



Tax Avoidance and Evasion by Multinationals: A Comprehensive Bibliometric Analysis

Kaoutar Lahrari*, Siham Sahbani

Laboratory of Research and Studies in Management, Entrepreneurship and Finance (LAREMEF), The National School of Commerce and Management, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco. *Corresponding Author's Email: kaoutar.lahrari@usmba.ac.ma

Abstract

This article analyzes the emerging trends in tax avoidance and evasion by multinational companies between 2010 and 2024, placing the issue within the broader context of increasing global concern about corporate tax behavior and its implications for public finances and economic equity. Using a bibliometric approach, the study examines a dataset of 396 publications extracted from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. Descriptive analyses were conducted to explore the distribution of publications over time, leading journals, citation patterns and the most active authors, institutions and countries contributing to this field of research. In a second phase, keyword evolution, co-occurrence networks and thematic concentration were analyzed using the Biblioshiny package in R, allowing for the identification of dominant research streams and their evolution over time. The findings reveal a significant and continuous growth in scholarly interest, particularly after major international tax reforms and increased regulatory scrutiny. The results also show a strong geographical concentration of research in developed countries, alongside a growing trend toward international collaboration. Thematic analysis highlights recurrent concepts such as tax havens, debt shifting, capital structure, transfer pricing and location decisions. These findings enabled the classification of determinants into internal factors—such as corporate governance, managerial incentives and strategic orientation—and external factors, including regulatory frameworks, institutional pressures and tax competition. Overall, this study provides comprehensive insights for both corporate decision-makers seeking to optimize tax strategies and policymakers aiming to design more effective and equitable tax systems.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Multinational Corporations, Profit Shifting, Tax Avoidance, Tax Evasion, Tax Havens.

Introduction

Multinational corporations (MNCs) that have expanded their international presence by setting up subsidiaries abroad show stronger adoption of tax avoidance practices (1). While tax avoidance is generally based on practices that comply with tax laws (2, 3), tax evasion constitutes an explicit violation of these laws and an intentional falsification of taxable income (4). The tax avoidance practices of MNCs are multiple and reflect a strategic desire to optimize the tax burden. These techniques include transfers of revenues by geographical area, redevelopment of the company, setting up in tax havens and exploiting loopholes in tax legislation (5). However, these tax avoidance practices can be a potential source of legitimacy challenges to social and institutional structures, insofar as they can encourage citizens to adopt excessive tax avoidance behaviors, thereby undermining social cohesion (6). Multinational taxation has become a

central research focus. Significant scientific contributions include a bibliometric review of tax evasion research, which revealed growth in the annual volume of relevant publications since 1998 (7). Similarly, past research combining bibliometric and systematic methods on contemporary practices and factors influencing tax avoidance and evasion on a global scale, showed that the implementation of effective tax governance requires a multidimensional approach integrating ethical standards, a sound regulatory framework and enhanced international cooperation (8). Another bibliometric study focused on major works and influential authors concerning the link between tax decisions and taxpayer behavior (9). Finally, past research explored the relationship between taxation and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), analyzing aspects such as tax compliance, the impact of the tax burden and the effectiveness of incentives (10).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted reuse, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

(Received 15th February 2026; Accepted 25th August 2026; Published 19th October 2026)

This body of bibliometric work, taken as a whole, has yet to focus specifically on MNCs. Despite these valuable contributions, none of these reviews jointly map the internal and external determinants specific to MNC tax behavior and their bibliometric evolution over a 15-year window using both Scopus and WoS databases - a dual focus that constitutes the specific contribution of the present study. Tax management mechanisms fall into three categories: those that are legally acceptable (tax avoidance), those that are aggressive (tax aggressiveness) and those that are illegal (Tax Evasion). In the literature, several concepts describe the phenomenon whereby a company tries to reduce its tax burden. The meaning of the concepts 'tax avoidance', 'tax planning', 'tax management', 'tax optimization', 'tax aggressiveness' and 'tax evasion' depends on the author's intentions and attitude (2, 11).

In order to provide a quantitative overview and to analyze the current state and future prospects of multinational tax avoidance and evasion, a bibliometric analysis of published scientific works has been carried out. It aims to:

- (a) map the evolution of scientific publications on the subject;
- (b) identify the most influential authors, sources, institutions and countries;
- (c) highlight trends in research themes and new approaches; and
- (d) propose paths of research to fill the gaps identified in the existing literature.

To achieve these objectives, this review is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How has the scientific literature on tax avoidance and

evasion by MNCs evolved over time?

RQ2: Who are the main contributors (authors, sources, institutions and countries) to this literature?

RQ3: What are the key and emerging themes in this field of research?

RQ4: What future research prospects can be envisaged based on bibliometric analysis?

In order to better understand the dynamics surrounding tax avoidance and evasion on an international scale, particularly in the context of MNCs, this article is structured into three main sections. The first section proposes a conceptual clarification and theoretical framework. The second part describes the methodology adopted, based on a bibliometric analysis of the literature. Finally, the third part presents the results and discussion.

Conceptualization and Theoretical Background

To present theoretical precision in this paper, these three major themes can be categorized along a legality continuum. On one side tax avoidance and tax planning are legal and generally accepted corporate practices. Tax aggressiveness lies in an intermediate position, as it exploits the letter of the law departing from its spirit. On the other side, tax evasion and tax fraud are illegal by definition, requiring intentional deliberate concealment or misrepresentation of taxable income. Making this distinction is necessary to classify the concepts discussed in the following subsections and throughout the literature reviewed in this study. Table 1 showed the comparative overview of these different tax management concepts.

Table 1: Comparative Overview of Tax Management Concepts

Concepts	Definition	Legal status	Related terms
Tax Avoidance	Legal reduction of taxes by implementing various methods, mechanisms and practices.	Legally acceptable	Tax planning Profit shifting Income shifting Tax optimization
Tax Aggressiveness	Exploitation of loopholes in existing legislation, which can lead to a bad-faith interpretation of the letter of the tax law	Legal but ethically contested	Aggressive tax planning
Tax Evasion	Intentional non declaration or falsification of taxable income.	Illegal	Tax fraud
Tax Fraud	Deliberate breach of tax laws to obtain an illegal tax advantage and/or causing an illegal tax loss	Illegal	Tax evasion

Tax Avoidance

For some researchers, tax avoidance refers to a legal approach that enables companies to reduce their taxes by implementing various methods, mechanisms and practices (2, 3). For others, it includes anything that reduces a company's taxes relative to its pre-tax income (12). Basically, there are two approaches to the strategy of reducing tax payments: minimizing revenues or increasing company costs (13). It is measured by the effective tax rate, which assesses the company's ability to reduce its tax burden (14–16). Consequently, tax avoidance can be a tool for increasing shareholder wealth and reducing tax costs (17).

Tax avoidance can also be referred to as profit shifting, a concept linked mainly to corporate groups, which allocate income and expenses between various legally-linked entities, with the aim of shifting profits from high-tax jurisdictions to lower-tax ones, thereby reducing the group's total tax burden (2, 18).

Tax Evasion

The concept of tax evasion has been widely used by researchers, without there being a consensus on a common definition of the term. Some have defined it as a crime committed by a taxpayer who refuses to declare taxable income through illicit measures (3, 19–22). Others define it as a variety of

commercial transactions ranging from the perfectly legal to the illegal (23).

Tax fraud is another concept used by researchers to describe illegal activity in the field of taxation. It consists of behavior aimed at obtaining an illegal tax advantage and/or causing an illegal tax loss (24). Tax fraud occurs when a taxpayer deliberately breaks the law to avoid paying tax (25, 26).

Tax Aggressiveness

Tax aggressiveness can be based on potentially dubious tax positions, achieved by exploiting loopholes in existing legislation, which can lead to a bad-faith interpretation of the letter of the tax law. Although these practices are legal, they may be deemed unethical and may violate the spirit of the law (27, 28). It has also been defined as the act of 'taking large tax positions based on relatively weak facts' (29) and as an activity enabling the reduction of the tax base through tax planning activities, which can be legal, illegal or in the grey zone (30). As such, it poses a threat to the company's reputation as it is unethical (31).

Past research argued that tax aggressiveness provides tax savings for the company and its shareholders (32). However, potential non-tax costs can also be significant, especially depending on the company's ownership and control structure. Figure 1 summarizes these concepts along the legality continuum described above.

