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Sushma Yadav, Kapil Malhotra

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Mapping the impact of sales promotions on consumer perception and behaviour: a bibliometric analysis

Sushma Yadav and Kapil Malhotra*

Department of Commerce,
Maharshi Dayanand University,
Rohtak, 124001, India
Email: sushma.rs.comm@mdurohtak.ac.in
Email: kapil.comm@mdurohtak.ac.in

*Corresponding author

Abstract: This review conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to evaluate the impact of sales promotions on consumer perception and behaviour, offering a guide for future research. 321 papers from renowned journals that are indexed in the Scopus database were found through a search. The dataset, spanning from 1980 to 2024, was analysed and visualised using RStudio, Bibliometrix, and VOSviewer software. The findings offer insights into annual publication trends, leading authors, sources, institutions, countries, and research outputs. The results challenge Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law. Additionally, bibliographic coupling analysis provides a conceptual framework for research and highlights potential avenues for further investigation. In conclusion, this study deepens the understanding of consumer behaviour, particularly in response to promotional offers.

Keywords: sales promotion; perceptions; consumer behaviour; bibliometric analysis; promotional strategies; coupling; R studio; VOS Viewer; Lotka's Law; Bradford's Law.

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Biographical notes: Sushma Yadav is a Research Scholar in the Department of Commerce at Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, Haryana, India. She completed her MCom from MDU Rohtak and qualified CTET, HTET and UGC-NET in Commerce. She has four years of teaching experience with Kishan Lal Public College Rewari, Haryana. She has presented her research papers at many international/national conferences and also got research papers accepted/published in esteemed journals.

Kapil Malhotra is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Commerce at Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, Haryana, India. He completed his PhD, MCom and MBA from MDU Rohtak and qualified UGC NET-JRF in Management and NET in Commerce. He has presented research papers at numerous international/national conferences and got many research papers published in various journals of high repute. He is a member of University academic council and also serving as the Deputy Director of CDS,

Departmental Coordinator of the Digital Learning Centre, Program Counsellor of Youth Red Cross and Course Coordinator of MCom (Online) program at MDU Rohtak.

1 Introduction

Sales promotion has emerged as a pivotal marketing instrument, providing strategic incentives to consumers, wholesalers, retailers, and organisational clients to stimulate immediate sales and influence purchasing decisions (DelVecchio et al., 2006). This multifaceted approach encompasses various tactics, including price discounts, coupons, complimentary gifts, product samples, negotiated pricing, and visually compelling product displays, all aimed at inventory optimisation and achieving business objectives (Walsh, 2000; Khan et al., 2021; Suryani and Syafarudin, 2021). Conceptually, sales promotions are defined as “a set of diverse and often short-term stimulant mechanisms designed to accelerate purchase frequency or increase the volume of goods or services acquired” (Rojuee and Rojuee, 2017). They are critical in augmenting customer value propositions and shaping consumer purchase behaviour (Alvarez and Casielles, 2005; Mishra et al., 2024).

Consumer purchase behaviour, characterised by a combination of cognitive, affective, and behavioural processes, begins with problem recognition and progresses through solution exploration, information evaluation, and the final decision-making stages to fulfil fundamental wants and preferences (Spáčil and Teichmannova, 2016; Rehman and Al-Ghazali, 2022; Dhakal et al., 2023). Sales promotion tools are particularly effective in influencing consumer perceptions by offering utilitarian benefits, such as monetary savings, convenience, and functional value, and hedonic benefits, including emotional gratification, experiential enjoyment, and intrinsic satisfaction (Chandon et al., 2000). Strategically structured, these benefits shape consumer perceptions, fostering favourable purchase decisions and enhancing overall marketing efficacy (Sinha and Smith, 2000).

However, recent studies indicate that customers' sensitivity and skepticism toward sales promotion tactics are growing (de Pechpeyrou and Odou, 2012). Promo items, for example, are frequently viewed as low-equity brands (Mela et al., 1997), and low prices are sometimes associated with inferior product quality. Additionally, some consumers may experience embarrassment when purchasing promotional products (Simonson et al., 1994). These negative perceptions highlight the risks of poorly designed sales promotions, which can lead to undesirable outcomes, such as reduced consumer trust and decreased purchasing behaviour. Consumer perceptions are influenced by various factors, including product quality, promotional strategies, and the overall shopping experience. Therefore, the success of sales promotion strategies depends on their ability to align with consumer expectations and preferences while effectively communicating value.

This study examines consumer perceptions and behaviour towards sales promotions, with a focus on the role of promotional tools and their influence on purchase decisions. It aims to provide insights into how well-designed promotions can enhance consumer satisfaction and drive sales while avoiding potential pitfalls associated with negative consumer perceptions.

The review offers a detailed overview and identifies the most influential studies in the field using bibliometric analysis. It also maps the study's conceptual framework by

highlighting key themes through bibliographic coupling analysis. Furthermore, the research contributions of notable authors and sources in this field are found by applying Bradford's and Lotka's Laws. In addition to advancing academic knowledge, the study outlines future research directions, serving as a guide for potential researchers. It also identifies impactful journals, helping scholars target appropriate publications. From a practical perspective, it assists marketers in formulating effective policies and robust marketing strategies, particularly within the evolving digital marketing landscape. This is crucial for sustaining market relevance by understanding consumer demand and preferences.

