

## MAPPING THE INTELLECTUAL STRUCTURE OF GLOBAL BRAND LITERATURE AND AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

This review aims to conduct a thorough bibliometric analysis to assess the propensity of the impact of the brand on purchase intention literature in the automobile industry and provide a roadmap for further research. Using the specified search string on 05 February 2024, 340 publications were retrieved from esteemed journals indexed in the Scopus database. The dataset from 1974 to 2023 was analyzed and visualized using RStudio combined with Bibliometrix and VOSviewer software. The findings provide valuable insights into yearly publication trends, the prolific authors, sources, institutions, countries, and research publications. The observed outcomes of the review contradict Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law. Furthermore, bibliographic coupling analysis offers the conceptual research framework and suggests potential research avenues in this research area. In conclusion, this study enhances understanding of consumer behavior, particularly the influence of product brand image on potential car customers' purchase intention.

**Keywords:** Brand, bibliometric analysis, automobile industry, network

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Branding plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer preferences, influencing purchasing decisions, and sustaining competitive advantage across various industries (Alganad et al., 2021). However, the dynamics of branding within the automobile industry are distinct due to the sector's high-involvement nature, long product lifecycles, emotional consumer attachment, and significant financial investments involved in vehicle purchases. While a company has really smart plans for how to do well, those plans won't work if the stuff they sell or offer doesn't make their customers happy. So, it's super important for businesses to pay attention to what their customers want and need. That way, they can make sure their strategies actually work and keep their customers satisfied. In recent years, branding has become increasingly important for automobile companies navigating rapid technological disruptions, the shift toward electric vehicles, global competition, and evolving consumer expectations. Strong brand image and brand equity not only enhance customer trust and loyalty but also provide insulation against intense market competition and pricing pressures (Aaker, 1985). Therefore, developing a powerful brand identity has become a strategic priority for automobile firms seeking to establish differentiation and long-term market presence.

When consumers decide to purchase a car, they are influenced by both direct marketing mix elements and indirect factors such as peer recommendations, country of origin, and celebrity endorsements. In today's global automobile industry, competition is increasingly unstable due to rapid technological innovations, shifting consumer preferences, and a strong demand for quality products (Murtiasih et al., 2014; Lunguleac-Bardasuc et al., 2020). Events like mergers, new product launches, and negative publicity can significantly alter market dynamics. As a result, traditional state-owned brands are finding it difficult to survive amid growing competition from foreign investors, joint ventures, and private firms with stronger branding, advanced technology, and better management practices (Husain et al., 2022).

Building strong brands is very important for automobile marketers because it helps them stand out in the market, stay ahead of competitors, earn higher profits, gain support from distributors, and grow into new products or markets (Chattopadhyay et al., 2009; Malhotra & Kavita, 2022). Brand equity refers to the extra value a product has because of its brand name. For instance, brands like Coke, Levi's, Kodak, and Nike are preferred by customers, even over similar products, because of their strong brand image (Hang Phan et al., 2019; Pham & Gammoh, 2015). Studies show that brand equity can be seen as the added value beyond a product's physical features. It is a valuable asset for companies because it increases cash flow and lets them charge higher prices than competitors (Murty et al., 2018; Prasanna et al., 2013; Murtiasih et al., 2014). Brand equity depends on how consumers view the brand, which is influenced by several factors. Understanding these factors is essential for marketers to stay competitive and meet consumer expectations.

While the concept of brand equity has been extensively discussed in marketing literature, the existing studies largely focus on consumer goods, services, or general industry contexts. Although bibliometric analyses have been conducted on branding-related research, there is currently no comprehensive bibliometric review specifically examining branding within the automobile sector. This absence represents a critical gap in the literature, as automobile branding presents unique theoretical and practical implications that differ significantly from branding in low-involvement or fast-moving consumer goods. It is especially important to study how branding research has developed in the automobile industry because digital platforms, environmental concerns, and social issues are now playing a bigger role in how people see and connect with car brands.

To address this gap, the present study conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of branding research in the automobile industry. Using data retrieved from the Scopus database, we apply various bibliometric techniques to map the intellectual structure of the field, including performance analysis, bibliographic coupling, and the application of Bradford's and Lotka's laws. These tools enable us to identify the most influential authors, journals, articles, and themes that have shaped the evolution of branding research in this sector. Additionally, the study provides an intellectual structure map of the field, identifies thematic clusters, and proposes future research directions, thereby supporting scholars in identifying unexplored areas and practitioners in aligning their branding strategies with emerging academic insights.

The primary contribution of this research lies in offering a focused, data-driven synthesis of branding scholarship in the automobile sector, which has not been systematically reviewed to date. This study adds value to the theoretical development of brand management literature by contextualizing branding strategies within a specific industrial framework. Furthermore, it serves as a practical resource for brand managers and automotive marketers by offering evidence-based insights into branding trends, author productivity, journal prominence, and the evolving discourse in the field. In doing so, the study not only bridges an evident research gap but also supports more targeted and industry-specific branding strategies in an era marked by digital transformation and changing consumer behavior.

Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of branding research within the automobile industry by focusing on six key objectives. First, it analyzes the annual trends in brand-related publications over time to understand how research activity has evolved. Second, it identifies the leading contributors and frequently used keywords that shape the field. Third, the study examines the relevance of bibliometric laws, specifically Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law, in explaining publication and authorship patterns. Fourth, it highlights the most influential academic articles that have shaped the discourse on automobile branding. Fifth, it maps the intellectual structure of the brand literature to uncover major themes and connections. Finally, the study explores future research directions to guide scholars and practitioners interested in advancing brand research in the automobile sector. Hence, the objectives of this study are:

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1. To analyze the annual research trends of brand publications in the automobile industry over time.
2. To identify the most dominant contributors and key keywords used in this research field.
3. To examine the applicability of Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law in this domain.
4. To determine the most influential academic articles in automobile brand research.
5. To map the intellectual structure of brand literature in the automobile industry.
6. To explore potential areas for future research to advance brand studies.

These objectives directly correspond to the six research questions and are now explicitly presented in the further section.

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Brand-related research in the automobile sector has shown significant growth in recent years, yet it remains relatively underexplored from a bibliometric perspective. While various review studies have been conducted in the broader domain of branding, a clear gap remains in the form of a systematic and quantitative bibliometric analysis that specifically addresses branding in the automobile industry. For instance, Husain et al. (2022) conducted literature reviews focusing on luxury brand research but did not narrow their scope to automobile brands. Similarly, Varsha et al. (2021) explored the role of Artificial Intelligence in branding, analyzing selected publications, but again, without a targeted focus on the automobile sector. He et al. (2020) performed a systematic literature review of branding studies published between 2000 and 2019 using the Web of Science database, but their study primarily used content analysis and did not include sentiment or bibliometric mapping techniques.

Several other scholars have explored branding through more traditional lenses. For example,

(Sharma & Kumar Mitra, 2024; V & Mangaitarkkarasi, 2017; Kumar, 2014; Souiden & Pons, 2009; Chattopadhyay et al., 2009) discussed various branding aspects like advertising, distribution, pricing, and quality in different contexts. Loureiro et al. (2017) examined brand attachment in the automobile industry by focusing on company reputation, specifically for brands such as Tesla, Toyota, and Volvo. (Ul Zia & Sohail, 2016) investigated how brand advocacy, quality, involvement, and pricing influence consumer preferences in automobile purchases. (Mabkhot et al., 2016) looked at how brand image mediates the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in the Malaysian automobile market.

