

Mapping Global Trends in Labor Income Share Studies

Diana Hassan^{1*}, Assis Kamu², Nur Aliyah Jazuli³, Ho Chung Mun⁴

^{1,2,4}Faculty of Science and Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, ³Faculty of Computer & Mathematical Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA Sabah Branch, Kota Kinabalu Campus, Locked Bag 71, 88997, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author Email: dianahassan@ums.edu.my

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Abstract

This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of global research on labor income share to identify key trends, influential authors and journals, and collaboration networks within the field. Using Scopus as the primary data source and analyzed through Biblioshiny tools, the study examines 95 documents published between 1988 and 2025, focusing on key themes such as labor income share and labor wage share, with all selected works limited to the English language. A notable increase in the number of annual publications was observed between 2020 and 2024, with a continued upward trend anticipated. The findings also reveal that research in this area is predominantly concentrated in developed economies, particularly China, with the *Cambridge Journal of Economics* having the highest local impact, evidenced by 182 citations. Additionally, the analysis highlights key research gaps, particularly regarding the influence of technological advancements, globalization, and energy dynamics on labor income share. These findings underscore the value of bibliometric analysis in mapping the scholarly landscape and providing a foundation for future research by identifying both areas of significant academic activity and those that remain underexplored.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Labor Income Share, Wage, Labor Market Dynamics

Introduction

Labor income share defined as the proportion of national income allocated to labor rather than capital is a foundational metric for understanding economic distribution, social equity, and macroeconomic stability. As economies evolve, this indicator offers critical insights into how the fruits of growth are shared between workers and capital owners. Its relevance has intensified in recent years due to a persistent global decline in labor's share of income, raising urgent questions about rising inequality, weakened consumption, and the sustainability of economic growth. The concept of labor income share has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly due to its observed decline in many economies. Studies indicate that labor's share of income has been decreasing globally, which has implications for income inequality and economic stability (Jacobson & Occhino, 2011; Doan & Wan, 2017; Paul, 2020).

The decline in labor income share can be attributed to several factors, including technological advancements, globalization, and changes in market structures. Understanding labor income share is essential for designing effective fiscal and monetary policies, as labor income tends to be more directly linked to consumption than capital income. A lower labor share can depress aggregate demand, stall economic growth, and exacerbate social tensions. Moreover, empirical studies show that labor income share is sensitive to policy interventions such as minimum wage regulations, digital transformation, and labor market reforms making it a valuable tool for evaluating the effectiveness of economic policies (Qi-lin et al., 2020; Fu, 2022).

From a societal perspective, the labor income share is closely tied to measures of inequality such as the Gini coefficient (Erauskin, 2020). Its decline has been associated with widening income gaps, reduced social mobility, and weakened democratic institutions. Thus, research in this area contributes directly to the pursuit of social justice, inclusive development, and economic resilience. Despite its importance, the literature on labor income share remains fragmented. While numerous empirical studies explore its determinants and consequences, there is a lack of systematic synthesis and bibliometric mapping of the field. A bibliometric analysis can illuminate underexplored themes, methodological trends, and collaboration networks, offering a strategic overview of the research landscape. Such an approach not only enhances scholarly understanding but also guides future research and policy formulation by identifying gaps and emerging priorities.

In sum, the study of labor income share is both timely and consequential. It bridges microeconomic realities with macroeconomic outcomes, informs policy decisions, and addresses pressing societal challenges. By conducting a bibliometric analysis of this domain, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing research, highlight its practical relevance, and chart pathways for future inquiry.

Methodology

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using Biblioshiny tools. The data retrieval from SCOPUS database was implemented on 21 February 2025, and 95 articles were initially searched. The main reason for selecting Scopus is its accessibility, as it is approximately 60% larger than the Web of Science (WoS) database (Zhao & Strotmann, 2015). These are articles from 1988 until 2025 and written in English. The literature screening process is shown in Fig. 1 which involves four steps, namely identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The initial step involves searching for potential literature across multiple databases but in this study only focus on SCOPUS and repositories relevant to the topic of interest, such as labor income share studies. This may utilize keywords and specific criteria to gather an expansive range of articles (Almasri *et al.*, 2021). After literature is gathered, the next step is the screening of titles, keywords and language to remove irrelevant articles. This step ensures that only articles that pertain directly to the research question are retained, laying the groundwork for a focused analysis (Aguilar *et al.*, 2023). In the eligibility phase, full-text articles identified in the previous steps undergo a detailed review against pre-established inclusion criteria. This step is crucial as it assesses the methodological robustness of the included studies and their alignment with the objectives of the bibliometric analysis (Güler *et al.*, 2016). Finally, this step involves the formal inclusion and categorization of selected articles in the bibliometric analysis. This can involve organizing data for subsequent quantitative

analysis, including citation counts, author networks, and publication trends, thus allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the literature landscape around labor income share (Župić & Čater, 2014).

Bibliometric analysis in this study employs two main strategies which is performance analysis and science mapping (Assis & Ho, 2024). Performance analysis primarily concerned with measuring various dimensions of scholarly performance, including publication counts, citation metrics, and author productivity. Meanwhile, science mapping is a visualization strategy that seeks to illustrate the relationships, structures, and dynamics within a specific research area or discipline. It serves to highlight patterns and trends in the scholarly communication landscape by mapping intellectual connections, collaboration networks, and thematic evolution.

