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Evolving Trends in Retail Brand Equity Research: A Comprehensive Bibliometric Analysis (2001–2022)

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Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of retail brand equity research spanning from 2001 to 2022. Employing co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-occurrence network mapping, the research explores publication trends, key contributors, influential articles, and emerging thematic clusters in the domain. The findings indicate a consistent growth in scholarly interest, with significant contributions from authors across the United States, Spain, and Australia. Core research themes include consumer-based brand equity, brand loyalty, store image, and the strategic impact of social media and customer experience. The study offers insights into the intellectual structure and future research trajectories, supporting academics, practitioners, and policymakers in advancing brand equity knowledge and application in retail contexts.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Bibliographic Coupling, Co-Citation, Co-Occurrence Network, Retail Brand Equity

1 Introduction

In the dynamic and highly competitive landscape of retail, brand equity has emerged as a pivotal construct influencing consumer choice, loyalty, and overall firm performance. Over the past two decades, the concept of retail brand equity has evolved significantly, mirroring shifts in consumer behavior, technological advancements, and global market dynamics. As retailers strive to build strong, differentiated brands, academic interest in understanding the nuances of brand equity within the retail context has grown exponentially.

Brands with high equity are more likely to be included in consumers' consideration sets and are associated with reduced perceived risk (Keller, 1993). This is especially important in retail, where customers often make decisions based on limited information and are influenced by the brand's reputation and previous experiences. Moreover, strong brand equity contributes to emotional connections, which are instrumental in driving repeat purchases and brand advocacy (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). From a financial perspective, retail brand equity contributes to increased profitability and shareholder value. Retailers with strong brand equity enjoy higher margins, as they can charge premium prices and experience reduced marketing costs due to brand recognition and trust (Srivastava & Shocker, 1991). It also serves as a buffer against competitive threats, economic downturns, and market fluctuations, thereby providing stability and resilience (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Furthermore, brand equity is instrumental in enabling successful brand extensions and multi-channel strategies. A strong retail brand can

facilitate the launch of new product lines, entry into new markets, and customer migration to digital platforms with reduced resistance (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004). In the current digital era, where omni-channel retailing is the norm, brand equity acts as a cohesive force across physical and virtual touchpoints, ensuring a consistent and trust-building customer experience. Retail brand equity serves as a strategic asset for expansion into new markets or product categories. The credibility and recognition associated with a strong brand enable retailers to introduce new offerings and enter unfamiliar territories with greater ease, as noted by Kapferer (2008).

Retail brand equity encompasses not only consumer perceptions of value, trust, and quality but also strategic elements such as brand positioning, experiential engagement, and omnichannel consistency. Retail brand equity is a critical intangible asset that significantly influences consumer behaviour, firm performance, and long-term competitive advantage. It represents the value that a brand adds to a retail offering, encompassing consumer perceptions, loyalty, awareness, and associations linked to the brand name (Aaker, 1991).

Pappu et. al., (2006) conceptualize retail brand equity as a four-dimensional construct, which includes retailer awareness, retailer associations, retailer perceived quality, and retailer loyalty. Their empirical examination highlights the significant relationship between customer satisfaction and the equity associated with retail brands, suggesting that satisfied customers are more likely to develop positive brand associations and loyalty. Further expanding on the dimensions of retail brand equity, (Jara et. al., 2012) provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and measuring retail brand equity. They build upon Keller's contributions to brand equity, emphasizing the need for a structured approach to assess the various components that contribute to a retailer's brand value. Gil-Saura et. al., (2013) delve deeper into the nature of retail brand equity by proposing an integrative model that identifies the variables influencing its formation. Their empirical study, underscores the importance of understanding the relationships among the dimensions of retail brand equity and their effects on consumer behavior. The use of bibliometric analysis to brand equity research has been limited to a few of studies, with important contributions coming from Chaves and Rodríguez-González (2019).

Despite the extensive body of literature, there remains a lack of consolidated insight into how retail brand equity research has evolved over time, what key themes have emerged, and which authors, journals, and institutions have significantly contributed to the discourse. A systematic and data-driven approach is necessary to map the intellectual landscape and uncover emerging trends, research clusters, and influential contributions. This study addresses this gap by conducting a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of retail brand equity research published between 2001 and 2022. Bibliometric analysis, as a quantitative research method, offers invaluable insights into the intellectual structure, emerging trends, and key contributors within a given academic discipline. By systematically examining the academic output in this domain, this study aims to uncover critical developments, highlight influential contributions, and identify future research trajectories in retail brand equity. Utilizing advanced bibliometric techniques and visualization tools, the research questions that are the main focus to be answered in this study include:

