



Bibliometric Analysis of Decision-Making Models in The Context of Bounded Rationality

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ABSTRACT

This study maps the intellectual landscape of decision-making models within the bounded rationality framework, specifically as it applies to financial management research. A systematic bibliometric analysis was conducted on publications retrieved from Scopus and Web of Science, covering the period from the 2000 to 2026 and analyzed using VOSviewer software. Publication trends exhibit a fluctuating yet upward trajectory concentrated in the most recent period, while inter-author and inter-country collaboration networks remain underdeveloped. Keyword co-occurrence analysis identifies bounded rationality as the conceptual core of the field, with visible thematic evolution from formal decision theory toward behavioral finance and artificial intelligence integration. Financial practitioners and policymakers should incorporate behavioral and cognitive constraints into decision-support frameworks, particularly in investment and risk management contexts. This paper contributes a systematic cartography of bounded rationality scholarship in financial management, identifying understudied themes and open directions for future research.

Keywords: *bounded rationality, decision making, financial management, bibliometric analysis, behavioral finance, artificial intelligence*

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INTRODUCTION

The capacity of individuals to process information and arrive at fully optimal decisions is fundamentally constrained by cognitive limits, informational asymmetry, and temporal pressure. This insight, codified by Herbert A. Simon as bounded rationality, rejects the classical economic premise of perfect rationality and replaces it with the empirically grounded observation that decision makers engage in satisficing, selecting outcomes that are adequate rather than globally optimal (Giarlotta and Petralia, 2024). In financial management, these constraints carry particular weight: investors misvalue assets, managers systematically underweight downside probabilities, and households devise financial plans that are adaptive rather than optimal (Angerer et al., 2025; Suryantari et al., 2024). As global markets have grown in complexity and technological mediation, the behavioral underpinnings of financial decisions have attracted increasing scholarly attention, yet a systematic cartography of where this literature stands and where it is heading remains absent.

However, the corpus of studies on *bounded rationality* in financial management is dispersed across journals and methodological traditions, complicating cumulative knowledge-building. Bibliometric analyses of related financial management domains demonstrate that such mapping exercises are valuable for identifying structural gaps and under-collaborated research clusters (Fadhilah, 2025; Korip et al., 2025; Wibowo et al., 2026). Yet a study focused specifically on the intersection of *bounded rationality* and decision-making models in financial management, one that traces thematic evolution and collaboration networks from the concept's early articulation to the present digital and AI-augmented era, has not been specifically undertaken. This gap represents the direct motivation for the present study.

This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of decision-making models in the context of *bounded rationality*, using publication data from Scopus and Web of Science spanning the 1980s through 2026, analyzed through VOSviewer network visualization. The analysis tracks annual publication trends, collaboration structures at both the author and country levels, and the thematic co-occurrence of keywords over time.

This paper establishes three distinct contributions to the literature. First, it complements emerging bibliometric reviews of financial management (Mawadah et al., 2026; Azmi et al., 2026) by providing the first dedicated mapping of the *bounded rationality* stream within that broader domain. Second, it traces the specific thematic trajectory from formal decision theory through behavioral finance to AI-assisted decision support, identifying the keyword clusters that have risen in prominence most recently. Third, the analysis of collaboration gaps provides actionable directions for researchers and funding bodies seeking to internationalize this research agenda. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant theoretical and empirical literature and develops the conceptual framework. Section 3 describes the data collection and methodological procedures. Section 4 presents and interprets the bibliometric findings. Section 5 concludes with theoretical and practical implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bounded rationality, as originally formulated by Herbert A. Simon, posits that decision makers operate under constraints of incomplete information, limited cognitive capacity, and restricted time horizons, leading them to adopt satisficing heuristics rather than exhaustive optimization strategies. This

theoretical foundation challenged the neoclassical assumption of the rational economic agent and became the cornerstone of behavioral approaches to economics and management. Recent work confirms that these premises remain generative: Giarlotta and Petralia (2024) demonstrate that Simon's framework continues to underpin contemporary models of preference and choice, and that its formalization has grown considerably more sophisticated in the decades since its introduction.

