

RISK ASPECTS IN E-COMMERCE: OVERVIEW OF THE DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM

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Abstract:

This study aims to synthesize the development and impact of risk dimensions in the field of E-Commerce. A total of 668 articles were collected from the Scopus database. Through bibliometric analysis with the support of VOSviewer and Excel, the study maps the progress of works in the period 2021–2025, showing a significant increase in publication volume starting from 2021. The analysis highlights research effectiveness, including the most influential publishers/journals, the most cited publications, and the countries with the highest publication output. In addition, the study identifies key factors closely related to consumer behavior in E-Commerce - acting as antecedents or consequences. Finally, the study analyzes thematic trends, points out research gaps, and suggests some directions for future research.

Keywords: Risk dimensions; E-commerce; Business-to-consumer (B2C); Online consumer behavior; Online retail.

1. Introduction

The rise of the Internet has changed the way people buy and sell products. Especially, Electronic commerce (E-Commerce) has been defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as the ordering of goods and services over the internet while payment and delivery of the goods or services can be conducted either online or offline. Today, e-commerce allows customers to shop anytime and anywhere through websites and mobile applications. It makes shopping easier, faster, and more convenient than traditional stores (Laudon & Traver, 2017). One important model is business-to-consumer (B2C), where companies sell goods or services directly to individual customers (Turban & King, 2004). Even with these advantages, many customers still feel uncertain about shopping online. This uncertainty is called perceived risk. Bauer (1960) first introduced the idea of risk in marketing. Later, Dowling and Staelin (1994) described it as the consumer's view of possible negative results when buying a product or service. In E-Commerce, perceived risk means the chance of loss or problems when making an online purchase, such as losing money, receiving the wrong item, or having personal data stolen (Featherman &

Pavlou, 2003; Glover & Benbasat, 2010).

Research shows that perceived risk has a strong effect on how customers think and act. High levels of risk can create negative feelings, such as fear and worry, which reduce the intention to buy online (Kim & Lennon, 2013). Perceived risks describe consumers' subjective belief that an online transaction is uncertain and bound to adverse effects, such as identity theft or financial losses (Mou et al., 2017). In the same way, Liao et al. (2021) found that when risk is high, trust in sellers decreases, and customers are less willing to complete a purchase. Phamthi et al. (2024) also explain that risk has many forms, including financial risk, privacy risk, delivery risk, performance risk, and social risk. All of these can lower the willingness of customers to shop online. On the other hand, good website design, secure payment methods, clear product information, and reliable sellers can reduce risk and make customers more confident (Chang et al., 2019). Social influence and cultural factors also affect how customers see risk and decide to buy.

More recent research highlights the emergence of novel mechanisms for mitigating perceived risk in digital markets. These mechanisms include advanced return policies, consumer-generated reviews on social media platforms,

influencer endorsements, blockchain-based payment systems, and Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services. Such practices are increasingly adopted by e-commerce firms to strengthen consumer trust (Iskamto & Rahmalia, 2023; Cheah et al., 2024; Kumar & Nayak, 2024). Nevertheless, extant research has largely concentrated on traditional factors such as website security and design. Limited attention has been directed toward examining how these newer mechanisms shape consumer perceptions of risk and purchasing behavior (Majeed & Samorin, 2025). Addressing this gap is essential to extend the understanding of risk in online shopping and to provide actionable insights for e-commerce businesses.

Therefore, it is essential to examine more closely the relationship between perceived risk, consumer decision-making, and the growth of e-commerce. A clear understanding of how both traditional risks and new risk-mitigating mechanisms influence purchase intention can extend existing knowledge and contribute to the academic debate. At the same time, such understanding offers practical value by helping businesses design effective strategies to strengthen trust, reduce uncertainty, and support sustainable development in digital markets (Phamthi et al., 2024).

In this article, the systematic literature review methodology and the PRISMA framework (Page et al., 2021) were applied to identify the most relevant studies in this field. The Scopus database was selected because it is widely recognized as one of the most reputable sources of scientific research due to its extensive collection of articles. The paper is structured as follows: the methodological approach, which explains how and where the articles were identified; the results, which present the findings of the systematic review based on the research question; the discussion, which provides a critical analysis of the outcomes of the review; and the conclusion that summarizes the main findings and highlights directions for

future research.