Although these studies have laid a solid foundation, most of them adopt either a descriptive or theoretical approach and lack a structured bibliometric methodology. Moreover, they do not map the intellectual structure of branding research in the automobile sector or assess the influence of academic contributions through citation analysis. Therefore, this study fills that gap by using bibliometric methods such as citation analysis and bibliographic coupling to provide an objective, data-driven view of global trends, influential authors and journals, and the evolution of the field.

By addressing these limitations, this review contributes to both theory and practice. It introduces a novel bibliometric perspective, analyzes publication patterns and intellectual structures, and highlights key contributors and research clusters in the automobile branding literature. This approach offers not only a foundation for future scholarly work but also practical guidance for marketers and policymakers interested in branding strategy within the dynamic context of the global automobile industry. This study addresses the following research questions (RQs) to accomplish the aforesaid objectives of the study:

Research Question 1. What is the annual research trend of brand publication in the automobile industry over time has fluctuated?

Research Question 2. Which are the most dominant contributors and major keywords employed in this research field?

Research Question 3. Do Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law align with the observed outcomes of this study?

Research Question 4. Which academic articles hold the most influence in this research field?

Research Question 5. What is the intellectual structure of the brand literature?

Research Question 6. What areas can be further explored to advance brand research?

The subsequent sections provide a detailed overview of the remaining review. Section 3 outlines the methodology and criteria employed in selecting data for this study. Section 4 offers an extensive examination of the subject, utilizing research trends in publications, citation network analysis, and bibliographic coupling network analysis to highlight potential directions for future research. Lastly, Section 5 concludes the study by addressing certain limitations.

### **3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA SELECTION**

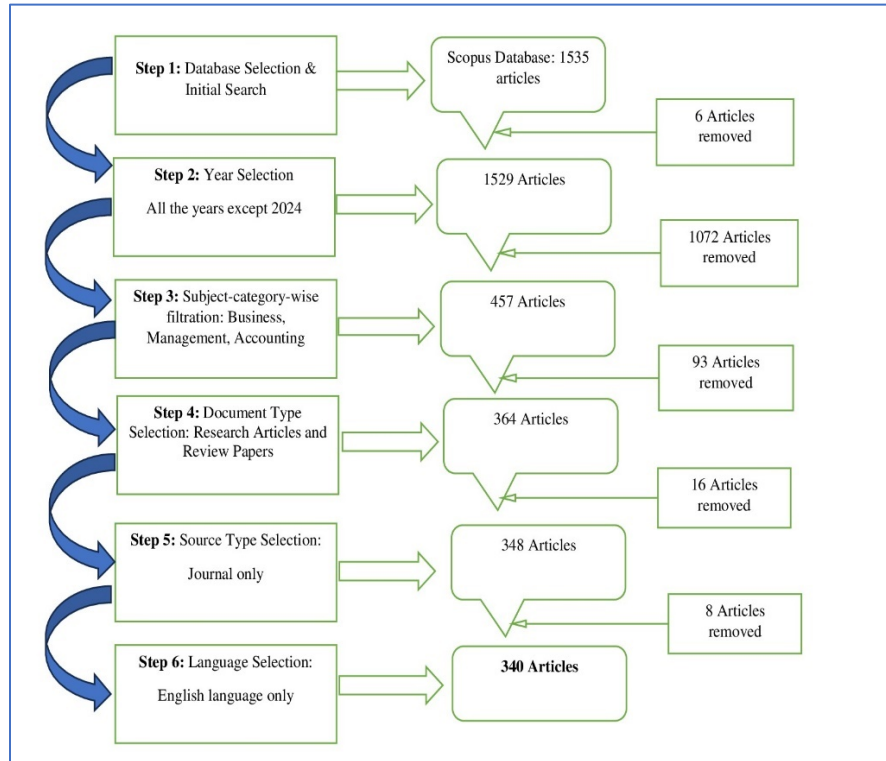
This study adopts a bibliometric analysis using two key techniques: performance analysis and science mapping, following the methodological frameworks proposed by Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, et al. (2021). The data for the analysis was retrieved exclusively from the Scopus database, selected for its wide disciplinary coverage, high-quality metadata, and robust citation tracking, particularly relevant for research in management, branding, and business. Scopus has been frequently used in recent bibliometric studies on branding (Verma & Malhotra, 2023a; Varsha et al., 2021) and is recognized for its superior journal inclusion and citation analysis features compared to other major databases like Web of Science (WoS), PubMed, and ScienceDirect (Verma & Malhotra, 2023c; Farooq, 2023; Batra, Saini, & Yadav, 2023). It supports advanced bibliometric tools such as VOSviewer and Bibliometrix, facilitating both quantitative mapping and trend analysis.

While WoS is also a credible source for bibliometric research, Scopus was chosen in this study due to its broader coverage in the social sciences and business domains, and its compatibility with visualization and analysis software. Future research could consider a comparative or combined database approach (e.g., Scopus and WoS) to increase robustness. This method is particularly effective for uncovering research gaps, key contributors, emerging themes, and collaborative networks, making it a robust and reproducible approach for fulfilling the objectives of this study.

According to (Yang et al., 2019; Donthu, Kumar, & Pattnaik, 2021; Zainuldin & Lui, 2022; Abbas et al., 2020; Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, et al., 2021; H. Wang et al., 2013; El Baz & Iddik, 2022; Zainuldin & Lui, 2022; Bunescu, 2023; Orastean et al., 2019; Lunguleac-Bardasuc et al., 2020) bibliometric reviews expand existed review of related literature techniques rather than replacing them. For the current study, utilizing the "bibliometrix" package of the R programme, network analysis using the VOSviewer programme (Jemghili et al., 2021; Costa & Forte, 2022; Hyk et al., 2022; Gorski & Dumitrascu, 2024; Țîmbalari & Herciu, 2023; Panta & Popescu, 2023) the bibliometric analysis is performed. The Scopus database has been taken for the purpose of data gathering since Scopus database has greater global coverage (unlike WOS) of interdisciplinary research output (El Baz & Iddik, 2022; Abbas et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2021; Batra et al., 2022; Yadav & Saini, 2023; Țîmbalari et al., 2024). After identifying the key database, the data collection is created using the key search terms ("brand" AND "automobile") for "title-abstract-keywords" on 05 February 2024 as shown in figure 1. The initial search resulted in 1535 documents to demonstrate the publications closely related to the concerned topic. The documents published in January 2024 were excluded, as it doesn't represent the publications of 2024 as a whole year, resulting in 1529 articles. Further, the articles are reduced by the subject area "Business, Management and Accounting", resulting in 457 documents. Further, these documents were refined by using "research articles and review articles" only, as document type, and 364 papers were left now. Documents were again refined using source type, including "journals" only, and which obtained 348 articles. In the final filtration stage, documents published in the English language

only were comprised in this review, which offered us 340 articles for the bibliometric analysis published from 1974 to 2023.

**Figure 1: Eligibility criteria for document selection**



## 4. BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS WITH DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Statistical summary of the dataset

This section of the study outlines the results of analyzing 340 documents on the brand realm concerning the automobile industry, published between 1974 and 2023, as depicted in Table 1. The table shows the growth rate of the documents 6.41% annually and the average citations obtained by each article was noted 34.66 during this period. The heightened growth rate and average citations per article indicate a rapid escalation in scholarly documents focusing on brand research in the automobile industry. The analysis revealed 735 distinct authors active in this field during the period. Of these, 51 publications were authored by a single individual, while the average co-authorship stood at 2.49 per document. This data underscores significant collaborative research efforts in advancing brand research, with international co-authorship accounting for 21.47%. However, there is also a significant number of single-author publications being published.

