

Developing Effective Literature Using Chronological Search

Suraya Badaruddin¹, Siti Mazzuana Shamsuddin^{1*}, Marlyana Azyyati Marzukhi¹

¹ Faculty of Built Environment, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: mazzuana@uitm.edu.my

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Abstract: *This study offers a structured methodology for crafting an effective literature review through a chronological search strategy, concentrating on research pertaining to Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and housing provision. The aim of this research is to evaluate the progression of academic discourse on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), specifically concerning housing policies, planning frameworks, and implementation methodologies. We used Google Scholar as our main database to find and filter research outputs from different time periods, from 1925 to 2025. A broad keyword search found 1,110,000 publications about TOD, with about 230,000 of those specifically about housing in TOD. This is 21% of all TOD-related literature. Chronological filtering showed that research themes have changed over the decades. For example, early publications focused on transportation engineering and geospatial studies, while more recent research has focused on land-use planning, sustainability, equity, and mobility. The analysis reveals a significant rise in academic focus on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) since the 1990s, paralleling the conceptual advocacy of TOD by early urban theorists. Recent literature (2015–2025) underscores governance, inclusive planning, affordability, environmental sustainability, and policy enforcement as pivotal research trajectories. The results show that chronological searching gives researchers a clear idea of how a topic has changed over time. This helps them keep track of how ideas are developing, find gaps in their knowledge, and build a stronger theoretical base for future research. The study finds that chronological filtering is a good way to put together changing research areas, especially in fields like TOD that are growing quickly.*

Keywords: Transit-Oriented Development, systematic literature review, housing provision, urban planning research, research trends, bibliometric insight

1. Introduction

A literature review is a structured summary and critical evaluation of existing research, theories, and publications related to a specific topic or research problem. Its purpose is to understand what is already known, identify gaps or inconsistencies in the literature, and provide a foundation for new research. A good literature review does not only describe studies but it analyses relationships, compares results, and builds an argument for your research.

Literature reviews are essential in academia as research is fundamentally a cumulative pursuit (vom Brocke et al., 2009). As in any academic discipline, rigorous knowledge syntheses are becoming indispensable in keeping up with an exponentially growing eHealth literature, assisting practitioners, academics, and graduate students in finding, evaluating, and synthesizing the contents of many empirical and conceptual papers. Literature reviews are

necessary for (a) finding out what has been written about a subject or topic; (b) figuring out how much a certain research area shows any interpretable trends or patterns; (c) putting together empirical findings related to a narrow research question to support evidence-based practice; (d) coming up with new frameworks and theories; and (e) finding topics or questions that need more research (Paré et al., 2015).

Literature review constitutes an original and valuable work of research in and of itself (Paré et al., 2015). The so-called “review article” is a journal-length paper which has an overarching purpose to synthesize the literature in a field, without collecting or analyzing any primary data (Green et al., 2006).

When done right, review articles are great sources of information for professionals who want to get the best evidence to help them make decisions and do their jobs (Paré et al., 2015). Moreover, high-quality reviews are often mentioned works that researchers look for as a first clear overview of the literature when they do empirical studies (Cooper, 1988; Rowe, 2014). Researchers that keep track of how many times articles are referred and downloaded have found that review papers are cited and downloaded more than any other sort of published work (Cronin et al., 2008; Montori et al., 2003). The reason for their appeal could be that reading the review gives you an overview, if not a full understanding, of the topic, as well as links to the most valuable primary sources (Cronin et al., 2008). Even though writing a review paper isn't easy, it is a huge service to one's academic community (Paré et al., 2015; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Most, if not all, peer-reviewed publications in medical informatics publish some kind of review paper.

Bryman (2012) highlights that content analysis is an approach to the analysis of documents and texts. It has a distinctive approach to analysis and usually used as a research method. It seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner. A content analysis tool is used to analyse various dimensions from the selected secondary material which can be used for the research.

For this study, one the objectives of the research is to review past research related to land use planning for housing provision in Transit Oriented Development (TOD) with the research question of to what extent does existing land use planning mechanism ensure the provision of land for housing in TOD area and how does local agencies support and encourage the provision of housing in TOD areas?