RQ1. What are the publication trends in the field of Retail brand equity research

RQ2. Who are the most influential authors, institutions and countries in the field

RQ3. What are the most influential publications in Retail brand equity literature

RQ4. What is the core intellectual foundations of retail brand equity research as revealed through co-citation clusters

RQ5: What are the dominant research clusters or thematic groups identified through bibliographic coupling in Retail brand equity literature

RQ6: What are the most frequently co-occurring keywords in retail brand equity research, and how do they reflect core themes

By synthesizing over two decades of scholarly output, this study provides valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers interested in the strategic management of retail brands. It offers a holistic view of the intellectual trajectory of retail brand equity research, helping to contextualize its current state and inform its future progression.

2 Methods

The bibliometric analysis technique was employed to assess and discern publishing trends and patterns. Bibliometrics is a quantitative tool employed to examine publication trends in research articles, conference papers, and other academic works. This study employed bibliometric analysis techniques with Biblioshiny and VOS viewer. According to Van Eck and Waltman (2010), Bibliometrix offers multiple routines for importing bibliographic data from SCOPUS, Clarivate Analytics' Web of Science, and Dimensions databases, conducting bibliometric analysis, and constructing data matrices for co-citation, coupling, scientific collaboration analysis, and co-word analysis. The data utilized in this study were obtained from the Scopus database. Scopus was utilized to obtain the information because to its extensive collection of double-blind peer-reviewed articles published in high-impact factor journals. The keywords ("Customer based brand equity" OR "CBBE" OR "Brand equity") AND ("retail*" OR "retail stores" OR "Organized retail*") were employed to filter publications only published in English from a diverse array of fields outlined in Table 1.

The inclusion criteria were: i) publications in business, economics, and social science; ii) journal articles authored in English; and iii) works published between 2001 to 2022. Articles that did not meet the aforementioned three inclusion criteria were excluded.

The identified publications were exported from the database in CSV format. A single file encompasses all 305 publications obtained throughout the search. A comprehensive data cleansing procedure was undertaken prior to extracting the most-cited articles to rectify incomplete or erroneous entries. This entailed confirming the presence of all requisite fields, ensuring that field content corresponded with the specified titles, and rectifying inconsistencies between field titles. Inaccurate entries were eliminated appropriately. After the data was sanitized, 270 publications, organized by citation frequency, were discovered and stored in a separate file for study.

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VOS viewer software was utilized to identify leading contributors: Identify authors, nations, and institutions while establishing co-citation and theme patterns in retail brand equity throughout the years.

Bibliometric analysis necessitates the utilization of two primary techniques: performance analysis and science mapping (Donthu et al., 2021). This study offers a bibliometric analysis composed of two components to elucidate the advancements and delineate the knowledge structure within the domain of retail brand equity.

3 Result and Discussion

The analysis of the bibliometric data from 2001 to 2022 reveals key insights into the growth and scope of research in the studied field. With a total of 270 documents published across 127 sources, the research shows a substantial annual growth rate of 14.82%, indicating an expanding interest in the topic. The average document age of 8.27 years suggests that the majority of research is relatively recent. On average, each document has garnered 28.63 citations, pointing to a solid level of academic recognition and influence. The research also references a significant number of sources, totalling 16,566 references, which further highlights the extensive scholarly engagement within this area. In terms of document content, the dataset includes 183 Keywords Plus and 837 Author's Keywords, reflecting a broad range of topics covered in the research. Regarding authorship, a total of 626 authors contributed to the documents, with 30 authors producing single-authored works. Collaboration is a significant feature of the research landscape, with an average of 2.71 co-authors per document and 26.67% of documents involving international co-authorship. The document types predominantly consist of articles (264) with a smaller portion of reviews (6), indicating a focus on original research rather than summary or review work

Table 1. Main information about data during the period of 2001 to 2022

Description	Results
Timespan	2001:2022
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	127
Documents	270
Annual Growth Rate %	14.82
Document Average Age	8.27
Average citations per doc	28.63
References	16566
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	183
Author's Keywords (DE)	837
AUTHORS	
Authors	626
Authors of single-authored docs	30
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	32
Co-Authors per Doc	2.71
International co-authorships %	26.67

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DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	264
review	6

3.1 Performance Analysis

3.1.1 Annual scientific growth

Figure 1 shows the trend of publications on the retail brand equity theme from 2001—2022. The graph depicting Annual Scientific Production showcases a clear upward trend in the number of articles published each year from 2001 to 2022. The data reveals some variability in the earlier years, with sporadic peaks and valleys, indicating periods of slower growth in scientific output. However, from around 2010, the number of articles begins to increase significantly, with a notable rise starting around 2015. This sharp upward trajectory in the latter half of the period is indicative of an expanding research community and the increasing importance of the field in contemporary scientific discourse.

