

Bibliometric Analysis of B2B Branding: A Study of 28 years of Literature and Visualization using Scopus Database (1993-2021)

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Abstract

Purpose: This study focuses on the analysis and visualization of B2B branding & industrial branding articles using bibliometric analysis over a period of 28 years ranging from 1993-2021.

Design/methodology/approach- The data were collected using the most popular and scientific database – “Scopus”. With the help of the advanced search feature in the database, data from published articles of the previous 28 years were extracted. An aggregate of 1811 research articles was analysed from 2385 total articles explored. Bibliometric applications and indicators like VOS viewer and MS excel program were used to do the analysis.

Findings- The analysis depicts the process of publication ($R^2=0.74$) was ascending. Among the most cited papers, the dominance of developed countries has been analysed and the scope of improvement for developing countries is observed for future studies and research. The USA leads the charts as the nation with the largest international publications and highest citations. Industrial Marketing Management has accumulated the most articles and citations on B2B branding and industrial branding research over the past 28 years. According to keyword analysis, the most frequent keywords in the study were grouped into three main categories.

Practical implications- The bibliometric analysis and keyword analysis can be valuable for scholars intending to do bibliometric studies. They can employ the current study and conduct a similar study to review other journals and other areas of interest.

Originality/value- This study uses bibliometric indicators and visualization applications to reveal a general pattern for the Scopus published B2B articles in the discipline of B2B and Industrial Branding.

Keywords: Bibliometric analysis, Industrial Branding, B2B Branding, Citation analysis, VOS viewer, Scopus.

Introduction

For a long time, branding was thought to have little value in industry

marketing and business. (Seward & Sinclair, 1988; Saunders and Watt, 1979). However, previous research and empirical findings have not only proven how important it is but also makes prominent and illustrative impacts on the processes involved around final decision-making in highly systemized Business to Business markets (Lynch & de Chernatony, 2007). In the corporate arena, B2B brands like Cisco, IBM and Oracle and have all experienced substantial growth. These findings back with scholarly claims that logical and impactful branding practices in B2B corporates can increase a company's competitive strength and profitability (Ohnemus, 2009). (Wise & Zednickova, 2009). As a result, most Business organizations are majorly relying on branding policies and their effective application to build and maintain strong brands.

Powerful organizational brands improve the chances of items being favored in buyers' basket lists throughout the industrial/organizational buying process (Wise & Zednickova, 2009), as well as the capacity to charge a higher price and earn favorable referrals (Bendixen et al., 2004). According to B2B branding research, strong brands are essential for providing value to business clients by motivating and amplifying their trust during the buying decision process and lowering the risk (Low & Blois, 2002, Ohnemus, 2009). Furthermore, by eliminating buyer ambiguity, B2B brands can assist decision-making teams in reaching a consensus (Wise and Zednickova, 2009). As a result, marketing strategies are made with the objective to fulfil the most critical part of the business which is establishing and maintaining strong brands in industrial markets (Leek & Christodoulides, 2011).

B2B branding has matured to the point that it can be recognized as a separate topic of study after more than four decades of research. As a result, the need for meta-analytical research related to the literature on branding in a business to examine and create fundamental and structural development, and evolution is supported for the following reasons: To start with, a detailed analysis of the literature related to branding in B2B not only highlights a whole broad view of the structural domain but also initiate a beginning point and relatable framework supported by theories of literature in Business to Business depending on

which futuristic theories of Branding about B2B could be developed. Second, most of the last recorded reviews about literature in branding based on B2B (Glynn, 2012) were majorly relied on classical qualitative methods based on the narrative approach on the basis of their personal views and judgment (Dunford & Liu, Yin, Liu, 2015), here bibliometric researches support and enhance older historical articles & research (Ramos-Rodriguez & Ruz-Navarro, 2004). Third, because very little focus and importance were provided to branding in B2B about its recognition as a field of study, one of the primary goals or objectives of our study is about the application of the bibliometric approach and methods to comprehend the strategy of growth for the development of branding practices in B2B research over a period of 28 years.

Given the aforementioned, the objective of this article is to understand the fruitful as well as influential B2B Branding studies undertaken between 1993 and 2021 in order to work on the following objectives:

- 1) To gain a better understanding of how B2B branding has evolved through time.
- 2) To select the most prolific and influential writers, universities, and countries.
- 3) To find the most cited papers in B2B and industrial marketing branding.
- 4) To find the most popular B2B branding publications.
- 5) Conduct keyword research to identify research topics related to Business-to-Business Branding.