In the context of finding answers for the research question, several key documents have been identified to be the basis of literature review. The documents are the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021-2025) and 13th Malaysia Plan (2026-2030), National Urbanisation Policy, National Physical Plan (NPP), National Housing Policy, National Transportation Policy, Selangor Structure Plan and Local Plans.

2. Methodology

This paper presents a systematic search strategy to do a literature. Historical research on topics related to transit-oriented development being conducted using the google scholar engine website. Since the concept of TOD was introduced long time ago, the researcher decided to conduct a research using chronological search or year-based filtering.

The process started with general search with the keyword of “Transit Oriented Development” with no specific year and the result showed that about 1,110,000 results (at any time including citations) on the topic identified in the system. Meanwhile reviewed article on the topic recorded about 37,600 articles. Then, a more refine word search for Transit Oriented Development is divided and filtered starting from 1925 to 2025.

Further review on previous research on housing in TOD was conducted using the google scholar engine website. The process started with title search on Housing in Transit Oriented Development and the result indicate about 230,000 articles or published journal (at any time-no specific year) related to the topic. It is estimated that total number of scholarly articles written on Housing in TODs represent 21% (230,000) from total number of articles written related to TOD (1,110,000) based on the website. Meanwhile, reviewed article estimated number is 6,900 for related articles.

Next, further assessment based on specific year i.e. from 1990 to 1995, about 7,790 results appeared during the period. Meanwhile reviewed articles about 202 articles including citations. Topic discussed include urban form, travel behaviour, market potential in TODs, congestion reduction strategies through TODs, land use planning, and transit development, neo traditional planning and design, concept and policies, and sustainable communities.

Further conducted was a search range from year 1996 to 2000 10,700 written articles or journals identified. Meanwhile reviewed articles during this period showed 243 results. Evaluation of key topics discussed found from 2001-2005, about 1,380 results on research topics on related to housing in TOD meanwhile reviewed articles summed around 47 articles. Key themes identified within this period focus on implementation of TOD and its effectiveness. While from 2006 to 2010 varies from history of TODs and the effectiveness of the concept. About 3,210 articles and journal written related on housing in TODs and review article about 111 results mentioned. Based on evaluation of research articles and journals within 2011 to 2015, about 16,400 articles related on housing in TODs. Additionally, reviewed article on the same topic is about 957 articles. Within this period, many researchers put emphasis on the effectiveness of TOD and identified key parameters that supports the effectiveness of TOD. Research articles and journals written during 2016-2020 discovered several key themes associated to housing in TODs. About 7,840 articles related to housing in TODs and 282 are reviewed articles. Finally, based on database recorded in the google scholar engine, research undertaken during 2021-2025 reached about 8700 articles associated with housing in TODs meanwhile reviewed articles recorded 452 articles on the topic.

3. Results and Discussion

From the chronological search, it was found that with a general term search with the keyword of “Transit Oriented Development” with no specific year and the result showed that about 1,110,000 results (at any time including citations) on the topic identified in the system. Meanwhile reviewed article on the topic recorded about 37,600 articles. The results are shown in Table 1. From Table 1, it shows that the focus of the findings shifted from a general transport engineering design and geological survey data.

