



Mapping the Evolution of Competition Law Scholarship (2010-2020): A Bibliometric Analysis of Publications in Heinonline and Jstor Databases

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Abstract

This study examines the evolution of competition law scholarship from 2010 to 2020 through bibliometric analysis of publications indexed in HeinOnline and JSTOR databases. The research analyses publication growth and geographical distribution of articles in competition law literature using quantitative research methods. A quantitative research method was adopted. A total of 660 publications were retrieved from the two databases and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings reveal a steady increase in competition law over the period, with notable dominance by scholars from developed jurisdiction. This study contributes to a better understanding of the development, focus areas, and gaps in existing scholarship, thereby offering useful insights for researchers, policymakers, librarians and legal practitioners. The population of the study is 92,362 articles from Heinonline and JSTOR databases. A sample size of 660 was derived after sampling the most relevant articles using the purposive sampling technique. Search filters were used to derive at the sample size, filter of year range 2010 to 2020, keyword of competition law, document type (articles) were used to derive the sample size. A checklist was designed by the researcher as an instrument for data collection which covers all variables of the study. The study used descriptive statistics (percentages, tables, charts) for data analysis. The findings of the study reveal a steady growth in competition law publications over the period, with a peak in certain years. The Geographical distribution indicates concentration of publication in USA. The study concludes that competition law has experienced significant development within the period under review, but recommends broader participation, and increased interdisciplinary and open access publishing to enhance future visibility and impact.

Keywords: Competition Law, Bibliometric Analysis, Publication Growth, Geographical Distribution, Database.

Introduction

Bibliometrics is described as the application of statistical techniques to assess textual publications, especially within scientific and library domains. This discipline entails the quantitative evaluation of multiple facets of written texts, including citation analysis, to determine the influence and distribution of research results. It is intricately linked to scientometrics, which concentrates on quantifying and examining scientific literature.

The open science movement has impacted bibliometrics by advocating for transparency and accessibility in research assessment. Initiatives such as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the Leiden Manifesto promote the judicious application of metrics and underscore the importance of qualitative evaluation in conjunction with quantitative measures (Agarwal et al., 2016).

Bibliometrics is a quantitative method utilized by information management. The measurement of human communication records is employed to uncover patterns in publication authorship and subject citations over time, thereby providing insights into the dynamics of a specific area of research. Bibliometrics has gained prominence in recent years due to its practical applications in diverse library operations and services. Bibliometrics embrace both statistical as well as mathematical analysis on all forms of bibliographic data. It is a research method employed in Library and Information science.

Nevertheless, due to the advancement in ICT's, the method utilizes databases for the conduct of any form of bibliometrics research. The databases encompasses all the vital features needed for the research to be conducted bibliometrically and successfully. Database is a systematic and enduring compilation of information regarding a certain facet of the real world, organized and kept to enable efficient retrieval and modification. Databases are generally administered by Database Management Systems (DBMS), which offer essential tools for data interaction, maintain integrity, and facilitate processes such as querying and updating. According to Haggerty (2019) database is a store of information in which logical and physical data are associated with each other. Also, Helen (2021) stressed that database is a collection of data that is saved and organised to allow easy retrieval when needed. It is a collection of schemas, tables, queries, reports, views and other objects.

Competition Law also known as the Antitrust Laws in the U.S as stressed by Odion (2015) is that branch of law that promotes or maintains market competition by outlawing anti-competitive conduct by businessmen and companies engaged in business. The history of Competition Law dates back to the Roman Empire, then the business practice of market traders. Competition policy and law work in the area of laying the blueprint for manufacturers and producers of goods and services to compete freely and attract patronage from the consumer. In this regard, monopolies or dominant position of companies or other business organizations are outlawed.

