Understanding Online Consumer Behaviour: A Bibliometric Systematic Review of Trust, Website Quality, Reviews and FOMO Buying

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Abstract – The rise of e-commerce has changed online consumer behaviour. Trust, website quality, online reviews and fear of missing out (FOMO) buying are repeatedly linked to purchase intention in both research and industry. This bibliometric systematic review covers 616 Scopus-indexed studies published between 2015 and 2026, retrieved with Publish or Perish and analysed with the Bibliometrix package and Biblioshiny in RStudio. It maps publication trends, leading authors, core sources and thematic clusters, and compares earlier review articles on the topic. Publications grew over time and peaked in 2022. Trust is a well-studied mediator between website quality and purchase intention, although its effects are conditional. Research on FOMO, urgency and scarcity in consumer psychology rarely cites research on persuasive design, dark patterns and nudges, even though both examine the same seller tactics. The paper sets out a research agenda covering AI personalisation, the combined effect of psychological and social influence, new forms of online retail, and actual versus declared purchasing, and discusses data and metadata limitations.

Key Words: online consumer behaviour, bibliometric review, consumer trust, website quality, online reviews, FOMO buying.

I. INTRODUCTION

After the internet became common, e-commerce changed shopping habits. People no longer have to go to a store every time they want something. They can buy items from home using a computer or phone. For many shoppers, this feels easier and more flexible than going to a physical shop. It also helps them avoid travel and does not tie them to store hours. They can browse many options without being stuck in one place (Cuong, 2023). Online shopping has changed how companies and shoppers connect. New tools in technology have played a big role. At the same time, the economy and social habits have shifted, so buying online matters more each year. Now it is common for people to order many types of items from websites and apps. Because of that, e-commerce fits into daily retail for many consumers. This move did not happen all at once. Faster tech progress keeps pushing it forward. It also changes the way firms find customers and build interest online.

According to (Singh et al., 2024), "the global e-commerce market is estimated to be $62,415 billion by 2030, rising at a cumulative growth of 11% from 2023 to 2030," with one of the reasons being technological innovations that have led to an increase in the use of AI. Businesses are adopting tools such as conversational bots to offer faster customer support and provide more personalised product and service recommendations. Modern online business environments require businesses to effectively engage with consumers so that their strategies meet consumer expectations and attract their target audience. E-commerce platforms such as eBay, Amazon, and Yahoo have therefore adopted recommendation technologies on their websites to understand consumer preferences through two-way communication, allowing customers to share their opinions and seek information that helps them make purchase decisions. These developments show the growing importance of product information in shaping consumers' purchase intentions and behaviour online (Rosário & Raimundo, 2021)

It would be useful, then, to understand how consumers think while making a purchase decision when shopping online. Factors like discounts, website quality, the ability of the e-retailer to gain a consumer's trust, and online reviews by other customers can help shape consumer behaviour. Understanding these factors can help businesses better understand consumer preferences and the way they make their final decision.

TABLE I. FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE PURCHASE DECISIONS

Factor	Respondents (%)
Brand trust	67%
User reviews	57%
Available discounts or promotions	43%
Reviews from influencers	39%
Lowest price	30%
Recommendations from friends	26%
Resale value	15%

Note: Data from Capterra's Elusive Online Consumer Survey (Awasthi, 2024). N = 500. Respondents could select up to three factors; percentages could exceed 100.

E-commerce businesses cannot act on all the above factors equally, given real-life limitations such as time constraints and budget. Operations Research provides mathematical and analytical tools to convert these factors, each of which contributes to hesitation in the minds of consumers, into confirmed purchases. This includes multi-criteria decision-making models to determine how discounts should be allocated among different products, or optimisation techniques to balance price fluctuations. These factors can be weighted and optimised in this way, which makes Operations Research an important tool for understanding and benefiting from the factors that influence online consumer behaviour. This paper

focuses on four key factors examined throughout the review: consumer trust, website quality, online consumer reviews, and FOMO buying.

A. Consumer Trust

During a first purchase, consumers may not have enough prior experience or information to judge the credibility of an online seller. Instead, they may rely on the peripheral route, where factors such as consumer trust help reduce perceived risk and encourage a purchase decision (Le & Hoang, 2020). Consumers with high levels of trust in retail brands offline tend to perceive those brands' websites more favorably and are more likely to purchase from them compared with other consumers. A trusted and widely recognised retail brand can take the lead over a relatively small or new company in adopting a new business format. As mentioned above, evaluating the quality of experience goods is difficult before purchasing and using them; however, once consumers experience the quality of these goods, repurchasing from the same brand becomes easier, since they already know what to expect (Sung et al., 2023). Consumer trust is an important factor in online shopping for this reason, as it helps reduce uncertainty and risk while increasing consumers' confidence in making a purchase or repurchase from a brand.

B. FOMO Buying

In online shopping, consumers may feel they are missing a good opportunity when they see limited-time offers, exclusive deals, low-stock messages, or products that are becoming popular among others. This feeling can create a sense of urgency and encourage consumers to make purchase decisions more quickly. Online platforms can further strengthen this feeling through personalised recommendations, interactive features, and timely communication. For example, chatbots or other digital tools may present limited time offers, exclusive deals, or unique suggestions that emphasise scarcity and urgency, which can trigger FOMO and motivate consumers to act quickly. At the same time, personalised recommendations and interactive conversations can increase curiosity and encourage consumers to explore additional products or services, potentially leading to impulse buying (Ferdowsi & Moradi, 2026). FOMO can play an important role in online purchasing behaviour as a result, since the fear of missing out may reduce the time consumers spend considering their choices and encourage immediate or unplanned purchases.