2. Methodological Approach

A systematic literature review was conducted following the PRISMA protocol (Page et al., 2021). This approach requires researchers to establish a well-defined plan, beginning with a clearly formulated research question. Accordingly, a systematic review can be characterised as a rigorous and transparent process, primarily aimed at collecting, analysing, and synthesising findings from prior studies undertaken by other scholars (Alcadinho et al., 2020).

As outlined above, the PRISMA method was employed (Page et al., 2021), with the search keywords defined as ("Risk*") AND ("Online*" OR "E-Commerce") AND ("Customer*"). The Scopus database was utilized, and the following query was executed: (("Risk*") AND ("Online*" OR "E-Commerce") AND ("Customer*")). At the initial PRISMA stage ("Identification"), the search yielded 668 records. This number was rapidly reduced to 196 records with after the application of the two methods (first: removing articles not relevant to the research topic "Keyword-based": 413 records and after that deleting articles not relevant to the research topic "Based on the abstract of the paper/article": 59 records, the dataset was reduced to 196 articles.

As no duplicate records were identified, the second stage of the PRISMA process ("Analysis") involved a review of the 196 articles based on their titles and abstracts. Of these, 50 were excluded for lacking direct relevance to the research question, resulting in 194 remaining articles. Among these, 64 could not be accessed due to paywall restrictions, which constituted an exclusion criterion. In the final PRISMA stage ("Inclusion"), 82 articles were retained for the systematic literature review (Figure 1: PRISMA approach)

