

# Brand Trust: Unveiling Major Contributions Through Bibliometrics Analysis

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## Abstract

Brand trust is the feeling of reliability a consumer has for a brand. The present study undertakes a bibliometric analysis of the concept of brand trust, aiming to discern patterns and insights from existing research. Motivated by the pivotal role brand trust plays in fostering positive consumer outcomes, such as brand loyalty and commitment, the research addresses the need for a systematic understanding of the extensive body of work in this domain. To achieve this, a comprehensive examination of prominent authors, key sources, prevalent keywords, and significant publications in the field of brand trust was conducted. The study obtained data extracted from the Scopus database, employing appropriate filters to refine the dataset to better represent the field. Analysis was done using the biblioshiny tool in the R software. Findings from this bibliometric analysis offer valuable insights into the scholarly landscape of brand trust research, revealing influential contributors, prevalent themes, and noteworthy publications. Also, the study offers insights into the future research agenda.

**Keywords:** brand trust, bibliometrics, mapping, future research agenda, biblioshiny

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## Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of consumer behavior and marketing dynamics, the concept of brand trust emerges as a critical construct, shaping the foundation of consumer-brand relationships. This study delves into the multifaceted realm of brand trust, utilizing a bibliometric approach to systematically analyze and bring out insights from the extensive body of research in this domain. As consumers increasingly seek reliability in their interactions with brands, understanding the nuances of brand trust becomes strategically significant.

Brand trust, synonymous with confidence in a brand's reliability and integrity, is a central concept in relational marketing

(Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This study seeks to unravel meaningful patterns from a vast array of scholarly articles on brand trust by exploring influential contributors, key themes, and significant publications through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis. The importance of brand trust is underscored by its robust connections with brand loyalty and commitment, as evidenced in the literature (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Laroche et al., 2012; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001), highlighting the need for academic interest in this respect.

By systematically examining metadata, including authors, sources, keywords, and publications, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the academic

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landscape surrounding brand trust. This study, therefore, not only illuminates the intricate dimensions of past literature on brand trust but also highlights the future research agenda in the ever-evolving landscape of consumer-brand relationships.

### Review of literature

Morgan and Hunt (1994) introduced the concept of brand trust as a relational marketing construct and conceptualized trust as existing when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) defined "*brand trust as the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function.*" Brand trust positively influences both aspects of loyalty i.e., purchase loyalty and attitudinal loyalty, and indirectly influences the brand performance aspect of brand equity (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) and is a crucial component in building and enhancing brand equity (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005).

The empirical results obtained suggest that in the context of consumer-brand relationship, brand trust consists of only one dimension (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001), but Delgado-Ballester et al. (2003) developed and validated a brand trust scale consisting of two dimensions i.e., brand reliability and brand intentions and Reast, (2005) depicts trust as multidimensional measure and draws attention to the two correlate dimensions of brand trust: 1. credibility; and 2. performance satisfaction and Koschate-Fischer and Gartner (2015) identifies various dimensions of brand trust,