C. Website Quality

The growing number of online retailers, virtual products, and digital marketing services has increased the need for businesses to provide complete and clear information through their websites. Website quality can be understood as a measure of how effectively a website supports interaction between users and service providers in terms of its usability, functionality, and overall benefits (Widagdo & Roz, 2021). Several instruments exist to measure website quality; (Giao, 2020) identifies the following dimensions:

Website design refers to the consumers' interaction including navigation, in-depth information and order processing; customer service is the response, helpful and willing service that answers the consumers' questions in a timely manner; fulfilment/reliability is the capability of providing accurate product information and delivering the right product within the time frame promised; and security/privacy is the security of card payment and privacy of the consumer's information (Giao, 2020).D.

D. Online Consumer Reviews

Online reviews need to be useful and available in sufficient numbers to help potential customers make informed purchase decisions. Helpful reviews can guide consumers during the decision-making process by providing information based on the experiences of other users. Satisfied customers often share their experiences and recommendations, which can help other consumers feel more confident about using an online service or purchasing from a website, and can create a positive perception of the product or service among prospective customers. This is why online user reviews can be considered a form of electronic word-of-mouth, or eWOM (Salameh, 2022). Reviews provide useful information about the quality of products and services as well as the experiences of previous customers. Positive reviews can help businesses attract potential customers and build trust, while negative reviews offer valuable feedback that allows companies to identify areas for improvement. Overall, customer reviews benefit both businesses and consumers by helping companies improve their offerings and enabling consumers to make better-informed purchase decisions (Ali et al., 2024).

These four factors (consumer trust, website quality, online consumer reviews, and FOMO buying) were selected over other possible variables, such as personalisation, impulse buying, or price sensitivity, because they consistently appear as leading influences on purchase decisions, both in the industry data summarised in Table I and in academic literature on online consumer behaviour. Factors such as delivery speed or payment security were left out, as they mainly affect post-purchase satisfaction rather than the decision-making stage itself. These four factors are also frequently studied together in existing research, which allows for a more integrated review rather than treating each variable in isolation.

E. Structure of the Paper

Section II reviews the existing literature. It defines the technical terms used, compares earlier review articles on online consumer behaviour, identifies the research gaps and states the objectives of the study. Section III covers the research methodology, including the screening flow chart used to build the bibliometric dataset. The four keywords taken up in this study are consumer trust, website quality, FOMO buying and online consumer reviews; Table I shows similar categories of factors, which is why these keywords were chosen. The section also explains the additional keywords that were considered (personalisation, impulse buying and eWOM) but excluded from the scope of the study, and describes the software used. Section IV presents the results of the bibliometric analysis, which shows how research on these four factors in e-commerce developed between 2015 and 2026. Research activity increased steadily through the late 2010s and peaked around 2022, which suggests that the topic has moved past its early developmental stage into a more mature phase; recent publication figures may appear lower simply because newer studies have not yet been fully indexed. Section V discusses the findings against the objectives, sets out the implications and proposes a future research agenda. Section VI concludes the paper and states its limitations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Scope of the Review

Consumer behaviour on the internet involves the process of consumers searching for, evaluating and purchasing products/services on the web as well as the mental processes

involved in such behaviour. Consumer behaviour on the internet is not a new field and there has been a significant amount of research undertaken in this area. As a result, several researchers have made an attempt to provide an overview of this domain. (Rosário & Raimundo, 2021) cover a decade of marketing strategy research in e-commerce. (Abu-Alsondos et al., 2023) work through a hundred peer-reviewed studies to pin down what shapes a customer's attitude to shopping online.

The thing that makes online buying different is simple enough. You cannot pick the product up, and you cannot look the seller in the eye. Everything the shopper must go on comes from the website, from other customers, or from the design of the page in front of them. That is why trust and perceived risk ended up as the field's central ideas, and why (Soleimani, 2022) argues that trust and mistrust deserve to be treated as two separate things rather than as two ends of one scale.

This section is organised by theme rather than paper by paper. Part B defines the terms that need defining. Part C sets the existing review articles side by side in a table and synthesises what they cover. Part D states the research gaps and Part E gives the objectives.

B. Key Terms and Definitions

Only terms that a reader is unlikely to already know are defined here. Purchase intention, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty are used as they stand.

TABLE II. KEY TERMS USED IN THE FIELD OF ONLINE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Term	What it means and why it matters here	Source
Electronic word of mouth (eWOM)	Comments about a product or a seller, written by customers and posted somewhere a lot of people can read them. The term also covers how other shoppers judge those comments and decide whether to act on them. Reviews do the job that picking up the product would do in a shop, which is why so much of the field studies them.	(Erkan & Elwalda, 2018)
Perceived risk	What the shopper thinks they stand to lose. It is usually broken into financial, product, privacy, security and delivery risk. Lumping these together hides which fear is actually stopping the purchase.	(Pappas, 2016); (Tran, 2020)
Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R)	Something in the environment sets off an internal reaction, and that reaction produces the behaviour. It has become the standard framework for impulse buying and live streaming research because it leaves room for reactions that were never thought through.	(Ming et al., 2021); (Xu, 2020)
Fear of missing out (FOMO)	The worry that other people are getting something you are not. In shopping it shows up as buying in a hurry, usually after a countdown timer, a low-stock warning, or a live stream telling you the item is nearly gone.	(Abero et al., 2026); (Erlinda & Fatmawati, 2025)
Persuasive technology and digital nudging	Systems built to change behaviour by persuading rather than forcing, and design choices that push a decision one way while technically leaving it open. A great deal of the pressure on shoppers now comes from the interface rather than from advertising.	(Esposito et al., 2017); (Allyssa & Oktavia, 2026)
Dark patterns	Manipulative or coercive designs which entice or force users into behaviour that is beneficial to the business (e.g. a cancel button hidden 3 menus deep). This is manipulative at the dark end of persuasive design.	(Gunawan et al., 2022); (Flayelle et al., 2023)
Behavioural targeting	Using a record of what someone has browsed and bought to pick what adverts they see next.	(Baumann et al., 2019)
Showrooming and webrooming	Looking at something in a shop and buying it online, or researching it online and buying it in the shop.	(Halibas et al., 2023);(Timoumi et al., 2022)
Structural equation modelling (SEM)	A method that allows multiple relationships between non-obvious (non-measured) variables to be tested simultaneously (for example trust). Smaller sample size compatible with PLS-SEM.	(Rita, 2019); (Qalati et al., 2021)
Mediation and moderation	A mediator carries the effect from one variable to another and explains how it happens. A moderator changes how strong the effect is, and explains who it works on.	(Oghazi et al., 2018); (Hsu et al., 2015)

