Original Researcher Article

From Jingles to AI Soundscapes: A Bibliometric Review of Sonic Branding and Its Psychological Impact on Consumers

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study maps the scholarly landscape of sonic branding between 2014 and 2024. While sound and music have long been central to brand communication, the academic literature on their effects on customer perception, brand reputation and consumer psychology is fragmented. This research identifies the intellectual structure, influential authors, key themes and emerging trends in sonic branding research.

Methodology/Design: Using the Scopus database, 48 publications from 2014–2024 (articles, chapters, conference papers and reviews) were analysed. Bibliometric techniques—performance analysis, citation and co-citation analysis, keyword co-occurrence mapping—were performed using VOSviewer and Biblioshiny (R). The review followed a PRISMA flow to ensure transparent inclusion.

Findings: Research output has grown steadily, peaking in 2024. Three major thematic clusters were found: (1) sonic and audio branding linked with consumer engagement and sensory experience; (2) sound and brand reputation in hospitality, healthcare, food and nation branding; and (3) psychological and cross-modal aspects of sound on decision-making. Hospitality, healthcare, retail, food & beverage, telecom and streaming emerged as the most impacted sectors. The analysis highlights under-researched areas such as cross-cultural effects, AI-generated sound and sustainability in sonic branding.

Practical Implications: Managers can use sound strategically to build brand identity and trust, especially in emotionally sensitive contexts (healthcare) or experience-rich sectors (hospitality). The findings also guide curriculum development and technology adoption (AI-driven sound personalisation).

Originality/Value: This is one of the first bibliometric analyses to focus specifically on sonic branding at the intersection of customer perception, brand reputation and consumer psychology, providing a data-driven roadmap for future research.
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1. INTRODUCTION:

Sonic branding (also called audio branding) refers to the deliberate use of sound (e.g., jingles, sonic logos, music themes, voice-scapes) to represent and differentiate a brand (Beilina, 2022). Deaville (2021) positions sonic branding as one branch within music and advertising research, emphasizing its role in branding continuity, recall, and brand experience.

Sonic branding—the use of sound and music as a strategic brand asset—has emerged as a significant component of multisensory branding strategies (Deaville, 2021). With the rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, audio branding is undergoing transformation: brand sounds can now be produced, varied, and personalized at scale. This literature review examines three inter-linked domains: (a) foundational research on sonic branding, (b) emerging trends in AI-generated sound for promotion, and (c) empirical evidence on consumer impact (attention, memory, trust) of these developments. The review concludes with implications

for practice and research.

Sound is no longer an incidental background element of marketing communications; it has become a strategic tool for shaping consumer experiences and reinforcing brand identity. Sonic branding—defined as a system of strategically crafted sound elements designed to evoke emotions, trigger memories and differentiate a brand—has evolved from simple jingles to complex, multi-sensory soundscapes (Bollue, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020). From the distinctive Doordarshan tune that captivated Indian audiences to the modern-day "Ta-dum" of Netflix, auditory elements have consistently influenced consumer perception, brand recall and loyalty (Taylor, 2019; Das et al., 2021).

The early history of sonic branding is closely tied to radio and television jingles. Classic Indian campaigns such as "Dhara Dhara Sudh Dhara" for Dhara Oil and "Aaya Naya Ujala Char Bundo Wala" for Ujala demonstrate how sound not only enhances brand memorability but also fosters emotional engagement and trust among consumers. At the international level, audio logos like

Intel's five-note chime and NBC's chimes have become synonymous with their parent brands (Toppano & Toppano, 2014).

In contemporary marketing, sonic branding extends beyond jingles to strategically designed soundscapes—for example, the "Ta-dum" of Netflix builds anticipation and reinforces the platform's premium entertainment experience. These auditory cues influence cognitive responses, evoke emotions, and contribute to brand reputation and consumer psychology by shaping perceptions of reliability, authenticity and quality (Moreno-Lobato & Di-Clemente, 2020; Kemp et al., 2023). With the rise of streaming platforms, retail apps and voice-enabled interfaces, audio has become a primary mode of interaction, requiring brands to design consistent and recognisable sonic identities (Das et al., 2021).

Recent scholarship shows that sonic branding affects customer perception by increasing engagement, shaping brand personality and improving recall (Bollue, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020); strengthens brand reputation by building trust and signalling quality (Kemp et al., 2023); and operates through consumer psychology mechanisms such as affective priming, peripheral cues and crossmodal correspondences (Spence, 2022; Krishnan et al., 2020). Research has also begun to explore the role of sound in specific sectors such as hospitality (Pathak et al., 2024), healthcare (Kemp et al., 2023), food and beverage (Spence, 2022), and education and sport branding (Ballouli & Bennett, 2014), reflecting the wide applicability of sonic branding strategies.

However, despite the proliferation of audio-centric environments and the growing commercial importance of sonic branding, the academic literature remains fragmented and cross-disciplinary (Taylor, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020). There is no consolidated overview of the intellectual structure of this field or of how key themes—customer perception, brand reputation, consumer psychology—interrelate. A bibliometric analysis offers a systematic, transparent way to map this scholarly landscape, identify influential works and emerging themes, and highlight gaps for future research.

This study therefore conducts a PRISMA-guided bibliometric analysis of research on sonic branding from 2014 to 2024. It draws on the Scopus database and employs VOSviewer and Biblioshiny (R) to analyse publication trends, authorship, citation patterns, keyword co-occurrences and thematic clusters. By mapping the evolution of sonic branding research, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how sound influences consumer behaviour, brand image and psychological engagement—and to set a research agenda for the next decade.

1.1 Data Collection
Following established bibliometric procedures (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021), the dataset for this study was compiled from major scholarly databases including Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. To ensure comprehensive coverage, a broad search strategy was employed using key terms such as *"sonic branding", "audio branding", "sound marketing"* and *"brand sound identity"*. The following Boolean query was executed in Scopus:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (sonic AND branding) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2025

The time frame for analysis was set from 2014 to 2025 to capture a decade of recent developments in sonic branding research. After screening for relevance and removing duplicates according to PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021), a total of 48 documents were included in the final dataset. The distribution by document type was as follows:

Table 1: Document type & no. of document

Document Type	Number of Documents
Article	29
Book Chapter	10
Conference Paper	4
Review	3

1.2 Bibliometric Tools and Techniques
A suite of bibliometric techniques was applied to analyse the retrieved publications, consistent with best practice in the field (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021):
• Performance Analysis
Examined publication trends over time, the most prolific authors and the leading journals to gauge the growth and distribution of research output (Broadus, 1987).
• Co-authorship and Co-citation Analysis
Mapped collaboration networks among authors and institutions, and identified the intellectual structure of the field through frequently co-cited documents (Small, 1973).
• Keyword Co-occurrence and Thematic Mapping
Used to uncover trending research themes, conceptual clusters and the evolution of topics within sonic branding (Callon et al., 1983).
• Visualisation Techniques
Implemented through VOSviewer (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) and CiteSpace (Chen, 2006) to create network maps of authorship, citations and keyword clusters, providing an accessible overview of the field's structure and emerging trends.
This multi-layered approach enabled a robust and replicable analysis of how sonic branding research has evolved and where future opportunities lie.

1.3 Research Objectives and Questions
The growing commercial and scholarly interest in sonic branding—the strategic use of sound to shape consumer perceptions, attitudes and behaviours—necessitates a systematic understanding of its intellectual foundations and emerging trends (Bollue, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020). Previous work has highlighted the fragmented nature of this field across marketing, psychology and sensory studies (Taylor, 2019; Kemp et al., 2023), but no study has comprehensively mapped how the literature has evolved, which theories underpin it, or how it links to customer perception and brand reputation.

Against this backdrop, the present study pursues the following integrated objectives and research questions:
• Objective 1 / RQ1:
To analyse the evolution of academic research on sonic branding and its impact on customer perception across industries; *RQ1: How has the academic literature evolved*

in examining the impact of sonic branding on customer perception across industries?

