Research Article

Exploring Brand Equity Studies in University Settings: An In-depth Analysis of Academic Research

Tanu Khasa[1*], Priya Sangwan[2], Aarti Chauhan[3], Dr. Sushil Sharma[4]

[1*]Ph.D Scholar at University School of Management, Kurukshetra University. She has a specialization in Digital and Social Media Marketing of Higher Education Institutes. She has presented Five research papers at national and international conferences and one paper has been published in peer-reviewed Journal. (tanukhasa190996@gmail.com)
[2]Ph.D. Scholar at University School of Management, Kurukshetra University. She has a specialization in Social Media Marketing. She has presented 7 research papers at national and international conferences and published 3 papers in peer-reviewed journals. (priyasangwan294@gmail.com)
[3]Ph.D Scholar at University School of Management, Kurukshetra University. She has a specialization in Finance. She has presented 8 research papers at national and international conferences, published 2 papers in peer-reviewed journals and 1 paper in UGC care. (aartichauhan0112@gmail.com)
[4]Professor at the University School of Management, Kurukshetra University. He specializes in Rural Marketing, Retailing, and Digital and Social Media Marketing. (sushilsharma@kuk.ac.in)

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study provides a thorough examination of academic publications, author contributions, the significance of journals, cooperation between countries, and notable works in the field of brand equity and university research. Using bibliometric approaches and data from the Web of Science database, we analyse publication trends, author affiliations, citation patterns, and international collaborations. The results of our research show a consistent increase in academic involvement, emphasizing the importance of this interdisciplinary field in academic discussions. The key findings involve the identification of authors who have made significant contributions, the recognition of influential journals, and the identification of influential publications that have shaped the discussion on brand equity dynamics. Our approach enhances comprehension of this field, providing valuable perspectives for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. **Keywords:** bibliometric analysis, brand equity, international collaboration, higher education management, university research.

1. Introduction

Recently, there has been a growing interest in studying the relationship between brand equity and university research. This reflects the acknowledgment of the significant influence that branding initiatives have on educational institutions (Pinar et al., 2014). This interdisciplinary field involves research into the creation, control, and evaluation of brand value in the context of universities and other higher education institutions (Mourad et al., 2011). Gaining insight into the dynamics of brand equity in this particular situation is essential for improving the reputation of the institution, attracting potential students, promoting interaction with stakeholders, and sustaining a competitive edge in a higher education landscape that is becoming more globalized and competitive (Vukasović, 2022).

Although there is an increasing interest in this area, there is still a requirement for thorough examinations of academic publications, author contributions, the significance of journals, cooperation between countries, and prominent works that shape the discussion on brand equity and university research. Our study attempts to fill this vacuum and offer significant insights into the changing field of brand equity research in universities. Using bibliometric techniques and data from the Web of Science database, our research aims to analyse the distribution of scholarly publications, explore the involvement of different countries in research collaborations, identify important journals for disseminating research, evaluate the scholarly impact of influential authors and significant works, examine trends in international collaboration, and contribute to a better understanding of the changing landscape of brand equity and university research.

Our study aims to gain insights into the dynamics of this interdisciplinary field by analyzing publication patterns, author contributions, and international collaborations. The findings will be beneficial for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. Our research seeks to clarify these patterns to provide valuable insights for future studies, stimulate scholarly discussions, and contribute to the progress of knowledge in the field of brand equity and university research.

2. Literature Review

The convergence of brand equity and university research has gained significant attention in academic literature, indicating the growing acknowledgment of branding efforts in the higher education sector. This section presents a comprehensive overview of important studies and theoretical frameworks that have enhanced our comprehension of the dynamics of brand equity in academic institutions.

