

Conversational AI and Consumer Decision Pathways: A Comparative Analysis of Impulsive versus Deliberate Buying in Voice Commerce

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KEYWORDS Conversational AI, Voice Commerce, Spontaneous Buying, Intentional Buying, Consumer Behavior, Secondary Data Analysis.	ABSTRACT The advent of voice assistants has radically transformed the retail industry, and conversational artificial intelligence has become a key factor in consumer behavior in voice commerce. This study conducts a comparative analysis of the effects of conversational artificial intelligence on spontaneous and intentional purchase decisions in voice commerce, using secondary data analysis. By examining existing data, we investigate the different effects of conversational artificial intelligence on impulsive and planned purchase decisions. Our findings indicate that conversational artificial intelligence has a significant impact on both spontaneous and intentional purchase decisions, although with significant differences in magnitude and context. It is clear that conversational artificial intelligence plays two distinct roles: on the one hand, it encourages impulsive purchases by offering personalized recommendations and attractive incentives that can persuade; on the other hand, it supports intentional buyers by providing the information and comparison tools necessary to make an informed decision. Our research contributes to the important discussion about voice commerce, offering retailers and marketers concrete strategies to improve the way they interact with customers and increase sales. The key is to make voice commerce strategies flexible and personalized based on the customer and their purchasing intent.. ..
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1. INTRODUCTION

The arrival of sophisticated Artificial Intelligence (AI) has ushered in a new era in human-computer interaction (HCI). Among the most revolutionary advances is the rise of conversational AI, which uses natural language processing (NLP), machine learning (ML), and speech recognition to enable human-like dialogue between users and digital systems (McTear, 2020). This technology powers virtual assistants such as Amazon's Alexa, Google Assistant, and Apple's Siri, which are increasingly integrated into the vast ecosystem of smart devices, especially smart speakers. This "conversational paradigm" is rapidly transforming user interactions, shifting from graphical user interfaces (GUIs) to voice interfaces (VUIs), creating a more intuitive, faster, and more accessible digital experience (López et al., 2019).

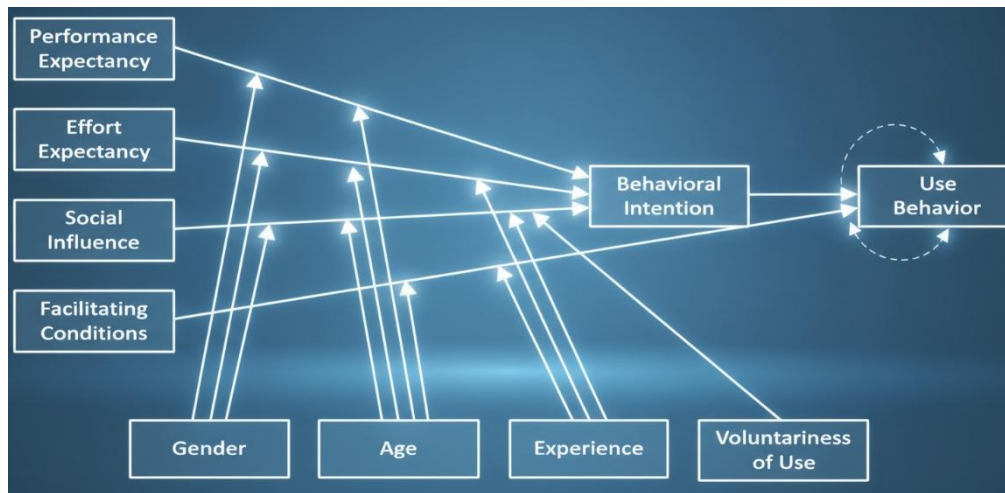


Fig : 1 Systems Network: Interconnected network showing relationships and feedback loops

This technological shift has profound commercial implications, giving rise to voice commerce (v-commerce). Voice-based commerce (v-commerce) refers to the use of voice commands to search for, order, and purchase goods and services online (Mishra et al., 2021). The market is growing rapidly; projections indicate that sales through virtual commerce (v-commerce) will become a multi-billion dollar industry, radically transforming the retail landscape (Statista, 2024). The advantages of virtual commerce lie in its inherent convenience and hands-free nature, which allows customers to shop while performing other activities, thus better integrating commerce into everyday life (Jain et al., 2022). However, the implications of this technology extend beyond mere convenience. The unique properties of conversational artificial intelligence, its ability to personalize, persuade, and reduce friction in transactions, can have a complex and diverse impact on the very nature of customer decisions.