This initiative intends to assist researchers in gathering reliable data that helps to validate their findings and their worldwide impact.

Resultantly, the current study provides a thorough overview of B2B branding literature, allowing future researchers to understand how B2B branding evolved, identify the research gaps, and provide research recommendations.

Literature Review

Previously, researchers in the industry sector concluded that branding had little impact on enterprises in Business - to - business marketplaces (Watt & Saunders, 1979; Seward

& Sinclair, 1988). Nonetheless, post-Nineteen Ninety, a lot of researchers and academics challenged the prevailing assumption, presenting real proof of B2B brand relevance (Veloutsou & Taylor, 2012, Leek & Christodoulides, 2012a). Numerous research pieces of evidence on the value of B2B branding have been conducted as a result of enhanced product performance and the growth of engagement in online and digital media (Baumgarth, 2010). Mass communication, hyper-competitiveness, greater complexity, and extreme premium price pressure are just a few of the elements pushing a concentration on the execution of brand-related strategy in business markets (B2B Brand Management, 2006). According to analysts, the expanded scope of world brands indicates upward and effective relevance of corporate brands (like Intel, Nike, and Apple), which are not only well-known customer brands but are also making inroads into the top consumer and commercial brands. These changes underline the importance of understanding B2B branding as a distinct and distinct discipline of study. B2-B branding has grown in popularity over time (Marquardt, 2013; Patel, 2014), yet different studies show that the literature and theories on the issue are still quite confused and opaque (Marquardt, 2013; Patel, 2014). (Leek & Christodoulides, 2012b). To supply extensive information on B2B branding's intellectual structure and background knowledge, more exploratory studies using longitudinal, conceptual, and structurally established approaches are required. Given the intricacies of B2B branding, researchers' knowledge, as well as subjective judgments and opinions, may hinder such a thorough literature review (Shafique, 2013). (Liu et al., 2015)

As a consequence, employing an innovative approach such as bibliometric analysis, which is widely utilised in a variety of industries such as marketing, and networking (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015), is justifiable and has the potential to contribute towards advancement in branding research in B2B-related subjects. Bibliometric tool for analysis is a well-developed applied and established in management and social disciplines including management (Podsakoff et al., 2008), marketing, and invention (Shafique, 2013). Because bibliometric studies in branding studies have received minimal attention, some researchers

have begun to undertake meta-analytical investigations in a variety of settings, including branding targeted and focused on consumers and branding specifying the global markets (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015). (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015). (Chabowski and colleagues, 2013). Branding, on the other hand, is unaffected in the B2B sector. As a result, the current study conducts a bibliometric analysis of Business-to-Business Branding to solve this information asymmetry in branding.

Methodology

Source of Information

In order to accomplish the objectives, Scopus database was used in the current investigation. The bibliographic database Scopus was created by Elsevier in November 2004. Scopus offers the most comprehensive perspective of the world's research output in the areas of science, technology, health, management, and the humanities, with 22,800 volumes from more than 5000 foreign publishers. Additionally, all journals that are listed in the Scopus database provide citation analysis. The Scopus database has a variety of operational characteristics that facilitate bibliometric study. The name of the journal, the type of document, the year of publishing, the authors and their relationships, and the quantity of citations are some examples of these operational features.

Bibliometric Analysis

An empirical examination of quantifiable and verifiable facts can assist in acquiring a thorough understanding of a field's fundamental intellectual structure and background knowledge (Shafique, 2013). The measurement of an article's engagement, relevance, and connections is the first step in bibliometric analysis (Narin et al., 1994). In their attempt to analyse the basic underlying structure of different fields of knowledge (Börner et al., 2005) along with exploring authentic and constructive publications, scholars, subject areas, and predominant viewpoints in a field of study, bibliometric analyses are recognized scientifically legitimate (Nerur et al., 2008, Ferreira et al., 2014). Bibliometric analysis, as a longitudinal and meta-analytical research tool, allows investigators to comprehend the creation, development, and development

of an area of study, besides integrating and extrapolating the results gained through more standard literature review methods (Ramos-Rodriguez & Ruz-Navarro, 2004).

