International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Impulse Buying: A Bibliometric Analysis & Future Research Direction

Surabhi Agrawal[1], Dr. Akhilesh Chandra Pandey[2]

[1]Research Scholar, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India
Email: surabhi_phd02023@allduniv.ac.in, **Orcid ID : 0009-0009-8599-8992**

[2]Assistant Professor, University of Allahabad, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India **Email: acpmanagement70@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the research landscape on impulse buying. Impulse buying is defined as an unplanned and on the spot purchase triggered stimuli, created by retailers through sensory marketing activities, such as attractive product display, store designs, pricing, promotional schemes, packaging and sales activities in all range of product categories. By employing bibliometric techniques aims to identify intellectual contributions in the field of impulsive buying, such as prolific authors, most active journals, highly cited documents, most commonly used keywords, affiliations, and trends of publications over time. For this, 456 articles from theWeb of Science Core Collection from 2000 to 2024 are considered. Our findings indicate the China is leading the country list for producing the maximum number of documents. The most frequent keywords were impulse buying, Impulsive buying, Social commerce, Purchase intention and Consumer behaviour. The paper suggests a specific future research agenda in impulse buying behaviour that has been determined from bibliometric analysis. This study offers practical implications for both academicians and practitioners.

Keywords: *Impulse Purchase, Impulsive buying, Unplanned Purchase, Bibliometric Review*

Introduction

Impulse buying is a widely researched yet continuously evolving phenomenon in consumer behavior studies characterized by unplanned, spontaneous purchases driven by emotional and cognitive triggers rather than deliberate planning (Rook, 1987).In other word impulse buying defined as an unplanned and spontaneous purchase driven by emotional and cognitive reactions, impulse buying plays a significant role in shaping consumer decision-making and influencing retail and marketing strategies.It represents a significant component of retail sales, with studies suggesting that impulse buying can account for up to 40% of all consumer purchases (Hausman, 2000). This behavior is multifaceted, influenced by various internal factors such as emotions, personality traits, and self-control(Verplanken&Herabadi, 2001), as well as external factors such as store environment, promotional cues, and social influence(Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). With the rise of e-commerce and digital marketing, impulse buying has taken on new dimensions, as online platforms provide personalized recommendations, flash sales, and seamless purchasing experiences that amplify impulsive tendencies (Xu & Huang, 2014). Social media has further intensified this behavior by leveraging influencer marketing and real-time interactions to stimulate emotional engagement and instant gratification (Chen et al., 2019).

Bibliometric analysis has emerged as a powerful method to systematically examine the evolution of academic research and uncover intellectual patterns within a specific domain (Zupic & Čater, 2015). By analyzing citation networks, co-authorship patterns, and keyword co-occurrences, bibliometric analysis allows researchers to identify influential works, emerging trends, and potential knowledge gaps. This approach has been widely applied across various fields, including consumer behavior, to assess the development of key concepts and to guide future research efforts (Donthu et al., 2021).

In the context of impulse buying, bibliometric analysis provides an opportunity to map the academic contributions over time, especially given the increasing attention to its psychological, social, and technological dimensions. Research has shown that impulse buying is not only influenced by traditional factors like store environment and promotional cues (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998) but also by emerging factors such as digital platforms, influencer marketing, and cultural shifts (Chen et al., 2019; Xu & Huang, 2020). Despite the growing body of literature, the integration of these diverse elements remains fragmented, necessitating a systematic review of the field's intellectual structure.

This study, through bibliometric analysis, aims to consolidate existing knowledge on impulse buying, identify leading researchers and seminal works, and highlight gaps and opportunities for future research, particularly in the context of technological advancements, cross-cultural variations, and ethical implications. Bibliometric analysis serves as a powerful tool and offers a systematic approach to mapping the intellectual structure of this field, identifying key trends, influential works, and underexplored areas, thereby providing a foundation for future research directions.

Research Question

1. What are the key research trends and themes in the literature on impulse buying?

2. Who are the most influential authors, journals, and countries in the field of impulse buying?

3. What are the emerging gaps and potential areas for future research in the domain of impulse buying, especially considering technological and societal advancements?