2 Literature review

Despite its role in fostering sustainable growth over the past three decades, research on consumer perceptions and behaviours toward sales promotions remains in its early developmental stages. While some literature reviews exist, a gap persists in the bibliometric analysis using the term 'Sales Promotion' (Yadav and Malhotra, 2024), which highlights current trends and suggests future research agendas. This review examines 568 documents from 2015 to 2024 (Yadav and Malhotra, 2022) exploratory research presents a comprehensive bibliometric and content analysis of 337 papers using the WOS database, spanning 1989–2022. Similarly, Florido-Benítez (2022) conducted a bibliometric analysis of the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) database, covering 2000–2021, excluding sentiment analysis.

Sales promotions serve as a potent tool for influencing consumer behaviour and perception, though their effectiveness depends on execution. Consumers have grown increasingly sensitive and sceptical of promotional strategies (de Pechpeyrou and Odou, 2012). Promotional products are frequently seen as low-equity brands (Mela et al., 1997), and lower prices may lead to associations with inferior quality. In some cases, consumers may even feel embarrassed purchasing promotional items, further reducing the appeal of poorly designed promotions (Simonson et al., 1994). However, when executed effectively, sales promotions can enhance consumer preferences and purchasing decisions, making promotional brands more attractive than their non-promotional counterparts (Schultz and Block, 2014). Rational consumers evaluate both price and quality before making purchases (Raghubir and Corfman, 1995), indicating that promotions need to strike a balance between these factors to meet consumer expectations.

Consumer behaviour, impacted by elements including societal standards, economic situations, and cultural values, dictates how individuals make decisions regarding what, why, when, and where to purchase, as well as how they perceive and evaluate purchases post-sale (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). Culture, in particular, plays an important role in creating consumer perceptions and responses to sales promotions (Kotler, 2003). Sales promotions typically generate direct behavioural responses, encouraging immediate purchases rather than substantially altering awareness or attitudes (Schultz, 1998). For sales promotions to be effective, they must align with consumer perceptions of value and quality while also addressing the underlying behavioural and cultural factors.

Given this, the authors identified a gap in the existing literature concerning a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of consumer perception and behaviour towards sales promotions. Previous research has not explored the intellectual structure of this field.

In contrast to earlier studies, this research employs citation analysis and bibliometric coupling analysis to provide an in-depth overview of the research landscape, uncovering global trends and outlining the intellectual structure of this domain. This study represents a pioneering effort to examine consumer perception and behaviour toward sales promotions from a bibliometric perspective. Such an approach serves as a valuable tool for identifying key quantitative features and research themes. As an outcome, this evaluation answers the following six research questions:

RQ1: *What are the annual research trends of consumer perception and behaviour towards sales promotions, and how have they fluctuated over time?*

RQ2: *Which are the most dominant contributors and major keywords employed in this research field?*

RQ3: *Are Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law consistent with the findings of this study?*

RQ4: *Which academic papers hold the greatest significance in this research field?*

RQ5: *What is the intellectual structure of the literature on consumer perception and behaviour towards sales promotions?*

RQ6: *What areas can be further explored to advance sales promotion research?*

The subsequent sections provide a comprehensive overview of the study. Section 3 discusses the methodology and criteria used in selecting the data for analysis. Section 4 presents an in-depth examination of the subject by analysing research trends in publications, citation networks, and bibliographic coupling while identifying potential directions for future research. Finally, Section 5 concludes the study by addressing its limitations and offering insights for future exploration in the field.

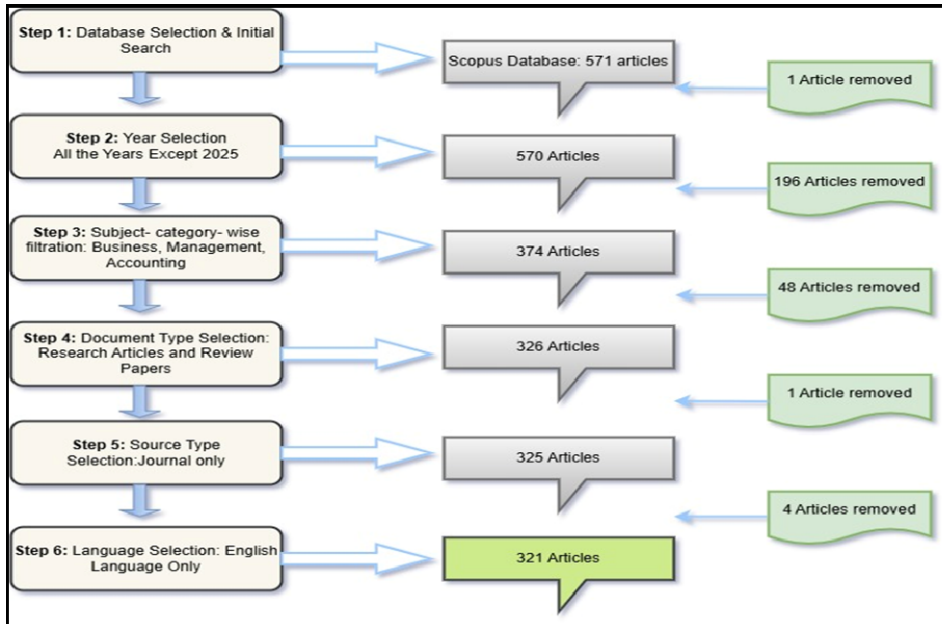
3 Methodology and data selection

According to Yang et al. (2019), Donthu et al. (2021a, 2021b), Zainuldin and Lui (2022), Abbas et al. (2020), Wang et al. (2013), El Baz and Iddik (2022), Zainuldin and Lui (2022), Bunesco (2023), Orastean et al. (2019), and Lunguleac-Bardasuc et al. (2020), bibliometric reviews serve to expand upon existing literature review techniques rather than replace them. For this study, bibliometric analysis was conducted using the 'bibliometrix' package in the R program, along with network analysis through the VOSviewer software (Jemghili et al., 2021; Costa and Forte, 2022; Hyk et al., 2022; Gorski and Dumitrascu, 2024; Țîmbalari and Herciu, 2023; Panta and Popescu, 2023). The Scopus database was selected for data collection because of its broader global scope and interdisciplinary research output, unlike the WOS database (El Baz and Iddik, 2022; Abbas et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2021; Țîmbalari et al., 2024).