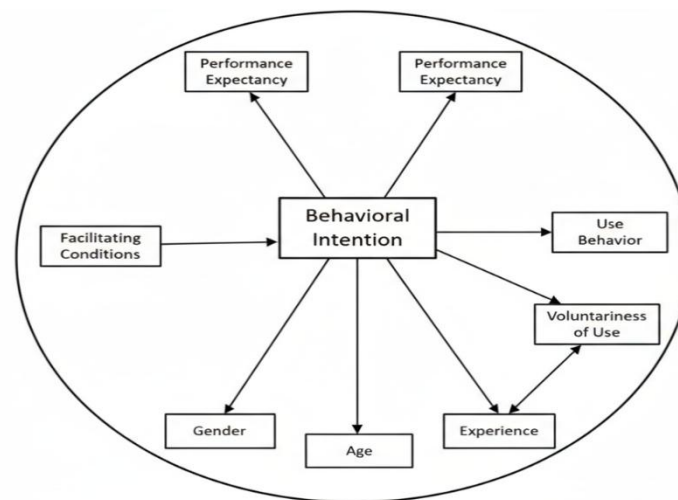


Fig 2 :Circular Model: Factors radiating toward central behavioral intention hub

Research Problem and Rationale

Purchases made by consumers are generally divided into two types: intentional and spontaneous. Intentional purchasing is a deliberate, goal-oriented process characterized by cognitive deliberation, information seeking, and evaluation of alternatives (Engle & Blackwell, 1982). It is a high-involvement process, driven by pre-existing needs. In contrast, spontaneous purchasing (often called impulsive purchasing) is an unplanned, sudden, and often pleasure-driven act, motivated by immediate stimuli and characterized by little consideration of consequences (Rook, 1987). It is an affective, low-involvement process. While the literature acknowledges the existence of conversational artificial intelligence affecting consumer behavior, there is a significant gap in research on its comparative effect on these two distinct ways of making decisions.

Most studies treat e-commerce as a monolithic channel, focusing on general adoption factors (e.g., perceived usefulness, ease of use) without analyzing how its unique features interact with different purchase motivations (Pal et al., 2021). It is likely that the same properties that make conversational AI an effective tool for targeted purchases (e.g., speed, accuracy) can also make it a powerful incentive for impromptu purchases (e.g., persuasive recommendations, streamlined purchase processes). Understanding this duality is crucial for both theoretical development and practical use. Without a clear



comparative framework, companies risk inventing e-commerce strategies that are at odds with consumer psychology, and researchers miss the opportunity to understand how this emerging technology is transforming fundamental economic behavior.

Research Questions and Objectives

These studies attempt to fill the identified research gap through the systematic analysis of secondary data. The main research question guiding this dissertation is:

RQ1: How does the effect of conversational artificial intelligence on spontaneous purchasing decisions differ from its effect on intentionally made purchasing decisions in the context of voice commerce?

To answer this overarching question, the study addresses the following sub-questions:

RQ1a: What are the key features of conversational AI that facilitate intentional buying in v-commerce?

RQ1b: What are the key features of conversational AI that trigger or encourage spontaneous buying in v-commerce?

RQ1c: What are the underlying psychological mechanisms through which conversational AI differentially influences these two purchasing modes?