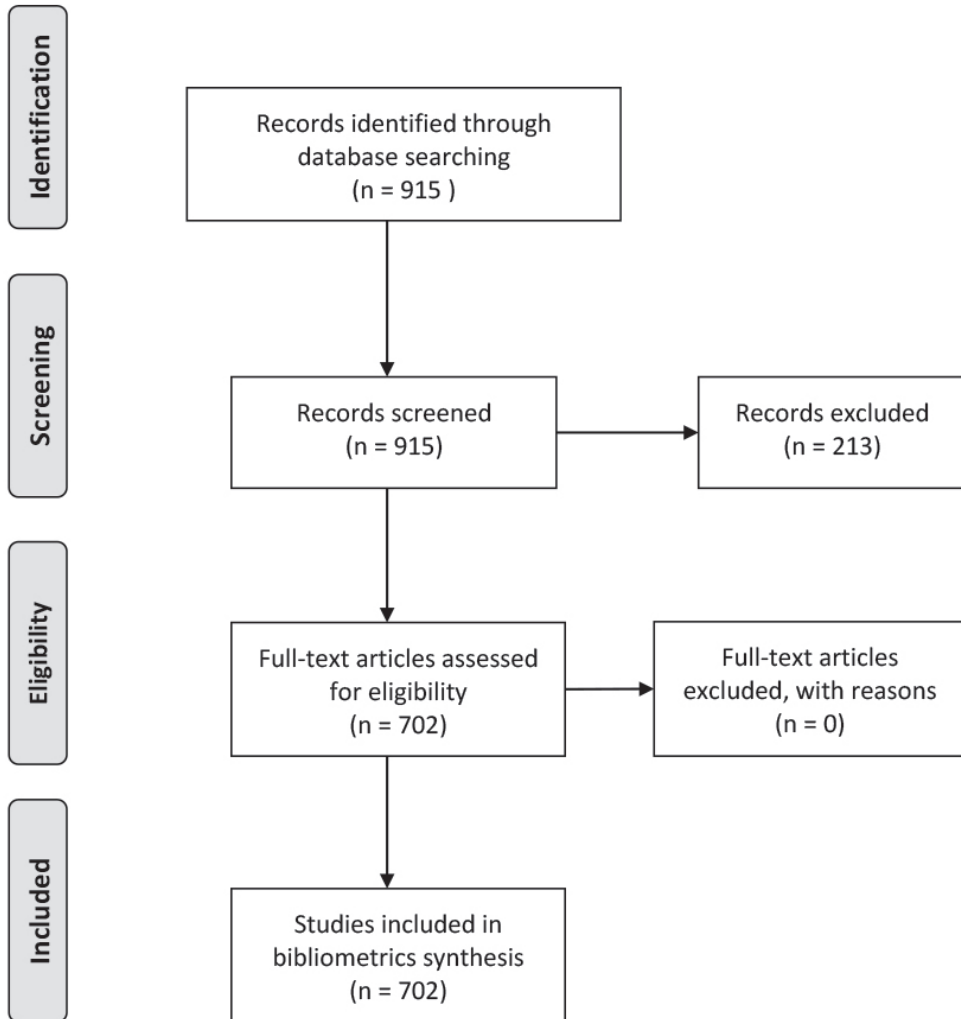
including competence trust, benevolence trust, and integrity trust and develops and validates a brand trust scale.

Previous studies employing bibliometric analyses have contributed significantly to the understanding of various research domains. Even though bibliometrics studies are conducted in the field of trust, most of them are in the general sense or the area of finance. A bibliometrics analysis of the past literature specifically focusing the area of marketing or branding could not be found (Mumu et al, 2022; Palácios et al, 2021). Thus, this study attempts to bridge this gap. In this context, the utilization of biblioshiny in R software adds a dynamic dimension to the analysis, allowing for comprehensive examination and visualization of the collected data.

### Methodology

To conduct this study, articles were retrieved from Scopus by employing the keyword "brand trust" and applying relevant filters. The focus was on journal articles written in English, specifically those in the final stages of publication. The data analysis was carried out utilizing the biblioshiny tool in the R software. The collection spanned from 2001 to 2023, encompassing articles from approximately 308 journals. Ultimately, we identified and selected 702 articles published exclusively in journals for inclusion in our study. The choice of a single keyword, "brand trust," was deliberate and aimed at maintaining specificity and relevance to the study's objectives. This approach aligns with established practices in bibliometric analysis, ensuring a focused and meaningful retrieval of literature.