The data collection process began with the use of the search terms ("Sales Promotion" OR 'Promotional Offers' AND 'Perception' OR 'Behaviour') for "title-abstract-keywords," as illustrated in Figure 1. The initial search yielded 571 documents closely related to the topic. Papers published in January 2025 were excluded, as they did not reflect the entire year's publications, leaving 570 papers. These were further limited by the subject area 'Business, Management, and Accounting,' resulting in 374

documents. The next step involved refining the selection to include only ‘research papers’ and ‘review papers,’ reducing the count to 326 papers. Further filtration was applied to include only ‘journals’ as the source type, resulting in 325 papers. In the final filtration stage, only documents published in English were retained, leaving 319 papers for the bibliometric analysis, covering publications from 1980 to 2024.

Figure 1 Paper criteria for document selection (see online version for colours)



4 Bibliometric analysis with discussion

4.1 Statistical overview of the dataset

This part of the study describes the findings from the analysis of 317 documents related to consumer perception and behaviour towards sales promotions, published between 1980 and 2024, as detailed in Table 1. The table shows an annual growth rate of 7.78% in the number of publications, with each paper averaging 28.51 citations over this period. These growth and citation rates reflect a significant increase in academic research focusing on consumer perceptions and behaviour regarding sales promotions and promotional offers.

The analysis also identified 746 unique authors contributing to this field over the given time frame. Of these, 55 publications were authored by a single researcher, while the average number of co-authors per document was 2.62. These figures indicate a strong trend toward collaborative research, with 16.2% of the publications involving international co-authorship. However, a substantial portion of the publications still came from single authors.

Table 1 Statistical information of dataset

<i>Description</i>	<i>Results</i>
Timespan	1980:2024
Source of Documents	142
Documents	321
Annual Growth Rate%	7.78
Document Average Age	9.93
Average citations per document	28.51
Keywords Plus	292
Author's Keywords	1007
Authors	746
Authors of single-authored documents	48
Single-authored documents	55
Co-Authors per documents	2.62
International co-authorship %	16.2
Paper	312
Review Papers	09

4.3 Prolific authors

Table 2 lists the top 10 most active authors in the field of consumer perception and behaviour towards sales promotions and promotional offers. These authors have made significant contributions and had a considerable influence on this area of research.

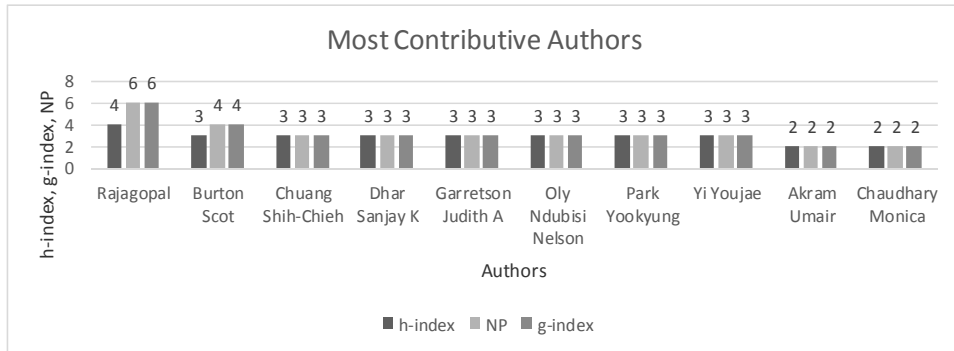
Table 2 Most prolific authors

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Authors</i>	<i>h_index</i>	<i>g_index</i>	<i>NP</i>	<i>TC</i>
1	Rajagopal	4	6	6	94
2	Burton Scot	3	4	4	529
3	Chuang Shih-Chieh	3	3	3	76
4	Dhar Sanjay K	3	3	3	144
5	Garretson Judith A	3	3	3	474
6	Oly Ndubisi Nelson	3	3	3	90
7	Park Yookyung	3	3	3	32
8	Yi Youjae	3	3	3	32
9	Akram Umair	2	2	2	160
10	Chaudhary Monica	2	2	2	28

Rajagopal ranks first with six papers, the highest number authored by an individual, and boasts an impressive h-index of 4. He has garnered 94 citations. Burton Scot, another notable contributor, has authored four papers, showcasing his significant influence in this field. Chuang Shih-Chieh, Dhar Sanjay K, Garretson Judith A, Oly Ndubisi Nelson, Park Yookyung, and Yi Youjae each have three publications, with Garretson Judith A earning

the second-highest citation count of 474, following Burton Scot with 529 citations. Additionally, Akram Umair and Monica Chaudhary have made notable contributions to this research area, as highlighted in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Most prolific authors



4.4 Top leading institutes

Table 3 shows the top institutions that have made substantial contributions to the literature on consumer perception and behaviour towards sales promotions and promotional behaviour. Drexel University leads with the highest number of publications, having authored seven documents. Following closely are the Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Murcia, and Victoria University of Wellington, each with six publications. Amity University, Islamic Azad University, London School of Economics and Political Science, and Seoul National University each have five publications. Additionally, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications has contributed four publications in this field.