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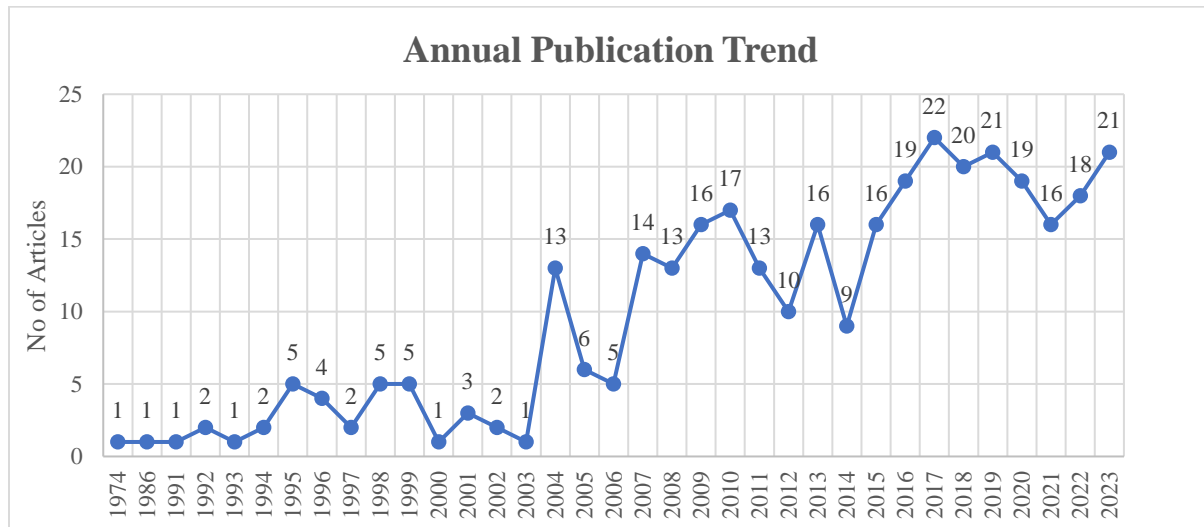
**Table 1: Statistical information of dataset**

Description	Results
Timespan	1974:2023
Sources of documents	173
Documents	340
Annual Growth Rate %	6.41
Document Average Age	11.2
Average citations per document	34.66
Keywords Plus	737
Author's Keywords	1012
Authors	735
Authors of single-authored documents	51
Single-authored documents	60
Co-Authors per documents	2.49
International co-authorships %	21.47
Article	325
Review Articles	15

## 4.2 Annual publication trend

Figure 2 responds to research question 1 and demonstrates the numerous articles published in the journals which are indexed in the Scopus database, on the brand research field regarding the automobile industry from 1974 to 2023. It manifests that the publication in the field of brand obtained its momentum after 2004. However, brand research in the automobile industry didn't just pop up recently; its origins trace back to earlier times, which used comparatively narrow terms (D. Yang et al., 2017). This figure shows the annual expansion in the number of articles published, from 1 in 1974 to 21 documents in 2023. By the trend line, a sharp uphill turn can be noted in 2007 and 2015, and up to 2019 slope of the publication trend line is less steep. This may be assigned to post Covid-19 effect (Y. Wang et al., 2021), which influenced consumer brand preference significantly with emotional reviews posted online. The maximum number of documents (181 papers) were found in the last decade (2014 to 2023), which shows the increasing interest of academicians in this field and also suggests the emerging potential interest in this research realm. As our results for Research Question 1 demonstrate a clear growth in brand-related publications in the automobile industry from 1974 to 2023, with notable momentum after 2004 and a surge in the last decade. This trend aligns with prior studies such as Feng et al. (2017), who observed a similar uptrend in luxury brand publications post-2009. While our study focuses specifically on the automobile sector, the observed patterns reflect a broader scholarly interest in branding, consistent with global developments across different industries.



**Figure 2: Annual Production trend**

#### 4.3 Prolific authors:

To answer Research Question 2, we conducted a comprehensive analysis to identify the most influential contributors in the field, including prolific authors, leading countries, and top publishing institutions. Firstly, the top ten most active authors in the brand regarding the automobile industry research field, who have made significant contributions and exerted influence, are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Top contributive authors as per Citation Matrix**

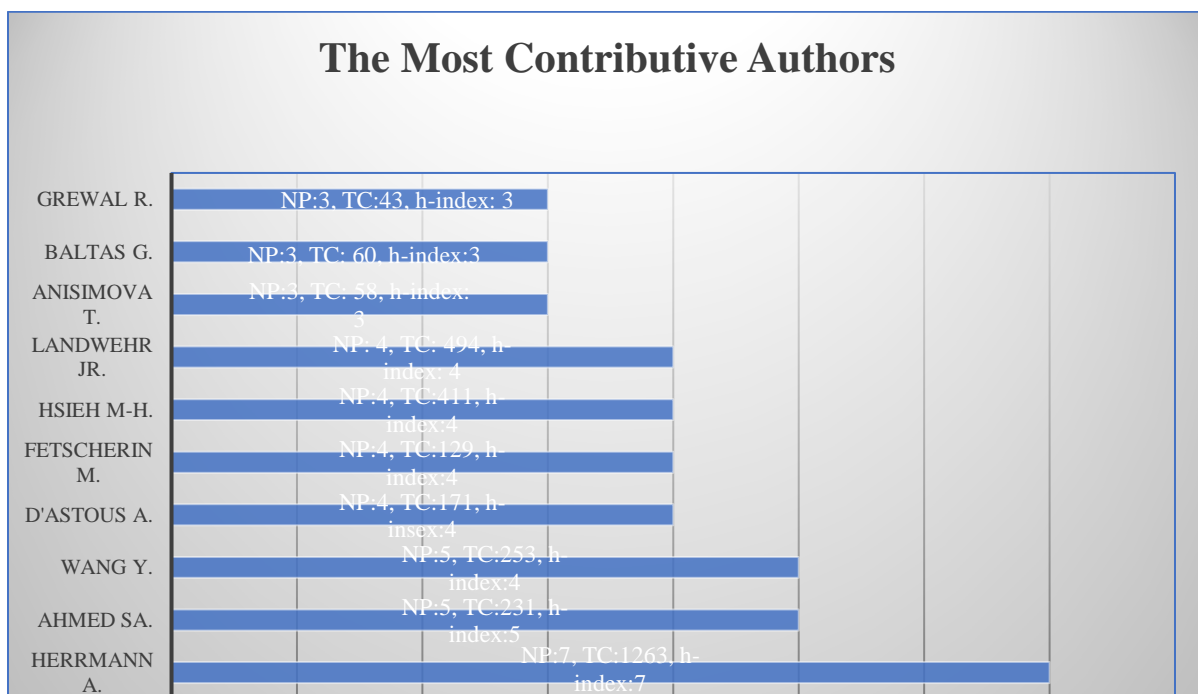
Rank	Authors	h_index	g_index	NP	TC
1	Herrmann A.	7	7	7	1263
2	Ahmed SA.	5	5	5	231
7	Wang Y.	4	5	5	253
3	D'astous A.	4	4	4	171
-4	Fetscherin M.	4	4	4	129
5	Hsieh M-H.	4	4	4	411
6	Landwehr JR.	4	4	4	494
8	Anisimova T.	3	3	3	58
9	Baltas G.	3	3	3	60
10	Grewal R.	3	3	3	43

Note: NP: Number of Publications; TC: Total Citations

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Herrmann A. holds the top position with seven articles, the highest number authored by an individual, and possesses an impressive h-index of seven. Additionally, Herrmann A. has obtained a notable 1263 citations, which is a milestone in itself within the automobile industry research field. Ahmed SA. And Wang Y. are noteworthy contributors, each having authored five articles, indicating their significant influence and contribution to this area. D'astous A., Fetscherin M., Hsieh M-H., and Landwehr JR. these authors have four documents each, where Landwehr JR obtained the second largest number of 494 citations, reflecting substantial impact. Further Anisimova T., Baltas G., and Grewal R. highlight their impactful presence in this area of study, as shown in Figure 3 also.