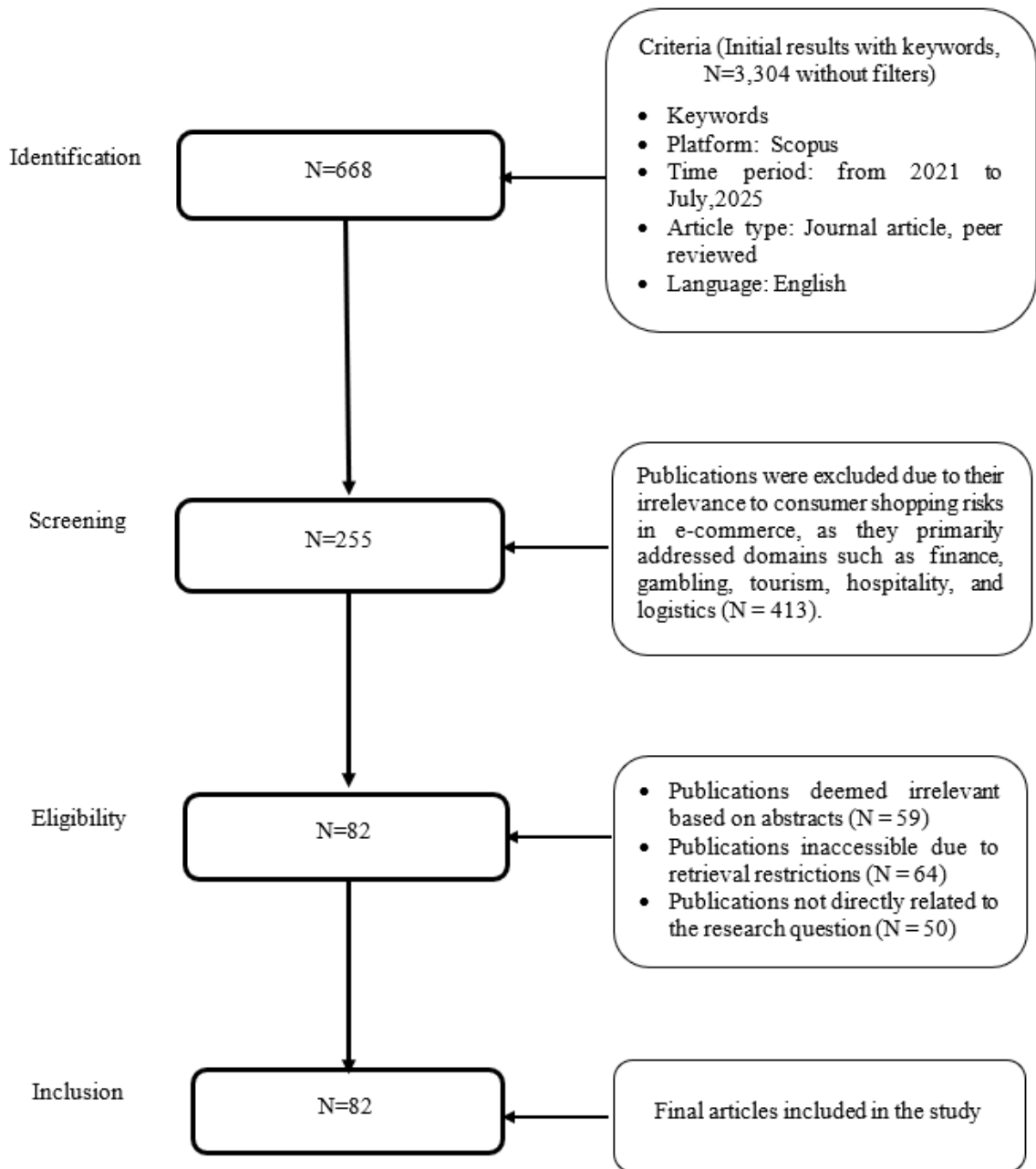


Figure 1: PRISMA approach

3. Research Findings

3.1. Research Trends Over Time

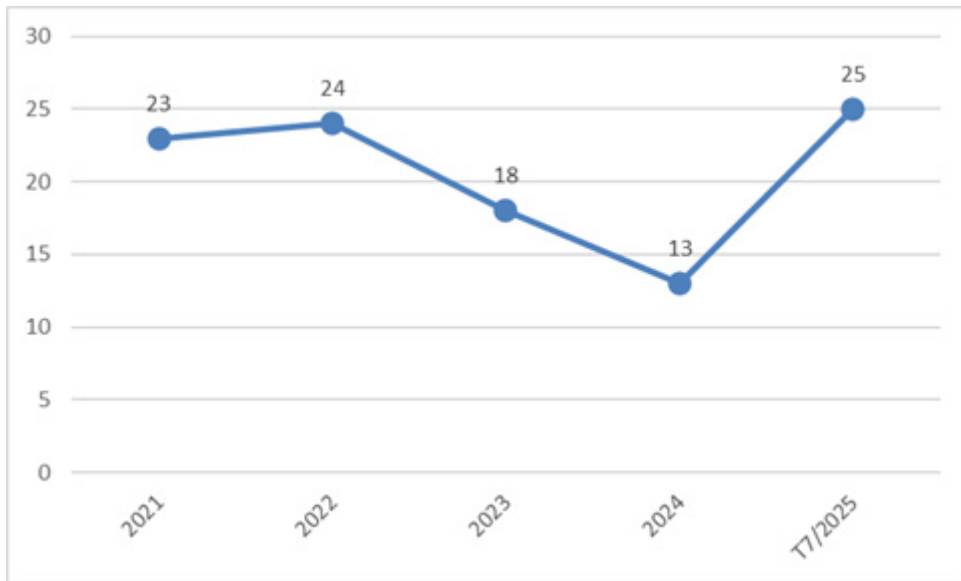


Figure 1. Number of articles published from

The chart illustrates the research trend on risk, customers, and E-Commerce from 2021 to July 2025, revealing notable fluctuations. In 2021, 23 studies were recorded, and this number slightly increased to 24 in 2022, reflecting the growing scholarly interest in the topic. However, from 2023 onward, the trend declined sharply, with only 18 studies in 2023, and further dropped to its lowest point of 13 in 2024, suggesting that academic attention had either stagnated or shifted to other emerging topics. Remarkably, by July 2025, the number of studies surged back to 25, surpassing all previous peaks. The rapid increase in recent years indicates that OCB is an engaging topic and will continue to be explored more extensively in the future. This indicates that E-Commerce in the context of risk and customer behavior remains an attractive research topic, particularly as the business environment is experiencing significant turbulence and emerging risks. The strong recovery in 2025 also suggests that scholars are re-evaluating the importance of risk management in the global marketplace, especially in E-Commerce with the rapid rise of artificial intelligence. This trend opens opportunities for deeper investigations into influencing factors such as trust, data security and user information protection, or customers' adaptability in the digital environment, thereby enriching the theoretical foundation and providing practical implications for both small and medium-sized enterprises as well as major e-commerce platforms worldwide.