Brand Equity in Higher Education:
Several definitions of brand equity can be found in the literature, provided by Aaker, 1991, Keller, 1993. According to D.A. Aaker, 1991, brand equity provides customers with advantages such as enhanced information processing and interpretation, satisfaction, and confidence in their buying choices. In addition, brand equity enhances the company's worth by enhancing its ability to negotiate favorable trade terms, gain a competitive edge, expand the brand into new product categories, increase pricing and profits, and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing programs. D.A.Aaker (1996b), defines "brand equity as a compilation of four categories of brand assets linked to a brand's name or symbol, which augment the value that a firm or its clients derive from a product or service". The four areas are: (1) perceived quality; (2) brand association; (3) brand awareness; and (4) brand loyalty. Keller, 1993 states that enhancing brand equity enables businesses to charge higher prices, motivates customers to seek out additional information, and enhances the impact of marketing communications, licensing agreements, and customer acceptance of brand extensions. "Customer-based brand equity refers to the differential impact of brand knowledge on consumer response to the brand's marketing efforts". Academics have become more aware of the significance of brand equity in influencing the views and actions of individuals involved in the higher education industry. (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985) were pioneers in the application of brand equity to universities. They emphasized the significance of the brand image, brand loyalty, and brand connections in shaping student recruitment and institutional reputation. Initial research on branding in higher education mostly examines mascots, advertising, names, mottos, logos, and promotional advertising as methods for establishing brand identification and promoting the institution (Argenti, 2000; David, 2007). Additional studies conducted by (D.A. Aaker, 1991) and (Keller, 1993) provided further insight into the various aspects of brand equity in the university setting. These studies highlighted the importance of academic excellence, alumni participation, and research impact as key factors that contribute to the overall worth of an institution's brand.

Factors Influencing Brand Equity in Universities:
Several factors have been recognized as exerting an influence on brand equity in academic institutions. (Booms & Bitner, 1981) established the notion of the expanded marketing mix, highlighting the significance of service quality, physical evidence, and people in influencing brand perceptions. In the same vein, (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010) emphasized the significance of brand identity, brand communication, and brand experience in augmenting brand equity in the context of higher education. The study conducted by (Pinar et al., 2014) identified specific aspects of brand equity that are relevant to university branding. These aspects were categorized into two groups: core dimensions and supporting dimensions. The recognized dimensions for creating value are perceived quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty, emotional environment, brand association, learning environment, organizational affiliation and brand reputation. The highlighted components that contribute to value creation are career services, student living (residence and eating services), physical facilities and library services. Additional study has examined how elements like faculty proficiency, research productivity, student contentment, and alumni connections influence the overall value and reputation of an institution.

Measurement and Assessment of Brand Equity in Universities:
Evaluating and gauging the value of a brand within a university setting is particularly difficult because educational services are intangible and there are a wide variety of stakeholders engaged. Diverse approaches have been suggested for assessing brand equity in higher education, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and analysis of secondary data (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Torres et al., 2008). In addition, researchers have created scales and frameworks to evaluate several aspects of brand equity, including perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

Implications for Strategic Management and Marketing:
An in-depth comprehension of the dynamics of brand equity inside academic institutions carries significant implications for the fields of strategic management and marketing. Universities can utilize findings from brand

equity research to create focused marketing strategies, improve institutional reputation, and distinguish themselves in a competitive market (Balmer & Soenen, 1999; O'neill, 2002). In addition, the efficient administration of brand value can have a positive impact on student retention, alumni involvement, and fundraising initiatives, thereby improving the overall performance and long-term viability of the institution (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001; Sweeney et al., 2008).

To summarise, the existing body of literature on brand equity and university research offers useful insights into the complex nature of brand perceptions in the higher education sector. This literature review establishes the basis for our analysis of brand equity dynamics in academic institutions by reviewing important studies and theoretical frameworks.

3. Objectives of the Study

1) To examine the dissemination of academic publications in the intersecting field of brand equity and university research.
2) To examine the significance of specific countries in research collaborations, both within a single country and across multiple countries, in this particular field.
3) To identify the main journals that are used to publish research on brand equity and university research.
4) To evaluate the academic significance and long-lasting influence of important publications by renowned authors in shaping the discussion about the dynamics of brand equity.

