

Tourist Citizenship Behavior and Destination Branding: State of the Art and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract

The organization spends millions of dollars on branding simply only gets reviews, not citizens. Why? Because most of the research separates Tourist Citizenship Behavior (TCB) from Destination Branding. This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) unites them. By analyzing 166 Scopus/WoS/EBSCO articles (2010-2025), it shows that tourists become brand citizens when they co-author the brand instead of consuming the advertisement. VOSviewer and NVivo exposed four channels: online advocacy, brand equity co-creation, emotional attachment, and smart technology participation. Besides, six branding strategies operationalize this shift: tourist generated advocacy, co-creative branding, sustainability-based branding, governance-centered branding, emotional attachment branding, and TCB-driven brand equity. However, there is a critical gap that is isolated and has not been widely researched. This review proposes an integrated framework positioning affective brand identity as the mechanism linking co-creation to citizenship. Four agendas were revealed: brand co-creation; immersive innovation; place-based public diplomacy; and cross domain theory. This is the first review to theorize TCB as political, not managerial. A shift from marketing places to governing brand citizenship.

Keywords: tourist citizenship behavior, destination branding, systematic literature review, bibliometric analysis

1. Introduction

Currently, Smart destinations measures success in arrival, applications, and 5G coverage, yet collapse when tourists behave as consumers, not citizens. Overtourism, greenwashing backlash, and abandoned “smart” platforms reveal the limit: satisfaction does not create defenders. What is Tourist Citizenship Behavior? Voluntary advocacy, helping, tolerance, and feedback performed without incentives (Yi and Gong, 2013). Tourists now defend brand through social media, co-design experience with AI, and boycott destinations that violated shared values. This is brand citizenship.

Destination branding was designed forge the identity that triggers such citizenship. Over two decades it shifted from logos to emotional bonds. (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007) to co-creation ecosystems where tourists co-author place narratives with residents and DMOs (Pham et al., 2022). When the governance legitimizes that co-ownership, tourists defend the brand.

Yet TCB and destination branding evolved in isolation. TCB research optimized service quality as an antecedent, treating tourists as helpful guests of organizations. Destination Branding research elevated image and equity, treating tourists as targets of campaigns. Neither explains why a VR pre-visit triggers post-visit advocacy, why blockchain participation associations

produce more defenders than advertisements, or why “smart” destinations with full instrument coverage still lack citizens. The cost of this split is theoretical and practical, this study measures the wrong antecedents, designs the wrong tech, and governs the wrong stakeholders.

This systematic review bridges the split, by providing thematic intersections that converge on co-created destination brand gestalt, the affective-cognitive contract that converts technology and governance into citizenship. (Mandagi & Centeno, 2024) Along with branding strategies operationalize it, however some fractures persist: immersive tech as TCB co-creator remains untested (Buhalis et al., 2022), public diplomacy is detached from behavior, and theory borrowing stops at SEM.

To resolve these fractures, this review directs five questions on research profile, knowledge structure, strategies, and future directions toward smart brand citizenship. (Kavaratzis, 2005; Qu et al., 2011). (1) What is the research profile of the TCB and destination branding relationship regarding publication trends, methods, and theories? (2) Which academic journals, authors, countries, affiliations, and landmark works have formed the field? (3) What is the knowledge structure of the TCB and destination branding intersection? (4) What branding strategies are defined by TCB? (5) What directions are developed for future research?

2. Literature Review

Tourist Citizenship Behavior. TCB grew out of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) research, adapted for cases where the “citizen” is a customer rather than an employee. Groth (2005) showed that service customers engage in extra-role behaviors. Based on this foundation, Yi and Gong (2013) operationalized customer citizenship behavior through a four-factor instrument involving feedback, advocacy, helping, and tolerance, which was widely adopted and adapted for the tourism destination context. (Chen & Peng, 2018)

Destination Branding. A place that can create identity through brand image, equity, personality, and love is called Destination Branding (Blain et al., 2005); afterward, Qu et al. (2011) integrated the model of linking brand associations, image, and equity. Consistent with these developments, Gretzel et al. (2012) highlight how digital transformation, enabled by social media and smart tourism, redefines branding as a collaborative co-creation process.

Bridging TCB and Destination Branding. The relationship between brand interactions along with consumer actions is inherently reciprocal; while engaging brand experiences stimulate prosocial conduct, these actions subsequently bolster brand equity by encouraging authentic, organic advocacy. Three distinct mechanisms primarily drive this dynamic: first, a strong sense of place attachment catalyzes stewardship, inducing individuals to exhibit safeguarding behaviors toward a destination (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Second, when consumers recognize high value in their engagement, it creates a sense of reciprocal obligation, frequently manifesting as “citizenship behaviors” such as advocacy and voluntary feedback (Yi & Gong, 2013). Finally, the process of co-creation smoothly bridges the space between traditional consumption and active citizenship, where the act of participating in the service experience greatly increases both client satisfaction and long-term loyalty (Grissemann & Stokburger-

Sauer, 2012).

3. Research Method

The review protocol followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021) and the standards of Kitchenham (2004) and Pati and Lorusso (2018). A mixed-method analytical design was used. Bibliometric analysis was executed using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20), mapping intellectual structures and keyword co-occurrence networks across the corpus. Qualitative content analysis was performed using NVivo (version 14), applying both inductive and deductive coding procedures to identify emergent and theory-based thematic patterns throughout the 166 articles. Table 1 summarizes the research protocol.