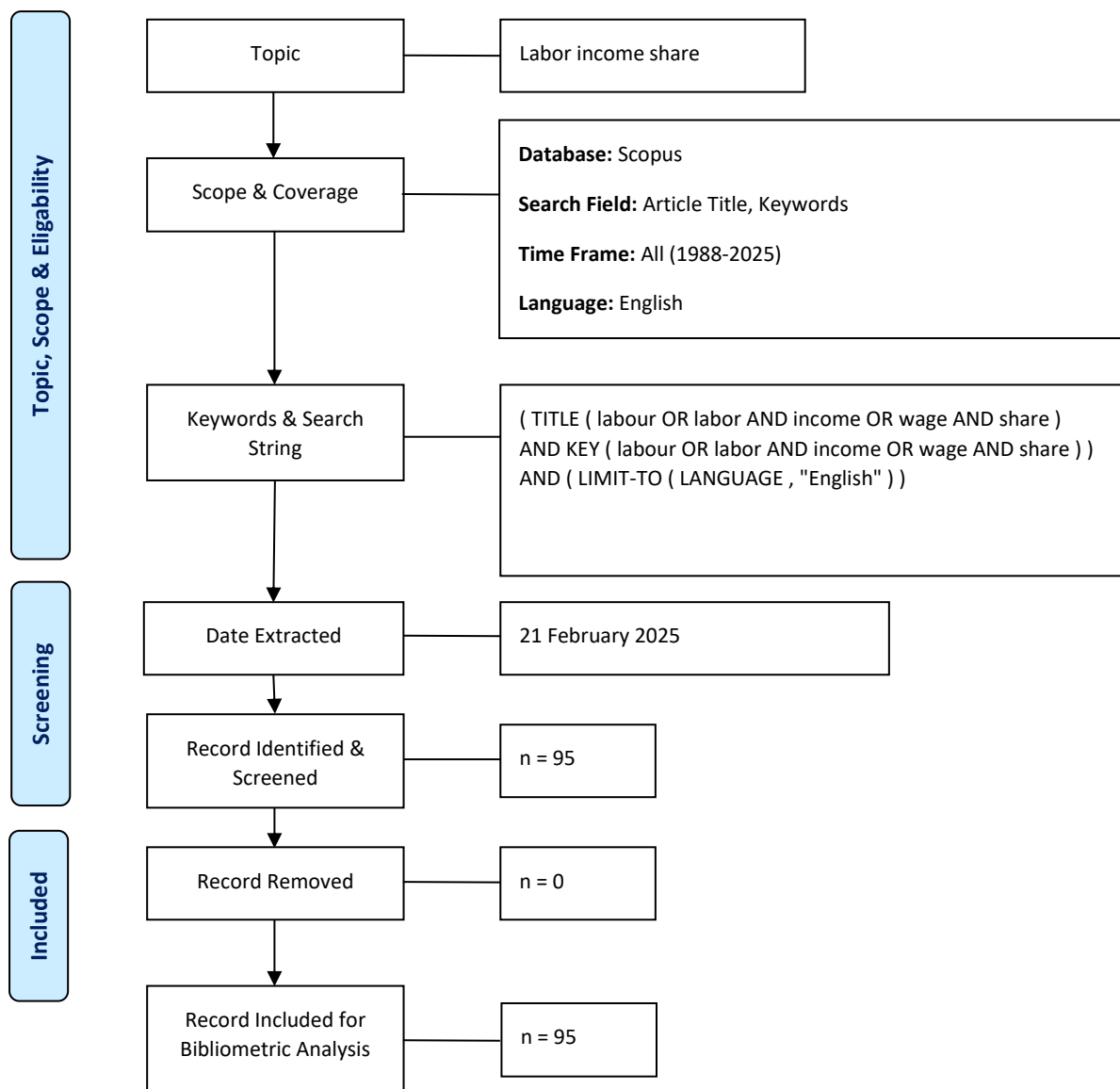


Fig. 1 Flowchart of literature screening process

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the essential details about the data, such as the timespan (from 1998 until 20205), document contents, authors information, authors collaboration and document types. In all, 213 authors contributed 95 papers overall that were included in the Bibliometric analysis. Articles accounted for 96% of the document, 1% books, 2% conferences paper and 1% of review paper.

Performance Analysis

Performance analysis in this study identifies and quantifies several aspects of research output such as the total number of publications produced by an author over a year, most relevant authors, corresponding authors's countries, most relevant sources and source local impact by total citation index.