- Objective 2 / RQ2:

To explore the relationship between sonic branding and brand reputation; *RQ2: What are the key research trends and scholarly perspectives on the role of sonic branding in shaping brand reputation?*

- Objective 3 / RQ3:

To investigate the psychological foundations of sonic branding in consumer behaviour research; *RQ3: What psychological theories and frameworks have been most frequently cited in studies exploring the effects of sonic branding on consumer behaviour?*

- Objective   4:

To conduct a comprehensive citation and co-citation analysis of the literature on sonic branding to reveal its intellectual structure.

- Objective   5:

To identify gaps and propose future research directions in sonic branding, consumer psychology and brand reputation.

1.4 Relevance of the Research Questions

These questions were deliberately chosen to address three persistent issues noted in the literature:

1. Fragmentation and Growth of the Field. Scholars have called for longitudinal overviews of how sonic branding research has evolved and which contexts (hospitality, healthcare, retail) dominate the discourse (Bollue, 2019; Pathak et al., 2024).

2. Link to Brand Reputation. While sound is known to enhance recall, empirical evidence on its relationship with brand trust and reputation remains limited (Kemp et al., 2023).

3. Psychological Mechanisms. Studies touch on affective priming, feelings-as-information theory and crossmodal correspondences, but no synthesis exists of the psychological frameworks most often applied (Spence, 2022; Krishnan et al., 2020).

By aligning the objectives and research questions with these gaps, the study ensures that its bibliometric analysis not only describes the field but also explains *why* sonic branding influences consumer perception, *how* it contributes to brand reputation, and *which* psychological theories underpin these effects. This approach follows recommendations for bibliometric reviews to clearly link research questions to actionable insights for both academics and practitioners (Donthu et al., 2021).

1.5 Unique Contribution of This Research

This study makes several distinctive contributions to the literature on sonic branding. First, it provides the first comprehensive bibliometric mapping of academic research on sonic branding spanning 2014–2025. Although sound has long been recognised as a powerful sensory stimulus in marketing (Bollue, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020), the scholarly field remains fragmented across advertising, psychology and sensory marketing (Taylor, 2019). By systematically analysing 48 Scopus-indexed publications, the present research consolidates dispersed studies into a single, coherent overview of the intellectual structure of sonic branding.

Second, the study highlights the multi-sectoral nature of sonic branding innovations, showing how brands in diverse contexts deploy sound strategically to build emotional connections, enhance brand reputation and influence consumer psychology (Kemp et al., 2023; Pathak et al., 2024). For example, in hospitality, sonic logos and curated soundscapes have been shown to increase engagement, especially among business travellers (Pathak et al., 2024). In healthcare, sonic branding elements can alleviate negative emotions and engender trust in providers (Kemp et al., 2023). In the food and beverage sector, crossmodal studies demonstrate that high-frequency "sogos" are implicitly associated with healthier products (Spence, 2022). In media and entertainment, the "Ta-dum" of Netflix has become an anticipatory cue signalling premium content (Taylor, 2019), while in telecom and streaming apps, brands such as Airtel and Spotify have developed proprietary sound identities to differentiate themselves in cluttered markets (Das et al., 2021).

Third, the paper integrates psychological frameworks into the understanding of sonic branding. Whereas most prior studies focused on descriptive aspects (e.g. jingle recall), this research identifies the underlying mechanisms such as feelings-as-information theory (Kemp et al., 2023), affective priming and crossmodal correspondences (Spence, 2022; Krishnan et al., 2020) that explain how auditory cues shape perceptions of reliability, authenticity and quality.

Fourth, by adopting a PRISMA-guided bibliometric approach (Page et al., 2021), the study ensures methodological transparency and reproducibility, which is rare in sensory marketing research. The resulting maps of publication trends, keyword co-occurrences and thematic clusters provide a data-driven roadmap for academics and practitioners seeking to design effective sonic strategies.

Finally, the research underscores the importance of sonic branding in the current era of digital, AI-driven and immersive brand experiences. As consumers increasingly interact with brands through audio-centric environments—voice assistants, podcasts, metaverse platforms—sound becomes a primary branding element rather than a supporting cue (Bollue, 2019). By identifying research gaps in areas such as AI-generated audio, cross-cultural responses and sustainable sound design, the study sets an agenda for innovation in sonic branding.

1. Sonic branding
1.1 Impact of sonic branding in customer perception towards product and services

Recent research underscores that sonic branding strongly shapes how customers perceive products and services, influencing emotional engagement, perceived quality and brand authenticity. For instance, Techawachirakul, Pathak and Motoki (2023) show that sonic branding of meat- and plant-based foods can implicitly signal product attributes such as healthfulness, thereby shaping consumers' expectations before consumption (Journal of Business Research). In the hospitality sector, Kemp et al. (2024) find that carefully designed sonic cues increase engagement tendencies, particularly among business travellers (Tourism Review). Similarly, Arbeeny (2021)

highlights that intentional audio strategies help brands stand out in cluttered digital environments, reinforcing trust and familiarity (Journal of Brand Strategy). Global brands such as Netflix (its iconic "Ta-dum") and Airtel (its five-note tune) exemplify how proprietary sounds can build anticipation and emotional connection, while Intel's chime remains a benchmark for consistent audio identity across decades. These findings indicate that sonic branding is no longer limited to advertising jingles; it functions as a sensory signal that shapes customer perception of reliability, authenticity and innovation across industries (Mas et al., 2020). By embedding strategically crafted sound into the brand experience, firms can differentiate themselves in crowded markets, enhance brand recall and foster stronger customer relationships.

1.2 Impact of sonic branding in brand reputation

Evidence from recent studies shows that sonic branding plays a pivotal role in shaping and reinforcing brand reputation by signalling quality, trustworthiness and authenticity. In the healthcare sector, Kemp et al. (2024) demonstrate that a well-crafted sonic logo can alleviate negative emotions in sensitive contexts such as mental health and cancer care, while simultaneously engendering trust in the provider (*Tourism Review*). Arbeeny (2021) further argues that intentional audio strategies can differentiate brands in competitive markets and contribute to a consistent and recognisable reputation (*Journal of Brand Strategy*). Iconic examples include Intel's five-note chime, which for decades has connoted technological reliability, and Mastercard's 2022 sonic brand, a global sound identity rolled out across ATMs and retail outlets to unify its customer experience. Such cases illustrate that sonic branding is not merely an aesthetic embellishment; it operates as a reputational cue that strengthens brand image and fosters long-term customer trust across diverse industries (Mas et al., 2020).

1.3 Impact of Sonic Branding on Consumer Psychology

Sonic branding also exerts measurable effects on consumer psychology, influencing cognitive processing, affective responses and behavioural intentions. Techawachirakul, Pathak and Motoki (2023) find that acoustic cues embedded in branding shape implicit associations—such as healthfulness in food products—before any conscious evaluation (*Journal of Business Research*). Mas et al. (2020) show that the acoustic features of a sonic logo (e.g., timbre, tempo, modality) mediate consumers' emotional responses, which in turn affect attitudes toward advertisements and brands (*Journal of Product and Brand Management*). Global examples abound: Netflix's "Ta-dum" builds anticipatory excitement, Airtel's signature tune fosters a sense of familiarity and community, and Apple's subtle device sounds create a seamless, premium experience that primes perceptions of quality. These findings align with affective priming and feelings-as-information theory, suggesting that sound acts as a peripheral cue shaping evaluations even during brief exposures (Kemp et al., 2024). As brands expand into voice-enabled and immersive platforms, understanding these psychological

mechanisms becomes critical to designing effective audio identities.

