

# The Current State of Brand Management Research: An Overview of Leaders and Trends in Branding Research Over the P...

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*The Bottom Line*

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## The Current State of Brand Management Research: An Overview of Leaders and Trends in Branding Research Over the Past 20 Years

### Abstract

**Purpose.** The aim of the paper is to identify leaders and trends in branding researches, undertaken during 2000 – 2019. Identification was made in the following categories: 1) most popular subjects; 2) most productive countries; 3) most productive institutions; 4) most productive scholars; 5) most productive sources; 6) most cited publications; 7) most cited scholars.

**Design/methodology/approach.** Bibliometric analysis based on data from Scopus and Dimensions.

**Findings.** The majority of branding publications belong to Business and Management. The interest towards this research field however declines mostly in favour of Cultural Studies, Psychology, Sociology, etc. The majority of publications on branding are concentrated in the USA, United Kingdom and Australia. Griffith University has become a leader in the number of branding publications within 2000 – 2019. T C Melewar is a leader by the number of branding publications among scholars. Journal of Brand Management has been a leader among sources. Journal of Marketing is a leader by the number of the most cited papers.

**Research limitations/implications:** we analyse the automatically formed results on search query without human meddling.

**Practical implications.** –

**Originality/value.** For the first time, bibliometric analysis was carried out simultaneously upon the two bases – Scopus and Dimensions.

**Keywords:** branding, scientometrics, leaders, trend, research field, Scopus, Dimensions.

**Article classification:** general review.

## Introduction

The aim of the paper is to identify leaders and trends of branding researches, carried out within the 2000 – 2019. We will make an identification upon the bibliometric approach following the data bases of scientific publications. Such an approach to scientific research is becoming more and more popular in marketing and management. For example, according to the bibliometric methods, (Seyedghorban *et al.*, 2016) analysed publications in B2B-branding during the 1972 – 2015, (Lucarelli and Berg, 2011) analysed publications of city branding during the 1998 – 2009, (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2015) analysed publications of consumer-brand relationship during the 1998 – 2010, (Llanos-Herrera and Merigo, 2019) analysed publications related to researches in brand personality during the 1995 – 2017, (Barahona *et al.*, 2018) analysed publications for identification of market research topics during the 2005 – 2014, etc.

We shall make the analysis of branding researches in the following categories: 1) most popular subjects; 2) most productive countries; 3) most productive institutions; 4) most productive scholars; 5) most productive sources; 6) most cited publications; 7) most cited scholars. The results of the research will focus on the primary source of knowledge in branding – key universities, journals, articles, and scholars. The results of the analysis may be used for forecasting trends of further researches in branding, building of partnerships for mutual scientific activities, headhunting, etc.

### Databases of publications and search queries

Our study shall be carried out upon the data of Scopus and Dimensions. The above systems are large scale since Scopus indexes over 70 million of publications and Dimensions – more than 100 million. More than that, all research fields are represented by a large number of issues. Search query shall be formed as follows: *Branding OR "Brand management"*. The search area in Dimensions will be *"Title and abstract"* of a paper. Scopus allows to make more specific exploration – with more accuracy and little worth recall than Dimensions. The search area shall be *«Article title»* and *«Keywords»*, which we connect by a logical operator *OR*. Publication years shall be restricted by an interval [2000, 2019]. Searching results show that on July 1, 2019 Scopus contains information on 8459 publications in branding. Dimensions has 1438 9 such publications.

### Popular research fields

Scopus refers each publication to one or more subject areas. There are just 27 such areas. Such a categorization is somewhat rough since it does not allow to reveal tendencies as for the content of branding researches. Dimensions uses a two-level version of Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification for categorization. Science in Dimensions is divided into 154 fields of research. The search result presents some publications which refer to each field of the research. Therefore, using Dimensions allows to obtain more detailed distribution of the research scope.

Figure 1 presents the distribution of branding publications on fields of research within the four of the five-years intervals. It takes into account only those research fields, which have more than 2% of branding publications in some of the five-years intervals. The majority of publications belong to Business and Management, but the interest to it gradually declines. Significant positive momentum is observed for Cultural Studies and Psychology. There is a steady growing interest in branding researches to Human Geography, Political Science, Sociology, and Public Health and Health Service. An interest to legal matters of branding became statistically insignificant from 2005.