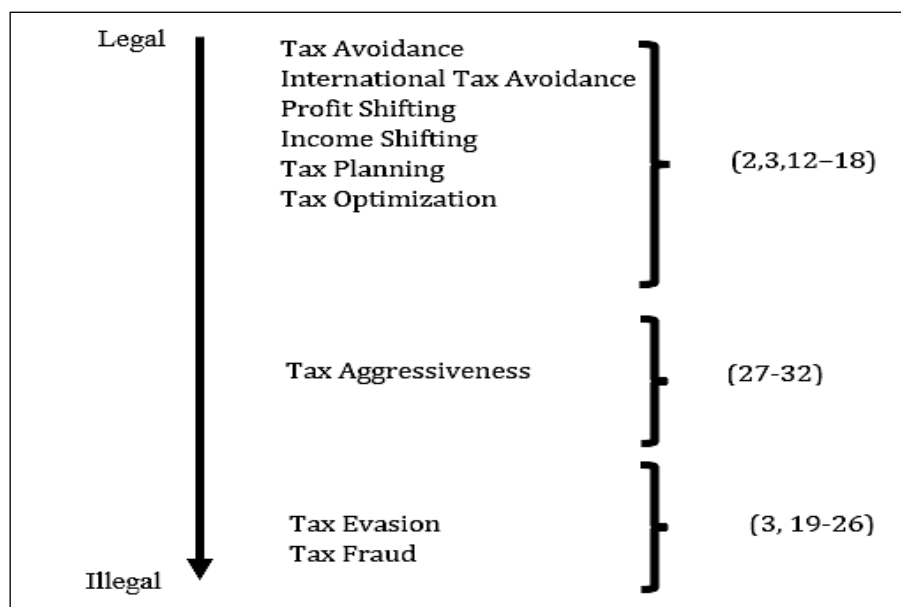


Figure 1: Summary of the Main Concepts Associated with Tax Avoidance and Evasion

Tax Avoidance and Evasion by MNCs

Multinational corporations employ various tax management practices to reduce their tax burden, notably income shifting and debt shifting. Income shifting, or 'profit shifting', involves moving profits generated by subsidiaries in high-tax countries to subsidiaries located in lower-tax jurisdictions, mainly through transfer pricing manipulation, financing arrangements, or strategic localization of intellectual property (33–36). Debt shifting involves transferring intragroup debt between subsidiaries in different countries to deduct interest paid in high-tax jurisdictions, thereby reducing the taxable base and overall tax burden (33, 34).

Tax havens play a key role in these strategies. Some specialize in profit-shifting services, such as Panama or the Cayman Islands, while others combine these services with hosting actual economic activities, as in the case of Ireland (37). Corporate structuring also contributes to tax optimization: a parent company located in a high-tax country may establish a controlled subsidiary in a lower-tax jurisdiction (38).

The channels for profit shifting are multiple. MNCs use transfer pricing to reduce taxable profits in high-tax countries by artificially increasing the prices of imported goods and services while lowering those of exported goods and services (39). Relocating patents and intangible assets allows companies to shift income generated from innovation to subsidiaries in lower-tax countries (40). Under-capitalization, through high-interest intragroup loans, is also used to transfer profits to low-tax jurisdictions (39). Finally, the use of tax losses allows both the intertemporal carryforward of income and the transfer of profits between entities (41).

The choice of tax practices by MNCs is determined by several internal and external factors. Among the internal determinants is the capital structure. Companies often favor debt financing over equity, as borrowing allows them to reduce their tax burden while mitigating information asymmetry between the firm and investors (38). The international structure of the group is another key internal factor: the presence of foreign subsidiaries enables the implementation of profit-shifting strategies by artificially moving income to low-tax jurisdictions (40). Capital intensity also affects taxation. Highly capital-intensive firms generally

have a lower effective tax rate due to depreciation on their capital investments (42).

External determinants include regulation and tax control. Anti-avoidance measures, such as rules on transfer pricing and thin capitalization, limit profit shifting by MNCs (41). Additionally, MNCs can take advantage of weak tax controls in certain countries, particularly developing countries, to manipulate transfer prices to their benefit (43). Finally, the effective tax rates in different jurisdictions influence subsidiary location choices: MNCs structure their subsidiaries according to tax regimes and rates to minimize their overall effective tax rate (35).

Methodology

The bibliometric method employed in this study consists of a research approach using database management technologies and statistics from various published scientific works, in order to analyze scientific developments and research trends (44). To ensure the rigor and comprehensiveness of the selection process, this study drew on two major databases: Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus and examined all publications on multinational taxation between 2010 and 2024.

The Scopus and WoS databases were selected because they provide the most comprehensive and reliable metadata, due to the extent of their content and their dynamic expansion (45). The following terms in publication titles, abstracts and keywords were selected: ("tax planning" OR "tax optimization" OR "tax management" OR "tax aggressiveness" OR "tax avoidance" OR "tax evasion" OR "income shifting" OR "profit shifting" OR "tax fraud") AND ("MNC" OR "multinational companies" OR "multinational corporation" OR "multinational firms").

This search identified 569 publications, 348 from Scopus and 221 from WoS. After consolidation of results, deletion of 166 duplicates, exclusion of two articles dated 2025 that fell outside the study period and exclusion of five records with incomplete metadata, 396 publications were retained for the final analysis. Duplicate records were identified and removed using the function of the Bibliometrix package in R. Bibliographic data were collected from the Scopus and WoS databases. Bibliometric analysis was carried out using the Biblioshiny package in the R software (46). The study combines descriptive analysis

(authors, institutions, sources and countries) and analytical analysis (thematic maps and historiography).

Various indicators were adopted to distinguish scholarly impact: total citations (TC) and average citations per document indicate raw and volume-adjusted impact; the h-, g- and m-indices balance

productivity, high-impact output and academic age; and the average number of co-authors per document together with the international co-authorship rate demonstrate the extent of research collaboration in the field.

Figure 2 presents the PRISMA flowchart illustrating the selection process.

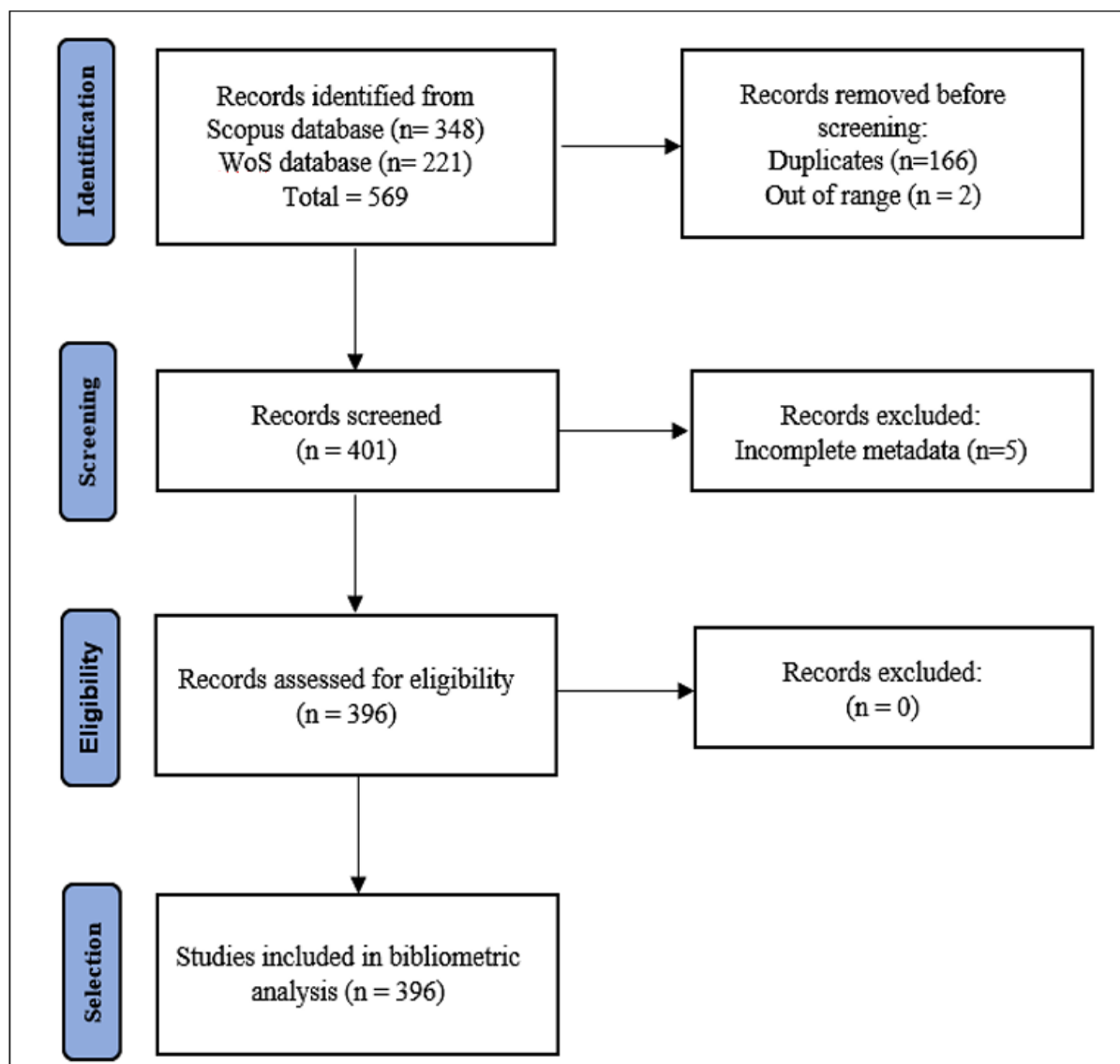


Figure 2: Research Methodology using PRISMA Statement

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Analysis of the consolidated WoS and Scopus databases identified 396 scientific publications in the field of multinational tax avoidance and evasion between 2010 and 2024, from 231 sources. These papers, produced by 703 authors, generated a total of 887 keywords to facilitate database searches, while 115 documents were the result of research carried out by a single author,