Table 3 Top 10 organisations

<i>Affiliations</i>	<i>No. of papers</i>
Drexel University	7
Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City	6
Swinburne University of Technology	6
University of Murcia	6
Victoria University of Wellington	6
Amity University	5
Islamic Azad University	5
London School of Economics and Political Science	5
Seoul National University	5
Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications	4

4.5 Leading sources

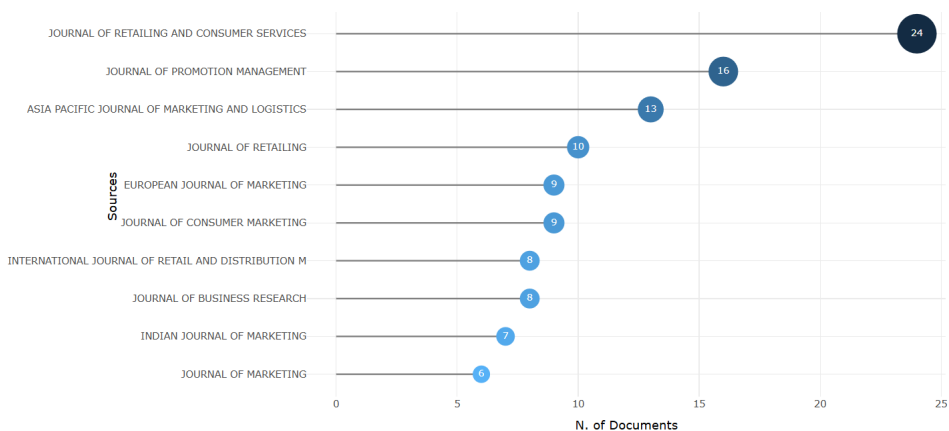
Figure 3 illustrates the leading journals in the field of sales promotion, particularly focusing on consumer perception and behaviour. From a publication perspective, the “*Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*” is the most productive, with 24 papers, followed by the ‘*Journal of Promotion Management*’ with 16 documents. The “*Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*” has published 13 papers, while the ‘*Journal of Retailing*’ has 10, and both the ‘*European Journal of Marketing*’ and ‘*Journal of Consumer Marketing*’ have nine papers each. Additionally, the “*International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*” and ‘*Journal of Business Research*’ each feature eight papers, with the ‘*Indian Journal of Marketing*’ also contributing significantly.

The ‘*Journal of Marketing*’ publishes fewer papers compared to others, yet it remains part of the top 10 sources in terms of publication volume, as clearly shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Top 10 journals

Source	No. of documents
“ <i>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</i> ”	24
“ <i>Journal of Promotion Management</i> ”	16
“ <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics</i> ”	13
“ <i>Journal of Retailing</i> ”	10
“ <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> ”	9
“ <i>Journal of Consumer Marketing</i> ”	9
“ <i>International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management</i> ”	8
“ <i>Journal of Business Research</i> ”	8
“ <i>Indian Journal of Marketing</i> ”	7
“ <i>Journal of Marketing</i> ”	6

Figure 3 Leading sources (see online version for colours)



Source: Rstudio software

4.6 Leading countries

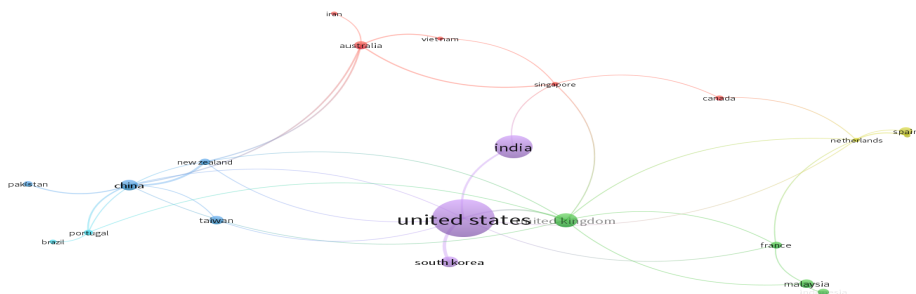
A total of 63 countries were considered, but only 22 countries participated in the dataset for this study as only 22 meet the threshold that is having at least 5 documents as shown in Figure 4, indicating widespread global interest in this field of research, which is not limited to specific geographic regions.

The bibliometric analysis finds that the USA is the leading contributor to this study on consumer perception and behaviour regarding sales promotions, with 83 papers and the highest citation count of 2687 as shown in Table 5. USA alone accounts for 25.46% of all publications in this area. Following the USA, India and the UK together contribute 20.85% (68 out of 326) of the total publications. Additionally, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Australia, Spain, and France collectively account for 28.83% (94 out of 326) of the publications. Together, these 10 countries contribute 245 documents represent approximately 75.15% of the total publications in this bibliometric study, highlighting their substantial role in advancing this emerging research area.

