Mapping the Landscape of Customer Trust Research: Trends and Future Opportunities

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
      	This study conducts a bibliometric and scientific mapping analysis of Customer Trust research from 1985 to 2024, aiming to explore publication trends, key contributors, influential journals, and thematic developments. Using Scopus data and tools like VOSviewer, the findings reveal a steady growth in publications, with peak citation impact during 2019–2020, followed by a citation lag in later years. Analysis shows that research influence is more closely linked to quality than quantity, with the International Journal of Bank Marketing and Universiti Sains Malaysia emerging as leading contributors. Thematic mapping identifies three primary clusters—Digital Trust, Online Trust, and Perceived Value—all anchored by customer satisfaction as a central theme. These results demonstrate that Customer Trust has evolved into a dynamic construct shaped by technological innovation, online behavior, and perceived corporate value. Future research should integrate interdisciplinary approaches, emphasizing digital ecosystems, ethical practices, and corporate responsibility to deepen the theoretical and practical understanding of Customer Trust in a rapidly transforming digital landscape. **Keywords:** Customer Trust; Bibliometric Analysis; Digital Trust; Perceived Value; Science Mapping.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Customer trust was first introduced into scholarly discourse during the late 1970s, coinciding with the evolution of understanding Customer behavior within transactional contexts and the enduring relationships established between Customers and companies (Jarratt & Cooper, 2005). With advancements in information technology and the globalization of markets, the significance of Customer trust has grown substantially, playing a crucial role in fostering customer loyalty, ensuring brand sustainability, and enhancing the effectiveness of both digital and traditional marketing strategies (Rowi et al., 2024). In today's digital landscape, Customer trust is influenced not only by product quality but also by brand reputation, the quality of digital experiences provided, data security, and corporate engagement in social issues (Kumar S & Nilkant, 2024).

A search within the Scopus database revealed that more than 3,100 scholarly publications have used the term "Customer trust" in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. This figure reflects the considerable interest from both academics and practitioners in this topic. These studies span a variety of fields, including e-commerce, financial services, digital marketing, and social media environments (Baynal & Boyaci, 2016)
In line with the evolution of the digital business environment, Customer trust has emerged as a fundamental element in building mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their clients. Trust plays a critical role in reducing perceived risk, enhancing satisfaction, and promoting loyalty and advocacy (Mann & Sahni, 2013). Within the digital domain, trust has also become a key determinant in decision-making processes related to purchasing, particularly given the overwhelming influx of information and increasing concerns regarding data security (Handoyo, 2024).

Nevertheless, there is a noticeable scarcity of studies specifically mapping the trajectory and development of Customer trust research using bibliometric and scientific mapping methodologies. This investigation seeks to address the following research questions: (a) How have publication and citation trends manifested within the field of Customer trust? (b) Which authors, institutions, and countries have made the most significant contributions to Customer trust research? (c) Which journals are most frequently referenced in this scholarly inquiry? (d) Which articles have exerted the greatest influence in shaping the understanding of Customer trust? (e) What are the prevailing themes and topics within the intellectual framework of Customer trust studies? and (f) What research focuses and trajectories could facilitate the future advancement of this field?

The originality of this manuscript lies in its application of occurrence metrics and average year of publication, alongside normalized occurrence and average citation metrics in overlay visualizations, thereby capturing the dynamics and evolutionary trajectory of Customer trust research in a more comprehensive manner.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer trust has become a central element in business and marketing research, in line with the growing attention to long-term relationships between companies and Customers over the past few decades. Customer trust can be defined as the belief in the reliability, integrity, and competence of a party in a business exchange (Baharin & Md Nayan, 2020). This field of research has grown rapidly, as trust plays a fundamental role in building customer loyalty, reducing uncertainty, and strengthening business relationships (Suryawan et al., 2024).

Methodologically, customer trust has been explored through two main approaches: analyzing the factors that lead to the formation of trust and examining the impact of trust on customer behavior. The antecedents of trust are often associated with perceptions of service quality, corporate reputation, communication, and prior experiences (Song et al., 2019). In terms of outcomes, trust has been shown to strengthen affective commitment, enhance loyalty, decrease the likelihood of customer switching, and mediate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Mann & Sahni, 2013).

In the digital context, studies have demonstrated that the dimensions of trust have undergone significant evolution. In the era of online transactions, customer trust is no longer solely based on direct experiences but is also influenced by perceptions of system security, information transparency, and the credibility of digital platforms (Prakash, 2022). This phenomenon has given rise to the concept of e-trust, which emphasizes the importance of technological factors in building and maintaining customer trust (Saputra et al., 2024).

The development of the customer trust literature has also enriched discussions on its formation mechanisms through theoretical models such as the Commitment-Trust Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model, which has been adapted for the context of digital trust (Khan & Mohamadali, 2023). In addition, several studies have adopted bibliometric approaches to map the evolution of customer trust research, identify major trends, and define future research focuses (Tunkevichus & Rebiazina, 2022).