**Figure 1**  
*PRISMA Flow Diagram*



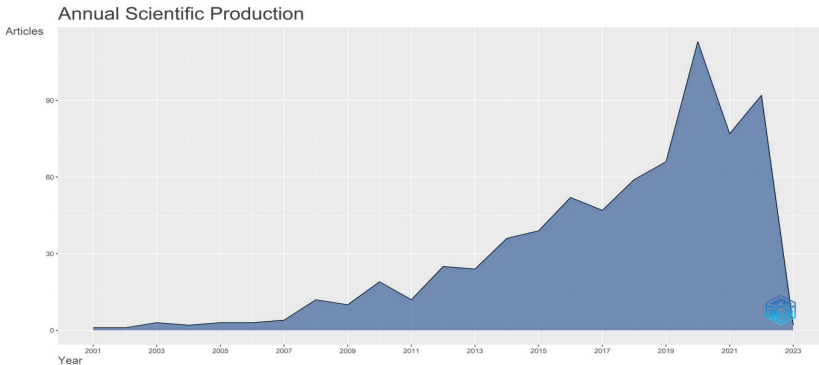
*Note.* The search strategy is illustrated using the PRISMA flow diagram.

**Analysis and Discussion**

**Publication trend**

**Figure 2**

*Publication trend*



*Note.* The annual scientific production results are extracted from biblioshiny tool of R software.

The first article on brand trust was published in the year 2001 by Chaudhuri and Holbrook, M. B. titled “The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty”. From the period of 2001 to 2007 research on brand trust showed little to no progress. From 2008 onwards the publications on brand trust started to grow. After 2015 publications on brand trust gained tremendous momentum. The highest number of articles on brand trust was published in the year 2020; 113 articles were published in the year. Compared to the previous year, there was 71 percent growth in

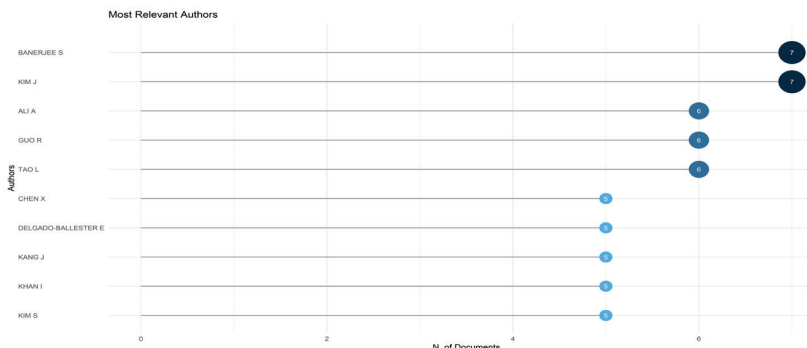
2020. Figure 2 shows the publication trend in the field.

**Most prominent authors**

The most prominent authors Saikat Banerjee, Department of Marketing, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Kolkata, West Bengal, India, and Jihyun Kim, Department of Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA have produced seven publications. Three authors produced six articles each and eight authors produced five articles each. Figure 3 shows the most prominent authors in the field

**Figure 3**

*Most prominent authors*



*Note.* Most Relevant Authors extracted from the biblioshiny tool of R software.

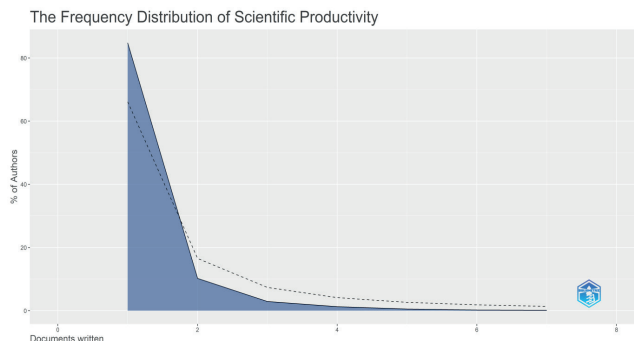
A total of 1585 authors were identified and among them around 1344 authors produced only one article on brand trust. The author productivity is low as only a few authors have produced more than 2 articles.

**Lotka’s law**

Lotka’s law depicts the frequency of scientific productivity by authors in any given field. Figure 4 shows Lotka’s law of scientific productivity in the field of brand trust. The

author productivity of one article is 84.8 percent with 1344 authors. Author productivity of 2 articles is 10.2 percent with 162 authors. The author productivity of 3 articles is 2.9 percent with 46 authors. Author productivity of 4 articles is 1.3 percent with 20 authors. The author productivity of 5 articles is 0.5 percent with 8 authors. The author productivity of 6 articles is 0.2 percentage with 3 authors and that of 7 articles is 0.1 percentage with 2 authors.