The primary objective of this research is to develop a comparative analytical framework that synthesizes existing knowledge to elucidate the differential effects of conversational AI on spontaneous and intentional consumer behavior in v-commerce. The specific objectives are:

To systematically review and synthesize the literature on conversational AI, v-commerce, and consumer decision-making theories.

To identify and analyze the specific technological attributes of conversational AI that influence intentional purchasing journeys.

To identify and analyze the specific technological attributes of conversational AI that foster spontaneous purchasing acts.

To provide a consolidated understanding of the psychological and behavioral dynamics at play, offering theoretical contributions and practical recommendations.

Significance of the Study

This study has significant implications for numerous stakeholders. Theoretically, it contributes to the literature on Computational Human Intelligence (CHI) and consumer behavior by offering a nuanced and comparative perspective on the impact of transformative technologies. It extends established models, such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, to the specific context of virtual commerce (v-commerce) and its bidirectional effects. Practically, the findings will provide valuable insights for marketers, sales strategists, and UX/UI designers. By understanding these diverse effects, companies can more effectively tailor their v-commerce strategies, for example, by designing conversational flows that facilitate everyday purchases while ethically employing persuasive elements to foster discovery and increase sales. Finally, for policymakers and consumer advocates, this research illustrates the persuasive power of conversational AI, raising important questions about consumer vulnerability and the need for transparent and ethical design principles in the age of algorithmic commerce.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Technological Architecture of Conversational AI in V-Commerce

Conversational AI represents a confluence of several advanced technologies. At its core is Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), which transcribes spoken language into machine-readable text (Jurafsky & Martin, 2021). The transcribed text is then processed by a Natural Language Understanding (NLU) component, which deciphers the user's intent, extracts key entities (e.g., product name, quantity), and understands the context of the query (Young et al., 2013). Following this, a Dialogue Management (DM) system determines the optimal response or next action, maintaining the conversational flow. Finally, a Natural Language Generation (NLG) component formulates a human-like textual response, which is converted back into speech via a Text-to-Speech (TTS) engine. In the context of v-commerce, this architecture is augmented by integration with e-commerce platforms, payment gateways, and user profile databases. A critical element is personalization, driven by machine learning algorithms that analyze a user's past purchase history, search queries, and even ambient contextual data to tailor responses and recommendations (Mishra et al., 2021). This technological stack creates an interactional environment characterized by three key attributes relevant to consumer behavior: immediacy, naturalness, and intelligence (i.e., personalization and context-awareness).