Analytical enrichment in customer trust studies is further achieved through network analysis, thematic clustering, and visualization techniques, which illustrate the interconnections among concepts, the evolution of research clusters, and the intellectual mapping of the development and future directions of the field (Yang et al., 2023). The application of these techniques enables researchers to identify research gaps and innovative opportunities for investigating customer trust across various industry contexts (Hui et al., 2024).

The literature on customer trust demonstrates that trust is not merely a static element within business relationships but a dynamic construct that continuously evolves in response to social, technological, and market behavior changes (Tan, 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

At the outset of the literature collection process, the researcher selected the Scopus database as the primary source for data retrieval. This decision was based on Scopus's reputation as one of the most reliable and comprehensive bibliographic data sources (Muritala et al., 2020; Wahyoedi et al., 2024). Additionally, Scopus provides convenient access to a wide range of documents from various publication sources. To locate relevant literature on customer trust, the researcher employed the following search query:

The applied search strategy successfully identified a total of 1,145 documents. The subsequent stages were conducted by following a modified PRISMA procedure, as illustrated in Figure 1. In the initial screening phase, selection criteria were established by limiting the publication years of the documents to between 1985 and 2024. The selected documents were articles with final publication status, focusing on the fields of Business, Management, and Accounting. Furthermore, only English-language scholarly journals were included as sources. After this filtering stage, the number of documents remained at 1,145. Screening then continued to ensure data completeness for each document. From all the articles that successfully passed the entire selection process

(1,145 articles), the information collected included the authors' names, institutional affiliations, journal names, document titles, author keywords, abstracts, and citation counts.

For this bibliometric analysis, the author utilized Microsoft Excel and the Publish or Perish application to conduct productivity analysis. Meanwhile, for the mapping of the scientific structure (science mapping), the VOSviewer software version 1.6.20 was employed. The type of analysis applied was co-occurrence analysis, using author-assigned keywords as the unit of analysis.

Figure 1. Flow diagram of the search strategy.
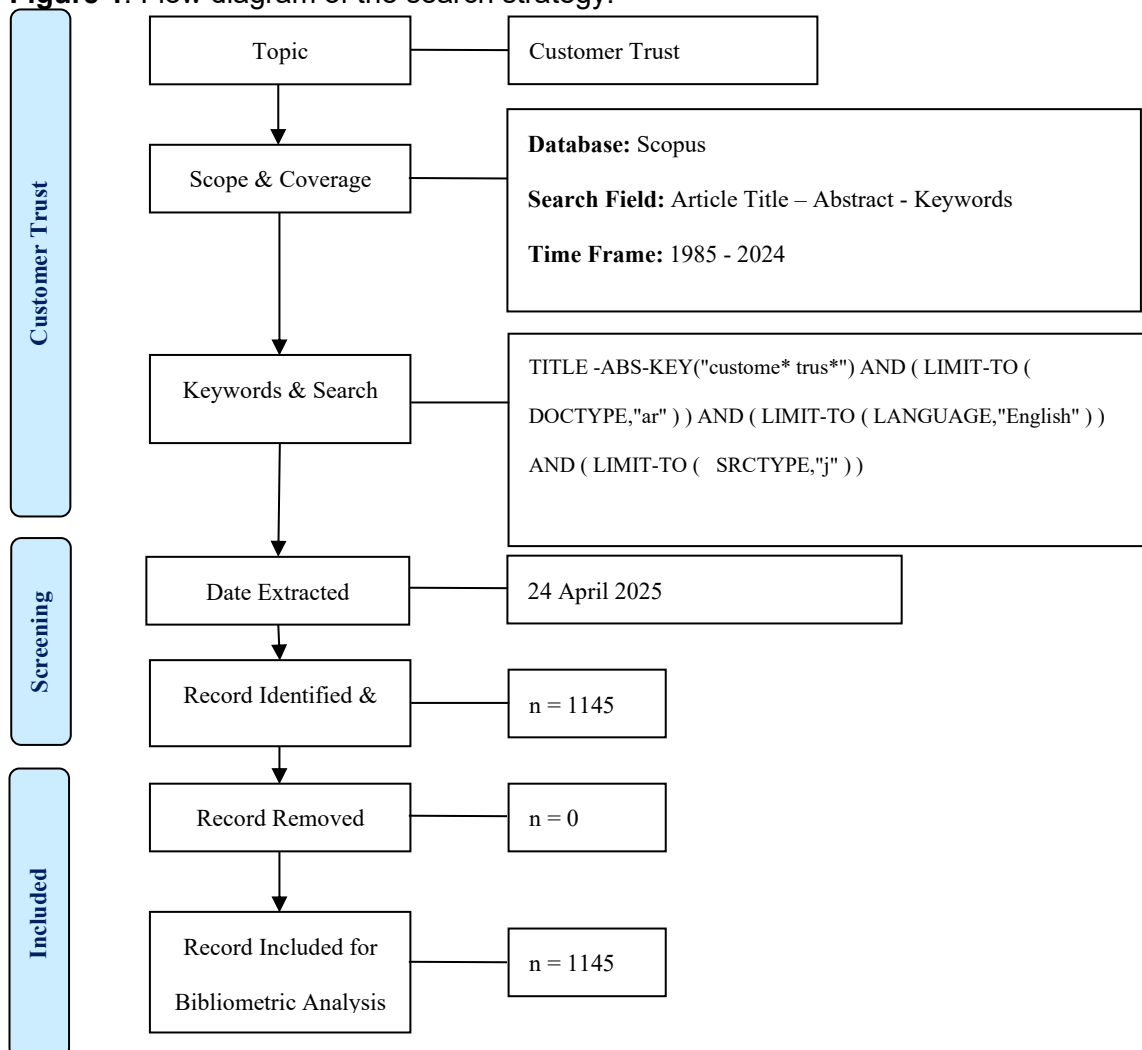
RESULTS

