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Impact of Published Articles on Trade Liberalization from 1980-2015: A Bibliometric Study

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Abstract

In this research, the viable impact of scholarly research on trade liberalisation by a bibliometric approach from 1980-2015 is examined. The paper analysed 886 academic articles extracted from the ISI Web of Science Core Collection database. Trade liberalisation research is notably interdisciplinary, with articles principally in journals for economics, international relations, and planning development. This study found that the field became evidently viable with more than ten articles per year from 1990 – 2015. The proportion of articles with at least one citation from 1980 – 2015 is 56.43%. The top 100 articles have a minimum of 25 citations. Given this, this study created a citation matrix trend to determine two decade's total citation per year. The data are statistically analysed. Furthermore, the study produced a cloud map showing the Web of Science research categories. Based on the results of this study, insight into citation forecast for future research to advance knowledge on trade liberalisation is provided.

Key Words: Article word count, citation matrix, publication trends, trade liberalisation, Web of Science

Introduction

Trade liberalisation gained momentum in the 1980s and is described as the elimination of restrictions on the exchange of goods and services among territories. It is expressed as internationalization (Madsen & Servais, 1997); glocalization (Roudometof, 2005); the death of distance (Cairncross, 2001); the world is flat (Friedman, 2005); and the late 20th and 21st century central factor (Asobie, 2001; Dix-Carneiro & Kovak, 2015; Flammer, 2015; Muhammad, 2013; Muhammad et. al., 2017a). The collapse of the Berlin Wall (Williams, 2007) and the disintegration of Soviet Union (Brubaker, 1996) broke down walls, opened windows and lessen divide (Darraj, 2010). Undoubtedly, the efficient transformation in communications and transport systems further reduces barriers. The world further shrinks with the development of information technologies allowing unrestricted capital flows and the digitalization of work manifested in the rise and global acceptance of free trade. Enhanced investment in technologies and financial markets enlarged and integrated economies. For more than three decades the global economy has increasingly integrated stimulating economic growth and decline through increased trade and investments boosting the roles of private businesses in wealth creation than that of the state.

Bibliometric studies succinctly present scholarly scientific feats from a diverse field of studies by presenting the present and predicting the future accomplishment (Garfield, 1979; Hirsch, 2007). The bibliometric research outputs analytically enhance the understanding of the elements in the scholars' contribution in the diverse field of studies to further enhance viability (Akhavan, Ale Ebrahim, Fetrati, & Pezeshkan, 2016; Muhammad et. al., 2017b). Importantly, the impacts of published articles are assessed by the quantum of citations received at any given time signifying the contribution of the author, article or journal (Hirsch, 2007; Patterson & Harris, 2009). Bibliometric data can be extracted from well-known online publication databases including SCOPUS, Thomson Reuter Web of Science (WoS) or Google Scholar depending on the limits and objective of the study. WoS is a highly organised top-ranked multidisciplinary collection of scientific publications (Akhavan et al., 2016). So, this study used WoS as the main database for searching the keywords terms. The growth in trade liberalisation studies is reported in scientific articles.

According to the information from the Web of Science Core Collection publication database, more than 4,900 articles have been published on the topic trade liberalisation from 1980 to 2015. The tremendous growth of literature in the area is required to keep up with trends on trade liberalisation research. Despite the significant growth of the liberalisation studies, to our understanding, we have not found existing bibliometric study on trade liberalisation.

This paper attempted to provide a comprehensive citation analysis report from 1980 to 2015. The study, unlike previous researches, is a clear departure from descriptive exposition in a most bibliometric presentation to a highly quantitative prescription, bibliometric articles can be imperative in understanding research trend. It is significant in determining most recent research development on trade liberalisation and to guide other scholars on how to constructively advance existing knowledge.