**Figure 3: Most prolific authors.**



### 4.4 Top Leading Institutes

Table 3 outlines the topmost institutions that have built significant contributions to the literature in the field of brand and automobile industry. University of South Carolina has a maximum number of thirteen documents. After that, The University of St. Gallen, Switzerland carried eleven publications, and then School of Management and The University of Science and Technology of China both published seven articles. Athens University of Economics and Business; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; University Utara Malaysia; University of California and University of North Texas all these institutes have five publications each, whereas Accenture Institute for High Performance has four documents.

**Table 3: Top ten Organizations**

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Articles</b>
University of South Carolina	13
University of St. Gallen, Switzerland	11
School of Management	7
University of Science and Technology of China	7
Athens University of Economics and Business	5
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	5
University Utara Malaysia	5
University of California	5
University of North Texas	5
Accenture Institute for High Performance	4

#### 4.5 Leading Sources

Figure 4 demonstrates the topmost journals in the brand area concerning the automobile industry. From per production point of view, “Journal of Product and Brand Management” is the most productive journal with fifteen articles, followed by “Journal of Business Research”, “Journal of Global Marketing”, and “Journal of Marketing” having nine documents each, whereas "Journal of Marketing" has maximum number of 1925 citations in the taken dataset. After that

**Table 4: Top ten journals**

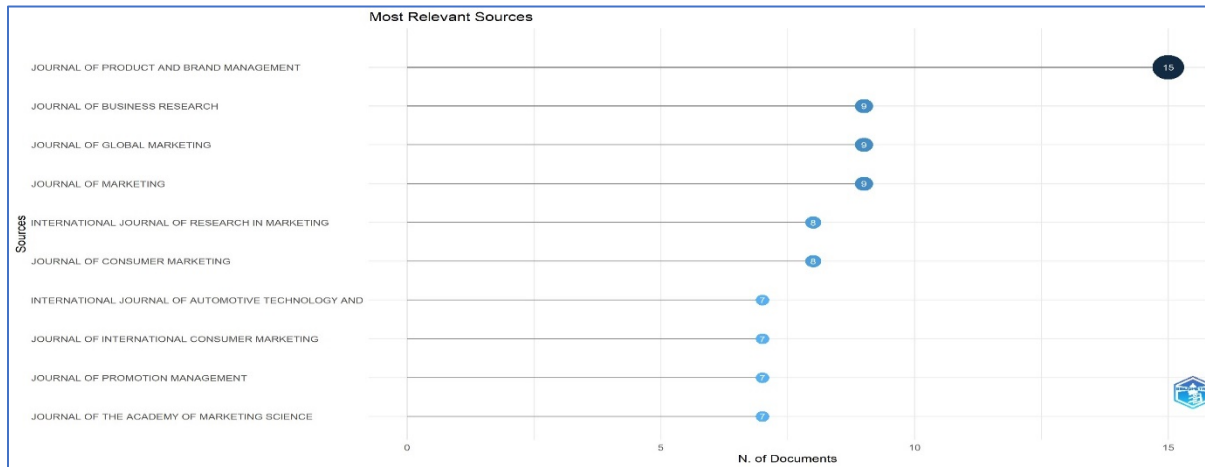
<b>Source</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<b>Citations</b>
Journal of Product and Brand Management	15	391
Journal of Business Research	9	814
Journal of Global Marketing	9	249
Journal of Marketing	9	1925
International Journal of Research in Marketing	8	666
Journal of Consumer Marketing	8	342
International Journal of Automotive Technology and Management	7	14
Journal of International Consumer Marketing	7	208
Journal of Promotion Management	7	76
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	7	422

International Journal of Research in Marketing and Journal of Consumer Marketing have eight articles each. International Journal of Automotive Technology and Management, Journal of

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International Consumer Marketing, Journal of Promotion Management, and Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science published comparatively fewer articles but still became part of the top ten sources, from the production point of view as shown clearly in table 4. Consequently, these journals have approx. one-fourth (25.29% or  $86/340 \times 100$ ) coverage among all published documents in this dataset.

**Figure 4: Leading sources**



### 4.6 Leading Countries

Fifty-six countries participated in taken dataset for this study, indicating widespread global interest in this field of research, which is not limited to specific geographic regions.

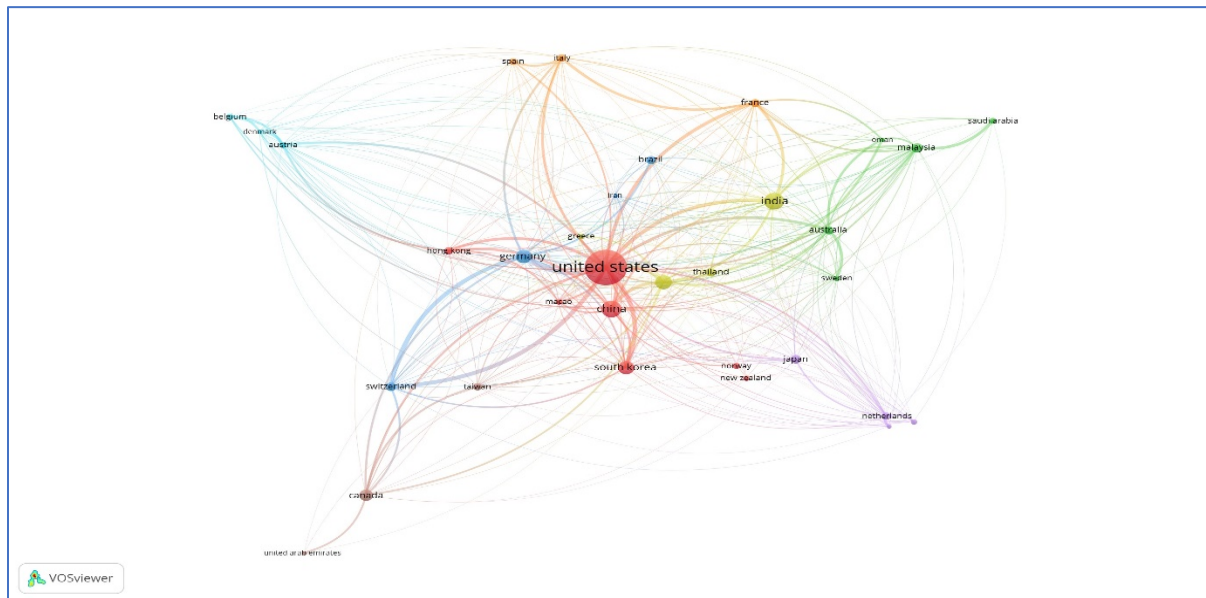
**Table 5: Top ten countries**

Rank	Country	Documents	Citations
1	United States	132	6819
2	India	30	189
3	China	29	606
4	United Kingdom	22	458
5	Germany	19	1284
6	South Korea	19	904
7	Canada	14	518
8	Malaysia	10	105
9	Switzerland	8	1416
10	Australia	7	296

According to the bibliometric analysis, the USA emerged as the leading producer of brands related to the automobile industries concerning research publications, with a significant contribution of 132 articles and the highest number of citations, totaling 6,819. Remarkably, the United States

alone accounts for 132 publications, constituting 38.82 % of all documents published in this field, hence making it the most prolific region in terms of article publication. Following the USA, India, China, and the UK have more than twenty documents with 23.82% ( $30+29+22=81/340 \times 100$ ) coverage of overall publications. This analysis illustrates the significant contribution of these ten countries, collectively accounting for 290 documents, which make up approx. 85% ( $290/340 \times 100$ ) of the total number of 340 documents included in this bibliometric study, thus driving forward the progress of this emerging topic. Hence, our findings are generally consistent with previous studies. In our analysis, the United States emerged as the leading contributor with 132 publications and the highest citation count, aligning with earlier research (Varsha et al., 2021; Husain et al., 2022) that also identified the USA as the most significant contributor.