C. Previous Review Articles

The field is old enough that a second layer of literature has grown on top of it. Looking at those reviews as a group is a quicker way of seeing what has been settled than reading through the primary studies again.

TABLE III. REVIEW OF PAST REVIEW ARTICLES

Author and Year	Scope of Review	Type of Study	Contribution and Limitation
(Rosário & Raimundo, 2021)	Consumer marketing strategy and e-commerce over the preceding decade	Literature review with bibliometric elements	Wide-angle map of a decade of marketing-strategy work. Being that broad, it does not go deep on any single consumer construct.
(Timoumi et al., 2022)	Cross-channel effects of omnichannel marketing on purchase journeys and firm outcomes; 50 empirical papers over twenty years	Structured review of data-driven research	Sorts twenty years of findings by the kind of data each study used, which exposes how much method shapes conclusion. Confined to omnichannel retail.
(Soleimani, 2022)	Buyers' trust and mistrust in e-commerce platforms, treated as unrelated constructs	Synthesising systematic literature review	Separates trust from mistrust, a distinction most primary studies collapse. Synthesis only, so no new evidence.
(Kanwal, 2022)	Gender differences and similarities in online shopping behaviour	Systematic review	Consolidates gender findings across adoption, payment, trust and service quality. Reports the differences without settling why they arise.
(Abu-Alsondos et al., 2023)	Factors shaping customer attitudes towards online shopping, from 100 peer-reviewed studies	Qualitative systematic literature review	Broad base of 100 studies on how attitudes form. Qualitative synthesis, so no pooled effect sizes.
(Bulsara & Vaghela, 2023)	The effect of trust on online purchase intention across prior studies	Systematic review with meta-analysis	The only study here that pools results statistically, which makes the trust finding unusually solid. Depends on the included studies measuring trust comparably.
(Chopra et al., 2024)	Shopping cart abandonment: publication trends, outlets and methods	Systematic literature review	Maps trends, outlets and methods for cart abandonment. Notes that the studies it reviews draw on a narrow set of theories.
(Patharia & Jain, 2024)	Antecedents of cart abandonment across the stages of the purchase process, 2000 to 2022	Systematic review following PRISMA	Organises abandonment antecedents by stage of the purchase process, which few reviews attempt. Covers one behaviour only.
(Halibas et al., 2023)	Trends in showrooming, webrooming and omnichannel shopping behaviour	Bibliometric analysis	Bibliometric mapping with future directions, and a usable template for method. Covers channel-switching rather than persuasion or trust.
(Erlinda & Fatmawati, 2025)	Publication trends on fear of missing out in consumer behaviour	Bibliometric analysis	Establishes FOMO as a research theme in its own right. Works at publication level, so says little about mechanism.
(Waqas et al., 2025)	Benefits and challenges of online shopping during COVID-19; 30 studies from 2020 to 2022	Systematic review	Captures how behaviour shifted during the pandemic across 30 studies. Tied to an unusual period, so how far it generalises is unclear.

Author and Year	Scope of Review	Type of Study	Contribution and Limitation
(Behl et al., 2020)	Gamification techniques used in e-commerce	Comprehensive literature review	Collects the gamification techniques used in e-commerce. Largely descriptive rather than evaluative.
(Urdea et al., 2021)	Experiential marketing in e-commerce; 58 empirical articles across two decades	Literature review	58 empirical articles on experiential marketing. Shows the central construct is defined inconsistently from study to study.
(Saprikis et al., 2018)	What influences consumers' intention to purchase through mobile devices	Exploratory study and review	Pairs a review with exploratory data on mobile purchase intention. Predates most social commerce and live streaming work.
(Sudiana et al., 2021)	Key success factors for user experience on e-commerce websites	Systematic literature review	Distils the success factors for user experience on e-commerce sites. Design-focused, with little on psychology.
(Flayelle et al., 2023)	Technology design features that encourage potentially addictive online behaviour	Taxonomic review	Taxonomy of design features tied to addictive use, which maps closely onto dark patterns. Comes from behavioural-addiction research, not particularly consumer behaviour.
(Gunawan et al., 2022)	Harms caused by dark patterns and the basis for redress under consent law	Literature review with case law analysis	Connects dark-pattern harms to consent law and the possibility of redress. Legal and EU-specific, so not behavioural evidence.
(Chawla & Kumar, 2022)	The Indian legal framework protecting online consumers	Doctrinal and conceptual review	Sets out the Indian provisions protecting online consumers. Doctrinal, with no empirical component.
(Hole et al., 2019)	Opportunities and challenges of omnichannel retailing in India	Review paper	Opportunities and challenges of omnichannel retail in India. Short review with limited method detail.