Methodology

A comprehensive research of literature searched for papers related to trade liberalisation was conducted using the Web of Science Core collection database. This database is accepted widely as the scientific and technical literature hub (Ahmed, Adam, Ghafar, Muhammad, & Ale Ebrahim, 2016; Maghami, Navabi Asl, Rezadad, Ale Ebrahim, & Gomes, 2015). The research carried out a bibliometric search on papers published on trade liberalisation from 1980 to 2015. Microsoft Academic research tool is used in keywords selection. The single and combined keywords used in the search for articles are (TI = ("Trade liberalization")) AND (TS = ((Adjustment) OR (Agreements) OR (Canada) OR (Competition) OR (Costs) OR (Countries) OR (Demand) OR ("Developing countries") OR (Dynamics) OR ("Economic growth") OR (Economy) OR (Efficiency) OR (Employment) OR (Export) OR (Firms) OR (Gains) OR (Globalization) OR (Growth) OR (Impact) OR (Industry) OR (Inequality) OR (Integration) OR ("International trade") OR (Investment) OR (Labour) OR (Market) OR (Mexico) OR (Model) OR (Monopolistic) OR ("Panel data") OR (Performance) OR (Plants) OR (Policy) OR (Pollution) OR (Prices) OR (Productivity) OR (Quality) OR (Reforms) OR (Returns) OR (Scale) OR (Tariffs) OR (Taxes) OR (Unemployment) OR ("United States") OR (Wage) OR (China) OR (Import) OR ("Free trade") OR ("Comparative advantage") OR ("Productivity growth") OR ("Trade Policy") OR ("Low cost") OR ("Open economy") OR (Access) OR (Welfare))). The search results were refined to include data relevant to economics, international relations, and planning development. After carrying out an extensive search in WoS core collection, 886 academic articles were collected. IBM SPSS 21 software for Windows was used to analyse the collected data. Independent one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilised in analysing the total citation and citation per year data. Tukey Post-hoc test was further used to precisely determine the significant variables. While Spearman's correlation was used to analyse for the prospective relationship between total citation received by articles and the length of abstract and article title word counts. $P<0.05$ was considered significant at 95% confidence interval. Consequently, the bibliometric analysis determines viability and impact of reported studies on trade liberalisation. The dominant trends on citation research stream are extensively reported. Data obtained from the bibliometric research could be used to determine the feat achieved by the academic area of study.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table one showed the distribution of articles published on trade liberalisation in the Web of Science Core collection database from 1980 to 2015. These articles in all are 886. The articles published before 1990 were less than 10 per year. Evidently, from 1990 to 2015, the number of articles published rose to 52 in 2009 and 2010. Notably, articles published from 2000 to 2015 represent 72% of the total articles published since 1980. This signified that the volume of trade liberalisation articles is experiencing a huge increase when compared with the earlier decades in this field.

Table 1: Distribution of Article Publication

Publication Year	Number of Articles	Percentage of Total Publication (%)
2015	47	5.305
2014	35	3.95
2013	38	4.289
2012	46	5.192
2011	50	5.643
2010	52	5.869
2009	52	5.869
2008	51	5.756
2007	50	5.643
2006	41	4.628
2005	27	3.047
2004	35	3.95
2003	39	4.402
2002	28	3.16
2001	31	3.499
2000	26	2.935
1999	36	4.063
1998	36	4.063
1997	27	3.047
1996	14	1.58
1995	18	2.032
1994	15	1.693
1993	18	2.032
1992	17	1.919
1991	12	1.354
1990	17	1.919
1989	5	0.564
1988	7	0.79
1987	3	0.339
1986	2	0.226
1985	3	0.339
1984	2	0.226
1983	1	0.113
1982	1	0.113