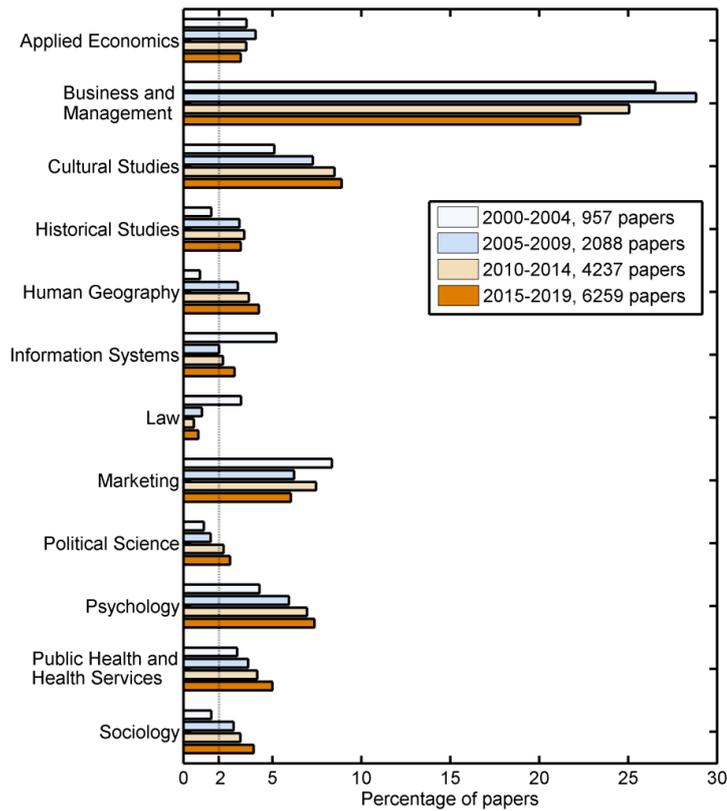


Figure 1. Distribution of publications in branding by the research fields in Dimensions

Subject matters of hot publications – publications within the 2018–2019 are presented on Figure 2. It shows the further decline in share of branding publications in Business and Management, as well as in Marketing. Research field of Business and Management has now only 19.5% of publications, whereas in 2005–2009 this share made up 28.8%. Research field of Marketing has 5.4% of publications, whereas in 2000–2004 this share made up 8.4%. But there is a growing interest to the non-economics research fields. Sociology demonstrated the most rapid growth and increased its share up to 4.7%.

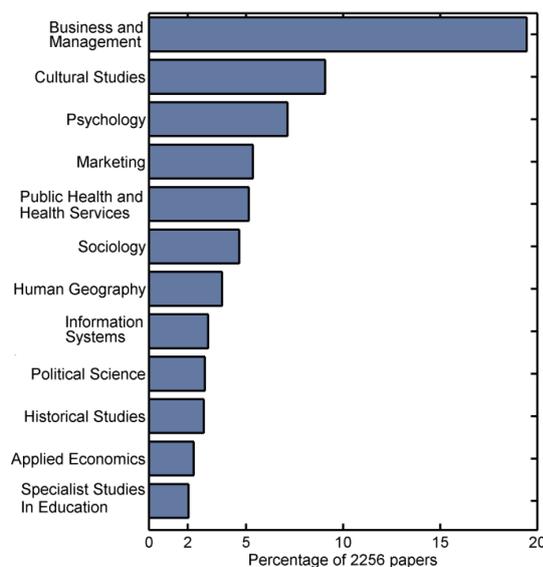


Figure 2. Distribution of hot publications in branding as for the research fields in Dimensions

### The most productive countries

According to Scopus, scholars from the USA, United Kingdom and Australia are reported to be the most productive. They are mentioned among the authors in more than 41% of all branding publications within the 2000–2019.

Let's analyse the dynamics of branding publications of each country (Figure 3). We shall consider the main contributors, i.e. countries, the share of which exceeded 2% in some of the five-years intervals. There are 14 of them. The X-axis on Figure 3 presents the percentage of publications in branding, the authors of which are scholars from the corresponding country. Figure 3 shows positive momentum of Spain, Germany, Italy, Sweden and France. India has significantly increased its share recently. This country overcame the five-percent threshold during the last five-years interval and hold the fourth rank in the number of publications thus coming close to Australia.