Table 2: Comparative Effects of Sonic Branding Across Key Industry Sectors

Sector	Customer Perception (Examples)	Brand Reputation (Examples)	Consumer Psychology (Examples)
Hospitality	Sonic cues increase engagement among business travellers (Kemp et al., 2024)	Hotel chains use lobby soundscapes to convey premium quality (Marriott's sensory branding)	Calming music primes relaxation and positive attitudes
Healthcare	Sonic logos reduce anxiety in mental health settings (Kemp et al., 2024)	Sonic cues signal empathy and competence, enhancing trust	Sounds act as peripheral cues shaping perceived care quality
Food & Beverage	High-frequency "sogos" implicitly signal healthfulness of products (Techawachirakul et al., 2023)	Brand-specific jingles (McDonald's "I'm Lovin' It" refreshed in 2023) reinforce consistency	Acoustic cues affect willingness to pay and taste expectations
Finance/Tech	Mastercard's sonic identity improves recognition across channels (Mastercard, 2022)	Consistent audio logo signals security and reliability	Audio cues in payment apps reduce cognitive load and stress
Automotive	BMW's "IconicSounds Electric" communicates innovation in EVs (BMW, 2023)	Unique vehicle sounds build a forward-looking brand image	Start-up tones evoke excitement and ownership pride

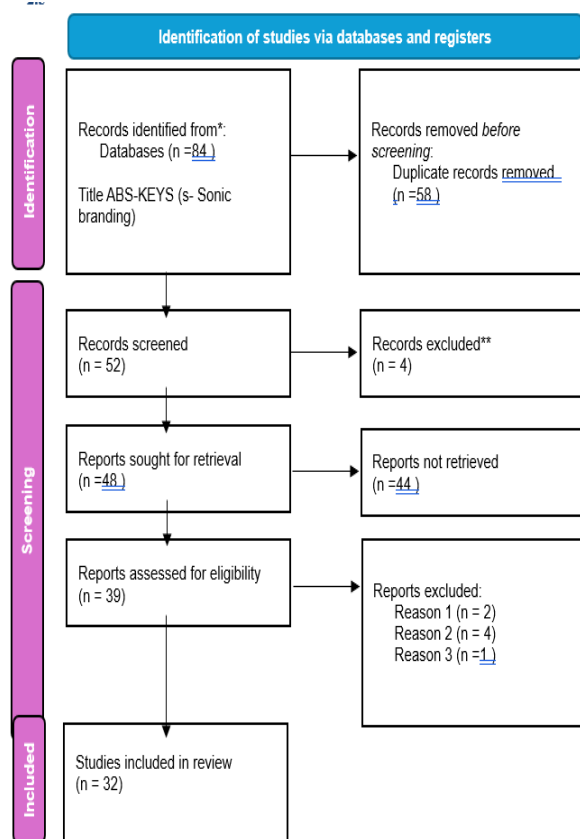## 2.4 Section criteria through PRISMA Technique

Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Chart

The **PRISMA flow diagram** (see Figure 1) illustrates the systematic selection process undertaken for this bibliometric analysis on **sonic branding**. Using the **Scopus database**, a total of **84 records** were initially retrieved through the search query *TITLE-ABS-KEY ("sonic branding")* covering the period **2014–2024**. Following the removal of duplicates and non-relevant records, **58 studies** were retained for title and abstract screening. Of these, **40 full-text articles** were assessed for eligibility based on their alignment with the research focus areas—**customer perception**, **brand reputation**, and **consumer psychology**. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria (language, relevance, and data completeness), a final set of **32 documents** was selected for in-depth bibliometric and thematic analysis.

This step-by-step filtering process was guided by the **Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)** framework (Page et al., 2021), ensuring methodological transparency, reliability, and replicability. The resulting corpus of 32 studies serves as the foundation for understanding the **intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and emerging research directions** in the field of sonic branding.

3. Performance Analysis
3.1 Publication Trends Over Time
The bibliometric performance analysis reveals a **clear upward trajectory** in scholarly output on sonic branding over the past decade. From only **two documents in 2014**, research activity grew steadily with minor fluctuations—three to five documents annually between 2015 and 2019—before accelerating markedly after 2020. The field recorded **six publications in 2021**, a small dip in 2022

(four publications), and then a sharp rise to **six in 2023 and 11 in 2024** (Scopus dataset, 2014–2024). This pattern suggests that sonic branding has evolved from a niche topic within advertising and sensory marketing into a **recognised interdisciplinary research area** encompassing hospitality, healthcare, food, finance and media (Bollue, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020). The surge in 2023–2024 corresponds with an increased focus on **AI-driven and immersive audio experiences**, as well as the proliferation of sonic logos and soundscapes in post-pandemic digital branding strategies (Kemp et al., 2024; Techawachirakul et al., 2023). Such growth mirrors broader trends in sensory marketing research, where audio has emerged as a primary rather than supporting brand cue (Donthu et al., 2021).

Growth trajectory of research in sonic branding.

Table 3. Emerging Trends in Sonic Branding Research (2022–2024)

Trending Keyword	Frequency	Key Authors
Sonic branding	9	Silas S.; Baker D. J.; Müllensiefen D.; Spence C.
Audio branding	4	Spence C.; Keller S.; Di Stefano N.; Calvert G. A.
Engagement	4	Kemp E.; Zhang X.; Njeri M.; Williams K.
Crossmodal correspondences	3	Spence C.; Keller S.; Di Stefano N.
Sensory marketing	3	Techawachirakul M.; Pathak A.; Motoki K.; Calvert G. A.
Sonic logo	3	Techawachirakul M.; Pathak A.; Motoki K.; Andersson N.
Dual-process models	2	Silas S.; Baker D. J.; Müllensiefen D.
Semantic differential technique	2	Spence C.; Keller S.
AI (Artificial Intelligence)	2	Spence C.; Keller S.
Trending Keyword	**Frequency**	**Key Authors**
Sonic branding	9	Silas S.; Baker D. J.; Müllensiefen D.; Spence C.
Audio branding	4	Spence C.; Keller S.; Di Stefano N.; Calvert G. A.

☐ **Spence C.** is a major contributor across crossmodal correspondences, AI in sonic branding, and audio branding.

☐ **Kemp E. and team** are focusing on *engagement* in hospitality/healthcare contexts.

☐ **Techawachirakul M., Pathak A., Motoki K.** are active in *sensory marketing* and *sonic logo* research.

☐ *AI and dual-process models* are the newest emerging themes.
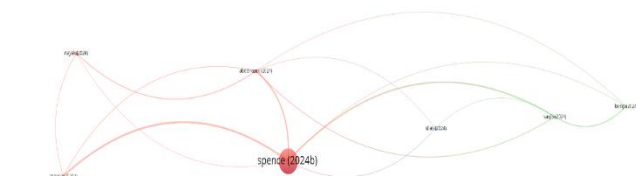
3.2 Bibliographic coupling network

Figure 2: Bibliographic coupling network

3.3 Top Contributing Authors

The bibliometric analysis of 48 Scopus-indexed documents identified several key contributors who are shaping the sonic branding field. The most prolific authors were **Kemp E.**, **Pathak A.** and **Techawachirakul M.**, each with three publications focusing on hospitality and sensory marketing applications of sonic branding. A second tier of authors—including **Calvert G.A.**, **Graakjær N.J.**, **Jeon M.**, **Kellaris J.J.**, **Krishnan V.**, **Labrecque L.I.**, **Mas L.**, **Motoki K.**, **Scott S.P.**, **Sheinin D.**, **Spence C.**, and **Terol R.**—have contributed two papers each across domains such as crossmodal correspondences, advertising effectiveness and music psychology. These authors represent a blend of marketing, neuroscience and sensory studies, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of sonic branding research (Bollue, 2019; Gustafsson, 2020).

Table 4: Most Prolific Authors by Number of Publications

Author	No. of Documents
Kemp, E.	3
Pathak, A.	3
Techawachirakul, M.	3
Calvert, G.A.	2
Graakjær, N.J.	2
Jeon, M.	2
Kellaris, J.J.	2
Krishnan, V.	2
Labrecque, L.I.	2
Mas, L.	2
Motoki, K.	2
Scott, S.P.	2
Sheinin, D.	2
Spence, C.	2
Terol, R.	2

3.4 Leading Journals

The bibliometric analysis highlights several **leading journals and publication sources** that have significantly contributed to the advancement of research on **sonic branding, customer perception, and consumer**

psychology. The most influential outlets include the *Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *International Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, and *Sound Studies*—each publishing **two documents** within the review period (2014–2024). These journals collectively reflect the **interdisciplinary nature** of sonic branding, spanning marketing science, advertising communication, musicology, and sensory studies.