Research Methodology

We applied bibliometric analysis to examine the body of research on impulse buying.A bibliometric analysis study is a quantitative method that uses published academic journals or papers to examine worldwide research trends in a particular field or topic. It enables a detailed understanding of the body of knowledge and their various aspects like co-citations, cooccurrence, etc., and is utilized to offer researchers reliable and high-quality academic material (Singh & Bashar, 2023).Web of science core collection database has been used for searching articles in the field of impulse buying, and a combination of keywords has been used to extract the most suitable articles in this context. The following combination of keywords with Boolean operators OR have been used.

('impulse buying' OR 'unplanned purchase' OR 'spontaneous purchase' OR 'impulse purchase' OR 'on the spot purchase' OR 'urge to buy impulsively' OR 'impulsive buying' OR 'impulsive purchase') The above keywords are used.

Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

From an initial search using the above keywords, 679 articles were found, which the authors further analyzed to select the most appropriate articles pertaining to impulse buying.

1. Inclusion criteria

- Articles published between years 2000to 2024.

- Articles written in English language.

- The articles have impulse buying behavior as a central theme.

- Article types include article and review article.

- The following research area isincluded business economics, psychology, social sciences, art humanities, and behavioral sciences.

2. Exclusion criteria

- The articles that do not directly address impulse buying.

- Articles published in other than English language.

- Conference papers, proceeding papers Commercial publications, newspaper articles, editorials, and letters.

After applying the above criteria, the resulting data of 456 documents was extracted in CSV format for further processing and analysis.

Data analysis

Number of Publications

The number of annual publications on impulse purchase is illustrated in Figure 1. The graph showing the trend of publications from 2000 to December 2024 shows that there has been an increase and decrease in the number of publications in the field of impulsive buying over time. Very few papers were published till 2019, but after 2019, the Production of literature expanded because, somehow, this topic has been successful in gaining researchers' attention.The results showed that research on impulse buying is still expanding.

Figure 1

Annual Scientific Production
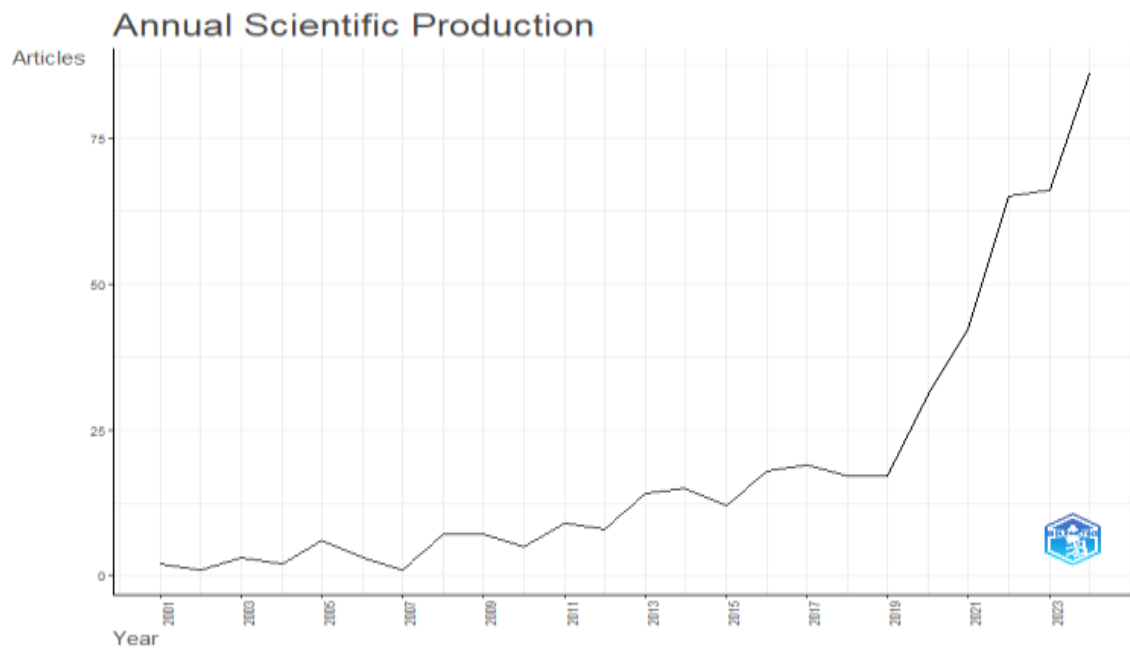
Most Relevant Journals

As to the publishing journals, a total of 456 studies pertaining to impulse buying were published in 117 different journals in the last twenty-five years (table 1). Among them, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services ranked the most popular with a total of forty-three papers, followed by frontiers of psychology with thirty-six articles related to impulse purchase. Journal of research ranked the third with a contribution of nineteen articles. The data can provide an insight for researchers when considering submitting papers on this topic.