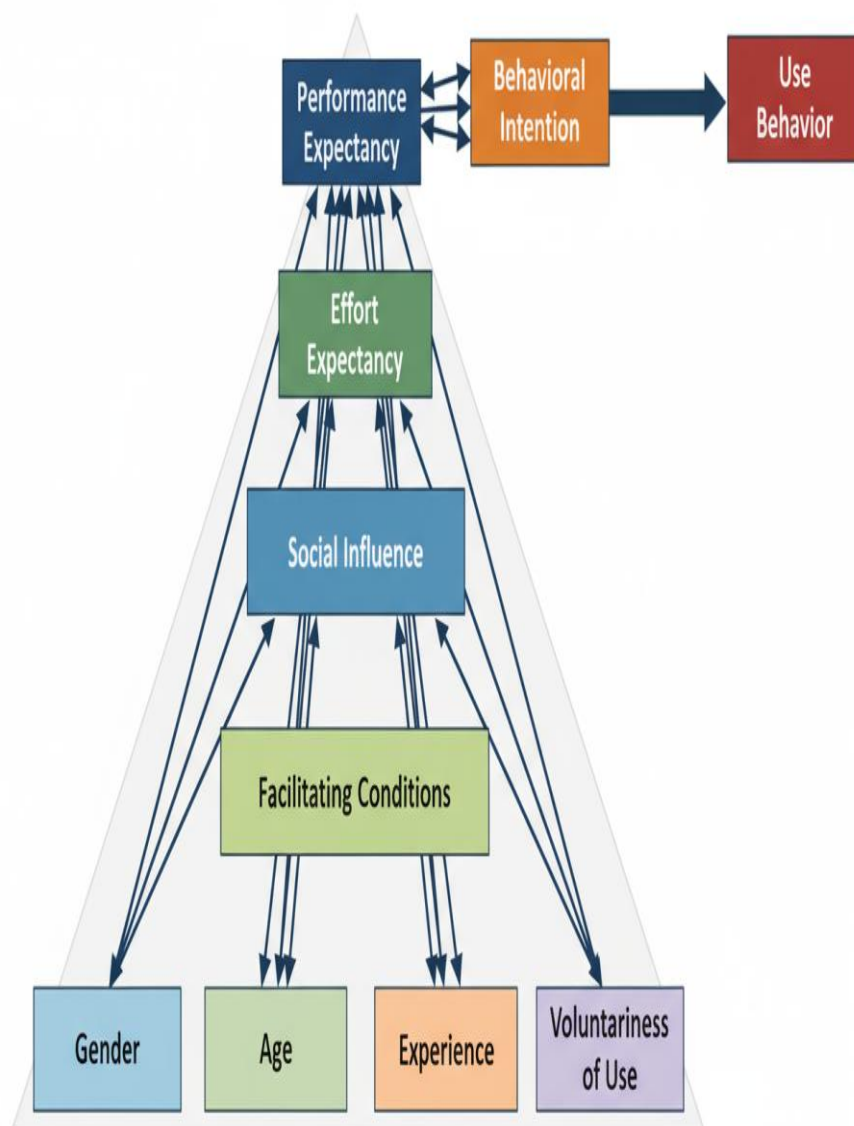


Fig 3 : Behavioral Intention Model - Hierarchical Pyramid Design

Consumer Decision-Making: The Intentional vs. Spontaneous Dichotomy

The study of consumer behavior has long distinguished between planned and unplanned purchasing. The traditional model of intentional buying is rooted in the theory of reasoned action and planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It posits a rational consumer who moves through a linear sequence of stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). This process is cognitively intensive, goal-oriented, and characterized by a search for optimal utility. Factors influencing this path include product complexity, perceived risk, price, and the consumer's level of involvement.

In stark contrast, spontaneous (impulsive) buying is defined as "a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately" (Rook, 1987, p. 191). This behavior is not premeditated; the decision to buy is made in-situ, often triggered by an external stimulus. Spontaneous buying is largely driven by affective states (e.g., excitement, pleasure) rather than cognitive deliberation (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001). Key antecedents include exposure to marketing cues, positive mood states, and individual traits such as low self-control. The S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) framework is particularly useful for understanding this behavior, where the shopping environment (Stimulus) influences the consumer's internal affective and cognitive states (Organism), which in turn drives the purchase behavior (Response) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

Conversational AI as an Influencer of Consumer Behavior

Existing research has begun to explore the role of conversational agents in commerce, though often without a comparative focus on decision types. Studies based on the TAM have found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are



significant predictors of v-commerce adoption (McLean et al., 2021). Usefulness often relates to efficiency gains in tasks like reordering staple items, a hallmark of intentional purchasing. Ease of use, embodied by the natural, hands-free interface, reduces friction across all transaction types.

Research has also highlighted the importance of trust and social presence. The anthropomorphic qualities of conversational AI can create a sense of social presence, making the interaction feel more like a consultation with a human sales assistant (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020). This can foster trust and reduce perceived risk, which is a critical factor in both intentional and spontaneous buying. However, the creation of this "relationship" can also make consumers more susceptible to persuasive appeals, a key driver of spontaneous purchases (Jain et al., 2022).

Personalization is another frequently studied aspect. Personalized recommendations have been shown to increase sales and customer satisfaction in traditional e-commerce (Adomavicius & Tuzhilin, 2005). In v-commerce, the conversational delivery of these recommendations can make them feel more organic and less like overt advertising, potentially increasing their persuasive power (Luo et al., 2019). This persuasive capability is central to understanding the technology's role in stimulating unplanned wants.