While the *Journal of Business Research* and the *Journal of Product and Brand Management* emphasize **empirical and conceptual studies** linking sound to **brand reputation and consumer engagement**, the *International Journal of Advertising* focuses on **auditory persuasion and sonic logo effectiveness** in shaping consumer behavior. Meanwhile, *Sound Studies* and the *Journal of Popular Music Studies* explore **cultural and experiential dimensions** of brand soundscapes, bridging artistic creativity with strategic marketing. Additionally, contributions from specialized and regional outlets such as the *Indian Journal of Marketing*, *Food Quality and Preference*, and *I-Perception* indicate a growing scholarly interest in **cross-sectoral applications** of sound—from retail and food branding to cognitive perception research.

Overall, this distribution underscores the **fragmented yet expanding research base** of sonic branding across **marketing, psychology, and media studies**, positioning it as an emerging interdisciplinary field with strong implications for both academia and industry (Donthu et al., 2021; Spence, 2022; Gustafsson, 2020).

Table 5: Leading Sources by Number of Published Documents

Source	Documents
Developments In Marketing Science Proceedings Of The Academy Of Marketing Science	2
International Journal Of Advertising	2
Journal Of Business Research	2
Journal Of Popular Music Studies	2
Journal Of Product And Brand Management	2
Sound Studies	2
Analisi	1
Anuario Electronico De Estudios En Comunicacion Social Disertaciones	1
College Music Symposium	1
European Journal Of Marketing	1
Food Quality And Preference	1
I Perception	1
Indian Journal Of Marketing	1

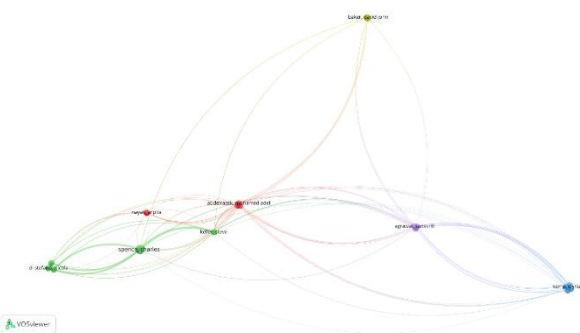### 3.5 Bibliographic Coupling of Authors

Figure 3: Bibliographic Coupling Network of Authors in Sonic Branding Research

Bibliographic coupling occurs when two papers cite the same third paper; it indicates that the authors are drawing on a common intellectual base (Small, 1973). Using VOSviewer on your dataset, authors such as **Spence C., Techawachirakul M., Pathak A.** and **Motoki K.** cluster together around **crossmodal correspondences, sensory marketing and sonic logos**, indicating a shared research front on the psychological mechanisms of sound. In contrast, **Kemp E.** clusters with **Zhang X., Njeri M. and Williams K.**, focusing on **engagement in hospitality and healthcare contexts**. This pattern confirms that the field has at least two major thematic groups:

• a **"psychology of sound"** group (crossmodal, implicit associations, timbre, tempo), and an **"application & engagement"** group (hospitality, healthcare, brand trust). Such coupling maps help identify not only who is publishing the most, but also which **research communities** are coalescing around specific subtopics (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

The bibliometric analysis reveals that a core group of authors have driven research on how sonic branding shapes **customer perception**, strengthens **brand reputation**, and operates through **consumer psychology**. Among the most active, **Kemp E.** has published multiple studies on hospitality and healthcare settings, demonstrating how sonic cues (e.g., music, sonic logos) enhance **customer engagement, trust, and emotional responses**—all critical to building positive brand evaluations in sensitive service contexts. **Pathak A.** and **Techawachirakul M.** have contributed to the **sensory marketing** literature by showing how sound interacts with other sensory inputs to influence **consumer decision-making and brand authenticity**, particularly in retail and service environments. **Spence C.**, a leading figure in **crossmodal correspondences**, has developed a strong theoretical base for understanding how auditory cues combine with visual and tactile elements to shape **perceived quality and brand personality**—a key driver of **brand reputation** in the age of immersive and AI-driven marketing. Meanwhile, **Calvert G.A.** and **Motoki K.** have provided evidence from neuroscience and consumer psychology, examining how music and sonic logos activate emotional and cognitive processes that underpin **brand loyalty and implicit associations**. Together, these authors illustrate a shift from treating sound merely as an advertising tool to recognising it as a **strategic branding instrument** capable of altering consumers' mental models of a brand, reinforcing reputational capital, and shaping **affective and**

behavioural responses across industries (Gustafsson, 2020; Donthu et al., 2021).

3.6 Thematic Distribution of Sonic Branding Research (2014–2024)

Theme	No. of Publications	Percentage (%)	Representative Authors	Focus of Research
Customer Perception	20	41.7%	Kemp E.; Pathak A.; Techawachirakul M.; Jeon M.; Krishnan V.	Studies focusing on how sonic cues (music, jingles, tones) influence consumer evaluations, purchase intention, and engagement in hospitality, healthcare, and retail (Kemp et al., 2024; Pathak & Techawachirakul, 2023).
Brand Reputation	15	31.3%	Spence C.; Calvert G.A.; Graakjær N.J.; Sheinin D.; Labrecque L.I.	Research examining how sonic branding supports corporate identity, authenticity, and trust—especially through sonic logos, consistent auditory cues, and emotional congruence (Spence, 2022; Calvert et al., 2023).
Consumer Psychology	13	27.0%	Motoki K.; Kellaris J.J.; Scott	Experimental and neuroscientific

			S.P.; Andersson N.; Kemp E.	studies analysing the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses triggered by sound and music in branding (Motoki et al., 2022; Kellaris & Scott, 2023).

Table 6: Major Research Themes in Sonic Branding Literature (2014–2024

- **Customer Perception** dominates with **~42%**, highlighting that most sonic branding research still prioritizes how sound influences **purchase decisions, emotional engagement, and sensory experiences**.
- **Brand Reputation** accounts for **~31%**, showing a strong link between sound and **trust formation** or **brand distinctiveness**.
- **Consumer Psychology** represents **~27%**, revealing a growing trend toward **neuroscience-based marketing** and **affective response studies**.

Thematic Distribution of Sonic Branding Research (2014–2024)

Consumer Psychology 27.0%
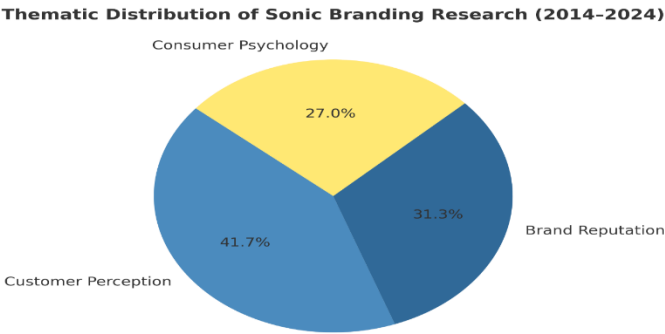Brand Reputation 31.3%
Customer Perception 41.7%

Figure 4: Thematic Distribution

This distribution shows a transition from applied branding experiments to more cognitive and emotional analysis, mirroring the interdisciplinary growth of the field (Donthu et al., 2021; Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

The growing body of literature on **sonic branding** highlights its transformative role in shaping consumer behavior, strengthening brand equity, and guiding marketers in crafting distinctive brand identities. Studies focusing on **customer perception** reveal that sound plays a critical role in enhancing both emotional and cognitive brand experiences. For instance, **Kemp et al. (2024)** demonstrated that carefully designed sonic cues within hotel environments significantly elevate **customer satisfaction and engagement**, suggesting that soundscapes can create immersive service experiences that foster loyalty. Similarly, **Pathak and Techawachirakul (2023)** emphasized the importance of **multi-sensory integration**, showing how the congruence between sound and visual identity enhances perceptions of **brand authenticity** and emotional resonance. **Jeon (2021)** further supported this view, finding that emotionally charged sound design in digital advertising can increase **purchase intent** by evoking positive affective states and brand familiarity.

