

Bibliometric Exploration of Consumer Behavior towards Sustainable Products

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ABSTRACT

This research provides a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of consumer behavior towards sustainable products, examining key themes, research trends, and author collaboration networks from 1971 to 2024. The study identifies central themes such as consumer behavior, food and organic products, planned behavior, consumer perception, and strategic approaches, with a notable emphasis on the role of social media. Research trends indicate a significant focus on the food sector, particularly organic products, and a consistent interest in understanding the psychological and social factors driving sustainable consumption. The analysis also highlights potential future research areas, including deepening the understanding of consumer behavior, enhancing consumer perceptions, leveraging social media for sustainability promotion, and developing effective strategic interventions. The author collaboration network reveals strong co-authorship ties within distinct clusters of researchers, suggesting the need for increased cross-collaboration to enhance the field's breadth and impact. This study offers valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers aiming to promote sustainable consumer behaviors and develop effective strategies for sustainability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing awareness of environmental issues and the urgent need to address climate change have led to a significant shift in consumer behavior towards more sustainable products [1], [2]. Over the past few decades, there has been a growing recognition of the impact that consumer choices have on the environment [3]. This awareness has fostered a global

movement towards sustainability, influencing not only individual consumers but also businesses and policymakers [4]. As a result, sustainable products, which are designed to minimize negative environmental impacts, have gained substantial traction in the market [5]. Consumers are increasingly considering the environmental footprint of their purchases, leading to a surge in demand for eco-friendly goods [2].

The evolution of consumer behavior towards sustainable products is multifaceted and influenced by various factors, including environmental awareness, social norms, and economic considerations [6]. Environmental awareness has been a critical driver, with consumers becoming more informed about the detrimental effects of non-sustainable products on the planet [7]. Educational campaigns, media coverage, and advocacy by environmental organizations have played pivotal roles in raising awareness [8]. Moreover, social norms are shifting, with sustainability becoming a key aspect of societal values [9]. Consumers are increasingly influenced by their peers and communities to adopt sustainable consumption patterns, leading to a collective shift towards environmentally responsible behaviors [10].

Economic factors also play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior towards sustainable products [11]. While sustainable products often come with a higher price tag, consumers are beginning to recognize the long-term economic benefits associated with these choices [12]. For instance, energy-efficient appliances and electric vehicles may have higher upfront costs but result in significant savings over time [13]. Additionally, the growing availability of sustainable products at various price points has made them more accessible to a broader range of consumers [14]. Companies are responding to this demand by incorporating sustainability into their business models and product offerings, thereby driving the market for sustainable goods [15].

Despite the positive trends, there are still barriers to the widespread adoption of sustainable products [16]. These barriers include a lack of standardized information on product sustainability, perceived higher costs, and limited availability in certain regions [17]. Furthermore, consumer skepticism about the actual environmental benefits of certain products, often referred to as "greenwashing," can hinder the adoption of genuinely sustainable options [18]. Addressing these

challenges requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and consumers [19]. Policymakers need to establish clear regulations and standards for sustainability claims, while businesses must ensure transparency and authenticity in their sustainability practices [20]. Consumers, on the other hand, need to be equipped with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions.

Despite the increasing interest and shift towards sustainable products, there remains a gap in understanding the comprehensive landscape of consumer behavior in this context. While numerous studies have explored various aspects of sustainable consumption, there is a lack of cohesive insights that integrate these findings into a holistic understanding. This gap is particularly evident in the academic literature, where fragmented research efforts often result in isolated conclusions that do not provide a comprehensive view of consumer behavior towards sustainable products. This research aims to bridge this gap by conducting a bibliometric exploration of the existing literature, identifying key trends, patterns, and knowledge gaps in this field.

