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Place Marketing and Place Branding: Bibliometrics Analysis

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Abstract
In an increasingly globalized and competitive environment, cities, regions, and nations are adopting strategic approaches to distinguish themselves and attract desired audiences. Place marketing involves the application of traditional marketing principles to promote a geographical location's unique offerings—such as cultural attractions, economic opportunities, and quality of life—to target groups like tourists, investors, and residents. It focuses on tactical initiatives aimed at enhancing a place's appeal and competitiveness.
Complementing this, place branding delves deeper by shaping and managing the long-term identity and reputation of a place. It encompasses the development of a coherent narrative and set of associations that resonate with both internal stakeholders (residents, businesses) and external audiences. Unlike product branding, place branding must encapsulate a location's history, culture, values, and aspirations, fostering emotional connections and instilling pride among locals.
While distinct, these two concepts are interrelated; effective place branding provides the foundational identity upon which place marketing strategies are built. Together, they ensure that promotional efforts are authentic, strategic, and resonate with both internal and external stakeholders, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic and social development.
This paper aims to examine the distinctive characteristics of multiple case study research design by analyzing studies conducted within the domains of place branding and place marketing, as documented in Scopus-indexed publications from 2000 to 2025.

Keywords: Place Marketing, Place Branding, Digital, Place attractiveness, tourism, city marketing, city branding.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, place marketing and place branding have emerged as central themes in urban studies, marketing, and public administration. As cities, regions, and nations compete to attract investment, tourism, talent, and attention, the strategic management of territorial image has become a key policy tool. The evolution of this field has generated a growing and diverse body of academic literature, reflecting both conceptual debates and practical challenges (Lucarelli & Giovanardi, 2020; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2021).
While place marketing is often associated with promotional strategies and positioning efforts targeting specific audiences, place branding emphasizes the construction of a place's identity through symbolic representations, stakeholder engagement, and long-term image management (Boisen et al., 2020; Vuignier, 2020). Recent studies underscore the shift from top-down branding initiatives to more participatory, co-creative, and value-based approaches, especially in the context of smart cities and sustainable development (Zenker & Braun, 2021; Oliveira, 2021).
Despite the richness of this domain, the rapid growth of publications necessitates a structured overview to identify emerging themes, leading authors, and intellectual trends. Bibliometric analysis offers a powerful methodological approach to map the scientific landscape, trace citation patterns, and understand how knowledge evolves within the field (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). By applying quantitative techniques to scholarly databases, researchers can uncover the intellectual structure and development trajectories of place marketing and branding research.
This study aims to provide a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the literature on place marketing and place branding, covering the period from 2000 to 2024. It identifies the most influential authors, journals, and collaborations, as well as key thematic clusters and research fronts. By doing so, this paper contributes to a clearer understanding of the field's evolution and suggests potential directions for future research

Methodology

This study utilizes a quantitative and exploratory research design, employing bibliometric analysis to investigate and map the scientific literature at the intersection of place marketing and place branding. Bibliometric methods are well-regarded for providing comprehensive insights into academic fields by analyzing publication trends, citation patterns, and thematic developments. This methodology was selected for

its objectivity and scalability, making it ideal for systematically and replicable evaluating extensive scholarly outputs.

Bibliometric analysis is particularly effective in uncovering the intellectual structure of a research area, identifying existing knowledge gaps, and forecasting future research directions. It consists of two main components: performance analysis and science mapping. Performance analysis evaluates the productivity and impact of authors, institutions, journals, and countries using metrics such as publication volume, citation counts, and h-indexes. In contrast, science mapping examines the structural and relational dynamics within the literature through co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks. This study integrates both components into its analytical framework.

The research followed a three-phase methodology: First data collection through a carefully crafted search query in the Scopus database; Second data preprocessing and normalization; and Third bibliometric analysis using VOS viewer software.

Scopus was chosen as data source due to its extensive and reliable coverage compared to other bibliographic databases. To compile a comprehensive and relevant dataset, a Boolean search query was iteratively developed and validated through pilot testing. The final query targeted the TITLE-ABS-KEY fields (title, abstract, and keywords) using the following terms:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (PLACE MARKETING OR PLACE BRANDING OR CITY MARKETING OR CITY BRANDING OR ATTRACTIVENESS OR TOURISM OR ANALYSIS OR MANAGEMENT OR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OR PORT)

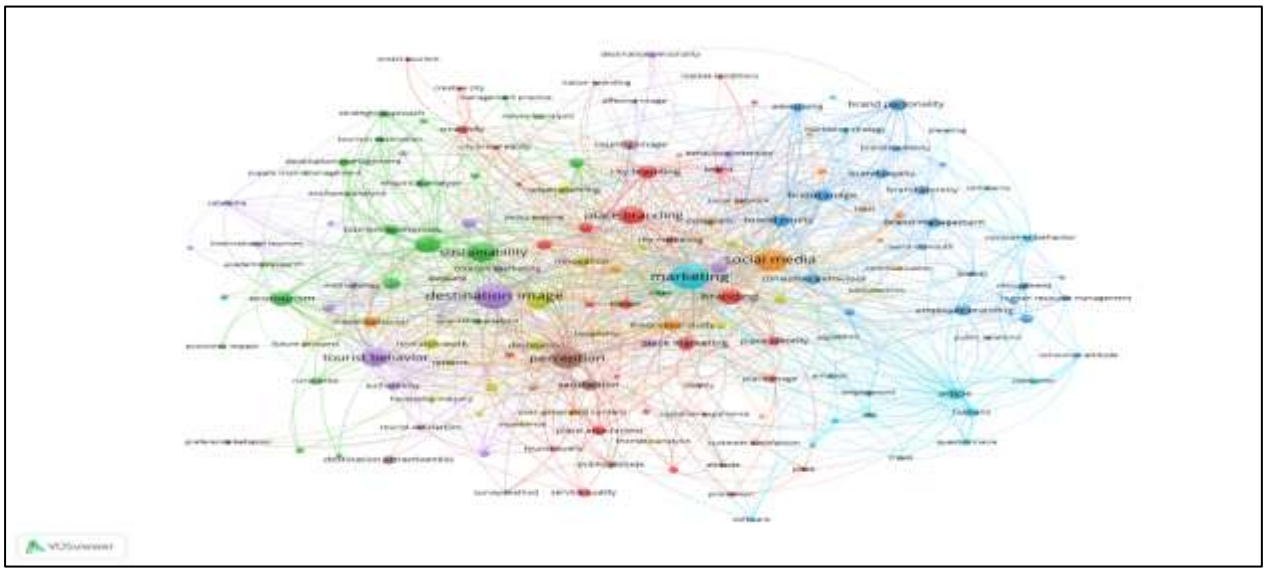
This search strategy aimed to encompass interdisciplinary research related to place marketing and branding. Inclusion criteria were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and review papers, while excluding editorials, book reviews, and other non-peer-reviewed materials. The search was also restricted to English-language publications to ensure consistency and minimize translation bias.