Table 1. Research Protocol

Criterion	Description
Document type	Scientific articles from peer-reviewed journals
Sources	Scopus and EBSCOhost databases
Time frame	January 2010 – December 2025
Search fields	Title, abstract & keywords
Language	English
Search terms	(“tourist citizenship behavior” OR “visitor citizenship behavior” OR “pro-social tourist behavior” OR “tourist extra-role behavior”) AND (“destination brand*” OR “place brand*” OR “destination image” OR “destination identity” OR “destination marketing”)
Subject area	Business, Management & Accounting; Social Science; Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism
Inclusion	Articles on TCB and/or destination branding in indexed peer-reviewed journals
Exclusion	Non-peer-reviewed sources, book chapters, conference papers, dissertations, non-English articles

Source(s): Authors' own work (2026)

The initial search returned 486 articles. Removing 201 duplicates brought the pool to 285. From these, 79 articles outside the target subject areas, three non-English articles, and 37 non-journal publications were excluded, leaving 166 articles (Figure 1). Analysis proceeded in two phases: VOSviewer mapped bibliometric patterns, and NVivo handled the qualitative content analysis.

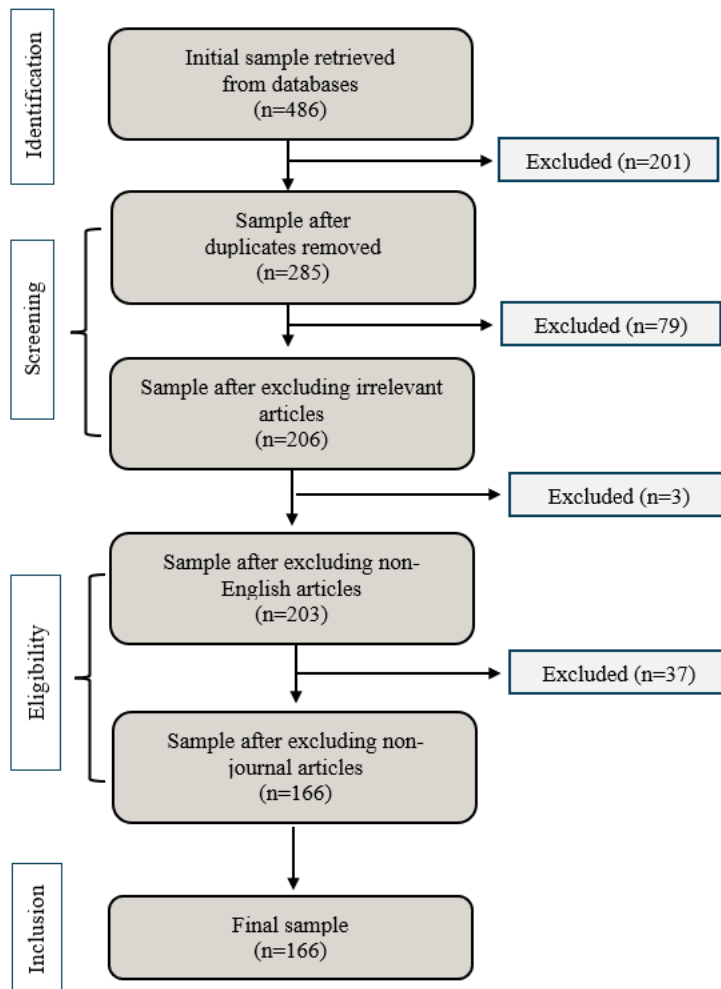


Figure 1. Article Selection Process (PRISMA Flow Diagram), *Source(s): Authors' own work (2026)*

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1 Research Profile

Publication Trends. Figure 2 shows the annual publication count. The four parts of the 166 articles cover the years 2010-2025. Beginning with 8 publications in 2010, there was a gradual increase to 12 in 2015 throughout Phase 1 (2010-2016, $n = 68$), which aligns with the fundamental work done by Liu and Tsaur (2014) and Qu et al. (2011). Phase 2 (2017–2019, $n = 20$) declines, with just three papers published in 2019, despite the emergence of sustainability and digital platform topics. The third phase ($n = 36$, 2020–2022) represents the impact of the pandemic on tourist research. The most prolific phase is 4 (2023–2025) with 42 participants; in 2025, production peaks at 16 articles.

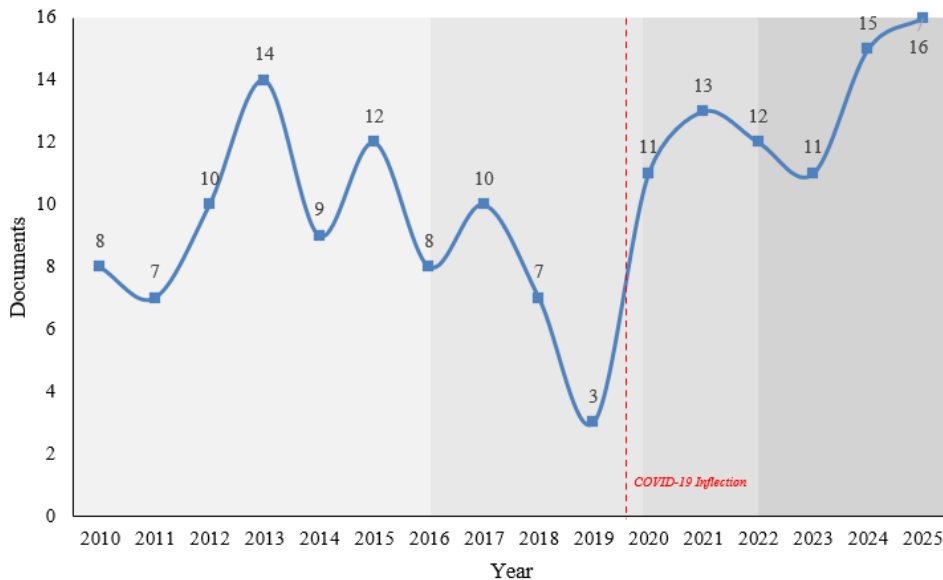


Figure 2. Annual Publication (*Authors' own work, 2026*)