Table 1

Main Information About Data

Description	Results
<i>Main Information About Data</i>	
Timespan	1988:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	65
Documents	95
Annual Growth Rate %	4.96
Document Average Age	4.43
Average citations per doc	10.12
References	4415
<i>Document Contents</i>	
Keywords Plus (ID)	252
Author's Keywords (DE)	272
<i>Authors</i>	
Authors	213
Authors of single-authored docs	23
<i>Authors Collaboration</i>	
Single-authored docs	24
Co-Authors per Doc	2.52
International co-authorships %	13.68
<i>Document Types</i>	
Article	91
Book	1
Conference Paper	2
Review	1

The total number of publications produced by an author over a period of time (year) on labor income share studies is shown in Figure 2, covering the years from 1988 to 2025. In the early years (1988–2000), the number of published articles remained very low or nearly zero, indicate that research activity in this field was either minimal or not widely documented. From 2000 to 2015, there were small but inconsistent fluctuations, indicating occasional increases in publications without a strong upward trend. However, starting around 2016, the number of publications began to rise gradually, with noticeable fluctuations reflecting growing research interest. A significant surge in scientific output is evident from 2020 onward, reaching a peak in 2024. A primary driver for the growing focus on labor income share studies

is the rising income inequality observed globally. The relationship between labor income share and inequality is critical; lower labor shares are generally associated with higher inequality as labor income is typically more evenly distributed compared to capital income (Bises *et al.*, 2023). Studies have increasingly highlighted this connection, suggesting that the decline in labor shares significantly contributes to worsening income disparities (Erauskin, 2020). As academic research on income inequality has proliferated, so too has the examination of labor income share as a contributory factor, motivating further inquiry into underlying mechanisms and potential policy responses.

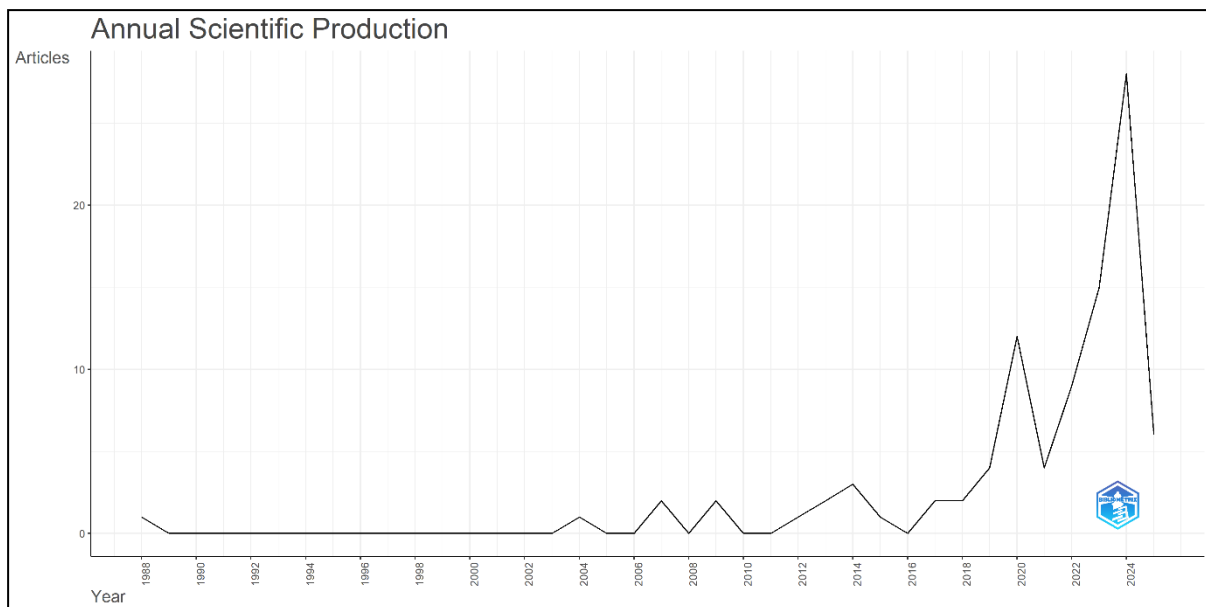


Fig. 2 Publication frequency (1988–2025)

Figure 3 shows, Jayadev A stands out as the most influential author, with 182 citations, followed by Dünhaupt P (88 citations) and Zhang S (83 citations). Other notable contributors include Alvarez-Cuadrado F, Long NV, Poschke M, and Song M-L, with impact scores ranging from 38 to 62 citations. Jayadev A's study titled "Capital account openness and the labour share of income" serves as a significant contribution to the understanding of labor income share dynamics within the broader context of globalization and capital flows. The significance of this research lies in its analysis of how increased capital account openness, defined as the degree to which countries allow capital to flow freely into and out of their economies, negatively influences the labor share of income. This relationship is pivotal for understanding income distribution trends and their implications for macroeconomic policies globally. Meanwhile, Dünhaupt P's study, "Determinants of labour's income share in the era of financialisation," is pivotal for advancing the understanding of the various determinants that influence labor's share of income amid the rise of financialisation. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of how financialisation characterized by the growing predominance of financial motives, financial markets, financial actors, and financial institutions can affect income distribution, specifically the share of income going to labor.