4. Data Collection and Methodology

Bibliometrics, as highlighted by (Li et al., 2017) stands out as the predominant approach for gaining a comprehensive insight into the structure of a research topic. In this study, data relevant to the subject matter was retrieved from the Web of Science database, employing the search query "Brand Equity" AND "Universit" in titles, abstracts, or keywords, resulting in a dataset comprising 926 articles. Analysis of this dataset was conducted using the R software Biblioshiny. Moreover, the study utilizes techniques such as citation network analysis and examination of publishing patterns, as discussed (Paul & Benito, 2018). Performance indicators extracted for the bibliometric study encompass various metrics, including Total Papers (TP) representing the total publications by a source and Total Citations (TC) indicating the total citations received by a publication.
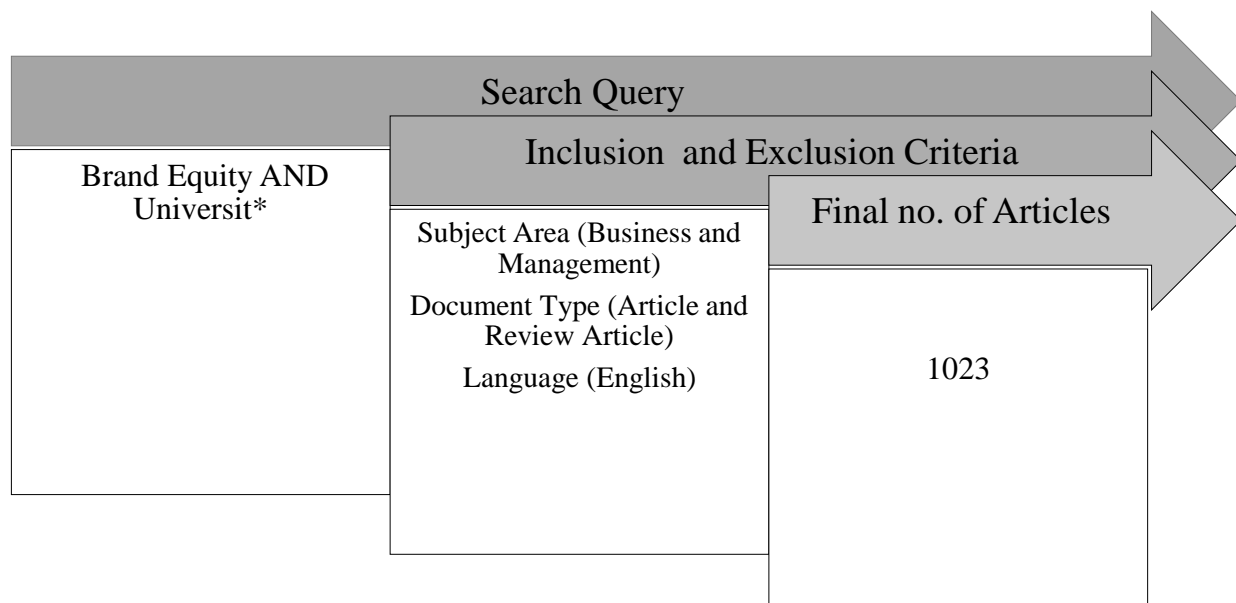

Search Query

Brand Equity AND Universit*

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Subject Area (Business and Management)

Document Type (Article and Review Article)

Language (English)

Final no. of Articles

1023

Figure 1 Search Query, Inclusion, and Exclusion Criteria

5. Bibliometric Analysis

This section provides bibliometric findings that cover several performance measures related to research advancement. These metrics include the identification of authors who have produced a large number of publications and have been highly cited, top journals in the field, analysis based on countries, and major publications related to Brand Equity and University.

a. Research Progression

Figure 2 presents a comprehensive analysis of academic articles on the interconnectedness of brand equity and universities from 1992 to 2024. At first, there is a small number of papers published each year, with occasional changes seen between 1992 and the early 2000s. Starting from the mid-2000s, there was a noticeable increase