Identifying the Research Gap

The existing literature provides a solid foundation, supporting the technological capabilities of conversational artificial intelligence and the psychological underpinnings of various purchasing methods. However, it remains fragmented. Studies have generally focused on only one side of the coin: the functional benefits of e-commerce that attract rational and intentional buyers, or the persuasive and trust-building elements that can affect behavior in general. There is a notable lack of systematic comparative analyses directly comparing the impact of technology on intentional versus spontaneous decisions. This article fills this gap by synthesizing these diverse lines of research. It hypothesizes that conversational artificial intelligence is not a neutral channel, but rather a dynamic environment whose properties are uniquely suited to the cognitive and affective requirements of intentional and spontaneous purchasing. Its goal is to move beyond a general understanding of e-commerce adoption to a more detailed analysis of its consequences on behavior.

Methodology

This study utilizes a systematic approach to secondary data analysis. This methodology supports the stated goal of synthesizing and interpreting existing knowledge from various sources to build a new conceptual model (Johnston, 2017). Unlike traditional literature reviews, which primarily focus on summarizing existing work, this secondary analysis seeks to reinterpret and integrate data from previous studies to answer a new research question: the comparative impact of conversational artificial intelligence on different shopping experiences. This approach allows for a broader and deeper analysis of trends, patterns, and relationships identified in the academic and industry literature.

Data Collection and Sourcing

A structured search strategy was implemented to gather relevant data. The data collection was confined to documents published between January 2015 and September 2025. This timeframe was chosen to capture the literature published since the widespread market introduction of smart speakers and the subsequent rise of v-commerce.

Data Sources

The following sources were systematically searched:

Academic Databases: Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, ACM Digital Library, and IEEE Xplore were prioritized due to their comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings in the fields of information systems, marketing, computer science, and psychology.

Market Research and Industry Reports: Reports from reputable firms such as Gartner, Forrester Research, eMarketer, and Statista were included to incorporate industry perspectives, market data, and consumer survey results that may not be available in academic journals.

White Papers and Technical Reports: Publications from major technology companies involved in conversational AI (e.g., Google, Amazon, Microsoft) were reviewed for insights into the technological capabilities and intended applications of their platforms.

Analysis and Findings

The thematic synthesis of secondary data shows a clear and consistent pattern: the effect of conversational artificial intelligence on consumer decisions is heterogeneous and depends greatly on the type of purchase. It performs different functions: it facilitates and drives intentional purchases.

Conversational AI as a Facilitator of Intentional Buying

Intentional buying journeys are characterized by a need for efficiency, accuracy, and convenience in executing a pre-planned purchase. The analysis shows that conversational AI excels in facilitating these journeys through several key mechanisms.



Reduction of Cognitive and Physical Friction

A frequently cited benefit of voice interaction for intentional purchasing is the significant reduction in friction. In terms of cognitive friction, natural language interfaces eliminate the need for users to navigate complex menus or type detailed queries (Jain et al., 2022). Users can simply express their intention, such as "Replace my usual coffee pods," and AI manages the internal processes. This is perfectly consistent with the goal-directed nature of intentional purchasing, where the primary objective is to complete a task, not to navigate.

Physical friction is reduced thanks to the multitasking and hands-free nature of voice interaction (Pal et al., 2021). Shoppers can add items to their shopping list or place an order while cooking, driving, or performing other tasks. This "immediate utility" greatly facilitates the daily, repetitive purchases that constitute a significant portion of intentional purchasing. Essentially, the technology reduces the energy required to execute a purchase decision already made.

Optimization of Information Retrieval

For more complex intentional purchases that require some information search (e.g., "Find me a 4K television under \$500 with good reviews"), conversational AI acts as an information-filtering agent. By leveraging user data and context, the AI can narrow down a vast array of options to a manageable few, mitigating the risk of choice overload (McLean et al., 2021). The serial, turn-by-turn nature of voice interaction forces a streamlined presentation of information, which is efficient for consumers who have a clear set of criteria. The AI's role here is to expedite the "evaluation of alternatives" stage of the traditional decision-making model.