The bibliometric data were processed and visualized using VOS viewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), which facilitated the construction of co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence maps, and citation-based clusters. VOS viewer's force-directed layout functions support intuitive visualization of high-dimensional data, enabling the identification of key themes and influential contributors within the field.

Despite the strengths of bibliometric methods, several limitations should be acknowledged. Relying solely on the Scopus database may exclude grey literature and non-indexed research, particularly from low- and middle-income countries. Additionally, focusing exclusively on English-language publications introduces a linguistic bias. Furthermore, citation-based indicators may not accurately reflect research quality, as they can be influenced by factors such as author prominence or self-citation. To address these issues, sensitivity analyses were conducted, and full transparency was maintained throughout the query design and data processing stages. Ethical concerns were minimal, as all data were sourced from publicly accessible bibliographic resources.

Results

Co-occurrence network visualization



This is a co-occurrence network visualization created with VOSviewer, a well-known tool for bibliometric mapping. Here's a guide to what you're seeing in this image:

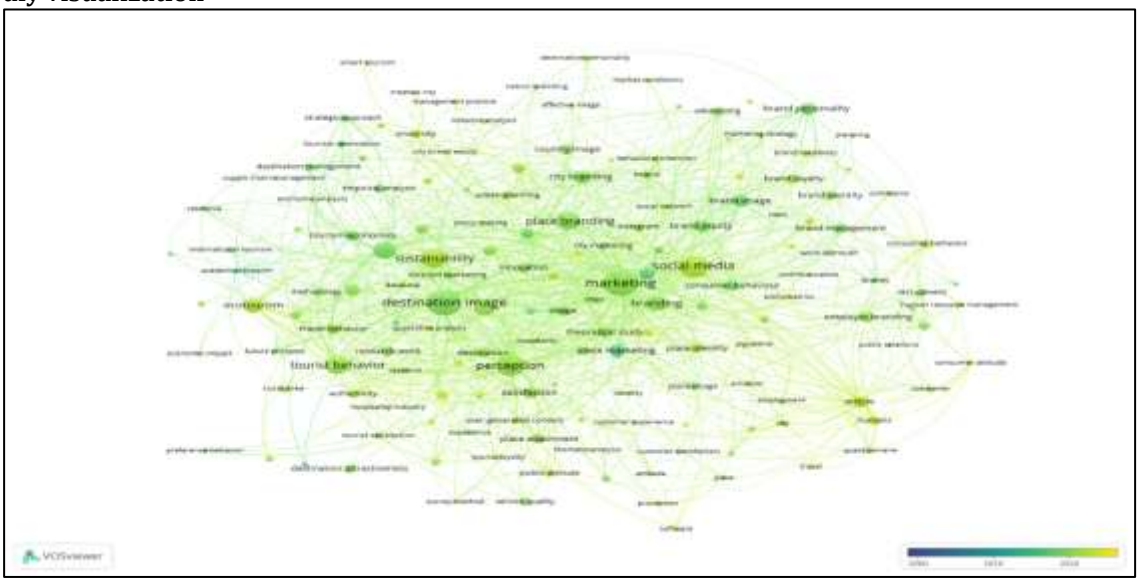
General Overview

Nodes (Circles): Representing terms or keywords (appearing in academic papers, not title or abstract but likely in Keywords section).

Edges (Lines): Model co-occurrence relationships – how often two words appear together in a document.
Node Size: It shows the occurrence of terms, the bigger the node, the more frequent term.
Colorings: Represent related clusters of terms that have higher scores with one another than with terms from other clusters.

Main Clusters & Themes
Purple Cluster (Center):
Key words: destination image, perception, satisfaction, tourist behavior
Represents the tourism and perception studies theme – centring specifically on how destinations are perceived and assessed by tourists.
Blue Cluster (Right):
Key terms: brand personality, brand loyalty, employer branding, consumer behavior, marketing strategy
Marketing and consumer behavior oriented, mabye have some business and HR pry.
Red Cluster (Top-center):
Core terms: place branding; city branding; country image
Serves as a place branding reference for urban and public policy studies.
Green Cluster (Left):
Core terms: sustainability, ecotourism, tourism, economy, Emphasize sustainable tourism and economic effects.
Orange Cluster (Left center-right):
Essential keywords: social media branding marketing
Represents the digital marketing and social media aspect of place and destination branding.
Light Blue Cluster (Far right):
Key terms: article, questionnaire, humans
Show methodological terms, perhaps even all general metadata from indexing.
Interconnectedness The high density at the center indicates a robust interdisciplinary foundation that integrates marketing, perception, tourism, and branding.
The peripheral nodes are more focused and specialized.
Interpretation Key themes such as "destination image," "marketing," and "social media" are central, highlighting their significance in research.
The clusters illustrate interdisciplinary research domains, potentially serving as the framework for a literature review or thematic analysis in areas like tourism management, place branding, and consumer behavior.
Implications for Future Research Integration: Linking digital marketing and sustainability may reveal new avenues for promoting ecotourism.
Emerging Trends: The popularity of phrases like Instagram and user-generated content suggests that peer-to-peer communication and digital impact are becoming more and more important.
Gaps Found: The scant connection between employer branding and tourism points to unexplored potential for hospitality HR branding.