in the frequency of publications, showing that there was a greater scholarly interest in this subject. The increasing number of publications in this field indicates a gradual development and increased scholarly focus on the relationship between brand equity and university-related areas over time. Significant increases in publication production, particularly noticeable in 2015, 2016, and 2023, indicate periods of increased research activity or heightened academic attention on this specific subject area. Overall, the data highlights a consistent increase in scholarly interest in the connection between brand equity and university topics. This suggests that the academic field is growing and placing more importance on this multidisciplinary area of study.
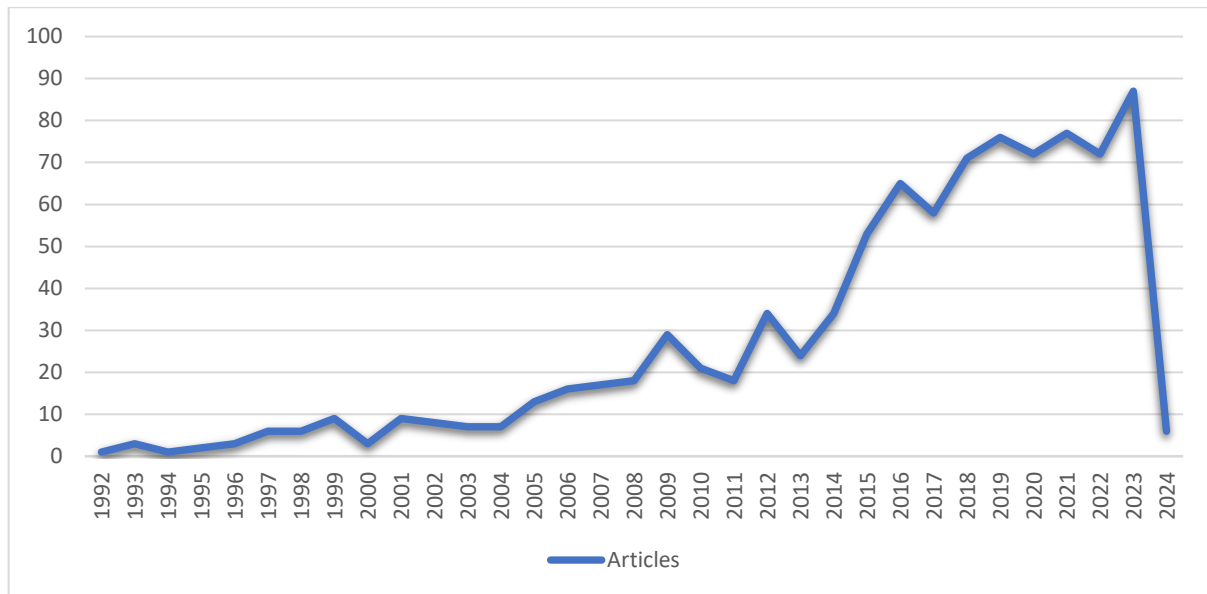

Figure 2 Annual Publications

b. Highly Productive and Influential Authors

Table 1 provides information on the scholarly contributions of authors in the field of brand equity and university research, including their total publications (TP) and total citations (TC), as well as their current institutional affiliations. Francisco Guzman, who is associated with the University of North Texas in the United States, stands out as the most productive author with a total of 17 publications. Irene Gil-Saura from Universitat de Valencia, Valencia, Spain, has 16 publications. This data demonstrates the global reach of brand equity research, with scholars originating from various geographical regions such as the USA, Spain, UAE, UK, France, and New York University, USA. Furthermore, it highlights the cooperative aspect of academic pursuits, as demonstrated by the inter-institutional affiliations of specific authors and the possibility of exchanging ideas across different disciplines.

The given data also provides a thorough summary of the academic influence of different authors in the domain of brand equity and university research, as demonstrated by their total citation counts (TC). Kevin Lane Keller stands out as a prominent author, having the greatest total citations with a significant count of 7018. Naveen Donthu has a prominent standing with 3472 citations, while David Aaker and Boonghee Yoo closely follow with citation counts of 2808 and 2801 respectively. This data highlights the academic community's recognition and impact of these authors, revealing the influence and contribution of their research efforts to the broader field of brand equity and university research.

Table 1 Highly Productive and Influential Authors

Authors	TP	Current Affiliations	Authors	TC
Francisco Guzman	17	University of North Texas, USA	Kevin Lane Keller	7018
Irene Gil-Saura	16	Universitat de Valencia, Valencia, Spain	Naveen Donthu	3472
George Christodoulides	13	American University of Sharjah, UAE	David Aaker	2808
Maja Šeric	9	University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain	Boonghee Yoo	2801
T. Bettina Cornwell	8	University of Oregon, USA	Sungho Lee	1438
Leslie de Chernatony	7	Aston University, UK	Stephen W. Brown	1324
Justin Paul	7	University of Puerto Rico, USA	Murali Chandrashekaran	1324
Mahabubur Rahman	7	Rennes School of Business, Rennes, France	Stephen S. Tax	1324
Asli DA Tasci	7	University of Central Florida, USA	Tülin Erdem	1262
Tülin Erdem	6	New York University, USA	C. Whan Park	1159

c. Top Journals

Figure 3 provides valuable information about the distribution of scholarly publications on the topic of brand equity and university research across different academic journals. The "Journal of Business Research" is the leading publication in this field, boasting the biggest number of articles, amounting to a total of 95. The

"Journal of Product and Brand Management" and the "European Journal of Marketing" have 47 and 44 papers respectively, demonstrating substantial academic interest and contributions in these periodicals. This data highlights the wide range of academic platforms that promote discussion and sharing of research findings on brand equity and university research. It demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature and scholarly importance of this thematic domain within the broader field of marketing and business research.