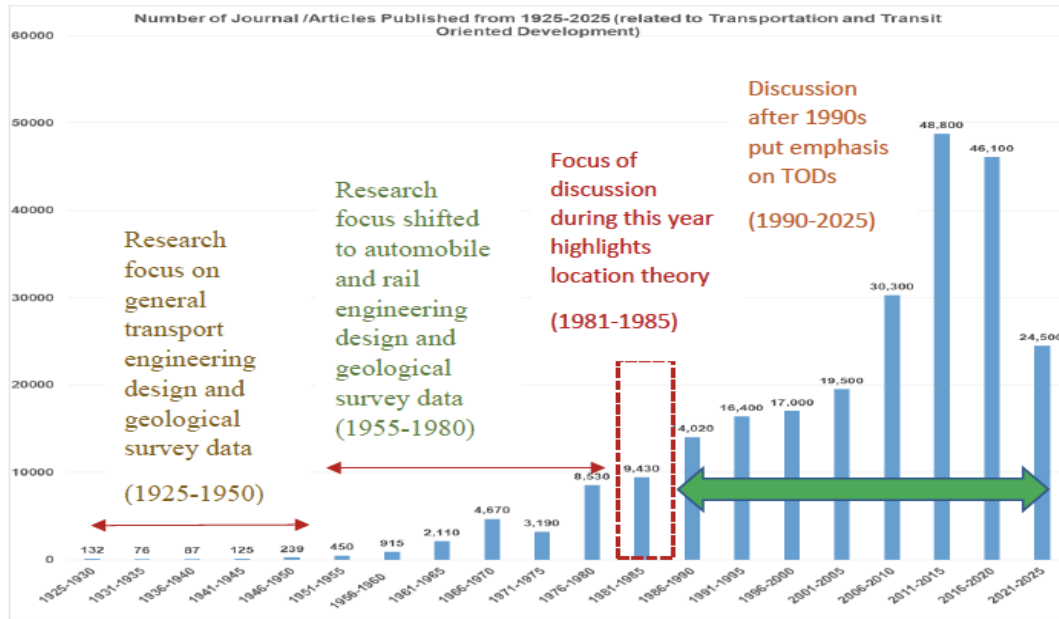


Figure 1: Assessment of Journal /Articles published from 1925 to 2025

Table 1: Result related to Transit Oriented Development found in scientific journal from 1925 to 2025

No.	Year of Publication (Journal/Research/Thesis)	Number of Articles / Journals published related to topic (TOD, Transport, Automobile and Transit)	Findings
1.	1925-1930	132	Research focus on general transport engineering design and geological survey data
2.	1931-1935	76	
3.	1936-1940	87	
4.	1941-1945	125	
5.	1946-1950	239	
6.	1951-1955	450	Research focus on automobile and rail engineering design and geological survey data
7.	1956-1960	915	
8.	1961-1965	2,110	
9.	1966-1970	4,670	
10.	1971-1975	3,190	
11.	1976-1980	8,530	
12.	1981-1985	9,430	Research focus on location theory and in early 1990s TOD being highlighted
13.	1986-1990	14,020	
14.	1991-1995	16,400	
15.	1996-2000	17,000	
16.	2001-2005	19,500	
17.	2006-2010	30,300	
18.	2011-2015	48,800	
19.	2016-2020	46,100	
20.	2021-2025	24,500	

The concept of TOD only being recognized in the 1990s. This is contributed many authors who have highlighted the concept during the 1990s by Peter Carlthorpe who has mooted the idea of TOD in the 90s. However, research and scientific since 1925 to 1950 put emphasis on general transport engineering design and geological survey data. During the period of 1951 to 1980 research focus on automobile and rail engineering design including the geological survey data.

Research development on relationship of transportation system and places were highlighted in the 1980s specifically on location theory were discussed among researchers. Relationship between location, transportation and places including residential and employment areas were discussed when the theory of Transit Oriented Development concept take place in 1990s. Number of articles related to TOD increased from 16,400 articles to 48,800 articles from 1991 to 2015. Based on data search in the google scholar number of research specifically on TOD had decreased to 46,100 during 2006 to 2015.

Further review on previous research on housing in TOD was conducted using the google scholar engine website. The process started with title search on Housing in Transit Oriented Development and the result indicate about 230,000 articles or published journal (at any time-no specific year) related to the topic. It is estimated that total number of scholarly articles written on Housing in TODs represent 21% (230,000) from total number of articles written related to TOD (1,110,000) based on the website. Meanwhile, reviewed article estimated number is 6,900 for related articles.