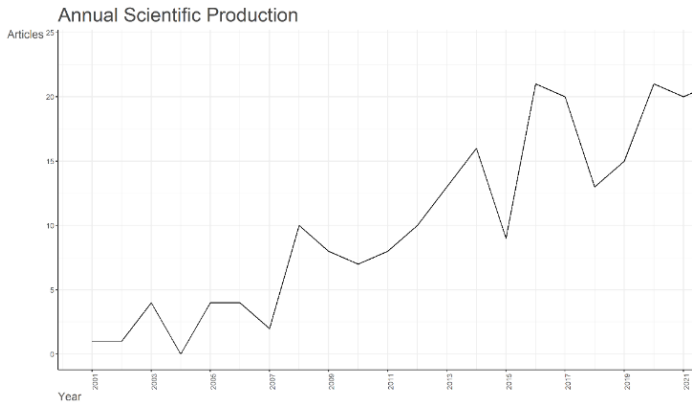


Figure 1. Annual growth of the publication

Source: Author's Computation

3.1.2 Major authors, countries, and institutions of Retail brand Equity Literature

Table-2 indicates the most influential authors, institutions, and countries for digital marketing research in Retail brand Equity research. The most prolific author in this dataset is Gil-Saura with 11 papers. With seven articles and 223 citations, Swoboda is productive and influential. This balance implies that the author's work influences theoretical or empirical orientations in academia. Anselmsson leads author citation impact. Despite only five articles, the high citation count suggests new or high-impact field insights. The strong citation count distinguishes Ball State University despite its solitary publication. This suggests that the study is important or extensively cited, demonstrating concentrated research quality. Like Ball State, Ohio State's sole article had a big influence, demonstrating its capacity to create significant research with little production. US publications and citations dominate the field, demonstrating its supremacy. Strong contributor Australia has a high average citation rate per article. Spain's 33

publications and high citation count make it a European powerhouse. Large and influential research suggests a collaborative and well-established academic network on the issue.

Figure 2 depicts a visual and exact depiction of three units of analysis (fields). The three-field plot, often known as the 'Sankey Diagram' , is the outcome of the connections between authors, keywords, and sources. A chain of threads connects each field to the next one. Each field has smaller components that reflect top authors (middle field), top keywords (left field), and top countries (right field). The Three-field Plot offers a comprehensive view of the relationships between authors, countries, and keywords/themes in the realm of Retail Brand Equity research. Spain emerges as the primary source of research, with strong contributions from authors such as Gil-Saura I., Swoboda B., and Ruiz-Molina ME, indicating the country's significant role in advancing the field. Other countries like Canada, Australia, Sweden, and Germany also contribute to the literature, but to a lesser extent. The plot reveals that the most prominent themes in the research are brand equity, retailing, satisfaction, loyalty, and store image, with a clear focus on consumer behavior, brand image, and purchase intention. These themes are closely tied to the works of the leading authors, suggesting a strong academic concentration on understanding the dynamics of brand equity in retail contexts.

Table 2: Major authors, countries, and institutions of Retail brand Equity Literature

TP	Author	TC	TP	Institution	TC	TP	Country	TC
4	Pappu R.	379	3	Lund university, Sweden	235	70	United states	2646
3	Quester P.	307	1	Ball state university, United States	228	22	Australia	947
5	Anselmsson J.	305	1	Ohio state university, United States	228	33	Spain	848
11	Gil-Saura I.	246	1	Emory university, United States	228	8	Netherlands	680
7	Swoboda B.	223	1	Cornell university, United States	228	16	United Kingdom	565
3	Cliquet G.	155	1	Purdue university, United States	228	14	Canada	540
4	Schramm-Klein H.	146	1	Stanford university, United States	228	14	Germany	500
3	Hyun H.	81	1	Dartmouth college, United States	228	19	South Korea	487
4	Calvo-Porral C.	70	1	University of Connecticut, United States	228	11	France	399
4	Dwivedi A.	69	1	University of Oklahoma, United States	228	5	Belgium	383
4	Merrilees B.	69	1	University of Texas - austin, United States	228	23	India	373