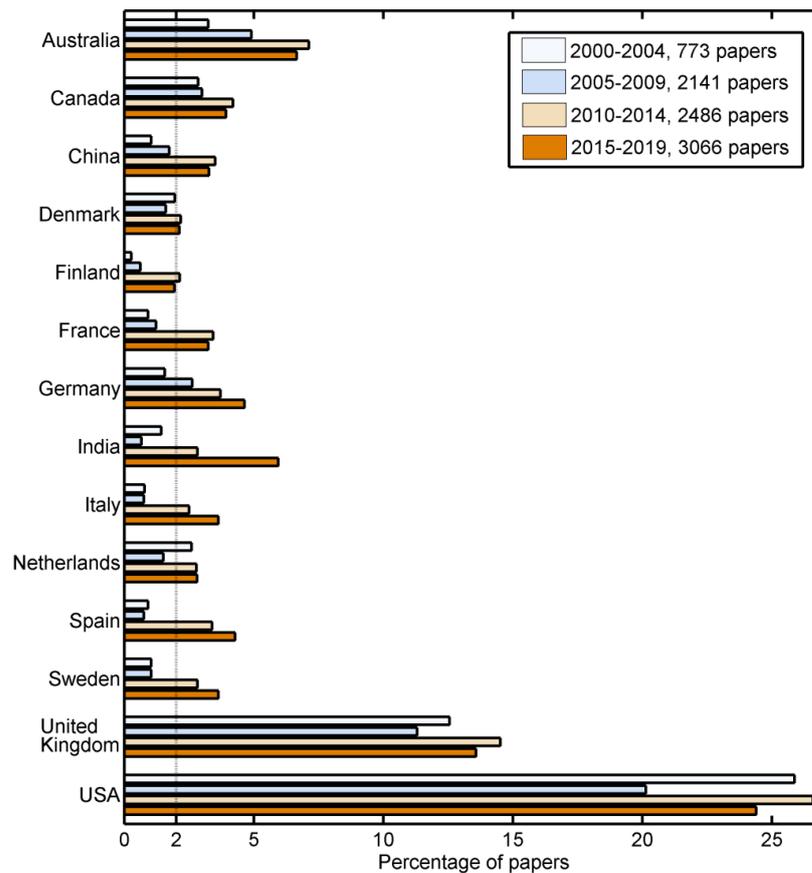


Figure 3. Dynamics of countries' contribution to branding publications

Statistics in 2018–2019 (Figure 4) shows that two newcomers – South Africa and Malaysia appeared among the main contributors. They are among those most productive countries that make branding researches. Spain, Canada and especially India improved their positions in ranking. Scholars from India are co-authors of 7.8% of all branding publications. The peculiarity of Indian scholars' publications is a very low level of cooperation with scholars from other countries. Only 11% of Indian branding publications are written together with scholars from other countries. For comparison, the level of cooperation in the neighbouring ranked countries is as follows: USA – 29%, United Kingdom – 56%, Australia – 52%, Spain – 43%. The second peculiarity is that Indian publications mostly adhere to one journal. 13% Indian branding publications are issued in the same journal. This factor in the neighbouring

ranked countries is the following: USA – 5%, United Kingdom – 8%, Australia – 9%, and Spain – 8%.