Table 1

| Journals	No. of Articles
JOURNAL OF RETAILING AND CONSUMER SERVICES	43
FRONTIERS IN PSYCHOLOGY	36
JOURNAL OF BUSINESS RESEARCH	19
ASIA PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MARKETING AND LOGISTICS	15
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RETAIL & DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT	15
JOURNAL OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR	14
COMPUTERS IN HUMAN BEHAVIOR	11
CURRENT PSYCHOLOGY	11
EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF MARKETING	11
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONSUMER STUDIES	11

Country-wise Production

China emerges as the dominant contributor, with 500 publications, accounting for a significant share of global research (Table 2&Figure 2). The USA follows as the second-largest producer, with 259 publications, showcasing its enduring leadership in academia and innovation. India is third with a frequency of 124 publications, followed by UK with a frequency of 84. Countries like Malaysia, South Korea, Australia, Pakistan, Vietnam, and Italy have frequencies of 73, 63, 55, 43, 26 and 24 respectively.

Table 2

Country	Frequency
CHINA	500
USA	259
INDIA	124
UK	84
MALAYSIA	73
SOUTH KOREA	63
AUSTRALIA	55
PAKISTAN	43
VIETNAM	26
ITALY	24

Figure 2

Country Scientific Production
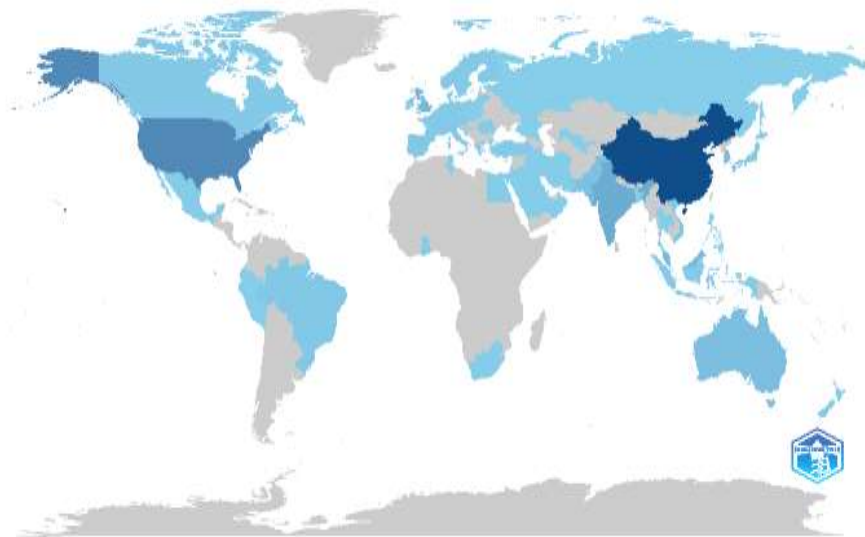
Most Cited Countries

Table 3 illustrates the most cited countries, data reveals the following insights USA leads with 5,486 total citations, averaging 78.4 citations per article, reflecting its strong influence in high-impact research. China ranks second with 4,757 total citations, though it has a lower average citation rate of 31.5 per article, indicating a focus on volume over per-article impact. China has produced the largest quantity of research papers; however, the USA has received more citations, indicating that China has prioritized the volume of papers while the USA has emphasized the quality of research. United Kingdom is third, with 1,578 total citations and a strong average of 68.6 citations per article, showcasing high-quality outputs, followed by India has 850 citations with an average of 26.6 citations per article and Singapore stands out with 786 citations but achieves the highest average per article at 157.2, suggesting niche, high-impact research.