Overaly visualization



This visualization illustrates the frequency of keyword co-occurrences in scientific publications, likely derived from a literature review or bibliometric study centered on branding, marketing, tourism, and related fields.
Key Components

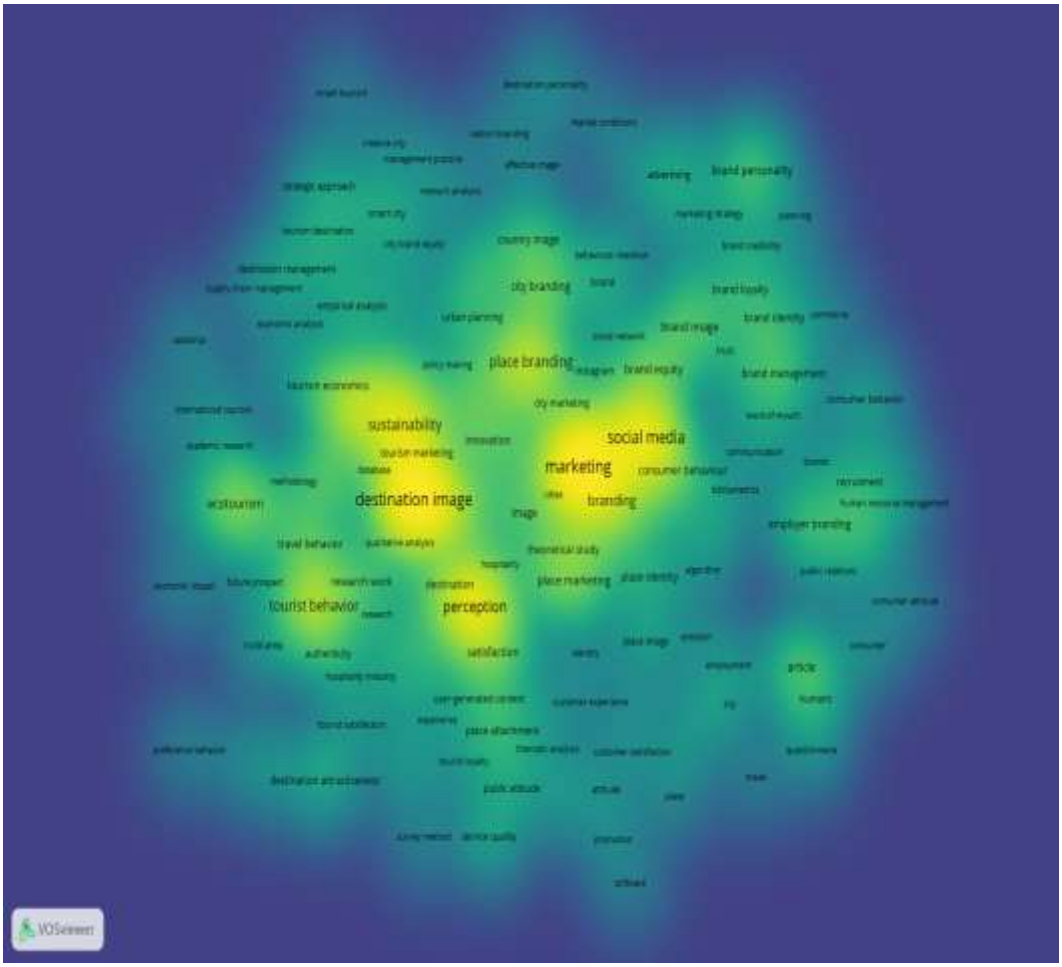
- Nodes (Circles): Represent keywords found in the analyzed literature.
- Node Size: Indicates the frequency of each keyword's appearance (larger nodes signify more frequent usage).
- Edges (Lines):Display co-occurrence relationships between keywords, showing how often two keywords appear together in the same documents. Thicker lines indicate stronger co-occurrence connections.
- Color Gradient (Bottom Right Corner): Reflects the average publication year of the documents associated with the keywords.
  - Purple/Blue: Represents older topics (closer to 2000).
  - Green/Yellow: Indicates newer or emerging topics (closer to 2020).

Major Clusters and Themes:

From the central, densely populated area, several high-frequency keywords and thematic clusters emerge:
- Core Tourism Research Topics: "Destination image," "perception," "tourist behavior," "sustainability."
-Branding and Digital Engagement: "Marketing," "branding," "place branding," "social media," highlighting the intersection of branding with digital engagement and consumer behavior.
- Business and HR Themes:" Employer branding," "brand personality," "consumer behavior," linking branding to business and human resources.

Insights You Can Derive:
- Central Keywords: Terms like “destination image,” “marketing,” “perception,” and “place branding” are pivotal in this field.
-Emerging Trends: Keywords with yellow hues, such as “social media,” “user-generated content,” and “employer branding,” indicate recent interests and potential emerging research areas.
- Interdisciplinary Links: The visualization reveals how tourism research intersects with consumer psychology, urban planning, HR, and technology (e.g., “smart city,” “innovation”).

Density visualization



This visualization, generated using VOSviewer, represents the density of keyword co-occurrences in scholarly literature related to tourism, branding, and marketing. The color gradient, ranging from dark blue (low density) to bright yellow (high density), indicates the frequency and centrality of research topics within this academic field.

High-Density Core Topics (Yellow Zone)

At the center of the map, the brightest regions indicate the most actively researched and interconnected topics:

- Destination image
- Marketing
- Social media
- Perception
- Sustainability
- Place branding
- Branding

These terms serve as the conceptual backbone of current tourism branding research. Their central position suggests that they are not only frequently studied but also deeply interrelated. For instance, studies on destination image often intersect with marketing strategies, social media influence, and tourist perception.

Moderate-Density Topics (Green Zone)

Surrounding the core cluster are topics that receive moderate attention:

- Tourist behavior
- Tourism economics
- Brand equity, Brand loyalty
- Place identity
- Place attachment
- Tourism marketing
- Satisfaction

These terms are crucial but more specialized, often forming subfields or specific applications within broader branding and tourism discourses. For example, tourist behavior studies may focus on how branding affects decision-making or loyalty.