This study will examine competition law literature published in the HeinOnline and JSTOR databases from 2010 to 2020, the growth of literature and the geographical distribution of articles in competition law were examined. The study employed a quantitative research methodology. The study population comprises journal articles from the HeinOnline and JSTOR databases published between 2010 to 2020. The population of the study is 92,362 articles from Heinonline and JSTOR

databases. A sample size of 660 was derived after sampling the most relevant articles using the purposive sampling technique. Search filters were used to derive at the sample size, filter of year range 2010 to 2020, keyword of competition law, document type (articles) were used to derive the sample size. Duplicate articles were removed. A checklist was designed by the researcher as an instrument for data collection which covers all variables of the study. The study used descriptive statistics (percentages, tables, charts) for data analysis.

Statement of the Problem

Competition law is essential for regulating market dynamics, maintaining equitable competition, and prohibiting monopolistic practices. Over the years, academic inquiry into competition law has progressed, mirroring changes in legal frameworks, economic policies, and market structures. The examining bibliometric patterns in competition law literature yields insights into research output, prominent authors, key journals, and rising subjects. Even though there are writings about competition law, there aren't many thorough bibliometric analyses that show how it has changed over time (Igbokwe, 2018).

Current evaluations of competition law research mostly emphasize legal interpretations, case law, and policy analysis, rather than quantitative analyses of research output. Furthermore, although bibliometric analyses have been performed across other legal fields, competition law continues to be a relatively neglected domain in this context. HeinOnline and JSTOR, prominent digital repositories for legal and academic research, provide an extensive collection of competition law literature. To the researchers' knowledge, no extensive bibliometric analysis has been performed to evaluate the research trends in competition law within these databases.

Consequently, a systematic bibliometric analysis of competition law literature from 2010 to 2020 within HeinOnline and JSTOR is urgently required. This analysis will investigate publication growth of literature and geographical distribution articles in competition law. It is hoped that, the study will enhance comprehension of the evolution of competition law research over the past decade and offer valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and legal practitioners.

Research Questions

This research work is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the growth of competition law literature between 2010 and 2020 in HeinOnline and JSTOR?
2. What is the geographical distribution of articles in Heinonline and JSTOR databases?

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to explore quantitatively the contribution of scholars in Competition Law literature in HeinOnline and JSTOR databases from 2010 to 2020. The specific objectives are to:

1. Analyze the growth of competition law publications in HeinOnline and JSTOR between 2010 and 2020
2. Analyse the geographical distribution of articles in Heinonline and JSTOR databases

Review of Related Literature

The literature on competition law has experienced notable growth, reflecting its increasing significance in both developed and developing economies. This expansion encompasses various dimensions, including the integration of innovation considerations, the influence of political factors, and the development of competition law in emerging markets. Competition law also known as antitrust law, is a legal frame work that promotes fair competition in the market by preventing anti-competitive practices such as price-fixing, bid rigging, abuse of dominant position, mergers and acquisitions that may lead to a monopoly (Teja (2023).

Accordingly, Richard Whish (2015) sees competition law as a legal frame work that aims to promote economic welfare by ensuring fair competition in the market place. The law protect competitive agreements, abuses of dominant position and lessen competition. The law regulated business practices such as cartels, cooperation agreements, distribution agreements, licenses of intellectual property rights, joint ventures and mergers. It is usually enforced by competition authorities, which have the power to investigate, imposes fines and order remedies to restore competition

Research indicates that large corporations can exert significant political influence, which may impact market competition. A 2023 study explores how antitrust analysis can incorporate the link between political and economic institutions affecting market competition (Beneke, 2023). Given the importance of innovation in today's world, legal scholars have shown a keen interest in economic studies that assess the contribution of the legal system to innovation (OECD, 2023). Some of the most cited economic literature on the subject focuses on court decisions, as judges can interpret rules and standards in ways that promote or restrict innovation (Lai et al., 2023).

More specifically, the impact of competition cases on innovation has been regularly studied by economists as competition law deals with economic issues that often involve innovation-related considerations. The results are nuanced; the specifics matter (Thatchenkery and Katila, 2022). Lawyers have contributed to the field by proposing normative insights to increase or decrease the role that innovation should play in deciding future cases (Cleynenbreugel, 2018). These insights are typically based on findings from the economic literature or qualitative analyses that discuss what they consider to be the most relevant cases (Kucharczyk, 2017).