Evaluation on key themes was conducted using custom range icon available in the google search engine. The search began with specific year of publication starting from 1990 (significant to TOD concept mooted by Carlthorpe in 1990s) until year 2025 (July 2025). It is recorded about 70,240 articles matched for housing in transit-oriented development which represent 30.5% of total articles/topic searched related to housing in TOD (no specific year). Based on data, majority articles on housing in TODs were derived from 2011-2015 publication with number recorded is 16,400 or 23.3% from total publication 1990 to date. It has also recorded the highest reviewed article which account 957 or 36.0% reviewed article recorded during the period of assessment. This is followed with publication within the period or 2001-2005 of which it is recorded about 15,600 articles on housing in TOD or 22.2% from total articles written during the period. However, the number of review article within 2001-2005 is lower (411 articles or 15.5%) compared to 2021-2025(452 articles or 17%) even though the number of articles indicate large gap (15,600 articles in 2001-2005) compared to 2021-2025 with 8,700 articles recorded during the period.

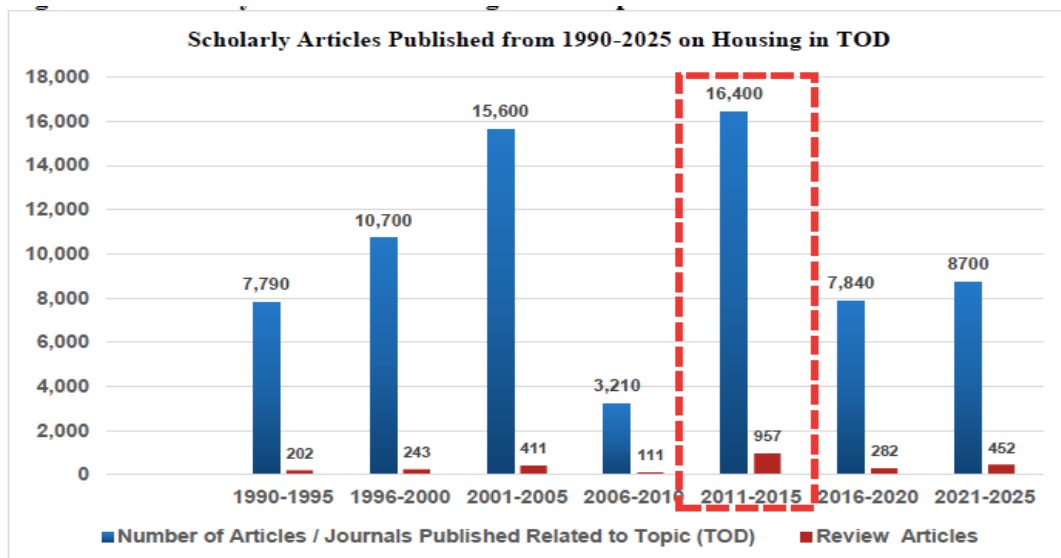


Figure 2: Scholarly Articles on Housing in TODs published from 1990 to 2025

Further assessment based on specific year i.e. from 1990 to 1995, about 7,790 results appeared during the period. Meanwhile reviewed articles about 202 articles including citations. Key themes found in the search findings include urban form, travel behaviour, market potential in TODs, congestion reduction strategies through TODs, land use planning, and transit development, neo traditional planning and design, concept and policies, and sustainable communities, as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Key Themes Identified from Scientific Research (1990-1995)

Moving to year range 1996 to 2000, 10,700 written articles or journals identified. Meanwhile reviewed articles during this period showed 243 results. It is observed that several key themes being discussed among researchers include theoretical assessment on Transit village movement, Neo-Traditional Planning, Smart growth theory and concept, GIS application on analytical hierarchy, land use pattern and implications on TOD, housing provision continuously being emphasis during this period. Community development and design being mentioned in several articles indicate that creating good amenities and facilities for communities in TOD is pertinent to support TOD objectives. Other topic highlighted also include the role of transit as the catalyst for urban revitalization, public finance, retail markets in TOD which emphasis on key factors that could influence the success of TODs as presented in Figure 4.