Co-citation analysis revealed scientific interaction between researchers and information flow in bibliometrics (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015). When two publications are cited together in subsequent literature, the underlying concept behind co-citation analysis is that there is some sort of relationship between them. This presupposes a larger number of co-citation scores for a certain publication (by an author or journal), which suggests the piece is more significant in that field. (Liu et al., 2015)

This bibliometric analysis is based on articles of B2B (Business to Business) domain and brand studies. It aims to highlight the field's intellectual structure as well as notable authors, high-impact articles, and influential institutions, and additionally offer suggestions for future research avenues. The primary keywords were found through reading reviews of books based on studies about Business - to - business brand building and branding activities.

"Industrial", "B-to-B", "Business-to-Business", "B2B and Brand" were the search engine terms. The search was done in the title, abstract, and keyword fields of the articles. It took place in December of 2021.

There were 2385 articles found in this search. A few papers were omitted from the study for one or more reasons, including the fact that they were published before 1993. Many articles lacked essential information such as the year and author. Following the screening, 1811 articles were selected for analysis. We utilised Microsoft Excel 2019 and VOSViewer software, version 1.6.17, to conduct the bibliometric analysis (Waltman, et al., 2010). We used the two applications to perform bibliometric analysis and used a variety of techniques.

Bibliometric Analysis Results and Analysis

The search for research papers on Business-to-Business Branding was completed in December 2021, with a total of 1811 articles were considered for this study (for a breakdown of all the articles written annually between 1993 and 2021, see Fig. 1.). The overall publishing for B2B branding was on an upswing, as shown by the Trend line or

Line of Best Fit created on the Scatter chart, which clearly depicts the shift. ($R^2=0.748$). In addition, most researches were published in 2020 ($n=124$) and 2018 ($n=115$), indicating that scholars are interested in studying branding in the Business to Business sector.

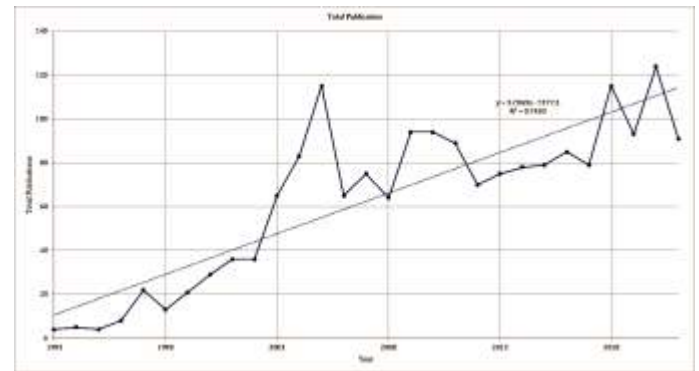


Figure 1: Number of B2B Branding articles (1993-2021)
Source: Research Data

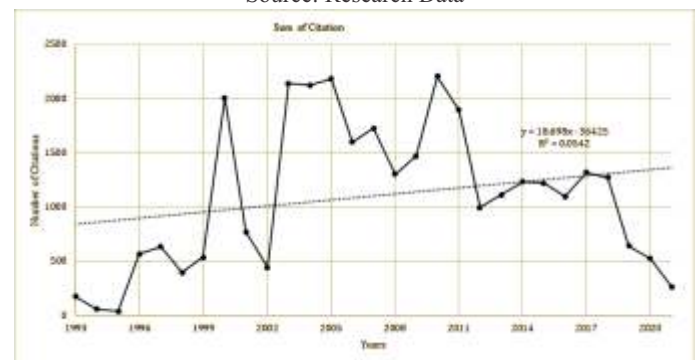


Figure 2: Sum of Citation for B2B articles
Source: Research Data

The overall number of citations received on papers based on B2B branding was found to be very high, with 31957 citations. Although the increase of citations was slow from 1996 to 2011, it was on an upward trend (Fig.2). However, the total number of citations obtained on papers has decreased slightly during the last ten years. Many reasons could be considered, such as the more strict organisations become in their operations and security, the more difficult it becomes to obtain data from organisations for scholars/researchers, which can lead to researchers losing interest and moving to more convenient areas such as B2C to conduct field research. Furthermore, early-year studies have earned more citations than later-year articles, as earlier research establishes a baseline and gives researchers more confidence in citing classic articles in their publications.