Research Productivity
The table presented illustrates the development of annual bibliometric performance from 2015 to 2024, based on several key indicators, namely the total number of publications (TP), the number of cited publications (NCP), total citations (TC), average citations per publication (C/P), average citations per cited publication (C/CP), and the h-index. Overall, the number of publications exhibits a consistent upward trend, increasing from 43 documents in 2015 to 175 documents in 2024. This surge reflects the growing research productivity in the field under study. However, the increase in publication

volume does not necessarily correlate with a proportional rise in the quality of scientific impact, as indicated by total citations and the average citations per publication.

Table 1. Publications by Year of Publication and Citations

Year	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h
2015	43	37	2045	47,56	55,27	20
2016	43	38	1392	32,37	36,63	15
2017	59	23	1203	20,39	52,3	19
2018	52	49	1345	25,87	27,45	20
2019	83	67	3454	41,61	51,55	27
2020	103	96	4330	42,04	45,1	36
2021	91	82	2579	28,34	31,45	24
2022	116	106	1928	16,62	18,19	26
2023	139	129	1767	12,71	13,7	22
2024	175	111	611	3,49	5,5	13

Note: TP = total publications; NCP = number of cited publications; TC = total citations; C/P = citations per publication; C/CP = citations per cited publication; h = h-index.

The peak of bibliometric performance was recorded in 2020, with total citations reaching 4,330 and an average citations per publication (C/P) of 42.04. Additionally, the h-index achieved its highest value at 36, indicating a significant number of articles that garnered widespread attention from the scientific community. The year 2019 also demonstrated strong performance, marked by 3,454 total citations and a C/P of 41.61. The 2019–2020 period can thus be regarded as a "golden era," during which both the quantity and scientific impact of publications made a substantial contribution to the field's development.

Although the number of publications continued to rise after 2020, citation quality experienced a considerable decline. Between 2022 and 2024, the average citations per publication dropped sharply, from 16.62 in 2022 to merely 3.49 in 2024. This decline was also reflected in the h-index, which fell from 26 to 13 over the same period. Such a phenomenon is commonly observed in bibliometric studies and is known as citation lag, where newly published articles require a longer period to accumulate a significant number of citations. Therefore, although the number of documents has continued to grow, additional time is needed to more accurately assess the academic contribution and impact of recent publications.

This analysis highlights the dynamic interplay between the quantity and quality of scientific production over the past decade. The 2019–2020 period marked the peak of scientific influence, while subsequent years showed increased productivity accompanied by a decline in citation performance, which may be temporary. Consequently, continuous monitoring of citation trends in the coming years is essential to evaluate whether recent publications will eventually achieve the level of scientific visibility attained during the earlier period.

Figure 2. Number of Publications and Citations by Year

Note: TP = total publications; TC = total citations

Authorship Analysis
Based on the analysis results presented in Table 2, the three most productive authors in this study are Ibrahim, O., Njashi, M., and Guenzi, P. All three demonstrated a significant level of productivity, as reflected in their total number of publications (TP). Ibrahim, O. and Njashi, M. each produced six publications, while Guenzi, P. followed closely with five publications. Although Ibrahim, O. and Njashi, M. recorded the same number of total citations (TC), amounting to 131 citations each, differences were observed in other metrics. The average citations per publication (C/P) for both authors were identical at 21.83; however, Njashi, M. achieved a higher citations per cited publication (C/CP) value of 13.10 compared to Ibrahim, O., who recorded 8.19. This indicates that Njashi, M. had a greater proportion of unique citations relative to their total output. Both authors also shared the same h-index value of 3, meaning that each had at least three publications cited a minimum of three times.