The relationship between the number of citations and the number of recent publications is inverse, as seen in Figure 3. The social media research by Xiang and Gretzel (6,101 citations), the place attachment framework by Scannell and Gifford (4,711), and the destination loyalty model by Yuksel et al. (2,418) were the only three of thirteen papers that garnered 27,707 citations in 2010. The COVID-19 article by Sigala (3,516 citations) is responsible for a significant increase in citations in 2020.

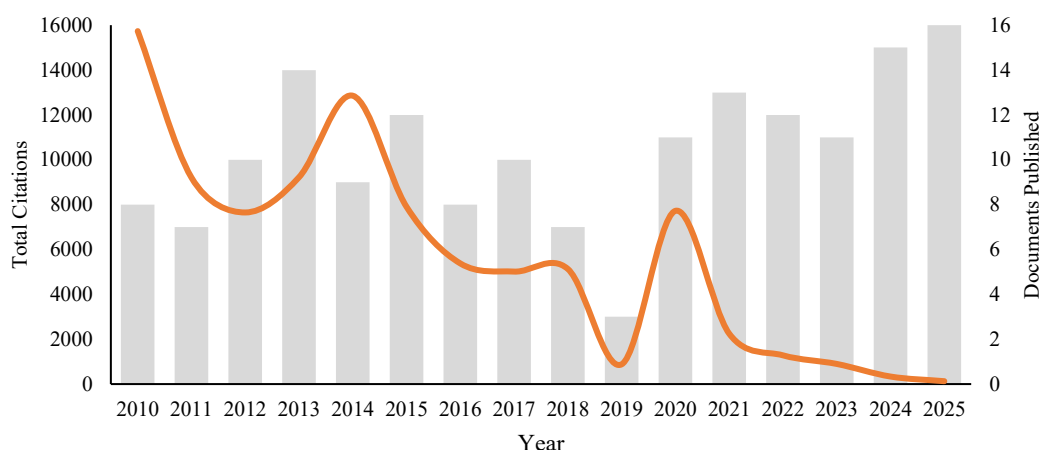


Figure 3. Citations vs. Documents Published (*Authors' own work, 2026*)

Research Methodologies. Table 2 provides summary of the methodology employed that was analyzed among TCB, destination branding, and associated dimensions. 149 papers (89.8%)

depend on surveys or questionnaires, demonstrating this preference. There is a dearth of qualitative approaches. Two research (1.2%) employ grounded theory, netnography, or content analysis to delve deeply into stakeholder activities or visitor experiences, whereas nine papers (5.4%) use case studies. Six studies (3.6%) make use of a mixed-methods design. As research into artificial intelligence (AI) in tourism, digital citizenship (DC), and sustainable branding continues to focus on surveys, a space has opened. Additional netnographic and long-term research is necessary in these emerging fields.

Table 2. Methodologies

Strategy	Methodology	n	Sample Studies
Quantitative	Survey/ Questionnaire	149	Abbasi et al. (2024); Chen et al. (2020); Liu et al. (2021); Liu & Tsaur (2014); Qu et al. (2011); Arica et al. (2022); Remoaldo et al. (2014); Xiang (2010); Hollebeek (2014); Scannell (2010); Gretzel (2015); Sigala (2020); Tung (2011); Yi (2013)
Qualitative	Case Study	9	Marine-Roig (2015); Casais & Poco (2021)
	Netnography/ Ethnography	2	Mandagi et al. (2025); Centner et al. (2021)
	Content Thematic Analysis	2	Pike & Page (2014); Mariani et al. (2016)
	Grounded Theory/ Phenomenology	2	Mandagi & Centeno (2024); Cammarota et al. (2025)
Mixed Methods	Qualitative + Quantitative	6	Yhee et al. (2023); Gonz��les-Santiago et al. (2025); Verma et al. (2022)

Theoretical Foundations. Table 3 shows the conceptual bases. Although it may not seem so at first glance, the corpus incorporates theories from a variety of disciplines, including information systems, psychology, sociology, marketing, and consumer behavior. Along with Place Attachment Theory and Tourist Engagement Theory, the most prominent theories include Value Co-Creation Theory, Brand Identity/Brand Equity Theory, and CCB/TCB Theory. They all start from the same place: that visitors do more than just react, and that service delivery isn't the only factor that determines a destination's success; emotional connections, participatory experiences, and co-creation are far more important. When studying environmental cues and two-way dynamics, the S-O-R Model and Social Exchange Theory keep popping up. The foundation of the service-performance strand is SERVQUAL. Modern research takes into account theories like TAM to explain why people use digital platforms, and theories like Attribution Theory and Social Identity Theory to explain how visitors perceive and connect with different locations.