**Figure 4**  
*Lotka’s law*



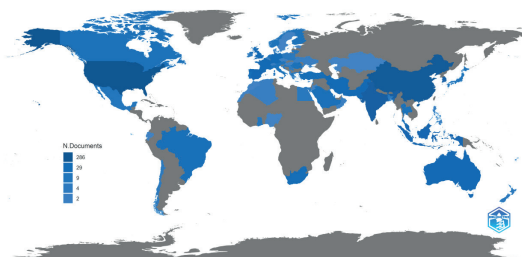
*Note.* The frequency distribution of scientific productivity extracted from the biblioshiny tool of R software.

**Most prominent countries**

The country that has conducted the most research studies on brand trust is the U.S. with a scientific production of 286 articles in total then comes China. Most of the prominent globally cited articles are from the U.S. The most globally cited article “The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand

Loyalty” is from the U.S. China has produced 190 articles in the area of brand trust. Then comes India having produced 129 articles in total. Saikat Banerjee a prominent Indian author in the field has contributed 7 articles. South Korea stands fourth in the list by having produced a total of 95 studies. Figure 5 shows the country-wise scientific production of brand trust articles.

**Figure 5**  
*Country scientific production*

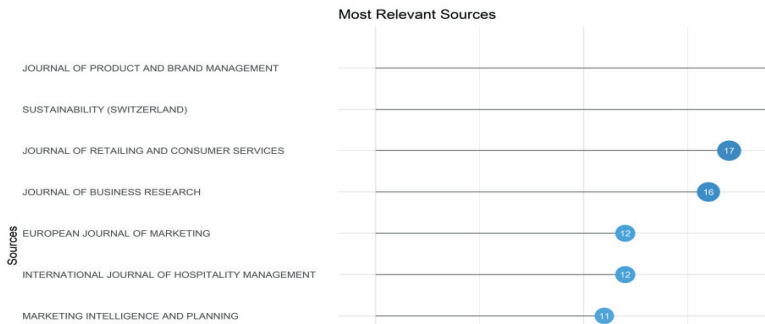


*Note.* Country scientific production extracted from the biblioshiny tool of R software.

**Most prominent journals**

**Figure 6**

*Most prominent journals*



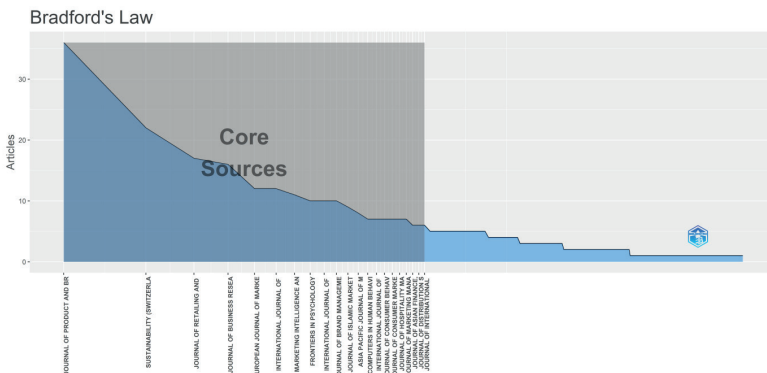
*Note.* Results from bibliometric analysis using the biblioshiny tool of R software show the most relevant sources.