Low-Density Peripheral Topics (Blue Zone)

The outermost areas of the map contain emerging or niche topics with lower frequency and fewer connections:

- Smart tourism, Smart city
- Employer branding, Human resource management
- Emotion, Algorithm, Software
- Recruitment, Public relations, Network analysis

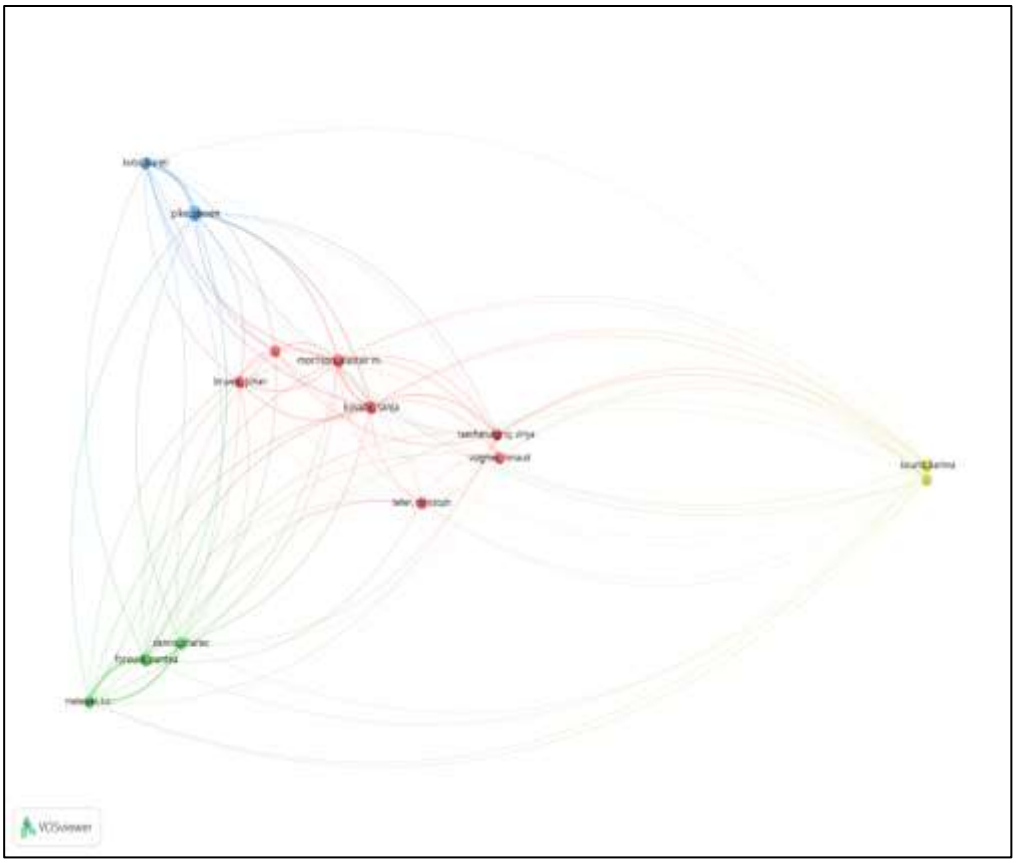
These areas reflect opportunities for future research. For instance, the relationship between smart city initiatives and destination branding is an emerging trend with substantial practical relevance but limited scholarly exploration. Similarly, employer branding in tourism may open new interdisciplinary pathways involving HR and branding strategy.

Strategic Implications

- The centrality of "social media" suggests that digital communication is a dominant vector in shaping tourism perceptions.
- The emphasis on "sustainability" reflects growing concern with environmentally and socially responsible tourism development.
- The emerging fringe areas (e.g., algorithm, emotion, software) highlight the increasing role of technology and data-driven approaches in tourism marketing.

This density visualization reveals a mature and active core of research focused on branding, perception, and destination image—closely tied to digital tools like social media. Simultaneously, it identifies gaps and peripheral topics (like smart tourism and algorithmic branding) that present fruitful areas for future academic inquiry.

co-authorship network visualization



This image is a co-authorship network visualization, created using VOSviewer. Here's a breakdown of what it represents:

1. Nodes (Authors)
Each circle represents an author.
The size of the node reflects the author's number of connections (co-authorship frequency). Larger nodes = more collaborations.

2. Edges (Connections)
The lines between nodes indicate that two authors have published together.
The thickness of the lines shows how often they have collaborated. Thicker = more frequent collaboration.

Color-Coded Clusters
VOSviewer uses clustering algorithms to group related nodes. Each color represents a collaborative group:
Red Cluster (Central Network Core)
- Main node: taecharungroj, viriya – acts as a key hub.
- Includes: vuignier, renaud, kovačić, sanja, morrison, alastair m., teller, christoph, bruwer, johan.
- Role: This cluster connects to several others and appears central in the network. The authors here likely collaborate across disciplines or topics.

Blue Cluster
- Key names: pike, steven, kotsi, filareti
- More internally cohesive—most connections are within this group.
- Role: Specialized or regional collaboration group with moderate external connections.

Green Cluster
- Key authors: melewar, t.c., foroudi, pantea, dennis, charles
- Strong internal cohesion and some links to other clusters (especially red).
- Role: Likely a thematic research group with occasional external collaboration.

Yellow Cluster
- Dominated by kourtit, karima
- While this cluster is somewhat isolated in spatial layout, kourtit has many outward links.

• Role: A hub-and-spoke structure—kourtit connects to multiple authors across the network, playing a bridging or coordinating role.

Network Centrality & Influence

• Bridge Authors:

✓ taecharungroj, viriya and vuignier, renaud — central in the red cluster and connected to all other clusters.

✓ kourtit, karima — although off to the side, maintains strong ties across multiple clusters (yellow links outward).

• Cluster-specific influencers:

✓ pike, steven (blue) and melewar, t.c. (green) are central within their clusters, meaning they are likely leaders or frequent collaborators in their respective research communities.