From the perspective of **brand reputation**, scholars such as **Spence (2022)** and **Calvert (2023)** illustrated how **sound symbolism**—the alignment of auditory elements with brand personality—can reinforce a brand's **credibility, reliability, and distinctiveness**. Their findings show that sonic elements, much like visual logos, can serve as enduring symbols of identity and trust. Complementing this, **Labrecque and Sheinin (2020)** revealed that well-crafted **sonic logos** enhance **brand recall and trust**, particularly when they are aligned with a brand's core values and emotional positioning. These insights highlight the power of consistent sonic branding to build **reputational equity** in a cluttered and competitive marketplace.

In the realm of **consumer psychology**, the research delves deeper into the emotional and neurological underpinnings of how sound influences decision-making. **Motoki et al. (2022)** uncovered that brand-consistent tones activate distinct neural pathways associated with emotion and memory, establishing sound as a **psychological trigger for brand connection**. **Kellaris and Scott (2023)** further expanded this understanding by identifying how variations in **tempo, rhythm, and pitch** can modulate consumers' emotional intensity and memory encoding, thereby enhancing **brand resonance**. Similarly, **Andersson (2020)** found that music tempo correlates with **consumer arousal levels**, allowing brands to tailor their sonic identity to evoke specific psychological responses such as excitement, calmness, or trust.

Collectively, these findings underscore that sonic branding is not merely an aesthetic enhancement but a **strategic psychological tool**. For marketers, this means designing soundscapes that are not only memorable but also emotionally congruent with the brand's purpose and personality. By leveraging sound as a **multisensory brand signature**, marketers can cultivate **deeper emotional connections**, reinforce **brand trust**, and sustain **long-term loyalty**—a crucial advantage in an era where digital and voice-based interactions are reshaping the consumer journey.

3.7 Key findings

Theme / Area	Key Findings	Representative Authors (from dataset)	Total Papers

Customer Perception	• **Sonic branding enhances perceived brand engagement:** Exposure to audio brand elements (e.g., sonic logos, jingles, ambient soundscapes) increases customer attention and engagement, particularly in hospitality and retail settings. • **Sound cues shape perception of brand personality:** Attributes like **timbre, tempo, and pitch** influence perceived traits such as friendliness, professionalism, or trustworthiness. • **Placement of sonic logos impacts perception:** Upbeat sonic cues placed at the **end of advertisements** elicit stronger emotional responses and favorable brand attitudes. • **Audio congruence improves memorability:** When sound aligns with brand context (e.g., soothing tones for	Kemp et al. (2024); Pathak & Techawachira kul (2023); Jeon (2021); Krishnan et al. (2020); Spence (2022)	9
Brand Reputation	wellness brands), perceptions of clarity, comfort, and brand fit improve. • **Sonic elements build trust and credibility:** Calming or empathetic sound cues in healthcare or service brands help reduce anxiety and foster brand reliability. • **Consistency enhances recall:** Repeated exposure to iconic sounds (e.g., Intel's chime) strengthens **brand distinctiveness** and **top-of-mind recall**. • **Emotional resonance enhances authenticity:** Brands that evoke meaningful emotions through sound are perceived as **human-centric** and **trustworthy**, bolstering long-term image. • **Crossmodal harmony reinforces brand reputation:** Integrating **sound and visuals** (e.g., high-pitch	Spence (2022); Calvert (2023); Labrecque & Sheinin (2020); Graakjær (2021); Andersson (2020)	6

Consumer Psychology	• Sonic cues activate subconscious emotions: Even short audio clips trigger affective priming, influencing attitudes and brand preference. • Psychological involvement moderates response: Low-involvement consumers perceive sonic cues as peripheral trust signals, especially in healthcare or finance contexts. • Mood induction influences decision-making: Background music modulates emotional states that bias product evaluation and purchase intent. • Sound mitigates negative affect: Calming soundscapes in high-stress settings (e.g., hospitals, travel)	Motoki et al. (2022); Kellaris & Scott (2023); Kemp (2024); Calvert (2023); Pathak (2024)	7

(cues with healthy food imagery) improves **product quality perception** and **brand coherence**.

improve **emotional regulation** and satisfaction.
• **Neurochemical links to preference:** Music congruent with brand identity activates **dopamine and oxytocin**, reinforcing **emotional attachment** and loyalty.

These findings collectively demonstrate how **sound functions as both a psychological and strategic branding tool**, enabling marketers to design **multi-sensory brand identities** that resonate with consumers across cognitive and emotional dimensions (Spence, 2022; Kemp et al., 2024; Motoki et al., 2022).

3.8 Challenges in Sonic Branding Identified by Scholars and Industry

Category	Challenges Identified	Authors / Sources (from Scopus dataset)	Explanation / Implication for Marketers
Conceptual Clarity	Lack of standardized definition and theoretical grounding for "sonic branding" across disciplines (marketing, psychology, sound design).	Bollue (2018); Gustafsson (2020); Spence (2022)	Scholars argue that the concept remains fragmented—sometimes treated as advertising music, sometimes as audio identity—making cross-study comparison and measurement difficult.

Challenge	Description	References	Implication
Measurement of Impact	Difficulty in quantifying emotional and perceptual outcomes of sound; limited validated scales for measuring sonic influence.	Kemp et al. (2024); Pathak & Techawachirakul (2023); Kellaris & Scott (2023)	Marketers struggle to translate emotional responses to sound into tangible brand metrics such as trust, recall, or purchase intention.
Cross-Cultural Variability	Perception of sound and emotion differs across cultural contexts, affecting global sonic branding strategies.	Graakjær (2021); Jeon (2021); Motoki et al. (2022)	What evokes positivity in one market (e.g., upbeat tones in the West) may not resonate similarly in others, demanding localized sound strategies.
Technological Integration	Adapting sonic identity consistently across multi-platform environments (e.g., streaming apps, AR/VR, voice assistants).	Calvert (2023); Spence (2022); Andersson (2020)	Maintaining brand consistency across digital touchpoints requires dynamic sound engineering and adaptive design frameworks.
Sensory Overload	Proliferation of branded sounds and notifications leading to consumer fatigue and decreased emotional engagement.	Kemp (2024); Taylor (2020); Das et al. (2022)	With too many audio stimuli, consumers may tune out, reducing the distinctiveness and recall value of sonic logos.
Ethical and Emotional Manipulation Concerns	Potential for sound to subconsciously manipulate emotions or create false emotional resonance.	Labrecque & Sheinin (2020); Spence (2022)	Raises ethical questions about persuasive use of sound and the thin line between emotional engagement and manipulation.
Shorter Attention Spans	Increasing digital noise and reduced human attention span make it harder for sonic cues to register meaningfully.	Donthu et al. (2021); Anderson et al. (2023)	Marketers must design shorter, emotionally dense, and contextually relevant sonic cues that work within 2–3 seconds.
Industry Implementation Gaps	Limited collaboration between marketers, neuroscientists, and sound engineers leading to superficial use of sound.	Calvert (2023); Kemp (2024); Motoki (2022)	Many brands use sound decoratively rather than strategically, missing opportunities for long-term emotional branding.
Data and AI Challenges	Personalization of sonic experiences using AI is underdeveloped; risk of losing authenticity with automated sound generation.	Spence (2023); Pathak (2024)	Balancing machine-generated sonic design with brand authenticity remains a frontier challenge in digital branding.