Journal of Product and Brand Management is the journal that has published the most articles in the field of brand trust. It published a total of 36 articles. The Q1 journal focuses on all aspects of branding and product management from development to dilution from any discipline published by Emerald Publishing with SJR 1.427. The journal Sustainability comes second by having published 22 articles. Sustainability is an international, peer-reviewed, open-access, Q1 journal on environmental, cultural, economic, and social sustainability of human beings with SJR 0.664. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services comes third by producing

17 articles. The Q1 journal is an international and interdisciplinary forum for research and debate in the rapidly developing - and converging - fields of retailing and services studies published by Elsevier with SJR 2.543. Journal of Business Research has published 16 articles. JBR is a Q1 journal published by Elsevier with SJR 2.895 that examines a wide variety of business decision contexts, processes, and activities, developing insights that are meaningful for theory, practice, and/or society at large. Figure 6 shows the most prominent journals that publish brand trust articles.

**Figure 7**

*Bradford's law*



*Note.* Bradford's Law extracted from biblioshiny tool of R software.



communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust, and brand loyalty,” authored by Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., Richard, M.O., and Sankaranarayanan, presents a comprehensive exploration of social media’s impact on brand communities and associated markers. This article on social media-based brand communities has provided

valuable insights into the transformative effects of digital platforms on brand-related interactions. The study’s findings have become integral to discussions on contemporary marketing strategies in the digital age, contributing to the enduring relevance and high citation count of the publication.

**Table 1**  
*Most globally cited documents*

Publication	Authors	Year	Total Citation
The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty.	Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B.	2001	3039
The effects of social media based brand communities on brand community markers, value creation practices, brand trust and brand loyalty.	Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., Richard, M.O., & Sankaranarayanan, R.	2012	514
The impact of online store environment cues on purchase intention: Trust and perceived risk as a mediator.	Chang, H. H., & Chen, S. W.	2008	482
To be or not to be in social media: How brand loyalty is affected by social media?	Laroche, M., Habibi, M. R., & Richard, M.-O.	2013	456
Are brands forever? How brand knowledge and relationships affect current and future purchases.	Esch, F.-R., Langner, T., Langner, T., Schmitt, B. H., & Geus, P.	2006	423
Does brand trust matter to brand equity?	Delgado-Ballester, E., & Munuera-Alemán, J. L.	2005	348
Development and Validation of a Brand Trust Scale.	Delgado-Ballester, E., Munuera-Aleman, J. L., & Yague-Guillen, M. J.	2003	335
The Role of Customer Engagement in Building Consumer Loyalty to Tourism Brands.	So, K. K. F., King, C., Sparks, B. A., & Wang, Y.	2016	322
The role of brand love in consumer-brand relationships.	Albert, N., & Merunka, D.	2013	281
The roles of brand community and community engagement in building brand trust on social media.	Habibi, M. R., Laroche, M., & Richard, M.-O.	2014	280

*Note.* Data was compiled by the author using the biblioshiny tool of R software.

## Conclusion

Brand trust is a concept that has gained the attention of academicians, the growing number of publications in the area is a proof for the same. Even though a large number of authors were identified only a few has made a contribution of more than two articles. 21 journals were identified as core journals. Out of the total journals identified, more than half had published only one article. Brand trust, brand loyalty, brand equity, and brand image are the frequently used keywords. The article titled “The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty” authored by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) is the most globally cited.

On the basis of analysis of the past studies it has come to the attention that most of the brand trust studies are quantitative and empirical in nature. Thus in-depth qualitative studies should be conducted in order to further understand the concept and studies focussing on a psychological level should be given more emphasis. There is no consensus among academicians regarding the measurement of brand trust. Some argue that the construct is uni-dimensional (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001) whereas others argue that it is multi-dimensional (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003; Reast, 2005; Koschate-Fischer & Gartner, 2015). Thus, it would be helpful if future research brings more clarity on this aspect. Also the opposite of brand trust i.e., brand distrust could be explored. Most researches focus on how to build brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005), hence studies on how brand trust is lost and how to regain it could be an area for further research.

## Limitations

Articles indexed in the Scopus database were exclusively collected for the study. Thus, the articles indexed in other databases but not present in Scopus are excluded. Literature from publications other than journals is not included. The articles that are published after obtaining the data are not included in the study.

A bibliometrics meta-analysis by compiling all the articles from various databases could be done to have a more comprehensive view of the concept.

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