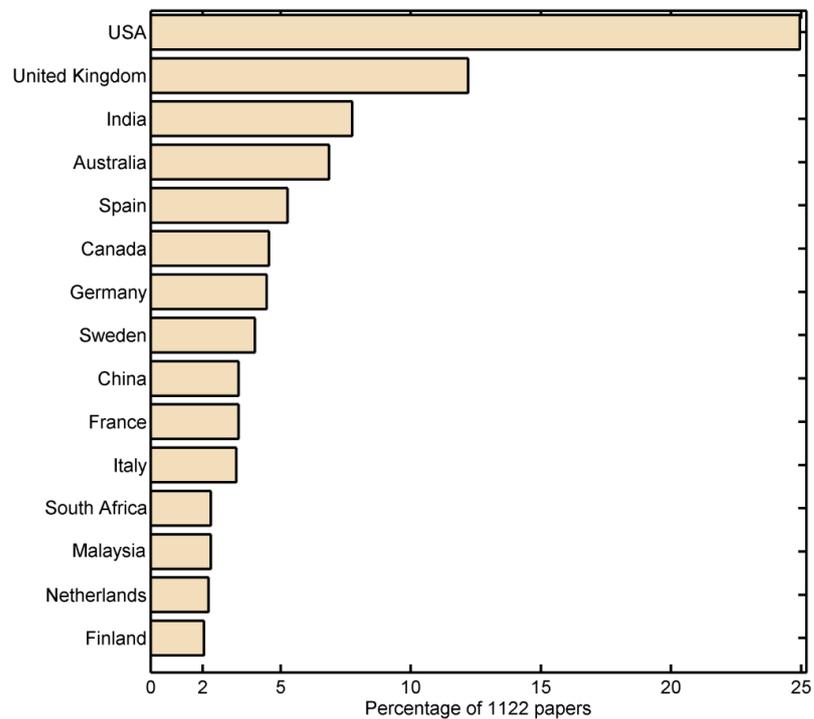


Figure 4. Countries’ contribution to branding publications during 2018–2019

### Most productive institutions

The list of the most productive institutions is presented in Table 1. We see that three of them are from Australia and three from the United Kingdom. On the national level the most concentrated are branding researches in Hong Kong and Denmark. Hong Kong Polytechnic University issued almost a half of branding publications in Hong Kong, and Copenhagen Business School – more than one-third of branding publications of Denmark.

The list of the most productive institutions over the past five years is the following: Lunds University, University of Leicester, Griffith University, Temple University, Middlesex University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Brunel University London, Copenhagen Business School, Bournemouth University, University of Manchester, and University of Groningen. Each of the listed universities published from 29 to 18 papers. Comparing this list to that in Table 1 we see that the number of British universities increased from 3 to 5.

Table 1 – The most productive institutions in branding researches within the 2000–2019

| Institution                        | Country       | Number of publications | Share in national product |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Griffith University                | Australia     | 70                     | 13.7%                     |
| Copenhagen Business School         | Denmark       | 65                     | 38.7%                     |
| Brunel University London           | Great Britain | 59                     | 5,3%                      |
| Erasmus University Rotterdam       | Netherlands   | 54                     | 26.1%                     |
| Lunds Universitet                  | Sweden        | 44                     | 20.9%                     |
| University of Queensland           | Australia     | 41                     | 8%                        |
| Manchester Metropolitan University | Great Britain | 40                     | 3,6%                      |
| Hong Kong Polytechnic University   | Hong Kong     | 39                     | 45.3%                     |
| University of Leicester            | Great Britain | 38                     | 3,4%                      |
| Monash University                  | Australia     | 37                     | 7.2%                      |

### Most productive scholars

The list of 10 scholars that published the largest number of branding publications is presented in Table 2. The table also indicates the current affiliation of the scholars. Therefore not all scholar's publications belong to the university that is mentioned. For example, Mihalis Kavartzis is an author of 33 branding publications, which are indexed in Scopus. 20 of them the author published in the University of Leicester. Correspondingly, Mihalis Kavartzis is a co-author of more than a half of branding publications of the University of Leicester, in particular, 20 from 38 papers (see Table. 1). The other «monopolist» – Bill Merrilees, who is a co-author of half of publications of Griffith University.

Table 3 presents the most productive scholars of branding over the last 5 years. Comparing Tables 2 and 3 we see that the top list is updated by one-half. Both lists are headed by T C Melewar.

Table 2 – The most productive scholars in branding researcher in the 2000–2019

| Scholar          | Current affiliation                             | Country        | Number of publications |            |
|------------------|---|----------------|------------------------|------------|
|                  |   |                | Scopus                 | Dimensions |
| Melewar T C      | Middlesex University                            | United Kingdom | 36                     | 50         |
| Merrilees B.     | Griffith University                             | Australia      | 33                     | 32         |
| Kavartzis M.     | University of Leicester                         | United Kingdom | 33                     | 28         |
| Balmer J.        | Brunel University London                        | United Kingdom | 23                     | 35         |
| Nguyen B.        | East China University of Science and Technology | China          | 16                     | 30         |
| King C.          | Temple University                               | USA            | 20                     | 22         |
| Keller K.        | Dartmouth College                               | USA            | 18                     | 21         |
| De Chernatony L. | Aston University                                | United Kingdom | 9                      | 30         |
| Esch F.          | EBS University of Business and Law              | Germany        | 1                      | 35         |
| Warnaby G.       | Manchester Metropolitan University              | United Kingdom | 14                     | 20         |