Decision-making under bounded rationality involves the deployment of computationally simple strategies that reduce the informational demands placed on the decision maker. Gottwald and Braun (2019) show that such strategies are not arbitrary shortcuts but systematic mechanisms that minimize uncertainty through elementary computational steps. This finding has direct implications for financial management, where decision environments are characterized by high volatility, incomplete information, and time-sensitive choices. The implication is that practitioners who appear to deviate from rational benchmarks may in fact be deploying adaptive and internally consistent heuristics. Consistent with this argument, Wu and Xiao (2022) develop a formal model of decision making based on weakly consistent preference relations, demonstrating that quantitative frameworks can represent boundedly rational behavior without sacrificing analytical rigor. H1: Decision-making models grounded in bounded rationality exhibit distinct and systematic structural evolution over time as captured by publication and citation patterns.

Cognitive bias constitutes a central mechanism linking bounded rationality to observed financial behavior. Jordao et al. (2020) demonstrate that biases including overconfidence, anchoring, and optimism systematically distort information evaluation when decision makers face complex or incomplete datasets. In financial management contexts, these effects are particularly consequential. Rizani et al. (2023) document that investment decisions among capital market participants are substantially shaped by psychological factors and non-rational risk perceptions. Similarly, Angerer et al. (2025) find that saving and retirement planning behaviors deviate from normative models in ways consistent with informational limitations and unstable intertemporal preferences. Suryantari et al. (2024) extend this finding to household financial planning, demonstrating that bounded rationality produces adaptive but suboptimal decisions in long-term contexts. H2: The thematic composition of the bounded rationality literature in financial management has shifted from formal decision theory toward behavioral and applied perspectives over time.

Risk management and the control illusion represent additional domains where bounded rationality research has concentrated. Faccia et al. (2025) find that individuals frequently overestimate their ability to predict outcomes in uncertain environments, producing systematic risk misjudgments that are both theoretically consistent with bounded rationality and empirically prevalent in financial contexts. Beyond individual cognition, Xu et al. (2024) demonstrate that framing effects interact with risk perception to alter choices in situations involving uncertainty, reinforcing the argument that cognitive architecture, not just informational deficits, drives decision distortions. The integration of technology into this landscape has introduced both opportunities and complexities. Salem et al. (2024) show that machine learning tools can augment decision quality by improving analytical throughput, yet psychological and cognitive factors persist in shaping how individuals interpret algorithmically generated recommendations. This suggests that the behavioral dimension of bounded rationality retains explanatory power even as computational capacity expands. H3: Collaboration networks in bounded rationality research within financial management remain fragmented, with limited integration across countries and research communities.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Data Sources and Search Strategy

This study obtained bibliometric data from two complementary databases, Scopus and Web of Science Core Collection, selected for their broad coverage of peer-reviewed scholarship and their established use in bibliometric research on financial management topics (Korip et al., 2025; Wibowo et al., 2026; Maulana et al., 2026). The search was executed using a combination of primary terms, specifically "bounded rationality" and "decision-making models," crossed with financial management descriptors including "financial management," "investment decisions," and "risk assessment." Boolean operators AND and OR were applied to maximize recall while preserving topical relevance, following established bibliometric search protocol (Ozturk et al., 2024). The temporal scope covered publications from the 1980s through the most recent available period in 2026, capturing the full arc of scholarly engagement with the concept since Simon's initial formulations gained traction.

Following the initial retrieval, a structured screening procedure was applied. Duplicate records appearing across both databases were removed. Articles were then assessed for relevance based on title, abstract, and keyword fields, retaining only peer-reviewed English-language journal articles with direct topical relevance to bounded rationality in decision-making and financial management contexts. Conference papers, book chapters, non-English publications, and records without clear topical alignment were excluded. This procedure is consistent with the systematic filtering approach recommended in bibliometric methodology literature (Passas, 2024; Ozturk et al., 2024; Adelia et al., 2025).

Analytical Tools and Bibliometric Indicators

The analysis employed VOSviewer software for network construction and visualization, a tool widely adopted in bibliometric studies across management and finance disciplines for its capacity to render co-authorship, citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks with interpretable cluster structures (Kirby, 2023; Martins et al., 2024; Althaf et al., 2025; Ilmahdy et al., 2025). Four bibliometric indicators were operationalized. Annual publication counts were computed to trace temporal trends and identify periods of accelerated growth. Citation analysis was performed to identify the most influential publications, authors, and contributing countries, with the h-index used as a composite measure of scientific impact. Co-authorship analysis at both the author and country levels was conducted to map the density and configuration of the collaboration network. Keyword co-occurrence analysis was executed to identify thematic clusters and to track the temporal evolution of research priorities through overlay visualization, distinguishing earlier from more recent conceptual emphases. Burst detection was additionally applied to identify keywords experiencing rapid and concentrated attention within delimited time windows, providing a forward-looking indicator of emerging research themes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Annual Publication Trends

