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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.

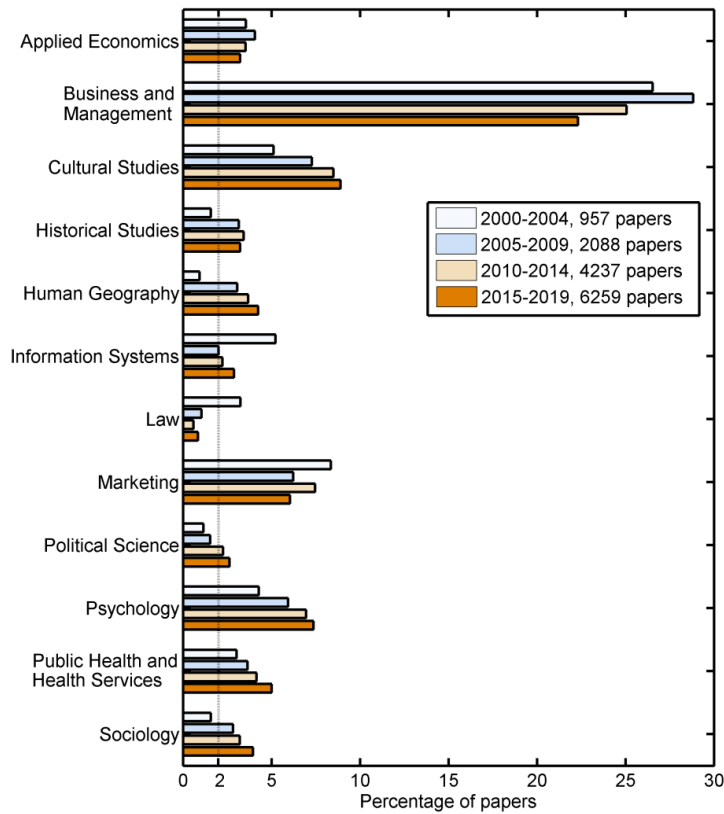


Figure 1. Distribution of publications in branding by the research fields in Dimensions

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%.

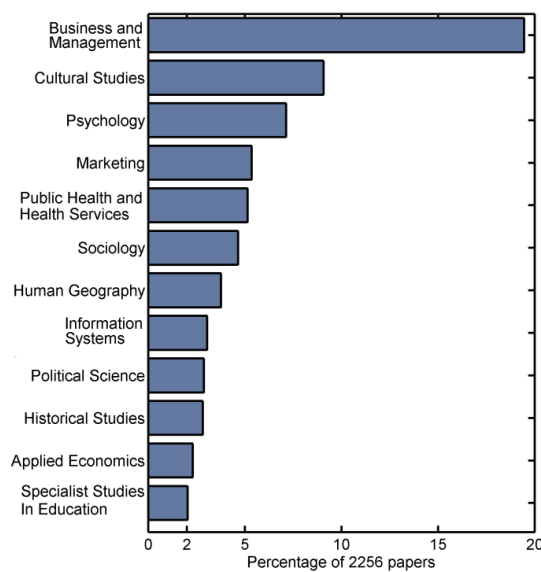


Figure 2. Distribution of hot publications in branding as for the research fields in Dimensions

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.

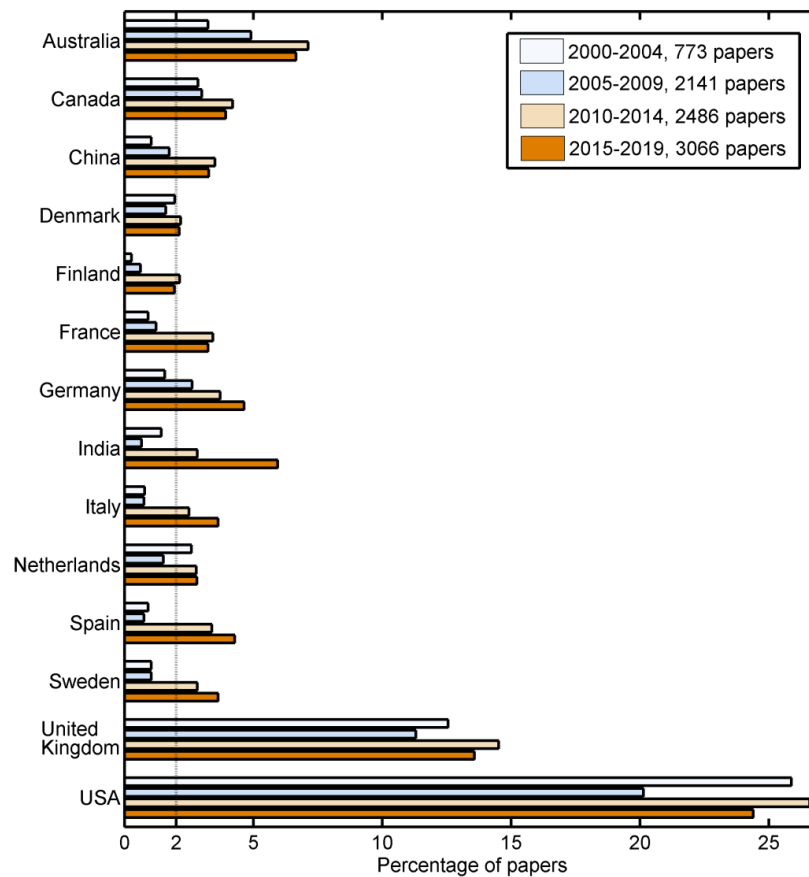


Figure 3. Dynamics of countries' contribution to branding publications

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%.