Figure 3 Top Journals

d. Country-wise analysis

The United States is at the forefront in terms of scholarly output, with a total of 1060 papers and 31,817 citations. This reflects the country's strong research infrastructure and significant investment in brand equity and university research. Australia, the United Kingdom, and Spain exhibit significant academic involvement with TP values of 272, 268, and 199 respectively. This suggests that they actively contribute to the creation of new information and contribute to the reputation and research efforts of universities.

Table 2 Top Countries Working on Brand Equity and University Research

Country	Total Production	Total Citation
USA	1,060	31,817
Australia	272	3,224
UK	268	3,859
Spain	199	2,213
China	191	1,114
France	165	1,800
Germany	139	2,473
Canada	115	3,145
Italy	82	303
Portugal	68	500

e. Top 10 Highly Influential Papers

Table 3 emphasizes the varied contributions of these scholarly works to the domain of brand equity and university research. These papers jointly influence our comprehension of the dynamics of brand equity. (Keller, 1993) groundbreaking research, published in the "Journal of Marketing", has received a significant total citation count of 6,148 highlighting its fundamental contribution to the development of discussions on customer-based brand equity. This article maintains a substantial impact in the area, with an average citation rate of 192.13 citations per year (TC/Y) and a normalized TC of 2.73. The article entitled "Measuring Brand Equity Across Products and Markets", (David A. Aaker, 1996) published in the California Management Review, has received a total of 2,527 citations, with an average citation rate of 87.14 citations per year. The TC, which has been normalized to a value of 2.95, demonstrates the lasting significance and influence of this research in comprehending brand equity in various product and market situations.

Table 3 Highly Cited Paper

Authors	Title	Journal	YOP	Total Citations	TC/Y	Normalized TC
(Keller, 1993)	Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity	Journal of Marketing	1993	6148	192.13	2.73
(David A. Aaker, 1996)	Measuring Brand Equity Across Products and Markets	California Management Review	1996	2527	87.14	2.95

(Yoo et al., 2000)	An examination of selected marketing mix elements and brand equity	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	2000	1438	57.52	2.04
(Yoo & Donthu, 2001)	Developing and validating a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale	Journal of Business Research	2001	1363	56.79	5.38
(Tax et al., 1998)	Customer Evaluations of Service Complaint Experiences: Implications for Relationship Marketing	Journal of Marketing	1998	1324	49.04	4.02
(Becker et al., 2012)	Hierarchical Latent Variable Models in PLS-SEM: Guidelines for Using Reflective-Formative Type Models	Long Range Planning	2012	1117	85.92	10.33
(Park et al., 2010)	Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers	Journal of Marketing	2010	1106	73.73	9.85
(Escalas; & Bettman, 2008)	You Are What They Eat: The Influence of Reference Groups on Consumers' Connections to Brands	Journal of Consumer Psychology	2008	935	42.50	4.72
(Kim & Ko, 2012)	Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand	Journal of Business Research	2012	890	68.46	8.23
(Netemeyer et al., 2004)	Developing and validating measures of facets of customer-based brand equity	Journal of Business Research	2004	633	30.14	3.22