**Figure 5: Countries collaboration**



#### 4.7: Relationship among authors, sources, and keywords

Figure 6 shows a three-field plot analysis representing the interconnection among the three prime terms: sources, keywords, and authors. In the left column, the publishing journals are displayed,

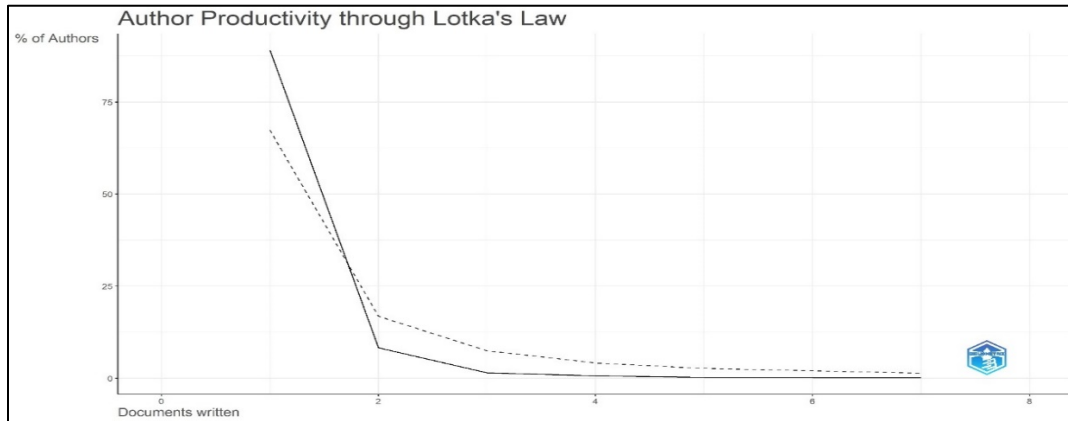


#### 4.8 Lotka's Law

To address research question 3, this study applied the classical bibliometric laws i.e. Bradford's and Lotka's laws as analytical tools to assess the structural characteristics of the literature on branding in the automobile industry. Lotka's Law is applied to analyze author productivity and assess whether the distribution of publications among researchers follows the typical inverse square law, indicating whether scholarly output in this domain is concentrated among a few prolific authors. Bradford's Law, on the other hand, is employed to identify the core journals that publish the most relevant research, helping to determine the dispersion of knowledge across journals and whether a small group of sources dominates the field. The decision to apply these laws is justified by their widespread use in bibliometric literature to examine the maturity, concentration, and knowledge diffusion within a research field. By testing these laws, this study not only validates structural patterns in existing scholarship but also provides insights into the depth and sustainability of research development in branding related to the automobile sector. Using these laws helps us better understand how the research in this area has developed over time and how knowledge is organized, which makes our analysis stronger and more reliable.

Lotka's law, established in 1926, suggests that approximately 60% of researchers have only one publication, while around 15% contribute two documents, and nearly 6.6% are responsible for three papers in a given field of study (Nusair et al., 2019; Tepe et al., 2022; Chakraborty et al., 2021; Palácios et al., 2021; Rodríguez Orejuela et al., 2020; Batra et al., 2022). Figure 8 illustrates a comparison between Lotka's distribution of scientific production and the observed production of authors. In this dataset, the analysis indicates that the majority of authors, specifically 89.1%, contribute only one article. Additionally, 8.3% of authors are found to have published two papers, while a smaller proportion, 1.5%, have produced three articles on the subjects. Significantly, the results indicate that the majority of authors, specifically 89.1% contribute only a single article, which is notably inconsistent with the 60% suggested by Lotka's law. Similarly, 8.3% and 1.5% of authors contributed two and three documents, which is also inconsistent with the pre-standard of 15% and 6.6% respectively. Therefore, these findings align with prior studies (Batra et al., 2022), suggesting a common pattern across research fields. Although these topics generate wide academic interest, most authors contribute only once, indicating a fragmented authorship landscape.

**Figure 8: The scientific distribution of articles as per Lotka's law**



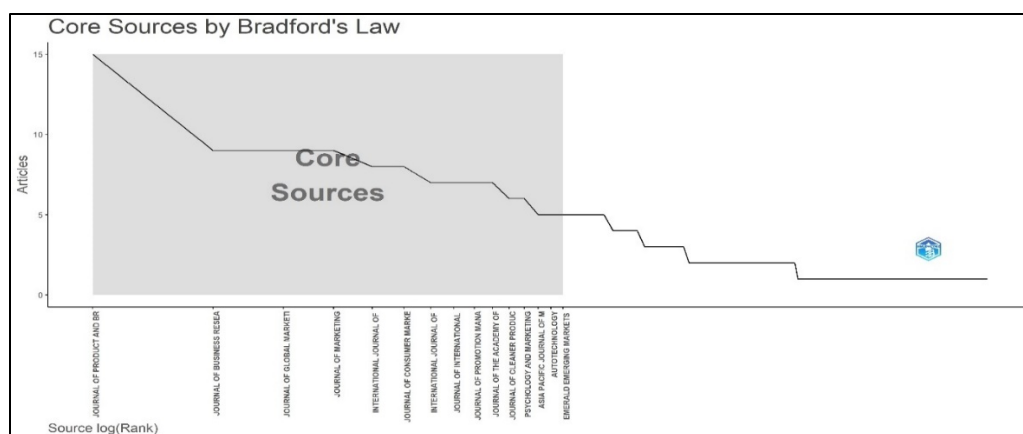
Therefore, the finding revealed a remarkable deviation between Lotka's law and the author's contribution to the brand and automobile industry research field. Moreover, our study findings suggest that some pertinent authors are significantly shaping this domain and providing potential avenues for future researchers to expand this field of study.

#### **4.9: Bradford's Law**

We identified the core journals by utilizing Bradford's law. According to this principle, the total number of sources is divided into three zones, each comprising approx. one-third of the entire dataset (Shenton & Hay-Gibson, 2009; Rathika et al., 2020). Zone one, often referred to as the nuclear zone, or core zone contains highly productive sources, while zone two encompasses sources of moderate contribution. Journals associated with zone three contribute the least to the dataset. The core zone aids researchers in identifying relevant articles that are considered essential to the subject matter. These articles are typically found in journals within this core zone, as they contain the majority of the pertinent articles related to the field.

**Figure 9: Bradford's Law**





As figure 9 shows that the documents that fall within the core zone are Journal of Product and Brand Management, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Global Marketing, Journal of Marketing, International Journal of Research in Marketing, Journal of Consumer Marketing, International Journal of Automotive Technology and Management, and so on, which predominantly publishes the most relevant and significant articles.

