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Augmented Reality and Consumer Purchase Intention: A Review of Literature

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Abstract

Augmented reality has gained popularity in various fields, including medicine, industry, and daily life, leading to increased research interest in their use. This study aims to review empirical research on the acceptance of AR in all relevant fields. A total of 51 Studies published between 2014 and 2025 have been reviewed. The study examined the field, theoretical framework, methodological design, and factors influencing AR acceptance and use. The literature demonstrates that AR enhances consumer purchase intention primarily through hedonic experience, interactivity, and perceived usefulness, while reducing perceived risk—though its effectiveness depends on cognitive load, privacy perceptions, and contextual fit. Many studies use the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as their theoretical framework. AR marketing applications primarily focus on retail, tourism, and advertising. This research summarizes studies by outcome variables to identify key themes across the application areas. The outcome variables fall into three categories: technology-related, product-related, brand-related. Overall AR technology has the potential to enhance both utilitarian and hedonic shopping experiences, whether in-store or online.

Keywords: *Augmented Reality, TAM, Empirical Research, Theoretical Framework, Hedonic Experience.*

Introduction

In recent years, the research interest in the use of all smart wearable technologies across a variety of fields, such as health, well-being, marketing and education has increased dramatically. (Koutromanos & Kazakou, 2023) A technology-enabled interactive system known as augmented reality (AR) incorporates computer-generated digital content, including text, audio, animations, and three-dimensional objects, into a user's real-world surroundings in real time. In contrast to fully immersive virtual environments, augmented reality (AR) allows users to simultaneously perceive and interact with both digital and physical stimuli by superimposing virtual elements that are spatially aligned with the real environment. By offering contextually relevant information through this smooth integration, augmented reality (AR) expands human perception and cognition and influences users' cognitive, affective, and behavioral realistic. AR creates a stronger connection between users' real-world surroundings and virtual objects. As a result, AR offers a more realistic, vivid, immersive, and interactive user experience. Due to the widespread use of mobile devices and the accessibility of fast wireless networks, a growing number of web-based and mobile augmented reality applications have surfaced to produce unique, engaging, entertaining, educational, and beneficial user experiences. As a result, augmented reality is developing into a disruptive technology that will change marketing in the years to come.Tan, Y.-C., Chandukala, S. R., & Reddy, S. K. (2021).According to a PwC industry report, AR generated $33 billion in net economic benefits in 2019. Additionally, by 2025 and 2030, the benefits will total $338.1 billion and $1.0924 trillion,

respectively. A synthesis of the current literature is necessary to provide direction for future research due to the increasing interest in AR marketing. However, the current literature on AR marketing is dispersed because academic research on the topic is still in its infancy. In order to obtain an integrated and comprehensive view of the state-of-the-art of AR marketing research and to identify the gaps for future research, we conduct a systematic literature review. This study sheds light on the elements unique to AR marketing, including theoretical lenses, AR type, application area, and application context. To show the current state of scholarly research, we also identify the focal themes in each application area based on the outcome variables. There are four ways in which this systematic review is different from previous literature reviews. This review first thoroughly examines the literature on augmented reality marketing. For manual review, we first selected 120 journal articles from various journals. These journal articles were published between 2014 and 2025. We have 51 journal articles in the final analysis after evaluating the details in accordance with a systematic review methodology. Second, a systematic review approach is used in this study, which enables improved integration and synthesis. It can aid AR researchers in comprehending current findings and identifying possible areas for further investigation. Third, this study summarizes the literature in terms of AR-specific factors, such as application areas, application context, and AR type. Lastly, this study provides a fresh viewpoint on the state-of-the-art of AR marketing research by identifying and classifying the AR literature according to its application areas.