1) Synthesis of Previous Reviews

There are three main things - the reviews are based off almost entirely on the older, settled topics: trust and mistrust (Soleimani, 2022), attitudes to online shopping (Abu-Alsondos et al., 2023), trust and purchase intention (Bulsara & Vaghela, 2023), website experience (Sudiana et al., 2021), and cart abandonment twice over ((Chopra et al., 2024); (Patharia & Jain, 2024)). The newer work on FOMO and persuasive design has two reviews between it, (Erlinda & Fatmawati, 2025) and (Flayelle et al., 2023), and neither of those sits inside consumer behaviour proper. One comes from bibliometrics and the other from research on behavioural addiction.

Method is the second thing. Most of these are narrative or systematic reviews. Only (Halibas et al., 2023) and (Erlinda & Fatmawati, 2025) use bibliometric techniques, and only (Bulsara & Vaghela, 2023) pool results statistically. Both cart abandonment reviews make the same complaint about the studies they cover, which is that the theory base is narrow, mostly stimulus-organism-response, cognitive dissonance and reasoned action.

The third is that the reviews stay in their own lanes. Consumer psychology ((Kanwal, 2022); (Abu-Alsondos et al., 2023)), interface design ((Sudiana et al., 2021); (Flayelle et al., 2023)) and regulation ((Gunawan et al., 2022); (Chawla & Kumar, 2022)) are each reviewed separately and rarely cite across the boundary. (Timoumi et al., 2022) notice something similar in omnichannel research, where what is known turns out to depend heavily on the kind of data each group of researchers happens to work with.

D. Research Gaps

Reading the primary studies and the reviews together, four things are still unsettled/not satisfactory enough.

Trust is well established, but nobody knows when it behaves differently. That trust carries the effect has been confirmed many times, including statistically across studies. The problem is that the handful of papers built to test conditions keep finding results that qualify or reverse the usual pattern ((Chen, 2015); (Qalati et al., 2021)), and there are not many such papers.

The same tactics get studied under different names. Consumer researchers write about scarcity, urgency and

FOMO. Design and privacy researchers write about nudges, dark patterns and persuasive systems. Often, they are describing the same thing a shop does to you. The two groups do not cite each other, and no existing review covers both.

Almost nobody connects these tactics to the rules around them. (Gunawan et al., 2022) and (Chawla & Kumar, 2022) are close to the only work on harm and legal protection, and neither is joined up with the research on how these tactics change what people buy.

Impulsive behaviour is measured by asking people to think it over. The fastest-growing topic in the field is about buying that happens with very little thought, and the evidence comes almost entirely from surveys filled in afterwards. (Hubert et al., 2018) and (Liang et al., 2021) show that measuring the body rather than the answer gives a different picture.

The gap this study addresses follows from those four points. There is a solid, largely agreed body of knowledge about trust, perceived risk, service quality and reviews. What is missing is any joined-up account of how platforms push shoppers now, through targeted advertising, algorithmic recommendation and persuasive design. That work exists scarcely, but it is recent, concentrated in a small number of countries, split across research communities using different names for the same things, and no review has pulled it together.

E. Research Objectives

The objectives below follow from the gap above and are set at the level of theory and concepts.

1) To examine the theoretical frameworks used to explain online consumer behaviour, and to assess how well they account for purchasing that is impulsive rather than deliberate.

2) To identify the main determinants of online purchase intention reported in the literature, and to clarify the roles trust and perceived risk play as mediators and moderators between them.

3) To compare how the consumer psychology literature and the persuasive design literature explain the same commercial tactics, and to establish where their concepts overlap.

4) To consolidate what the existing review articles have established about online consumer behaviour, and to identify the themes they have not yet covered.

5) To set out a research agenda for online consumer behaviour based on the gaps identified above.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection and Selection Criteria

The current study adopted an incremental and structured approach in choosing literature, aiming at an evidence-based identification and screening process that would reduce the possibility of bias by the researcher. In adopting this approach, the study has adhered to the common protocol in a bibliometric study to ensure the creation of a strong and highly relevant database. The selection of articles for the final analysis was carried out in a step-by-step approach based on one inclusion criteria that limits the time frame for retrieving the literature to 2015-2026 only.

1) Search and Identification

During the first phase, a comprehensive literature search using suitable keywords was carried out to identify the key concepts associated with consumer behaviour and digital marketing. The aim of the literature search was to identify the key influences on digital consumption in contemporary times without making the literature too broad. On the basis of the initial search queries, the distribution of articles received is as follows under stage 1 of Fig. 1.

2) Data Cleaning and De-duplication

Following the process of collecting the data, all four sets of search strings were put together in a single common database for further data cleaning. At this point, any overlapping literature across the four areas of search was identified and removed, resulting in a clean database for the final analysis.

- **Number of duplicates detected and removed:** 65
- **Number of unique articles retained:** N = 616

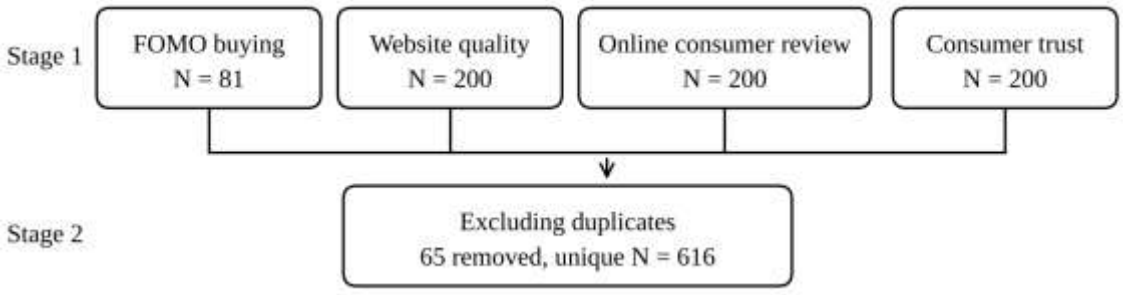


Fig. 1. Flow chart of the screening process. Stage 1 refers to the independent identification of four constructs (N = 681 in total). In Stage 2, 65 duplicate records are removed, leaving N = 616.