Table 5 Top 10 leading countries

S. No.	Country	Documents	Citations	Total link strength
1	USA	83	2687	17
2	India	44	545	04
3	UK	24	810	10
4	China	17	442	13
5	South Korea	17	475	06
6	Malaysia	13	296	03
7	Taiwan	13	326	02
8	Australia	12	405	09
9	Spain	12	590	01
10	France	10	297	04

Figure 4 Countries collaboration (see online version for colours)

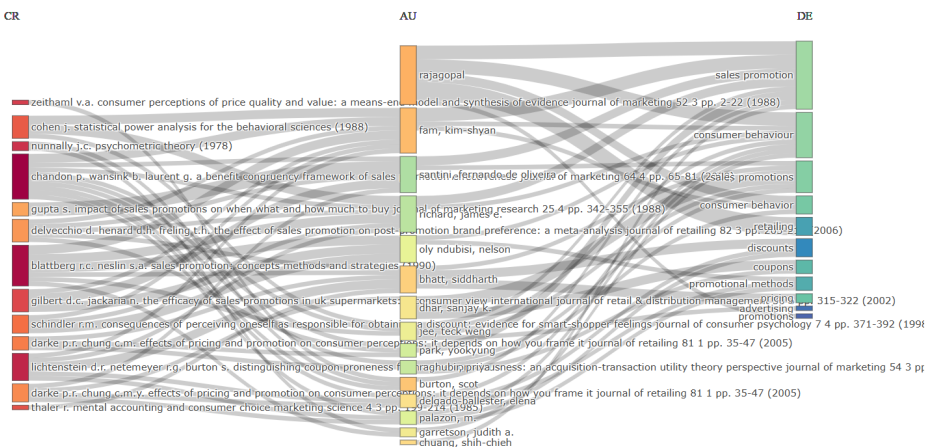


Source: Using VOS Viewer

4.7 Relationship among authors, sources, and keywords

Figure 5 shows a three-field plot analysis representing the interconnection among the three primary terms: sources, keywords, and authors. In the left column, the publishing journals are displayed

Figure 5 Three-fold plot (see online version for colours)



Source: R studio

While the right column displays the keywords, the middle column lists the authors' names. This information underscores the fact that many authors have used terms such as 'sales promotion' and 'consumer behaviour' as keywords in their research, as further highlighted in Figure 6, which was developed using Bibliometrix analysis in RStudio. Additionally, keywords such as 'promotional methods,' 'consumer perception,' 'promotional offers,' 'perception,' 'pricing,' and 'purchase intention' are also frequently employed in the remaining 321 papers of this dataset, illustrating their close association with the research field.

Figure 6 Word cloud for most frequently used author's keywords (see online version for colours)



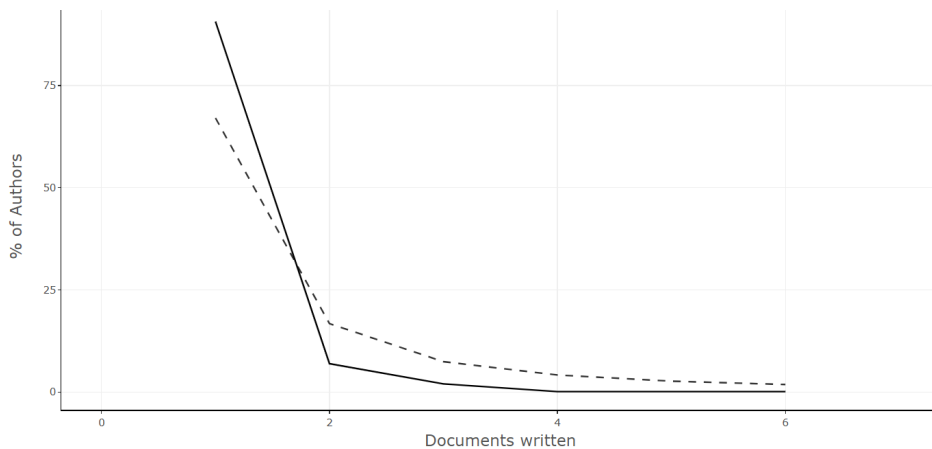
Source: Rstudio software

4.8 Lotka's Law

To identify significant authors, the review used a citation matrix, total publications, and total citations. For research question 3, the authors employed bibliometric laws such as

Lotka's Law and Bradford's Law. Lotka's Law, a prominent bibliometric principle, was applied to analyse how authors distribute their publications within a specific research domain. Established in 1926, Lotka's Law posits that approximately 60% of researchers have only one publication, around 15% contribute two documents, and nearly 6.6% produce three papers in a given field (Nusair et al., 2019; Tepe et al., 2022; Chakraborty et al., 2021; Palacios et al., 2021; Rodríguez Orejuela et al., 2020). Figure 7 compares Lotka's distribution of scientific production with the observed production of authors. The analysis revealed that the majority of authors, "specifically 90.6%", contributed only one paper. Additionally, 7% of authors published two papers, and 2% contributed three papers on the subject. These findings are notably inconsistent with Lotka's Law, which suggests that 60% of authors should only contribute one paper. Similarly, the proportions of authors publishing two and three papers are lower than expected based on the established distribution.

Figure 7 Scientific distribution of papers according to Lotka's Law



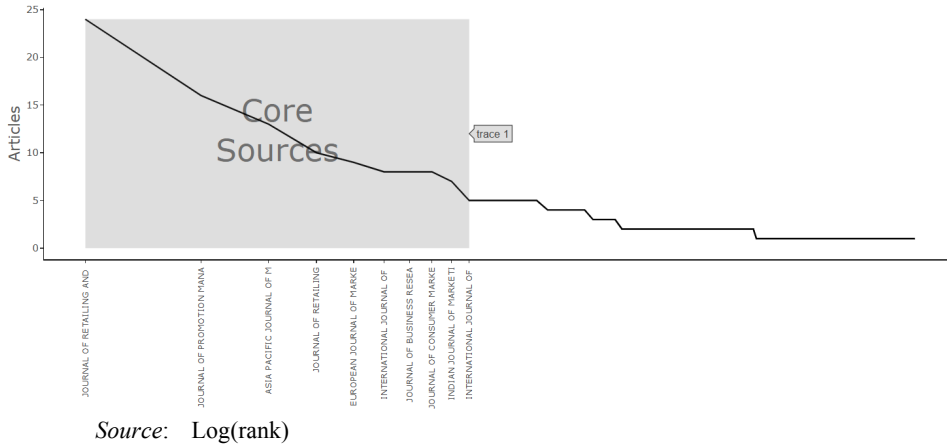
Therefore, the findings revealed a remarkable deviation between Lotka's Law and the authors' contribution to the sales promotion research field. Moreover, our study suggests that some pertinent authors are significantly shaping this domain and providing potential avenues for future researchers to expand this field of study.