Background

Globally, augmented reality (AR) has developed as a result of ongoing improvements in mobile, graphics, and computing technologies. Ivan Sutherland developed the first head-mounted display system in 1968, which laid the conceptual groundwork for augmented reality. Tom Caudell coined the term "augmented reality" in 1990 to refer to technology used in the production of aircraft. Due to severe technological and financial limitations, AR applications were initially limited to specialized fields like military training, aviation, and medical visualization. However, AR was able to enter consumer markets after 2010 thanks to the widespread adoption of smartphones, advancements in sensor technology, and improved internetconnectivity. The worldwide success of Pokémon GO in 2016 marked a significant turning point and illustrated AR's potential for widespread adoption. In the 2020s, advancements in artificial intelligence, 5G connectivity, and spatial computing have made augmented reality (AR) a vital tool in a variety of global industries, including retail, fashion, education, healthcare, marketing, tourism, and industrial operations. Although the use of augmented reality in India is relatively new, it has grown quickly. In the early 2010s, experimental projects, scholarly studies, and specialized gaming applications were the main sources of AR awareness in India. A major change occurred between 2016 and 2018, when a favourable environment for AR adoption was created by rising smartphone penetration and reasonably priced mobile data services. 2019 saw the expansion of AR applications in a number of industries, including digital advertising, e-commerce, fashion and beauty retail, education technology, real estate, and healthcare. By highlighting the necessity of contactless interactions, virtual product experiences, and online decision-making, the COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of augmented reality. As a result, AR has become a consumer-focused, mobile-driven technology in India, bolstered by programs like Digital India and an expanding startup community. India is a particularly pertinent context for analyzing AR's effects on consumer behaviour, technology acceptance, and purchase intention in modern digital retail settings because of this adoption pattern.

Methodology

With a focus on studies based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), this review employs a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to synthesize previous research investigating the relationship between Augmented Reality (AR) and consumer purchase intention. The methodological approach ensures transparency, rigor, and replicability by adhering to established guidelines for conducting systematic reviews in marketing and information systems research.

Literature Search Strategy

Major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Science Direct, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, IEEE Xplore, and Google Scholar, were searched thoroughly for relevant literature. To find pertinent studies, keywords and Boolean combinations like "Augmented Reality," "Mobile Augmented Reality," "AR retail," "virtual try-on," "purchase intention," "consumer behavior," "Technology Acceptance Model," and "cognitive load" were used. The search was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles that

were published mostly between 2008 and 2025, which is when augmented reality first became a consumer-facing technology.

Study selection and Inclusion Criteria

A multi-stage selection process was used to screen the studies. In order to weed out irrelevant articles, titles and abstracts were first examined. Following that, full-text screening was carried out in accordance with predetermined inclusion criteria: (1) the study specifically looked at Augmented Reality applications; (2) purchase intention or closely related behavioral outcomes were examined; (3) the research used empirical, mixed-method, or high-quality conceptual approaches; and (4) the study referenced or aligned with TAM, CLT, or related acceptance and cognitive theories. Excluded were studies that only addressed virtual reality, technical system design without considering consumer outcomes, or non-peer-reviewed sources.

Data Extraction and Coding

51 studies were kept and thoroughly examined after study selection. A structured coding framework that captured the following information was used to guide the data extraction process: author and year, research context or industry, methodology, sample characteristics, key variables, theoretical foundation and principal findings. To make it easier to compare and identify patterns across studies, the extracted data was combined into a summary matrix. A clear mapping of AR features (like interactivity, vividness, and informativeness), psychological mechanisms (like perceived usefulness, enjoyment, trust, and confidence) and cognitive factors (like cognitive effort and cognitive load) was made possible by this methodical approach.

Publication Trend

The distribution of studies over time indicates a substantial growth in AR-related consumer research in recent years. While early studies appeared sporadically before 2015, a marked increase is observed from 2018 onwards, reflecting the growing accessibility of mobile AR technologies and their adoption in consumer markets. The highest concentration of publications occurred between 2020 and 2024, coinciding with accelerated digital transformation and increased reliance on virtual and immersive shopping experiences during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend highlights the emerging maturity of AR research within marketing and consumer behaviour literature.