Surprisingly, there is a lack of legal scholarship that explores the jurisprudence using a systematic methodology. This is surprising because proposing normative insights based solely on economic literature lacks a view of what courts do, whether their decisions are consistent with economic findings, and thus how they can improve given the specifics.

Competition law is the main driver for building competitiveness, innovation, technologies advancement and economic development in a free market, Olayiwola (2021). Competition law is a law that seeks to strengthen the workings of markets by prohibiting certain forms of anti-competitive behaviour. The law includes rules that prohibit certain conducts regardless of their effects is in the naked price fixing. On the other hand, where the effects are ambiguous, a conduct

may be prohibited only if it is shown to have anti-competitive effects. The costs of an inquiry into economic effects brings up further question such as which entity is best placed to pursue the competitive analysis, how the costs of enforcement compare to the costs of allowing a potentially anti-competitive conduct to stand what the appropriate scope of rules and presumptions is OECD (2017).

As the global economy is incurring a process of transformation by the ongoing “fourth industrial revolution”, competition law is traversing a “liminal” moment, a period of transition during which the normal limits to thought, self-understanding and behaviour are relaxed, opening the way to novelty and imagination, construction and destruction (Doku, and Nabieu, 2024). The development of digital capitalism during the last three decades has led to an important “information overload”, induced by this rapid revolutionary change (Gerber, 2019).

Emerging economies have increasingly recognized the importance of robust competition law frameworks. Nigeria, for instance, has undergone significant legal reforms to promote market competition and curb anti-competitive practices. An in-depth analysis of Nigeria's competition law highlights its evolution, key challenges, and implications for economic growth. The study underscores the role of competition authorities in enforcing laws against restrictive practices and abuse of dominant market positions, reflecting a commitment to fostering a competitive economic environment

While specific bibliometric analyses focusing solely on competition law literature are limited, related fields offer insights into research trends. A bibliometric study on bank efficiency and competition from 1993 to 2022 reveals a significant increase in publications, indicating growing scholarly interest. The study identifies leading journals, influential scholars, and collaborative networks contributing to the discourse on bank competition and efficiency. These findings suggest a parallel expansion in competition-related research, reflecting its relevance across various economic sectors (Schrepeel, 2024). Chen and Fang (2025) in their research found that the overall trend in quantity of papers published in NLP has been ascending from 2011 to 2017, the annual publication count remained below 110, with the first two years failing to reach 50 publication. During the period the overall growth in publication was slow, and research primarily focused on theoretical knowledge and straight forward NLP tasks. However, he found that in 2018, quantity of articles began to surge rapidly, from 135 in 2018 to 155 in 2019 and finally receiving rapid growth to 1,155 in 2023. More so, Ahmad et al., (2025) in their study growth and development of IT literature in LIS Research (2022- 2023): a bibliometric analysis based on web of science found that the number of publications in IT literature gradually increased two fold during the past 12 years, with the largest number of total cited publications (1945) occurring in 2016, and the smallest of total cited publications (838) are from 2023 to date. Similarly, Pradhan and Zala (2021) in their study analyzed the year wise literature published globally on research data management during the study period 2000 – 2019. They found that the annual publication growth rates for the data collected from SCOPUS were 37.67%, for WOS were 39.67% and for the merged data file were 39.34%. They also found that literature on research data management in both SCOPUS and WOS started to get published from same year 2000. There were no literatures published in both the databases from 2004 to 2006. There was inconsistency in literature growth trends in both the

databases. However, there was consistency in literature published in merged data from 2011 onwards with a single decline in 2018. Abubakar and Harande (2010) in their study "A snapshot of information seeking behavior literature in health sciences: a bibliometric approach" found that the growth of literature was slow at first, but picked up in 2002, and fell back in 2003. Starting in 2004 the growth became exponential.