Table 3

Country	Total Citations (TC)	Average Article citations
USA	5486	78.4
CHINA	4757	31.5
UNITED KINGDOM	1578	68.6
INDIA	850	26.6
SINGAPORE	786	157.2
KOREA	680	34
NETHERLANDS	680	136
AUSTRALIA	610	38.1
NORWAY	495	123.8
MALAYSIA	355	22.2

Most Relevant Author

Wang Y is the most productive author, with nine publications(The Effect of Self-Compassion on Impulse Buying: A Randomized Controlled Trial of an Online Self-Help Intervention), making this author the most prolific contributor in the dataset. This reflects their active involvement in the research domain and consistent output of work. Followed by Cheah JH (Boosting customers' impulsive buying tendency in live-streaming commerce: The role of customer engagement and deal proneness, Compulsive buying of branded apparel, its antecedents, and the mediating role of brand attachment),Chen X (Impulsive purchasing in grocery shopping: Do the shopping companions matter?), and Sivakumaran B (Impact of store environment on impulse buying behavior,Impulse buying and variety seeking: A trait-correlates perspective) with six publications each, indicating significant contributions to the field, (Table 4). These data suggest that Wang Y contributions have been steady and influential in the field of Impulse Buying research. Authors like LI Y and ZAFAR AU, each with 5 publications, represent consistent contributors with a growing presence in the research community.
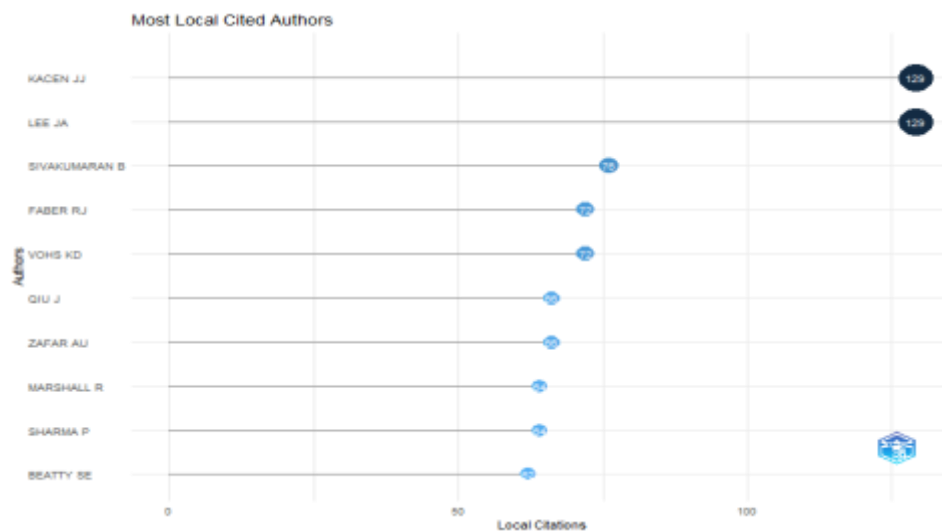
Table 4

Authors	No. of Articles
WANG Y	9
CHEAH JH	6
CHEN X	6
SIVAKUMARAN B	6
LI Y	5
ZAFAR AU	5
CHEN Y	4
CHIU W	4
CHO H	4
CHUNG N	4