Table 2. Most Productive Authors

Author Name	Affiliation	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h
Ibrahim, O.	University Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia	6	16	131	21,83	8,19	3
Nilashi, M.	USCI University, Malaysia	6	10	131	21,83	13,10	3
Guenzi, P.	Università Bocconi, Italy	5	9	392	78,40	43,56	5
Roberts-Lombard, M.	University of Johannesburg, South Africa	5	7	176	35,20	25,14	5
Roy, S.K.	Edith Cowan University, Australia	5	7	99	19,80	14,14	4
Al-Adwan, A.S.	Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Jordan	4	8	237	59,25	29,63	4
Hamsal, M.	Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia	4	7	15	3,75	2,14	2
Liang, C.J.	National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taiwan	4	7	210	52,50	30	4
Mpinganjira, M.	College of Business and Economics, South Africa	4	7	154	38,50	22	4
Rather, R.A.	King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Saudi Arabia	4	6	810	202,50	135	4

Note: TP = total publications; NCP = number of cited publications; TC = total citations; C/P = citations per publication; C/CP = citations per cited publication; h = h-index.

In contrast to the two previous authors, Guenzi, P. demonstrated outstanding performance in terms of publication quality. With only five articles, Guenzi, P. managed to accumulate a total of 392 citations, resulting in a significantly higher average citations per article (C/P) of 78.40. Guenzi, P. also recorded a C/CP ratio of 43.56, the highest among all authors in the table, indicating that each of their published articles received a strong and consistent distribution of citations. Furthermore, Guenzi, P. achieved an h-index of 5, surpassing both Ibrahim, O. and Njashi, M., thereby reinforcing the consistency and quality of their scholarly contributions.

These findings suggest that while Ibrahim, O. and Njashi, M. dominated in terms of publication quantity, Guenzi, P. excelled absolutely in terms of quality and scientific impact. Productivity in this research context is not solely determined by the number of articles published but also by the intensity and effectiveness of the citations received, which ultimately shape an author's academic reputation within the global scholarly community.

Most Active Journal Sources
Within the domain of Customer Trust research, three journals consistently emerge as the most influential in terms of both publication output and citation performance: the *International Journal of Bank Marketing* (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.), *Sustainability Switzerland* (MDPI), and the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* (Elsevier Ltd.). These journals not only demonstrate strong productivity but also maintain high scientific quality, as reflected by their total citations, average citations per article, citation distribution, and h-index. Their contributions have been central to shaping academic discussions on Customer Trust across a range of business and marketing disciplines.

Table 3. Most Active Journal Titles

Source Title/Publisher	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h
Sustainability Switzerland/Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI)	25	126	1768	70,72	14,031746	20
International Journal of Bank Marketing/Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	21	53	2927	139,380952	55,2264151	34
Journal Of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology/Little Lion Scientific	19	40	1207	63,5263158	30,175	20
Journal Of Retailing and Consumer Services/Elsevier Ltd	18	39	1633	90,7222222	41,8717949	21
Cogent Business and Management/Cogent OA	17	37	1016	59,7647059	27,4594595	17
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics/Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	15	35	977	65,1333333	27,9142857	16
Service Industries Journal/Taylor & Francis Ltd.	13	34	913	70,2307692	26,8529412	16
International Journal of Hospitality Management/Elsevier Ltd	12	33	783	65,25	23,7272727	20
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management/Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	11	32	536	48,7272727	16,75	14
Journal Of Islamic Marketing/Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	10	29	192	19,2	6,62068966	7

Note: TP = total publications; NCP = number of cited publications; TC = total citations; C/P = citations per publication; C/CP = citations per cited publication; h = h-index.

Among them, the *International Journal of Bank Marketing* stands out with the greatest academic impact. It published 21 articles (TP = 21), which collectively received 2,927 citations (TC = 2,927), yielding a high average of 139.38 citations per article (C/P). This outstanding citation rate suggests that its research is highly influential and widely referenced. Its C/CP ratio of 55.23 further indicates that citations are well-distributed across its publications. With an h-index of 34, the journal consistently demonstrates strong scientific influence, solidifying its status as a primary reference point in Customer Trust studies.

Sustainability Switzerland leads in terms of sheer publication volume, with 25 articles (TP = 25) garnering 1,768 citations (TC = 1,768) and an average C/P of 70.72. Although its citation average is lower than that of the *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, it reflects considerable academic interest. However, its lower C/CP ratio of 14.03 suggests that a smaller subset of articles accounts for most of the citations. The journal's h-index of 20 supports its reputation for impactful research and highlights its role in expanding Customer Trust studies into sustainability and CSR domains.

Meanwhile, the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* distinguishes itself by maintaining a balance between quantity and impact. With 18 articles (TP = 18) and 1,633 citations (TC = 1,633), it achieves a C/P of 90.72, surpassing *Sustainability* in citation quality. A C/CP ratio of 41.87 suggests evenly distributed influence across its articles. Its h-index of 21 positions the journal as a leading outlet for research focused on customer behavior, retail service experiences, and service innovation.