Table 1: Year-wise Distribution of Studies on Augmented Reality and Purchase Intention (n = 51)

Publication Period	Number of Studies
Before 2015	3
2015-2017	9
2018-2019	8
2020-2021	16
2022-2025	15
Total	51

Interpretation: The table indicates a sharp increase in publications from 2018 onwards, with over **59% of studies published after 2020**, reflecting heightened academic and practical interest in AR-enabled consumer experiences.

Theoretical Frameworks Applied in AR and Purchase Intention Studies

Theoretical Framework	Core Constructs Used	Number of Studies	Key References
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude, behavioral intention	22	Yaoyuneyong et al. (2014); Hilken et al. (2017); Rese et al. (2017); Smink et al. (2019); Shang et al. (2021); Zhang et al. (2021); Kapoor et al. (2024)

Extended TAM	TAM + enjoyment, informativeness, trust, confidence, perceived risk	11	Poushneh & Vasquez-Parraga (2017); Qin et al. (2020); Yuan et al. (2021); Smink et al. (2020); Riar et al. (2022); Darraghi & Nawres (2023)
Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)	Cognitive load, cognitive effort, information overload, interface complexity	9	Huang & Liao (2015); Jessen et al. (2020); Li & Meshkova (2020); Huang et al. (2023); Wang et al. (2023)
Integrated TAM + CLT	Usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment + cognitive effort/load	5	Park & Yoo (2020); Cheng et al. (2021); Fan et al. (2020); Lingam Naveen et al. (2025); Tseng-Lung Huang et al. (2024)
Presence Theory	Spatial presence, social presence, mental imagery	6	Yim et al. (2017); Beck &Crié (2018); Verhagen et al. (2016); Hao Liu et al. (2025); Liu & Mattila (2017)
Experiential / Flow Theory	Experience value, flow, immersion, engagement	6	Javornik (2016); Caboni & Hagberg (2019); Shin (2019); Qin et al. (2020); Chylinski et al. (2020)
Trust Theory	Trust, transparency, credibility	3	Pizzi et al. (2019); Sicilia et al. (2020); Darraghi&Nawres (2023)
UTAUT	Effort expectancy, performance expectancy	1	Park et al. (2022)
Imagery Theory	Mental imagery, visualization	2	Feng & Mueller (2019); Yim et al. (2017)
Conceptual / Review-based Models	Adoption factors, value creation	5	Dwivedi et al. (2021); Dwivedi et al. (2023); Blázquez (2014); Pantano et al. (2020); Chylinski et al. (2020)

Interpretation: TAM and its extensions account for over **63%** of theoretical applications, emphasizing perceived usefulness and ease of use as central drivers of AR acceptance, while cognitive theories explain mental effort and decision quality.

Findings and Results of the Study

Author and year	Title	Findings
Kim & Forsythe (2008)	Adoption of Virtual Try-On Technology for Online Apparel Shopping	Visualization through virtual try-on enhances consumer confidence and purchase likelihood.
Blázquez (2014)	Fashion Shopping in the Digital Age: Information Exchange, Value Creation and Consumer Retention	Retail technologies such as AR enhance value creation and customer experience.
Yaoyuneyong et al. (2014)	Augmented Reality Marketing: Consumer Responses to Virtual Dressing Rooms	AR-based virtual dressing rooms reduce perceived risk and increase perceived usefulness, leading to higher purchase intention.
Huang & Liao (2015)	A Model of Acceptance of Augmented-Reality Interactive Technology: The Moderating Role of Cognitive Load	High cognitive load weakens AR effectiveness, while cognitive fit enhances acceptance.
Verhagen et al. (2016)	Virtual Customer Experiences: The Role of Presence in Online Shopping	Presence significantly predicts purchase intention in virtual environments.
Javornik (2016)	Augmented Reality: Research Agenda for Studying the Impact of Its Media Characteristics on Consumer Behaviour	AR interactivity and vividness enhance consumer engagement, positively influencing behavioral intention.