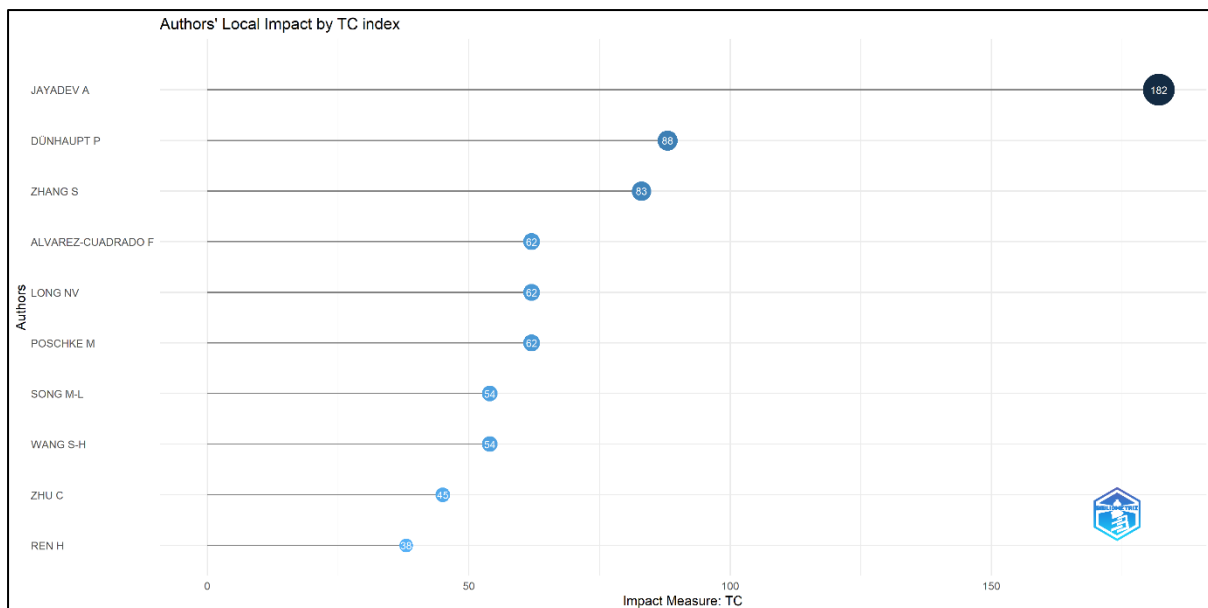


Fig. 3 Most influential authors

The distribution of corresponding authors by country, along with their collaboration patterns shown in Fig 4. This visualization is relevant to the study's objective of mapping global trends in labor income share research by identifying key contributing countries and their collaboration dynamics. From the result, China dominates as the leading contributor to labor income share research, with a significantly higher number of publications compared to other countries. However, a large portion of these studies falls under Single Country Publications (SCP), indicating a lower level of international collaboration. Italy, Turkey, the USA, Germany, and India also contribute notable research output, with a mix of SCP and Multiple Country Publications (MCP) publications, suggesting some degree of international collaboration. Other countries, including Korea, Poland, Spain, and Australia, have relatively smaller contributions but still participate in the research domain.

China's prominence as a contributor to labor income share research arises from several interrelated factors affecting its economic structure, policy orientation, and demographic trends. With its rapid economic growth and substantial shifts in labor dynamics, China provides a unique laboratory for studying labor income share which defined as the proportion of national income that is allocated to labor as opposed to capital. China's transition to a market-oriented economy since the 1980s has led to an increase in capital accumulation, paradoxically accompanied by a declining labor share. Tu *et al.*, (2024) indicates that China's labor share fell from 59.33% in 1999 to 52.06% in 2008, highlighting a broader trend of increasing income inequality. This observation aligns with findings pointing to the detrimental impacts of rising capital intensity and economic integration on labor's slice of national income (Dao *et al.*, 2017).