Table 3– The most productive scholars in branding researchers over the past 5 years

| Scholar       | Current affiliation                             | Country        | Number of publications |            |
|---------------|---|----------------|------------------------|------------|
|               |   |                | Scopus                 | Dimensions |
| Melewar T C   | Middlesex University                            | United Kingdom | 15                     | 26         |
| Nguyen B.     | East China University of Science and Technology | China          | 13                     | 25         |
| Kavaratzis M. | University of Leicester                         | United Kingdom | 16                     | 10         |
| King C.       | Temple University                               | USA            | 11                     | 10         |
| Arku G.       | Western University                              | Canada         | 9                      | 10         |
| Cleave E.     | Western University                              | Canada         | 9                      | 10         |
| Warnaby G.    | Manchester Metropolitan University              | United Kingdom | 8                      | 9          |
| Pich C.       | Nottingham Trent University                     | United Kingdom | 6                      | 11         |
| Zenker S.     | Copenhagen Business School                      | Denmark        | 9                      | 6          |
| Duffy B.E.    | Cornell University                              | United States  | 8                      | 7          |

### High productive sources

We have selected 5 sources with the largest number of branding papers (Table 4). Two sources are in the top 5 list as in Scopus as in Dimensions, therefore Table 4 contains 8 sources. Among them there are 6 scientific journals, 1 conference proceeding and 1 magazine (Drapers) from the fashion industry. Three of six scientific journals are good cited, their Source Normalized Impact per Paper (SNIP) exceeds 1.

The situation changed a bit over the past 5 years. The top five from Scopus and from Dimensions differ by only one journal. So, the list of the most efficient branding publishers contains 6 journals. Their order totally corresponds with the first six from Table 4.

Table 4 – Highly productive sources in branding

| Rank | Source   | Publishing house                     | Number of publications |            | SNIP in 2018 |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------|------------|--------------|
|      |  |                                      | Scopus                 | Dimensions |              |
| 1    | Journal of Brand Management  | Palgrave Macmillan & Springer Nature | 203                    | 389        | 0.87         |
| 2    | Place Branding and Public Diplomacy  | Palgrave Macmillan & Springer Nature | 159                    | 252        | 0.95         |
| 3    | Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science | Springer                             | –                      | 221        | –            |
| 4    | Journal of Product and Brand Management  | Emerald Publishing                   | 178                    | 195        | 1.13         |
| 5    | Journal of Business Research   | Elsevier                             | 101                    | 143        | 1.92         |
| 6    | European Journal of Marketing  | Emerald Publishing                   | 109                    | 117        | 1.01         |
| 7    | Corporate Reputation Review  | Springer Nature                      | 173                    | 47         | 0.66         |
| 8    | Drapers  | Emap Media                           | 152                    | –          | 0            |

### The most cited publications and scholars

The pair of the most cited publications in each five-years interval is presented in Tables 5 and 6. There are 15 publications, since the paper written by Douglas Holt got into two tables. Journal of Marketing published 5 most cited papers. Two scholars – Albert Muñiz and Lucia Malär published 2 most cited branding papers.

Comparing Tables 5–7 with Tables 2–4 we see that only 1 out of 14 most cited papers are published in high productive journal – Journal of Business Research. As for the 15 most cited scholars, we see that Kevin Lane Keller is a co-author of one most cited paper. Only 2 out of 15 most productive institutions – Erasmus University Rotterdam and University of Groningen are work places of authors of the most cited branding publications.