indicating that most of the published works were the result of cooperation between several researchers. An average of 15.38 citations per document testifies to the impact of all publications. Furthermore, an average of 2.38 co-authors per paper and a rate of 18.69% of international co-authors demonstrate the importance of partnerships between authors from different countries in this field of research. The complete statistical data are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Overview of The Final Dataset Used for Bibliometric Analysis

Description	Results
Timespan	2010:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	231
Documents	396
Annual Growth Rate %	16.35
Document Average Age	5.91
Average citations per doc	15.38
Keywords Plus (ID)	610
Author's Keywords (DE)	887
Authors	703
Authors of single-authored docs	106
Single-authored docs	115
Co-Authors per Doc	2.38
International co-authorships %	18.69

Annual Publication Volume Analysis

An annual growth rate of 16.35% was recorded, showing the growing importance and significant recognition of this research topic. Publications increased significantly over the period studied,

with the years 2023 and 2024 recording the highest number of scientific publications (50 research papers each), followed by 2020 (40), 2017 (36), 2019 (35), 2021 (32), 2018 and 2022 (29), 2016 (24) and 2014 (16). Figure 3 presents the annual scientific production.

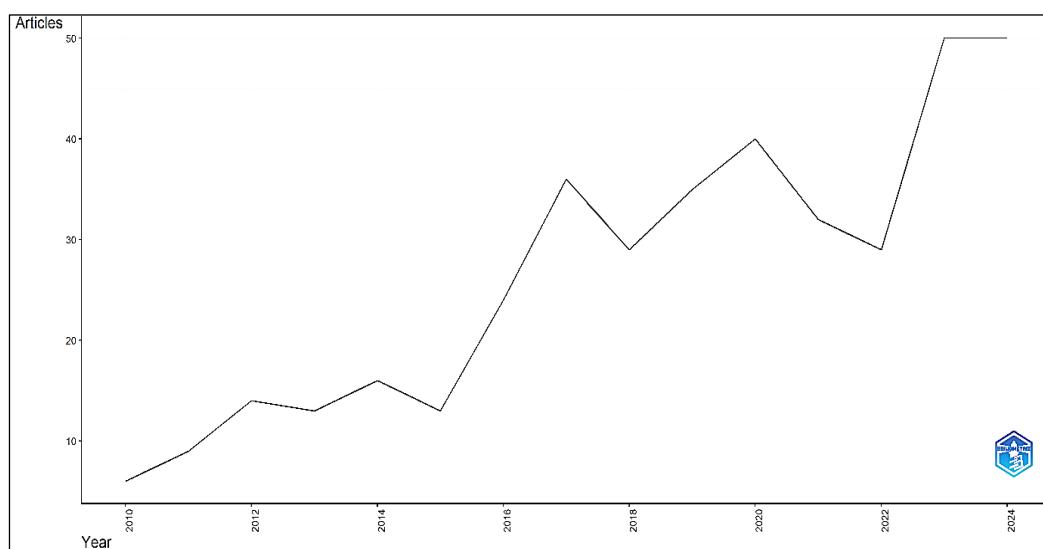


Figure 3: Annual Scientific Production (2010–2024). The Number of Publications Moved from 6 in 2010 to a Peak of 50 in Both 2023 and 2024

Citations Analysis

Table 3 shows the annual distribution of publications with average total citations (TC) per article and per year. Average citations per article showed considerable variability over the years, peaking in 2012 at 44 citations per article, followed by a gradual decline. After another high in 2017 (27.19 citations per article), the general trend

shows a steady decline, with values falling to 11.94 in 2021, 6.14 in 2022, 4.06 in 2023 and just 0.72 in 2024. This recent decline can be explained in part by the fact that the most recent articles have not yet accumulated enough time to be widely cited, unlike older publications which benefit from a longer horizon of academic visibility. Figure 4 illustrates this trend in average citations per year.

Table 3: Average Citations Per Year

Year	Number of Articles	Mean TC per Art	Mean TC per Year	Citable Years
2010	6	9.17	0.57	16
2011	9	32.22	2.15	15
2012	14	44.00	3.14	14
2013	13	29.46	2.27	13
2014	16	21.50	1.79	12
2015	13	20.92	1.90	11
2016	24	26.21	2.62	10
2017	36	27.19	3.02	9
2018	29	18.03	2.25	8
2019	35	16.49	2.36	7
2020	40	15.62	2.60	6
2021	32	11.94	2.39	5
2022	29	6.14	1.53	4
2023	50	4.06	1.35	3
2024	50	0.72	0.36	2

Note: TC = Total Citations.

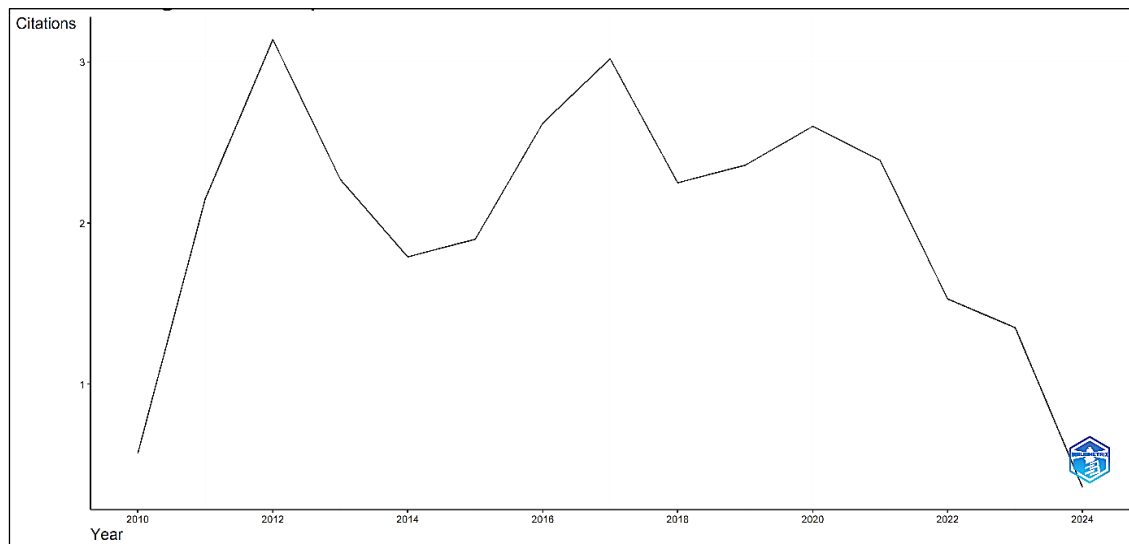


Figure 4: Average Citations Per Year. Citation Rates Peaked in 2012 (44 Citations Per Article) and Declined to 0.72 by 2024

Most Relevant Sources

Figure 5 and Table 4 show the top 10 journals by number of publications, h-index, g-index, m-index and total citations. The Journal of Public Economics published 22 papers between 2010 and 2024 and stands out with the highest values for h-index [11], g-index [22] and total number of citations [672], indicating high visibility and significant impact in the field. The National Tax Journal and Accounting

Review follow with 14 and 10 publications, h-indexes of 9 and 8 and TCs of 367 and 318 respectively. International Tax and Public Finance published 15 papers and has an h-index of 7 and a g-index of 14. In contrast, Finanz Archiv and European Economic Review have the lowest indices, with an h-index of 3 each. The m-index highlights Accounting Review [0.8] and Journal of Public Economics [0.733] as the journals with the most consistent academic influence.