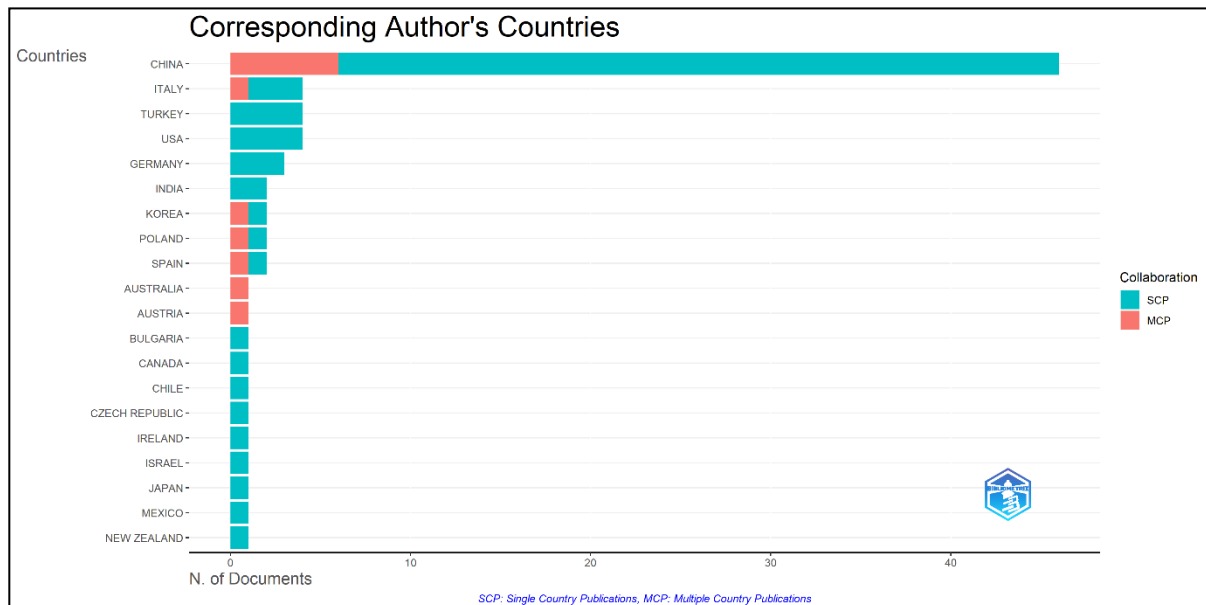


Fig. 4 Most productive countries

Figure 5 shows the most relevant sources publishing research on labor income share. The number of documents published in each source serves as an indicator of the journal's role in disseminating research on labor income share. *Economic Modelling* and *Finance Research Letters* are the two most significant journals, each contributing six publications, followed closely by *Sustainability (Switzerland)* and *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, which have published five documents each. Other notable sources, such as *Applied Economics*, *Applied Economics Letters*, and *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, contribute three publications each, reflecting their relevance to economic research and labor-related studies. The presence of journals like *Energy Economics* and *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* indicates interdisciplinary interest, suggesting that labor income share research is being explored in relation to sustainability, energy, and environmental economics.

Economic Modelling, recognized for its interdisciplinary focus, serves as a platform for articles that evaluate long-term trends in labor income shares. Contributions to this journal analyze various economic theories and modeling approaches, illuminating the mechanisms that influence labor's share of income. For example, Charpe *et al.* (2019) discuss national income distribution among factors, utilizing newly available historical data to capture long-term cycles in the labor share, thereby engaging with central themes of labor income share where they reinforces the importance of understanding these trends through rigorous modeling. *Finance Research Letters* complements this by addressing microeconomic factors related to capital accumulation and corporate behavior that affect labor income distribution. For instance, Ma *et al.* (201) investigate the role of financial constraints on corporate savings and their implications for labor income share, particularly during China's economic transition. Their findings suggest that improvements in financial conditions can stabilize or increase the labor income share.

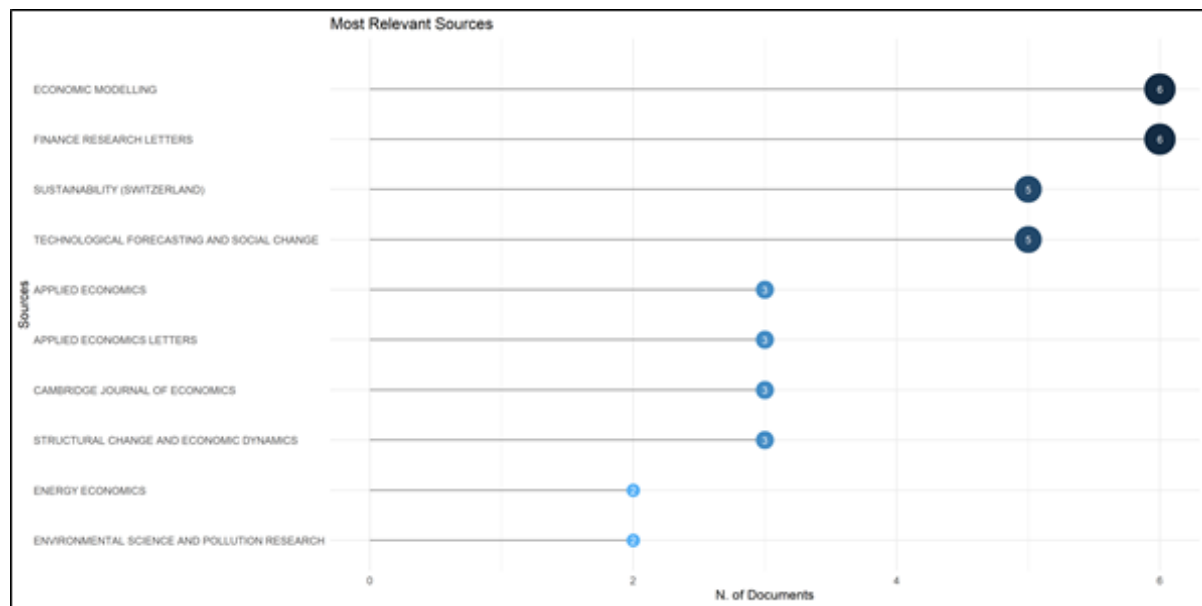


Fig. 5 Most relevant sources

The most influential journals in labor income share research based on the total citation (TC) index was shown in Fig 6. The total citation count serves as an indicator of the impact and reach of research published in these sources, helping researchers identify the most authoritative journals in labor income share studies. The *Cambridge Journal of Economics* emerges as the most influential journal, with a significantly higher citation count (276), indicating that its published research has had the most academic impact in this domain. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* follows with 67 citations, suggesting its role in interdisciplinary research that links labor income share trends to technological and economic transformations. Other notable journals, such as *Economic Modelling* (42 citations) and *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control* (42 citations), also demonstrate substantial influence, reinforcing the importance of economic and policy-oriented discussions in labor income share studies. Others journal as *Energy Policy* (54 citations), *Journal of Business Research* (38 citations), and *Energy Economics* (38 citations) show moderate impact, indicating that labor income share is increasingly analyzed in the context of energy economics, business dynamics, and policy frameworks. The presence of *Journal of Asian Economics* (35 citations) suggests a regional focus, which can be particularly relevant for Malaysia in understanding labor income trends within Asia. This analysis is valuable for Malaysian researchers as it identifies the key academic sources that shape global discourse on labor income share. By targeting high-impact journals for publication and referencing their most-cited studies, Malaysian scholars can enhance their research visibility, align with global trends, and contribute more effectively to the field. Moreover, recognizing the interdisciplinary nature of influential research can inspire new directions that integrate labor income share with broader economic, technological, and policy-related studies.