4.9 Bradford's Law

We identified the core journals using Bradford's Law, which divides the total number of sources into three zones, each representing approximately one-third of the entire dataset (Shenton and Hay-Gibson, 2009; Rathika et al., 2020). Zone one, known as the 'nuclear zone' or 'core zone,' consists of highly productive sources. Zone two contains sources with moderate contributions, while zone three includes journals that contribute the least to the dataset. The core zone is particularly valuable for researchers as it highlights the most relevant papers in the field. These papers are typically published in journals within the core zone, which holds the majority of essential literature related to the subject matter.

As Figure 8 shows, that the documents that fall within the core zone are “*Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*”, “*Journal of Promotion Management*”, “*Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*”, “*Journal of Retailing*”, “*European Journal of Marketing*”, and so on, which predominantly publish the most relevant and significant papers.

Figure 8 Bradford’s Law



The results show that 145 journals published the entire dataset of 317 papers. Specifically, the first segment, containing 10 journals, published 108 papers; the second segment, comprising 38 journals, published 105 papers; and the remaining 97 papers were distributed among 104 journals in the third segment. This distribution demonstrates that over one-third of the papers were published by the first few journals, followed by a segment with moderate productivity. This pattern aligns with Bradford’s Law, as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6 Distribution of total journals and papers as per Bradford’s law

Zone	Journal	Papers	Percentage
Core zone	10	108	34.069
First zone	38	105	33.123
Second zone	97	104	32.808
Total	145	317	100

4.10 Citation network analysis

The authors employed citation network analysis to address research question 4, identifying the most influential scholarly documents. This approach examines the frequency with which papers are cited by other researchers, providing insights into those that have had the greatest impact on the academic community (Bhaiswar et al., 2021; Agarwal and Kumar, 2020; Strozzi et al., 2017; de Moya-Anegón et al., 2014; Qiu et al., 2017; Kaur et al., 2022; Quinn et al., 2013; Iyengar and Bharathi, 2018). By evaluating how often these papers are referenced, citation network analysis highlights the

publications that have significantly contributed to advancing the field. Table 7 presents the papers with the highest influence based on both local and global citations. Global citation analysis accounts for all citations a paper has received, while local citation analysis focuses on how frequently a paper is cited within the dataset of 340 papers analysed in the study (Kent Baker et al., 2020).

Table 7 Top 10 cited papers

<i>Author/Year</i>	<i>Paper title</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>LC</i>	<i>GC</i>
Sirohi (1998)	"A model of consumer perceptions and store loyalty intentions for a supermarket retailer"	<i>"Journal of Retailing"</i>	03	569
Burton et al. (1998)	"A scale for measuring attitude toward private label products and an examination of its psychological and behavioural correlates"	<i>"Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science"</i>	06	380
Wansink (1996).	"Can Package Size Accelerate Usage Volume?"	<i>"Journal of Marketing"</i>	04	363
Darke and Chung (2005)	"Effects of pricing and promotion on consumer perceptions: it depends on how you frame it."	<i>"Journal of Retailing"</i>	23	215
Ramanathan et al. (2017)	"Role of social media in retail network operations and marketing to enhance customer satisfaction"	<i>"International Journal of Operations and Production Management"</i>	00	184
Kivetz and Simonson (2003)	"The Idiosyncratic Fit Heuristic: Effort Advantage as a Determinant of Consumer Response to Loyalty Programs"	<i>"Journal of Marketing Research"</i>	03	177
Awan et al. (2015)	"Factors affecting Halal purchase intention – evidence from Pakistan's Halal food sector"	<i>"Management Research review"</i>	00	175
Akram et al. (2018)	"How website quality affects online impulse buying: Moderating effects of sales promotion and credit card use"	<i>"Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics"</i>	02	153
Valette-Florence et al. (2011)	"The impact of brand personality and sales promotions on brand equity"	<i>"Journal of Business Research"</i>	11	151
Nguyen-Phuoc et al. (2020)	"Factors influencing customer's loyalty towards ride-hailing taxi services – A case study of Vietnam"	<i>Transportation Research Part A</i>	01	148

The paper "*A model of consumer perceptions and store loyalty intentions for a supermarket retailer*" by Sirohi (1998) has garnered the highest number of global citations. This study focuses on store loyalty intentions of current customers for a multistore grocery retailer. Following this, "*A scale for measuring attitude toward private label products and an examination of its psychological and behavioural correlates*" by Burton et al. (1998) examines how consumers can select between price-related discounts

In the first cluster (red), the most influential studies include “The Idiosyncratic Fit Heuristic: Effort Advantage as a Determinant of Consumer Response to Loyalty Programs” by Kivetz and Simonson (2003), and “Factors influencing customer’s loyalty towards ride-hailing taxi services – A case study of Vietnam” by Nguyen-Phuoc et al. (2020). Additionally, Wansink’s (1996) study, “Can Package Size Accelerate Usage Volume?”, is part of this influential group.