1981	2	0.226
1980	2	0.226

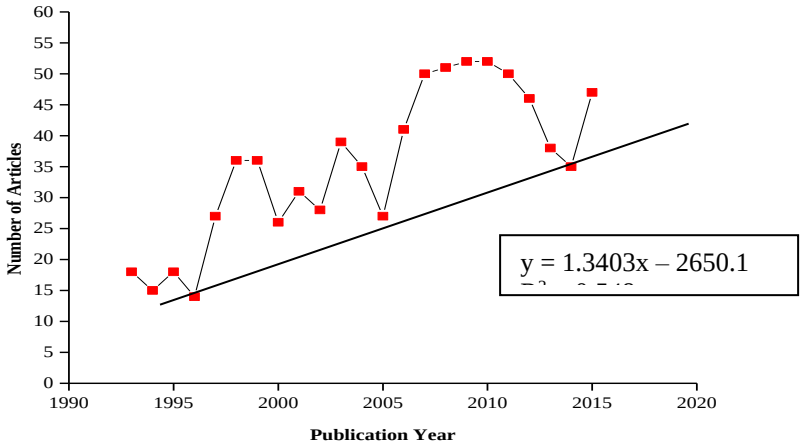

Fig. 1: Distribution of article publication

The articles on trade liberalisation became ostensibly viable from 1990 to 2015 with more than ten articles published per year (see Fig. 1). Besides the year range chosen also covers more than 95% of the publications in the field. The trend of publications is still on the rise and regression equation (y = 1.3403x-2650.1, R^2=0.548) postulates that the number of articles will still be increasing decades to come.

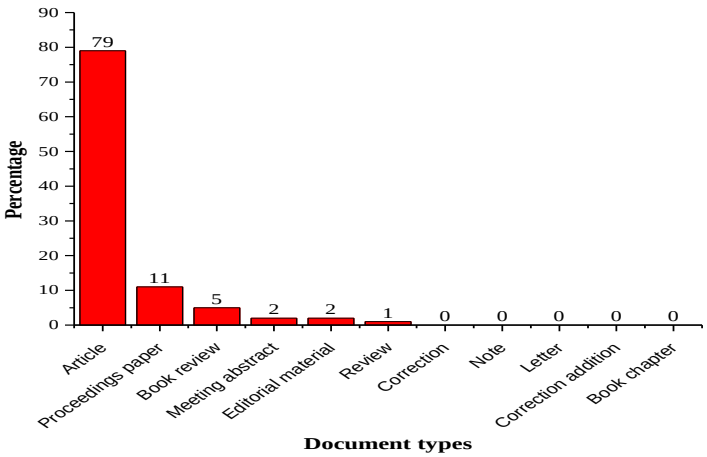

Fig. 2: Document types of all 886 publications on trade liberalisation

Results from Web of Science Core Collection database document types on the topic trade liberalisation reporting academic submission is indicating that 79% articles are published in journals. Other document types reported are proceeding papers 11%, book reviews 5%, meeting abstracts 2%, editorial materials 2%, reviews 1%, correction 0%, note 0%, letter 0%, correction addition 0% and book chapter 0% (see Fig. 2).

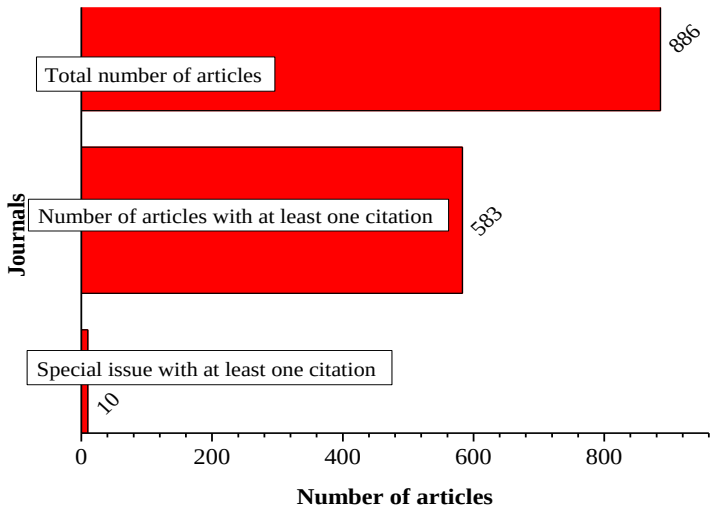

Fig. 3: Proportion of articles with at least one citation to total articles published including special issues

Of the 886-total number of papers recorded in WoS core collection database from 1980 to 2015, 66.03% have received at least one citation (see Fig. 3). The total citation for all cited article is 9201. Fig. 4 present articles published in special issue journals indicating that the article entitled "employment and wage effects of trade liberalisation: The case of Mexican manufacturing" published by the journal of labour economics received 57 as the highest citation. Table 2 gave more details on special issue journals and their citation matrix.