Table 5 – Most cited branding publications in Scopus

| Authors   | Affiliation   | Title   | Source                             | Cited by |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|----------|
| Holt D.   | Harvard Business School   | Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding  | Journal of Consumer Research, 2002 | 876      |
| Brown S.,<br>Kozinets R.V.,<br>Sherry Jr.J.F  | University of Notre Dame,<br>University of Southern California  | Teaching old brands new tricks: Retro branding and the revival of brand meaning   | Journal of Marketing, 2003         | 521      |
| Schau H.,<br>Muñiz A.,<br>Arnould E.  | University of Arizona,<br>DePaul University,<br>University of Wyoming                                     | How brand community practices create value  | Journal of Marketing, 2009         | 950      |
| Verhoef P.C.,<br>Lemon K.N.,<br>Parasuraman A.,<br>Roggeveen A.,<br>Tsiros M.,<br>Schlesinger L. A. | University of Groningen,<br>Boston College,<br>University of Miami<br>Babson College                      | Customer Experience Creation: Determinants, Dynamics and Management Strategies  | Journal of Retailing, 2009         | 768      |
| Whan Park C.,<br>Maclnnis D.,<br>Priester J.,<br>Eisingerich A.,<br>Lacobucci D.                    | University of Southern California,<br>Imperial College London,<br>Vanderbilt University                   | Brand attachment and brand attitude strength: Conceptual and empirical differentiation of two critical brand equity drivers | Journal of Marketing, 2010         | 590      |
| Batra R.,<br>Ahuvia A.,<br>Bagozzi R.P.   | University of Michigan,<br>University of Michigan–Dearborn  | Brand love  | Journal of Marketing, 2012         | 435      |
| Govers R.,<br>Go F.   | University of Leuven,<br>International University of Languages and Media,<br>Erasmus University Rotterdam | Place Branding: Glocal, Virtual and Physical Identities, Constructed, Imagined and Experienced                              | A book of Palgrave Macmillan, 2016 | 132      |
| Baldus B.J.,<br>Voorhees C.,<br>Calantone, R.   | California State University,<br>Michigan State University   | Online brand community engagement: Scale development and validation   | Journal of Business Research, 2015 | 126      |

Table 6 – Most cited branding publications in Dimensions

| Authors   | Affiliation  | Title  | Source   | Cited by |
|---|--|--|--|----------|
| Muñiz A.,<br>O'Guin T.  | DePaul University,<br>University of Illinois   | Brand community  | Journal of<br>Consumer<br>Research, 2001   | 2199     |
| Holt D.   | Harvard Business<br>School   | Why Do Brands Cause<br>Trouble? A Dialectical<br>Theory of Consumer<br>Culture and Branding                            | Journal of<br>Consumer<br>Research, 2002   | 837      |
| Jansen B.,<br>Zhang M.,<br>Sobel K.,<br>Chowdury A.                       | Pennsylvania State<br>University,<br>Twitter   | Twitter power: Tweets as<br>electronic word of mouth   | Journal of the<br>Association for<br>Information<br>Science and<br>Technology,<br>2009 | 872      |
| Keller K.,<br>Lehmann D.  | Columbia University,<br>United States<br>Dartmouth College,<br>United States                                   | Brands and Branding:<br>Research Findings and<br>Future Priorities   | Marketing<br>Science, 2006   | 764      |
| Marwick A.,<br>Boyd D.  | New York University,<br>Microsoft  | I tweet honestly, I tweet<br>passionately: Twitter<br>users, context collapse,<br>and the imagined<br>audience         | New Media &<br>Society, 2011   | 1077     |
| Malär L.,<br>Krohmer H.,<br>Hoyer W.,<br>Nyffenegger B.                   | University of Bern,<br>University of Texas at<br>Austin  | Emotional Brand<br>Attachment and Brand<br>Personality: The Relative<br>Importance of the Actual<br>and the Ideal Self | Journal of<br>Marketing,<br>2011   | 366      |
| Morhart F.,<br>Malär L.,<br>Guèvremont A.,<br>Girardin F.,<br>Grohmann B. | University of Lausanne,<br>University of Bern,<br>University of Quebec at<br>Montreal,<br>Concordia University | Brand authenticity: An<br>integrative framework<br>and measurement scale   | Journal of<br>Consumer<br>Psychology,<br>2015  | 101      |
| Marine-<br>Roig E.,<br>Clavé S.   | University of Lleida,<br>Rovira i Virgili<br>University Spain  | Tourism analytics with<br>massive user-generated<br>content: A case study of<br>Barcelona                              | Journal of<br>Destination<br>Marketing and<br>Management,<br>2015                      | 80       |