**Table 6: Distribution of total journals and articles as per Bradford's Law**

Zone	Journals	Articles	Percentage
Core Zone	15	113	33.235
First Zone	46	115	33.823
Second Zone	112	112	32.942
Total	173	340	100

Furthermore, the results indicate that 173 journals published the complete dataset of 340 articles. Specifically, the first segment of 15 journals published 113 documents, the second segment of 46 journals published 115 documents, and the remaining 112 documents were distributed among the last segment consisting of 112 journals. Thus, the findings reveal that over one-third of the articles were published by the first few journals, followed by a segment with moderate productivity, while the largest number of sources published the remaining articles. Finally, this distribution pattern aligns with Bradford's Law, as shown in Table 6. Therefore, this study's results are consistent with Bradford's Law and in line with the findings of the study (Batra et al., 2022b), confirming that a small number of core journals contribute disproportionately to the publication volume, while a broader base of journals contributes the rest.

#### 4.10: Citation network analysis

The authors utilized citation network analysis to address research question 4, identifying the most influential scholarly documents. This method offers insights into papers, which have received the most significant impact within the academic community by examining how many times they've

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been cited by other researchers (Bhaiswar et al., 2021; Agarwal & Kumar, 2020; Strozzi et al., 2017; de Moya-Anegón et al., 2014; Qiu et al., 2017; Kaur et al., 2022; Quinn et al., 2013; Iyengar & Bharathi, 2018). By using citation network analysis, the authors can find out which papers are really important in the field (Verma & Malhotra, 2023b). They look at how often other researchers mention these papers in their research works; hence it helps to identify the most influential publications that have made a big impact and assisted in further work. Table 7 displays the articles that have the most influence based on both local citations and global citations. Global citation analysis states all the citations, a particular paper has received, while local citation analysis indicates the papers' recognition within the taken dataset i.e. the total of 340 articles examined in the study (Kent Baker et al., 2020).

**Table 7: Top ten cited articles**

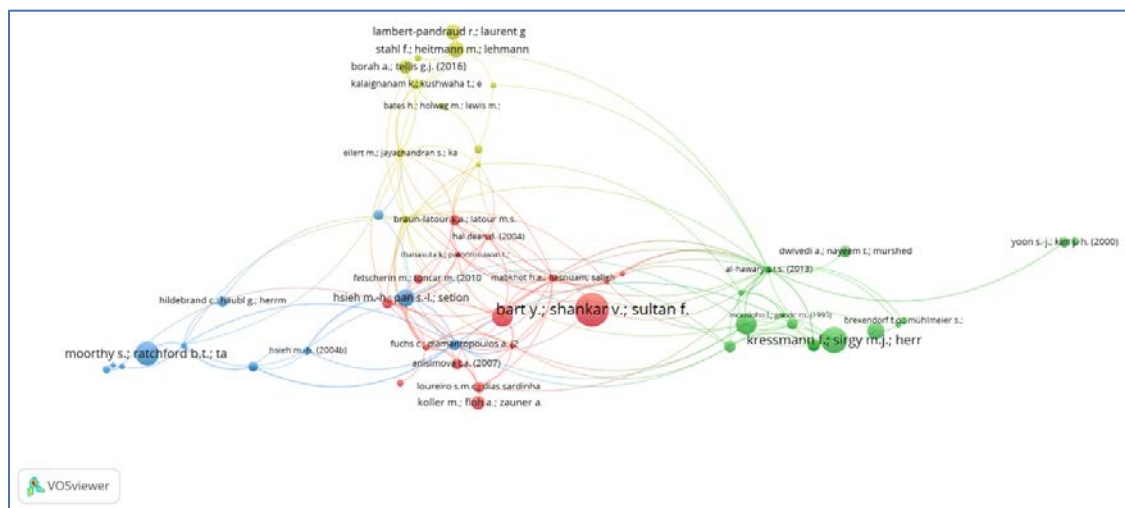
Author	Title of the Articles	Journal	LC	GC
Bart et al. (2005)	Are the drivers and role of online trust the same for all web sites and consumers? A large-scale exploratory empirical study.	Journal of Marketing	1	981
Kressmann et al. (2006)	Direct and indirect effects of self-image congruence on brand loyalty.	Journal of Business Research	10	604
Moorthy et al. (1997)	Consumer Information Search Revisited: Theory and Empirical Analysis.	Journal of Consumer Research	2	512
Jalilvand & Samiei (2012)	The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention.	Marketing Intelligence & Planning	1	384
Hudson et al. (2016)	The influence of social media interactions on consumer-brand relationships: A three-country study of brand perceptions and marketing behaviors.	International Journal of Marketing Research	2	373
Iyer (1998)	Coordinating channels under price and nonprice competition.	Marketing Science	0	303
Hsieh et al. (2004)	Product-, corporate-, and country-image dimensions and purchase behavior: A multi country analysis.	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	0	280
Hong & Zinkhan (1995)	Self-concept and advertising effectiveness: The influence of congruency, conspicuousness, and response mode.	Psychology & Marketing	1	243
Stahl et al. (2012)	The impact of brand equity on customer acquisition, retention, and profit margin.	Journal of Marketing	3	230

Landwehr et al. (2011) It's got the look: The effect of friendly and aggressive "Facial" expressions on product liking and sales. Journal of Marketing 222

Are the drivers and role of online trust the same for all web sites and consumers? A large-scale exploratory empirical study by (Bart et al., 2005) has obtained a maximum number of global citations. Direct and indirect effects of self-image congruence on brand loyalty by (Kressmann et al., 2006), and Consumer information search revisited: theory and empirical analysis by (Moorthy et al., 1997) have a remarkable effect on brand-related issues in the automobile industry, by obtaining above five-hundred global citations. The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention by (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012a), The influence of social media interactions on consumer–brand relationships: A three-country study of brand perceptions and marketing behaviors by (Hudson et al., 2016a), Coordinating channels under price and nonprice competition by (Iyer, 1998), Product-, corporate-, and country-image dimensions and purchase behavior: A multi country analysis by (Hsieh et al., 2004), Self-concept and advertising effectiveness: The influence of congruency, conspicuousness, and response mode by (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995), The Impact of brand equity on customer acquisition, retention, and profit margin by (Stahl et al., 2012), and It's got the look: The effect of friendly and aggressive "facial" expressions on product liking and sales by (Landwehr et al., 2011) are possessing a significant number of citations and collectively these are leading in top ten cited articles.

The key factor is noted here that the rankings of articles differ based on whether local or global citations are considered, highlighting the impact of context on their perceived importance. From the local citations point of view, the study of (Kressmann et al., 2006) has received a maximum number of citations in the taken dataset as local citations.