The objective of this research is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of consumer behavior towards sustainable products. By systematically reviewing and analyzing the existing body of literature, this study aims to identify the most influential research works, key authors, prominent journals, and dominant themes in the field. Additionally, this research seeks to uncover emerging trends and potential areas for future investigation. Through this bibliometric exploration, we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge, highlight critical insights, and offer recommendations for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to foster the adoption of sustainable products.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Evolution of Consumer Behavior towards Sustainable Products*

The evolution of consumer behavior towards sustainable products has been a subject of extensive academic scrutiny over the past few decades. Early research in the 1990s focused on understanding the basic motivations behind environmentally conscious consumption. Scholars such as [21] highlighted the growing consumer concern for the environment and the corresponding rise in green marketing. This period marked the initial recognition of the link between consumer choices and environmental impact, laying the groundwork for subsequent studies.

In the early 2000s, research began to delve deeper into the specific factors influencing sustainable consumption. For instance, [22] examined the role of demographic variables, such as age, gender, and income, in shaping consumer attitudes towards green products. This era also saw the introduction of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by [23] into the realm of sustainable consumption, providing a robust framework for understanding how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence purchasing decisions.

2.2 Drivers of Sustainable Consumer Behavior

Several key drivers of sustainable consumer behavior have been identified in the literature. Environmental awareness remains a predominant factor, as noted by numerous studies [24], [25]. Consumers with a higher level of environmental concern are more

likely to engage in sustainable purchasing. This awareness is often shaped by education, media exposure, and personal experiences with environmental degradation.

Social norms and peer influence are also critical drivers. As noted by [26], consumers are influenced by the behaviors and expectations of their social circles. The desire to conform to socially accepted practices can significantly impact sustainable consumption patterns. Moreover, the rise of social media has amplified the visibility of sustainable behaviors, further reinforcing these norms.

Economic incentives and barriers are another crucial aspect. While sustainable products are often perceived as more expensive, several studies have highlighted the long-term economic benefits, such as energy savings and durability [27]. Additionally, the availability of government subsidies and incentives for sustainable products can mitigate initial cost concerns, making them more appealing to consumers.

2.3 Barriers to Sustainable Consumption

Despite the positive trends, several barriers to sustainable consumption persist. One significant barrier is the perception of higher costs associated with sustainable products. Studies by [28] indicate that while consumers recognize the environmental benefits of sustainable products, the higher price point often deters purchase. This is

particularly relevant in markets where disposable income is limited, and consumers prioritize immediate cost savings over long-term benefits.

Another barrier is the issue of information asymmetry. Consumers often face challenges in accessing accurate and reliable information about the sustainability of products. The prevalence of greenwashing, where companies falsely claim environmental benefits, exacerbates this problem. As a result, consumers may become skeptical of sustainability claims, as highlighted by [29]. This skepticism can lead to a lack of trust in genuinely sustainable products, hindering their adoption.

Cultural factors also play a role in shaping consumer behavior towards sustainable products. Research by [30] suggests that cultural values and traditions can influence perceptions and attitudes towards sustainability. In some cultures, sustainable practices may be deeply ingrained, while in others, they may be relatively new and less accepted. Understanding these cultural nuances is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote sustainable consumption globally.

2.4 Role of Marketing and Branding

Marketing and branding strategies play a pivotal role in influencing consumer behavior towards sustainable products. Effective green marketing can enhance consumer perceptions and drive adoption. Studies by [31] emphasize the importance of aligning marketing messages with consumer values and

ensuring transparency in sustainability claims. Brands that communicate their environmental efforts authentically and transparently are more likely to gain consumer trust and loyalty.

The concept of ethical branding has also gained traction in recent years. Ethical brands, which prioritize sustainability and social responsibility, can create a strong emotional connection with consumers. As noted by [32], consumers are increasingly seeking brands that align with their values and contribute positively to society. This shift towards ethical branding reflects a broader trend towards conscious consumption, where consumers make purchasing decisions based on a brand's ethical and environmental credentials.

2.5 Impact of Technology and Innovation

Technological advancements and innovation are transforming the landscape of sustainable consumption. The rise of digital platforms and e-commerce has made it easier for consumers to access sustainable products and information. Online reviews and social media have become powerful tools for consumers to share their experiences and influence others. Research by [33] highlights the impact of digital word-of-mouth on consumer behavior, particularly in the context of sustainable products.