4	Marín-García A.	55	1	Chemin de la côte-sainte-catherine, Canada	206	8	China	324
4	Berenguer-Contrí G.	52	1	York university, Canada	206	7	Sweden	323
3	Lévy-Mangin J.	43	1	Texas tech. university, United States	197	7	Italy	172
3	Park J.	23	1	Erasmus university, Netherlands	192	5	Indonesia	148

Note(s): TC = "total citations". TP = "total number of article(s) publications"

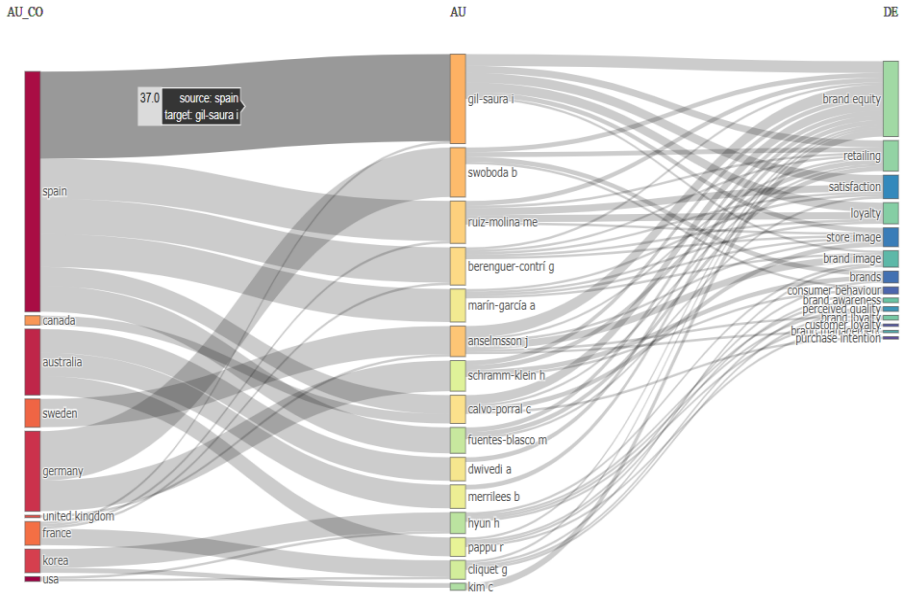


Figure 2: Three-field Plot

Source: Author's Computation

3.1.3 Most influential Journals on Retail Brand Equity Research

Figure 3 represents the most impactful sources of Retail Brand Equity Research. The Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services stands out as the preeminent magazine for study in this field, with 27 articles. Its pre-eminence indicates that it is the favoured option for scholars seeking to publish practical and empirical studies about marketing and retail. The Journal of Product and Brand Management, with 18 publications, ranks second, highlighting its significant emphasis on brand equity research. Ranking third with 12 articles, the International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management indicates a persistent interest in the operational and strategic dimensions of retail.

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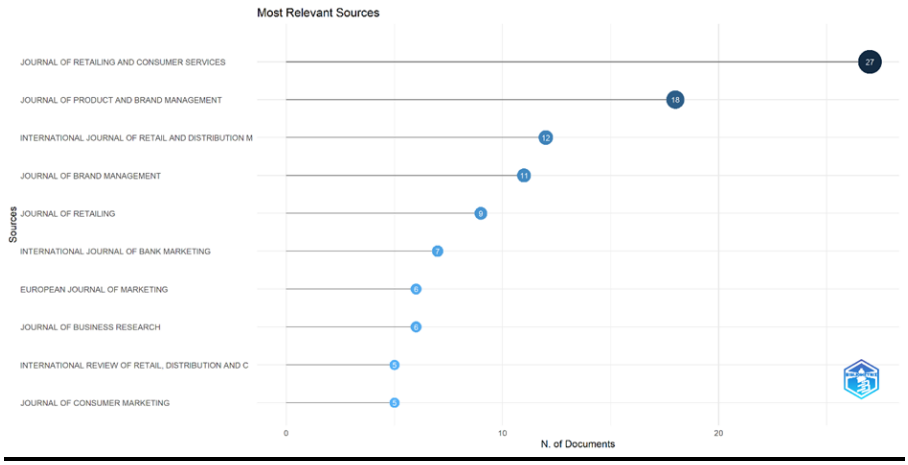


Figure 3: Most influential Journals on Retail Brand Equity Research

Source: Author's Computation

3.1.4 Most influential articles on Retail Brand Equity Research

The table-3 indicates the most cited and impactful articles in the area of Retail Brand Equity Research. Leone and associates investigated the intricate link between brand equity and consumer equity. The authors propose a modelling methodology to explore the connections between brand equity and customer equity, as well as to assess the worth of the manufacturer to a store. The study by Dolbec and Chebat provides a compelling analysis of shop settings and their psychological impact on consumers. Their approach emphasises the significance of creating retail settings that prioritise emotional and experiential appeal to foster brand success. Anselmsson and colleagues conducted an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing brand image and its impact on customers' propensity to pay a price premium.