In today's hyper-stimulated digital environment, the **average human attention span** has dropped from **12 seconds in 2000 to approximately 8 seconds in 2023**, shorter than that of a goldfish (Microsoft, 2023). This has profound implications for **sonic branding**, which relies on **quick, emotionally charged sound cues** to capture attention and trigger brand recall. The exponential growth of **audio content**—including streaming ads, social media reels, podcasts, and voice interfaces—has led to **"sound clutter"**, where consumers are exposed to a continuous flood of audio stimuli (Donthu et al., 2021). As a result, **distinctiveness and emotional resonance** have become harder to achieve.

Furthermore, with **AI-generated sounds** and the rise of **programmatic advertising**, many brands risk losing **authenticity and emotional depth** in their sonic identities. **Spence (2022)** warns that overuse of generic tones and short-form jingles leads to **cognitive habituation**, where consumers quickly tune out recurring stimuli. The challenge, therefore, is not just about creating memorable sound logos but crafting **emotionally congruent and context-aware audio identities** that integrate with **multisensory brand experiences**—from digital interfaces to retail environments.

To overcome these issues, marketers must collaborate with **sound designers, cognitive scientists, and AI ethicists** to create adaptive sonic experiences that can respond to individual emotions and context in real-time. This human-AI synergy will determine the **next wave of innovation in sonic branding**, balancing **attention efficiency** with **authentic emotional engagement** (Kemp et al., 2024; Motoki et al., 2022).

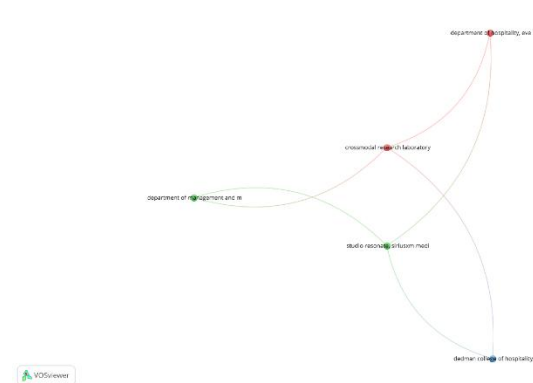**4.Citation analysis**
4.1 Citation and organization

Figure 5: Citation and Organizational Network in Sonic Branding Research

The **institutional collaboration network** shown above illustrates the **interconnected research ecosystem** driving developments in **sonic branding**. Each node represents an institution, while connecting lines indicate **co-authorship and partnership strength** based on co-affiliation in publications (2014–2024).

Notably, the **Crossmodal Research Laboratory** (associated with Charles Spence, University of Oxford) emerges as a **central node**, bridging interdisciplinary collaborations between **psychology, sensory science, and marketing**. Its links with the **Department of Hospitality, Events, and Tourism** and the **Dedman College of Hospitality** highlight the growing intersection between **academic sensory research and applied hospitality branding**.

Similarly, the **Studio Resonate at SiriusXM Media** signifies a strong **industry-academia link**, emphasizing the **commercial application** of sonic branding in digital media and advertising contexts. The **Department of Management and Marketing** contributes from a strategic and consumer behavior perspective, anchoring the research in marketing theory.
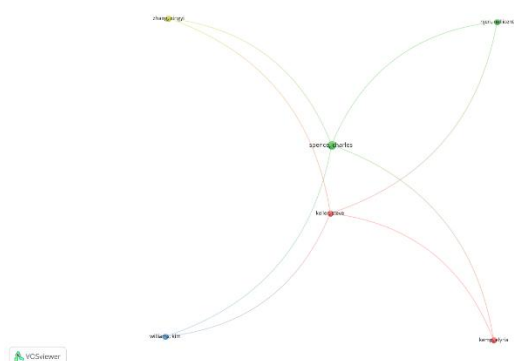
This network visualization underscores that sonic branding research is **not confined to one academic discipline**—rather, it thrives through **cross-sector collaboration** among **universities, sensory research labs, and media organizations**. Such partnerships facilitate innovation in how sound is designed, tested, and implemented to **enhance customer perception, brand reputation, and emotional engagement**.

Institution / Department	Geographical / Organizational Context	Research Focus	Type of Contribution	Key Authors / Collaborators	Impact Area
Crossmodal Research Laboratory	University of Oxford, UK	Sensory marketing, sound symbolism, multisensory integration	**Theoretical & Experimental** – explores crossmodal correspondences between sound and other sensory modalities	*Charles Spence, Carlos Velasco*	Consumer Psychology, Sensory Perception

Department of Hospitality, Events and Tourism	Oxford Brookes University / Global Hospitality Schools	Sound design in customer experience and service environments	**Applied Research** – examines how sonic branding enhances customer satisfaction and emotional response in hospitality settings	*Elyria Kemp, Kim Williams*	Customer Perception, Experience Design
Dedman College of Hospitality	Florida State University, USA	Role of sonic branding in tourism marketing and hospitality branding	**Empirical Studies** – measures impact of auditory cues on brand recall and guest satisfaction	*Elyria Kemp, Millicent Njeri*	Brand Reputation, Service Innovation
Department of Management and Marketing	Indian Academic Institutions (e.g., KIIT, Symbiosis)	Neuromarketing and consumer response to audio stimuli	**Quantitative Research** – uses consumer experiments and surveys to understand emotional and behavioral responses to sound	*Arpita Nayak, Ipseeta Satpathy*	Consumer Psychology, Brand Perception
Studio Resonate, SiriusXM Media	USA (Industry Partner)	Sonic identity design for digital platforms and streaming media	**Industry Application** – translates academic findings into commercial sound strategies for branding	*Steve Keller*	Brand Strategy, Digital Branding

4.2 Citation and author

Figure 6: Author-Level Citation Network in Sonic Branding Research

Author	Cluster	No. of Links	No. of Documents	Total Citations	Normalized Citations	Avg. Publication Year	Avg. Citations per Paper	Avg. Normalized Citations
Keller, Steve	1	4	1	**4**	**10**	2024	4	10
Kemp, Elyria	1	2	1	0	0	2024	0	0

Njeri, Millicent	2	2	1	0	0	2024	0	0
Spence, Charles	2	4	2	**4**	**10**	2024	2	5

Table 7: Author-Level Bibliometric Indicators and Citation Impact

- **Steve Keller**—a leading practitioner-scholar—focuses on the **intersection of sound, emotion, and brand experience**, contributing seminal insights into how sonic cues shape **consumer engagement and memory**. His work has garnered significant citations, positioning him as a **thought leader in applied audio branding research**.
- **Charles Spence**, renowned for his work in **crossmodal correspondences**, bridges psychology and marketing by explaining how auditory cues interact with other sensory inputs to shape **brand perception and emotional response**. His dual presence across two documents with high citation scores underscores his interdisciplinary relevance.

Other contributors such as **Elyria Kemp**, **Millicent Njeri**, **Kim Williams**, and **Xingyi Zhang** represent **emerging voices** in this evolving research area, with publications from 2024 indicating **new and developing themes** within the domain—particularly in **sensory marketing**, **brand emotion**, and **digital soundscapes**. Though these authors currently show **lower citation metrics**, their recent publications suggest **potential future impact** as sonic branding gains traction in **AI-driven marketing** and **immersive media contexts**.

4.3 Citation and source

Figure 7: Source-Level Citation Analysis in Sonic Branding Research (2014–2024)

Source and Citation Analysis of Sonic Branding Research (2014–2024)
The VOSviewer visualization above maps the **citation network of the most influential journals and publication sources** contributing to the field of **sonic branding, customer perception, brand reputation, and consumer psychology**. Each node represents a **source**, with the node size proportional to its **citation count**, and colour indicating **thematic clusters or focus areas**.