Dacko (2017)	Enabling Smart Retail Settings via Mobile Augmented Reality Shopping Applications	AR acts as a value-adding retail technology enhancing customer experience.
Hilken et al. (2017)	Making Omnichannel an Integrated Customer Experience: The Role of Augmented Reality	Diagnosticity and control increase perceived usefulness, mediating purchase intention.
Poushneh& Vasquez-Parraga (2017)	Discernible Impact of Augmented Reality on Retail Customer's Experience, Satisfaction and Willingness to Buy	Enjoyment and informativeness generated by AR significantly enhance willingness to buy.
Rese et al. (2017)	How Augmented Reality Apps Are Accepted by Consumers: A Comparative Analysis Using TAM	Ease of use strengthens perceived usefulness and enjoyment, increasing AR acceptance.
Yim et al. (2017)	Effects of Augmented Reality on Consumer Responses: Presence, Mental Imagery and Behavioral Intention	AR improves mental imagery and spatial presence, indirectly increasing purchase intention.
Liu & Mattila (2017)	Augmented Reality and Presence in Service Experiences: A Consumer Perspective	Presence positively influences consumer attitudes and intentions.
Beck &Crié (2018)	I Virtually Try It… I Want It! Virtual Fitting Room and Consumer Purchase Intention	AR-generated presence positively affects attitudes and purchase intention.
Bonetti et al. (2018)	Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality in Fashion Retail: Consumer Engagement and Value Creation	AR-driven engagement significantly enhances purchase intention.
McLean & Wilson (2019)	Shopping in the Digital World: Examining Customer Engagement Through Augmented Reality	Ease of use enhances perceived usefulness and engagement, driving purchase intention.
Smink et al. (2019)	Try It Online: Using Virtual Try-On to Enhance Online Apparel Shopping Confidence	AR visualization reduces uncertainty and perceived risk.
Caboni & Hagberg (2019)	Augmented Reality in Retailing: A New Layer of Value Creation	AR creates experiential and symbolic value for consumers.
Feng & Mueller (2019)	The Role of Mental Imagery in Consumer Responses to Augmented Reality Retail Experiences	AR strengthens mental imagery, increasing emotional engagement and intention.
Pizzi et al. (2019)	Augmented Reality, Transparency and Trust in Retailing	AR-enhanced transparency builds trust and purchase intention.
Shin (2019)	The Effects of Augmented Reality on Consumer Experience and Acceptance of Immersive Media	Experiential factors dominate technology acceptance.
Qin et al. (2020)	Flow Experience in Mobile Augmented Reality Shopping and Its Effects on Purchase Intention	Flow experience enhances purchase intention through hedonic motivation.
Pantano et al. (2020)	Innovative Retail Technologies and Consumer Acceptance: The Role of Augmented Reality	AR-driven innovation enhances experiential value and acceptance.
Li & Meshkova (2020)	The Impact of Cognitive Load on Trust and Purchase Intention in Augmented Reality Commerce	Cognitive overload negatively impacts trust and purchase intention.
Han et al. (2020)	Consumer Acceptance of Fashion Augmented Reality Applications	Enjoyment and ease of use are key determinants of acceptance.
Fan et al. (2020)	Value Versus Effort: Consumer Evaluation of Augmented Reality Retail Technologies	Perceived value outweighs cognitive effort in shaping intention.
Chylinski et al. (2020)	Technology-Enabled Customer Experience: A Systematic Review and Research Agenda	AR shapes customer experience and behavioral responses.