Innovation in product design and manufacturing processes is also driving the adoption of sustainable products.

Companies are increasingly investing in research and development to create eco-friendly products that meet consumer needs without compromising on quality or performance. The development of biodegradable materials, energy-efficient technologies, and circular economy models are examples of how innovation is contributing to sustainability. These advancements not only enhance the appeal of sustainable products but also reduce their environmental impact.

3. METHODS

This research employs a bibliometric analysis to explore the landscape of consumer behavior towards sustainable products. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method used to analyze the body of literature in a specific field by examining publication patterns, citation analysis, and co-authorship networks. The study begins with a

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Data Metrics

comprehensive search of Google Scholar, using keywords such as "consumer behavior," "sustainable products," "green consumption," and "environmentally friendly products." The initial search results are filtered based on relevance, time frame (1971-2024), and the inclusion of peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and review articles. The selected publications are then analyzed using VOSviewer to identify key trends, influential authors, prominent journals, and dominant research themes. Additionally, co-citation and co-authorship networks are mapped to understand the collaborative landscape and intellectual structure of the field. The findings from the bibliometric analysis are further contextualized through a narrative synthesis, highlighting the evolution of research themes and identifying gaps and future research directions. This method provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature, offering valuable insights into the development and current state of research on consumer behavior towards sustainable products.

Table 1. Data Citation Metrics

Publication years	1971-2024
Citation years	53 (1971-2024)
Paper	980
Citations	164866
Cites/year	3110.68
Cites/paper	168.23
Cites/author	77720.43
Papers/author	417.96
Author/paper	2.92
h-index	191
g-index	383
hI,norm	134
hI,annual	2.53
hA-index	67
Papers with ACC	: 1,2,5,10,20:950,909,766,597,344

Source: Publish or Perish Output, 2024

The table provides a detailed snapshot of citation metrics for research publications from 1971 to 2024, covering 53 years. It encompasses 980 papers, which have collectively garnered 164,866 citations. This substantial citation count indicates the high impact and recognition of the research within the academic community. The average citations per year stand at 3110.68, highlighting the consistent annual influence of these papers. Each paper, on average, has been cited 168.23 times, underscoring the significant individual impact of the publications.

In terms of authorship, the metrics reveal a highly productive research environment. The average number of citations per author is 77,720.43, and each author has contributed approximately 418 papers on average. The collaborative nature of the research is evident, with an average of 2.92 authors per paper. This suggests a strong culture of teamwork and shared intellectual contributions in this field. The h-index of 191

signifies that 191 papers have been cited at least 191 times each, reflecting both the quantity and quality of the research output. Similarly, the g-index of 383 indicates that the top 383 papers together have received a high number of citations, further emphasizing the impact of highly-cited works.

Additional metrics such as the hI,norm (134) and hI,annual (2.53) provide nuanced insights into the individual contributions and annual impact of the research, respectively. The hA-index of 67 highlights the influence of newer publications. The "Papers with ACC" metric shows the distribution of papers reaching specific citation milestones, with 950 papers having at least 1 citation and 344 papers having at least 20 citations. These metrics collectively illustrate a vibrant and influential research community that continues to shape and inform the field of consumer behavior towards sustainable products.

Table 2. Top Cited Research

Citations	Authors and year	Title
5076	[34]	Applying the technology acceptance model and flow theory to online consumer behavior
3570	[35]	Sustainable food consumption: Exploring the consumer "attitude-behavioral intention" gap
2485	[36]	Predicting green product consumption using theory of planned behavior and reasoned action
2183	[37]	Consumer behavior and culture: Consequences for global marketing and advertising
2132	[38]	Consumer behavior: Buying, having, and being
1795	[39]	Factors affecting green purchase behaviour and future research directions
1676	[40]	Promoting sustainable consumption: Determinants of green purchases by Swiss consumers
1658	[41]	Pro-environmental products: marketing influence on consumer purchase decision
1617	[42]	Mindful consumption: A customer-centric approach to sustainability
1596	[43]	How to SHIFT consumer behaviors to be more sustainable: A literature review and guiding framework

Source: Publish or Perish Output, 2024

The table lists the top ten most cited research papers in the field of consumer behavior towards sustainable products,

highlighting their significant impact and influence. The most cited paper, with 5076 citations, is by M. Koufaris (2002) titled

"Applying the technology acceptance model and flow theory to online consumer behavior." This paper's high citation count indicates its foundational role in understanding how consumers interact with technology in online shopping environments, blending technology acceptance and flow theory to explain consumer behavior.