The Scopus retrieval identified 54 peer-reviewed articles addressing decision-making models in the context of bounded rationality, with annual publication counts revealing a pattern consistent with a field in

early-to-mid development. From 2004 through 2010, output remained minimal, typically between one and four articles per year, reflecting the period during which behavioral approaches to financial decision-making were still consolidating their scholarly foothold. This trajectory aligns with bibliometric findings in related domains, where nascent research fields exhibit low and irregular publication counts in their formative stages (Martins et al., 2024; Passas, 2024).

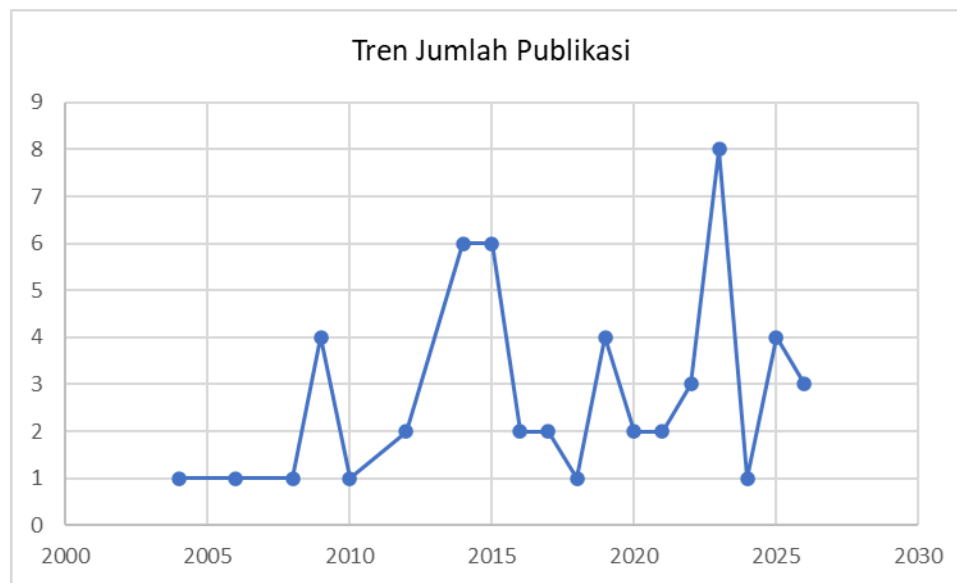


Figure 1. Annual Publication Trends 2004-2026
(Source: Data Processed, 2026)

A moderate acceleration occurred between 2012 and 2015, with annual publications reaching their first local peak of six articles each in 2014 and 2015. This concentration corresponds to the broader institutionalization of behavioral finance as a distinct research stream within financial management scholarship. From 2016 through 2021, publication counts reverted to lower and less stable values, oscillating between one and four per year, suggesting that the field had not yet achieved the self-sustaining citation momentum characteristic of mature disciplines. The dataset's global maximum of eight publications in 2023 represents a decisive inflection point, followed by continued growth in 2025 and 2026. This recent acceleration indicates that bounded rationality has regained scholarly momentum, plausibly driven by the convergence of behavioral finance with digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and the post-pandemic reassessment of decision-making under radical uncertainty (Samita et al., 2025; Azmi et al., 2026). Taken together, the publication trend supports H1 by confirming that the field exhibits systematic structural change over time, consistent with the evolutionary patterns documented in other bibliometric reviews of financial management topics (Adelia et al., 2025; Chairani et al., 2026).

Co-Authorship Network: Authors

Co-authorship visualization reveals a network comprising approximately five active authors, all of whom belong to a single cohesive cluster indicated by uniform node coloring. The presence of dense interlinking

lines connecting every author node to every other suggests intensive and integrated within-group collaboration. Node sizes are approximately uniform, indicating that no single author occupies a disproportionately central position as the dominant intellectual leader within this collaborative structure. This configuration reflects a team-oriented research practice without a clearly differentiated hub author.