Table 3: Most influential articles on Retail Brand Equity Research

Author	Title	TC
Leone et al., 2006	Linking brand equity to customer equity	228
Dolbec & Chebat, 2013	The Impact of a Flagship vs. a Brand Store on Brand Attitude, Brand Attachment and Brand Equity	206
Anselmsson et al., 2014	Brand image and customers' willingness to pay a price premium for food brands	201
Arnett et al., 2003	Developing parsimonious retailer equity indexes using partial least squares analysis: A method and applications	197
Sloot & Verhoef, 2008	The Impact of Brand Delisting on Store Switching and Brand Switching Intentions	192
Phan et al., 2011	Social media and luxury brand management: The case of burberry	179
De Wulf et al., 2005	Consumer perceptions of store brands versus national brands	170
Pappu & Quester, 2006	Does customer satisfaction lead to improved brand equity An empirical examination of two categories of retail brands	169

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Fatma et al., 2015	Building company reputation and brand equity through CSR: the mediating role of trust	153
Keller (2010)	Brand equity management in a multichannel, multimedia retail environment	147
Çifci et al., 2016	A cross validation of Consumer-Based Brand Equity models: Driving customer equity in retail brands	137
Pappu & Quester, 2006	A consumer-based method for retailer equity measurement: Results of an empirical study	126
Juan Beristain & Zorrilla, 2011	The relationship between store image and store brand equity: A conceptual framework and evidence from hypermarkets	123
Baldauf et al., 2009	The Impact of Product-Country Image and Marketing Efforts on Retailer-Perceived Brand Equity: An Empirical Analysis	106
Jara & Cliquet, 2012	Retail brand equity: Conceptualization and measurement	103

Note: TC = "total citations"

Source: Author's Computation

3.2 Science Mapping

3.2.1 Knowledge foundations of Retail Brand Equity Research through co-citation analysis

Co-citation analysis is a bibliometric method employed to identify relationships among scholarly works by examining how often pairs of documents are cited together. The co-citation analysis visualized using VOS viewer reveals the intellectual structure of retail brand equity research through the interconnectedness of frequently cited authors. Figure 4 displays three primary clusters, each representing distinct but related thematic areas

Cluster 1 (Red Cluster) comprises six key contributions that form the foundational core of brand equity and consumer perception literature. Central to this cluster is the work of Aaker (1996), including Building Strong Brands and Managing Brand Equity, which establish comprehensive frameworks for understanding brand value creation and strategic brand management. Keller (1993) seminal piece on Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity further enhances this theoretical base by introducing the consumer-centric perspective on brand equity. Yoo and Donthu (2001) work on developing and validating multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scales adds a methodological dimension to the cluster. Cluster 2 (Green cluster) reflects an intellectual nexus of influential studies that shape contemporary thought on branding and its measurement. Central to this cluster is the work of Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), delves into the emotional and behavioral dimensions of brand relationships, advancing the field of consumer-brand dynamics. Keller and Lehmann (2003) further enhanced the intellectual depth of this cluster by integrating perspectives on brand knowledge and market outcomes, presenting a conceptual framework that aligns brand equity with financial returns and customer behavior metrics. Additionally, the contribution of Lassar, Mittal, and Sharma (1995) introduced one of the earlier

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multidimensional measures of brand equity from the consumer perspective, highlighting components such as perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. Collectively, the blue cluster synthesizes both theoretical and methodological advancements, offering a balanced view that bridges the emotional and analytical aspects of brand evaluation.

Cluster 3 (Blue cluster) consists of five key authors whose works are frequently co-cited. This clustering suggests a thematic alignment or shared contribution to a specific area of research. A pivotal contribution comes from Ailawadi & Keller (2004), and colleagues, whose work examines the interface between retail and manufacturer brands, exploring how retail strategies influence brand equity and consumer preferences. Arnett et.al (2002) research emphasizes the role of consumer values and self-congruity in driving brand loyalty, especially in services and experience-centric sectors. Meanwhile, Jara and Cliquet (2012) explore retail brand management in international settings, offering frameworks for understanding how local and global forces shape retail branding practices. Jinfeng and Zhilong (2009) contribute by investigating the impact of store image and perceived value on consumer behavior, further solidifying the link between physical retail attributes and brand outcomes. Lastly, the inclusion of Yoo, Donthu, and Lee(2000) reinforces the methodological backbone of this cluster with their work on measuring consumer-based brand equity in cross-cultural contexts.