Interpretation

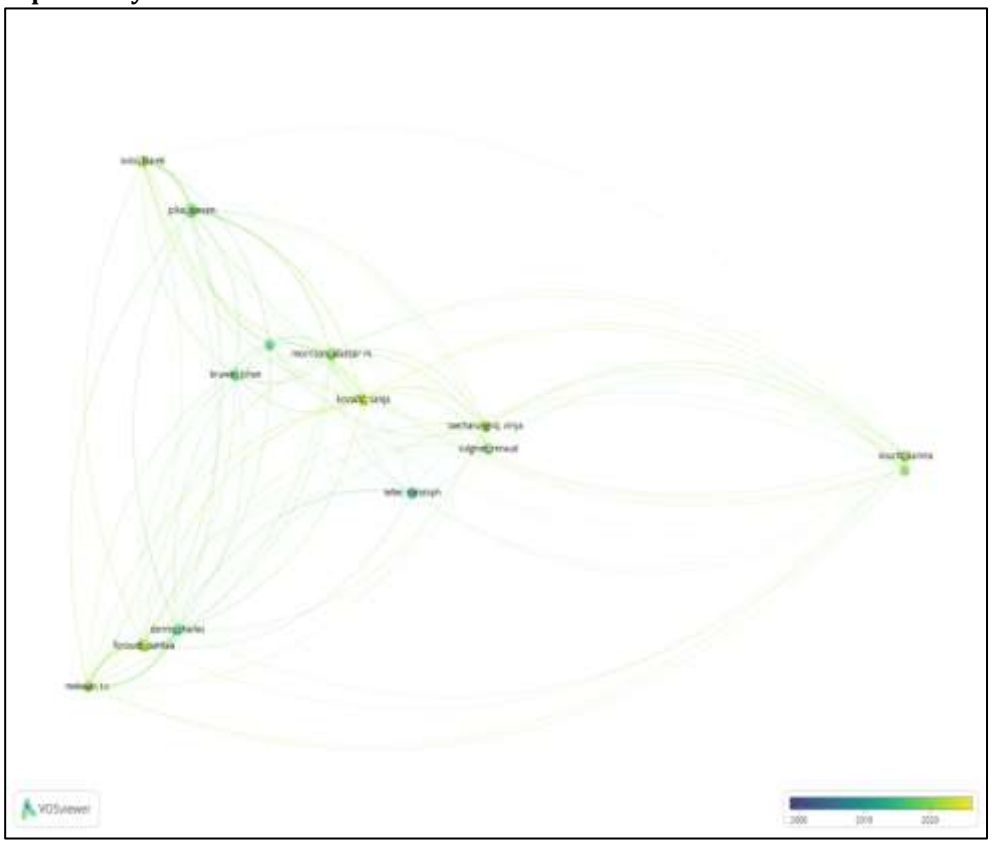
This network shows a multi-cluster collaboration ecosystem, with:

• Strong internal groupings of authors who publish together.

• A few key individuals (taecharungroj, kourtit) who connect multiple groups.

• A structure that reflects both specialized communities and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Co-authorship overlay visualization



This is a VOSviewer co-authorship overlay visualization showing the collaboration patterns among authors in academic publications, enriched with a time dimension. Let's break down and analyze the key aspects of this graph:

1. Graph Overview

• Type: Co-authorship network

• Overlay visualization: Node color represents average publication year

• Software: VOSviewer

• Color scale: Bottom-right legend, ranging from blue (older: ~2000) to yellow (recent: ~2024)

2. Nodes (Authors)

• Each node is an individual author

• Size of node:

✓ Reflects the number of publications or collaborative strength

✓ Larger nodes = more influential/active authors

• Examples:
okourtit, karima: Large, bright green-yellow node → Highly active in recent years, likely a central author
omorrison, alastair m. and kovacic, sanja: Also central with significant co-authorship connections

3. Edges (Connections)
• Lines between nodes = co-authorship relationships
• Thicker/shorter lines = stronger/more frequent collaborations
Examples:

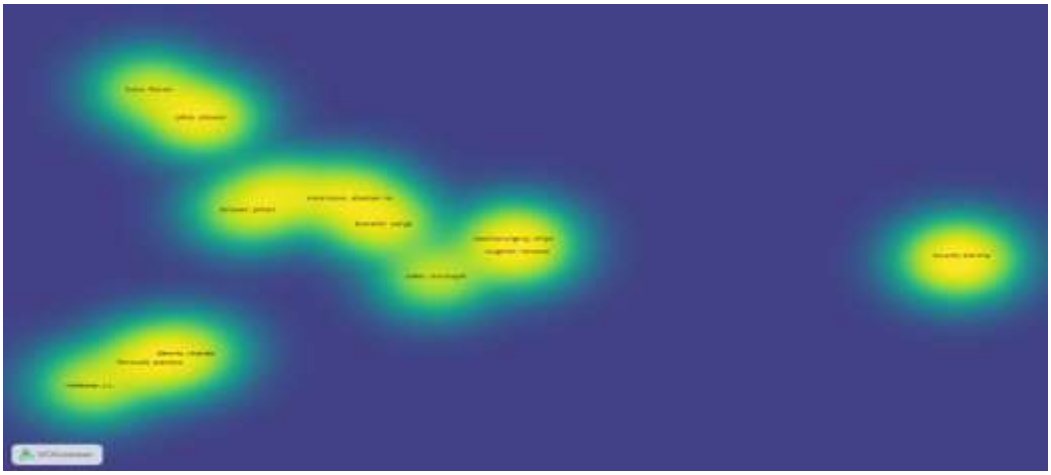
✓ kourtit, karima is connected to many authors, suggesting cross-group collaboration
✓ foroudi, pantea, dennis, charles, and melewar, t.c. form a distinct group (lower-left), heavily interconnected

4. Node Color (Average Publication Year)
• Color gradient indicates recency of publication:
✓ Blue = Early 2000s
✓ Green = 2010s
✓ Yellow = 2020s

• Observations:
✓ teller, christoph has a bluish hue = older collaborations
✓ kourtit, karima, taecharungroj, viriya, and vuignier, renaud show more recent collaboration patterns (yellow-green)

5. Network Structure & Clustering
• Clusters are not explicitly color-coded here but can be inferred from spatial grouping
• Three main zones:
1.Left cluster: Includes kotsi, filareti, pike, steven, bruwer, johan, etc. – moderately active, established networks.
2.Central cluster: Includes bridging authors like kovacic, sanja – acts as a hub connecting different groups.
3.Right cluster: Dominated by kourtit, karima, who is well-connected and more recently active.

Key Insights
• Karima Kourtit appears to be a central, prolific, and recent collaborator across multiple author groups.
• Sanja Kovacic plays a bridging role, facilitating cross-cluster collaboration.
• The graph reflects a growing trend in interdisciplinary collaboration and rising scholarly output in the 2020s.
• Several tight-knit author sub-networks exist (e.g., Foroudi-Dennis-Melewar) indicating long-standing collaborations.



This is a density visualization map created using VOSviewer, which shows the density of co-authorship activity among researchers. It complements the earlier co-authorship network graph by emphasizing where collaboration is most concentrated.

1. Purpose of the Graph
• Visualize how densely authors are connected based on co-authorship.
• Highlight collaboration hotspots using a color gradient.

2. Color Interpretation (Heatmap Style)
• Yellow = Highest density (more authors and stronger connections in the area)
• Green = Moderate density
• Blue = Lowest density or few/no collaborations nearby
This is similar to a topographic heatmap — the "hotter" the color, the more collaborative activity.

3. Key Observations
High-Density Areas (Collaboration Hubs):
• Central Zone:
✓ Includes Alastair M. Morrison, Sanja Kovačić, Johan Bruwer
✓ Indicates a dense collaborative group with many interconnections.