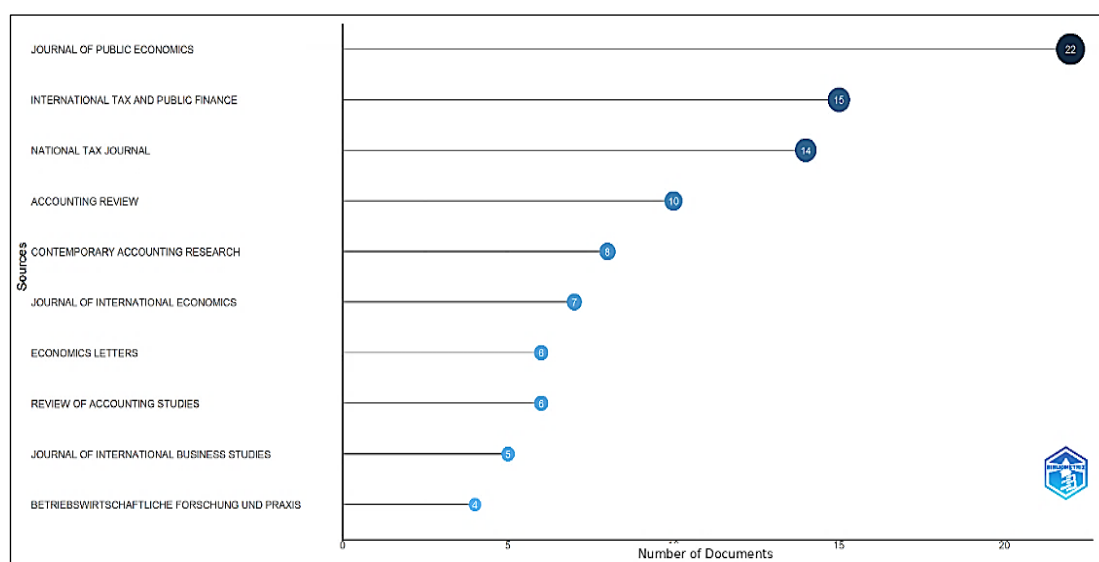


Figure 5: The Top 10 Most Relevant Sources. The Journal of Public Economics Leads with 22 Publications, the Highest h-index [11] and the Highest Total Citation Count [672]

Table 4: Top 10 Journals with h, g and m index as well as Total Citation Counts

Source	h-index	g-index	m-index	TC
Journal of Public Economics	11	22	0.733	672
National Tax Journal	9	14	0.643	367
Accounting Review	8	10	0.800	318
International Tax and Public Finance	7	14	0.583	213
Journal of International Economics	6	7	0.375	264
Contemporary Accounting Research	5	8	0.357	132
Journal of Accounting Research	4	4	0.286	269
Review of Accounting Studies	4	6	0.286	315
European Economic Review	3	4	0.214	62
FinanzArchiv	3	4	0.250	18

Note: TC = Total Citations.

Authors, Institutions and Collaborative Network Analysis

Figure 6 shows the top 10 contributing authors in the field of multinational tax avoidance and tax management between 2010 and 2024. Riedel N. tops the list of authors with 11 publications (2.7% of total papers). Two studies with 180 and 127 citations respectively (47, 48), show that the lower a subsidiary's tax rate relative to other subsidiaries

in the group, the higher its level of investment in intangible assets. Overesch M. is ranked second with 9 published papers (2.27%). His research (49, 50) focused on profit transfer tools, including transfer pricing and licensing and the effect of restrictive tax measures on foreign direct investment. Wamser G. is the third author with 8 publications (2%), with research (49, 51) focused on the role that domestic debt plays in the transfer of profits to low-tax countries.

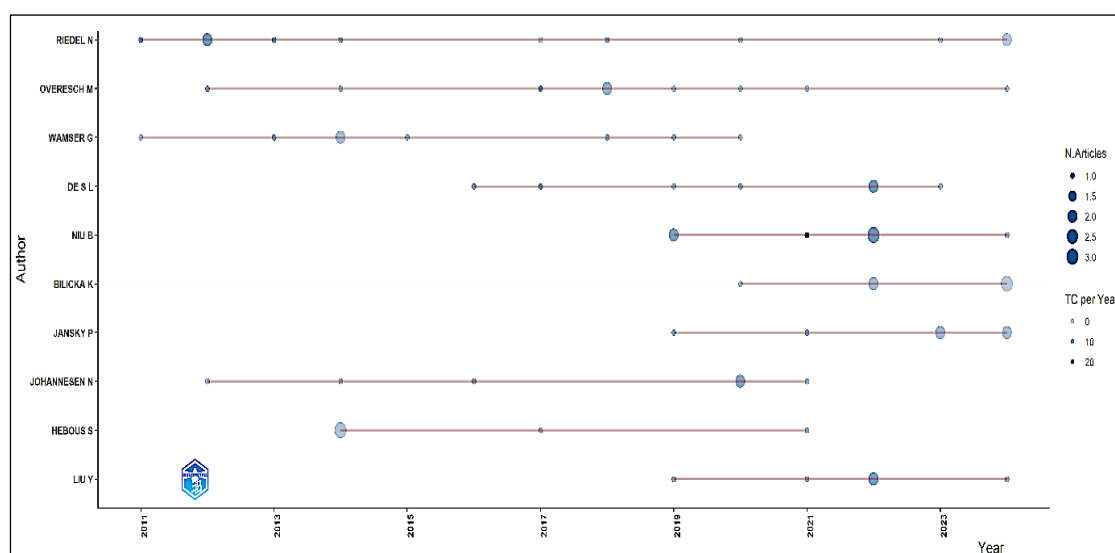


Figure 6: Top 10 Authors by Volume of Publications

Table 5 shows the scientific production of the top 10 institutions contributing to research in the field. University of Copenhagen and University of Oxford dominate with 15 papers each. These institutions explore the main determinants of tax avoidance

and evasion, namely regulation, sector of activity, location and perception of tax fairness. The collective production indicates an international commitment to improving research in the field of multinational tax management and evasion.

Table 5: Key Institutions in The Field of Multinational Tax Avoidance and Evasion

Affiliation	Articles
University of Copenhagen	15
University of Oxford	15
Charles University Prague	14
University of Munich	12
University of Munster	12
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology	11
Utah State University	11
Goethe University Frankfurt	10
University of Cologne	10
University of California Berkeley	9

Figure 7 illustrates several collaborative networks between authors. The first network links Riedel N., Johannesen N., Hebous S., Jansky P., Wier L., Torslov T., Knoll B., Dharmapala D. and Garcia-Bernardo J. and has contributed to the development of thinking on international tax management practices adopted by MNCs such as transfer pricing, relocation of real economic activity, profit shifting and tax havens (33, 47, 52–

56). The second network consists of Wamser G., Overesch M. and Egger P. and analyzes the effect of tax legislation on MNCs' investment and bilateral internal debt decisions (57–60). The third network consisting of Williams B., De Simone L., Klassen K., Laplante S. focuses on the factors MNCs take into account when adapting their tax decisions (61–64).

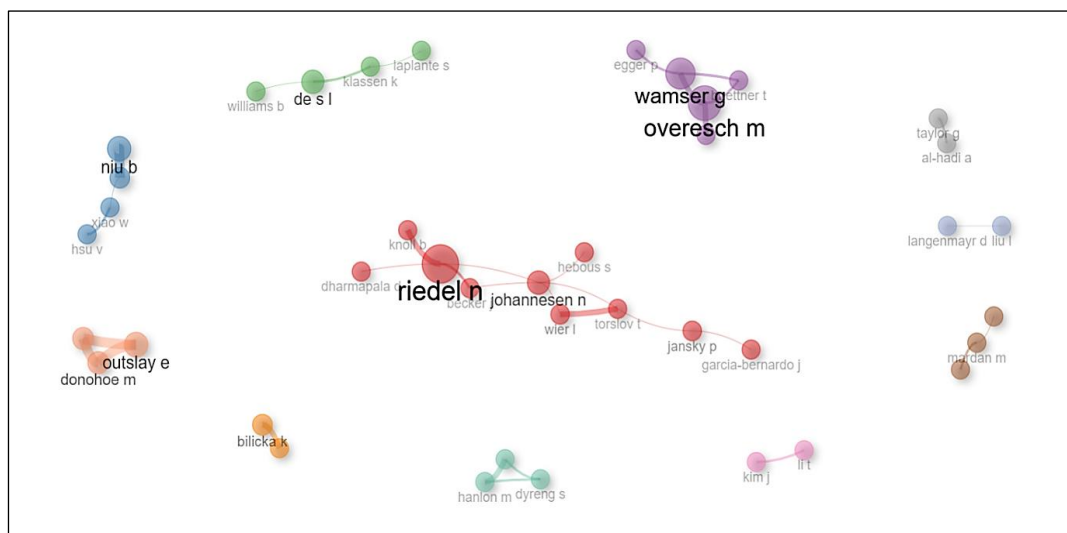


Figure 7: Author Collaboration Network. Node Size Reflects Each Author's Publication Count and Edges Represent Co-authorship Ties

Country and Region Cooperation

Analysis

According to Table 6, the USA stands out as the country with the highest number of publications (225 papers). Germany and China follow with 187 and 74 research papers respectively. The UK and

Switzerland, although with fewer publications (66 and 30 respectively), are among the most productive countries. Figure 8 illustrates several collaborations between different nations, highlighting the links between countries such as the USA and China, Germany and the UK, France and Belgium and the USA and Denmark.