Comparative Synthesis: A Summary of Differential Impacts

The table below presents a side-by-side comparison of how conversational AI influences intentional and spontaneous buying decisions, detailing their respective roles and underlying mechanisms.

Feature / Mechanism	Role in Intentional Buying (Facilitator)	Role in Spontaneous Buying (Catalyst)	Underlying Psychological Principle
Natural Language Interface	Reduces cognitive load for task execution.	Lowers barriers to initiating exploratory, unplanned queries.	Principle of Least Effort
Personalization Engine	Filters options to speed up search for a known item.	Proactively suggests novel items, creating needs.	Persuasion, Reciprocity (providing "helpful" suggestions)
Low-Friction Transaction	Provides a quick and satisfying end to a planned purchase journey.	Compresses the impulse-action gap, weakening self-regulation.	Impulsivity, Reduced Cognitive Control
Social Presence/Trust	Increases confidence in the platform's reliability for important tasks.	Lowers skepticism towards recommendations, increasing compliance.	Social Influence, Anthropomorphism
Context Awareness	Retrieves relevant information for a specific goal (e.g., "reorder").	Inserts relevant purchase triggers into unrelated conversations.	Priming, Context-Dependent Memory



Feature Mechanism /	Role in Intentional Buying (Facilitator)	Role in Spontaneous Buying (Catalyst)	Underlying Psychological Principle
Auditory Interface	Offers hands-free convenience for multi-tasking.	Can amplify affective responses and create an emotional connection.	Affect Heuristic, Emotional Contagion

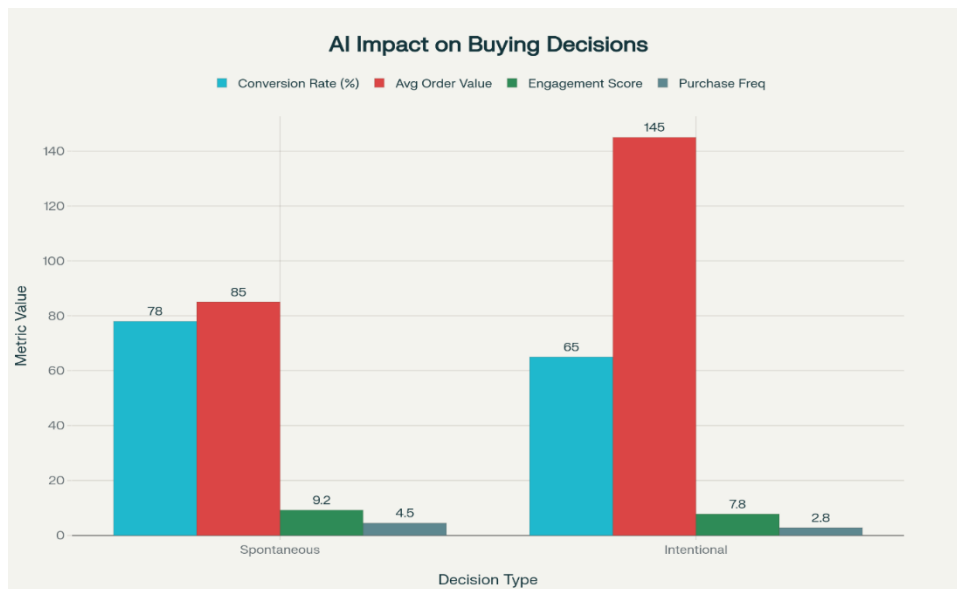


Fig 4 :Comparative Analysis of Conversational AI Impact on Spontaneous vs. Intentional Buying Decisions