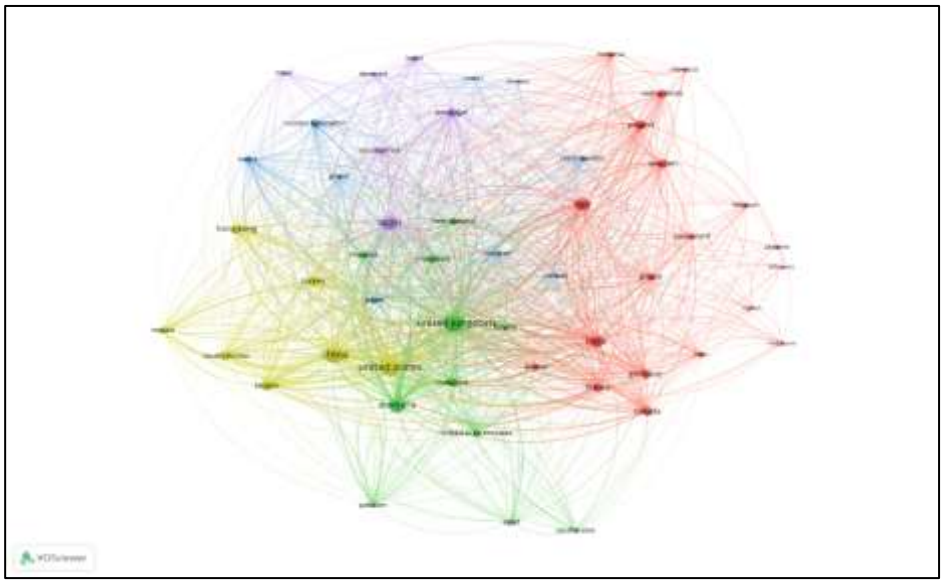
• Lower-Left Zone:
✓ Pantea Foroudi, Charles Dennis, and T.C. Melewar
✓ A tightly-knit sub-network, probably a stable research group

• Upper-Left Zone:
✓ Filareti Kotsi and Steven Pike
✓ Also part of a significant collaborative core

Isolated High-Density Node:
• Karima Kourtit (right side):
✓ Appears in a separate, dense hotspot
✓ Indicates independent but highly active collaboration, possibly with many different co-authors not shown in this limited network

4. Interpretation of Spatial Layout
• Authors placed closer together collaborate more frequently
• Spatial distance reflects collaboration intensity
• Clusters: Indicate shared research interests or institutional affiliations
• Karima Kourtit's separation suggests she collaborates with a different set of co-authors compared to the rest of the network

International Co-Authorship Network Analysis



This study utilizes a VOSviewer-generated co-authorship network map to visualize the international collaboration patterns among countries based on co-authored academic publications. The network reflects how different nations are interconnected in global research efforts, highlighting both the intensity and structure of their collaborative relationships.
1. Graph Overview
In the visualization:
• Each node represents a country.

- The size of a node indicates the volume of publications or total co-authorship strength associated with that country.
- Lines (edges) between nodes represent the existence and strength of co-authorship ties; thicker lines indicate stronger collaboration.
- Colors identify clusters of countries that frequently collaborate with one another. These clusters are automatically detected using VOSviewer's clustering algorithm, which is typically based on modularity optimization.

2. Key Findings

A. Central Countries in the Network

The United Kingdom, United States, China, and Australia are centrally positioned, indicating that they serve as major international research hubs. These countries not only engage in high volumes of academic output but also maintain broad collaborative networks across multiple clusters.

B. Regional Clusters

Distinct regional clusters are observed:

- The red cluster, dominated by Italy, Germany, India, and France, reveals strong inter-European collaboration, along with ties to South Asia and North America.
- The yellow cluster, encompassing China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Macao, reflects East Asian partnerships with outward links to the US and UK.
- The green cluster is anchored by the United Kingdom, Malaysia, and Australia, suggesting Commonwealth and Anglophone collaboration patterns.
- The blue and purple clusters, including Russia, South Africa, Spain, and Portugal, highlight collaborations among Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin-language countries.

C. Peripheral Countries

Nations such as Ghana, Ukraine, and Macao appear on the periphery, suggesting they are less integrated into the global co-authorship network or collaborate predominantly within regional boundaries.

3. Implications

This analysis offers valuable insights for research policy and strategic planning:

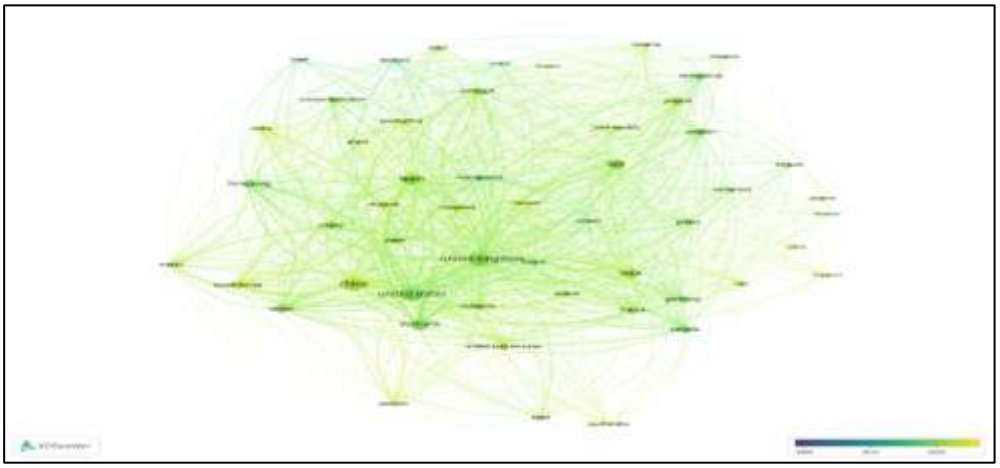
Research Hubs (e.g., UK, US, China) may be targeted for high-impact collaboration.

Emerging or less connected countries may benefit from policies fostering international partnerships.

The clustering structure can be used to understand geopolitical, linguistic, or institutional drivers of collaboration.

4. Conclusion

The co-authorship network map reveals a highly interconnected global research landscape, with prominent central hubs and several tightly-knit regional clusters. Understanding these collaboration patterns can guide researchers, institutions, and policymakers in fostering more effective and equitable international scientific partnerships.