Table 3. Theories

No.	Theory	Sample Studies
1	Value Co-Creation Theory	Yi & Gong (2013); Assiouras et al. (2019)
2	Brand Identity/ Brand Equity Theory	Hollebeek et al. (2014); Qu et al. (2011)
3	Citizenship Behavior Theory (CCB/TCB)	Liu & Tsaur (2014); Yi & Gong (2013); Torres-Moraga et al. (2024)
4	Place Attachment Theory	Scannell & Gifford (2010); Prayag & Ryan (2012); Ramkissoon et al. (2013)
5	Customer/ Tourist Engagement Theory	Hollebeek et al. (2014); So et al. (2014); Rather & Hollebeek (2019)
6	S-O-R Framework	So et al. (2014); Liu et al. (2021)
7	Social Exchange Theory	Rather & Hollebeek (2019); Nunkoo & Ramkissoon (2012)
8	Service Quality Theory (SERVQUAL)	Han & Hyun (2017); Su et al. (2016)
9	Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	Kim et al. (2020); Tussyadiah et al. (2018)
10	Attribution Theory	Su et al. (2020); Kadić-Maglajlić et al. (2024)
11	Social Identity Theory (SIT)	Fernández-Díaz et al. (2024)

4.2 Performance Profile

Most Influential Journals. In accordance with the 2025 SJR rankings, the top ten journals are categorized as Q1 outlets (Table 4). The Journal of Travel Research accounted for 19 papers with 10,729 citations, while Tourism Management supplied 22 articles with 22,892 citations. When added together, these two venues account for an outsized part of the corpus' overall scholarly impact.

Table 4. Journals

Source Title	Publisher Name	TA	TC	SJR (2025)
Tourism Management	Elsevier	22	22892	4.496 Q1
Journal of Travel Research	SAGE	19	10729	3.127 Q1
Journal of Destination Marketing and Management	Elsevier	10	3026	1.725 Q1
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Routledge	7	2044	2.381 Q1
Annals of Tourism Research	Elsevier	7	5447	2.435 Q1
International Journal of Hospitality Management	Elsevier	6	2940	2.316 Q1

Journal of Business Research	Elsevier	5	7917	3.498 Q1
Tourism Review	Emerald	5	536	2.279 Q1
International Journal of Tourism Research	Wiley	4	1659	1.010 Q1
Current Issues in Tourism	Taylor & Francis	4	647	1.331 Q1

Note: TA=Total Articles; TC=Total Citation; SJR=Scimago Journal & Country Rank.

Most Influential Authors. Table 5 profiles the most influential authors. Ramkissoon leads on output (7 articles, 1,740 citations), while Gretzel leads on citation rate (11,123 citations from 3 articles). Buhalis holds the highest h-index (82). Authors cover 10 countries, with Mandagi (Indonesia) among the most recent entrants.

Table 5. Authors

Author	Affiliation	TA	TC	CPA	h-Index
Ramkissoon, H	University of Derby	7	1740	249	53
Su, L	Central South University	4	1815	454	41
Gretzel, Ulrike	University of Queensland	3	11123	3708	59
Prebensen, N. K	University of Tromsø	3	2408	803	25
Buhalis, Dimitrios	Bournemouth University	3	2382	794	82
Rather, R. A.	University of Kashmir	3	1170	390	40
Prayag, G	University of Canterbury	2	3613	1807	74
Witell, L.	Linköping University	2	1334	667	39
Confente, I	University of Verona	2	649	325	23
Nunkoo, R.	University of Waterloo	2	310	155	52
Kumar, Vikas	Indian Institute of Management	2	289	145	41
Mandagi, D. W.	Universitas Klabat	2	41	21	8

TA = Total Articles; TC = Total Citations; CPA = Citations per Article; h-Index = Scopus h-index.

Leading Countries. The most productive nations are shown in Table 6. On one hand, we have the United States with 25 papers and 26,025 citations. On the other hand, it has Australia with 21 articles and 17,593 citations. China comes in third with 17 articles, which most likely reflects the relative youth of its contributions, given its lower citation totals. South Korea (1,551), Canada (1,450), and New Zealand (CPA = 2,404) all outperform nations with larger volume according to per-article citation rates; New Zealand's result is associated with a handful of widely disseminated foundational destination branding studies. Destination marketing, visitor engagement, and ecotourism are areas where Europeans from Turkey, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Austria tend to congregate. Historically, the field's geographic scope has grown. Publication began in 2010 in the United States, Australia, and a number of European nations; 2020 and 2021 saw the entry of Vietnam and Indonesia.

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Table 6. Countries

Country	TA	TC	CPA
USA	25	26025	1041
Australia	21	17593	838
China	17	6603	388
Spain	15	2887	192
UK	14	7619	544
Italy	9	3435	382
South Korea	6	9307	1551
Canada	6	8698	1450
Taiwan	6	1293	216
India	6	1474	246
Portugal	5	1106	221
Vietnam	5	330	66
Indonesia	4	154	39
Austria	4	1267	317
Turkey	4	2554	639
New Zealand	3	7213	2404

Top Contributor Institutions. The top institutions are ranked in Table 7. While the University of Queensland ranks first in terms of output (seven publications with 8,370 citations from 2012–2024), Kyung Hee University ranks most in terms of citations per article (1.591), surpassing both the University of South Australia and Queensland. Simply publishing more works does not translate to more citations. The more impactful entries are rounded out by Central South University with 4 publications and 1,815 citations and the University of Kashmir, which has recently gained attention for its research on visitor involvement and citizenship behavior. While the majority of universities made their initial contributions between 2012 and 2016, the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh was the most recent to join, making its debut in 2023 and continuing until 2025.

Table 7. Institutions

Institution	TA	TC	CPA
University of Queensland	7	8370	1196
Kyung Hee University	4	6365	1591
Central South University	4	1815	453.75
University of South Australia	3	3832	1277
University of Kashmir	3	1170	390
Monash University	3	896	299
National Chiayi University	3	437	146
University of Economics Ho Chi Minh	3	42	14

TA = Total Articles; TC = Total Citations; CPA = Citations per Article.