Al-Qallaf (2009) in his research divided the timeline into periods of five years each with the exception of the first and last periods. He found that prior to 1970, very few literatures were published. Thereafter, there has been a steady and consistently increasing interest in Punica grantum L. related research. Its analysis suggests that the literature exploded to remarkable proportions during the period 2000 to 2004. In 2005 to 2006 there were 557 publications. The study support the premise that scientific output of the Punica Grantum L. literature is growing and that there is an avid research interest in the pursuit of related topics.

The reviewed studies on growth of literature were based on different field of knowledge, data and scope. However, this research will focus on growth of competition law literature indexed in heinonline and JSTOR databases from 2010 to 2020.

The geographical distribution of articles provides insights into the global spread and contribution of knowledge across countries, institutions or regions that contribute most significantly to the research output within a given field. Understanding these patterns offers insights into global academic productivity, research dominance, and disparities in knowledge production.

Several scholars have explored geographical trends in scholarly publication. Safri and AbdulRahman (2026) in their study "Legal aspects of Antitrust Law: a bibliometric Analysis" found that the USA having 381 documents leads the research output, followed by UK (65), Italy (61), Germany (54), Belgium (33), Neitherland (31), France (26), Poland (24) and Austria (14). Verma et al., (2025) in their study "A comprehensive Bibliometric analysis of research trends in sustainable inclusive economic growth with the SDG and framework from 2015 to 2025 using Biblioshany and Vosviewerx" found that China (203 publications) and India (14 Publications) are the most productive contributors to research on Sustainable Inclusive Economic Growth. Similarly, Chen and Fang (2025) In their study found that out of 4803 NLP articles, USA leads in academic publishing contributing 1578 articles, followed by China with 1097 articles. The top ten countries have published 4468 articles accounting for 93.02 % while other countries only account for 6.98%. Similarly, Ahmad et al., (2025) in their analysis found that the U.S outperformed their countries, followed by China. Total publications in the USA were 7837 with 180,288 total citation, China 3270 publications. The UK ranked 3rd with 2284 publications, followed by India with 2023 publications. Chen et al., (2022) in their study dispersion and disparity: bibliometric and visualised analysis of research on climate change science communication, analysed a total of 1175 valid papers published in 2000 to 2021. In the WOS core database, they found that out of the 20 countries, the field is still dominated by developed countries, but developing countries are actively building their unique climate communication discourse. Among the countries USA is not only the first country to study climate communication issues, but also the region with far the highest number of publications followed by U.K, Germany, Australia and Canada. They found that the number of

studies in Asia, South America and Africa are generally low, and scholars from countries other than US have focused on this area and conducted research relatively late, mainly between 2008 and 2010. This studies were conducted in other fields of knowledge like climate change, SDG and NLP to find the geographical distribution of articles, however this study focused on competition law publication.

Kirtania (2022) in his research analysis found that the publications by country shows that India tops the list with 504 articles, followed by the United States (302) and the United Kingdom (98). In addition, countries such as China, Spain, Canada, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Pakistan have also made significant contributions to the research on authorship patterns.

Similarly, Pradhan and Zala (2021) carried out their research analysis on the country's scientific production for both SCOPUS and WOS databases based on the authors affiliated country. A list of 20 countries contribution in globally published literatures on research data management from 2000 to 2019 was made. USA, Germany and UK were found to be most productive countries in both SCOPUS and WOS databases. Afterwards there is inconsistency of countries in ranking in both the databases. The USA was having 445 published literatures in SCOPUS and 294 in WOS, Germany and UK having 382 and 173 in SCOPUS and 224/118 in WOS. Portugal emerged the 4th with 99 in SCOPUS and 7th on WOS database with 43 published literatures. On the other hand, Sofik et al., (2021) in their study found out that China is at the top list with 1773 publications and 22035 citations. USA ranked 2nd with 1600 publications and 18309 citations followed by Denmark and Chile were found to be at the bottom of the list with 127 and 154 publications respectively.