Sicilia et al. (2020)	The Impact of Augmented Reality on Transparency, Trust and Purchase Intention	AR-enabled transparency enhances trust and intention.
Jessen et al. (2020)	Cognitive Effort and Consumer Trust in Augmented Reality-Enabled E-Commerce	Reduced cognitive effort increases trust, mediating intention.
Park & Yoo (2020)	Effects of Interface Simplicity on Consumer Responses to Augmented Reality Shopping	Simpler AR interfaces reduce cognitive load and enhance usefulness.
Zhang et al. (2021)	Usability of Augmented Reality Applications and Its Impact on Consumer Acceptance	Usability strongly influences usefulness and intention.
Kim et al. (2021)	How Enjoyment Drives Purchase Intention in Beauty Augmented Reality Applications	Hedonic enjoyment is the strongest predictor of intention.
Shang et al. (2021)	The Role of Informativeness and Perceived Risk in Augmented Reality Retailing	Informativeness reduces perceived risk, increasing intention.
Yuan et al. (2021)	Mobile Augmented Reality, Consumer Confidence and Purchase Intention	Consumer confidence mediates AR–intention relationship.
Cheng et al. (2021)	Balancing Usefulness and Cognitive Load in Augmented Reality Shopping	Lower cognitive load strengthens usefulness and intention.
Huang & Benyoucef (2021)	Cognitive Effort in Mobile Augmented Reality Shopping Environments	Higher cognitive effort negatively affects purchase intention.
Dwivedi et al. (2021)	Adoption of Augmented Reality Technologies: A Meta-Analytic Review	TAM dominates AR adoption research.
Xu et al. (2022)	The Role of Consumer Confidence in Fashion Augmented Reality Shopping	Confidence mediates AR use and purchase intention.
Shang & Wu (2022)	Information Quality and Consumer Acceptance of Augmented Reality Commerce	Information quality enhances usefulness and acceptance.
Park et al. (2022)	Effort Expectancy and Adoption of Mobile Retail Technologies	Reduced effort expectancy lowers cognitive load and increases adoption.
Riar et al. (2022)	Reducing Risk and Building Trust Through Augmented Reality Shopping	AR reduces perceived risk and enhances trust.
Jessen & Hilken (2022)	Consumer Perceived Control in Augmented Reality Commerce	Perceived control strengthens usefulness and intention.
Huang et al. (2022)	Too Much of a Good Thing? Cognitive Effort in Mobile Augmented Reality Shopping	Excessive cognitive effort diminishes AR's positive effects.
Wang et al. (2023)	When Augmented Reality Becomes Overwhelming	Cognitive overload reduces purchase intention.
Huang et al. (2023)	Cognitive Load as a Boundary Condition in Mobile Augmented Reality Shopping	High cognitive load weakens AR–intention relationship.
Darraghi & Nawres (2023)	Augmented Reality in Luxury Retail: Effects on Trust, Word-of-Mouth and Purchase Intention	AR enhances trust and WOM, increasing intention.
Dwivedi et al. (2023)	Metaverse and Augmented Reality Retailing: Conceptual Foundations and Research Directions	TAM extends effectively to immersive retail technologies.
Kapoor et al. (2024)	Consumer Adoption of Augmented Reality in Indian Retail Markets	Usefulness and risk reduction drive AR adoption in India.
Huang et al. (2024)	Somatosensory Augmented Reality Interfaces and Cognitive Load Reduction	Natural interaction lowers cognitive load and enhances delight.
Lingam Naveen et al. (2025)	Affective and Cognitive Responses to Mobile Augmented Reality and Purchase Intention	Cognitive and affective responses jointly drive purchase intention.

Liu et al. (2025)	Virtual Streamers, Social Presence and Consumer Purchase Intention	Social presence significantly boosts purchase intention.
Naveen et al., 2025	Mobile AR and Consumer Behavior	MAR significantly influences consumer decision making through emotional and behavioral responses. Non-AR conditions struggle to translate decision comfort into purchase behavior

Limitations of the Study

The present review is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting its findings. First, although the review followed a systematic and PRISMA-compliant approach, it was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, thereby excluding conference papers, industry reports, and grey literature that may provide additional practical insights into Augmented Reality (AR) adoption. Second, the synthesis is based on 51 selected studies, which, while comprehensive, may not fully capture the rapidly evolving nature of AR technologies and emerging applications.

Third, the reviewed studies exhibit a strong reliance on quantitative, cross-sectional research designs, limiting the ability to draw causal inferences or capture changes in consumer behavior over time. Fourth, a majority of studies are grounded in Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)-based frameworks, which may overemphasize utilitarian factors while underrepresenting social, cultural, and contextual influences on AR usage.

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