**Figure 10: Citation Network Analysis**

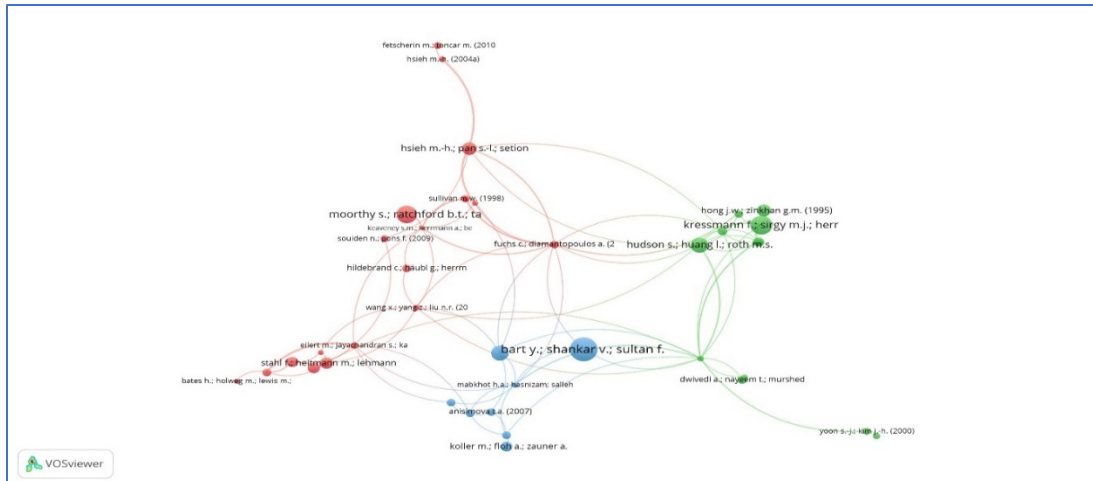


The most influential publications in this area under the taken dataset are represented through the Citation network analysis in Figure 10. In the 1<sup>st</sup> cluster (red color) “Are the drivers and role of online trust the same for all web sites and consumers? A large-scale exploratory empirical study” by (Bart et al., 2005) and the study of (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012a) entitled “The effect of electronic word of mouth on brand image and purchase intention” are found the most influential articles in the citation network. After that more notable documents from 2<sup>nd</sup> cluster (green in color) are “Direct and indirect effects of self-image congruence on brand loyalty” (Kressmann et al., 2006) and “The influence of social media interactions on consumer–brand relationships: A three-country study of brand perceptions and marketing behaviors” (Hudson et al., 2016b); (Hong & Zinkhan, 1995). In 3<sup>rd</sup> cluster (blue), (Hsieh et al., 2004) surveyed the global brand image of twenty international automobile markets by using their economic and cultural data at the macro level. Furthermore, (Stahl et al., 2012) from the 4<sup>th</sup> cluster (yellow) investigated the correlation between customer brand equity and their acquisition, retention, and profit-making power, by using the ten years of data that combines the acquisition rate, customer retention rate with the rate of profitability of the USA automobile market, and suggested that “soft” and “hard” phases of marketing must be managed in a coordinated way to attract and retain the customer.

#### **4.11 Bibliometric coupling analysis**

Bibliographic coupling refers to the situation where two documents share the same references or citations. This connection indicates a similarity or relationship between the documents based on the sources they reference. It's a useful method for analyzing the intellectual structure of a field or identifying related works. The authors utilized bibliographic coupling to address research question 5, along with VOSviewer software, to explore the intellectual structure of the concerned domain and identify emerging themes in the research field of the brand with the automobile sector. This approach allowed them to gain insights into current research themes and pinpoint potential future directions for the concern field, further developing a clear picture of the key topics and trends within brand research. Since the total number of documents is too large, the authors focused on those that were cited together at least forty times to form clusters; hence it resulted in the creation of three clusters, comprising a total of sixty-four documents as shown in Figure 11. Furthermore, the authors apply content analysis to fetch out the key areas for future research themes from these three clusters as shown in the table.

**Figure 11: Bibliometric coupling analysis**



### Cluster 1: Brand image and car purchase decision

Cluster one stands out as the largest cluster in the bibliometric coupling network analysis, comprising 19 documents, as illustrated in Figure 11. The studies in this cluster that is red mainly focus on how brand influences customers' purchase intentions regarding goods and services. Different documents discuss many aspects associated with brands which affect the purchase intention of customer in the automobile industry such as country image, consumer brand preference, concept of brand building, brand positioning, brand personality, consumer loyalty, brand equity (Demirbag et al., 2010; Aaker, 1985; Hsieh et al., 2004; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010; Hildebrand et al., 2013; X. Wang et al., 2009; Bates et al., 2007; Eilert et al., 2017; Souiden & Pons, 2009; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Ming-Huei, 2004).

The study of (Hsieh et al., 2004) provides practical utilization for benchmarking in the case of the best brand that can be used as a good indicator of brands' associative scenario in the global automotive market, by utilizing the *national brand equity* model to analyze 18 different brands across 16 global automobile markets. Demirbag et al. (2010) investigated that how materialism influences the relationship between country image and product preference, specifically focusing on emerging economies. The study (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010) aims to examine which strategies for positioning products are most effective from the viewpoint of consumers. Consumers' perception of a brand is primarily subjective and based on their rational or emotional attitude. The findings of the study (X. Wang et al., 2009) indicate that the product-brand personality holds a more significant impact on consumers' purchase decisions than the company-brand personality itself (Souiden & Pons, 2009) investigated effectiveness of managing a recall crisis on the manufacturer's image, consumer loyalty, and their intentions to make a future purchase. The findings of the study (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010) reveal that consumers who struggle to differentiate between two visually similar product lines tend to have negative perceptions not only towards the product itself but also towards the parent brand. Brands provide different values to their buyers, which can be broadly categorized into functional, experiential, and symbolic

benefits. Functional value pertains to the brand's ability to solve problems or meet practical needs. Experiential value refers to the enjoyment or cognitive stimulation that consumers derive from using the brand. Symbolic brand benefits shown the signals or messages conveyed to others through the brand, reflecting aspects such as status, identity, or lifestyle (X. Wang et al., 2009).

### **Cluster 2: Effectiveness of brand**

The second cluster of bibliometric network analysis is represented by green bubbles. The primary focus of this cluster is on the importance and effectiveness of brands in the automobile industry (Kressmann et al., 2006; Hong & Zinkhan, 1995; X. Wang et al., 2009; Hudson et al., 2016a; Yoon & Kim, 2000). Brands provide different values to their buyers, which can be broadly categorized into functional, experiential, and symbolic benefits. Functional value pertains to the brand's ability to solve problems or meet practical needs. Experiential value refers to the enjoyment or cognitive stimulation that consumers derive from using the brand. Symbolic brand benefits shown the signals or messages conveyed to others through the brand, reflecting aspects such as status, identity, or lifestyle. The study of (Kressmann et al., 2006) tests the model which proposes that when there's a match between your self-image and the brand's image, consequently it boosts brand loyalty. Brand meets the consumers' needs, their level of interest in the product, and the quality of their relationship with the brand. (Hudson et al., 2016b) investigated the influence of social media interactions on consumer-brand relationships, utilizing both cross-country survey data and experimental data. Moreover, the results indicate a positive correlation between social media interaction and Brand Relationship Quality (BRQ), along with other marketing strategies.

### **Cluster 3: Brand and E-WOM**

The study concluded that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is a highly influential factor that impacts both brand image and purchase intention in auto markets (Bart et al., 2005; Braun-LaTour et al., 2007; Carpenter & Moore, 2006; Sung et al., 2015; Anisimova, 2007; Loureiro et al., 2012). Jalilvand & Samiei (2012b) examined that positive word-of-mouth (WOM) and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) significantly boost customers' purchase intentions, build a positive company image and product brand image, and reduce promotional costs. Additionally, examining the impact of online WOM on brand image across various brands and product categories, such as financial services, could yield valuable insights, especially for products/services with high credibility qualities. In the highly competitive automotive industry, having strong brand awareness provides a crucial advantage that sets a business apart from its competitors. When customers are more familiar with a brand, they are willing to choose it over competitors offering similar products or services (Braun-LaTour et al., 2007). The study of (Sung et al., 2015) constructed a theoretical framework to comprehend the dimensions of luxury brand personality, along with developing a dependable and valid scale to assess these dimensions, provided a solid foundation for analyzing and evaluating the personality traits associated with luxury brands. Anisimova (2007) explored the effect of corporate brands on both the attitudes and behaviors of consumers of an automobile

manufacturer in Australia, in terms of brand loyalty. Their research divides corporate brand attributes into two categories: corporate-level (including corporate activities, associations, values, and personality) and marketing-level (comprising functional, emotional, and symbolic brand benefits). The findings indicate that corporate values, corporate brand personality, and functional consumer benefits are the most significant predictors of both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. A study by (Loureiro et al., 2012) has indicated that maintaining a strong record of corporate social responsibility (CSR) or corporate social performance (CSP) can have a positive impact on corporate financial performance (CFP). This is often achieved by reducing costs and enhancing productivity within the organization.