Table 2: Articles in special issues of journals published with at least one citation since 1980

S/N	Article Title	Journal Name	Total Citation	Average Citation Per Year	Publication Year
1	Employment and wage effects of trade liberalisation: The case of Mexican manufacturing (Revenga, 1997).	Journal of Labour Economics	57	2.85	1997
2	Trade liberalisation and the allocation of labour between households and markets in a poor country (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2006).	Journal of International Economics	10	0.91	2006
3	Trade liberalisation, unemployment, and inequality with endogenous job destruction (Ranjan, 2012).	International Review of Economics and Finance	7	1.4	2012

4	Product Quality, Wage Inequality, and Trade Liberalization (Ma & Dei, 2009).	Review of International Economics	6	0.75	2009
5	Environmental implications of trade liberalisation on North American transport services: the case of the trucking sector (Fernandez, 2010).	International Environmental Agreements-Politics Law and Economics	5	0.71	2010
6	Trade Liberalisation, Product Complexity and Productivity Improvement: Evidence from Chinese Firms (Yu, Ye, & Qu, 2013).	World Economy	3	0.75	2013
7	Trade liberalisation and employment: Verdoorn's law meets the Asian Tigers (Abizadeh & Grant, 1999).	Canadian journal of development studies	2	0.11	1999
8	Processing trade, export intensity, and input trade liberalisation: evidence from Chinese firms (Tian & Yu, 2015).	Journal of the Asia-Pacific Economy	1	0.5	2015
9	Measuring China's trade liberalisation: A generalised measure of trade restrictiveness index (Chen, Ma, & Xu, 2014).	Journal of Comparative Economics	1	0.33	2014
10	Trade and Transboundary pollution: quantifying the effects of trade liberalisation on CO2 emissions (Hubbard, 2014).	Applied Economics	1	0.33	2014

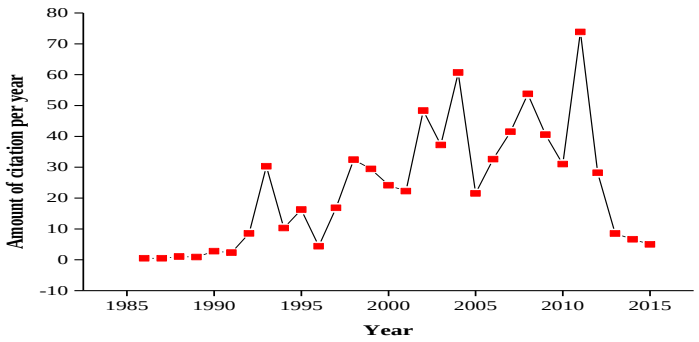

Fig. 4: Citation matrix trend of last three decades using total citation

Fig. 4 showed the trend of total citation received by all articles since 1995. Total citations received by all articles on a yearly basis denote that the trend is decreasing on average. The highest total citations were recorded in 2004. The following years recorded fewer citations with the lowest registered in 2015. To make a better assessment on the yearly citation trend citation per year was computed and represented in Fig. 5. Fig. Five shows that citation per year has been increasing from 1985 on

average with 2011 recording the highest. Interestingly, this trend had started decreasing since 2011. Consequently, reports from citation per year indicate that articles published in 2011 have been better cited and used when compared with 2004 articles which have the highest total citations.