Table 6: Countries' Scientific Production

Country	Frequency
USA	225
Germany	187
China	74
UK	66
Switzerland	30
Denmark	28
Norway	28
Australia	25
Czech Republic	24
Netherlands	23

On the whole, both institutional and national collaboration patterns continue to be concentrated among high-income countries. Table 6 and Table 5 show that none of the ten most productive countries or institutions is in a developing economy and the main collaboration ties identified in Figure 8 (USA-China, Germany-UK, France-

Belgium, USA-Denmark) all involve at least one high-income partner. This suggests limited evidence of North-South research partnerships in the field of multinational tax avoidance and evasion, despite developing countries being frequent targets of profit-shifting strategies by MNCs (33).

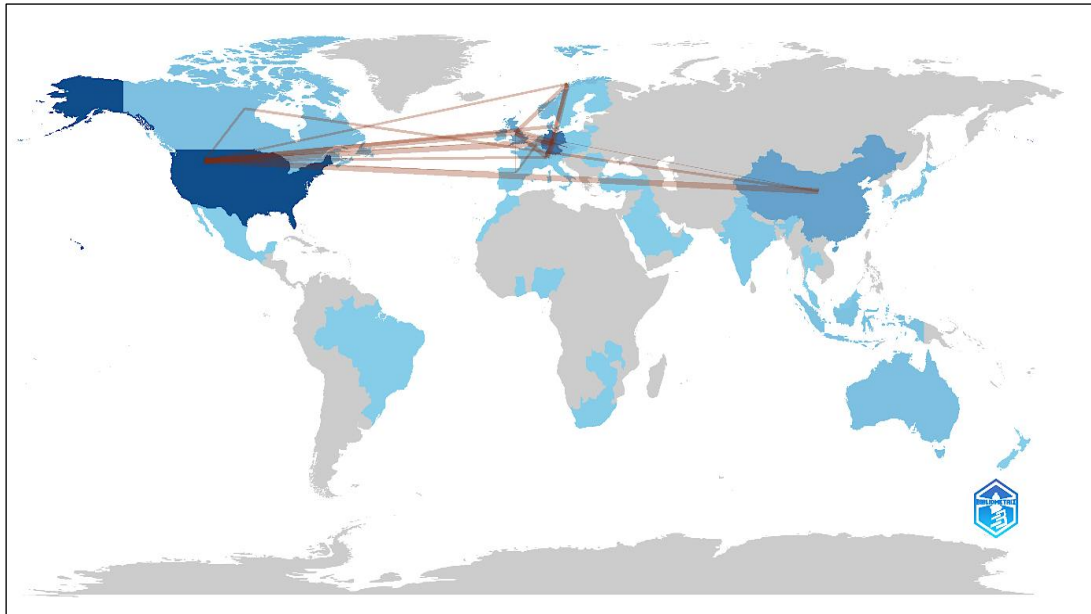


Figure 8: Country Collaboration Map. Line Thickness Reflects the Frequency of International Co-Authorship Between Country Pairs

Keyword Evolution and Trend Analysis

Figures 9 and 10 present the keyword cloud and the evolution of keyword frequency over time, highlighting the main research topics related to multinational taxation. The most frequent terms are 'multinational firms', 'taxation', 'income', 'investment' and 'impact', demonstrating the growing interest in examining the impact of

taxation on the financial performance and investment strategy choices of MNCs. The notions of 'avoidance', 'havens', 'debt', 'capital structure' and 'incentives' reflect tax management practices such as debt optimization and tax haven location. Concepts such as 'competition', 'location', 'choice', 'policy', 'governance', 'ownership' or 'information' reflect the internal and external determinants that influence tax decisions.



Figure 9: Keyword Cloud. Word Size Represents Frequency of Occurrence Across the Dataset

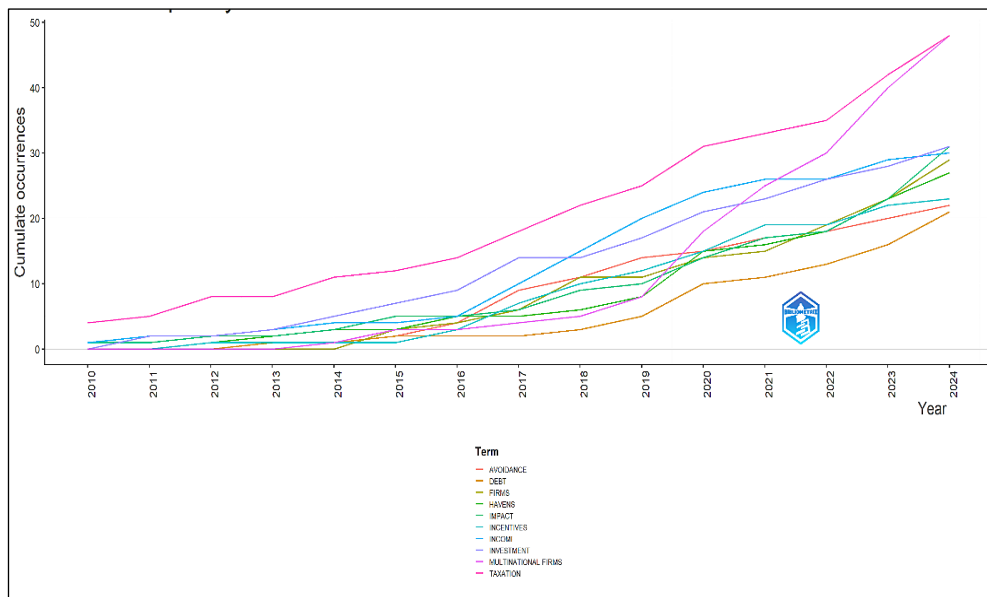


Figure 10: Dynamic View of Authors' Keywords

Discussion

Analysis of Trends and Hotspots

The contribution of this paper is reflected in its focus on MNCs, combined with a bibliometric mapping of the literature over a 15-year window based on both Scopus and WoS databases. In contrast to earlier reviews focused on taxpayer behavior, tax fraud, or SME compliance, this study

indicates that the MNC tax literature is structured around a distinction between internal and external determinants of tax behavior, a structure that emerges from the thematic mapping.

Figures 11 and 12 highlight the main emerging themes in research on multinational tax management, which can be divided into two categories: internal and external determinants of tax management.