Seminal Works. According to Table 8, the most-cited articles are as follows. With 6,101 citations, Xiang and Gretzel's (2010) study on social media in online travel information search dominated the field's thinking on what questions to ask next. Hollebeek et al. (2014) offered a consumer brand engagement framework with 5,380 citations. Thirdly, Scannell and Gifford (2010) integrated attachment theory into tourism research in a way that has since been widely used as a theoretical anchor; furthermore, Gretzel et al. (2015) laid the conceptual groundwork for smart tourism research; and finally, Sigala (2020) entered the field with a study on the effects of COVID-19 on tourism that gained citations quickly because it came at a time when there was no preexisting framework to draw from. In 2011, Qu et al. developed a concept for integrated destination branding. Various researchers have explored the connections between destination image, place attachment, satisfaction, and loyalty; for example, Yuksel et al. (2010), Tung & Ritchie (2011), and Prayag & Ryan (2012) all looked at the topic of visitor loyalty and memorable tourism experiences. A customer value co-creation behavior scale, created by Yi and Gong in 2013, has now become a widely used tool in the field.

Table 8. Seminal Works

Title	Authors	Year	Source Title	Cited by*
Role of social media in online travel information search	Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U.	2010	Tourism Management	6101
"Consumer brand engagement in social media: Conceptualization, scale development and validation"	Hollebeek et al.	2014	Journal of Interactive Marketing	5380
Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework	Scannell, L., & Gifford, R.	2010	Journal of Environmental Psychology	4711
Smart tourism: Foundations and developments	Gretzel et al	2015	Electronic Markets	4176
"Tourism and COVID-19: Impacts and implications for advancing and resetting industry and research"	Sigala, M.	2020	Journal of Business Research	3516
Exploring the essence of memorable tourism experiences	Tung, V.W.S., & Ritchie, J.R.B.	2011	Annals of Tourism Research	2687
Customer value co-creation behavior: Scale development and validation	Yi, Y., & Gong, T.	2013	Journal of Business Research	2537
"A model of destination branding: Integrating the concepts of the branding and destination image"	Qu, H., Kim, L.H., & Im, H.H.	2011	Tourism Management	2429
"Destination attachment: Effects on customer satisfaction and cognitive,	Yuksel, et al	2010	Tourism Management	2418

affective and conative loyalty"				
"Antecedents of tourists' loyalty to Mauritius: The role and influence of destination image, place attachment, personal involvement, and satisfaction"	Prayag, G., & Ryan, C.	2012	Journal of Travel Research	2210

*Citation counts as of April 2026.

4.3 Current Research Trends

Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis. An study was conducted on 1,044 keyword occurrences using VOSviewer's keyword co-occurrence feature (Jiang et al., 2022). The inclusion of at least 31 high-frequency keywords was necessary for meaningful analysis according to Donohue's (1974) threshold calculation ($N = \frac{1}{2} (1 + \sqrt{1 + 8I_1})$). As a result, 120 keywords that appeared twice were included for network construction, and four theme clusters were discovered (refer to Figure 4). Table 9, shows each cluster in the TCB-Destination Branding nexus indicates a different research pathway.