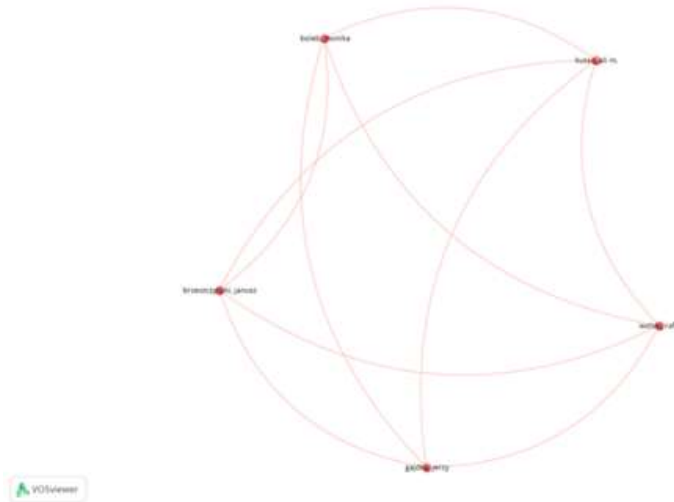


Figure 2. VOSViewer: Co-Authorship Authors
(Source: Data Processed, 2026)

The limited number of authors in the network, however, points to a significant constraint on the field's collaborative breadth. The relative narrowness of author participation is consistent with a research community still in the process of expanding its core contributor base and has been documented as a characteristic feature of emerging fields in bibliometric analyses (Kirby, 2023; Li et al., 2025). This finding provides partial support for H3, confirming that collaboration networks in this domain remain underdeveloped. Scaling this network to include additional researchers from adjacent disciplines, including computational social science, behavioral economics, and decision science, represents a concrete and actionable pathway for enriching the field's collaborative infrastructure (Surya et al., 2025; Usada et al., 2025).

Co-Authorship Network: Countries

Country-level co-authorship visualization identifies nodes representing Germany, the United States, Poland, the United Kingdom, Chile, China, Mexico, and Canada, organized into three distinct color-coded clusters. The blue cluster comprises Germany and the United States; the green cluster includes Poland, the United Kingdom, and Chile; and the red cluster encompasses China, Mexico, and Canada. Connections between nodes form a predominantly linear rather than lattice-like topology, indicating that inter-country linkages are mediated through intermediary nodes rather than formed through direct bilateral ties across all country pairs.

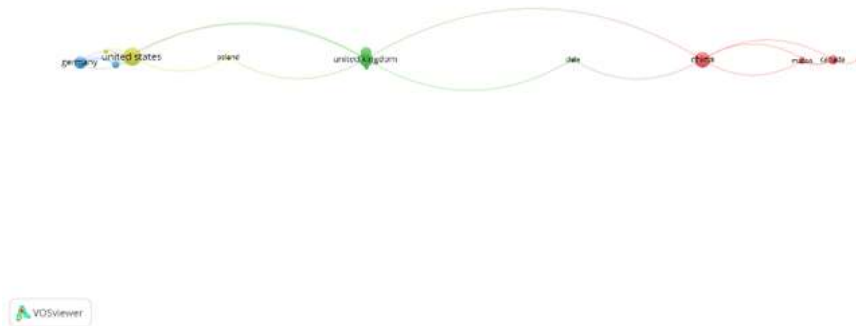


Figure 3. VOSViewer: *Co-Authorship Countries*
(Source: Data Processed, 2026)

The United Kingdom and China occupy network positions that bridge multiple clusters, endowing both with disproportionate influence over the flow of research activity across national boundaries. This bridging role is a structural asset for expanding the network, as research has shown that countries occupying central positions in collaboration networks facilitate the rapid diffusion of conceptual innovations and methodological advances (Zhao et al., 2024). The chain-like architecture of the overall network, however, confirms that the field has not yet achieved the dense, multi-directional collaboration characteristic of mature international research communities. This finding corroborates H3 and extends the observation made in the authorship analysis by identifying specific national clusters whose targeted engagement could meaningfully accelerate collaborative growth. Bibliometric studies of analogous financial management topics have documented similar early-stage collaboration structures, underscoring the comparative underdevelopment of this specific stream (Mawadah et al., 2026; Simangunsong et al., 2026).

Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis

Bounded rationality occupies the most central node in the keyword co-occurrence network, confirming its role as the foundational organizing concept around which adjacent research themes are structured. The co-occurrence of this term with keywords such as *decision making*, *investment*, and *financial markets* demonstrates that the framework has been systematically applied to financial management contexts rather than remaining a purely theoretical construct. This is consistent with research documenting that financial decisions, from capital allocation to retirement planning, are regularly shaped by cognitive limitations and informational constraints rather than by fully optimizing behavior (Rizani et al., 2023; Angerer et al., 2025).

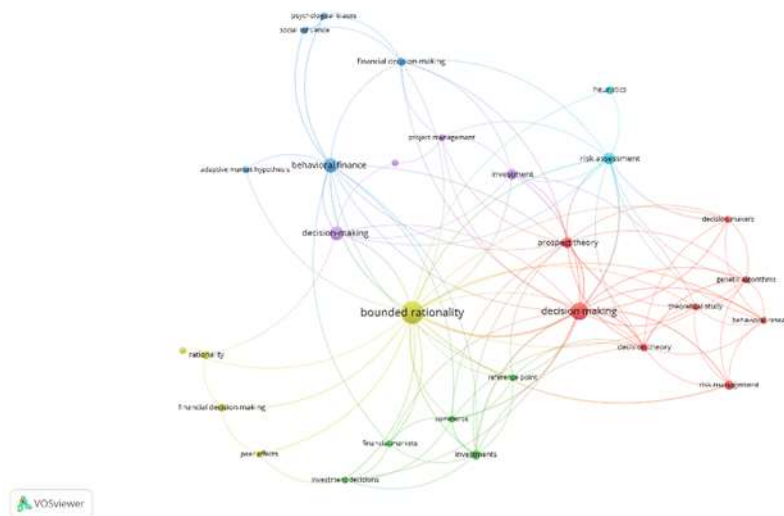


Figure 4. Network Visualization of Keyword Co-Occurrences
(Source: Data Processed, 2026)

The keyword network resolves into several thematically coherent clusters. One cluster centered on behavioral finance, psychological biases, and social influence reflects the dominant contemporary strand of empirical work on how cognitive factors shape financial choices, corroborating the findings of Jordao et al. (2020). A second cluster organized around risk assessment, uncertainty, and investment decisions identifies the applied risk management stream, which is consistent with Gottwald and Braun's (2019) characterization of heuristic decision strategies as efficient responses to informational incompleteness. A third cluster linking decision theory, prospect theory, and decision makers indicates the continued vitality of formal and theoretical approaches to modeling boundedly rational choice (Wu and Xiao, 2022). The coexistence of these clusters confirms H2, demonstrating that the field encompasses both legacy theoretical traditions and emergent applied and behavioral orientations simultaneously.

The overlay visualization introduces a temporal dimension to the co-occurrence structure. Keywords such as bounded rationality and decision theory appear in earlier-period coloring, confirming their foundational status. Behavioral finance and psychological biases emerge in intermediate-period nodes, reflecting the field's progressive empirical turn. Most recently colored terms include risk management, decision makers, genetic algorithms, stock market, investment, and behavioral change, with the appearance of artificial intelligence and algorithm signaling the most contemporary research frontier. This temporal gradient corroborates the thematic evolution identified in H2 and aligns with broader patterns observed in financial management bibliometrics, where digital technologies increasingly intersect with behavioral and organizational themes (Rafasya et al., 2026; Ariswati et al., 2025).

Co-Occurrence Network: Text Data

The text-data co-occurrence network complements the keyword analysis by capturing terms derived directly from abstract and title content, yielding a more granular picture of the field's conceptual

vocabulary. The most prominent nodes in this network are human, model, and probability, indicating that research discourse is organized around the operationalization of decision mechanisms rather than around purely abstract conceptual labels. This lexical emphasis on process and model structure is consistent with the quantitative tradition in decision science and financial management research.