3.2. Influential academic journal

On the topic of risks faced by consumers when using services from e-commerce platforms, most studies have been published in journals focusing on management, E-Commerce, and services. Among them, Sustainability (Switzerland) accounts for the largest share with 14.63% of total publications and 227 citations, highlighting its prominent role in this research field. Following this, the International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management and the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services both recorded 222 citations, indicating strong interest in online retail research. Cogent Business and Management is also notable with 267 citations, despite representing only 3.66% of the total articles.

In addition, the Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research and the Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity also show significant influence with 71 and 94 citations, respectively. Other journals such as Annals of Operations Research, International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management, and Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology have fewer publications but relatively high citation counts, with 53, 61, and 50 respectively. Overall, these journals cover most of the publications and citations, showing that the research is focused on a few key journals.

3.3. The most influential country in the research topic

The influential countries in the research topic are identified based on citation analysis, using the full counting method of countries according to the authors' affiliations.

Table 1: Selected countries with the greatest influence on the research topic

Rank	Country	Number of Publications	Number of Citations	Average Citations per Article	Total Link Strength
1	China	12	340	28,3	50
2	India	12	252	21,0	61
3	Saudi Arabia	9	295	32,8	84
4	United States	8	379	47,4	37
5	Viet Nam	8	75	9,4	34
6	Malaysia	7	48	6,9	42
7	Jordan	5	192	38,4	40

Source: Compiled by the author from VOSviewer

The results show that China and India lead globally in the number of studies on customer risks in online shopping, with 12 published papers and 340 and 252 citations, respectively. The average citations per paper are 28.3 and 21.0, respectively. Saudi Arabia ranks second in productivity with 9 papers and 295 citations, and an average of 32.8 citations per paper. Other countries with high research productivity include the United States, Viet Nam, and Malaysia. However, in terms of publication quality, Jordan is notable with the

highest average citations per paper (38.4), although the number of publications is still limited (5). Some other countries also show strong research quality based on high average citations per paper, such as the United States (Table 1). Overall, research on consumer risks in online shopping is concentrated mainly in developed countries such as China, India, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Viet Nam. Publications in some developing countries are also increasing, but the numbers remain limited.