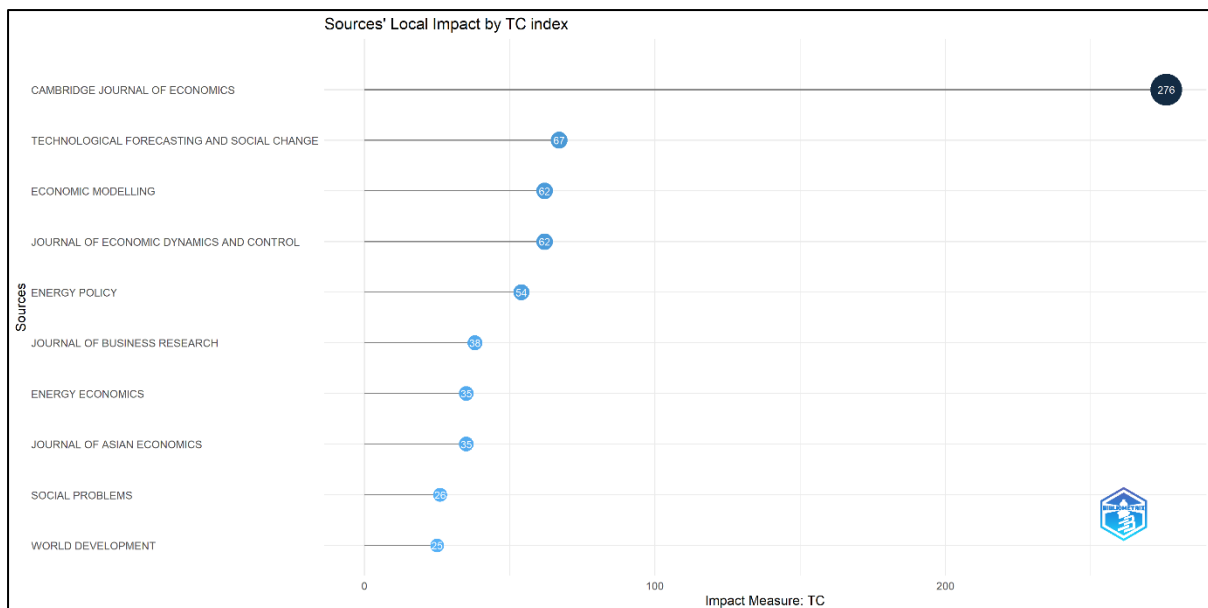


Fig. 6 Most influential journal

Science Mapping

Science mapping is a process that synthesizes and visualizes research literature to reveal the structural characteristics and dynamics of a specified area, such as studies related to labor income share. This methodology encompasses various techniques, including citation analysis, co-citation analysis, keyword analysis and bibliographic coupling, allowing researchers to identify trends, relationships, and gaps within the literature (Özdemir, 2023; Sakya *et al.*, 2021; Firmansyah *et al.*, 2024). The methodology of science mapping in this study employs Bibliometrix software to create visual outputs that represent relationships between total citations articles and authors in the literature, co-words analysis, trend topics and co-authorship analysis through collaboration network by authors. For instance, Huang *et al.* (2022) examining labor share in relation to environmental regulation reveals nonlinear relationships, suggesting that mapping these studies can elucidate hidden dynamics and interdependencies. Through this visual representation, researchers can effectively communicate their findings, further facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration and signaling the need for policy interventions in areas where labor income share is declining.

The table 2 shows the most influential articles in labor income share research, measured by total citations (TC) and TC per year. The most cited article is "Capital account openness and the labour share" by Jayadev A. (2007) in *Cambridge Journal of Economics* with 182 citations, highlighting the impact of financial liberalization on labor income share. This is followed by Dünhaupt P.'s (2017) study on financialization's effect on labor income share (88 citations), indicating a strong research focus on how economic and financial policies shape labor distribution. Another significant work by Alvarez-Cuadrado F. (2018) in *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control* explores capital-labor substitution and structural changes in labor share (62 citations), emphasizing the role of economic transformations in income distribution. Furthermore, studies focusing on regional perspectives, such as Wang S-H. (2014) in *Energy Policy* and Zhang S. (2023) in *Journal of Business Research*, analyze labor income share in China, shedding light on how carbon emissions, economic structures, and new economic growth models influence labor compensation. Other impactful articles

examine labor productivity, ownership structures, and policy interventions in labor income share dynamics, reflecting a diverse range of research interests.