The second most cited work, "Sustainable food consumption: Exploring the consumer 'attitude-behavioral intention' gap" by I. Vermeir and W. Verbeke (2006), with 3570 citations, addresses the crucial gap between consumer attitudes and their actual purchasing behaviors regarding sustainable food products. This study's findings are critical for developing strategies to bridge this gap, emphasizing the need for more targeted and effective communication and marketing efforts to convert positive attitudes into actual sustainable purchases.

Other notable papers include J. Paul, A. Modi, and J. Patel's (2016) "Predicting green product consumption using theory of planned behavior and reasoned action" with 2485 citations, and M. De Mooij's (2019) "Consumer behavior and culture: Consequences for global marketing and advertising" with 2183 citations. These works contribute to the understanding of the theoretical frameworks that predict green product consumption and the cultural factors influencing consumer behavior globally. Additionally, the presence of recent works like K. White, R. Habib, and D.J. Hardisty's (2019) "How to SHIFT consumer behaviors to be more sustainable" with 1596 citations, reflects ongoing efforts to synthesize and guide future research in promoting sustainable consumer behaviors, underscoring the dynamic and evolving nature of this research field.

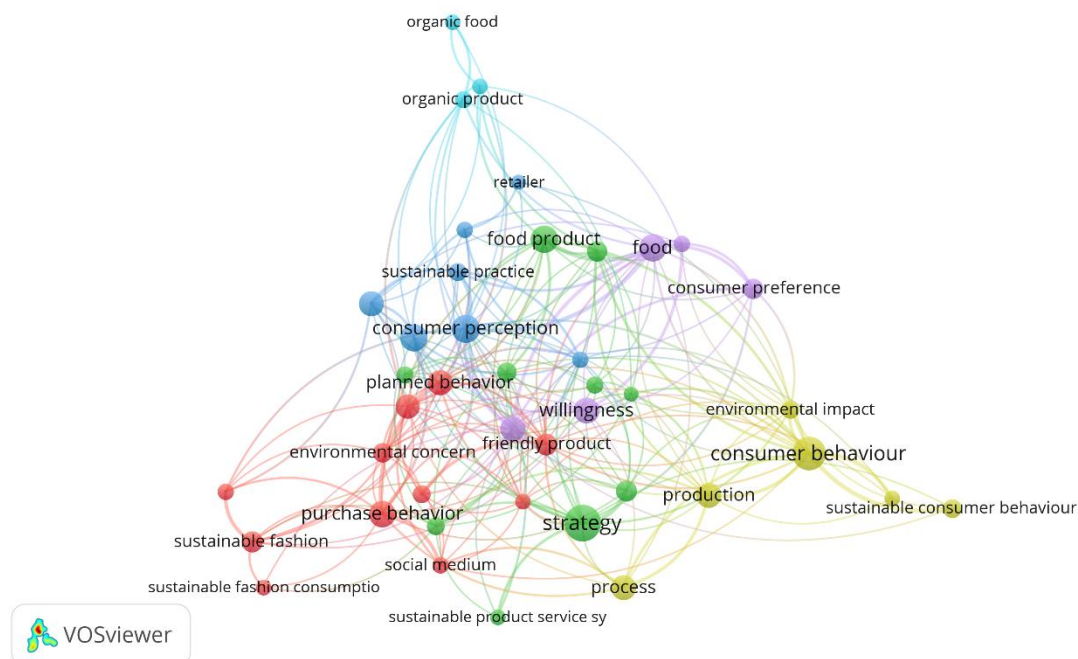


Figure 1. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

The VOSviewer visualization depicts a co-occurrence network of keywords related to research on consumer behavior towards sustainable products. The nodes represent keywords, and the size of each node indicates

the frequency of occurrence. The lines connecting the nodes represent co-occurrences, with thicker lines indicating stronger connections. The color coding of the

nodes and lines indicates different clusters or thematic groups within the research field.