The success of journals in advancing Customer Trust research is determined not only by the number of publications but also by the academic influence and utility of their outputs. The *International Journal of Bank Marketing* dominates in citation impact and credibility, *Sustainability Switzerland* contributes breadth through its multidisciplinary scope, and the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* combines specialization with strong citation consistency. Collectively, they serve as essential platforms for researchers aiming to advance the study of Customer Trust.

Top Contributing Institutions in Customer Trust Research
In the evolving landscape of Customer Trust research, three institutions have emerged as the leading contributors in terms of both publication output and citation impact: Universiti Sains Malaysia, the University of Johannesburg, and the University of Tehran. These institutions demonstrate not only high research productivity but also significant scientific influence, as indicated by their total citations (TC), average citations per publication (C/P), citation distribution (C/CP), and h- and g-index values.

Table 4. Leading Institutions Contributing to Customer Trust Research

Institution	TP	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	h	g
Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia	26	14	190	7	14	7	13
University of Johannesburg, South Africa	13	13	296	23	23	9	13
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia	12	22	1079	90	49	12	22
University of Tehran, Iran	11	11	274	25	25	9	11
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong	10	10	841	84	84	8	10
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysia	10	7	140	14	20	4	7
Islamic Azad University, Iran	10	8	45	5	6	4	6
Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia	9	8	45	5	6	4	6
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand	9	8	162	18	20	4	8
Chulalongkorn University, Thailand	9	8	138	15	17	5	8

Note: TP = total publications; NCP = number of cited publications; TC = total citations; C/P = citations per publication; C/CP = citations per cited publication; h = h-index; g = g-index.

Among the listed institutions, Universiti Sains Malaysia holds the top position for academic influence. With 12 publications (TP = 12) accumulating 1,079 citations (TC = 1,079), the university records an outstanding average of 90 citations per article (C/P)—the highest among all institutions analyzed. A C/CP ratio of 49 suggests a strong and even distribution of citations across its publications. Additionally, its h-index of 12 and g-index of 22 underscore both the productivity and long-term impact of its scholarly output, reinforcing its pivotal role in advancing Customer Trust research.

Closely following is the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, which produced 13 publications (TP = 13) with a total of 296 citations (TC = 296), yielding an average of 23 citations per publication (C/P) and a C/CP ratio of 23. Despite a lower average citation rate compared to Universiti Sains Malaysia, the university's h-index of 9 and g-index of 13 highlight the continued relevance and academic visibility of its research, particularly within emerging market contexts.

The University of Tehran in Iran also ranks as a major contributor. With 11 publications (TP = 11) and 274 citations (TC = 274), the university achieved an average of 25 citations per article (C/P) and a C/CP ratio of 25, indicating a well-distributed citation impact across its works. Its h-index of 9 and g-index of 11 further affirm its significant role, especially in offering cultural and regional insights from the Middle Eastern perspective into the study of Customer Trust.

Universiti Sains Malaysia, the University of Johannesburg, and the University of Tehran play essential roles in shaping the academic development of Customer Trust research. While Universiti Sains Malaysia leads in citation quality and scholarly influence, the University of Johannesburg contributes through consistent and balanced research output, and the University of Tehran enriches the literature with distinct regional perspectives. These findings highlight that institutional success in this field is driven not only by publication quantity but also by the substantive impact reflected in citation performance and scientific relevance.

Visualization Map
To explore the thematic structure and conceptual linkages in Customer Trust research, a science mapping analysis based on keyword co-occurrence was conducted. This approach maps major topic relationships and illustrates the intellectual dynamics shaping the field. Figure 3 presents the resulting keyword network, revealing several key clusters.

The analysis shows that Customer Trust research is multidimensional, forming three main domains: Digital Trust, Online Trust, and Perceived Value. These domains overlap and are strongly connected through the central node of customer satisfaction.

The Digital Trust cluster highlights the role of technology—specifically data security, cybersecurity, blockchain, and artificial intelligence—in fostering trust, especially within financial and e-commerce sectors. Concepts like trust repair and service recovery emphasize the need for post-incident recovery strategies to maintain loyalty.

The Online Trust cluster focuses on trust in online transactions, where privacy protection, security management, and perceived risk are critical. Keywords such as purchase intention, social commerce, and social media underscore the growing importance of online social interactions in influencing customer decisions.

The Perceived Value cluster stresses the role of service quality, relationship quality, and corporate social responsibility in building trust and loyalty. Elements like corporate reputation, brand equity, and customer retention highlight that trust extends beyond service delivery to company image and social commitment.