Table 2

Most influential articles

Author	Article title	Total citations (TC)	TC per year
Jayadev A, 2007, Camb J Econ	Capital account openness and the labour share of income	182	9.58
	Determinants of labour's income share in the era of financialisation	88	9.78
Dünhaupt P, 2017, Camb J Econ	Capital-labor substitution, structural change and the labor income share	62	7.75
Alvarez-Cuadrado F, 2018, J Econ Dyn Control	Review of hidden carbon emissions, trade, and labor income share in China, 2001–201	54	4.50
Wang S-H, 2014, Energy Policy	New structural economic growth model and labor income share	38	12.67
Zhang S, 2023, J Bus Res	Labor productivity, wages, nationality, and foreign ownership shares in Thai manufacturing, 1996–2000	34	1.55
Ramstetter Ed, 2004, J Asian Econ	The impact of China's pilot carbon ETS on the labor income share: Based on an empirical method of combining PSM with staggered DID	27	9.00
Xiao D, 2023, Energy Econ	Slicing the Pie: State Policy, Class Organization, Class Integration, and Labor's Share of Israeli National Income	26	2.00
Kristal T, 2013, Soc Probl	The decline of the labor income share in Mexico, 1990–2015	25	3.57
Ibarra Ca, 2019, World Dev	Does environmental regulation affect the labor income share of manufacturing enterprises? Evidence from China	24	8.00
Cui G, 2023, Econ Model			

Co-word analysis evaluates the co-occurrence of keywords in academic literature, enabling to identify prevailing trends, research hotspots, and intellectual interconnections among themes, in this case labor income share. The strength is lies in its ability to synthesize vast amounts of bibliometric data, thereby enhancing the understanding of how different concepts interrelate across publications. Co-word analysis could reveal intricate connections among keywords, illuminating publication patterns and citation trends in labor income share studies. Figure 7 shows the frequency of co-occurring keywords, such as income distribution

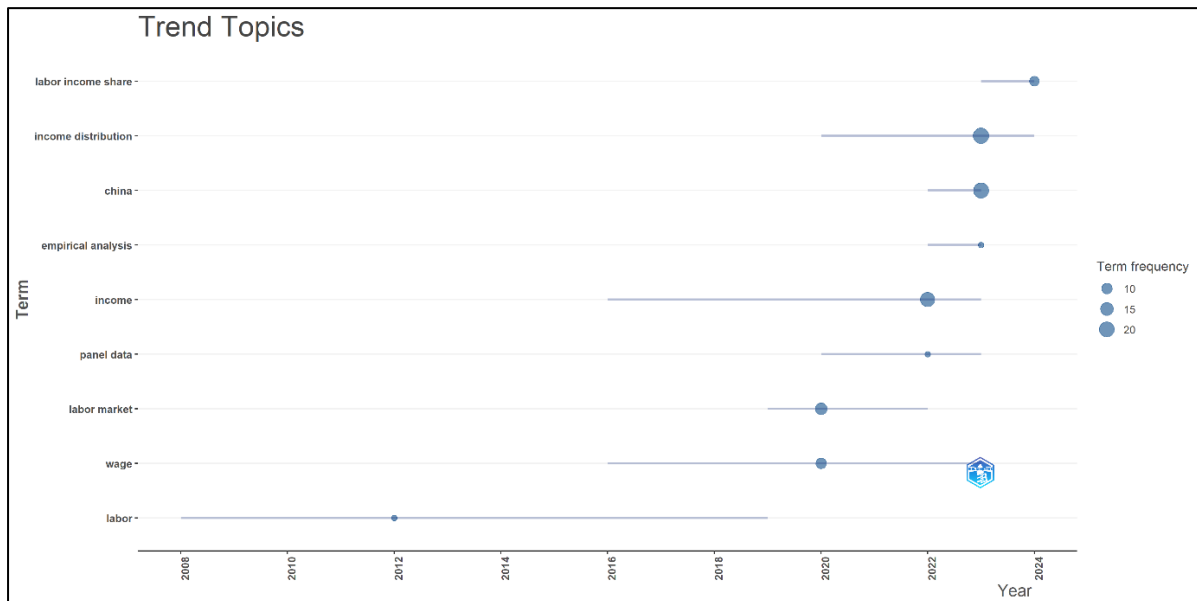


Fig. 8 Trend topics

Co-authorship analysis examines the collaboration networks formed through joint publications among authors. This offers insights into the patterns of collaboration within a research field, revealing the relationships and networks that authors build with one another as they co-create knowledge. The significance of collaboration in enhancing a researcher's reach, potentially increasing citation rates, demonstrating the integrated nature of these networks in scholarly communication and allows to detect prominent authors and institutions actively contributing to a field, which can guide future collaboration efforts. Each node in the Figure 9 serves as an author, while the connecting lines illustrate co-authorship relationships, with larger names signifying authors with higher influence or more collaborations. It is evident that certain clusters of authors work closely together, indicating the formation of distinct research groups focused on specific aspects of labor income share. The most outstanding author, Zhang S, present central amount co-authorship, show a significant contribution to this research field. Other marked clusters are Zhang Y, Chen J and Jiang Y, all of whom exhibit strong co-authorship networks. The presence of multiple isolated clusters suggests that while there are established research teams, there is limited cross-group collaboration, which may indicate regional or institutional silos in the field.