Authors, countries, and institutions with the most productive and influential output are examined

Table 1 shows top 30 most influential and important authors in terms of citations. According to the table, Michael P. Keane has authored two articles and obtained the most citations (956), followed by George Christodoulides in second place and V. Kumar in third place, with 792 and 785 citations, respectively.

S.No	Authors	No. of Documents	Citations
1	Keane M.P.	2	956
2	Christodoulides G.	7	792
3	Kumar V.	6	785
4	Brown B.P.	8	597
5	Beverland M.B.	4	419
6	Chiu C.-J.	2	415
7	Lai C.-S.	2	415
8	Pai D.-C.	2	415
9	Yang C.-F.	2	415
10	Mccoll-Kennedy J.R.	2	385
11	Swani K.	4	376
12	Li L.	2	332
13	Baumgarth C.	5	313
14	Miller D.	2	303
15	Chung W.	2	302
16	Kalnins A.	2	302
17	Rowley J.	3	301
18	Lindgreen A.	5	284
19	Kotler P.	3	267
20	Vanolo A.	2	266
21	Pfoertsch W.	4	263
22	Merrilees B.	4	261
23	Leek S.	3	251
24	Karjaluoto H.	6	246
25	Milne G.R.	2	245
26	Biedenbach G.	7	234
27	Matanda M.J.	5	232
28	Wise R.	2	228
29	Abratt R.	2	227
30	Bendixen M.	2	227

Table 1: Top 30 authors as per citation **Source:** Research data

Articles on the Most Influential Countries in B2B Branding

Table 2 shows that the US leads the research domain, and has the highest number of publications (315) and citations (14211), which is very promising and encouraging for any country wishing to support research. With 4885 and 3118 citations, the United Kingdom and Australia are second and third, respectively, but well behind the United States. With 830 citations, India ranks 12th, indicating that studies in the domain of B2B branding are in developing stages even now and that more encouragement and resources are needed.

Despite this, analysts and industry professionals believe that India has the potential to emerge to the top as more and more commercial prospects and rising new inventive concepts are incorporated in the branding of B2B organisations.

S.N	Name of the Country	Total Publications	Citations
1	United States	315	14211
2	United Kingdom	191	4885
3	Australia	74	3118
4	Germany	66	1996
5	Italy	62	1256
6	Finland	72	1137
7	Netherlands	38	1023
8	Taiwan	76	990
9	France	52	967
10	South Korea	32	956
11	Denmark	31	895
12	India	95	830
13	China	183	806
14	Canada	35	749
15	New Zealand	19	674
16	Sweden	38	599
17	Spain	39	552
18	Turkey	16	513
19	Hong Kong	20	495
20	South Africa	22	359
21	Belgium	11	319
22	Norway	16	302
23	Austria	18	259
24	Switzerland	18	247
25	Ireland	9	174
26	Portugal	18	156
27	Thailand	13	135
28	Israel	4	129
29	Brazil	17	116
30	Singapore	8	113

Table 2: Top 30 countries with highest citations

Source: Research data

Institutes, Country, and Citations

S.No	Country	Institution	Total Publication	Total Citations
1	China	National Yunlin University of Science and Technology	2	379
2	USA	Isenberg School of Management, University of Massachusetts	2	245
3	USA	Vcu School of Business, Virginia Commonwealth University	2	245
4	USA	Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania	2	204
5	USA	J. Mack Robinson College of Business	3	187
6	USA	Spears School of Business	3	187
7	UK	Department Of Information and Communications, Manchester Metropolitan University	2	164
8	UK	Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham	3	156
9	Norway	Oslo School of Management	3	156
10	France	Montpellier Business School	2	153
11	Finland	Department Of Economics and Management, University of Helsinki	2	138
12	Israel	Bar-Ilan University	2	124
13	China	Business Division, Institute of Textiles and Clothing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	5	116
14	Finland	School Of Business and Economics, University of Jyväskylä	3	112
15	Germany	Pforzheim University	2	98
16	USA	Columbia University	2	90
17	Finland	Oulu Business School	2	86
18	Australia	Deakin University, Faculty of Business and Law	2	85
19	Australia	Department of Marketing, Monash University	3	75
20	Finland	Lappeenranta University of Technology	2	74
21	New Zealand	Waikato Management School, University of Waikato	2	72
22	USA	Ohio University	2	68
23	Australia	Department of Marketing, Griffith University	2	66
24	USA	Bowling Green State University	2	65
25	Germany	Faculty of Business Administration, Univ. Of Appl. Sciences of Darmstadt	2	61
26	Italy	University of Verona	5	59
27	Denmark	The Aarhus School of Business, Department of International Business	2	58
28	Canada	Faculty of Business Administration, Simon Fraser University	2	54
29	Sweden	Umeå School of Business and Economics, Umeå University	3	53
30	UK	Aston Business School, Aston University	4	50