The yellow cluster prominently features terms like "consumer behavior," "sustainable consumer behavior," and "environmental impact." This cluster focuses on the broad study of how consumers interact with sustainable products and the environmental consequences of these behaviors. The presence of terms like "production" and "process" suggests an interest in how consumer behavior influences and is influenced by the production processes of sustainable goods. The connectivity within this cluster underscores the importance of understanding the holistic impact of consumer choices on sustainability.

The light blue cluster includes keywords such as "organic food," "organic product," "food product," and "retailer." This cluster centers around the consumption of organic and sustainable food products, highlighting the role of retailers in promoting these products. The strong connections between "organic food" and "organic product" suggest a focus on the specific attributes and benefits of organic consumption. The linkage with "consumer perception" indicates that consumer attitudes and perceptions are critical factors in the adoption of organic food products.

The red cluster is characterized by terms such as "planned behavior," "purchase behavior," "environmental concern," and "sustainable fashion." This cluster explores the theoretical underpinnings of consumer behavior, particularly the Theory of Planned Behavior, and its application to sustainable consumption. The inclusion of "environmental concern" signifies the importance of environmental awareness in driving sustainable purchase behaviors. The presence of "sustainable fashion" points to specific industries where these behaviors are particularly relevant.

The green cluster includes terms such as "strategy," "friendly product," "social medium," and "process." This cluster examines the strategic approaches businesses use to promote sustainable products and the

role of social media in influencing consumer behavior. The connection between "strategy" and "friendly product" indicates the importance of developing products that align with consumer values and environmental goals. The inclusion of "social medium" underscores the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability.

The cluster of purple features keywords like "consumer perception," "sustainable practice," and "willingness." It focuses on how consumers perceive sustainable practices and their willingness to engage in such behaviors. The links between "consumer perception" and "food product" suggest that perceptions significantly impact sustainable food choices. This cluster highlights the role of consumer attitudes and the factors that influence their willingness to adopt sustainable practices.

From the image, we find that the term "consumer behavior" is one of the largest nodes in the network, indicating its central importance in the research field. Its connections with other key terms like "environmental impact," "production," and "process" suggest that understanding consumer behavior is crucial for addressing broader sustainability issues. The network shows strong linkages between clusters, indicating that different themes within sustainable consumer behavior research are highly interconnected. For example, the connection between "consumer perception" in the blue cluster and "food product" in the light blue cluster highlights the overlap between consumer attitudes and specific product categories. Similarly, the link between "strategy" in the green cluster and "willingness" in the blue cluster suggests that strategic approaches can significantly influence consumer willingness to adopt sustainable practices.

The prominence of terms related to consumer perceptions and attitudes, such as "consumer perception," "willingness," and "environmental concern," underscores the critical role of psychological factors in sustainable consumption. These terms are

well-connected with others, indicating that consumer attitudes and perceptions are central to understanding and promoting sustainable behaviors. The network highlights specific industries where sustainable consumer behavior is particularly relevant, such as food and fashion. The presence of terms like "organic food," "organic product," and "sustainable fashion" indicates focused research on these sectors, reflecting

their importance in the broader context of sustainable consumption. The term "social medium" in the green cluster signifies the growing role of social media in shaping consumer behavior. The connections between "social medium," "strategy," and "process" suggest that digital platforms are not only influential in spreading information about sustainable practices but also in shaping strategic approaches for businesses.