In the field of law, Kostova and Zaheer (2019) examined how legal scholarship is often skewed toward western legal systems, with relatively fewer contributions from Global South countries. This imbalance can lead to a lack of contextualized legal research and epistemic dominance by developed nations. Similarly Bornmann et al., (2015) highlighted global research inequality in their bibliometric mapping of science. Their findings showed that low and middle income countries contribute relatively fewer articles for major journals largely due to limited funding, infrastructure deficits, and language barriers. Despite these challenges, regional growth in research output has been observed in countries like Brazil, India, and South Africa, driven by targeted national policies and international collaborations. Navaneethakrishnan (2014) in his study examined distribution of research output by geographical regions, it illustrates the collaboration of other countries with the researchers/scholars of humanities and social sciences of Sri Lanka. A rank list of contributing countries was prepared on the basis of affiliations of the contributions from various countries. Among the whole 1795 publications other than contributors belonging to Sri Lanka, he found that the remarkable collaborative contributors are from United States with (15.93%), United Kingdom (7.41%), Australia (4.23%), India (3.68%), Canada (2.51%), and Japan (2.40%). 15 countries contributed with at least 18 publications (1%). Likewise, Adams (2013) found that multi-authored articles involving multiple countries tend to be more frequently cited, indicating that global collaboration enhances research quality and dissemination. Glanzel and Schubert (2005) emphasized that publication output is often concentrated in economically advanced countries, such as the U.K, U. S. A, Germany, and China. Their study based on web of science data, showed a strong correlation between national research investment and scholarly

productivity. Despite the growing literature in this field, few studies have conducted a targeted bibliometric analysis specifically on the geographical distribution of articles within competition law. This gap underscores the need for a study in the area.

Methodology

This study adopts bibliometric analysis method which involves the application of quantitative research technique which is a positivist research paradigm, it relies on measurement and reason. That knowledge is revealed from a neutral and measurable observation of activity, action or inaction. Bibliometric analysis is a popular and rigorous method for exploring and analysing large volume of data. Scholars use bibliometric analysis to uncover emerging trends in article and journal performance, collaboration patterns, etc (Donthu et al, 2021). It was used to study the detailed bibliographic data of articles in HeinOnline and JSTOR databases from 2010 to 2020. All relevant articles on Competition Law were used. The population of the study is 92,362 articles from Heinonline and JSTOR databases which were retrieved in September to october 2025. A sample size of 660 was derived after sampling the most relevant articles using the purposive sampling technique. Search filters were used to derive at the sample size, filter of year range 2010 to 2020, keyword of competition law, document type (articles) were used to derive the sample size. Duplicate publication were sorted and removed. A checklist was designed by the researcher as an instrument for data collection which covers the variables of the study. The study used descriptive statistics (percentages, tables, charts) for data analysis.

Result and Findings

This section presents the growth of competition law literature in HeinOnline and JSTOR databases from 2010 to 2020 as follows:

Table 1: Growth of Literature

S/N	YEAR	NO. OF PUBLICATION	PERCENTAGE
1	2010	172	26.06%
2	2011	66	10%
3	2012	37	5.61%
4	2013	27	4.09%
5	2014	56	8.48%
6	2015	54	8.18%
7	2016	40	6.06%
8	2017	39	5.91%
9	2018	40	6.06%
10	2019	45	6.82%
11	2020	84	12.73%
	TOTAL	660	100%