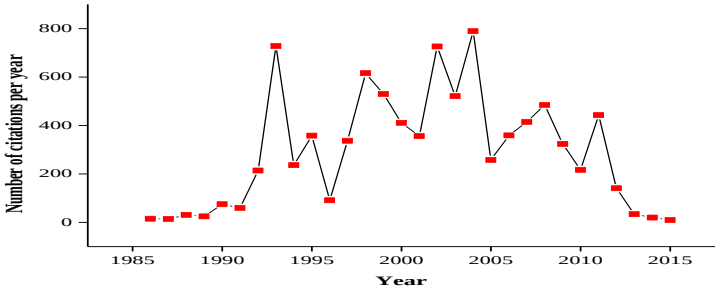

Fig. 5: Citation matrix trend of last two decades using citation per year

Inferential/Analytical Statistics

Table 3: Testing the mean total citation among three decades

Year Range	Mean Total Citation (SEM)	F-Stat (df)	P-Value
1986-1995	175.60 (71.68)	5.139 (2)	0.013*
1996-2005	463.50 (68.08)		
2006-2015	244.80 (58.39)		

All data represent (average standard error mean)**.** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilised in analysing the data and $p<0.05$ was taken to be statistically significant. Turkey posthoc test was also used.

The total citation counts of articles published from 1986-1995 and 1996-2005 are statistically significantly different with total citation counts with 1996-2005 articles receiving more citations (463.50 $\pm$ 68.08) as compared to 1986-1995 (175.60 $\pm$ 71.68). Conversely, total citations of articles published between 2006 -2015 are not significantly different ($P = 0.743$) when compared with 1986-1995 and $P= 0.068$ when compared with 1996 – 2005.

Table 4: Testing the mean average citation per year among three decades

Year Range	Mean Citation Per Year (SEM)	F-Stat (df)	P-Value
1986-1995	7.34 (3.05)	5.139 (2)	0.004**
1996-2005	29.73 (5.09)		
2006-2015	32.16 (6.93)		

All data represent (average standard error mean)**.** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilised in analysing the data and $p<0.05$ was taken to be statistically significant. Turkey posthoc test was also used.

Citation per year is significantly different (P= 0.004) across decades 1986-1995, 1996-2005 and 2006-2015. Precisely, comparing between 1986-1995 and 1996-2005 P= 0.015 and between 1986-1995 and 2006-2015 P=0-007.

Table 5: Correlation between total citations of top 100 highest cited articles with article title and abstract word count

	Mean (SEM)	Sig. (2-tail)	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Total Citation	59.55 (5.270)		
Article Title Word Count	10.16 (0.035)	0.127	-0.152
Abstract Word Count	103.84(6.249)	0.991	-0.001

Values represent Mean (SEM). The analysis was done using non-parametric spearman's correlation to test all data. P<0.05 was considered to be significant statistically.

In analysing the top 100 highest cited articles which represent 67% (5996) of total citation (9012). These 100 articles have a minimum of 25 citations. Base on correlation analysis abstract and title word count do not determine the total citation of an article (P>0.05) r=0.15).

First 100 highest cited articles: Choosing first 100 highest cited articles to represent approximately 67% (5996) of total citation (9012). In addition, all 100 articles have 25 and above citations.