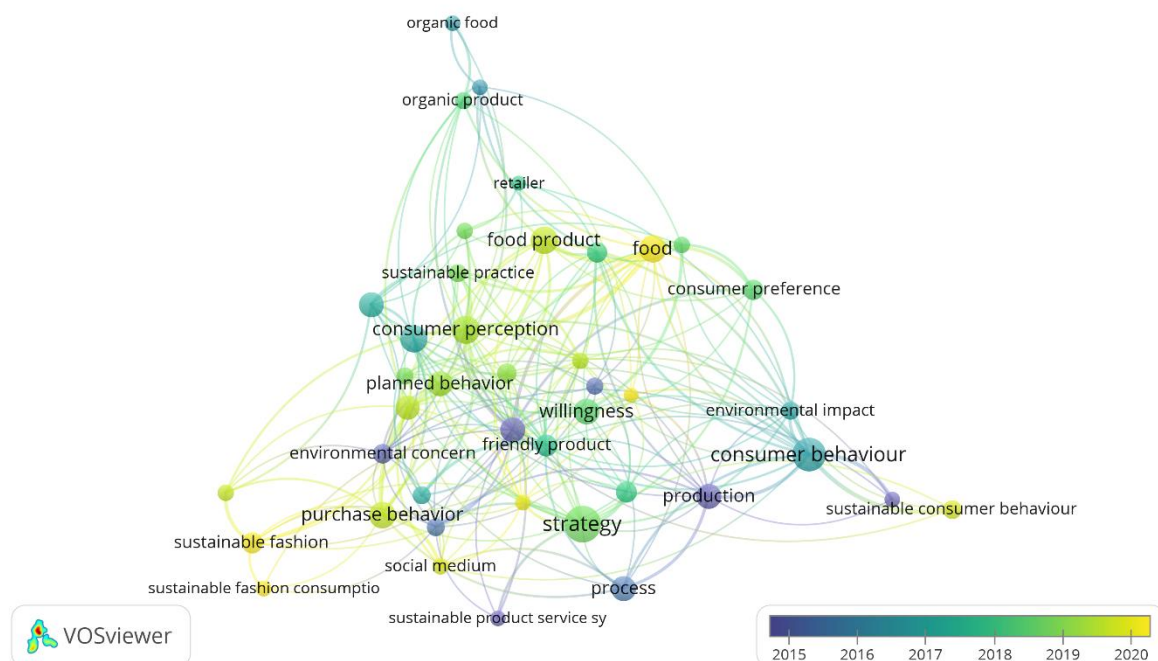


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2024

The VOSviewer visualization presents a co-occurrence network of keywords related to research on consumer behavior towards sustainable products, focusing on the period from 2015 to 2020. The nodes represent keywords, with their sizes indicating the frequency of occurrence. The lines connecting the nodes represent co-occurrences, with thicker lines indicating stronger connections. The color gradient from blue to yellow represents the timeline, where blue denotes earlier years (2015) and yellow indicates more recent years (2020).

The color gradient in the visualization indicates a clear growth in research activity from 2015 to 2020. Keywords that transition

from blue to yellow, such as "consumer behavior" and "organic food," reflect increasing attention and evolving research trends in these areas. The largest cluster in blue-green includes keywords like "consumer behavior," "sustainable consumer behavior," and "environmental impact." This cluster indicates a primary focus on understanding how consumer behaviors impact sustainability and the environment. The size of the "consumer behavior" node and its strong connections suggest that this is a central theme in the research. The transition from blue to green and then to yellow shows a growing emphasis on this area, with

increasing research activity and interest over the years.

The green-yellow cluster includes keywords such as "organic food," "organic product," "food product," and "retailer." This cluster emphasizes research on sustainable and organic food products. The presence of terms like "consumer perception" and "retailer" indicates a focus on how consumers perceive organic products and the role of retailers in promoting these products. The color gradient from green to yellow suggests a recent increase in interest and research activity in this area, particularly around 2019-2020.