Figure 3. Co-Occurrence Analysis of Keywords in Customer Trust Research
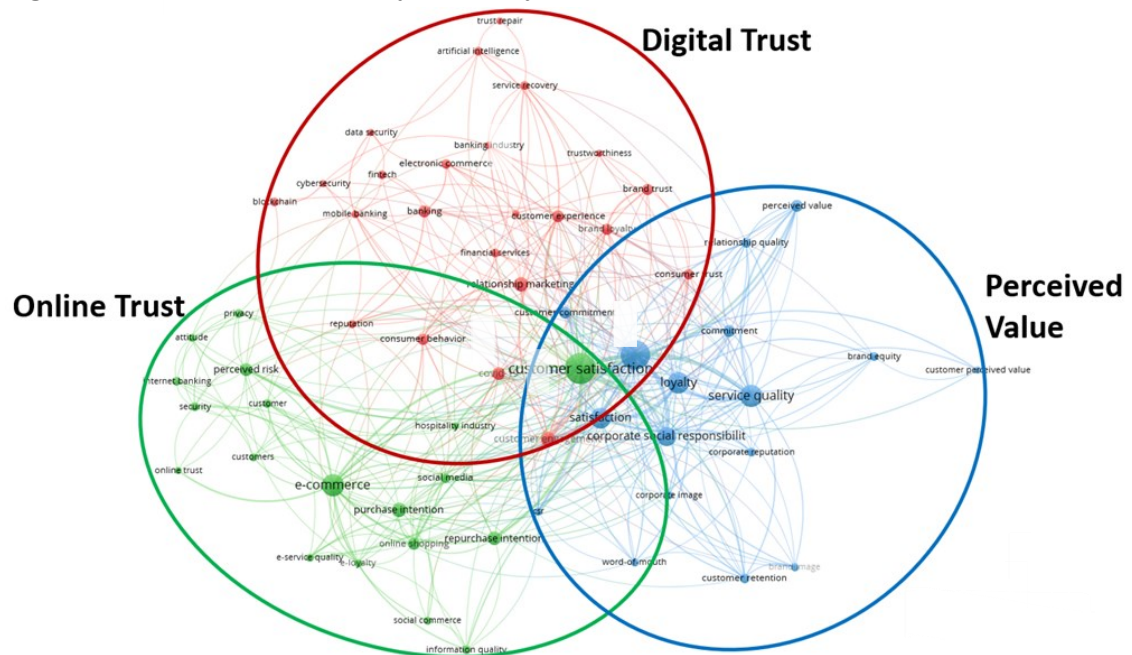
Together, these clusters reveal that Customer Trust is shaped by the integration of technological innovation, trusted online experiences, and strong perceived value. Customer satisfaction acts as the strategic outcome linking these dimensions, highlighting the need for a holistic, integrated approach to building sustainable customer trust in the digital era.

As part of the effort to map the intellectual landscape of Customer Trust studies, a visualization analysis based on keyword co-occurrence, incorporating the average year of publication, was conducted. This analysis helps to identify dominant themes, conceptual linkages, and the developmental trajectory of research in this field. Figure 4 illustrates the thematic structure shaped by the interaction of key concepts within the Customer Trust literature.

The Digital Trust cluster emphasizes the role of technology—data security, cybersecurity, blockchain, and artificial intelligence—in building trust, particularly in banking and e-commerce sectors. The presence of trust repair and service recovery highlights the critical need for post-incident trust restoration strategies.

The Online Trust cluster focuses on trust formation in online environments, where privacy protection, security, and perceived risk significantly influence purchase intentions. Concepts like social commerce and social media reveal the growing impact of online community interactions on consumer trust.

The Perceived Value cluster stresses the influence of service quality, relationship quality, and corporate social responsibility in fostering trust and loyalty, with corporate reputation and brand equity reinforcing the importance of perceived value in sustaining long-term relationships.

These clusters demonstrate that building Customer Trust in the digital era requires integrating technological innovation, managing secure online experiences, and creating strong perceived value. A holistic strategy encompassing all three dimensions is essential for sustaining trust and loyalty.