Moving to year 2006 to 2010, findings indicate that most of research topics being discussed revolves around TODs this time varies from history of TODs and the effectiveness of the concept. About 3,210 articles and journal written related on housing in TODs and review article about 111 results mentioned. As shown in Figure 5, the key themes identified during this period include climate change and transportation housing market, equitable TOD, travel behaviour and transit use, selection of mobility, transit economies, ecological approach and community living, compact cities, barriers of TOD, vehicle trip reduction, use of artificial intelligence in TOD and private and public partnership in TOD.

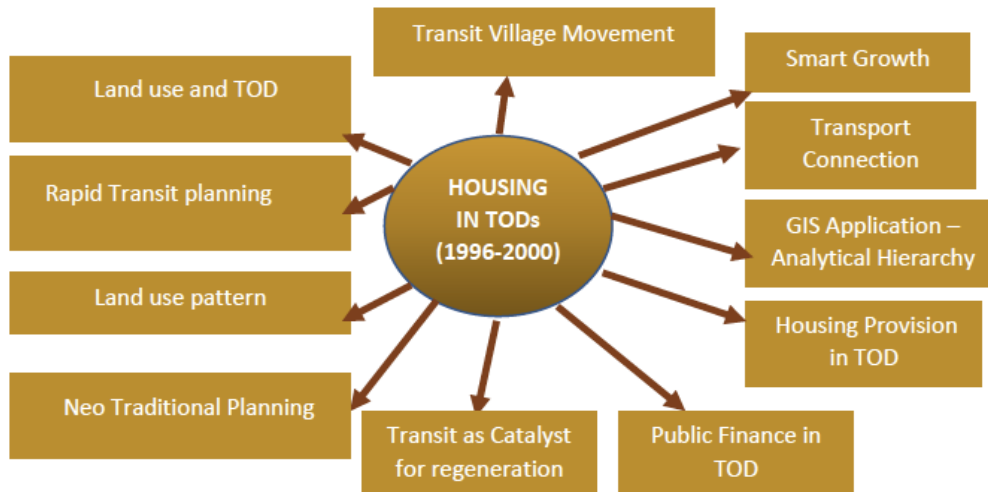


Figure 4: Key Themes Identified from Scientific Research (1996-2000)

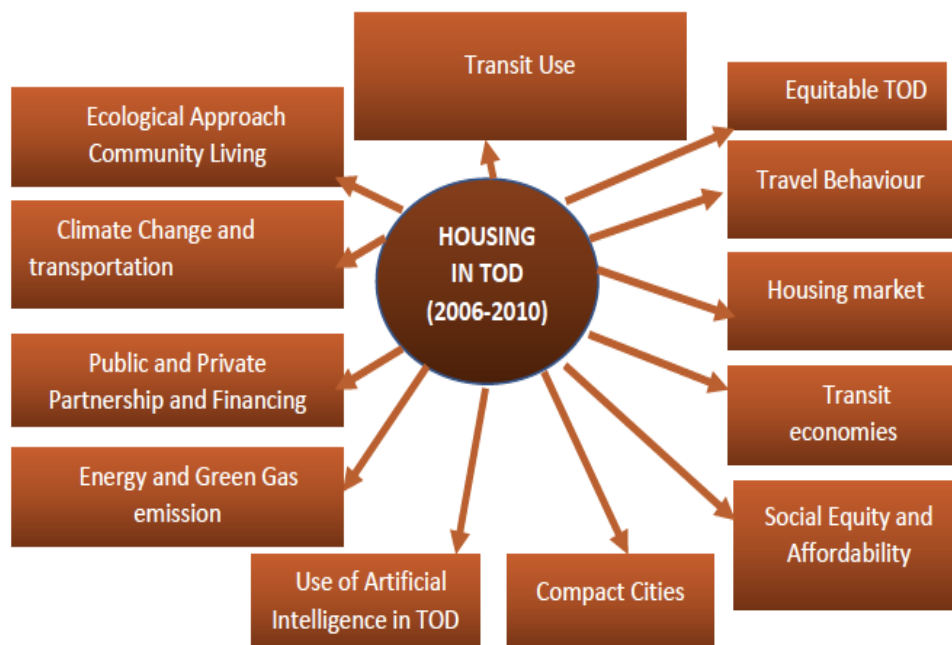


Figure 5: Key Themes Identified from Scientific Research (2011-2020)