The blue-green cluster includes keywords such as "consumer perception," "willingness," and "sustainable practice." This cluster focuses on how consumers perceive sustainable practices and their willingness to

adopt them. The strong connections between "consumer perception" and "food product" suggest that perceptions significantly impact sustainable food choices. The color gradient shows ongoing interest in this area, with a slight increase in recent years. The green-blue cluster includes terms such as "strategy," "social medium," "friendly product," and "process." This cluster examines strategic approaches businesses use to promote sustainable products and the role of social media in influencing consumer behavior. The connections between "strategy," "social medium," and "friendly product" suggest that digital platforms are essential in shaping consumer attitudes towards sustainability. The green-blue gradient indicates that this area has been actively researched, with a stable level of interest over the years.

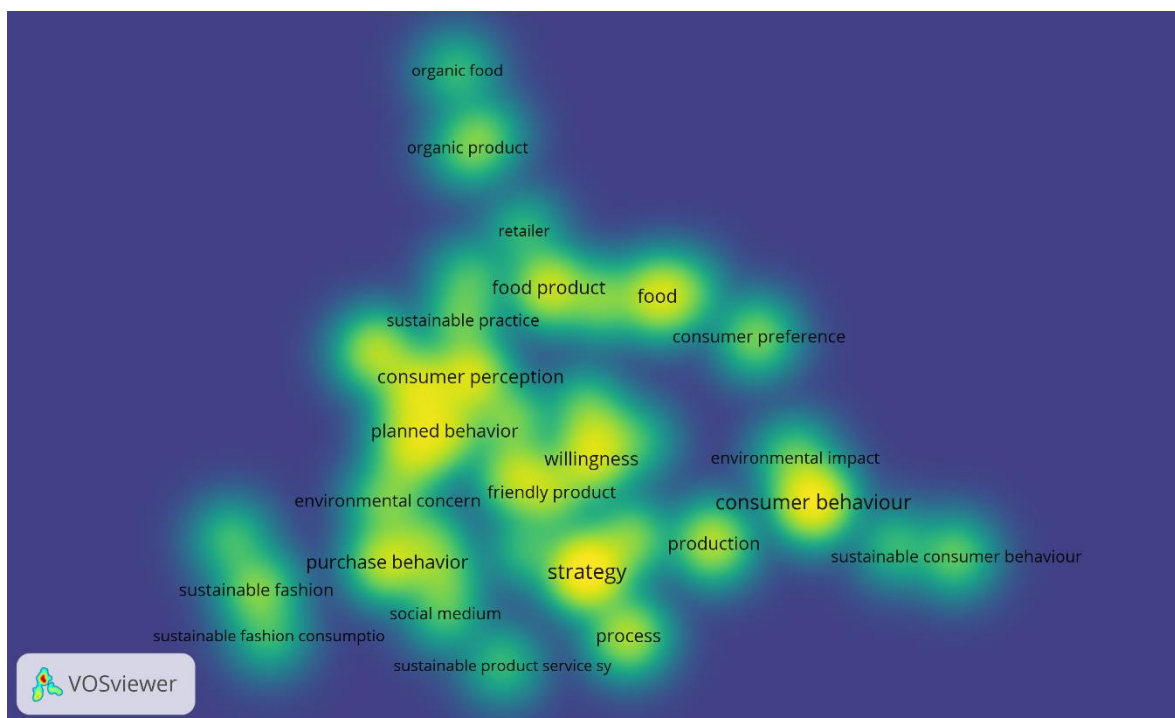


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

The VOSviewer heatmap visualization presents the co-occurrence network of keywords related to research on consumer behavior towards sustainable products. The intensity of the color (from blue to green to yellow) represents the frequency

of occurrence and significance of the keywords within the research. Yellow indicates the highest frequency and significance, followed by green and then blue. The term "consumer behavior" is highlighted in bright yellow, indicating its central

importance and high frequency in the research field. Its prominent position and connections to various other terms such as "environmental impact," "production," and "sustainable consumer behavior" signify that understanding consumer behavior is pivotal for advancing research on sustainability.