Most Cited Author

Figure 3 illustrates the most cited authors, data reveals the following insights Kacen JJ and Lee JA lead with 129 citations each (The influence of culture on consumer impulsive buying behavior), making them the most influential authors. Their work likely forms the foundation for many studies in the field. Sivakumaran B ranks third with 76 citations, followed closely by Faber RJ and Vohs KD, each with 72 citations.Kacen JJ has three papers, and Lee JA has two articles with a total of 129 citations each, indicating that their work is more impactful and focused on quality. In contrast, Wang Y has authored nine articles but has only received one citation, suggesting that their work emphasizes quantity over quality.
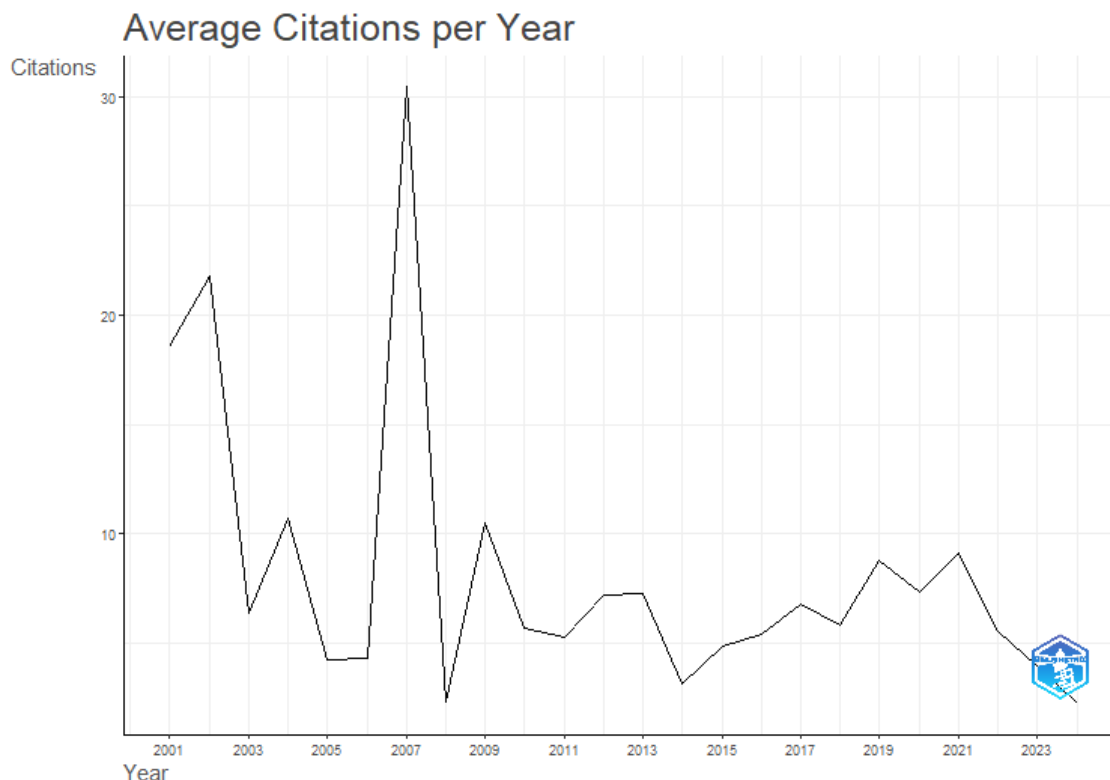
Figure 3

Most Local Cited Authors

Average Citation Per Year

Figure 4 explain the average citation per year, Early 2000s (2001–2006) The average citations per year show fluctuations, with peaks and dips. Around 2002, there is a notable increase, followed by a sharp drop in 2004, then another rise leading up to 2007. There is a significant peak in 2007, where the average citations reach their highest point (above 30). This suggests that influential papers were published around this time. After 2007, citations sharply drop in 2008, followed by small fluctuations. From 2010 onwards, citations stabilize at a lower level, with minor peaks around 2016–2020. However, there is a downward trend leading to 2023.

Figure 4

Average Citations per Year

Word Cloud

Figure 5& Table 5 Provides the information of word cloud, the most frequent term is "behavior" (133 occurrences), suggesting a central focus on understanding behavioral patterns, likely related to consumer behavior, decision-making, or psychological aspects.Other high-frequency terms like "model" (125) and "impact" (118) indicate a strong emphasis on developing and analyzing theoretical frameworks and measuring their effects. Terms such as "consumption" (61), "consumer" (39), "purchase" (55), and "intention" (36) highlight the dataset's emphasis on consumer-related topics, such as

purchasing decisions and consumption patterns. The word cloud data reveals that the research focuses on behavioral theories, consumer psychology, and decision-making frameworks. The high frequency of terms such as "behavior" and "model" suggests a multidisciplinary approach, integrating behavioral science, marketing, and psychology to address consumer-related phenomena**.**

**Figure 5**

Table 5

Term	Frequency
Behavior	133
Model	125
Impact	118
Consumption	61
Purchase	55
Satisfaction	52
Online	45
Consumer	39
Experience	36
Intention	36