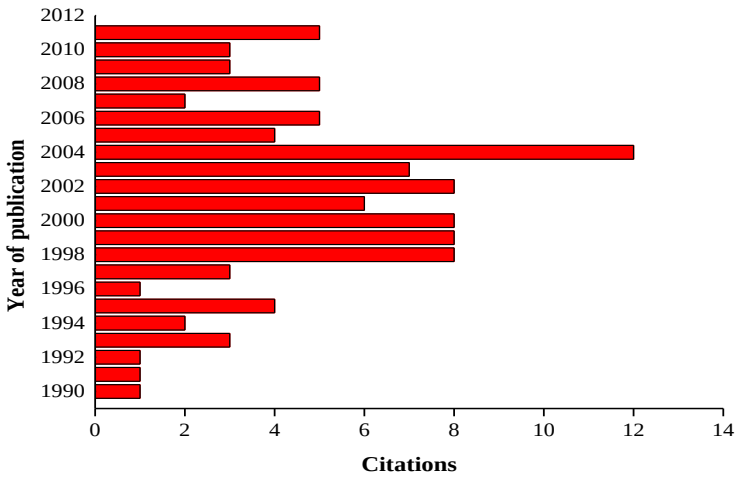

Fig. 6: Top 100 cited articles yearly distribution

Of note, it was discovered that not any of the top cited papers were published before 1990 (see Fig. 6). In translation, it means that 1980s articles are not being highly used or their contributions are not of much public interest again. The year 2004 recorded the highest number of highest cited articles which corresponded to the result of total

citations matrix. This further reiterates the fact that the year 2004 produced some of the best articles in the field which are actively contributing to the field.

Fig. 7: Cloud map showing the Web of Science research categories

The prominence of keywords was explored to obtain their appearance according to WoS categories of publications. Fig. 7 showed the cloud map for all the research categories of the top 100 highest cited articles. Prominent categories according to hierarchy are Economics, Business Development, Planning and Environmental, Relation, Finance and International. On the same note, Fig. 8 showed the country distribution of authors publishing these 100 highest cited articles. Obviously, the majority of the publications came from authors in USA and England. Other countries of note include Netherlands, Canada, Australia, Brazil and France. In addition, Table 6 presented the details of all papers that have received at least 100 citations in the field.

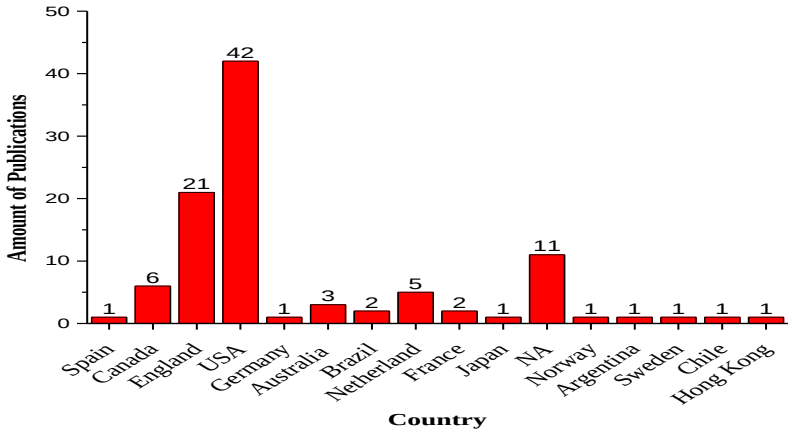

Fig. 8: Country Distribution of Publications with Highest Citation. NA= Not Available.

Table 6: Articles with 100 citations and above

Articles	Total citation	Citation per year

Pavcnik, Blom, Goldberg, and Schady (2004) Trade liberalisation, exit, and productivity improvements: Evidence from Chilean Plants. The Review of Economic Studies, 69(1), 245-276	320	22.85
Edwards (1993)Openness, trade liberalisation, and growth in developing countries. Journal of Economic Literature, 31(3), 1358-1393	299	13.0
Trefler (1993) Trade liberalisation and the theory of endogenous protection: An econometric study of US imports policy. Journal of Political Economy, 138-160	206	8.956
Amiti and Konings (2007) Trade liberalisation, intermediate inputs, and productivity: Evidence from Indonesia. The American Economic Review, 1611-1638	200	22.22
Ben-David (1993) Equalising Exchange: Trade liberalisation and income convergence. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 653-679	172	7.478
Wacziarg and Welch (2008) Trade liberalisation and growth: New evidence. The World Bank Economic Review, 22(2), 187-231	170	21.25
Winters, McCulloch, and McKay (2004) Trade liberalisation and poverty: the evidence so far. Journal of economic literature, 42(1), 72-115	147	12.25
Lopez (1994) The environment as a factor of production: the effects of economic growth and trade liberalisation. Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, 27(2), 163-184	138	6.27
Tybout and Westbrook (1995) Trade liberalisation and the dimensions of efficiency change in Mexican manufacturing industries. Journal of International Economics, 39(1), 53-78	136	6.476
Bustos (2011) Trade liberalisation, exports, and technology Upgrading: Evidence on the impact of MERCOSUR on Argentinian Firms. The American economic review, 101(1), 304-340	135	27.00
Hanson and Harrison (1999) Trade liberalisation and wage inequality in Mexico. Industrial & Labour Relations Review, 52(2), 271-288	124	7.29
Panagariya (2000) Preferential trade liberalisation: the traditional theory and new developments. Journal of Economic Literature, 38(2), 287-331	121	7.56
Egger and Kreickemeier (2009) Firm Heterogeneity and The Labour Market Effects of Trade Liberalization. International Economic Review,50(1), 187-216	106	15.14
Krishna and Mitra (1998) Trade liberalisation, market discipline and productivity growth: new evidence from India. Journal of development Economics, 56(2), 447-462	100	5.55