3.4. The most influential study

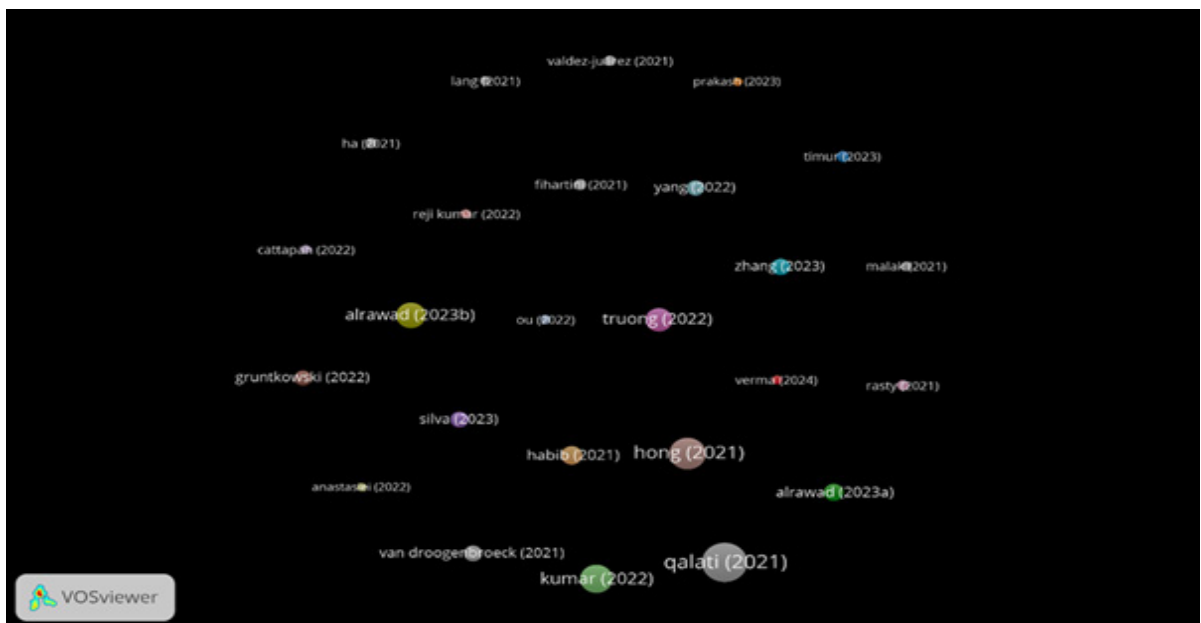


Figure 3. The most influential studies on the topic

Although research on consumer risk in online shopping has shown signs of decline, the most influential works, measured by the highest citation counts, have only appeared in recent years. The first is the study by Qalati et al. (2021) with 226 citations, which examined Effects of perceived service quality, website quality, and reputation on purchase intention: The mediating and moderating roles of trust and perceived risk in online shopping. The second most influential article in this topic is by Hong et al. (2021) with 162 citations. This study explored Factors affecting customer intention to use online food delivery services before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The third most influential publication is by Kumar (136 citations). In addition,

several other studies have also made significant contributions to the topic, such as the work of Truong et al. (2022), which investigated How do customers change their purchasing behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic? and the study of Alrawad et al., which examined Assessing customers' perception of online shopping risks: A structural equation modeling–based multigroup analysis.

4. The most influential scholar

Based on the results of bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer, the influence of authors within the research domain can be classified into dimension: the quality of publications, which is determined by the number of citations.

Table 2: The most highly cited authors

Author	Citations	Documents	Average number of citations per article
Ali, Imran	18	2	9
Almaiah, Mohammed Amin	181	2	90,5
Lutfi Abdalwali	181	2	90,5
Alrawad, Mahmaod	181	2	90,5
Asokan-ajitha, Aswathy	28	2	14
Dinesh, k. g.sofi	28	2	14
Habib, Sufyan	74	2	37
Jose, Ajay	28	2	14
Mayr, Kathrin	13	2	6,5
Naushad, Mohammad	18	2	9
Nguyen, Thi Mai Anh	16	2	8
Reji Kumar, g.	28	2	14

In assessing the influence of authors within a research domain, the number of published works alone does not fully reflect research quality. Therefore, examining the number of citations attributed to each author, as well as the average citations per publication, is essential for a more accurate evaluation (Trinh et al., 2025). In this regard, Almaiah and colleagues exert considerable influence, with 181 citations for their publications, resulting in an average of 90.5 citations per article. This group of authors has contributed two studies

on customer behavior in relation to mobile payment technologies and perceived risk in e-commerce (Alrawad et al., 2023). The next highly influential author is Sufyan Habib, whose second article received 37 citations per publication. His research examined perceived risk and technology acceptance during the pandemic, as well as the factors influencing online purchase intention, with consumer trust playing a mediating role (Habib & Hamadne, 2021; Habib et al., 2024). Asokan-Ajitha, Aswathy, Dinesh K. G. Sofi, and Ajay Jose also show notable influence,

each reaching 14 citations per publication. Other authors with high citation counts in this research domain are presented in detail in Table 2.