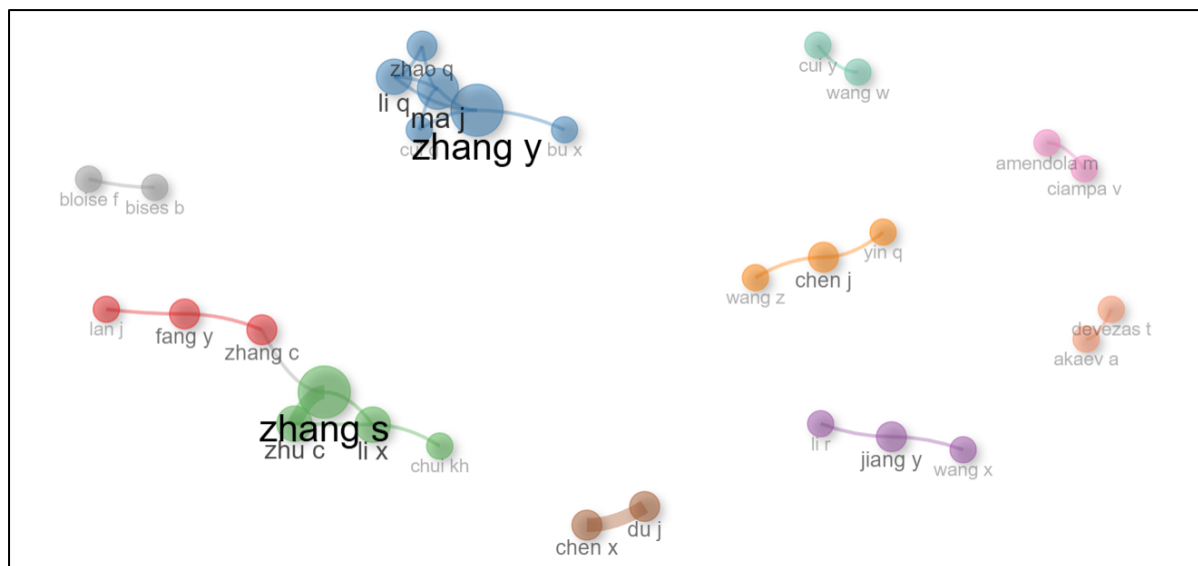


Fig. 9 Co-authorship analysis: collaboration network by authors

Future Research Direction

This study may help other researchers gain a deeper understanding of the existing literature and inspire future research on labor income share. The most corresponding author's countries shows that the existing research is concentrated on China, the U.S., and Europe, so next should focus on expanding regional and sectoral analysis, particularly in Southeast Asia, where labor market dynamics differ significantly from those of developed economies. For example, how labor income share evolves in emerging markets like Malaysia, considering factors such as industrial development, wage structures, and economic policies. Other than that, enhance dataset of labor income share studies by consider source from database Web of Science, Dimensions, PubMed, and Lens.org to ensure a broader and more representative bibliometric analysis. While Scopus provides extensive coverage, integrating other databases will also help reducing the risk of bias and improving the robustness of research outcomes. A wider data approach would also facilitate the inclusion of regional studies that might be underrepresented in a single database.

Implication

The implications of this bibliometric analysis on labor income share studies can drive academic research, inform policy formulation, and contribute to fulfilling future research gaps within the field. Firstly, this analysis highlight key themes such as income distribution, labor markets, wage dynamics, and macroeconomic influences, which have been widely studied. Then, the collaboration network analysis shows that research in this field is largely dominated by countries such as China, the USA, and European nations, with limited representation from Southeast Asia. Furthermore, identifying the most influential sources, authors, and cited articles enables policymakers to utilize structured, evidence-based knowledge to shape policies addressing income distribution, wage regulation, and labor market inequalities. Ultimately, this bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of global research trends, highlighting key authors, influential journals, and major collaboration networks that allows to identify leading contributors, emerging topics, and potential research gaps that need further exploration.

Limitations and Recommendations

The limitations of this bibliometric analysis on labor income share studies primarily stem from database dependency. This study relies heavily on Scopus as the main data source, which encompasses a vast range of journals and conferences across multiple disciplines, making it a valuable resource for capturing the breadth of research on topics like labor income share. For instance, Scopus has the expansive database has been noted to include a larger number of journals compared to other databases like Web of Science. This extensive index ensures that output of this analysis can give a comprehensive view of publication activities, citation dynamics, and collaborative trends across diverse scholarly outputs, which is essential for understanding complex research areas. Positively, utilizing a single database minimizes inconsistencies that can arise when merging data from multiple sources. Each database has its own indexing practices and citation styles, leading to potential biases and discrepancies in data accuracy. As noted by Pathmanandakumar *et al.* (2021), single-database studies reduce the complexity involved in data management and filtering, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of bibliometric analyses, while acknowledging that this method does have its limitations.

Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of global research trends, collaboration networks, and thematic focus areas in labor income share studies. By utilizing Scopus as the primary data source and employing bibliometric techniques, this study identifies key contributors, influential journals, and major research clusters that have shaped the labor income share studies. The findings highlight the growing academic interest in labor income share, particularly in relation to income distribution, wage dynamics, macroeconomic policies, and labor market inequalities. Also, this analysis reveals that research is main dominated by scholars from China, the USA, and European countries, while participation from developing nations remains limited. This suggests a need for greater global collaboration and the expansion of research efforts in underrepresented regions. Thus, this study provides an essential framework for academics aiming to navigate complex interrelations within labor income share scholarly domains effectively.

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