3) Exclusion Criteria and Keyword Justification

In order to maintain conceptual clarity and focused attention within the study, some keywords that were related to the topic but could not be considered directly related were excluded from the screen. Similarly to systematic reviews, where peripheral mechanisms are excluded to avoid complications with inclusion criteria, the following keywords were excluded:

Impulse Buying- The reason for exclusion: This mechanism bears a similar conceptual meaning to the FOMO buying since both of these phenomena refer to rush-induced purchases. The inclusion of the keyword "impulse buying" in the research will bring the same set of academic sources. Its exclusion allowed avoiding redundancies and focusing on the concept of FOMO.

Personalisation- The reason for exclusion: This is a completely different phenomenon. First of all, this is primarily a firm-side mechanism which deals with manipulation and control of consumer behaviour through technological interface. Secondly, the current review is based only on consumer side mechanisms. It does not make sense to include systemic platform mechanisms together with consumer

behavioural concepts as it would confuse the criteria for the review itself.

Word-of-mouth (WOM) / eWOM- The reason for exclusion: Nowadays, the concept of WOM and eWOM is mostly encompassed by the concept of "online consumer review". Moreover, in most research articles devoted to the problem, eWOM is almost the same concept as online consumer review. The additional search would have been redundant to the results of initial screen.

B. Software and Analytical Tools

The bibliometric review involved systematic investigation and comprehension of the literature related to the existing constructs through the application of bibliometric techniques. The selected articles were screened and organised using the help of Mendeley, and subsequently, the final articles' metadata was exported in the BibTeX format.

The software Publish or Perish was utilised for the purpose of collecting and analysing citation metrics, including the h-index, g-index, and citations per year for the chosen articles and authors. The BibTeX data set was further analysed with the help of Bibliometrix package in RStudio to generate the bibliometric data set with the performance analysis carried out with the aid of Biblioshiny package.

IV. RESULTS

A. Annual Scientific Production

The bibliometric database includes 616 articles extracted from Biblioshiny, covering the time span 2015-2026. Out of these articles, 479 articles (77.8%) are journal articles while 136 articles (22.1%) belong to conference proceeding or some other article type. Total number of 2046 authors in 616 articles makes the average author per article 3.32 with only 43 articles (6.98%) having single author. This ratio of co-authors is considerably higher than that obtained in similar review papers on related digital-commerce literature. This high rate of co-authorship indicates that impulse buying and FOMO research in e-commerce field is being done through more collaboration among researchers.

In contrast with the exponential path described in similar studies, yearly publication numbers for this data set do not follow a neat exponential trend ($R^2 = 0.007$). The number of publications went from 31 in 2015 up to a maximum of 78 in 2022 and then down to 67 (2023), 41 (2024), and 39 (2025); 2026 is 30 publications but reflects incomplete indexing through August 2026 instead of a real decrease in number of publications. The trend of growth until 2022 followed by stabilization or decline indicates that the research field might have reached or even surpassed its maximal velocity of publication and represents a matured rather than an emergent research area. Such an assessment must be taken into consideration with the understanding that 2024–2026 numbers are likely underestimated because of the delay in indexing

Year-wise distribution:

2015 (31) · 2016 (31) · 2017 (47) · 2018 (59) · 2019 (60) · 2020 (57) · 2021 (76) · 2022 (78) · 2023 (67) · 2024 (41) · 2025 (39) · 2026 (30, partial)

B. Most Relevant Sources and Bradford's Law

The evolution of the number of documents over time for the sources (Fig. 2) shows that the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services has a near-linear growth trend from 2015 and thereafter experiences an abrupt rise from 2019 to 2023, before levelling off. This leveling-off is probably an artifact of indexing delays during 2024 to 2026 rather than a real decline. The journal Sustainability (Switzerland) starts growing relatively later from about 2020 and shows a higher rate of increase, consistent with the fact that sustainable e-commerce and consumption has become a new theme in addition to the older literature on impulse buying. The other four top sources, namely Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, Frontiers in Psychology, and Journal of Internet Commerce have growth trends that track each other without any divergence.

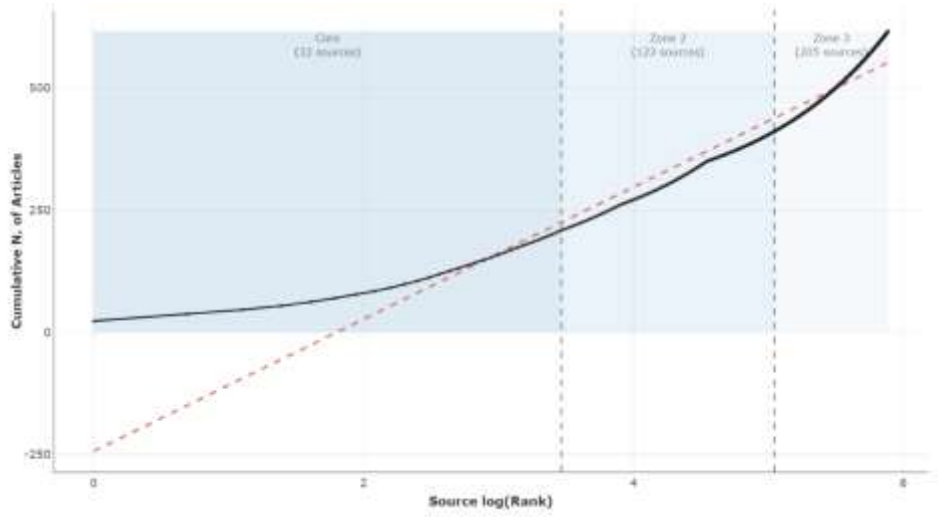


Fig. 2. Core sources by Bradford's Law: cumulative articles against log(source rank), showing the 32-journal core zone.