Services of Dimensions calculate a Mean Field Citation Ratio (FCR) for authors of branding publications. FCR is pretty much a universal feature – it is normalized both, for research area and for publication age. The list of the best authors of branding publications following FCR is presented in Table 7. The table includes authors that have minimum 6 branding publications. FCR shows that one American scholar Avery Holton stands out. The seventh in ranking is Mihalis Kavartzis, but he significantly dominates among other authors by the number of papers. Mihalis Kavartzis is the only one who is at the same time in the ranking list of the most productive scholars and in that of the most cited scholars in branding researches.

Table 7 shows that 6 out of 10 scholars affiliate with the most productive universities. As for the relation between productivity and citation in the top part of branding distribution, we may draw the following conclusion: productivity and citation on the level of authors and journals are weakly correlated figures; correlation takes place on the level of universities.

Table 7 – Authors of branding publications with maximum Mean FCR according to Dimensions

| Scholar       | Affiliation                        | Number of publications | Mean FCR |
|---------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Holton A.     | University of Utah                 | 6                      | 26.39    |
| Gertner D.    | Pace University                    | 6                      | 17.92    |
| Lucarelli A.  | Lunds Universitet                  | 6                      | 14.64    |
| Eshuis J.     | Erasmus University Rotterdam       | 10                     | 13.88    |
| Kalandides A. | Manchester Metropolitan University | 6                      | 13.34    |
| Kavartzis M.  | University of Leicester            | 28                     | 11.65    |
| Klijn E.      | Erasmus University Rotterdam,      | 8                      | 11.53    |
| Brown B.      | Virginia Commonwealth University   | 6                      | 11.53    |
| Ewing M.      | Deakin University                  | 8                      | 11.32    |
| Braun E.      | Erasmus University Rotterdam       | 6                      | 11.1     |

## Conclusions

The paper presents the bibliometric analysis of branding publications in the 2000 – 2019. This is the first analysis which is made simultaneously in two bases – Scopus and Dimensions, and this allowed to make a deep research in the matter by combining different services of both bases. It was well established that the majority of branding publications belong to the research field of Business and Management. But the interest to this research field declines. At the same time there is a strong tendency to an increase in the share of branding publications which relate to Cultural Studies and Psychology. Analysis over the last 2 years shows a further reduction in branding publications in Business and Management, and Marketing. The share of branding publications which relate to Sociology is rapidly growing. So the focus of branding researches is becoming more and more multidisciplinary.

The most part of branding publications are concentrated in the USA, United Kingdom, and Australia. During the last decade we observe a downward trend in hegemony of the top three leaders of XXI century due to an increase in publications which come from Spain, Italy, Germany, France and Sweden. But India demonstrates a rapid growing and following the data of 2018–2019, it outstrips Australia. India branding researches are characterized by a low level of international cooperation and high concentration of publications in one journal.

Griffith University in Australia is a leader by the number of branding publications in 2000 – 2019. Over the past five years the leader changed for Lunds University in Sweden. At the same time British universities create more and more branding publications. British universities now take 5 out of 10 places in the ranking list of the most productive institutions.

T C Melewar is a leader by the number of branding publications among the scholars in 2000 – 2019. He is the number one in Scopus and in Dimensions. Statistics over the past 5 years shows that the list of highly productive scholars had half changed but T C Melewar remained a leader.

Journal of Brand Management is a leader among sources. In 2000 – 2019 this journal issued 2.4% of all branding publications in Scopus and 2.7% in Dimensions. The group of leading journals did not change over the last 5 years.

For each of the five-years intervals we have found the most cited publications in Scopus and in Dimensions. These publications must get into folders “Must read” of each of the branding scholars. Journal of Marketing published 5 out of 14 most cited papers. This journal must obviously get into the checking-list of branding scholars. Two scholars – Albert Muñiz and Lucia Malär published 2 most cited branding papers each.

We have also formed a ranking list of authors of branding publications following the Mean Field Citation Ratio. American scholar Avery Holton is leading in this rating by a large margin. Mihalis Kavaratzis – the only scholar from the top list of the most productive branding researches is also in the list.

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