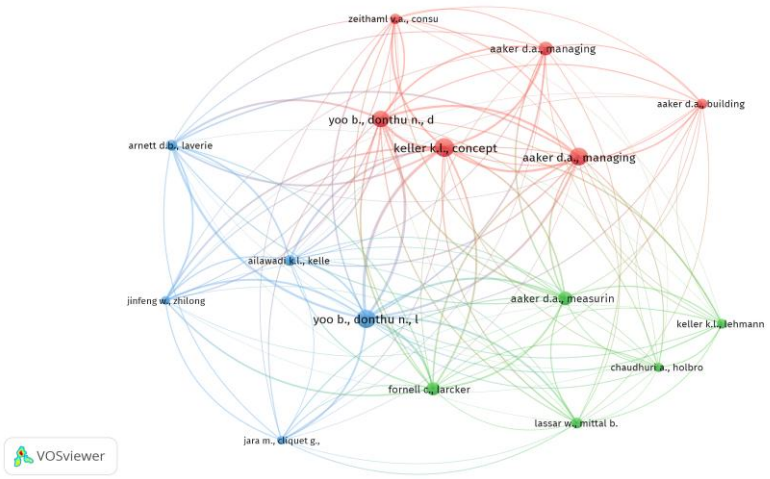


Figure 4: Co-citation network

Source: Author's Computation

3.2.2 Intellectual foundations of Retail Brand Equity Research through Bibliometric Coupling

The bibliographic coupling approach was used in conjunction with the VOS viewer software to conduct a thorough content analysis. Bibliographic coupling happens when two research papers refer to the same document and form a relationship between them. By analyzing similar references or citations between studies, bibliographic coupling assists in the establishment of links and the finding of subject clusters within a collection of documents. It helps to identify unique subject clusters that reflect coherent subsets of study by grouping related texts based on reciprocal references. Using bibliographic coupling, the study found six major subject clusters

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(table 5) from a sample of 270 works. The bibliometric coupling data on Retail Brand Equity research indicates a variety of subject clusters, each adding to a more comprehensive knowledge of brand equity in retail settings. The Brand Equity Cluster examines how factors such as CSR, product-country image, and marketing activities affect brand equity, with major research by Fatma et al., 2015 (2015) and Çifci et al., 2016. The Retail Experience Cluster investigates the relationship between brand equity and the retail environment, highlighting the significance of store image and multimedia experiences, as noted by Keller (2010) and Beristain & Zorrilla (2011). The Store Equity Cluster analyses how customer views of store brands and willingness to pay a premium for them affect brand equity, including contributions by Anselmsson et al., 2014 (2014) and Sloot (2005). The Customer Brand Equity Cluster investigates the link between customer happiness, loyalty, and brand equity, including notable contributions by Pappu & Quester (2007) and Nyadzayo et al. (2010). The Retail Brand Equity Cluster emphasizes the importance of flagship stores and brand attachment in establishing brand equity, as demonstrated by Dolbec (2013) and Pappu & Quester (2006). Finally, the Social Media Cluster looks at how social media platforms affect customer behavior and brand equity, using research from Leone (2006) and Sharma et al (2016) Overall, the research suggests a multifaceted strategy to brand equity, with a greater emphasis on consumer connection, retail experiences, and the expanding influence of social media on brand perception.

Table 5: Thematic clusters of Retail Brand Equity Research through Bibliometric Coupling

Clusters	Author(s)	Title	TC
Brand Equity	Fatma (2015)	Building company reputation and brand equity through CSR: The mediating role of trust	153
	Çifci (2016)	A cross-validation of Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) scale in fast-growing markets	137
	Baldauf (2009)	The Impact of Product-Country Image and Marketing Efforts on Brand Performance	106
Retail Experience	Arnett (2003)	Developing parsimonious retailer equity indexes using partial least squares analysis	197
	Keller (2010)	Brand equity management in a multichannel, multimedia retail environment	147
	Beristain (2011)	The relationship between store image and store brand equity: A conceptual framework and evidence from hypermarkets	123
Store Equity	Anselmsson (2014)	Brand image and customers' willingness to pay a price premium for food brands	201
	Sloot (2005)	The impact of brand equity and the hedonic level of products on consumer stock-out reactions	192