Table 3: Top 30 institutes with highest publications and citations **Source:** Research Data

Table 3 shows which institutions are at the top of the research and citations for B2B Branding papers. The data reveals that the United States tops the list, with eight institutes placing in the top 30, demonstrating the impact of high-quality publications with lots of citations on the field

and forthcoming research.. Amongst the Asian countries, universities from Taiwan and Hong Kong were able to place in the top 30, suggesting how much effort is needed while also indicating how many prospects and potential for research may be established.

Highly cited papers for B2B Branding

Table 4 illustrates the highly cited papers for B2B and Industrial branding. Out of the aggregate 31957 citations on

all articles published, the top 30 publications earned 10701 citations, accounting for 33.5 percent of all citations.

Table 4: Most cited papers in B2B branding

Rank	Authors & Year	Journal	Citations
1.	Dellarocas, 2003	Management Science	1955
2.	Brynjolfsson and Smith, 2000	Management Science	1360
3.	Pansari and Kumar, 2016	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	508
4.	Erdem and Keane, 1996	Marketing Science	483
5.	Fiebig et al., 2010	Marketing Science	473
6.	Michaelidou, Siamagka and Christodoulides, 2011	Industrial Marketing Management	470
7.	Esch et al., 2006	Journal of Product and Brand Management	391
8.	Beverland, 2005	Journal of Management Studies	390
9.	Lai et al., 2010	Journal of Business Ethics	378
10.	Kim and Kim, 2005	Tourism Management	329
11.	Li, 2018	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	313
12.	Henderson, Miller and Hambrick, 2006	Strategic Management Journal	291
13.	Mudambi, 2015	Industrial Marketing Management	240
14.	Bendixen, Bukasa and Abratt, 2004	Industrial Marketing Management	217
15.	Vanolo, 2008	Cities	204
16.	R Wise, D Morrison, 2000	Harvard Business Review	204
17.	Russell-Bennett, McColl-Kennedy and Coote, 2007	Journal of Business Research	202
18.	Mishra and Raghunathan, 2004	Management Science	192
19.	Mudambi, Doyle and Wong, 1997	Industrial Marketing Management	191
20.	Bennett, Härtel and McColl-Kennedy, 2005	Industrial Marketing Management	183
21.	Hobday, Rush and Bessant, 2004	Research Policy	179
22.	Sudhir, 2001	Marketing Science	176
23.	Toffel, 2004	California Management Review	175
24.	Yu, 2007	Journal of Business Ethics	174
25.	Houman Andersen, 2005	Industrial Marketing Management	172
26.	Kadiyali, Chintagunta and Vilcassim, 2000	Marketing Science	172
27.	Merrilees, Rundle-Thiele and Lye, 2011	Industrial Marketing Management	171
28.	Michell, King and Reast, 2001	Industrial Marketing Management	170
29.	Davies et al., 2001	Corporate Reputation Review	169
30.	Noble and Gruca, 1999	Marketing Science	169