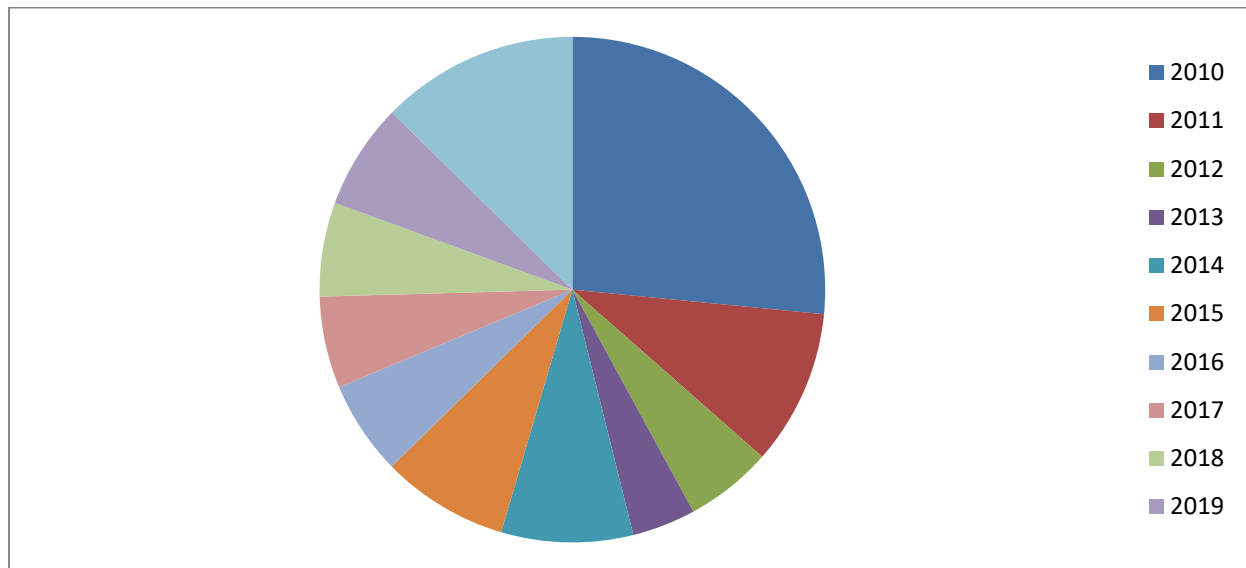


Table 1 and figure 1 presents the yearly distribution of publications on the subject area from 2010 to 2020, with a total of 660 publications recorded during the study period. The analysis reveals a fluctuating pattern in research output over the years. The year 2010 recorded the highest number of publications (172; 26.06%), indicating a strong beginning of research activities in the field.

However, a sharp decline is observed between 2011 and 2013. Publications dropped significantly to 66 (10%) in 2011, it further decreased to 37 (5.61%) in 2012, and reached the lowest point in 2013 with 27 publications (4.09%). This downward trend suggests a temporary reduction in research interest or possible shifts in academic focus during that period. From 2014 to 2015, the field experienced a notable recovery, with publications increasing to 56 (8.48%) in 2014 and slightly decreasing to 54 (8.18%) in 2015. This indicates a gradual return of scholarly engagement and renewed interest in the research area.

Between 2016 and 2018, the number of publications remained relatively stable but moderate, with values fluctuating slightly between 39 and 40 publications (approximately 6%) each year. This stability suggests a consistent level of research activity without significant growth or decline. In 2019, there was a slight increase to 45 publications (6.82%), showing a modest improvement in research output. This upward movement continued into 2020, where publications rose significantly to 84 (12.73%), representing the second-highest output after 2010. This increase may indicate renewed academic interest, possibly driven by recent developments, policy changes, or emerging issues within the field.

Overall, the trend shows that research output in the area experienced an initial peak, followed by a decline, a period of stability, and finally a renewed increase towards the end of the study period. This pattern reflects the dynamic nature of scholarly research, which is often influenced by socio-economic, academic, and policy-related factors. The findings presented in Table 1 directly address the objective of examining the growth of literature in the field of competition law between 2010

and 2020. The table clearly shows how research output has changed over time, revealing both increases and decreases in scholarly publications.

The high number of publications recorded in 2010 indicates that the field experienced significant research attention at the beginning of the study period. However, the decline observed between 2011 and 2013 suggests that the growth of literature was not consistent, reflecting a period of reduced scholarly output. Furthermore, the gradual increase from 2014 to 2015 and the relatively stable output between 2016 and 2018 indicate that the field maintained a steady level of research activity. The noticeable rise in publications in 2019 and especially in 2020 confirms a renewed growth in literature towards the end of the study period. Therefore, the analysis demonstrates that while the growth of literature in competition law fluctuated over the years, there was an overall pattern of decline followed by recovery and eventual increase. This finding supports the research objective by providing clear evidence of how the volume of publications evolved during the study period. The findings of the study is in line with the studies of Schrepel,2024; Chen and fang, 2025; Pradhan and Zala, 2021; Abubakar and Harande, 2010, who all found that there is inconsistency in literature growth, starting slow and then eventual increase. However, Qallaf (2009) found that there is a steady and consistent increase in punica grantum L. literature.