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	De Wulf (2005)	Consumer perceptions of store brands versus national brands	170
Customer Brand Equity	Pappu R.; Quester P.	Does customer satisfaction lead to improved brand equity An empirical examination of two categories of retail brands	169
	Pappu & Quester (2006)	A consumer-based method for retailer equity measurement: Results of an empirical study	126
	Nyadzayo M.W.; Matanda M.J.; Ewing M.T.	Brand relationships and brand equity in franchising	77
Retail Brand Equity	Dolbec (2013)	The Impact of a Flagship vs. a Brand Store on Brand Attitude, Brand Attachment and Brand Equity	206
	Pappu & Quester (2006)	A consumer-based method for retailer equity measurement: Results of an empirical study	126
	Pappu (2008)	Does brand equity vary between department stores and clothing stores? Results of an empirical investigation	72
Social media	Leone (2006)	Linking brand equity to customer equity	228
	Phan (2011)	Social media and luxury brand management: The case of burberry	179
	Sharma (2016)	Product innovation as a mediator in the impact of R&D expenditure and brand equity on marketing performance	96

Note: TC = "total citations"

Source: Author's Computation

3.2.3 Co-Occurrence Network Analysis

Figure 5 presents a co-occurrence network consisting of several thematic clusters, where each cluster represents a group of terms related to retail brand equity. Co-occurrence networks can suggest common themes and future research directions. The co-occurrence network analysis of Brand Equity visualizes the links between numerous major ideas and topics in brand equity research. The centre node, brand equity, is linked to a broad set of related words, representing the many aspects of brand equity investigated in the literature. The network is color-coded to indicate various topic groups. The blue cluster focuses on brand image, loyalty, awareness, and association, stressing the importance of customer perception in determining brand equity. The green cluster, which contains phrases like customer-based brand, customer loyalty, and customer behavior, emphasizes how important customer interactions and behaviors are in the establishment of brand equity. The purple cluster focuses on brand management, retail brand equity, and brand awareness, demonstrating the strategic management of brands and the value of brand identification. The red and yellow clusters investigate the relationship between retail, buy intent, customer happiness, quality, and brands, demonstrating how customer experiences

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and product quality in retail contexts contribute to brand equity. Finally, the green cluster connects social media and private labels, demonstrating the expanding role of digital platforms and alternative brand tactics in determining consumer involvement and brand equity. Overall, the network emphasizes the complex, diverse character of brand equity, in which consumer perception, brand management, retail experiences, and marketing tactics all play important roles in its creation and maintenance.

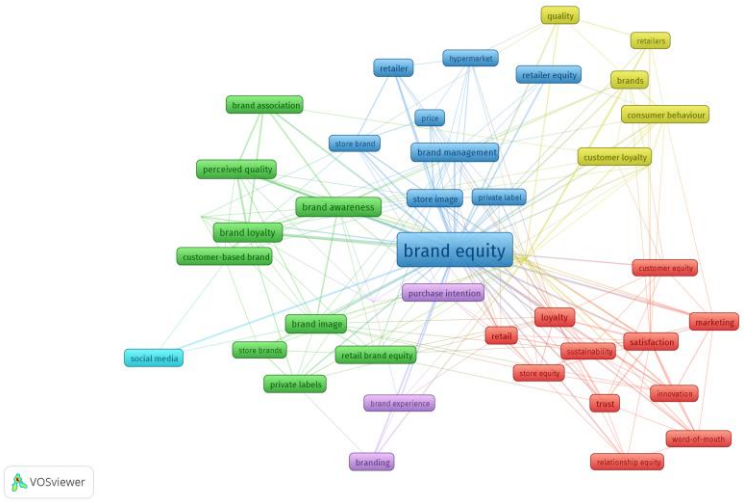


Figure 5: Co-occurrence network

Source: Author's Computation

Furthermore, thematic analysis is important for understanding keywords associated to retail brand equity. Thematic analysis includes grouping writers' keywords and investigating their linkages to uncover themes. These themes can be identified by their qualities, such as density and centrality. The vertical axis denotes density, whereas the horizontal axis reflects centrality. The number of links a node has with other nodes in the thematic network determines its relevance and level of growth. Figure 6 depicts a complete thematic map of retail brand equity throughout all four quadrants. This map provides a visual picture of the interrelated topics and their relative importance. In the Motor Themes quadrant (top right), key themes such as retailing, consumption behavior, marketing, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are highly developed and central, indicating their critical importance in contemporary research and practice. The Basic Themes quadrant (bottom right) includes mature topics like brand equity, electronic commerce, and sales, which, while foundational, are slightly less central compared to the motor themes. The Emerging or Declining Themes quadrant (bottom left) features themes like advertising Australia and United States, suggesting these areas are either losing centrality or emerging as niche topics. Lastly, the Niche Themes quadrant (top left) includes specialized topics such as the clothing industry, market, label, Taiwan, internet, and quantitative analysis, which are highly developed but have limited relevance in the broader research landscape. Overall, the map illustrates the evolving nature of retail and brand equity research, with broad themes like marketing and CSR gaining prominence, while more specific areas remain valuable for targeted, in-depth studies.