This trend is also reflected in the graph depicting the Annual Scientific Production, which shows an increase of the number of publications from 31 in 2015 to about 59–60 in 2018–2019, a small fall in 2020, followed by a sharp increase to 78 publications in about 2022. The decline of the curve from its peak starts from 2023 and continues until 2023–2026, when the number of publications becomes even lower than the one of 2017. Instead of signifying a real collapse in the interest in

the topic, the sharp decline is better seen because of the lack of coverage of the last years due to delays in the indexing of recent publications. In this interpretation, the curve represents a topic that experienced fast development throughout the 2010s, matured and reached its peak in 2022, and after that just stayed on the same level without declining.

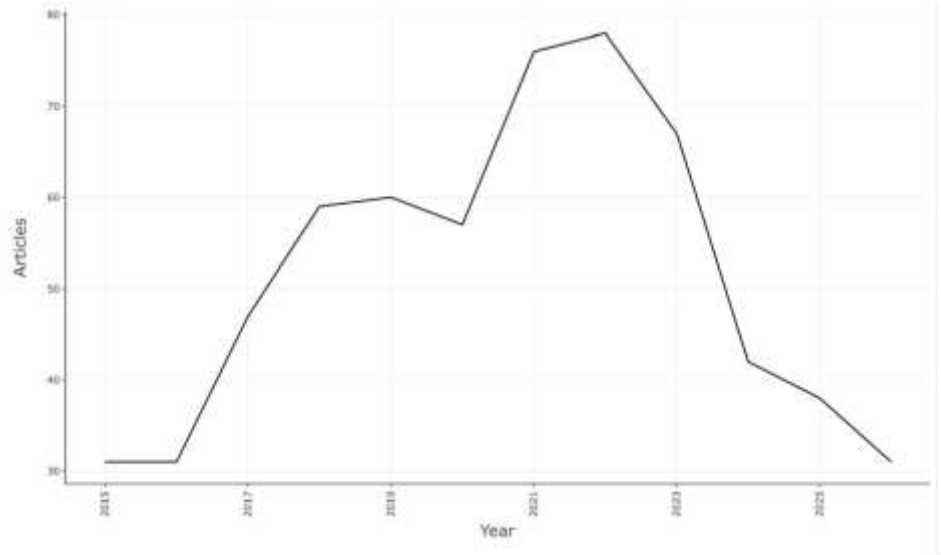


Fig. 3. Annual Scientific Production, 2015–2026.

C. Most Productive Authors and Lotka's Law

Among individual authors, Wang, X tops in productivity with eight publications, with Akram, U and Zhang, X next in line with seven publications. Another group of five authors includes Chen, Y; Halim, E; and Wang, J, each having produced five publications, with another group of four authors consisting of Khoa, B.T.; Wang, H; Wang, Y; and Xu, B, each with four publications. Significantly, among the eleven most prolific authors, four have the same family name of 'Wang,' a common trend seen in bibliometric data sets having significant presence of Chinese affiliation authors. Although Biblioshiny's author disambiguation using surnames and initials considers WANG X, WANG J, WANG H, and WANG Y as different authors, verification against complete author records is advisable.

The analysis of the Authors' Productivity over time demonstrates that Wang X, Akram U, and Zhang X continue to be productive authors through 2025–2026, thus staying relevant for the latest field developments. On the contrary, Chen Y seems to be productive only at the very beginning period and not being mentioned further as the author, which implies possible withdrawal from the topic or disambiguation problem, since another person with the same name can become the author of publications on this topic starting from 2019. Khoa BT demonstrates the alternation of absence and productivity, especially notable is his/her productivity spike in 2024-2025.

As a test of authors' productivity following Lotka's Law, the empirical distribution of the dataset sharply decreases: around 80% out of 1,790 unique author-keys produce one document, less than 10% produce two documents, and the number of documents produced by any other authors approaches zero. The empirical distribution is rather close to theoretical Lotka curve, which means no problems with data quality in such a mature dataset.

D. Thematic Mapping

The thematic map shown in Fig. 4, generated using the keyword co-occurrence dataset and divided into four quadrants based on their relevance and development along x-axis and y-axis, respectively, is one wherein the motor, niche, basic, and emerging themes are well differentiated.

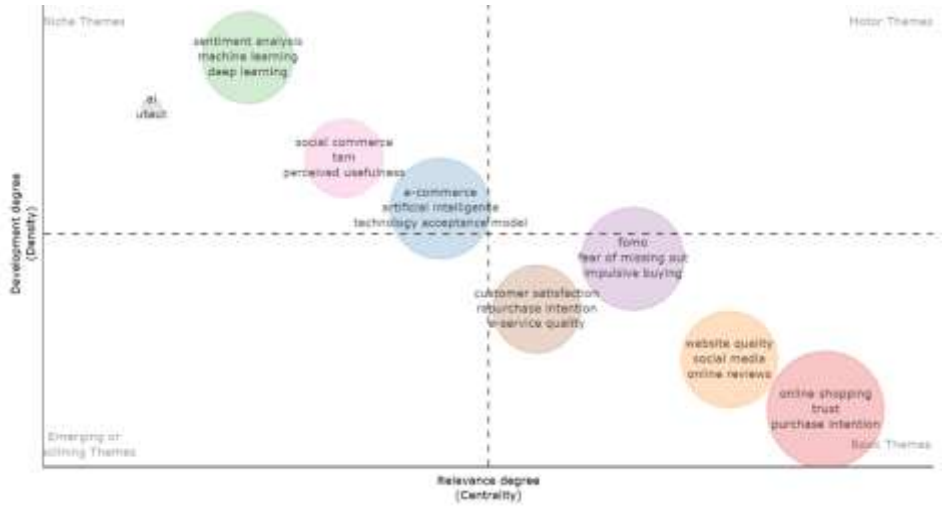


Fig. 4. Thematic map of keyword clusters by centrality (relevance) and density (development).