Figure 4. Co-Occurrence Analysis and Average Publication Year
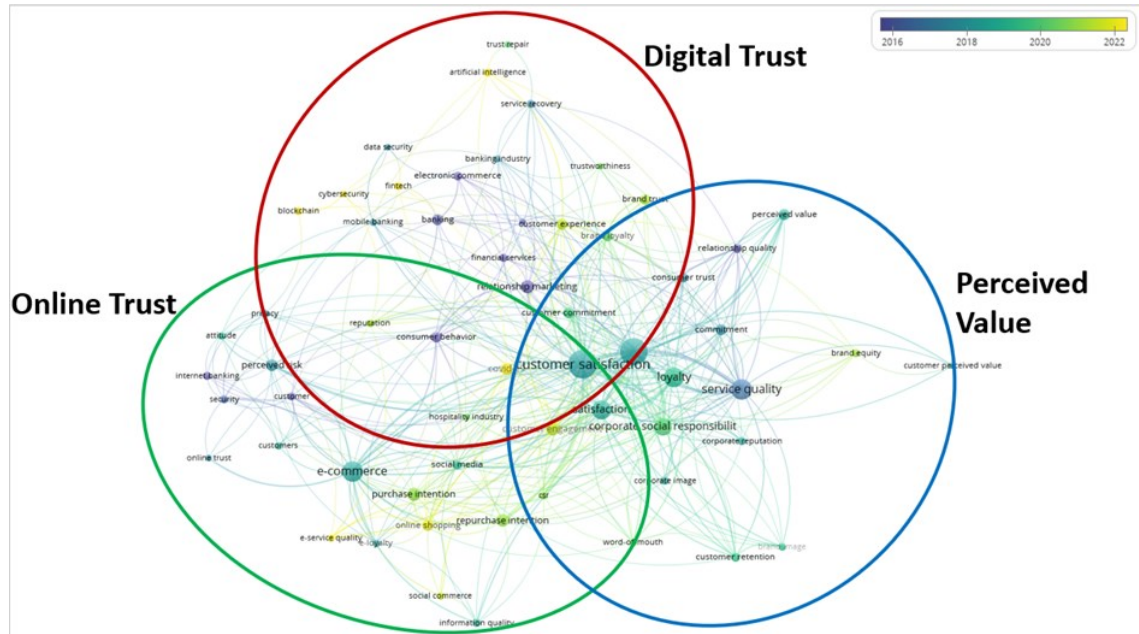
An extended analysis using average citation mapping provides further insights into dominant themes, conceptual interactions, and research developments, as visualized in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Keyword Occurrence and Average Number of Citations
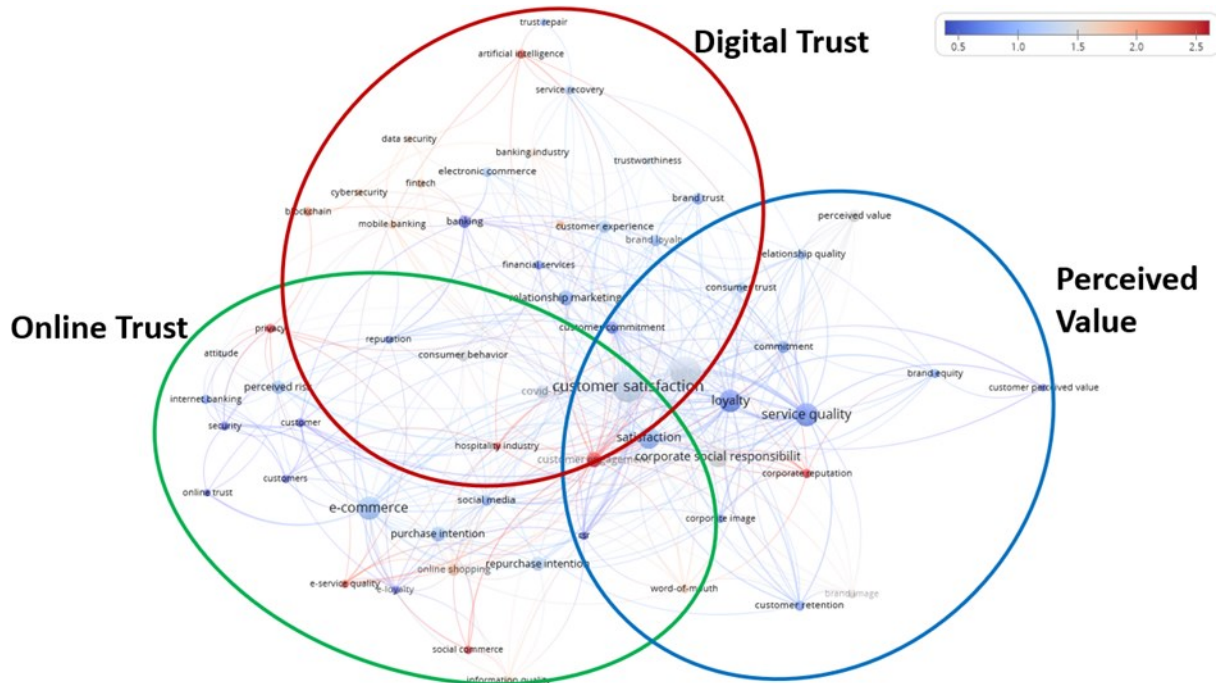
The science mapping analysis based on the average citations in Customer Trust research uncovers the development of a multidimensional structure composed of three key domains: Digital Trust, Online Trust, and Perceived Value. These clusters are interconnected through customer satisfaction, which functions as the central node linking various research perspectives. In the visualization, the intensity of color and the thickness of lines indicate the strength of conceptual relationships, while differences in average citation counts highlight topics that have drawn greater academic attention

The Digital Trust cluster emphasizes the essential role of technological innovations such as data security, cybersecurity, blockchain, and artificial intelligence in cultivating and maintaining trust, particularly within digital finance and e-commerce sectors. The frequent appearance of terms like trust repair and service recovery points to an increased scholarly focus on restoring customer trust following technological disruptions.