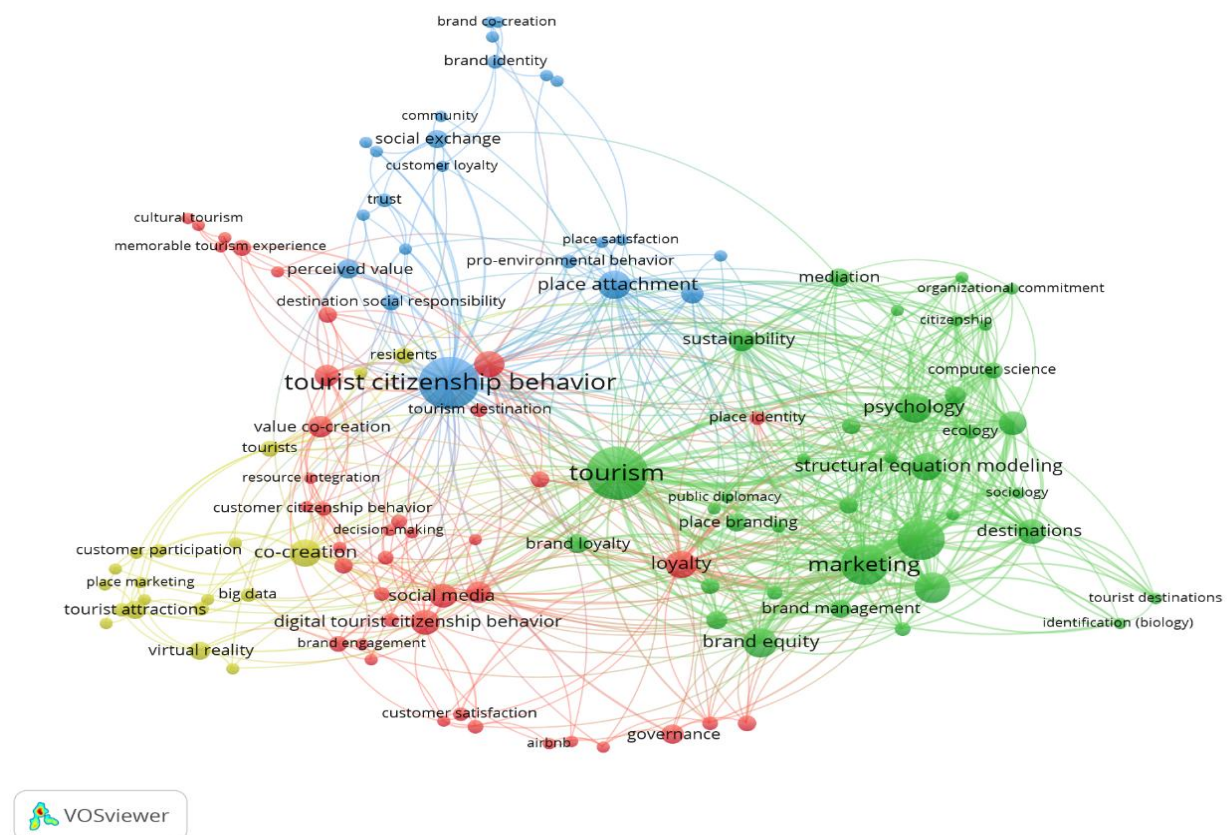


Figure 4. VOSviewer Keyword Co-occurrence Network, *Source(s): Authors' VOSviewer analysis (2026)*

Table 9. Keyword Clusters

Cluster	n	Keywords	Thematic Focus	Sample Authors
Cluster 1 (Red)	41	loyalty (12); destination image (11); digital tourist citizenship behavior (10); social media (9); value co-creation; satisfaction; hospitality (7); governance (6); cultural tourism (5); consumer behavior (4); destination branding (4); user-generated content; e-WOM; sharing economy; COVID-19 (3)	Digital Engagement, Online TCB & Destination Experience	Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie (2014); Tung & Ritchie (2011); Yi & Gong (2013)
Cluster 2 (Green)	37	tourism (43); marketing (26); business (25); advertising (15); psychology (14); brand equity (14); structural equation modeling (12); destinations (10); geography (9); sustainability (8); brand loyalty (6); place branding; social psychology; brand management; brand awareness (5); structural equation modeling (12)	Brand Equity, Multidisciplinary Lenses & Methodological Rigor	Sigala (2020); Qu, Kim & Im (2011); Jalilvand & Heidari (2017)
Cluster 3 (Blue)	23	tourist citizenship behavior (42); place attachment (13); sustainable tourism; perceived value (6); destination social responsibility (4); brand identity; pro-environmental behavior; place identity; customer citizenship behavior; trust (3); brand co-creation (2); destination governance (2)	Place Attachment, Prosocial Behavior & Community-Centered Branding	Scannell & Gifford (2010); Ramkissoon, Mavondo & Sowamber (2023)
Cluster 4 (Yellow)	19	co-creation (12); tourist attractions (5); virtual reality (5); residents (4); big data; accessible tourism; tourism websites (3); immersive technology; smart cities; place marketing; service innovation; customer participation; social interaction (2)	Co-creation, Technology-Mediated Participation & Smart Destination Innovation	Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang & Koo (2015); Tussyadiah, Wang, Jung & tom Dieck (2018); Grisseemann & Stokburger-Sauer (2012)

Source(s): Authors' own work (2026)

Cluster 1 (Red): Digital Engagement, Online TCB & Destination Experience. This largest cluster captures how tourists use digital channels to express citizenship behaviors. Its theoretical base draws on Hollebeek et al. (2014), Tung and Ritchie (2011), and Yi and Gong (2013). Core concepts span digital TCB, social media, e-WOM, and UGC, alongside behavioral outcomes like loyalty, satisfaction, and revisit intention. Destination image, branding, and governance

Overlay Visualization of Keywords Over Time

Overlay visualization (Figure 5) shows the field's early worries (colors run from 2010 to 2025) in relation to brand identification, customer loyalty, trust, perceived value, memorable tourism experience, brand engagement, and customer happiness among other things. These consumer-brand constructs were originally taken from approved measures of civic behavior and traditional marketing frameworks (Yi & Gong, 2013). In the years between 2015 and 2019, TCB came together. Within this category, you'll find tourism, customer citizenship behavior, value co-creation, social media, location attachment, social exchange, and TCB. The impact of the pandemic on the dynamics between tourists and destinations, as well as the role of social media in generating citizenship responses related to sustainability objectives, influenced the emergence of digital tourist citizenship behavior, sustainability, governance, place identity, Airbnb, and place branding during this stage (Martínez García de Leaniz, P. et al., 2025). Disciplinary indexing terms like ecology, sociology, computer science, and identification reside on the periphery of the network 2024-2025, together with pro-environmental behavior, tourist attractions, location satisfaction, organizational commitment, mediation, and so on. These have been the most talked-about areas in recent years' academic publications.

4.4 Key Marketing and Branding Strategies

Table 10 shows the six destination branding initiatives that were found by NVivo content analysis that were inspired by and meant to foster TCB.