The motor themes (high centrality and high density) are located in the upper right quadrant on the thematic map and cover such themes as e-commerce, artificial intelligence, and technology acceptance model. These three themes converge at the crossroads of the thematic map and are closely related to such themes as fomo and impulsive buying. Motor themes are the most mature, developed, and interconnected themes in the literature – these are the themes that are the most central in the field at the moment and that a new researcher should study first.

The niche themes (high density and low centrality) include sentiment analysis, machine learning, and deep learning. This cluster is quite developed but relatively self-contained; it is methodologically sophisticated but not well-integrated with other substantive themes of the field. AI and UTAUT (unified theory of acceptance and use of technology) are located deeper in the niche quadrant, signaling a smaller and more isolated cluster of research in the field. It seems that there is some AI research in technology-acceptance-model context, although not yet integrated into impulse-buying literature.

Theme clusters with high centrality but low density, such as those involving online shopping trust/purchase intention and website quality/social media/online reviews, are large, highly central clusters that connect many themes, while lacking strong internal cohesion. Such a structure matches the classic structure of foundational (transversal), widely used constructs that are controlled or cited by nearly all studies in the field without being a research program in itself.

Themes that can be considered either emerging or declining and which have low centrality and low density – this quadrant does not have any clusters, as it is empty in our map. This is a good sign, as there are no declining themes in our dataset, nor do we find any themes that are too immature to even show up on the map.

Finally, it is noteworthy that there is one cluster that is located slightly above the centrality midline, social commerce/tam/perceived usefulness. The position of this cluster suggests that it is growing in centrality in the field.

E. Summary of Main Findings

TABLE IV. SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS

Metric	Value
Total publications	616
Document types	479 articles (77.8%); 136 conference/other (22.1%); 1 book
Year range	2015–2026 (2026 partial)
Peak publication year	2022 (78 publications)
Total author instances	2,046
Unique author-keys	1,790
Authors per publication	3.32
Single-authored publications	43 (6.98%)
Leading source	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (23 docs)
Bradford core sources	32 journals
Most productive author	Wang, X (8 docs)

V. DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine online consumer behaviour by reviewing the existing literature on trust, website quality, online reviews and FOMO buying, and the ways in which these factors shape purchase intention in digital marketplaces. Having brought together findings from a wide range of studies, it is now possible to reflect on what this body of research collectively shows, where it remains divided or incomplete, and what value it offers to those who study, regulate, manage, or simply participate in online shopping.

A. Achievement of Objectives

This study was guided by five theoretical objectives, developed from the gaps identified in the literature review. Having completed the review, it is possible to assess the extent to which each objective was achieved.

The first objective, to examine theoretical frameworks explaining online consumer behaviour and their ability to account for impulsive purchasing, was substantially achieved. Section II-C showed that the existing reviews rest on a narrow theory base, mostly stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R), cognitive dissonance and reasoned action. The review found that most frameworks assume a deliberating consumer, while dual-process approaches remain less prominent. This highlights a gap between established theory and the growing focus on impulsive buying.

The second objective, concerning determinants of purchase intention and the mediating and moderating roles of trust and perceived risk, was comprehensively addressed through Secs. II-C and II-D, which compare 19 review articles (Table III) and set out the unresolved questions. The findings showed that trust consistently mediates the relationship between platform quality and purchase intention, while also identifying differences, such as (Qalati et al., 2021), who found that the trust–intention relationship strengthens under high perceived risk.

The third objective, comparing consumer psychology and persuasive design explanations of commercial tactics, was achieved through Sec. II-D on research gaps. The review found that scarcity, urgency and FOMO often overlap with concepts such as nudges, dark patterns and persuasive systems design, despite these literatures rarely being integrated.

The fourth objective, consolidating existing reviews and identifying underexplored themes, was fulfilled through Sec. II-C. Existing reviews largely focus on established topics such as trust and cart abandonment, while newer areas such as FOMO and persuasive design remain comparatively underexplored.

The fifth objective, developing a future research agenda, was partially achieved. The review suggests that future research should move beyond purchase intentions and examine how consumers actually behave within complex digital ecosystems shaped by algorithms, technology, psychology and social conditions.

Beyond these objectives, the study developed an integrated four-factor framework comprising consumer trust, website quality, online reviews and FOMO buying. It also conducted bibliometric mapping, including performance analysis, Bradford's Law, author productivity and thematic mapping. These analyses independently supported the review's conclusions and strengthened the overall credibility of the study.

B. Implications

The clearest contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that the consumer psychology and persuasive design literatures, though examining the same seller tactics, have developed as parallel bodies of research that rarely cite one another. This provides a concrete direction for future academic work: research that deliberately draws on both the FOMO and nudging literatures could help unify vocabulary and theory in a manner neither field has achieved independently. The review also identifies a methodological limitation worth addressing, namely that impulsive behaviour, despite being the fastest-growing topic in the field, continues to be measured predominantly through retrospective self-report rather than behavioural or physiological data , representing a direct opportunity for methodologically innovative research. For e-commerce businesses, the study offers an evidence base for allocating limited resources effectively. Website quality has an indirect effect on online buying behaviour through usefulness or satisfaction and so is not an area that can be addressed in isolation. Instead investment in website design should be paired with trust building. The finding that the credibility of reviews seems to be more important than the quantity of reviews suggests that managers looking to tap into social proof should focus on providing detailed and verified reviews rather than an increasing number of reviews. The integration of persuasion techniques, scarcity messages, FOMO and the like into a digital world also provides an advantage to the consumer as it represents digital fluency. By recognising that low stock messages, urgency and personalisation all aim to decrease decision processing time consumers can begin to identify when they are being pushed towards impulse buying rather than thoughtfully made purchases.