The Online Trust cluster focuses on building trust in online transactional environments, where elements like privacy, security, and perceived risk are crucial in shaping customers' purchasing decisions. The rise of social commerce and social media further illustrates the critical role of online interactions in strengthening consumer trust, with studies in this area often achieving high citation rates.

The Perceived Value cluster highlights the significance of customer perceptions related to service quality, relationship quality, and corporate social responsibility. Constructs such as corporate reputation, brand equity, and customer retention demonstrate that trust is influenced not only by technical factors but also by organizational image and social responsibility efforts.

This analysis suggests that research integrating technological innovation, secure online interactions, and strong perceived value tends to gain higher academic visibility. Customer satisfaction consistently emerges as the core outcome across clusters, reinforcing the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to building and sustaining Customer Trust in an increasingly digitalized environment.

DISCUSSION

This study provides an extensive bibliometric and scientific mapping analysis of Customer Trust research over the past decade, revealing a sharp increase in publications from 2015 to 2024, fuelled by the growth of digital platforms and the changing nature of customer-company relationships. Despite the rise in publications after 2020, citation impact did not increase proportionally, reflecting the citation lag where newer studies take time to gain visibility.

Analysis of authorship suggests that citation impact is a better indicator of influence than sheer productivity. Authors like Ibrahim, O., and Nilashi, M. were highly productive, while Guenzi, P., though having fewer publications, received significantly more citations and achieved a higher h-index, demonstrating that research quality and relevance outweigh output quantity. Journal analysis shows *Sustainability Switzerland* leads in publications, but the *International Journal of Bank Marketing* excels in citation impact, highlighting the importance of thematic focus and high research standards.

Institutional analysis further confirms that citation impact depends more on research quality than volume. While Bina Nusantara University had the highest publication count, Universiti Sains Malaysia led in citation impact, indicating that impactful research requires high-quality contributions. Additionally, the University of Johannesburg and the University of Tehran emphasize the increasing global diversification of Customer Trust research.

The thematic analysis reveals three key clusters in Customer Trust research: Digital Trust, emphasizing technological reliability and security; Online Trust, focusing on privacy, risk perception, and social commerce; and Perceived Value, covering service quality, brand reputation, and corporate social responsibility. Customer satisfaction serves as a central element linking all these clusters.

These findings show that Customer Trust is now a dynamic, multifaceted concept influenced by technology, societal expectations, and market behavior. Future research should integrate insights from multiple disciplines, including technology management, behavioral science, marketing, and ethics, to address the complexities of Customer Trust in an increasingly digital world. Ongoing bibliometric monitoring is necessary to track emerging trends and guide future research directions.

CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric and scientific mapping analysis of the evolution of Customer Trust research between 2015 and 2024. The findings highlight that while the volume of scholarly publications has consistently increased over the past decade, the peak of scientific impact occurred during the 2019–2020 period, marked by high citation performance and academic visibility. The subsequent decline in average citations per publication, despite rising productivity, suggests the presence of a citation lag effect, emphasizing the need for longitudinal monitoring to accurately assess the enduring impact of more recent contributions.

Authorship analysis revealed that scientific influence is more strongly associated with research quality and citation impact rather than sheer publication quantity. Journals such as the International Journal of Bank Marketing, Sustainability Switzerland, and the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services have emerged as pivotal platforms in disseminating Customer Trust research, each offering distinct strengths in terms of focus, scope, and influence. Institutional contributions from Universiti Sains Malaysia, the University of Johannesburg, and the University of Tehran further demonstrate that impactful research is increasingly global and diversified across various geographic contexts.

The thematic mapping of the literature identified three primary research domains—Digital Trust, Online Trust, and Perceived Value all of which converge around the central concept of customer satisfaction. These clusters illustrate that Customer Trust has evolved into a multidimensional construct shaped by technological innovation, secure online experiences, and value creation mechanisms, reflecting broader shifts in digital consumer behavior and corporate responsibility expectations.

In summary, this study affirms that Customer Trust is no longer a static element within business relationships but a dynamic, evolving phenomenon. Future research should adopt interdisciplinary perspectives, integrating technological, psychological, and marketing insights to address emerging challenges and opportunities. A deeper exploration of evolving digital ecosystems, ethical considerations in data management, and the role of corporate social responsibility in trust-building will be crucial for advancing the theoretical and practical understanding of Customer Trust in the increasingly complex digital age.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author(s) declare(s) that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted with full adherence to ethical standards, and no financial or personal relationships influenced the study's outcomes.

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