Research clusters associated with consumer risks in online shopping

The co-occurrence bibliometric analysis was conducted for all keywords, with a minimum occurrence threshold of three. A total of 29 keywords met this criterion. After excluding several irrelevant

keywords, the results were visualized in a network map as shown in Figure 4. The main keywords most frequent term in the topic is e-commerce, with 19 occurrences and 51 links. This is the central keyword that shows strong relationships with other factors in the topic. Among these, the most closely related factor is perceived risk. The keyword phrase perceived risk appears 18 times with 45 links. Therefore, it can be seen that e-commerce is closely

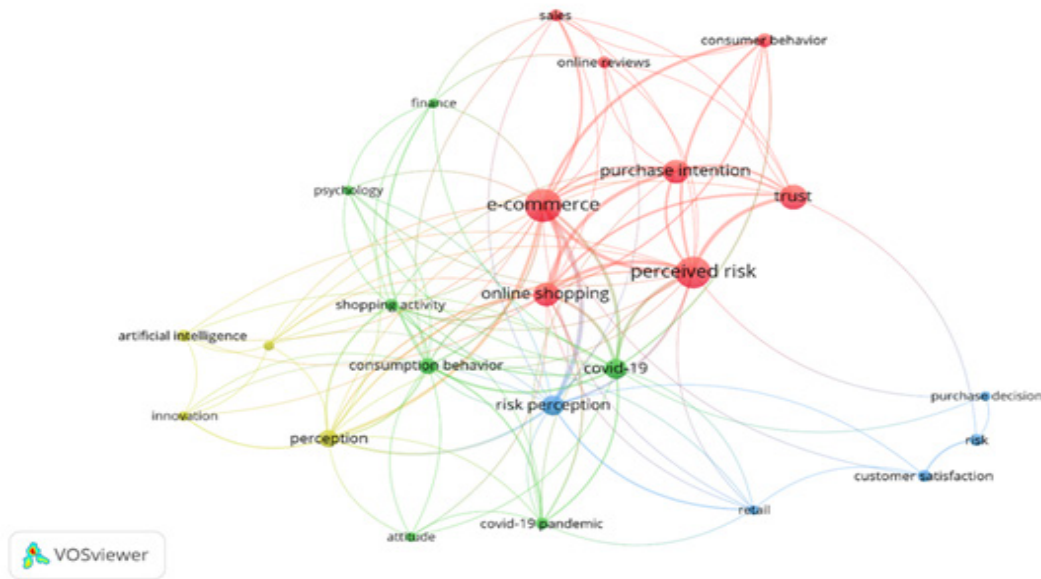


Figure 4: Research clusters on consumer risks in online shopping

connected with perceived risk in the field of online commerce. Perceived risk is often viewed as a result of consumers' online shopping behavior. The main perceived risk topics include online purchase intention (Tarawneh et al., 2024), consumer trust in e-commerce (Quintus et al., 2024), and the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on purchase decisions (Deepa et al., 2025).

The second strong connection is between e-commerce and consumers' online shopping. Online shopping appears 11 times with 41 links. Several representative studies on this relationship include Tarawneh et al. (2024) and Quintus et al. (2024). COVID-19 and risk perception form the third group of closely related factors with e-commerce, with 9 occurrences and 37 and 30 links, respectively. In addition to these three key factors, other elements such as shopping behavior, perception, purchase intention, and trust are also closely linked to the research topic. Most of these aspects function as antecedents that influence consumer risk in online shopping. In general, many

factors are considered as antecedents of risk in online shopping. At the same time, this topic is also viewed as an important predictor of the number of online shoppers, which contributes to the overall performance of businesses and small retailers on E-Commerce platforms. Regarding research trends over time, the keyword co-occurrence analysis shows several topics that have gained attention in recent years. Figure 5 illustrates these research trends. The dark green nodes represent topics that have been studied earlier, followed by blue and green nodes, while the most recent research topics are shown in yellow. This trend is observed during the study period from 2021 to July 2025, the visualization highlights several emerging research trends on consumer risks in online shopping. E-commerce and perceived risk appear as central nodes, indicating their pivotal role in the literature. The close connection between perceived risk and factors such as trust, purchase intention, and COVID-19 suggest that risk considerations remain at the core of consumer behavior