C. Future Research Agenda

Online consumer behaviour keeps shifting. It changes as digital platforms, tech tools, and buyer expectations change too. Because of that, future work should not only test one or two factors tied to purchase intention. It should also look at what people actually do in digital settings that are getting harder to navigate.

Exploring new types of e-retail is essential. Virtual worlds, augmented reality, mobile apps, livestreaming, social commerce all combine elements of fun, social interaction and deeper levels of technology integration with retailing. Within these different contexts common theories from e-retailing can be assessed for their relevance. Additionally, the influence of factors such as immersion, social presence and interactivity on consumer behaviour can be assessed.

There is also a need to investigate consumer behaviour in relation to the combination of social influence and consumer psychology. Factors such as social presence, electronic word of mouth, influencers, customer reviews, FOMO may interact rather than operate independently. Further research may benefit from exploring the impact of AI driven recommendations coupled to the influence of FOMO, influencers, or social influence on impulsive buying behaviour. This would provide an insight into the combined influence of psychological and social factors in online retailing.

The use of AI in e-retailing is rapidly developing. Virtual assistants, chatbots and recommendation systems are all increasingly utilised to shape consumer choices and information received. Future research should aim to explore the impact of transparency, accuracy, self-explanatory ability of the AI, and the explicitness of AI usage on consumer trust. Furthermore, the relationship between transparency and risk perception should be investigated. Comparing AI driven recommendations to those from human experts may reveal patterns which are not readily apparent when only looking at a single source of recommendations. Additionally, there is a need to further investigate the impact of trust, privacy and personalisation on consumers. Consumer personalisation and data can provide benefits such as increased perceived convenience and improved personalisation of recommendations however may also give rise to concerns around privacy, safety and misuse of data. Research could investigate the trade-off between comfort and privacy concerns. Additionally, research could explore the impact of transparency around data usage and data collected and its influence on consumer trust. Furthermore, there is a need to investigate the level of control that is expected over personal

data. Finally, there is a need to explore the impact of age and culture. Online consumers are diverse and factors such as age, culture, technological comfort and technological experience may impact on a consumer's response to AI driven recommendations, FOMO, influencers, social commerce and other elements. Conducting side by side research across age and culture groups (particularly young and older adults) could explore whether previously observed results remain consistent across these groups. At last, there is a need to move beyond declared intention to purchase and explore actual behaviour. Data such as actual purchases, add to cart behaviour, time spent on site, browsing and click data, repeat purchase and abandonment data can all be utilised. Furthermore, longitudinal data on FOMO driven purchase, AI acceptance, privacy concerns, trust and other elements can be used to explore changes over time. Overall, there is a need to consider the online consumer as more than a declared purchaser. The consumer is influenced by technology and platforms, psychology and emotion, social influence

VI. CONCLUSION

This review of 616 Scopus-indexed studies shows that research on online consumer behaviour grew steadily after 2015 and peaked in 2022. Trust remains the best-established mediator between website quality and purchase intention, but its effect depends on conditions such as perceived risk. The consumer psychology literature on FOMO, urgency and scarcity and the persuasive design literature on nudges and dark patterns describe the same seller tactics yet rarely cite each other, and joining them is the clearest opening for future work. Researchers should also measure actual rather than declared behaviour and test how AI personalisation and social influence interact with these factors. The limitations below should be kept in mind when reading these findings.

A. Limitations

There were a number of practical problems that arose during the process of carrying out this piece of research. These will now be addressed in addition to the problems relating to the results of this review that have already been addressed.

The bibliometric analysis used data from a number of sources. The level of data extraction was quite different across databases. Google Scholar source items via Publish or Perish did not provide enough structured data in the item to allow them to be used in the production of thematic maps, cluster maps or any other similar visualisations in Biblioshiny. Items from ScienceDirect via EBSCO also only provided partial keyword data. Using Publish or Perish to access Scopus did provide keyword and citation data which was suitable for the bibliometric analysis used in this piece of research. As a result, the scope of the study was limited to items indexed within Scopus rather than across all relevant literature. Both thematic and cluster maps within Biblioshiny also required a significant amount of time to learn how to operate and produce useful results as both tools were new to the researchers.

Another problem that arose was the subject. Online consumer behaviour is a descriptive field with many potential areas. Bibliometric analysis also tends to work well with areas that can produce data that can be predicted, quantified or otherwise trended. Behavioural research such as this does not lend itself as naturally to this type of analysis. As a result, it can be more difficult to reach specific and well justified conclusions based on the results of the bibliometric analysis. There has also been relatively little research published specifically on online consumer behaviour. Instead, much of the research that exists focuses on more specific aspects of this field. This made it more problematic to build a body of literature that was relevant to the specific focus of this research.

Access to literature also presented a problem. Within the Mendeley collection there were 616 items. However, many of these were not available in full text. Some were behind a paywall whilst others required institutional access. This made it more difficult to read individual items in depth and to cite them with accuracy. It could also impact upon the inclusion or depth of individual studies within the review as only those available could be considered. This also created problems when attempting to produce future research. Typically, a future research plan is created by reading the original literature in detail. However, due to the problems regarding access and data mentioned above only a subset of literature that was available and readable could be used in this way.

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