list first, so the algorithm can better understand your preferences.

4.2 Coupons and Promotions.

- **Q**: Do you frequently claim and use Taobao coupons? How do you combine them with other promotions to save money?
  A: I don't go out of my way to hunt for coupons, but I'll use them if they're easy to claim. The best way to maximize savings is to use all available coupons in a single order.

- **Q**: When do you prioritize using these discount methods?
  A: I usually prioritize them when large-value coupons are available or when I'm purchasing high-priced items with significant discounts.

4.3 Taobao Membership and Exclusive Benefits.

- **Q**: Are you an 88VIP member? If so, do you think the discounts and exclusive perks are worth it?
  A: Yes, I'm an 88VIP member, and I think it's worth it. The membership not only provides discounts and coupons on Taobao but also offers benefits across other apps like Youku, Ele. me, and NetEase Cloud Music. If you use even one or two of these services, the membership pays for itself.

- **Q**: For non-members, what are your tips for saving money?
  A: For non-members, it's best to shop during major promotions when many coupons are released. You can also check out live streams for store-specific discounts or use the regular discounts that Taobao often offers.

4.4 Live Streaming and Flash Sales.

- **Q**: Do you participate in Taobao live streams or flash sales? Do you think these activities make shopping more efficient or cost-effective?
  A: I rarely participate. I find it time-consuming unless the live stream offers something I really want or if they're giving out special gifts. Live streams are more about keeping viewers engaged, not about making shopping more efficient.

- **Q**: How do you quickly assess whether a product in a live stream or flash sale is worth buying?
  A: I check if the live stream offers extra discounts or gifts that aren't available otherwise. Sometimes they offer additional coupons or promo codes for live viewers, but you should avoid impulse buying. It's best to only shop for things you already planned to buy and see if the livestream offers a better deal.

5. Logistics and After-Sales Experience:

- **Q**: How important are delivery speed and after-sales service when you choose a product?
  A: If I don't need something urgently, I don't care about delivery speed. But for urgent needs, I choose Tmall Supermarket for next-day delivery or switch to JD for same-day delivery. I'm also particular about shipping speed; I don't like pre-sales that take too long. As for after-sales, since I'm an 88VIP member, I have access to exclusive customer service, so I rarely face issues.

6. Conclusion:

- **Q**: Can you share an example of a successful and efficient shopping experience on Taobao?
  A: I often shop at Tmall Supermarket for daily necessities because they offer next-day delivery. Once, I realized I was running out of toothpaste late at night. I quickly searched my previous order in Tmall Supermarket, added toothpaste and some other essentials like tissues, and completed the purchase in just a few minutes. The next day, I received my items. While I didn't spend time comparing prices or looking for extra discounts, the convenience and speed made it worthwhile.

3.2 Questionnaire

Indirect Scaling Table: Indirect Scaling is the key to understanding the participants' overall preferences by comparing multiple online shopping platforms. The absence of specific features (such as price or service) simplifies the subject's thought process, allowing it to focus directly on overall preferences rather than being distracted by specific details. This allows researchers to quickly capture respondents' overall preferences for each platform.

Questionnaire Design: This questionnaire consists of a total of 22 questions, divided into 5 sections: basic information, online shopping professional degree information, online shopping habits exploration, online shopping strategy exploration, and self-assessment.

- Basic information: This part mainly collects the personal information of the subjects, including gender and shopping frequency, through which the categories of participants can be basically divided.

- Online shopping professional degree information: The section identifies professional online shoppers by asking participants how much they spend and how often they shop.

- Online shopping habits exploration: This part explores the online shopping habits of the participants at a superficial level. This part, combined with the Indirect Scaling Table, can show whether participants have the habit of buying on fixed platforms.

- Online shopping strategy exploration: This section explores the participants' shopping strategies, how they actually buy information products, and how the buying habits of experienced online shoppers are similar.

- Self-assessment: Participants self-assessed the key to online shopping

4 Discussion

From Tab 5, it is not difficult to find that participants generally love Jingdong&Taobao. And for other online shopping platforms are not very concerned. This shows the dependence of these online shopping "experts" on the two traditional e-commerce platforms of Taobao and Jingdong. Emerging e-commerce platforms such as Douyin&Kuaishou have a relatively low penetration rate among these experts.