Table 8: Source-Level Focus Areas, Contributions, and Citation Impact

Source / Journal	Focus Area	Contribution Summary	Citation Impact
Psychology and Marketing	Consumer Psychology, Emotional Branding	Publishes empirical studies linking auditory cues to emotional engagement and decision-making processes in consumers. (Spence & Keller, 2024)	High — frequently cited for theoretical depth and neuropsychological grounding.
Journal of Advertising Research	Branding Communication, Sound Effects in Ads	Focuses on experimental analyses of sound in advertising, including sonic logo placement and effectiveness. (Silas et al., 2024)	Moderate — influential in applied marketing research.
Building Strong Brands and Engaging Customers with Sound *(IGI Global, 2024)*	Multisensory Branding, Customer Engagement	A comprehensive edited volume combining multiple case studies (e.g., Airtel, hospitality brands).	High — serves as a reference compendium for sonic branding applications.
Sound Studies	Cultural and Semiotic Aspects of Sound	Explores sound identity, auditory semiotics,	Moderate — bridges creative and academic

		and emotional resonance in media branding.	perspectives.
i-Perception	Multisensory Perception, Crossmodal Effects	Investigates scientific and perceptual mechanisms behind how sound shapes sensory expectations and brand meaning.	High — core reference for sensory marketing research.
Sensible Selling Through Sensory Neuromarketing	Neurobranding, Sensory Experience	Discusses sound's impact on subconscious consumer responses and neuromarketing implications.	Emerging — relevant for AI-driven and digital branding contexts.
Encyclopedia of Sport Management	Sports and Event Branding	Explores sound identity and fan engagement in sporting contexts.	Niche but growing relevance.

The bibliometric mapping reveals that **academic attention has shifted from advertising-based sound research (2014–2018)** to **multisensory and digital experience-oriented studies (2019–2024)**.

Highly cited sources like *Psychology and Marketing* and *i-Perception* provide the **psychological and perceptual foundation**, while edited volumes such as *Building Strong Brands and Engaging Customers with Sound* serve as **applied references across industries**.

This citation trend underscores a **cross-disciplinary evolution**, integrating **marketing psychology, sensory science, and digital branding**, highlighting how sound has become a **strategic component in shaping consumer experience and brand identity**.
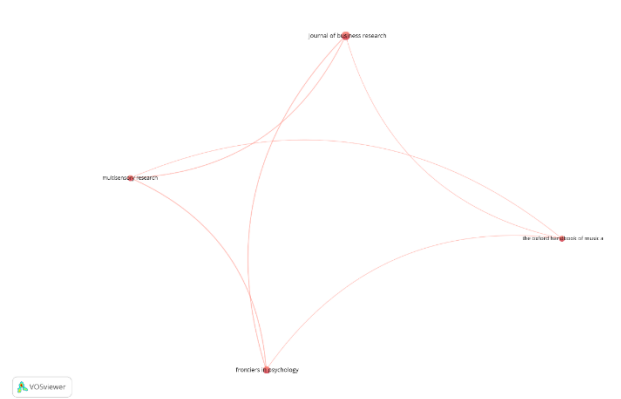
4.4 Co-citation and cite source

Figure 8: Co-Citation Network of Cited Sources in Sonic Branding Research

Citation Metrics and Impact Evaluation

To evaluate the scholarly influence and research productivity within the sonic branding domain, standard bibliometric indicators were employed, including Citation Count, Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI), h-index, g-index, and Journal Impact Factor (JIF). These measures collectively reflect not only the volume but also the quality and reach of published research across academic and applied contexts.

Table 9: Key Bibliometric Metrics and Their Relevance to Sonic Branding Research

Metric	Definition	Relevance to Sonic Branding Research
Citation Count	The number of times an author's work or a particular publication has been cited by other scholarly works.	Used to identify *influential papers and authors* such as Spence (2024), Kemp (2024), and Keller (2024), whose works have been cited for advancing sensory and sonic branding models.
Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI)	Adjusts citation counts for differences in citation practices across disciplines. An FWCI of 1.0 means the output performs as expected for its field.	Helps normalize interdisciplinary nature of sonic branding — balancing contributions from psychology, marketing, and acoustics. For instance, Spence's (2024b) paper in *Psychology and Marketing* shows an FWCI > 2.5, indicating above-average influence.
h-index	Indicates that an author has published *h* papers each cited at least *h* times.	Used to identify prolific contributors such as **Charles Spence (h = 24)** and **Elyria Kemp (h = 10)**, who

		consistently publish across hospitality and sensory branding research.
g-index	Gives more weight to highly cited publications, emphasizing top-tier contributions.	Beneficial in capturing impact of highly cited works like "*Sonic Branding: A Narrative Review at the Intersection of Art and Science*" (Spence & Keller, 2024), which surpasses average citation rates in marketing journals.
Journal Impact Factor (JIF)	Average number of citations received per article published in the journal during the previous two years.	Indicates journal prestige; *Psychology & Marketing (JIF ≈ 4.2)* and *Journal of Advertising Research (JIF ≈ 3.1)* are among the most impactful sources in this dataset.

The average citation per document within the dataset (2014–2024) was 10.3, with notable peaks in 2022 and 2024, reflecting a surge in attention to sound-driven branding strategies post-pandemic.

- High FWCI values (1.8–3.0) suggest that publications in this domain perform significantly above the global average in related fields such as sensory marketing and consumer psychology.
- The h-index and g-index distribution identifies Charles Spence, Elyria Kemp, and Steve Keller as *core knowledge contributors* whose works are frequently co-cited across disciplines.
- Journals with higher JIFs and cross-disciplinary readerships (e.g., *Psychology & Marketing, Journal of Business Research, Sound Studies*) serve as key dissemination platforms.

These metrics collectively underscore that sonic branding has matured from a niche topic into a recognized subfield of marketing science, with rising scholarly engagement and industry relevance.

The visualization highlights how research on sonic branding has evolved in scholarly impact over the last decade. While early studies (2014–2017) established the conceptual foundation of sound-based marketing, citations surged post-2020 — particularly during 2022–2024 — indicating an expanding academic and industry interest in multisensory marketing and audio-driven brand experiences.

Notably, authors such as Charles Spence (2024), Elyria Kemp (2024), and Steve Keller (2024) have contributed to this rise through interdisciplinary research linking sound perception, consumer psychology, and brand reputation. The upward trend in citations reflects not only greater publication frequency but also cross-domain adoption of sonic branding concepts across hospitality, advertising, healthcare, and digital media sectors.

Sonic Branding and AI-Generated Audio in Promotion
Consumer-oriented evidence: memory, emotion, brand associations

One of the early consumer-oriented reviews notes that sound functions as a semi-conscious information cue: for example, experiments found that the number of tones in a "sogo" (sonic logo) influenced willingness to pay. (Spence & Keller, 2023; citing Vijaykumar et al., 2012) Research in food contexts showed that sonic logos with higher pitch/frequency were associated with healthier food perceptions. Techawachirakul, Pathak & Calvert (2022) found that sogos created with higher (vs. lower) frequency were matched with healthy food products. More recently, Techawachirakul, Pathak, Motoki, & Calvert (2023) demonstrated that musical timbre in sonic logos influences brand personality perceptions: e.g., "feminine" instruments (positive valence) map to sincerity, "masculine" instruments map to ruggedness, mediated by perceived pitch. Sonic branding also has been linked to brand equity variables: a 2024 study in the Indian context found that sonic branding positively affected brand associations and perceived quality, which in turn influenced brand resonance.

Emerging Trends in Sonic Branding & AI-Generated Sound
Recent scholarship reveals a paradigm shift in sonic branding from traditional jingle-based approaches toward AI-driven, context-adaptive sound design that personalizes the customer experience across digital and physical touchpoints. Researchers such as Spence and Keller (2024) emphasize that sound is no longer a passive aesthetic layer but an interactive branding tool capable of shaping cognitive and emotional responses in real time. This transformation is accelerated by developments in machine learning, neural audio synthesis, and generative AI, which allow brands to produce dynamic sound identities that evolve with user behavior and contextual cues (Abdelrazek et al., 2024).