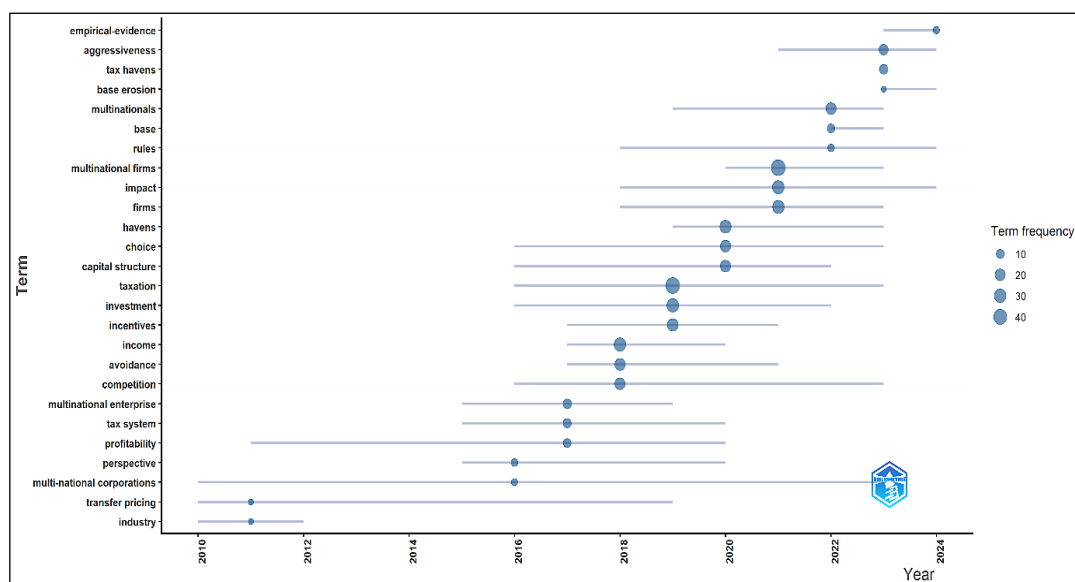


Figure 11: Trending Topics between 2010 and 2024. Topics are Positioned by the Period in Which They Gained Prominence

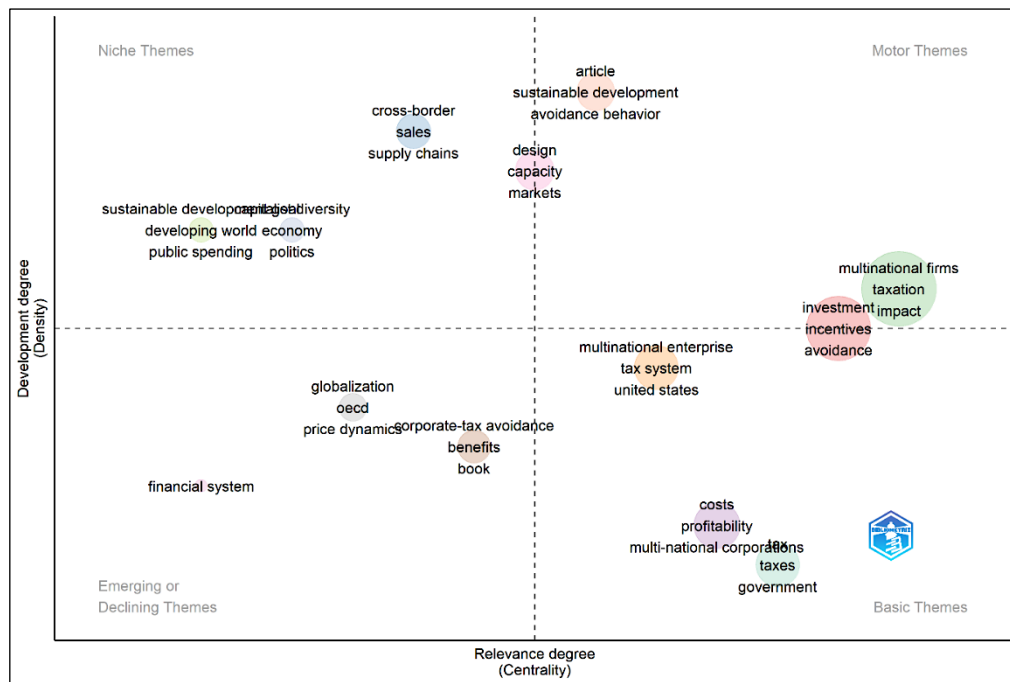


Figure 12: Strategy Coordination Map of Themes. Themes are Plotted by Centrality (Relevance to The Field) And Density (Level of Development)

Internal determinants, which include the cost of capital, play an important role in corporate tax avoidance practices. A high cost of capital, whether debt or equity, can encourage companies to adopt tax avoidance strategies, notably through the use of tax havens, in order to improve their net profitability and maintain their attractiveness to investors (65). Moreover, profitability, measured in particular by return on assets (ROA), is positively associated with tax avoidance (66). However, a high ROA can also reflect mature tax management that leads to balanced tax optimization, characterized by a reduction in tax avoidance practices (67).

External determinants of tax management have a significant influence on corporate tax avoidance practices. Globalization, by increasing the complexity of tax environments, tends to indirectly favor these practices, especially in contexts where corporate transparency remains limited (68). To counter these behaviors, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through Action 13 of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) plan, is strengthening transparency and the exchange of information with tax authorities through country-by-country reporting (52), prompting MNCs to attach greater importance to tax compliance and reduce their avoidance practices under the increased pressure of controls (69). On the other hand, tax incentives

can encourage companies to manipulate their reported expenses to maximize tax benefits, thus fueling tax avoidance (70). The use of tax havens became an emerging theme between 2022 and 2024, with MNCs from developing countries intensifying their cross-border tax avoidance via outbound foreign direct investment (FDI) to tax-advantaged jurisdictions (65, 71). Finally, sustainable development is a central issue in tax management, with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) combined with ethical leadership reducing tax avoidance practices and improving transparency (72).

Several actors play a role in the tax management of MNCs. Governments can intervene in the digitization of tax administration to enable the collection of correct and exhaustive information and improve the transparency of public services, thus facilitating the prevention of tax evasion (73). National governance is a crucial lever in the fight against tax evasion (74). Companies with greater international exposure have more opportunities to engage in tax avoidance activities by structuring transactions that enable them to shift taxable income to low-tax jurisdictions (18, 75). The OECD is also a key stakeholder, developing international transfer pricing guidelines and facilitating tax cooperation between states to harmonize practices and combat tax evasion (76).

These results are generally consistent with previous empirical research associating profitability and capital structure to tax avoidance, thereby extending this literature by placing such determinants within a bibliometrically-mapped, MNC-specific evidence base.

Overall, these results indicate a conceptual relationship between corporate governance structures, institutional pressures and tax administration tactics. Internal governance mechanisms (capital structure, profitability and ownership structure) establish a firm's underlying propensity for tax avoidance, whereas external institutional pressures and stakeholder expectations moderate the extent to which this propensity translates into observed tax minimization practices.

Based on these results, we provide the following recommendations. For researchers, future reviews and empirical studies should examine the interaction between internal and external determinants identified in this study. For corporate boards, tax avoidance decisions should be integrated into broader governance and CSR oversight, rather than being driven solely by profit maximization. For policymakers, enhancing cross-border information sharing and country-by-country reporting mechanisms would help mitigate aggressive tax avoidance practices.

Conclusion

This bibliometric study, carried out using R-Bibliometrix software, analyzed a total of 396 publications from the Scopus and WoS databases on multinational tax avoidance and evasion. Addressing RQ1, the results demonstrated a notable growth in scholarly interest, with an annual growth rate of 16.35% and the highest publication volumes recorded in 2023 and 2024. In response to RQ2, among the researchers with the most contributions, Riedel N. tops the list of authors, followed by Overesch M. and Wamser G. The most influential institutions include University of Copenhagen, University of Oxford and Charles University Prague. Geographically, the main contributing countries are the USA, Germany and China. Regarding RQ3, the dominant keywords are 'taxation', 'income', 'investment', 'havens', 'ownership' and 'governance'. Concerning RQ4, future research should examine more closely the intersecting dynamics between internal deter-

minants (such as organizational structure, governance or ownership) and external determinants (such as the competitive environment, tax policies or regulations), as these interactions remain underexplored in the existing literature.

The bibliometric analysis applied to the literature on multinational taxation provides an in-depth overview of the knowledge structure, research clusters and major trends shaping the field. A key contribution of this mapping exercise is to highlight the decisive role played by both internal and external determinants in the tax decisions of multinational groups.

Although this study makes significant contributions, it has certain limitations. It is possible that not all publications dealing with the taxation of MNCs published during the period analyzed have been included, which could result in certain trends or gaps being overlooked. Furthermore, the analysis is based exclusively on publications referenced in the Scopus and WoS databases. The inclusion of documents from other sources not indexed in these databases could potentially alter the results obtained. Moreover, the analysis is restricted to English publications, potentially excluding pertinent research published in other languages. Finally, because citation counts accumulate over time, the most recent publications in our sample may seem less influential than they will ultimately prove to be.

Future research could expand this analysis by including supplementary databases beyond Scopus and WoS, by extending the study period as the field continues to grow and by carrying out a more systematic bibliometric treatment of emerging transparency mechanisms such as country-by-country reporting and automatic exchange of information, which lie outside the scope of the present study.

Abbreviations

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility, FDI: Foreign Direct Investment, MNC(s): Multinational Corporation(s), OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, ROA: Return on Assets, SMEs: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, TC: Total Citations, WoS: Web of Science.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank all researchers and institutions whose published work contributed to the corpus of this bibliometric study.

Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to the conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing of the original draft and review and editing of the final manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the Scopus and Web of Science databases, subject to institutional access.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance

The authors declare that generative AI tools were used to assist with grammar and language editing, as well as with figure formatting. No generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used for data collection, data analysis, or interpretation of results. The authors take full responsibility for the originality, interpretation and accuracy of the content of this manuscript.

Ethics Approval

Not applicable. This study is a bibliometric analysis of publicly available published literature and did not involve human participants, animals, or personal data.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

References

1. Park SJ, Park WJ, Sun EJ, Woo S. Is Foreign Direct Investment Effective from the Perspective of Tax Avoidance? An Analysis of Tax Avoidance through the International Transfer Pricing Behaviors of Korean Corporations. *Journal of Applied Business Research*. 2016;32(3):917–934. <https://doi.org/10.19030/jabr.v32i3.9664>
2. Cooper M, Nguyen QTK. Understanding the Interaction of Motivation and Opportunity for Tax Planning Inside US Multinationals: a Qualitative Study. *Journal of World Business*. 2019;54(6):101023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2019.101023>
3. Gravelle JG. Tax Havens: International Tax Avoidance and Evasion. *National Tax Journal*. 2009;62(4):727–753. <https://doi.org/10.17310/ntj.2009.4.07>
4. Barbu L, Horobeț A, Belasçu L, Ilie AG. Approaches To Tax Evasion: A Bibliometric and Mapping Analysis of Web of Science Indexed Studies. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*. 2024;25(1):1–20. <https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2024.20691>
5. Ftouhi K, Ghardallou W. International Tax Planning Techniques: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Applied Accounting Research*. 2020;21(2):329–343. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JAAR-05-2019-0080>
6. Conrad M. Do multinational corporations pay their “Fair Share”? *Green Finance*. 2022;4(1):88–114. <https://doi.org/10.3934/GF.2022005>
7. Mansour AZ, Ahmi A, Alkhuzai ASH, Alhmood MA, Popoola OMJ, Altarawneh M. State of art in tax evasion research: A bibliometric review. *Review of Education*. 2023;11(3):e3422. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3422>
8. Sumantri E, Samudra AA, Suradika A. Global tax avoidance and evasion: A landscape through insights from a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. *Journal of infrastructure, policy and development*. 2024;8(9):8073. <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i9.8073>
9. Costa DF, Fonseca BM, Moreira BCDM, De Andrade LP. Bibliometric and scientometric analyses on the relation of tax decision and taxpayer behavior. *SN Business & Economics*. 2023;3:210. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43546-023-00593-3>
10. Thaha AR, Antoro AFS, Muhtarom. Analytical Review of Tax Compliance Studies in the SMEs Sector: A Bibliometric Approach. *Journal of Tax Reform*. 2023;9(3):398–412. <https://doi.org/10.15826/jtr.2023.9.3.149>
11. Kovermann J, Velte P. The impact of corporate governance on corporate tax avoidance—A literature review. *Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation*. 2019;36:100270. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intaccudtax.2019.100270>
12. Choi J, Park H. Tax Avoidance, Tax Risk and Corporate Governance: Evidence from Korea. *Sustainability*. 2022;14(1):469. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14010469>
13. Sianipar NK, Yahya I, Sadalia I. The Determinants of Tax Avoidance with Firm Size as Moderating Variable at Multinational Companies. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2020;7(7):237–242. https://www.ijrrjournal.com/IJRR_Vol.7_Issue.7_July2020/Abstract_IJRR0031.html
14. Mgammal MH, Ismail KNIK. Corporate Tax Planning Activities: Overview of Concepts, Theories, Restrictions, Motivations and Approaches. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 2015;6(6 S4):350. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n6s4p350>
15. Nafti O, Kateb I, Masghouni O. Tax evasion, firm's value and governance: evidence from Tunisian Stock Exchange. *Journal of Financial Crime*. 2020;27(3):781–799. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFC-02-2020-0023>

16. Tang TYH. A review of tax avoidance in China. *China Journal of Accounting Research*. 2020;13(4):327–338.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cjar.2020.10.001>
17. Huseynov F, Klammer BK. Tax avoidance, tax management and corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Corporate Finance*. 2012;18(4):804–827.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcorpfin.2012.06.005>
18. Taylor G, Richardson G. International Corporate Tax Avoidance Practices: Evidence from Australian Firms. *The International Journal of Accounting*. 2012;47(4):469–496.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intacc.2012.10.004>
19. Allam A, Moussa T, Abdelhady M, Yamen A. National culture and tax evasion: The role of the institutional environment quality. *Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation*. 2023;52:100559.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intaccaudtax.2023.100559>
20. Alm J, Liu Y, Zhang K. Financial constraints and firm tax evasion. *International Tax and Public Finance*. 2019;26:71–102.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10797-018-9502-7>
21. Jamei R. Tax Avoidance and Corporate Governance Mechanisms: Evidence from Tehran Stock Exchange. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*. 2017;7(4):638–644.
<https://www.econjournals.com/index.php/ijefi/article/view/5267>
22. Khelif H, Achek I. The determinants of tax evasion: a literature review. *International Journal of Law and Management*. 2015;57(5):486–497.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLMA-03-2014-0027>
23. Alexander A, Pisa M. Credit refinancing and corporate tax avoidance. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*. 2023;42(3):107073.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaccpubpol.2023.107073>
24. de la Feria R. Tax Fraud and Selective Law Enforcement. *Journal of Law and Society*. 2020;47(2):240–70.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jols.12221>
25. Augustine AA, Adewale OT, Babatunde LA. Forensic Accounting, Tax Fraud and Tax Evasion in Nigeria – Review of Literatures and Matter for Policy Consideration. *International Journal of Emerging Trends in Social Sciences*. 2020;9(1):21–28.
<https://doi.org/10.20448/2001.91.21.28>
26. OECD. International Tax Avoidance and Evasion: Four Related Studies. *Issues in International Taxation*, No. 1. Paris: OECD Publishing; 1987.
<https://doi.org/10.1787/g2ghgbf6-en>
27. Lenz H. Aggressive Tax Avoidance and Business Ethics. In: Poff DC, Michalos AC, editors. *Encyclopedia of Business and Professional Ethics*. Cham: Springer International Publishing; 2022. p.1–5.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23514-1_1287-1
28. Payne DM, Raiborn CA. Aggressive Tax Avoidance: A Conundrum for Stakeholders, Governments and Morality. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 2018;147:469–487.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2978-5>
29. Frischmann PJ, Shevlin T, Wilson R. Economic consequences of increasing the conformity in accounting for uncertain tax benefits. *Journal of Accounting and Economics*. 2008;46(2–3):261–278.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacceco.2008.08.002>
30. Richardson G, Taylor G, Lanis R. The impact of board of director oversight characteristics on corporate tax aggressiveness: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*. 2013;32(3):68–88.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaccpubpol.2013.02.004>
31. Benkraiem R, Gaaya S, Lakhal F. Tax avoidance, investor protection and investment inefficiency: An international evidence. *Research in International Business and Finance*. 2024;69:102258.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ribaf.2024.102258>
32. Yahaya KA, Yusuf K. Impact of Company Characteristics on Aggressive Tax Avoidance in Nigerian Listed Insurance Companies. *Jurnal Administrasi Bisnis*. 2020;9(2):101–111.
<https://doi.org/10.14710/jab.v9i2.30512>
33. Johannesen N, Tørsløv T, Wier L. Are Less Developed Countries More Exposed to Multinational Tax Avoidance? Method and Evidence from Micro-Data. *World Bank Economic Review*. 2020;34(3):790–809.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/wber/lhz002>
34. Godar S. Tax Haven Investors and Corporate Profitability - Evidence of Profit Shifting by German-Based Affiliates of Multinational Firms. *Finanz Archiv*. 2021;77(4):345–375.
<https://doi.org/10.1628/fa-2021-0013>
35. Kundelis E, Legenzova R, Kartanas J. Debt Or Profit Shifting? Assessment Of Corporate Tax Avoidance Practices Across Lithuanian Companies. *Central European Business Review*. 2022;11(2):81–100.
<https://doi.org/10.18267/j.cebr.290>
36. Overesch M, Willkomm S. The relation between corporate social responsibility and profit shifting of multinational enterprises. *International Tax and Public Finance*. 2025;32:466–500.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10797-024-09850-z>
37. Pieretti P, Pulina G. Does eliminating international profit shifting increase tax revenue in high-tax countries? *Economic Modelling*. 2020;93:717–727.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econmod.2020.01.020>
38. Alfandia NS. How do countries curb their debt or profit shifting: a systematic literature review. *Cogent Business & Management*. 2024;11(1):2344032.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2344032>
39. Binhadab N, Gillanders R, McCluskey T. A clean and discreet service: The role of corruption and secrecy in profit shifting by multinational firms. *Journal of International Development*. 2023;35(7):1551–1573.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3739>
40. Cheng CSA, Guo P, Weng CH, Wu Q. Innovation and Corporate Tax Planning: The Distinct Effects of Patents and R&D*. *Contemporary Accounting Research*. 2021;38:621–653.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1911-3846.12613>
41. Alexander A, de Vito A, Jacob M. Corporate tax reforms and tax-motivated profit shifting: evidence from the EU. *Accounting and Business Research*. 2020;50(4):309–341.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00014788.2020.1712649>
42. Laplante S, Lynch D, Vernon M. Internal Information Quality and State Tax Planning. *Contemporary Accounting Research*. 2021;38(4):2589–2621.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1911-3846.12714>