Journals publishing top articles are depicted in Fig. 10. Journal of International Economy published most of the highest cited articles publishing more than 12 articles of the 100 highest cited articles; followed by Economic Journal which published 10 of these articles. Quarterly Journal of Economics and Journal of Economic Literature published the least amount of the highest cited articles. The Impact Factor is believed to have a corresponding impact on citation matrix. Surprisingly, in our study after accessing current impact factors of this journals, Journal of Economic Literature which has 9.2 Impact Factor published the least number of these 100 highest cited articles while Journal of International Economy with 2.3 Impact Factor published highest number of these 100 articles.

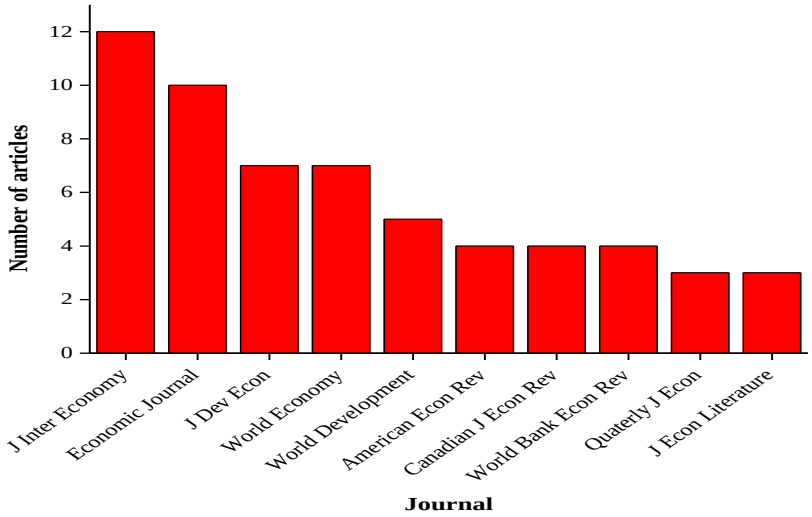

Fig. 9: The top 10 journals that published the highest number of top cited papers

Table 7: Top Journals, Their Corresponding Sum of Citations and Impact Factors.

Journal	Sum of Citations	Number of Articles	Current Impact Factor	5Yrs Impact Factor
J Inter Economy	556	12	2.368	2.745
Economic Journal	465	10	2.336	NA
J Dev Econ	436	7	1.798	2.792
World Economy	241	7	0.727	1.2
World Development	141	5	1.965	2.713
American Econ Rev	421	4	2.69	4.08
Canadian J Econ Rev	141	4	0.554	NA
World Bank Econ Rev	267	4	1.488	2.202
Quarterly J Econ	275	3	6.654	9.795
J Econ Literature	497	3	9.24	9.43

Table 8: Correlation between Total Citations of Top 100 highest Cited Articles with Article Title and Abstract Word Count

	Mean (SEM)	Sig. (2-tail)	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Total Citation	59.55 (5.270)		
Article Title Word Count	10.16 (0.035)	0.127	-0.152
Abstract Word Count	103.84(6.249)	0.991	-0.001

Values represent Mean (SEM). The analysis was done using non-parametric spearman's correlation to test all data. $P<0.05$ was considered to be significant statistically.