Three-Field Plot analysis

The relationship between the three separate components of the study—the Authors (AU), Countries (AU_CO), and Keywords (DE)—is explained by the three-field plot analysis. This graphic illustrates the contributions and connections among the 456 selected articles, emphasizing important connections between the leading nations, the most popular keywords, and well-known authors in the field of impulse buying. Each flow band's breadth in the plot represents the amount of contribution from that particular field. According to Figure 6, the top three nations in research on impulse buying are China, Vietnam, and Australia, as indicated by authors Cheah Jh., Wang Y., and Lim Xj., respectively. The terms "impulsive buying," "impulsive buying," "social commerce," "COVID-19," "materialism," and "consumer behavior" are the words that these authors use the most.

Figure 6
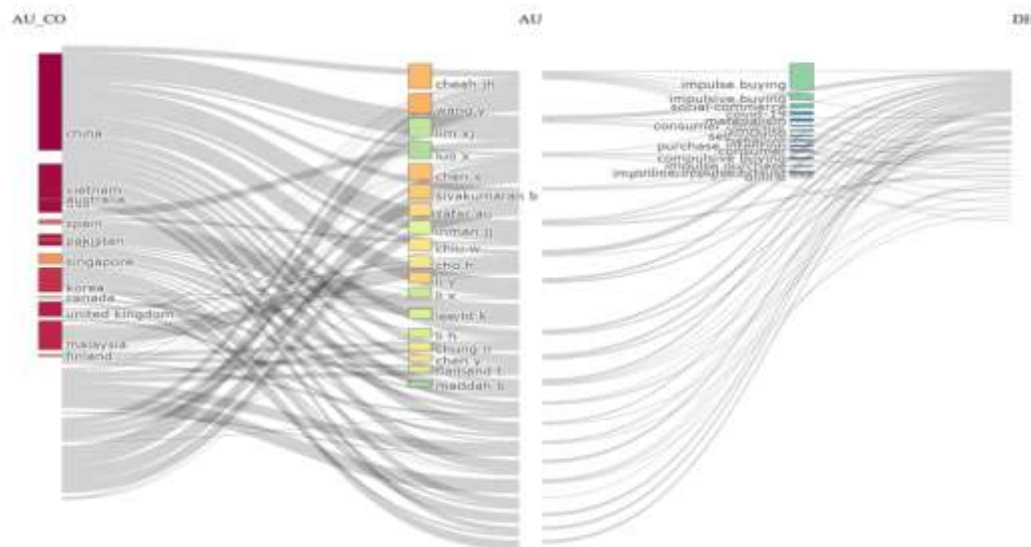
Thematic Map

Thematic map likely has four quadrants based on centrality (X-axis) and density (Y-axis):

1. Motor Themes (Top-Right): Well-developed and highly relevant topics.

2. Highly Developed but Isolated Themes (Top-Left): Specialized but less influential topics.

3. Emerging or Declining Themes (Bottom-Left): Underdeveloped topics, possibly declining.

4. Basic and Transversal Themes (Bottom-Right): Foundational but not deeply developed topics.

Figure 7 illustrates, Motor Themes (Top-Right) – Well-Developed & Influential These are the most central and dense themes, driving research in the field. Impulse Buying, Consumer Behavior, Online Shopping, Impulse Purchase Intention, Buying Behavior. These topics are well-researched and interconnected, meaning they are core themes in impulse buying literature.

Highly Developed but Isolated Themes (Top-Left) – Niche Topics. These themes are well-developed but not strongly connected to the main field, Trust, Mindfulness, Social Commerce. Trust and mindfulness are critical but underexplored in impulse buying research. Social commerce (shopping through social media) is a rising trend but needs more integration with mainstream studies. Future research could link these themes with motor themes to increase relevance.

Emerging or Declining Themes (Bottom-Left) – Weakly Connected Topics, these are less central and not well-developed. Meta-Analysis of Impulse Buying, Boredom & Shopping Behavior. Meta-analyses are important but may lack frequent citations compared to primary studies. Boredom is an interesting but underdeveloped concept in impulse buying.

Basic & Transversal Themes (Bottom-Right) – Fundamental but Less Explored, these themes are important but underdeveloped in the literature. Impulse Buying Tendency, Urge to Buy Impulsively, Self-Control. These themes are essential to impulse buying behavior but need deeper exploration, especially in the context of digital shopping, brand loyalty, and emotional triggers.