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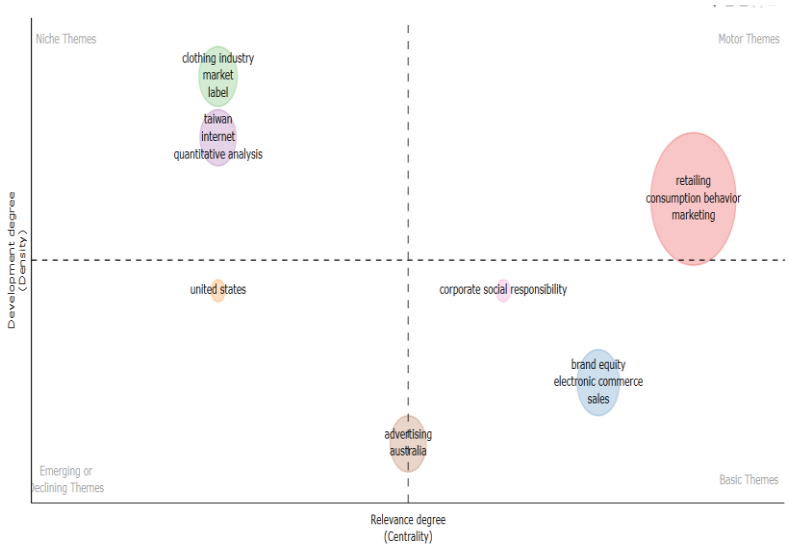


Figure 6: Thematic map

Source: Author's Computation

4 Discussion and Conclusion

The bibliometric insights derived from the study highlight a significant and accelerating academic interest in retail brand equity (RBE) over the past two decades. The consistent annual growth rate of 14.82% indicates that retail brand equity has evolved from a niche research area into a robust, interdisciplinary domain, reflecting its increasing importance in both academia and industry. This evolution aligns with global shifts towards customer-centric retail models, digital transformation, and experiential branding. The performance analysis reveals a well-distributed network of authors, institutions, and countries contributing to RBE research, with the United States, Spain, and Australia emerging as major hubs. Influential authors such as Gil-Saura and Anselmsson, and journals like Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services and Journal of Product and Brand Management, are instrumental in shaping the discourse. Notably, co-authorship and international collaboration are prominent, underscoring the global relevance of the topic. Science mapping through co-citation and bibliographic coupling uncovered a rich intellectual structure with six dominant research clusters: Brand Equity, Retail Experience, Store Equity, Customer Brand Equity, Retail Brand Equity, and Social Media. These clusters collectively emphasize the multi-dimensionality of RBE, encompassing cognitive, emotional, experiential, and digital elements. The thematic evolution also reveals a strong orientation towards consumer perceptions, CSR, and omnichannel branding as emerging focal areas.

Moreover, co-occurrence analysis illustrated that foundational constructs such as brand image, loyalty, awareness, and satisfaction are increasingly intertwined with newer themes like social media, e-commerce, and sustainability. This transition reflects the growing complexity and interdependence of branding elements in a digital-first retail environment. This bibliometric study provides a panoramic overview of the intellectual landscape of retail brand equity research from 2001 to 2022. The findings confirm that RBE has matured into a critical research area intersecting marketing, consumer behavior, and strategic brand management. The growing volume of publications, high citation metrics, and diverse research clusters signify both the

depth and breadth of scholarly engagement. Despite the depth of insight, the study is limited to English-language publications indexed in the Scopus database. Future research should aim to include broader databases and explore emerging areas such as brand equity in omnichannel and metaverse retail, the role of AI in personalizing brand experiences, and the growing influence of sustainability and ESG factors. Overall, this study serves as a valuable resource for academics, practitioners, and policymakers by mapping the intellectual trajectory of RBE research and offering clear directions for its continued development. The study contributes by systematically identifying influential contributors, dominant themes, and research trajectories. It underscores the importance of integrating traditional brand equity dimensions with contemporary factors like digital branding, social media influence, and customer experience management.

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