Table 1: Indirect Scaling Table

	Taobao	Jingdong	Pinduoduo	Xiaohongshu	Douyin/Kuaishou
Taobao	-	33.33%	66.67%	91.67%	83.33%
Jingdong	66.67%	-	75%	83.33%	83.33%
Pinduoduo	33.33%	25%	-	75%	66.67%
Xiaohongshu	8.33%	16.67%	25%	-	50%
Douyin/Kuaishou	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	50%	-

(a) Online shopping spending distribution   (b) Last online shopping distribution   (c) Online shopping frequency distribution

Figure 1: Participants online shopping professional display

As can be seen from Fig 1, most participants spend a lot of money on online shopping every year. They do a lot of shopping online, which fits our need for an "expert."

In Fig.2, though the "experts" showed in the questionnaire that only ordinary people are dependent on specific platforms, through the Indirect Scaling Table, we can find that participants are significantly more inclined to use Taobao and Jingdong. This is because the advantage of the Indirect Scaling Table is that it can reveal the potential preferences and real choices of the subjects through indirect comparison, instead of directly asking a specific question, the respondents may give ambiguous answers due to social expectation effects, vague expressions or not thinking deeply. At the same time, Indirect Scaling Table forces participants to make clear decisions based on actual experience or intuition, rather than to answer an abstract question vaguely, by allowing them to choose and compare among multiple online shopping platforms. In comparison, people tend to choose the platform they use or prefer. This gives a truer picture of the platform's usage and popularity.
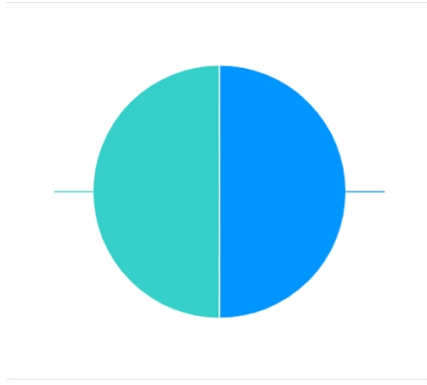
(a) Whether participants are dependent on a platform

(b) Whether the participant is a member of a platform

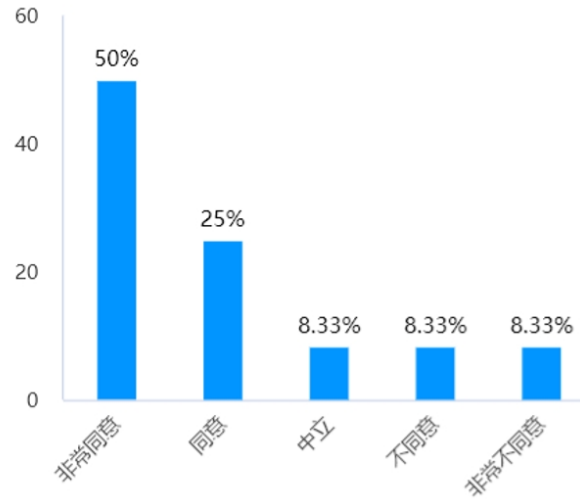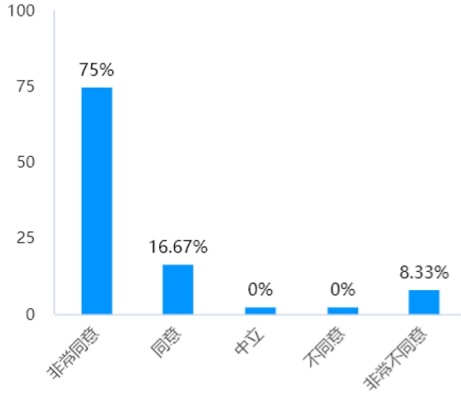Figure 2: Participants' dependence on online shopping platforms (green is yes, blue is no)

Figure 3: Distribution of whether participants will compare each platform before shopping