Figure 7
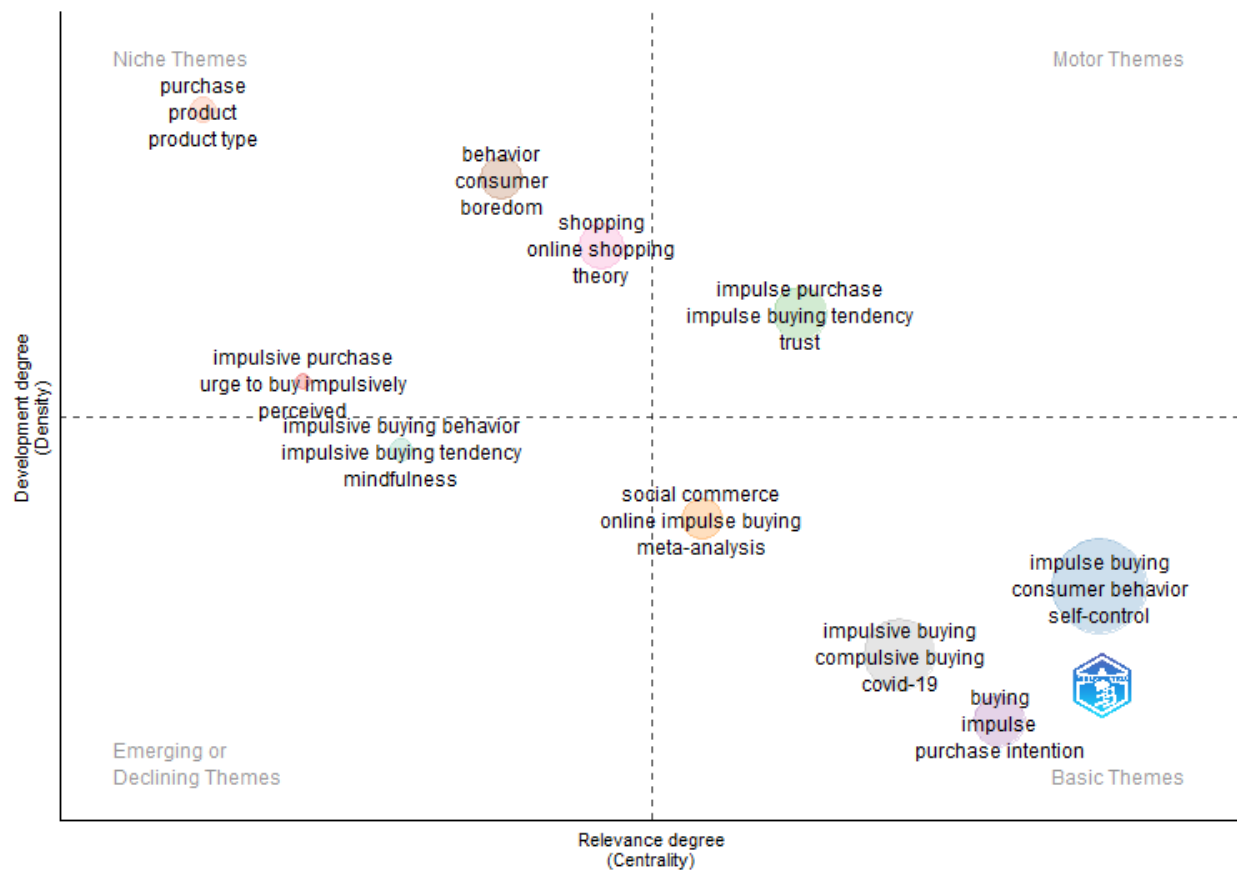
Discussion

With the scope of the literature review and the numerous aspects that have been investigated in the study to look at the influence on impulse buying, this study delivers a valuable contribution to policymakers, marketers, retailers, researchers, and practitioners. It gives different parties strategic assistance and contributes to the body of knowledge previously available on impulse buying. The current study made three significant contributions. First, future scholars and practitioners will find this review research useful. By providing them with an extensive knowledge of impulse buying and all its associated facets. Second, marketers can use this paper to better understand consumer behavior and increase sales and customer happiness. This paper can assist retailers by recommending methods to enhance their product organization, product positioning, outlet configuration, store ambiance, and store atmospherics, among others.