Apart from that, for duration from 2001 to 2010, about 7,840 articles related to housing in TODs and 282 are reviewed articles. Based on assessment, most of the research topics discusses current trends of TOD and key themes based on reviewed articles put emphasis on transportation and land use change, TOD and gentrification, public transit and land use decision, Garden city and eco urbanism, transport and infrastructure network, TOD and gentrification, TOD and urban fabric, Urban public transport , TOD and affordable housing, gentrification and travel behaviour , accessibility and transport viability, TOD and urban design, TOD and gentrification - housing market, TOD role in shaping urban, energy in TOD, travel behaviour and mobility, place making and city image. Other related themes include land value capture and tax increment financing, Artificial Green Infrastructure, Greenovation, data application in urban transport system, energy sources transport value added and housing price capture, social infrastructure, transit and accessibility, data application in urban transport system. The key theme is shown in Figure 6.

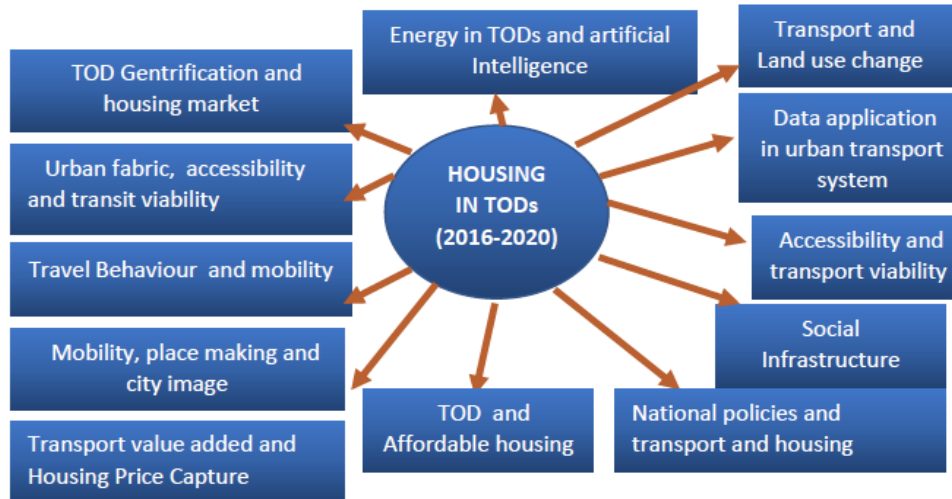


Figure 6: Key Themes Identified from Scientific Research (2011-2020)

For research undertaken during 2021-2025, about 8700 articles associated with housing in TODs meanwhile reviewed articles recorded 452 articles on the topic. Key themes associated with the articles include land use, transport, and energy a combination of three important component in TODs, other key words identified repeatedly include land use integration with transport, interchangeably the word of land use planning and transport, infrastructure planning, social and environmental sustainability being mentioned in various articles indicate its significant in TODs. Other aspects or components discussed as pertinent for planning housing in TOD areas include integrated mobility, social dimension include design for gender inclusion, sustainable urban mobility, equity in neighbourhood walkability, social inclusion, social sustainability, transport justice, mixed communities, next generation TODs imply the future demand for TODs. In terms of environmental dimension, many scholars associate housing in TODs with climate change strategies which include greenhouse gas emission, energy consumption, and provision of walkable urban environment. Meanwhile in terms of physical dimension as infrastructure provision, scholars discussed about provision of park and ride infrastructure, challenges of high-rise development, public transit nodes. Other key areas highlighted by scholars throughout the period include knowledge economy, urban competitiveness, planning housing method, accessibility issue and challenges.