Source: Research data



Figure 3. Business Journal Network Map

Table 5: Top 30 cited Journals

S.No	Name of the Journal	Total Publications	Citations
1	Industrial Marketing Management	112	5497
2	Management Science	14	4385
3	Marketing Science	6	1521
4	Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	62	1421
5	Journal of The Academy of Marketing Science (JTAMS)	5	820
6	Journal of Business Research (JBR)	27	758
7	Journal of Cleaner Production (JCP)	22	722
8	Strategic Management Journal	6	669
9	Journal of Business Ethics (JBE)	4	654
10	Journal of Product and Brand Management	17	609
11	Cities	11	578
12	International Journal of Production Economics	10	492
13	Corporate Reputation Review	17	486
14	Journal of Brand Management	16	467
15	Tourism Management	2	427
16	Journal Of Product & Brand Management	6	417
17	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	5	365
18	International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)	5	351
19	Journal Of Research in Interactive Marketing (JIRM)	4	329
20	Journal Of Retailing and Consumer Services	20	314
21	European Journal of Marketing	11	309
22	California Management Review	3	271
23	International Journal of Industrial Organization	11	261
24	International Journal of Production Research	4	260
25	Research Policy	2	253
26	Business Strategy and The Environment	5	234
27	Journal of Services Marketing	7	220
28	Review of Industrial Organization	8	218
29	Harvard Business Review	2	213
30	Marketing Intelligence and Planning	12	213

Source: Resource Data

Table 5 demonstrates that Industrial Marketing Management, one of the oldest Business and Marketing publications, has the most citations (5497), followed by Management Science with 4385 citations and Marketing Science with 1521 citations. 23734 of the total 31957 citations received on B2B & Industrial papers were covered in the top 30 journals, accounting for more than 74% of the total publication, demonstrating how top journals are consistently focusing on high-quality publications while examining sub-standard articles.

Keyword Occurrence Analysis

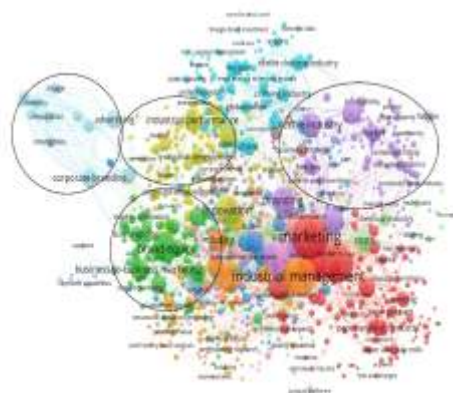


Figure 4: Keyword Cluster Analysis Research Data

Using an overlay visualisation, Figure 4 demonstrates the analysis for the co-occurrence of used keywords that aids in identifying the new concepts and research areas in B2B industrial marketing. As shown in the figure different clusters can be easily identified. The first cluster in red shows the main keywords as Marketing and Industrial management. The second cluster in Green shows variables such as B2B branding, Business-to-Business marketing, Brand Equity. The third cluster shows the main keyword as Innovation, branding, industrial development, and industrial performance.

Conclusion

The analysis of papers on B2B branding and Industrial marketing for the previous 28 years indicates a lot about the field's orientation, history, and future directions. Bibliometric analysis helps academics and practitioners identify which areas are well investigated and which require greater intervention from researchers and scholars by reviewing databases and assessing them from various perspectives. Table 2 shows that developed nations viz. US, Australia and the UK have done an excellent job with their literature and are at the top of the tables when looking at the top 30 countries with the most citations. But, the overall trend for B2B branding articles has shown a downward slope (Figure 1), which is an alarming call for more quality and innovative ideas from researchers so that the Business to Business branding literature could be more structurally established and studied globally.

The current standing of Asian countries is not particularly impressive; only Taiwan and South Korea are among the top ten countries, while India is ranked 12th. To better comprehend various B2B branding cultures and thought processes and to apply branding strategies in enterprises, emerging B2B marketplaces in Asian nations like China, India, and South Korea have a lot to learn and explore. SMEs are major participants in Asian B2B economies, thus examining organisational mindsets and exploring the scope and impact of branding for these firms can provide the groundwork for future research into new theories and a better knowledge of B2B marketplaces in these growing economies.

Table 4 indicates how high-quality papers have a significant impact on the worldwide literature, while just 33.5 percent of the total citations received on B2B branding articles are from the top 30 cited papers. Keyword word analysis done for the research helps us to identify different clusters formation from the analysed data and depicts Marketing and Industrial marketing forms the biggest cluster while brand, branding, brand equity and business marketing forms sub cluster or the smaller clusters. The final cluster identifies major keywords like innovation, branding, industrial development, and industrial performance. These results will help scholars and new researchers to work on new ideas and explore unexploited areas of related branding and industrial marketing trends for global market development.

Finally, it can be suggested for future research that researchers should not only give importance and attention to old and classic authors and publications, but also to new papers and authors, so that their study can be read globally and more such innovative and trending ideas can change the virtue of B2B branding and industrial marketing in the field of research.

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