The second cluster (green) features notable documents like “How website quality affects online impulse buying: Moderating effects of sales promotion and credit card use” by Akram et al. (2018), and “Effects of pricing and promotion on consumer perceptions: it depends on how you frame it” by Darke et al. (2005).

In the third cluster (blue), “A scale for measuring attitude toward private label products and an examination of its psychological and behavioural correlates” by Burton et al. (1998), and “Role of social media in retail network operations and marketing to enhance customer satisfaction” by Ramanathan et al. (2017) stand out as key studies.

Finally, in the fourth cluster (yellow), the study “*A model of consumer perceptions and store loyalty intentions for a supermarket retailer*” by Sirohi (1998) emerges as one of the top 10 documents based on the highest global citations.

These clusters reflect the significant contributions made by these studies to the field of consumer perception and behaviour towards sales promotions.

4.11 Bibliometric coupling analysis

Bibliographic coupling refers to the connection between two documents that share common references or citations, signifying a relationship based on the sources they cite. This technique is valuable for analysing the conceptual framework of a study and identifying related works. In this study, the authors used bibliographic coupling along with VOSviewer software to address research question 5 and explore the intellectual structure of the research domain related to brand and the automobile sector. This approach allowed the authors to gain insights into current research themes and identify potential future directions for the field.

Given the large number of documents, the authors focused on those that had been cited together at least fifty times, forming four clusters comprising fifty-four documents, as shown in Figure 10. To further understand these clusters, the authors applied content analysis to extract key areas for future research, summarised in Table 8. This analysis provides a clearer understanding of the prevailing topics and trends in brand research, highlighting promising avenues for future exploration.

Cluster 1 “Sales Promotion and Consumer Behaviour”

Cluster One (red bubbles in the bibliometric coupling network) is the largest, comprising 17 documents that explore factors influencing consumer perception and behaviour toward sales promotions. Key studies include Akram et al. (2018), who examined the impact of website quality on impulse buying behaviour in China, emphasising the role of sales promotions and credit card use. Badgaiyan and Verma (2015) focused on situational variables like mood and time pressure that drive impulsive buying, while Burton et al. (1998) analysed how consumers decide between price-related discounts and private label products, demonstrating that perceived value affects their choices. Tan and Hwang Chua

(2004) studied how the framing of sales offers influences consumer perceptions, and Teck Weng and Cyril de Run (2013) explored how consumer preferences for specific sales techniques impact purchase satisfaction. Together, these studies highlight the complex relationship between consumer behaviour, promotional strategies, and psychological factors in shaping purchasing decisions.

Cluster 2 “Risk Perception and Promotional Responses”

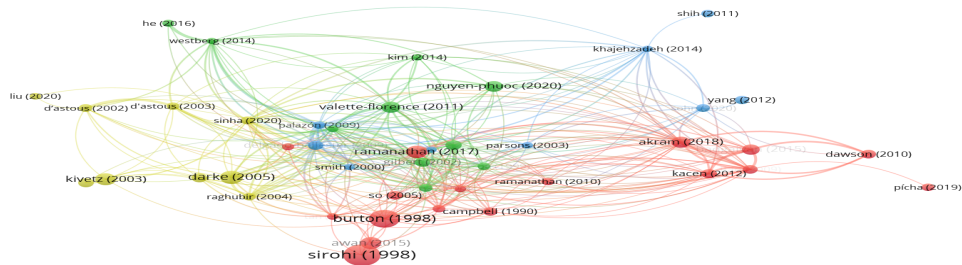
The second cluster, represented by green bubbles, examines how risk perception affects consumer responses to promotional offers, focusing on short-term effects. Garretson and Clow (1999) and Gilbert and Jackaria (2002) studied consumer reactions to coupons and price discounts, highlighting how perceived risks, such as concerns about product quality or promotion effectiveness, influence consumer decisions. Laroche et al. (2003) proposed a multidimensional model linking cognitive, affective, and behavioural patterns to coupons and buy-one-get-one-free offers. The model suggests that consumer responses are driven not only by the value of the promotion but also by emotional and rational reactions influenced by perceived risks. These studies emphasise that risk perception significantly shapes consumer engagement with promotions.

Cluster 3 “Consumer Response to Promotions”

Cluster three, represented by blue bubbles, explores how factors like promotion type, benefit level, price consciousness, and deal framing impact consumer preferences and behaviours. Delgado et al. (2009) examined the interaction between promotional benefit levels and promotion types, showing how these factors affect consumer responses. Palazon and Delgado (2009) investigated how price consciousness influences consumer evaluations of price discounts and premiums, revealing that more price-sensitive consumers react differently to various promotional offers. Smith et al. (2000) emphasised how deal framing influences consumer preferences and retailer selection, even when the offers are similar in cost. Lastly, Yang et al. (2012) explored how word-of-mouth (WOM) volume and valence affect product sales, suggesting that positive WOM can enhance the effectiveness of promotional strategies.

Cluster 4 “Consumer Perception Dynamics”

The fourth cluster, represented by yellow bubbles, examines consumer evaluation and perception of coupons and how these perceptions shape the overall perceived value of promotions. Alvarez et al. (2005) emphasised the need to understand consumer preferences and behaviours to design effective promotions. Sinha et al. (2020) explored how product categories affect the perceived value of hedonic and utilitarian benefits in promotions, showing different responses based on product type. d’Astous et al. (2002) studied the cognitive and emotional responses triggered by premium promotions, finding that emotions play a key role in consumer evaluation. Kivetz and Simonson (2003) examined how the effort required to earn rewards in loyalty programs impacts their attractiveness, revealing that higher effort can decrease consumer engagement. These studies together form a framework for understanding how factors like preferences, product categories, effort, and emotion shape the perceived value of promotions.