Table 10. Key Marketing and Branding Strategies for TCB–Destination Branding

Strategy	Sub-category	Description	References (APA Style)
Co-Creative Participatory Tourist Generated Branding	Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)	Tourists share authentic recommendations through social media advocacy	Jalilvand & Heidari (2017).
	User-Generated Content (UGC) Campaigns	Hashtag campaigns encourage tourists to co-create destination content.	Hollebeek et al. (2014); Rather (2021); Rather & Hollebeek (2019)
	Influencer & Micro-Influencer Co-Creation	Micro-influencers model citizenship behaviors, increasing destination engagement.	Hollebeek et al. (2014); So et al. (2014); Kandampully et al. (2015)
	Social Media Brand Defense	Strong brand identification motivates online destination defense.	Hollebeek et al. (2014); Rather et al. (2022); Torres-Moraga et al. (2024)
	Collaborative Storytelling Platforms	Tourist narratives become integral components of destination identity.	Yi & Gong (2013); Assiouras et al. (2019); Mandagi & Centeno (2024)
	Resident – Tourist Co-Design Workshops	Resident–visitor collaboration strengthens tourism products and TCB.	Gretzel et al. (2015); Grisseemann & Stokburger-Sauer (2012).
	AI-Mediated Personalization & Co-Creation	AI personalization enhances co-creation but risks homogenization.	Buhalis et al. (2023); Tussyadiah et al. (2018); Kim et al. (2020)

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Governance-Sustainability & Values-Based Branding	Value Co-Creation in Service Encounters	Service interactions create value through tourist co-creation.	Yi & Gong (2013); Verma et al. (2022)
	SDG-Aligned Brand Positioning	SDG-aligned branding attracts citizenship-oriented tourists.	Ramkissoon et al. (2023); Su et al. (2020); Kim & Hall (2019)
	Pro-Environmental Behavior Nudges	Behavioral nudges reinforce sustainability and destination brand values.	Ramkissoon et al. (2013); Han & Hyun (2017); Cheng et al. (2019)
	Climate-Vulnerability Communication	Sustainability transparency activates trust-based TCB	Ramkissoon et al. (2023); Sigala (2020)
	Eco-Certification & Responsible Tourism Labels	Certifications enhance credibility and encourage responsible citizenship.	Kim & Hall (2019); Han & Hyun (2017)
	Resident Brand Ambassador Programs	Residents strengthen destination brands through authentic storytelling.	Pike & Page (2014); Hanna & Rowley (2015); Mandagi et al. (2025)
	Participatory Brand Governance	Stakeholder councils improve legitimacy in destination branding.	Pike & Page (2014); Nunkoo & Ramkissoon (2012).
	Destination Social Responsibility (DSR) Initiatives	DSR initiatives stimulate reciprocal prosocial visitor behaviors.	Su et al. (2020); Kadić-Maglajlić et al. (2024); Rather et al. (2022)
	Stakeholder Co-Management Frameworks	Shared governance strengthens resilience and destination legitimacy.	Pike & Page (2014); Marine-Roig & Clavé (2015); Gonzáles-Santiago et al. (2025)
	Heritage & Cultural Conservation Branding	Heritage participation deepens attachment and tourist citizenship.	Scannell & Gifford (2010); Tung & Ritchie (2011); Prayag & Ryan (2012)
	Authentic Place-Based Storytelling	Authentic narratives strengthen attachment and destination identification.	Qu et al. (2011); Kavaratzis (2005); Mandagi & Centeno (2024)
	Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) Design	MTE drive loyalty, attachment, and advocacy.	Tung & Ritchie (2011); Rather et al. (2019)
Brand Equity Structure Through TCB Measurement	AR/VR Heritage	AR and VR enrich heritage interpretation and engagement.	Tussyadiah et al. (2018); Kim et al. (2020); Buhalis et al. (2023)
	Performance Dashboards	TCB metrics transform prosocial behavior into measurable value.	Liu & Tsaur (2014); Yi & Gong (2013); Torres-Moraga et al. (2024)
	Scale Development & Validation	TCB scales enable longitudinal tracking across contexts.	Liu & Tsaur (2014); Yi & Gong (2013); Abbasi et al. (2024)
	Multi-Construct SEM Models	SEM links TCB antecedents to brand equity outcomes.	Chen et al. (2020); Liu et al. (2021)

4.5 Future Research Agenda

Brand Co-Creation & Affective Brand Identity. Previous research confirmed brand co-creation as a distal antecedent of TCB mediated by gestalt brand and place identity, when visitors co-create narrative destinations, bond triggers TCB are created, advocacy is formed from affective brand identity through gestalt integration (Mandagi & Centeno, 2024, Mandagi et al, 2025). Although the comprehensive framework supported how co-created tourism destination branding forms a cognitive-affective foundation to generate brand advocacy. Nonetheless, the path of brand co-creation to TCB through affective identity is still fragmented. When visitors participate in creating a brand, employees defend it not because they are paid but because of a sense of belonging.

Immersive Technology & Smart Destination Innovation. Evidence that advanced technologies as co-creators can trigger value co-creation and citizenship behavior has been done by Palatkova (2025). The study by Buhalis et al (2022) also shows the metaverse as a driver for customer experience and value co-creation. However, the impact on destination advocacy is still low-density and has not been explored much. If TCB can be activated through pre-visit VR and AR, then smart destinations can become a field of brand advocacy before tourists visit.

Destination Governance & Place-Based Public Diplomacy. In practice, public diplomacy, place branding, and organizational commitment are still isolated from TCB. In fact, without linking governance to TCB, it is like reducing destination branding to just tourism advertising and not public diplomacy (Gonzales-Santiago et al, 2025). Though one tourist review can change the political map of the destination. How participatory governance shapes TCB? What mediator has a strong influence? This can be homework for researchers.

Multidisciplinary Bridges & Cross-Domain Theory Borrowing. Repeatedly TCB research borrows methods from neighboring disciplines, but it is not regenerative system thinking, as a result it can calculate faster but don't know how it happened. Amani (2024) has proven that destination communities and social identity have shown the value of import theory across disciplines to explain destination brand value co-creation. If TCB is constantly borrowing SEM tools to test variables, without knowing the theory behind them, then this is just a refinement of the older construct and not an original science.