43. Agana JA, Mohammed AK, Zamore S. International transfer pricing and income shifting in developing countries: evidence from Ghana. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*. 2018;13(5):1132–1153.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJoEM-05-2017-0181>
44. Khomsiyah, Nilawati YJ, Aryati T. A bibliometric review of stakeholder theory in accounting: Current trends and future directions. *Journal of Governance and Regulation*. 2024;13(1):277–288.
<https://doi.org/10.22495/jgrv13i1siart2>
45. Ben Said F, Meyer N, Bahri-Ammari N, Soliman M. Shopping Tourism: A Bibliometric Review from 1979 to 2021. *Journal of Tourism and Services*. 2024;15(28):61–88.
<https://doi.org/10.29036/jots.v15i28.598>
46. Singh AP, Behera RK, Bala PK. Evolution of sustainable retailing and how it influences consumer behavior: A bibliometric review. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*. 2025;35(3):260–290.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09593969.2024.2381066>
47. Dharmapala D, Riedel N. Earnings shocks and tax motivated income-shifting: Evidence from European multinationals. *Journal of Public Economics*. 2013;97:95–107.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2012.08.004>
48. Dischinger M, Riedel N. Corporate taxes and the location of intangible assets within multinational firms. *Journal of Public Economics*. 2011;95(7–8):691–707.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2010.12.002>
49. Buettner T, Overesch M, Wamser G. Anti profit shifting rules and foreign direct investment. *International Tax and Public Finance*. 2018;25:553–80.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10797-017-9457-0>
50. Heckemeyer JH, Overesch M. Multinationals' profit response to tax differentials: Effect size and shifting channels. *Canadian Journal of Economics*. 2017;50(4):965–994.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/caje.12283>
51. Buettner T, Wamser G. Internal Debt and Multinational Profit Shifting: Empirical Evidence from Firm-Level Panel Data. *National Tax Journal*. 2013;66(1):63–95.
<https://doi.org/10.17310/ntj.2013.1.03>
52. Garcia-Bernardo J, Jansky P, Tørsløv T. Multinational corporations and tax havens: Evidence from country-by-country reporting. *International Tax and Public Finance*. 2021;28:1519–1561.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10797-020-09639-w>
53. Hebous S, Johannesen N. At your service! The role of tax havens in international trade with services. *European Economic Review*. 2021;135:103737.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurocorev.2021.103737>
54. Garcia-Bernardo J, Jansky P. Profit shifting of multinational corporations worldwide. *World Development*. 2024;177:106527.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2023.106527>
55. Garcia-Bernardo J, Jansky P, Tørsløv T. Decomposing Multinational Corporations' Declining Effective Tax Rates. *IMF Economic Review*. 2022;70:338–381.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41308-022-00157-9>
56. Knoll B, Kruse-Becher S, Riedel N. The impact of transfer pricing laws on import mis-pricing: Evidence from Denmark. *Economics Letters*. 2023;233:111361.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2023.111361>
57. Egger P, Merlo V, Wamser G. Unobserved tax avoidance and the tax elasticity of FDI. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*. 2014;108:1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2014.09.014>
58. Egger PH, Wamser G. The impact of controlled foreign company legislation on real investments abroad A multi-dimensional regression discontinuity design. *Journal of Public Economics*. 2015;129:77–91.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2015.07.006>
59. Overesch M, Strueder S, Wamser G. Do U.S. Firms avoid more taxes than their European peers? On firm characteristics and tax legislation as determinants of tax differentials. *National Tax Journal*. 2020;73(2):361–400.
<https://doi.org/10.17310/ntj.2020.2.03>
60. Overesch M, Wamser G. Bilateral internal debt financing and tax planning of multinational firms. *Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting*. 2014;42:191–209.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11156-012-0339-3>
61. De Simone L, Klassen KJ, Seidman JK. The effect of income-shifting aggressiveness on corporate investment. *Journal of Accounting and Economics*. 2022;74(1):101491.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacceco.2022.101491>
62. De Simone L, Klassen K, Seidman J. Unprofitable Affiliates and Income Shifting Behavior. *The Accounting Review*. 2017;92(3):113–136.
<https://doi.org/10.2308/accr-51555>
63. De Simone L, Stomberg B, Williams B. Does tax enforcement disparately affect domestic versus multinational corporations around the world? *Contemporary Accounting Research*. 2023;40(4):2816–2845.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1911-3846.12900>
64. Klassen KJ, Laplante SK. Are U.S. Multinational Corporations Becoming More Aggressive Income Shifters? *Journal of Accounting Research*. 2012;50(5):1245–1285.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-679X.2012.00463.x>
65. Chen LH, Jiang GJ, Wang W, Zhang JH. The impact of profitability pressure and capital market valuation on tax haven engagement. *Advances in Accounting*. 2025;68:100804.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adiac.2024.100804>
66. Hossain MS, Ali MdS, Islam MZ, Ling CC, Fung CY. Nexus between profitability, firm size and leverage and tax avoidance: Evidence from an emerging economy. *Asian Review of Accounting*. 2024;32(5):759–780.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/ARA-08-2023-0238>
67. Hendayana Y, Arief Ramdhany M, Pranowo AS, Abdul Halim Rachmat R, Herdiana E. Exploring impact of profitability, leverage and capital intensity on avoidance of tax, moderated by size of firm in LQ45 companies. *Cogent Business & Management*. 2024;11(1):2371062.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2371062>
68. Budiman NA, Bandi B, Widagdo AK, Sudaryono EA. The evolution of tax strategies in multinational companies: A historical perspective. *International*

- Journal of Disclosure and Governance. 2025;22:745–758.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41310-024-00265-0>
69. Roggeman A, Aro-Sati L, Verleyen I. Compliance with base erosion and profit shifting action 13: Insights from tax consultants and tax officials. *European Research on Management and Business Economics*. 2025;31(1):100267.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iemeen.2024.100267>
 70. He Y, Zhang X, Hao P, Dai X, Xue H. Tax incentives and upward R&D manipulation: Evidence from the R&D tax deduction policy in China. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*. 2025;20(4):1507–1529.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOEM-02-2022-0254>
 71. Chen Y, Lei S. Tax avoidance opportunity for multinational enterprises: Effects of digitalized tax administration in China. *Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions and Money*. 2025;102:102177.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intfin.2025.102177>
 72. Balaskas S, Nikolopoulos T, Koutroumani M, Rigou M. Determinants of Tax Avoidance Intentions in Tourism SMEs: The Mediating Role of Coercive Power, Digital Transformation and the Moderating Effect of CSR. *Sustainability*. 2024;16(21):9322.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su16219322>
 73. Yamen A, Coskun A, Mersni H. Digitalization and tax evasion: The moderation effect of corruption. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*. 2023;36(2):2142634.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2022.2142634>
 74. Montenegro TM. Tax Evasion, Corporate Social Responsibility and National Governance: A Country-Level Study. *Sustainability*. 2021;13(20):11166.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su132011166>
 75. Wang F, Xu S, Sun J, Cullinan CP. Corporate tax avoidance: a literature review and research agenda. *Journal of Economic Surveys*. 2020;34(4):793–811.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12347>
 76. Rathke AAT, Rezende AJ, Watrin C. The impact of countries' transfer pricing rules on profit shifting. *Journal of Applied Accounting Research*. 2021;22(1):22–49.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JAAR-03-2020-0034>

How to Cite: Lahrari K, Sahbani S. Tax Avoidance and Evasion by Multinationals: A Comprehensive Bibliometric Analysis. *Int Res J Multidiscip Scope*. 2026;7(4):1294-1311.
 DOI: 10.47857/irjms.2026.v07i04.010608