Figure 10 Bibliometric coupling analysis (see online version for colours)

Source: VOS Viewer

Table 8 Cluster research: current and future directions

Cluster	Current research	Future research agendas
Cluster 1 “Sales Promotion and Consumer Behaviour”	Mainly concerned with the complex interplay between sales promotions, consumer perceptions, and purchasing behaviour (Akram et al., 2018; Badgaiyan and Verma, 2015.; Burton et al., 1998; Teck Weng and Cyril de Run, 2013; Tan, 2014)	Cross-cultural studies could explore how consumer behaviour varies across regions, also longitudinal studies could investigate the lasting impact of sales promotions on customer satisfaction over time
Cluster 2 “Risk Perception and Promotional Responses”	Examined how promotional tools (e.g., coupons, price discounts) and risk perception influence consumer attitudes and behaviours, and refining the cognitive-affective-behavioural model (Garretson and Clow, 1999; Gilbert and Jackaria, 2002; Laroché et al., 2003)	Future research could explore long-term impacts on brand loyalty, digital promotions, cross-cultural differences, and predictive analytics for consumer behaviour
Cluster 3 “Consumer Response to Promotions”	Explored how promotion type, benefit level, price consciousness, deal framing, and WOM affect consumer behaviour and preferences (Delgado et al., 2009; Palazon and Delgado, 2009; Yang et al., 2012; Smith and Smith, 2000)	Future research could look into online promotions, customised offers, cultural differences, and predicting consumer behaviour
Cluster 4 “Consumer Perception Dynamics”	Exploring consumer perceptions of premium-based promotions, focusing on how preferences, product categories, effort, and semantics shape perceived value and purchase behaviour (Alvarez et al., 2005; d’Astous et al., 2002; Kivetz and Simonson, 2003; Sinha et al., 2020)	Future research could explore the impact of digital platforms and, and the use of advanced analytics to predict consumer responses to promotions

5 Conclusion

The spread of sales promotion has gained significant recognition in both the marketplace and academic literature, particularly regarding its impact on consumer perceptions and behaviour. This bibliometric analysis quantitatively reviews the literature concerning the effects of sales promotion on consumers by analysing documents indexed in the Scopus database. The authors aimed to observe researchers' contributions in this area, utilising a dataset of 321 papers published from 1980 to 2024. Through this bibliometric analysis, the study identified yearly publication patterns, contributive authors, institutions, countries, and the most influential documents. Additionally, the findings were compared with bibliometric laws, such as Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law.

The analysis revealed an exponential growth in the field of sales promotion, particularly between 2016 and 2024, which accounted for the majority of the dataset. Burton Scot was identified as the most productive and influential author in this area, having published three papers and receiving a total of 529 citations. Rajagopal, who had the highest h-index of 6 and 94 citations, was also a significant contributor. However, the analysis suggests that the field is still experiencing relatively slow development and growth.

In terms of influential studies, Sirohi et al.'s (1998) work, "A model of consumer perceptions and store loyalty intentions for a supermarket retailer", published in the *Journal of Retailing*, emerged as the most globally cited document. On the other hand, Darke et al.'s (2005) study, "Effects of pricing and promotion on consumer perceptions: it depends on how you frame it", also published in the *Journal of Retailing*, received the highest number of local citations. Among the leading journals, the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* published the most documents in this area, with 24 publications, followed by the *Journal of Promotion Management* with 16 documents.

USA, India, UK, and China were identified as the primary contributors to the research in this field. *Drexel University* emerged as the top institution, having published seven papers. This bibliometric analysis offers valuable insights into the current trends in sales promotion research, highlighting the key contributors, journals, and countries that shape the development of this research area.

To address research question 6, the study analysed the bibliographic coupling network to identify current and future research directions in sales promotion. The research underscores the importance of understanding consumer perceptions and behaviour in response to promotions. Future studies should focus on the impact of digital platforms and cross-cultural differences on consumer behaviour. Marketers must also address risk perceptions by offering customised and personalised promotions. Additionally, factors such as product category, effort, and emotions significantly influence consumer evaluations, highlighting the need for strategic promotion designs, particularly for premium offers and loyalty programs. These clusters identify key research areas and suggest promising avenues for future investigation.

6 Limitations

This study offers several valuable contributions to the literature on sales promotions and consumer behaviour; however, like any study, it has its limitations. Recognising these drawbacks is essential for refining future research and advancing the field. First, the

study's authors focused solely on the Scopus database, which may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings. Future studies could benefit from incorporating additional databases such as Web of Science, Dimensions, or others to capture a broader range of relevant research. Additionally, some important documents might have been overlooked due to the search string and filtration techniques applied in the dataset. Future researchers could explore different search strategies to ensure no significant studies are missed.

While the current study provides a detailed analysis of prolific authors, influential journals, countries, institutions, and the relationships among authors, sources, and keywords, further enhancements could be made by applying advanced methodologies. For instance, the inclusion of advanced techniques such as PageRank analysis or updated multiple network matrices could provide greater insights on the structure and effect of the research area. Furthermore, while bibliometric analysis is a highly successful quantitative tool, future research may benefit from combining methodology-based systematic reviews, which might offer a more comprehensive qualitative perspective on the subject matter.

Conflicts of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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