Conclusion and Future Research Direction

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of impulse buying research from 2000 to 2024, highlighting key trends, influential authors, prolific journals, and emerging themes. The study identifies China as the leading contributor in terms of publication volume, while the USA remains dominant in terms of citation impact. Major research themes include consumer behavior, impulse buying tendency, online shopping, and social commerce, demonstrating the evolving nature of impulse buying in digital and social media contexts. Additionally, the thematic analysis reveals well-developed research areas, such as impulse purchase intention, alongside emerging but underexplored topics like mindfulness and trust in impulse buying behavior.As impulse buying continues to evolve with technological advancements and changing consumer preferences, further research is needed to explore its implications in emerging digital platforms and cultural contexts.

The bibliometric analysis has discovered certain areas that can be addressed by future researchers. Investigate how emerging digital platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and live-streaming commerce, shape impulse buying behavior.Explore the role of artificial intelligence, personalized recommendations, and chatbots in facilitating impulsive purchases.Conduct comparative studies to examine impulse buying behavior across different cultures, economic conditions, and consumer segments.Investigate how cultural values and societal norms influence impulse buying tendencies.Analyse the impact of emotional states, such as boredom, stress, and happiness, on impulse buying behavior.Explore the role of self-control, mindfulness, and financial literacy in moderating impulsive purchases.Investigate the influence of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and metaverse shopping experiences on impulse buying.Analyse how blockchain and decentralized finance (DeFi) could impact impulse purchases in digital marketplaces.

References

1. Beatty, S.E. and Ferrell, M.E. (1998) Impulse Buying: Modeling Its Precursors. *Journal of Retailing, 74*, 169-191. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359(99)80092-X

2. Chen, Y., Lu, Y., Wang, B., & Pan, Z. (2019). How do product recommendations affect impulse buying? An empirical study on WeChat social commerce. *Information & Management*, *56*(2), 236–248. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2018.09.002

3. Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Mukherjee, D., Pandey, N., & Lim, W. M. (2021). How to conduct a bibliometric analysis: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, *133*, 285–296. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070

4. Hausman, A. (2000). A Multi-Method Investigation of Consumer Motivations in Impulse Buying Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 17*, 403-426. https://doi.org/10.1108/07363760010341045

5. Kacen, J. J., & Lee, J. A. (2002). The influence of culture on consumer impulsive buying behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 12*(2), 163–176. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327663JCP1202_08

6. Lim, X.-J., Cheah, J.-H., Cham, T. H., Ting, H., & Memon, M. A. (2020). Compulsive buying of branded apparel, its antecedents, and the mediating role of brand attachment. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, *32*(7), 1539–1563. https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-03-2019-0126

7. Luo, X., Cheah, J., Hollebeek, L., & Lim, X. (2024). Boosting customers' impulsive buying tendency in live-streaming commerce: The role of customer engagement and deal proneness. *Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services*, 77, 103644. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103644

8. Rook, D. W. (1997). The Buying impulse. *Journal of Consumer Research, 14(4),* 189-199.

9. Sharma, P., Sivakumaran, B., & Marshall, R. (2010). Impulse buying and variety seeking: A trait-correlates perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, *63*(3), 276–283. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.03.013

10. Singh, S., & Bashar, A. (2023). A bibliometric review on the development in e-tourism research. *International Hospitality Review*, *37*(1), 71–93. https://doi.org/10.1108/IHR-03-2021-0015

11. Verplanken, B., &Herabadi, A. (2001). Individual differences in impulse buying tendency: Feeling and no thinking. *European Journal of Personality*, *15*(1_suppl), S71–S83. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.423

12. Xu, Y., & Huang, J.-S. (2014). *Effects Of Price Discounts And Bonus Packs On Online Impulse Buying*. *| EBSCOhost*. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2014.42.8.1293

13. Zupic, I., &Čater, T. (2015). Bibliometric Methods in Management and Organization. *Organizational Research Methods*, *18*(3), 429–472. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114562629