**Table 8: Future avenues**

Cluster	Current research	Further research avenues
Cluster 1: Brand image and car purchase decision	Mainly concerned with the role and impact of a product-brand image while car purchasing (Hsieh et al., 2004; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010; X. Wang et al., 2009; Souiden & Pons, 2009)	More in-depth studies by applying case studies or any other comparative analysis should be addressed to identify the impact of brand image on purchasing decisions in the auto industry.
Cluster 2: Effectiveness of brand	Explained the effectiveness of brands in the automobile industry (Kressmann et al., 2006; X. Wang et al., 2009).	To identify the significant mediating factors that enhance the brand choice for a specific car among several cars available in the auto market.
Cluster 3: Brand and E-WOM	Explored the impact of both E-WOM and brand on the auto market (Bart et al., 2005); (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012a); (Anisimova, 2007).	A cross-country study could be conducted on customer satisfaction towards brand loyalty and e-wom significance in the automobile industry at the world level.

## 5. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The spread of brand image has become increasingly valuable and recognized in both the marketplace and academic world. In this bibliometric analysis, the authors aim to quantitatively review the literature concerning the impact of brand image on buying intention in the automobile market. By analyzing the documents from journals indexed in the Scopus database, the review sought to observe researchers' contributions in this area. The authors conducted a bibliometric analysis using a dataset of 340 articles to identify the yearly publication pattern, contributive authors, institutions, countries, and the most influential documents from 1974 to 2023. Additionally, we compared the study findings with bibliometric laws such as Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law.

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The findings of the review revealed a remarkable exponential expansion in areas of brand research within the timeframe of 2007 to 2023, while this period covered approx. 82% (280 out of 340) of total dataset. Herrmann A. was found the most productive and influential author in this realm, having seven publications and the highest h index along with the maximum number of 1263 citations. Nevertheless, the analysis suggests that experts in this field are in a phase of relatively slow development or growth. Furthermore, the study of (Kressmann et al., 2006) entitled "Direct and indirect effects of self-image congruence on brand loyalty" in the well-reputed source "Journal of Business Research" and the article of (Bart et al., 2005) entitled "Are the drivers and role of online trust the same for all web sites and consumers? A large-scale exploratory empirical study" in the journal "Journal of Marketing" are found the most influential sources as per global and local citations respectively. "Journal of Product and Brand Management" is found the top source of publications in this area, published fifteen documents, followed by "Journal of Business Research", "Journal of Global Marketing", and "Journal of Marketing" having nine articles each, and "Journal of Marketing" is also the most influential source as it has the maximum number of 1925 citations. Notably, findings showed that the USA, India, China, and the UK are the substantial contributors, and "University of South Carolina" is ranked one with thirteen publications. However, the outcomes observed in this review contradict Bradford's Law and Lotka's Law. As a result, the research area of a brand is not dominated by a few sources that can be exploited by early researchers to access a wide range of resources for advancing the field.

Following this, to respond to research question 6, the study analyzed the bibliographic coupling network to identify the current research issues and further research avenues in brand research concerning automobile markets in Table 8. The review developed three clusters with themes of "brand image and car purchase decision", "effectiveness of brand", and "brand and E-WOM". Finally, the findings suggest brand managers in selecting the most appropriate positioning strategies for their brands in high-involvement markets such as the automobile market. Further, the study provides several theoretical and practical recommendations and implications for both managers and academics. These insights not only contribute to the advancement of academic research but also offer valuable guidance for practitioners operating in the highly competitive and brand-driven automobile industry. The findings help bridge the gap between branding theory and its application in real-world market scenarios, making the study relevant for future research, industry strategy, teaching, and public policy.

This paper is significant for both academic researchers and industry professionals, particularly those focusing on branding, marketing, and consumer behavior in the automobile sector. It contributes theoretically by offering a structured and data-driven understanding of how brand-related research in the automobile industry has evolved over time. By using bibliometric analysis techniques like performance analysis, co-citation, and bibliographic coupling, this study identifies key themes, influential publications, and emerging research areas that shape the current intellectual structure of the field. This not only strengthens the existing knowledge base but also provides a



roadmap for future researchers to explore under-researched areas such as brand activism, digital branding, and sustainability in automobile branding.

**Theoretical perspective**, the study highlights important gaps, such as the limited focus on consumer-brand relationships in emerging markets and the lack of interdisciplinary approaches involving AI, sustainability, and branding. These gaps offer promising directions for future work. Scholars can also benefit from the study's use of Lotka's and Bradford's laws, which help to evaluate the productivity and source patterns of branding literature, thus enhancing the methodological rigor of bibliometric studies.

**Managerial implications**, industry professionals, especially brand managers and automotive marketers can use the findings to better understand what branding strategies have been most discussed and valued in academic research. Knowing the most influential contributors, themes, and practices can guide strategic decisions in brand positioning, customer engagement, and innovation. For instance, insights into brand equity, loyalty, and digital branding trends can help firms adapt their marketing strategies to match consumer expectations in a rapidly changing market.

From a societal standpoint, this research promotes awareness of how branding influences consumer choices and cultural values. As automobile brands increasingly align with sustainability and ethical narratives, understanding brand impact becomes crucial in shaping responsible consumption and public discourse. Furthermore, this study is valuable to academics, marketing professionals, automotive industry leaders, and policymakers. It provides a holistic view of brand research development in the auto industry and serves as a benchmark for future bibliometric studies in related fields. Academically, this paper supports better research planning and encourages collaboration across disciplines. In practice, it can inspire brand strategists to align marketing efforts with evidence-based insights from branding literature. As it offers a clear, structured, and insightful overview of branding research in the auto industry using advanced bibliometric techniques, while identifying actionable gaps and future directions. It is a useful resource for anyone studying or working in branding, marketing, or automotive sectors.

## Limitations

This study has numerous contributions to the literature, but still has some drawbacks, as with all other studies. Identifying drawbacks helps in refining future research and advancing the knowledge of potential scholars. Firstly, the study's authors limited their search solely to the Scopus database, potentially studies could enhance comprehensiveness by incorporating additional databases like Web of Science or Dimensions or any other type of databases. We acknowledge that future studies could incorporate both databases to enhance comprehensiveness. Further, some correlated important and relevant documents might have been left due to the applied search string and filtration techniques used for this dataset. However, the current study analyzed the most prolific

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authors as per their production with citation influence, the most contributive journals, countries, institutions, relationship among authors, sources, and keywords, citation analysis, bibliometric coupling analysis, bibliometric laws compared with the observed findings of the study; though some additional applications could be proved fruitful in further studies, like advanced page rank analysis or updated multiple network matrices. Furthermore, bibliometric analysis is considered a crystal-clear quantitative technique, still future research may apply methodology-based systematic reviews. Moreover, this study also recognizes the limitation in the initial keyword selection, as “purchase intention”, though central to the study, was not included in the original search string. Future research can refine the methodology by incorporating such targeted keywords to better isolate studies that directly examine purchase behavior in the automobile sector. Potential researchers can explore different search methods to make sure don't miss anything important next time.

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