f. **Single-Country Publications and Multi-Country Publications**

Figure 4 depicts the distribution of single-country publications (SCP) and multi-country publications (MCP) among various countries (Sweileh et al., 2016). The United States excels in single-country publications (SCP) and multi-country publications (MCP), demonstrating a strong and significant commitment to research partnerships both within the country and beyond. The United Kingdom demonstrates a higher MCP count, which suggests a strong involvement in collaborative international research efforts. Overall, the data reveals that different countries have distinct levels of participation in single-country and multi-country research projects, which indicates their research interests and the extent of their international cooperation.
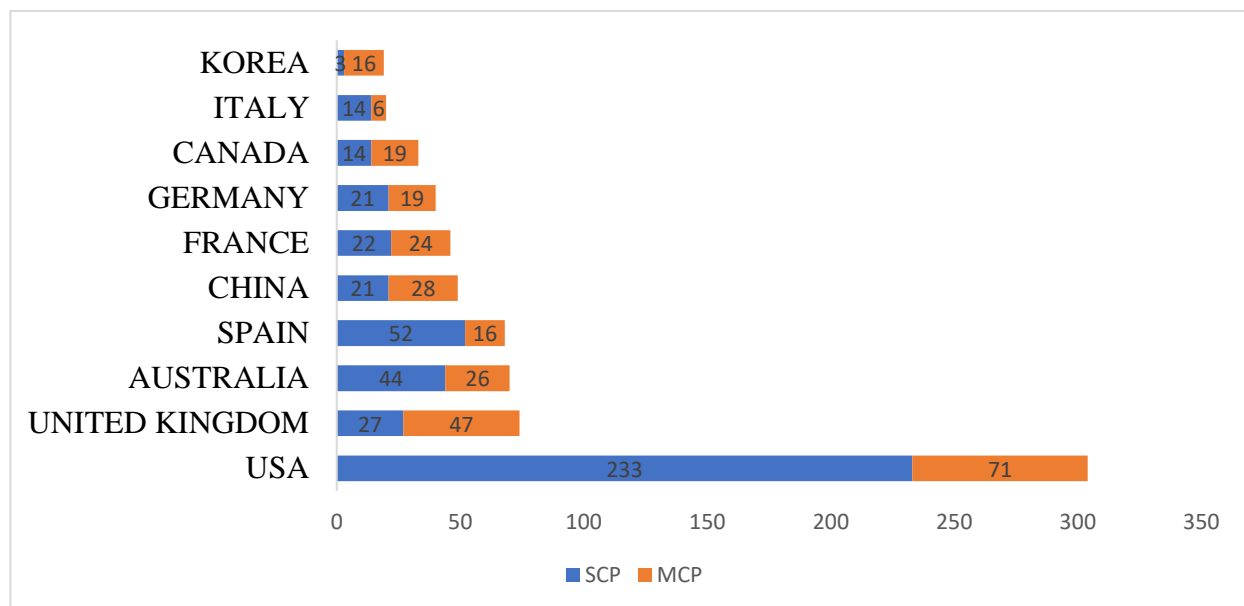

Figure 4 Single Country Publication and Multi-Country Publication

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study offer useful knowledge about how scholarly publications on brand equity research are distributed and change over time in the university setting. By examining patterns in publications, author contributions, journal importance, and international collaboration, we have identified many important findings. The data indicates a substantial academic interest in the connection between brand equity and university research, with a noticeable rise in the frequency of publications over time. This increasing trend indicates a rising acknowledgment of the significance of this interdisciplinary field in academic discussions. Furthermore, the analysis of publication distribution among different countries demonstrates the dominant role of the United States in both individual-country and collaborative research projects. This highlights the strong and well-developed research facilities and significant investment in the reputation and academic

research of universities in the United States. Moreover, the United Kingdom's significant participation in joint international research projects indicates a dedication to promoting global academic alliances. Moreover, the significance of certain journals like the Journal of Business Research, the Journal of Product and Brand Management, and the European Journal of Marketing highlights the wide range of academic platforms that promote discussion and distribution of research findings in this discipline. These publications are crucial forums for promoting knowledge and fostering academic communication in the field of brand equity and university research. In addition, the significant contributions made by renowned authors like Keller and Aaker, as demonstrated by their extensive citation counts and long-lasting influence, emphasize the fundamental role of some landmark works in defining the discussion on the dynamics of brand equity. Their study remains fundamental in comprehending customer-based brand equity and assessing brand equity in various product and market settings.

To summarise, the information offered in this study emphasizes the changing nature of brand value and academic research in universities. This is characterized by a growing involvement of scholars, international cooperation, and the lasting influence of important works. This study enhances comprehension of the dynamics influencing this interdisciplinary field and offers useful insights for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. Additional investigation in this field could examine developing patterns, inventive approaches, and the consequences of brand value changes for different individuals involved in academia and business.

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