We can also see from Fig 3 that only half of people carefully compare products across platforms before making a purchase. This conclusion is the same as in Figure 2. Therefore, when analyzing participants' choice behavior, it is easy to produce different understandings and interpretations only through the more vague questions of the questionnaire. For a consumer, "dependence" may have different definitions. Some people may think that "dependence" means almost always using a certain platform, while others think that "dependence" is only occasionally choosing the same platform. At this point, a direct questionnaire may lead to a large divergence in respondents' responses (50% vs. 50%) because of their inconsistent understanding of "dependency." Therefore, by using the Indirect Scaling Table to avoid fuzziness, social expectation effect, and self-presentation bias in the questionnaire through actual comparison behavior, it can reveal the actual dependence of respondents on various platforms more truly and accurately.

As can be seen from Fig 4, online shopping experts are very sensitive to price (free shipping can also be understood as a kind of price), and at the same time, they are very concerned about the public's evaluation of the goods (it is not difficult to understand that many merchants are even willing to give customers red envelopes for good reviews). But the celebrity endorsements that merchants spend a lot of money on each year have little impact on online shopping experts.
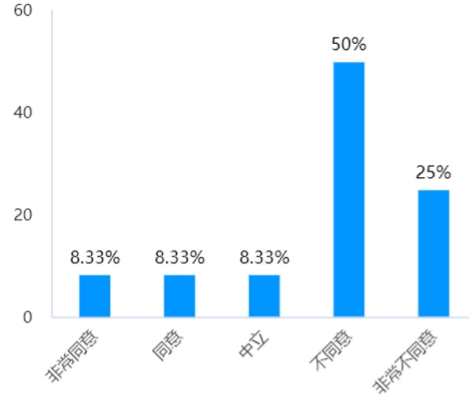
(a)   The effect of price on participants
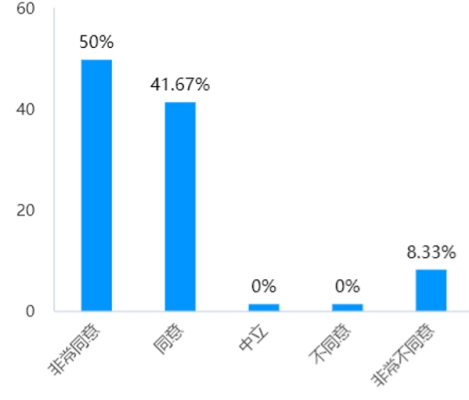
(b)   The impact of commodity evaluation on participants
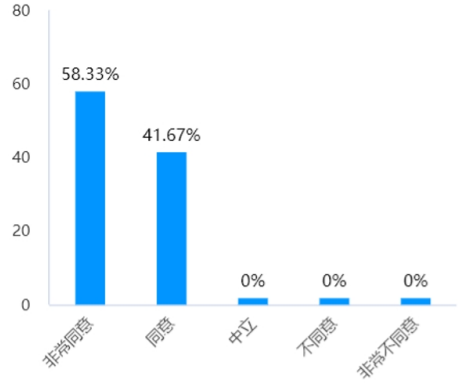
(c)   The impact of free shipping on participants

(d)   The influence of celebrity endorsement on participants

Figure 4: Online shopping expert online shopping strategy analysis

5   Conclusion

To be a successful online shopper, it's important to remain rational and avoid falling for misleading advertising or overly aggressive promotions. Merchants often use various strategies to make products appear more appealing, such as celebrity endorsements, exaggerated reviews, or limited-time discounts, but experienced shoppers know how to navigate these tactics. The key is to focus on practicality—purchasing products that are both affordable and of good quality, rather than being swayed by flashy marketing. An efficient shopper takes the time to compare prices across multiple platforms, checks user reviews for authenticity, and considers the overall value of a product rather than just its price tag. In addition, understanding the timing of major promotional events like Double 11 or 618 can help you maximize savings through the use of stacked coupons, bundled discounts, or flash sales. However, it's also essential to remain cautious about impulsive purchases during these events. Delivery speed and after-sales service should not be overlooked, especially for time-sensitive or high-value items. Opting for platforms or sellers with strong customer support and quick shipping can make a significant difference in your overall shopping experience. In summary, being a good online shopper is about balancing cost with functionality, carefully evaluating products before purchasing, and avoiding unnecessary expenditures driven by marketing tactics. By maintaining a rational mindset and using a strategic approach, you can consistently make smarter, more cost-effective buying decisions.