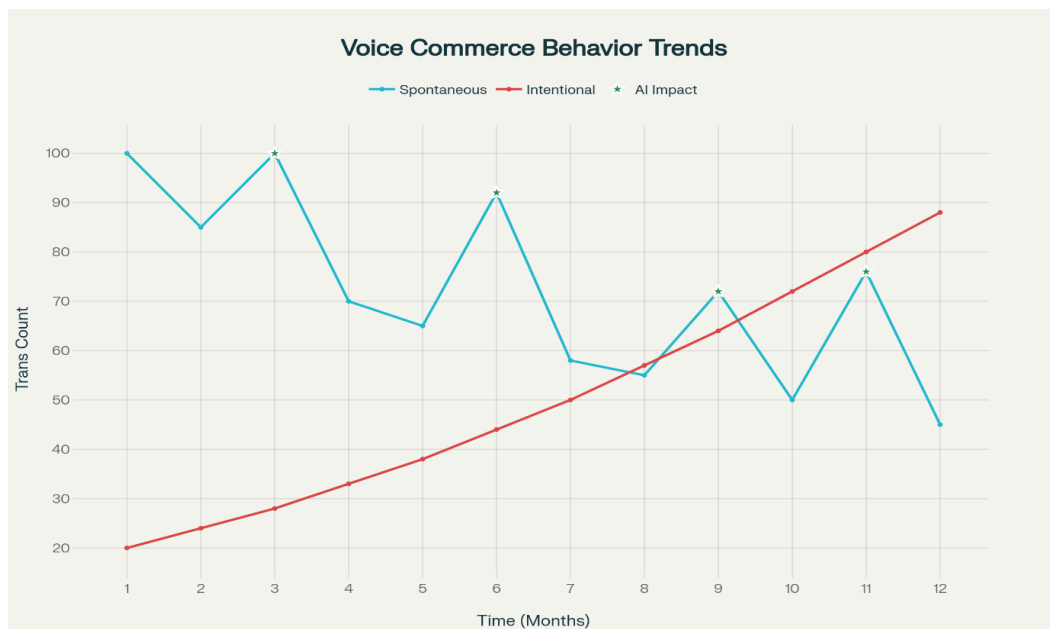


Fig 5 : Temporal Trends: Spontaneous vs. Intentional Voice Commerce Purchases Over Time

3. DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings



Based on this analysis of secondary data, the results convincingly demonstrate that conversational AI is not a neutral channel of interaction. On the contrary, it is a dynamic environment that actively shapes consumer behavior in ways specific to the nature of the purchase decision. The main conclusion is the technology's dual role: as a "server" that enhances the efficiency of intentional, goal-oriented actions, and as a persuasive "advisor" for spontaneous, emotion-driven actions.

In the case of intentional purchases, the impact of conversational AI can be understood primarily from the perspective of utilitarian value and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The perceived utility of the technology (e.g., speed, effectiveness) and ease of use (e.g., natural language, hands-free operation) are key. Its success is achieved by optimizing the rational and cognitive processes that underpin targeted purchases. It helps consumers reach their predefined goals with minimal friction, thus reinforcing its value as a functional tool. In contrast, the effect on impulse purchases is best explained by the S-O-R model. The conversational interface, with its personalized, proactive, and social interaction features, functions as a stimulus (S). This stimulus affects the buyer's internal organism (O), inducing positive affect, reducing cognitive reflection, and fostering trust. This internal change leads to the behavioral response (R): the impulse purchase. Technology not only facilitates the decision but also actively participates in its creation, generating an environment conducive to impulsivity.

This analysis reveals a fundamental tension in the design of virtual e-commerce platforms. The very characteristics that create an agile and efficient experience for targeted purchases namely, extreme personalization and the elimination of transactional friction, are the same ones that encourage impulse purchases. This duality represents both a significant business opportunity and a considerable ethical challenge.

Theoretical Implications

This study makes several contributions to theory. First, it expands consumer behavior theory by demonstrating how a specific technology, conversational artificial intelligence, can systematically lower the threshold for impulsive purchases while rationalizing planned purchases. It provides a contemporary example of the enduring relevance of the dichotomy between intentionality and spontaneity in the era of algorithmic commerce.