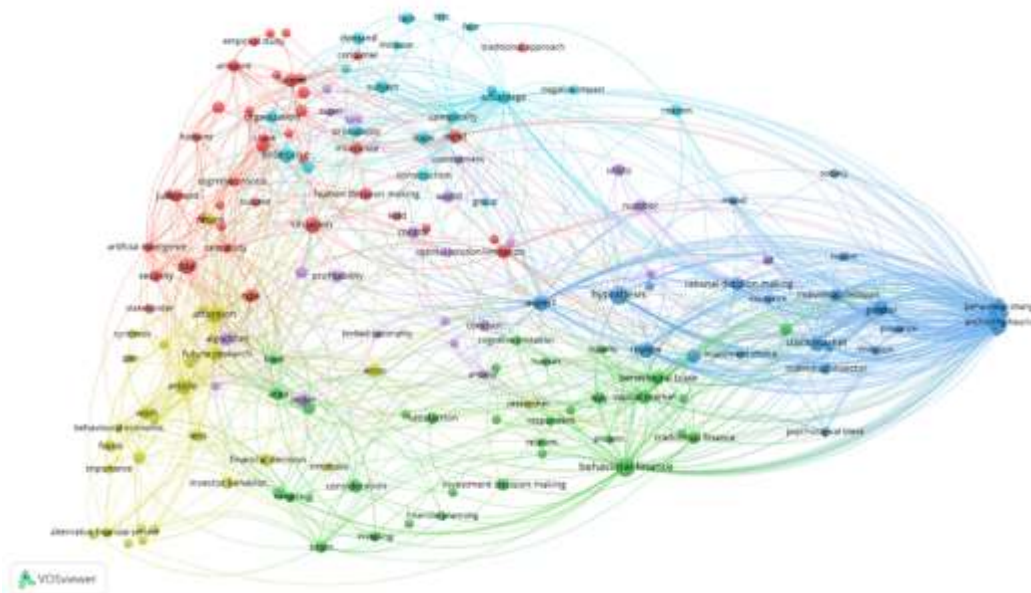


Figure 5. Network Visualization of Co-occurrence Based on Text Data
(Source: Data Processed, 2026)

Five color-differentiated clusters emerge from the text data. The red cluster, dominated by human, organization, and empirical study, signals the behaviorally and organizationally oriented empirical strand. The blue cluster, featuring stock market, individual decision, and anchoring heuristic, maps the behavioral finance applications segment and connects directly to the prospect theory tradition established by Kahneman and Tversky (1979). The green cluster organized around behavioral finance, investment decision making, and financial planning captures the applied financial management strand where bounded rationality is deployed as an explanatory frame for practitioner behavior. A yellow cluster centered on article, review, and future research reflects ongoing meta-scientific activity, suggesting that the field is at a stage of active self-reflection and synthesis. The purple cluster encompassing hypothesis, utility, and decision theory anchors the formal theoretical tradition within the network. The co-existence of these five clusters confirms the field's multidisciplinary character and indicates that theoretical, empirical, and applied research traditions are developing concurrently rather than sequentially. Overlay visualization of the text data network replicates the temporal gradient observed in keyword analysis, with theoretical terms preceding behavioral terms and AI-related vocabulary appearing most recently, consistent with the broader digital transformation of financial management scholarship documented by Adelia et al. (2025) and Chairani et al. (2026).

CONCLUSION

This study examines the intellectual structure and temporal evolution of decision-making models within the bounded rationality framework in financial management using a bibliometric analysis of Scopus and Web of Science data spanning the 2000 to 2026 and processed through VOSviewer. The analysis reveals that annual publication volume, while historically modest and fluctuating, has entered a phase of accelerated growth in the most recent period, with 2023 registering the highest single-year count in the dataset and output continuing to rise through 2025 and 2026. Co-authorship networks at both the author and country levels remain sparse and linearly structured rather than densely integrated, confirming that the field is still in an early-to-mid development phase with substantial collaborative capacity yet to be realized. Keyword and text-data co-occurrence analyses jointly confirm that bounded rationality serves as the conceptual center of this literature and that research has evolved systematically from formal decision theory through behavioral finance toward the integration of artificial intelligence and computational methods, supporting all three hypotheses advanced in this study.

For financial practitioners and policymakers, this study highlights that decision-support frameworks in investment, risk management, and household financial planning should explicitly account for cognitive constraints and behavioral biases rather than defaulting to optimization-based models that assume fully rational agents. Scholars in this domain are encouraged to pursue cross-national collaborative partnerships, particularly with research communities in underrepresented regions, to diversify both the empirical base and the institutional perspectives embedded in the literature. The principal limitation of this study is its reliance on two databases, which, despite their broad coverage, may underrepresent contributions in regional or non-English-language journals. Future research should expand the search architecture to include additional repositories and investigate the mechanisms through which technological tools such as machine learning alter the cognitive dynamics of bounded rationality rather than simply supplanting them.

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