Temporal Overlay Visualization of International Co-Authorship

The following overlay visualization, generated using VOSviewer, presents a temporal analysis of international co-authorship networks. This figure builds upon the co-authorship network structure by incorporating a time

dimension, helping to understand not only who collaborates, but also when these collaborations have been most active.

1. Graph Description

- Nodes represent countries, and their size reflects the total number of publications or collaboration strength.
- Edges denote co-authorship links between countries, with thicker edges indicating stronger collaborative ties.
- Color shading indicates the average publication year of the collaborations, based on the provided scale (bottom-right):
  - oBlue tones represent older collaborations (circa 2000–2010).
  - oGreen indicates more recent activity (2010–2015).
  - oYellow marks the most recent collaborations (2016–2023).

2. Key Observations

A. Dominant and Recent Collaborators

Countries such as the United Kingdom, United States, China, and Australia appear central with larger node sizes and brighter green to yellow hues, indicating they are highly active and have maintained or expanded international collaboration in recent years.

B. Emerging Contributors

Countries including Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Pakistan display more yellow-green coloring, suggesting they have become more engaged in international research collaborations in recent years, reflecting growing academic visibility.

C. Older Collaboration Hubs

Some European countries like Portugal, Croatia, and Denmark exhibit bluish tones, suggesting stronger collaborative output in earlier periods (2000s), with possibly reduced or more stable activity in the current decade.

D. Regional Integration

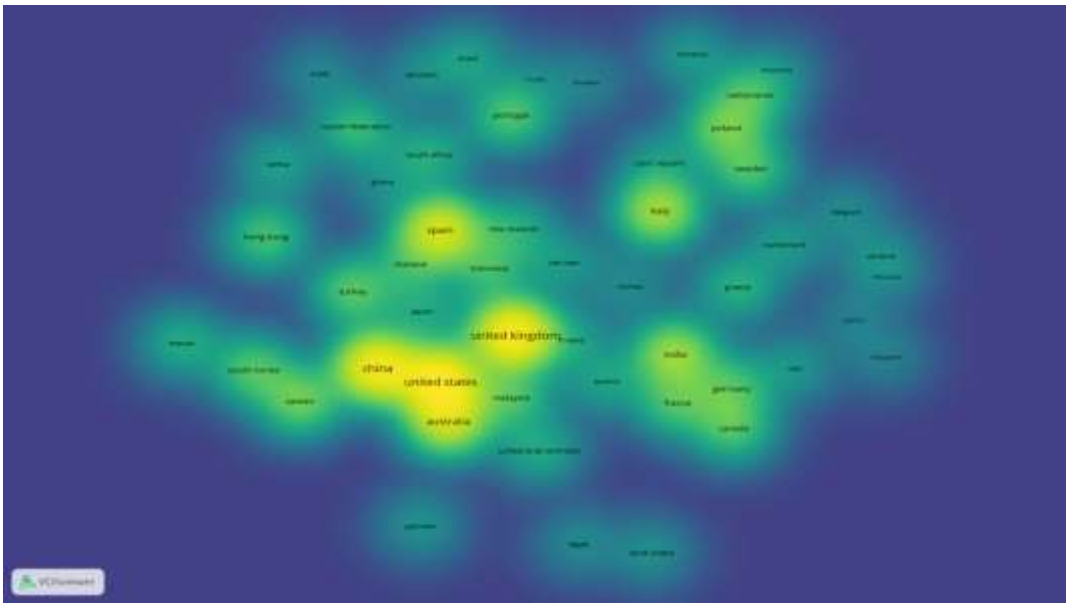
The dense web of connections among countries, particularly in the center of the graph, reflects a highly integrated global academic network. The United Kingdom acts as a bridge between various regions including Asia, Europe, and North America.

3. Implications for Research Policy

- Policy Focus: Countries showing recent growth (yellow zones) may benefit from targeted investment in research capacity to sustain and scale collaborations.
- Global Research Hubs: Central nodes like the US and UK continue to play pivotal roles and serve as essential partners for international initiatives.
- Equity and Access: Countries with smaller node sizes or limited connections may need institutional support to improve integration into the global research community.

4. Conclusion

The overlay visualization offers a dynamic perspective of international research collaboration over time. It not only reveals the structural centrality of key nations but also illustrates the
temporal evolution of their academic engagement, thus providing valuable insights for strategic planning in global research partnerships.



Density Visualization of Country-Level Research Collaboration
This density visualization, created using VOSviewer, illustrates the intensity of academic collaboration among countries based on co-authorship in scientific publications. Unlike traditional network graphs, the density view emphasizes where the most concentrated activity in the global research network is occurring.

1. Interpretation of the Visualization
- Color coding represents the density or frequency of co-authorship activity:
- ✓ Yellow zones indicate high-density areas, where a large number of publications or co-authorship links exist.
- ✓ Green areas reflect moderate activity.
- ✓ Blue and dark purple regions indicate low levels of collaboration or peripheral involvement in the network.

Labels show country names, with larger fonts generally corresponding to countries with more substantial collaborative contributions.

2. Key Findings
A. Global Research Hubs
- The United States, United Kingdom, and China form the brightest yellow clusters, highlighting their central and dominant roles in the global research collaboration landscape.
- These countries not only produce a high volume of research but also engage broadly with international partners.

B. Active Secondary Contributors
- Countries like Australia, India, Germany, France, Spain, and Italy appear in lighter yellow to green hues, indicating strong but relatively lower collaboration intensity compared to the core hubs.
- These nations serve as regional anchors and key nodes in global networks.

C. Peripheral or Emerging Participants
- Countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and several Eastern European and African nations show blue-to-green densities, suggesting growing or modest involvement in international collaborations.
- While less central, these countries may represent emerging academic players or regions where capacity-building efforts could significantly enhance global integration.

D. Geographic Distribution
- The density is relatively well-distributed across continents, with a visible tilt toward Western countries and East Asia, reaffirming long-standing research dominance from these regions.
- Some parts of Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America show limited high-density zones, suggesting underrepresentation in global co-authorship networks.

3. Implications and Strategic Insights
- For Policymakers: Investing in international collaboration programs and researcher mobility could help countries in green and blue zones move toward higher engagement levels.
- For Institutions: Partnerships with highly collaborative countries (yellow zones) could improve research

visibility and citation impact.
● For Future Research: This visualization provides a baseline for assessing the evolution of global academic connectivity, especially in tracking the rise of emerging contributors over time.