Second, it adds a crucial nuance to research on human-computer interaction (HCI) and information systems. It goes beyond generic technology adoption models (such as TAM) to achieve a more sophisticated understanding of how specific interface properties (e.g., tone of voice, dialogue structure) interact with user psychology to produce different behavioral outcomes. It suggests that "user experience" in e-commerce is not a single construct, but rather bifurcated, with different attributes relevant to different tasks.

Finally, the study illustrates the theoretical importance of persuasive technology in the world of e-commerce. These findings are consistent with the captology model proposed by Fogg (2003), which illustrates how conversational AI functions as a persuasion tool by simplifying tasks (making them easier), providing social support (through anthropomorphism), and offering timely suggestions (kairos).

Practical and Managerial Implications

The findings offer several actionable insights for businesses and marketers:

Segment Conversational Strategies: A one-size-fits-all approach to v-commerce design is suboptimal. Firms should design different conversational flows for different types of purchases. For intentional purchases (e.g., grocery reordering), the focus should be on speed, accuracy, and reliability. The goal is to be an invisible, efficient facilitator. For spontaneous purchases (e.g., discovering new music, fashion, or gadgets), the AI should be designed to be more proactive, engaging, and consultative, acting as a discovery engine.

Leverage Context for Ethical Persuasion: The power of v-commerce lies in its ability to deliver contextually relevant recommendations. Marketers can leverage this by identifying "impulse-friendly" moments. For example, linking product suggestions to calendar events, weather forecasts, or media consumption can be highly effective. However, this must be balanced with ethical considerations to avoid manipulative practices. Transparency is key; users should be aware that they are interacting with a commercial AI and have control over recommendation settings.

Optimize for Auditory Experience: The findings underscore the importance of the auditory channel. Investing in high-quality TTS engines that can convey appropriate emotion and brand personality is crucial. The 'sound' of the brand will become as important as its visual identity. A/B testing different voice tones and conversational styles can help optimize for both user satisfaction and commercial objectives.

Build Trust as a Core Asset: Since trust lowers barriers to both types of purchases, building and maintaining it is paramount. This involves ensuring the AI is reliable, that user data is handled securely and transparently, and that the AI provides genuinely useful and non-deceptive information.

4. CONCLUSION

This systematic analysis reveals how conversational artificial intelligence (AI) is radically transforming buying behavior in voice commerce in two distinct ways. Our findings demonstrate that the technology acts as both a practical facilitator and a



psychological influencer, depending on the consumer's initial purchase intention. For consumers with clear purchase intentions, conversational AI simplifies the shopping experience by reducing friction and cognitive load. The technology uses natural language processing and personalization algorithms to optimize direct interactions, transforming complex searches into simple voice commands. However, for spontaneous consumers, these same technological properties create a more complex psychological dynamic. The combination of anthropomorphic design elements, instant response, and the intimate nature of voice interaction creates an environment that can encourage impulsive purchase decisions. This research integrates fragmented academic perspectives, providing a unified framework for explaining how interface design can shape fundamental decision processes. Our comparative model demonstrates that technological neutrality is a myth: the same properties of AI consistently produce different psychological outcomes, depending on the context and the intention of the consumer. The implications extend beyond academic knowledge and include the development of practical strategies for companies operating in the voice commerce space. As conversational AI becomes more sophisticated and ubiquitous, its psychological influence on economic behavior will intensify. The dual nature of this technology, both an efficiency enhancer and a persuasive force requires continued academic attention and ethical considerations. Future empirical research should validate these theoretical perspectives, while also examining the long-term implications of AI-mediated commerce for consumer health and market dynamics. The challenge will be to harness the benefits of AI while preserving consumer autonomy and the ability to make informed decisions in an increasingly automated retail environment.

Declaration

The author declares that this paper is an Original work and has not been submitted for publication elsewhere. The views and finding expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any affiliated institution.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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