4. Discussion

Key issues highlighted in previous journals (1990s to 2025) related to housing in TOD include the conceptual framework of TOD concept and its basic principles, zoning regulations, investment on infrastructure, land value and housing price, gentrification, transportation modes and mobility, people preferences (travel behaviour), institutional and governance and stakeholder engagement. Nevertheless, research conducted from 2015-2025 highlighted further research needs to be conducted on implementation of TOD that focus on regulations and policies that could reduce imbalance issues in TOD areas. This statement is supported by Abdullah et al. (2023) that further research on the role of authority in enforcing TOD transformation is deemed necessary especially in saturated areas where public transport is critical and land use change is a challenge in the area. In addition, little research on how land use mechanism could support housing provision in TOD and promote spatial equality in terms of housing and community facility provisions. Therefore, the present research will investigate and fill the gaps identified in previous research. Selected journals and past research related to

housing in TOD from 2015-2025 summarizes key findings which indicate nine important used extensively in this study. The key findings are summarized as Figure 7 below.

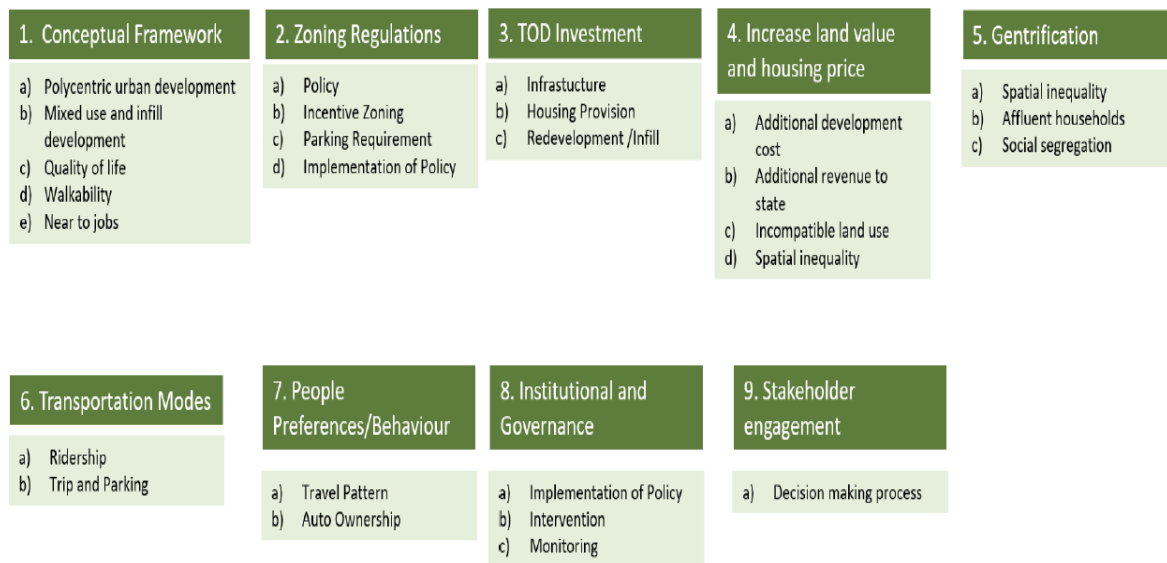


Figure 7: Summary of key findings for article search 2015-2025

5. Conclusion

This study illustrates the efficacy of employing a chronological search strategy to systematically chart the progression of research on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), especially concerning housing provision and land-use planning in Malaysia and worldwide. By filtering publications from 1925 to 2025 into specific time periods, we were able to see clear patterns and thematic progressions. For example, we saw a shift from early transport engineering foundations to more recent focuses on sustainable mobility, fair housing, governance mechanisms, and integrated planning approaches. The results show that scholarly interest in TOD grew a lot after the 1990s, which shows how important compact, transit-supported communities are becoming for solving problems caused by urbanization. The review highlights ongoing deficiencies in research regarding the functions of planning authorities, regulatory enforcement, and land-use mechanisms in achieving inclusive housing outcomes in TOD areas. These insights underscore the necessity for ongoing examination of policy coherence, institutional structures, and implementation strategies that can facilitate equitable and sustainable Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) practices. This study confirms that chronological literature analysis is an effective approach for discerning research trends, charting intellectual progress, and directing future investigations in urban planning and transit-oriented development.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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