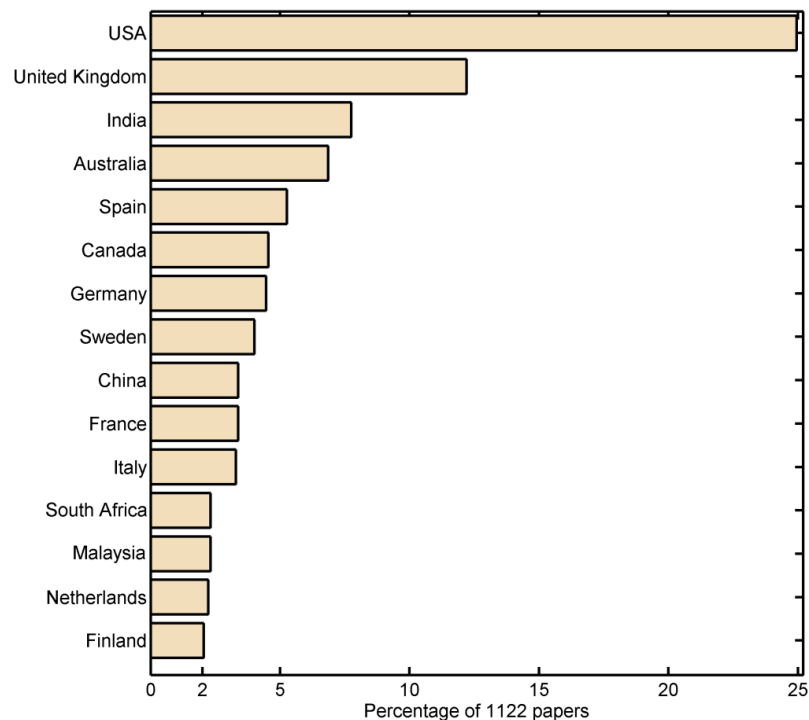


Figure 4. Countries' contribution to branding publications during 2018–2019

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 Kavaratzis 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 Kavaratzis 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
Kavaratzis 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., Kozinets R.V., Sherry Jr.J.F	University of Notre Dame, University of Southern California	Teaching old brands new tricks: Retro branding and the revival of brand meaning	Journal of Marketing, 2003	521
Schau H., Muñiz A., Arnould E.	University of Arizona, DePaul University, University of Wyoming	How brand community practices create value	Journal of Marketing, 2009	950
Verhoef P.C., Lemon K.N., Parasuraman A., Roggeveen A., Tsiros M., Schlesinger L. A.	University of Groningen, Boston College, University of Miami Babson College	Customer Experience Creation: Determinants, Dynamics and Management Strategies	Journal of Retailing, 2009	768
Whan Park C., Maclnnis D., Priester J., Eisingerich A., Lacobucci D.	University of Southern California, Imperial College London, 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., Ahuvia A., Bagozzi R.P.	University of Michigan, University of Michigan–Dearborn	Brand love	Journal of Marketing, 2012	435
Govers R., Go F.	University of Leuven, International University of Languages and Media, Erasmus University Rotterdam	Place Branding: Glocal, Virtual and Physical Identities, Constructed, Imagined and Experienced	A book of Palgrave Macmillan, 2016	132
Baldus B.J., Voorhees C., Calantone, R.	California State University, 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., O'Guin T.	DePaul University, University of Illinois	Brand community	Journal of Consumer Research, 2001	2199
Holt D.	Harvard Business School	Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding	Journal of Consumer Research, 2002	837
Jansen B., Zhang M., Sobel K., Chowdury A.	Pennsylvania State University, Twitter	Twitter power: Tweets as electronic word of mouth	Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 2009	872
Keller K., Lehmann D.	Columbia University, United States Dartmouth College, United States	Brands and Branding: Research Findings and Future Priorities	Marketing Science, 2006	764
Marwick A., Boyd D.	New York University, Microsoft	I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience	New Media & Society, 2011	1077
Malär L., Krohmer H., Hoyer W., Nyffenegger B.	University of Bern, University of Texas at Austin	Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self	Journal of Marketing, 2011	366
Morhart F., Malär L., Guèvremont A., Girardin F., Grohmann B.	University of Lausanne, University of Bern, University of Quebec at Montreal, Concordia University	Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale	Journal of Consumer Psychology, 2015	101
Marine- Roig E., Clavé S.	University of Lleida, Rovira i Virgili University Spain	Tourism analytics with massive user-generated content: A case study of Barcelona	Journal of Destination Marketing and Management, 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 Kavaratzis, but he significantly dominates among other authors by the number of papers. Mihalis Kavaratzis 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
Kavaratzis 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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