Keywords like "organic food," "organic product," "food product," and "food" are also highlighted prominently, particularly in green and yellow shades. This indicates a significant research interest in the food sector, focusing on how organic and sustainable food products are perceived and consumed by

consumers. The connections to terms like "retailer" and "consumer perception" suggest an integrated approach to studying the entire supply chain from production to retail and consumer acceptance. "Strategy" and "social medium" are notable keywords in the heatmap, suggesting the importance of strategic marketing and the role of social media in promoting sustainable products. The bright color of "strategy" indicates that developing effective strategies is a key focus area, while the inclusion of "social medium" points to the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping consumer behavior.

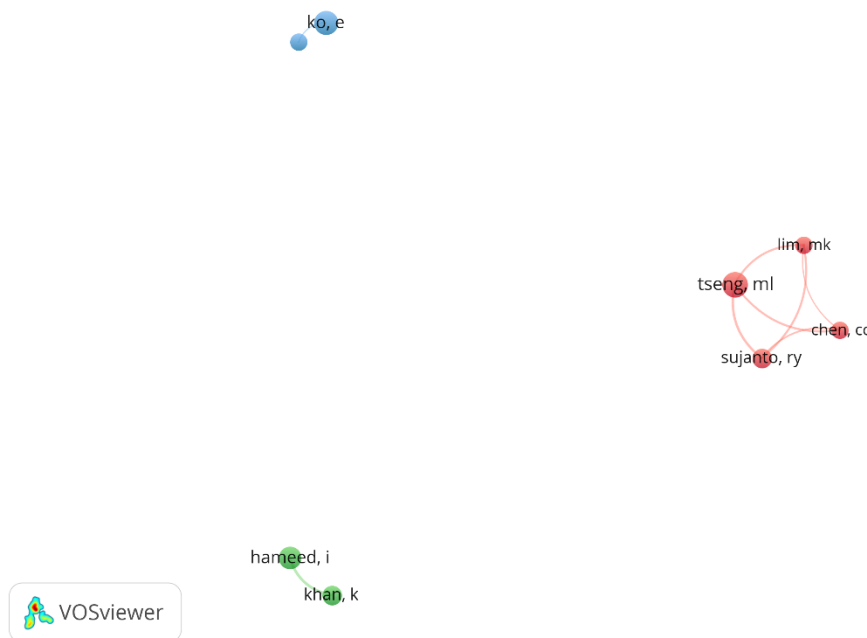


Figure 4. Author Collaboration Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2024

The VOSviewer visualization displays an author co-occurrence network related to research on consumer behavior towards sustainable products. The nodes represent individual authors, with the size of each node indicating the frequency of their publications. The lines connecting the nodes represent co-authorship relationships, with thicker lines indicating stronger collaboration. The colors denote different clusters of collaborating authors.

The network reveals three distinct clusters of authors. The red cluster includes

authors such as Tseng ML, Lim MK, Chen CC, and Sujanto RY, who have strong co-authorship ties, indicating frequent collaboration on research projects. This cluster signifies a closely-knit group of researchers working together on topics related to sustainable consumer behavior. The green cluster consists of Hameed I and Khan K, who also show a significant co-authorship relationship, suggesting a focused collaboration on specific research topics. Lastly, the blue cluster contains Ko E, who appears to have a more isolated but still

significant role in the research landscape. The separation of these clusters indicates that while there are strong collaborative networks within each group, there is less collaboration between the groups, suggesting potential areas for future cross-collaboration to enhance the research field.

5. CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis of the visualizations provides significant insights into the field of consumer behavior towards sustainable products. The thematic cluster analysis revealed that central themes include consumer behavior, food and organic products, planned behavior, consumer perception, and strategic approaches, with an emphasis on the role of social media. Research

trends indicate a growing focus on the food sector, particularly organic products, and a consistent interest in understanding the psychological and social factors that drive sustainable consumption. Potential future research topics include deepening the understanding of consumer behavior, enhancing consumer perceptions, leveraging social media for promoting sustainability, and developing effective strategic interventions. Lastly, the author collaboration network highlights strong co-authorship ties within distinct clusters of researchers, with less collaboration between these groups. This suggests a need for increased cross-collaboration among researchers to broaden the scope and impact of future studies in this important field.

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