peer-reviewed journal articles written in English, thereby excluding potentially valuable insights from conference proceedings, book chapters, and non-English publications. Incorporating a wider variety of publication types and languages could enrich the findings and strengthen the robustness of future studies. Fourth, the current review focuses primarily on qualitative and bibliometric synthesis without conducting a quantitative meta-analysis of the relationships among risk, trust, and purchase intention. This constitutes a significant gap, as a meta-analytical approach could provide more precise and generalizable conclusions regarding the magnitude and direction of these relationships. Future research should therefore employ quantitative synthesis methods to test the robustness of theoretical frameworks and validate the consistency of findings across different contexts and methodological approaches. Moreover, several emerging themes deserve closer scholarly attention. The increasing application of AI and big data analytics in online retail creates new challenges for consumer risk perception, particularly in relation to algorithmic transparency, data security, and personalized recommendation systems. Investigating how consumers perceive and respond to such technologies, and how these perceptions affect their trust and purchasing behaviors, represents a promising avenue for future inquiry. Likewise, the growing importance of mobile commerce (M-Commerce) and social commerce (S-Commerce) introduces novel dimensions of consumer risk. For instance, issues such as app security, payment reliability, peer influence, and real-time interactions in social commerce platforms may shape consumer perceptions differently from traditional E-Commerce contexts. Expanding the research lens to encompass these new forms of commerce would provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer risk in the digital economy. Another underexplored direction involves the diversity of risk categories. While prior studies have mainly emphasized financial, privacy, and

product performance risks, other forms such as delivery risk, psychological risk, and social risk have received less scholarly attention. These dimensions may play an increasingly important role in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in cross-border e-commerce where uncertainties are amplified by geographical and cultural distances. Future studies should thus adopt a multidimensional approach to capture the complexity of perceived risk in online transactions. Lastly, moving beyond the examination of purchase intention, future research could extend its scope to actual purchasing behavior, post-purchase satisfaction, and long-term loyalty. Understanding how perceived risk influences not only initial purchase decisions but also repeat purchases and brand advocacy would provide valuable implications for both theory and practice. Moreover, the adoption of advanced analytical techniques such as structural equation modeling, machine learning, or big data analytics could enhance the precision of results and reveal deeper insights into consumer decision-making processes.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, while this study contributes to consolidating knowledge on consumer risk in online shopping, it also highlights several limitations and opportunities for advancement. By broadening the scope of data sources, incorporating diverse research contexts, employing more sophisticated methodologies, and expanding the theoretical lens, future studies can provide richer and more actionable insights into the complex interplay between risk, trust, and consumer behavior in e-commerce.

Such efforts will not only advance academic discourse but also equip practitioners with the knowledge required to design effective risk-mitigation strategies, foster consumer trust, and ensure sustainable growth in the rapidly evolving digital marketplace.

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Tóm tắt:

Nghiên cứu này nhằm tổng hợp quá trình phát triển và mức độ ảnh hưởng của các chiều kích rủi ro trong lĩnh vực thương mại điện tử. Tổng cộng 668 bài báo được thu thập từ cơ sở dữ liệu Scopus. Thông qua phân tích thư mục học (Bibliometric Analysis) với sự hỗ trợ của VOSviewer và Excel, nghiên cứu lập bản đồ diễn tiến các công trình trong giai đoạn 2021–2025, cho thấy sự gia tăng đáng kể về khối lượng công bố bắt đầu từ năm 2021. Kết quả phân tích làm nổi bật hiệu quả nghiên cứu, bao gồm các nhà xuất bản/tạp chí có ảnh hưởng nhất, các công bố được trích dẫn nhiều nhất và các quốc gia có sản lượng công bố cao nhất. Bên cạnh đó, nghiên cứu xác định các yếu tố then chốt có liên hệ chặt chẽ với hành vi người tiêu dùng trong thương mại điện tử—đóng vai trò như các yếu tố tiền đề hoặc hệ quả. Cuối cùng, nghiên cứu phân tích xu hướng chủ đề, chỉ ra các khoảng trống nghiên cứu và đề xuất một số định hướng cho các nghiên cứu tiếp theo.

Từ khóa: Các chiều kích rủi ro; Thương mại điện tử; Doanh nghiệp–người tiêu dùng (B2C); Hành vi người tiêu dùng trực tuyến; Bán lẻ trực tuyến.