Discussion

The driving force of this research is by far not restricted to give an overview on the research topic of trade liberalisation. However, it is an effort to appraise academic literature from WoS on how the topic emerged within three and one-half decades. This study provided comprehensive evaluation of the research output on the topic under review. The outcome of this analysis indicated that the number of articles published has a significant relationship with upsurge and acceptance of trade liberalisation. The concept starts making waves in the 1980s with less than ten articles published every year before 1990 as "the new world order" (Rupert, 2012). The intense integration of the world in the 1990s to 2015 encouraged more research in the field of trade liberation. Remarkably, 72% of the total number of articles was published from 2000 to 2015. This result implies the relevance of the field of study. The articles are evidently viable from 1990 – 2015 by receiving more than ten articles annually. Furthermore, of the total number of articles extracted from 1980-2015, 66.03% received at least one citation. The highest total citations received are in 2004 with the subsequent years receiving fewer citations.

This study is unique in the sense that the result of the study is both descriptive and statistics, unlike most previous bibliometric research that is mostly descriptive. Notably, total citation counts of articles reported between 1986-1995 and 1996-2005 are not significantly different ($p<0.05$) with total citation counts with articles receiving more citations (463.50 ± 68.08) as compared to 1986-1995 (175.60 ± 71.68). Contrarily, total citations of papers reported between 2006 and 2015 are not significantly different ($P=0.743$) when compared with 1986-1995 and $P= 0.068$ when compared with 1996-2005. Consequently, we observed that citation per year is significant across decades 1986-1995, 1996-2005 and 2006-2015. Accordingly, in evaluating the top 100 highest cited articles, we found that they represent 67% of the total citations. Moreover, the 100 highly cited articles all have 25 and above citations. It is observed that none of the highly cited papers was published before 1990. This portrays the fact that the concept and process of trade liberalisation gained momentum in 1990 up to the new millennium with 2004 producing some of the finest papers. Additionally, trade liberalisation research in US and England accounts largely of studies conducted worldwide. The information cites Netherland, Canada, Australia, Brazil and France accordingly as the topmost countries with the top figure of publications from the WoS categories. The work also presented the journal with the highest number of cited articles publishing more than 12 and ten articles of the highest cited papers. Most importantly, the research discovered that the journal with the highest Impact Factor 9.2 published the lowest figure of the 100 highly cited papers. The journal with 2.3 Impact Factor curiously published the topmost number of the 100 highest cited papers.

Conclusion

The world is increasingly becoming a single market place at a time when free market principles are strongly propagated (Tupy, 2016). Countries open their borders and allow free access for exchange of goods and services. In the last three and half decades, trade liberalisation has quickened as an after-effect of different elements especially, the fall of the Berlin Wall, improved information and communications technology, efficient transport system and growth in global financial markets. Research on trade liberalisation will most likely be viable and will have made a huge impact with more articles likely to be reported many more years to come. 2004 published the greatest number of highest cited papers which corresponded to the result of total citations matrix as well. This emphasised the fact that the year 2004 produced some of the best papers in the field which are actively contributing to the area of study. Markedly, total citation counts of papers published in 1986-1995 and 1996-2005 are not significantly different ($p<0.05$) with total citation counts with papers receiving more citations (463.50 ± 68.08) as compared to 1986-1995 (175.60 ± 71.68). Furthermore, the 100 highly cited papers all have 25 and above citations. It is observed that none of the highly cited papers was published before 1990. Based on these results policy makers can evaluate the research output and decide appropriate policy directions to adopt. This study will help scholars to know the performance and major trends in trade liberalisation research streams. Future research is expected to determine the distribution of words in article titles and keywords plus.

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