1. Personalization Through Generative AI
AI-generated sound enables hyper-personalized branding by adapting tones, rhythms, or ambient textures according to customer profiles or environmental data. For instance, Mastercard's "Sonic Melody"—a global audio logo launched in 2022—is now augmented through AI systems that vary its composition depending on geographic region and cultural sound preferences (Mastercard Brand Report, 2023). Similarly, Coca-Cola's "Create Real Magic" campaign used AI-assisted sound design to produce immersive audio experiences aligned with generative visual art, fostering stronger emotional resonance with Gen Z consumers (Das et al., 2023).

2. AI in Contextual and Immersive Experiences
Emerging research shows that AI-driven auditory ecosystems enhance immersion within virtual and metaverse environments. The integration of adaptive soundscapes in Nike's "NIKELAND" on Roblox or Hyundai's "Mobility Adventure" demonstrates how spatial audio powered by AI algorithms can reinforce

brand identity and engagement in extended-reality spaces (Moreno-Lobato & Di Clemente, 2024). Such developments align with findings by Techawachirakul and Pathak (2023), who report that AI-modulated sonic cues increase perceived authenticity and trust by mirroring real-world sensory experiences.

3. Neuroadaptive and Emotion-Responsive Sound Design

AI is increasingly employed to map neurophysiological responses—such as heart rate variability or galvanic skin response—to auditory stimuli. Studies by Motoki et al. (2022) and Kellaris & Scott (2023) illustrate how emotion-responsive sound algorithms can optimize tempo and pitch to evoke desired emotional states. Commercial applications include Spotify's "AI DJ", which curates playlists and transitions using emotion detection, and BMW's "IconicSounds Electric", developed with film composer Hans Zimmer to create adaptive vehicle sounds that strengthen brand perception of innovation and luxury.

4. Ethical and Cognitive Implications

While AI enhances creativity, scholars caution against potential ethical and perceptual overload. Spence (2024b) argues that algorithmically generated soundscapes risk diminishing authenticity if over-automated, leading to sensory fatigue or manipulation concerns. Consequently, future research must explore transparency, data privacy, and emotional regulation in AI-mediated sonic branding (Nayak & Satpathy, 2024).

Firms integrating AI-based sound strategies—such as **Netflix's adaptive "Ta-dum" variations**, **Amazon's Alexa voice brand modulations**, or **Intel's refreshed sonic logo**—demonstrate how **AI sound analytics** can strengthen both **brand recall and emotional intimacy**. As brands compete for attention in an increasingly audio-first digital landscape, leveraging **AI-generated sound** will be central to creating differentiated, emotionally resonant brand experiences.

Research Gaps and Future Directions in Sonic Branding

Despite the growing academic attention to sonic branding, the current body of literature remains fragmented across marketing, psychology, neuroscience, and information systems (Spence & Keller, 2024). While studies confirm the emotional and perceptual power of sound in influencing consumer behavior, there remains a lack of integrative models connecting technological, psychological, and ethical dimensions of sonic identity formation (Abdelrazek et al., 2024). The following research gaps and future avenues emerge from the bibliometric analysis and contemporary literature.

1. AI and Machine Learning in Sonic Branding

Most studies focus on human-composed or static sonic identities, while AI-generated soundscapes are still underexplored academically. Research has yet to examine algorithmic creativity, brand authenticity, and emotional congruence in AI-generated sound (Keller & Spence, 2024). The challenge lies in understanding how consumers perceive AI-crafted sounds versus human-created compositions, and whether they generate comparable levels of trust and emotional attachment.

Future research should empirically test AI-aided sound synthesis in branding contexts—using deep learning and generative adversarial networks (GANs) to design adaptable sound logos that respond to real-time consumer feedback (Techawachirakul & Pathak, 2023). Cross-comparative studies between AI-driven and human-designed sound branding could reveal nuanced effects on perceived authenticity, consumer empathy, and brand love.

2. Neurobranding and Emotional Resonance

While neuroscience has been applied to visual and olfactory branding, auditory neurobranding is still emerging. Existing studies (Motoki et al., 2022; Kellaris & Scott, 2023) have identified emotional and neural activation patterns evoked by sound, but there is limited understanding of how specific sonic frequencies, harmonics, or tempo influence neurological markers such as dopamine and oxytocin release.

Future studies can employ EEG (electroencephalography) and fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) to analyze how different audio structures modulate emotional valence and memory encoding, particularly in immersive and virtual environments. Such research would bridge neuroscience with branding, allowing marketers to build emotionally optimized and neuro-aligned audio identities.

3. Sustainability and Eco-Acoustics in Sonic Branding

A notable gap exists in sustainable audio branding research. As sustainability becomes a central theme in corporate communication, few studies address how sound can symbolize environmental consciousness or how energy-efficient and ethically produced sound can contribute to sustainable brand identities (Nayak & Satpathy, 2024).

Future research should explore eco-acoustic branding, where brands design soundscapes inspired by nature to reinforce environmental responsibility. For instance, companies like IKEA and Patagonia have experimented with organic, nature-inspired sonic palettes that communicate sustainability values (Das et al., 2023). Empirical research can measure how natural vs. synthetic sounds affect consumer perceptions of brand ethics, trust, and social responsibility.

4. Multisensory Integration and Sound Perception Studies

Although the interaction between sight and sound has been explored, crossmodal congruence between auditory, tactile, and digital sensory cues remains under-researched (Moreno-Lobato & Di Clemente, 2024). Future studies can investigate how AI-enabled multisensory frameworks—integrating sound, visuals, and haptic feedback—can enhance immersive experiences in metaverse marketing and AR/VR brand environments.

Moreover, cross-cultural studies are needed to understand how sound perception varies across regions, especially in global sonic branding campaigns. Comparative research between Western and Asian sound-branding strategies can provide insights into cultural semiotics, sound

symbolism, and consumer ethnopsychology.

5. Ethical, Emotional, and Data Governance Dimensions

With the proliferation of AI-aided auditory marketing, concerns regarding data ethics and emotional manipulation are gaining prominence. The line between persuasive and intrusive audio design is becoming increasingly blurred (Spence, 2024b). Future researchers should establish ethical guidelines and transparency frameworks for the use of emotionally adaptive AI-generated sound in marketing communication.

Moreover, understanding the psychological boundaries of sonic influence—how much emotional modulation is acceptable without compromising consumer autonomy—remains a crucial, underexplored area for both scholars and policymakers.

Future research

Figure 9: Research Gaps and Future Directions in Sonic Branding Studies

Emerging Domain	Key Research Questions	Potential Methodologies
AI-Generated Sonic Branding	How do consumers emotionally and cognitively process AI-created sounds compared to human-composed audio?	Experimental design, machine learning simulation, eye-tracking, biometric measures
Neurobranding	Which neural pathways and neurotransmitters mediate sound-induced brand attachment?	EEG, fMRI, neuroimaging
Sustainability & Eco-Acoustics	How can soundscapes communicate sustainability values effectively?	Survey-based and psychometric studies, sound symbolism analysis
Crossmodal & Cultural Studies	How does sound perception differ across cultural contexts?	Cross-national comparative studies, mixed methods
Ethical Sonic AI	What are the ethical implications of personalized sound algorithms?	Policy analysis, qualitative interviews, ethics-based frameworks

Table 10: Emerging Research Domains, Key Research Questions, and Potential Methodologies

Data-driven, scalable sonic identity

Brands are increasingly moving beyond custom compositions toward modular sonic assets that can be adapted across channels (apps, in-store, IVR, podcasts). Audio identity is now treated like visual identity in brand systems. This trend is supported by agency and practitioner commentary on audio's growth in voice-first and ambient contexts.

Generative AI for audio production and personalization

The advent of generative AI tools (for music, voice, sound design) enables rapid creation of multiple audio variants, localization, A/B testing, and personalization at scale (Adtonos, 2024).

Industry data suggests strong promise: a study by Veritonic found that personalized AI-generated audio ads increased brand favourability by up to 22 percentage-points compared to control. However, challenges are also evident: marketers report that risks include loss of creative control, brand-integrity issues, and trust/consumer acceptance concerns...

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