5. Conclusion

For fifteen years, tourism research separated citizenship from destination branding. This review ends that divide. Tourist Citizenship Behavior and destination branding converge on one outcome: defenders, not consumers. Four themes: digital TCB, brand equity methods, place-based prosocial, and smart co-creation, reveal a single mechanism: co-created destination brand gestalt. When tourists co-author the brand through VR pre-visits, AI itineraries, or governance councils, they defend it.

Six branding strategies operationalize this shift: tourist-generated advocacy, co-creative engagement, sustainability-based branding, governance-centered branding, emotional attachment branding, and TCB-driven brand equity. Yet the field optimized for the wrong era. Three fractures cover smart, sustainable destinations:

1. Technology as decoration, VR/AR and AI are studied as marketing gimmicks, not civic spaces where TCB is rehearsed before travel.
2. Governance without citizenship, it counts instruments, not whether blockchain committees or public diplomacy cast brand citizens.
3. Geographic parochialism, zero studies from Africa, South America, where NEOM, Rwanda's conservancies, and Amazon tourism are building smart destinations from scratch, or the Middle East, Doha with Msheireb downtown and Lusail

Methodologically, 90% of cross-sectional surveys explain correlations, not causation, borrow SEM but ignore political theory, we list keywords from sociology but don't test collective

action, limited to English articles, which may exclude key insights from Chinese, Spanish, or Arabic where smart tourism is advancing rapidly. This is the first review to show TCB is the real outcome of smart destination branding. The moment a tourist stops rating a place and starts defending a brand they co-own. Next, move beyond surveys, test brand citizenship in the metaverse, in city council, and Global South.

Theoretical Foundations Underpinning The Nexus

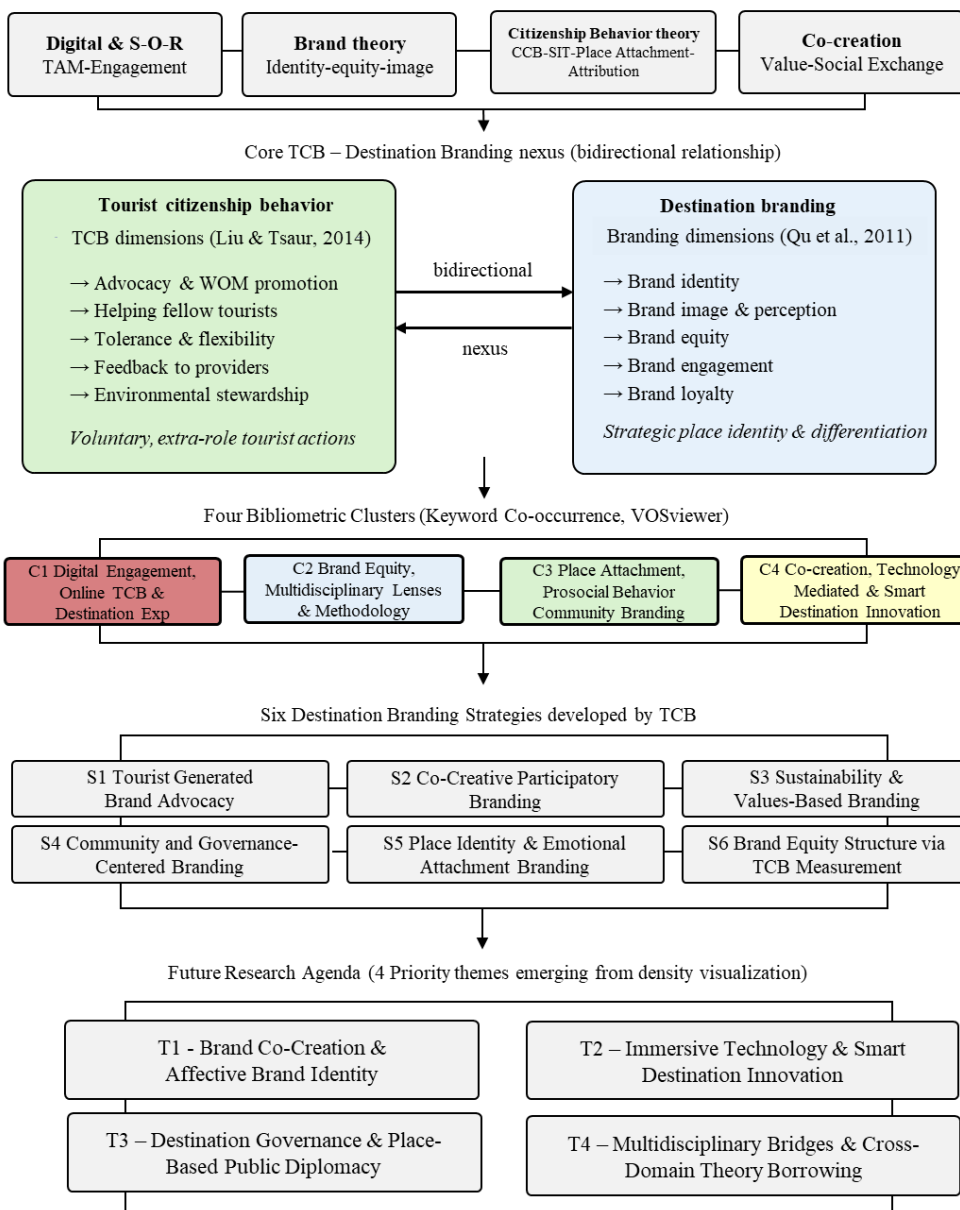


Figure 7. Integrated TCB–Destination Branding Framework, *Source(s): Authors' own work (2026)*

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