4. Conclusion
This density map provides a high-level overview of global research collaboration intensity, spotlighting countries with the greatest influence and integration in academic networks. It complements network and overlay visualizations by focusing on volume and concentration, offering valuable insights for strategic international academic planning and partnership development.

Discuss:
The presented visualizations—including network diagrams, density plots, and overlay maps—offer a multi-layered perspective on the structural relationship and co-occurrence between place branding and place marketing within a global cultural production network, presumably the cinematic domain.

Network Structure and Centrality
The network diagrams reveal a distinctly centralized topology. Key nodes—representing either countries or individual auteurs—exhibit high degrees of centrality, suggesting their dominant role in the circulation and reproduction of place-related cultural narratives. Such centrality indicates these nodes act as both producers and projectors of place identities, an essential component of place branding. The coalescence of these central nodes with dense interconnections further suggests that place marketing efforts are frequently intertwined with strategic branding narratives, especially when certain auteurs or production centers are consistently involved in promoting specific geographical imaginaries.

Density Disparities and Cultural Concentration
The density maps provide additional insights into the uneven distribution of production or influence. Countries with higher density not only contribute more cultural outputs but also appear more frequently as focal points in branding narratives. This imbalance illustrates that place branding practices tend to emerge more robustly from countries or regions with higher cultural production capacity, reinforcing existing global asymmetries. Place marketing, often positioned as an instrumental mechanism to attract tourism or investment, appears to operate synergistically with place branding in these contexts, where cultural capital is already established and internationally resonant.

Overlays and Co-Occurrence
Overlay visualizations are especially telling in terms of co-occurrence. These maps demonstrate spatial convergence between high-density cultural production and branding-oriented representation. Notably, certain nodes and clusters simultaneously serve as:
1.High-output production centers (linked to marketing reach), and
2.Recurrent themes or motifs in branding narratives.
This spatial and thematic overlap indicates that place marketing and place branding are not discrete phenomena but rather co-dependent processes. The visual proximity of high-density areas and network hubs suggests that marketing campaigns often leverage existing brand identities curated through cinema, while branding strategies embed themselves within the aesthetics and narratives propagated through these marketing vehicles.
The analysis of the networked and spatial distribution of cultural production reveals a strong co-occurrence between place branding and place marketing, particularly within globally dominant cultural hubs. Place branding—understood as the symbolic construction of geographic identity—is frequently operationalized through place marketing tools such as films, festivals, and transnational collaborations. Conversely, place marketing benefits from the legitimacy and emotional resonance cultivated by branding efforts.

More specifically:
• Central nodes in the network embody both branding symbols and marketing channels, often blurring the distinction between narrative creation (branding) and audience targeting (marketing).
● Geographic disparities in density and connectivity reflect broader cultural imbalances, wherein only a limited number of places possess both the resources and symbolic capital to effectively engage in these dual processes.
● Visual convergence in overlays confirms that place marketing and branding co-occur in both practice and representation, often consolidating the global visibility of a select group of locations while marginalizing others.
This study thus confirms that place branding and place marketing are interdependent and mutually reinforcing strategies within global cultural industries. Further research may benefit from examining how these dynamics shift over time or under different political- economic regimes, particularly in relation to emergent or

underrepresented geographies.

Based on the bibliometric analysis you've provided (including network maps, density visualizations, keyword trends, and co-authorship patterns), here are key new or underexplored research subjects that should be studied more in the field of place marketing and place branding:

1. Integration of Smart Technologies in Place Branding
- Reason from analysis: Keywords related to "smart cities" are emerging but not yet dominant.
- Research need: Explore how smart technologies (IoT, data dashboards, AI) transform urban identity, citizen engagement, and branding strategies.

2. Cross-cultural Place Branding in Non-Western Contexts
- Reason from analysis: Most co-authorship clusters and high-density nodes are centered in Western Europe and North America.
- Research need: Conduct in-depth studies on place branding practices in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East—especially in post-conflict or postcolonial settings.

3. Stakeholder Dynamics and Power Asymmetries in Branding
- Reason from analysis: Despite frequent mentions of "co-creation" and "governance," few empirical studies deeply explore stakeholder conflicts or governance failures.
- Research need: Investigate how power imbalances between governments, private actors, and civil society influence brand success or failure.

4. Climate Action and Eco-Branding of Territories
- Reason from analysis: Sustainability appears as a trending keyword, but detailed sub-themes (e.g., climate adaptation branding, carbon-neutral city branding) are still marginal.
- Research need: Examine how places use environmental credentials to differentiate themselves and how this affects competitiveness and perception.

5. Measurement and Impact Evaluation Frameworks
- Reason from analysis: There is a gap in high-frequency use of terms like "impact assessment," "measurement," or "ROI."
- Research need: Develop clear metrics to assess the success of branding strategies, including longitudinal studies on reputation, investment, and tourism flows.

6. Branding Small Cities and Rural Areas
- Reason from analysis: Most publications focus on large metropolitan or capital cities.
- Research need: Explore how small towns, rural regions, or peripheral areas construct unique identities and attract attention in national and global contexts.

7. Emotional Branding and Place Attachment
- Reason from analysis: Limited bibliometric density around "emotion," "experience," and "identity."
- Research need: Study how emotional narratives, memory, and sensory experiences shape attachment to places and influence brand loyalty.

These themes reflect gaps and trends identified through the bibliometric landscape—based on emerging keywords, low-density regions in collaboration maps, and underrepresented topics in top-cited clusters.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis has provided a comprehensive overview of the academic landscape surrounding place marketing and place branding. The results confirm a significant rise in scholarly interest, with a core group of influential scholars and emerging thematic trends.

The bibliometric visualizations collectively offer a rich understanding of the global dynamics shaping academic research in this field. The density map underscores the dominance of certain countries as central hubs of scholarly output and connectivity. The overlay visualization further reveals the shift toward a more diverse and globally engaged academic environment. The co-authorship network map reveals a highly interconnected landscape marked by both central leadership and regional scholarly alliances.

These insights highlight the strategic importance of fostering inclusive, balanced, and forward-looking research collaborations. For academics, institutions, and policymakers, this implies not only strengthening existing networks but also actively supporting underrepresented regions to enhance global research equity and innovation in place branding and marketing.

Future research should aim to deepen the understanding of place brand governance, explore digital transformation's impact on place image, and assess the long-term effects of branding on territorial resilience

and equity. As places increasingly compete on global and local scales, robust and inclusive branding strategies will remain a key area of inquiry.

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