Appendix

Indirect Scaling Table

	Taobao	Jingdong	Pinduoduo	Xiaohongshu	Douyin/Kuaishou
Taobao	-	-	-	-	-
Jingdong	-	-	-	-	-
Pinduoduo	-	-	-	-	-
Xiaohongshu	-	-	-	-	-
Douyin/Kuaishou	-	-	-	-	-

Questionnaire Please refer to the following pages to check the details.

Questionnaire

问卷调查：消费者网购行为及策略研究

前言

感谢您参与本次问卷调查。我们希望通过您的反馈，了解消费者在网购时的习惯、策略以及偏好。您的答案将帮助我们改进购物体验。本次问卷大约耗时 10 分钟，所有信息将严格保密，仅用于学术研究。

第一部分：基础信息

您的年龄是？

☐ 18-25 岁

☐ 26-35 岁

☐ 36-45 岁

☐ 46-55 岁

☐ 55 岁以上

您的性别是？

☐ 男

☐ 女

☐ 其他

您已经有多少年网购经验？

☐ 0-2 年

☐ 3-5 年

☐ 6-10 年

☐ 10 年以上

第二部分：网购专业度信息

您每年在网购上大约花费多少钱？

☐ 少于 5000 元

☐ 5000-10000 元

☐ 10001-20000 元

☐ 20001-50000 元

☐ 50000 元以上

您上一次网购是什么时候？

☐ 今天

☐ 1-3 天前

☐ 4-7 天前

☐ 1-2 周前

☐ 1 个月以上

您平均每周网购多少次？

☐ 1 次

☐ 2-3 次

☐ 4-6 次

☐ 7 次以上

第三部分：网购习惯探寻

您是否是某个平台的会员（如淘宝 88VIP、京东 PLUS 等）？
☐ 是
☐ 否

您是否对某一特定平台有很强的依赖（比如总是使用淘宝或京东）？
☐ 是
☐ 否

您通常会通过平台的系统推荐商品进行购买吗？
☐ 经常
☐ 偶尔
☐ 从不

您是否会进行冲动购物（看到商品突然购买而未事先计划）？
☐ 经常
☐ 偶尔
☐ 从不

在网购时，您更倾向于依赖以下哪些信息？（多选）
☐ 用户评价
☐ 商品详情
☐ 好友推荐
☐ 系统推荐
☐ 促销活动
☐ 其他（请注明）

第四部分：网购策略探寻

请根据以下陈述，选择最符合您看法的选项：
价格对我的购物决策有非常重要的影响。
☐ 非常同意
☐ 同意
☐ 中立
☐ 不同意
☐ 非常不同意

我通常会在多个平台之间比较价格后再做决定。
☐ 非常同意
☐ 同意
☐ 中立
☐ 不同意
☐ 非常不同意

促销和打折活动往往会促使我提前购买商品。

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

我更喜欢选择那些评价数量多且评分高的商品。

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

我通常信任平台的推荐商品，并基于推荐进行购买。

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

如果我之前在某个店铺购买的商品体验不错，我会继续选择该店铺购物。

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

我倾向于在产品详情页中寻找尽可能多的信息，以确保产品适合我。

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

我通常会在购物前详细规划所需购买的商品清单。

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

物流速度对我的网购决策有重要影响。

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

是否包邮对我的网购意愿影响很大

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

自己喜欢明星/主播带货会让我更加倾向购买该产品

☐ 非常同意

☐ 同意

☐ 中立

☐ 不同意

☐ 非常不同意

第五部分：自我评估

请简短总结一下您的网购策略。您通常是如何决定要购买什么商品的？影响您做出购物决策的关键因素是什么？

_____

感谢您的参与！