Geographical Distribution

This section will analyze the geographical distribution of competition law Literature in Heinonline and JSTOR databases from 2010 to 2020. The analyses are as follows:

S/N	Country	No. of Publications	Percentage
1.	U.S.A	401	60.76%
2.	Europe	62	9.39%
3.	New York	60	9.09%
4.	U.K	43	6.52%
5.	Germany	42	6.36%
6.	Canada	24	3.64%
7.	Australia	18	2.72%
8.	Africa	10	1.52%
	TOTAL	660	100%

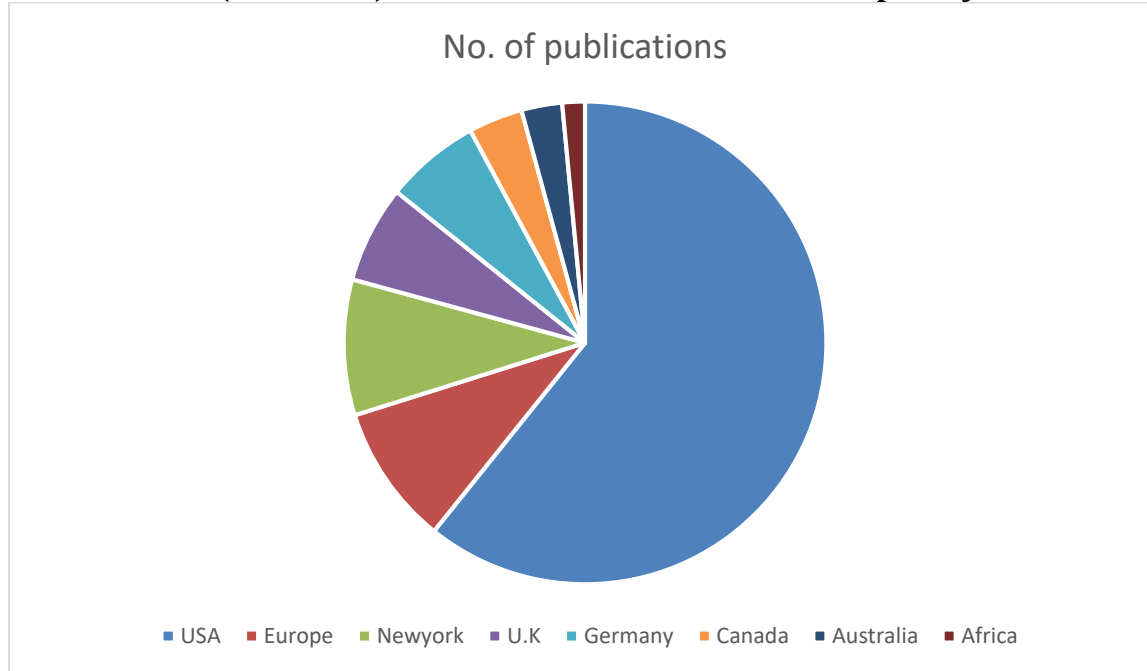


Table 2 and figure 2 presents the geographical spread of 660 publications across different countries. The USA having 401 (60.76%) dominates the publication output, making it the leading contributor. Followed by New York with 60 (9.09%). Uk and Germany contributed moderately with 43 (6.52%) and 42 (6.36%) publications respectively. Canada and Australia have smaller share contributing 24 (3.64%) and 18 (2.72%) respectively. Africa has the lowest representation with 10 (1.52%), this suggests limited research output from African countries. The data reveals that scholarly publications are overwhelmingly dominated by western countries, particularly the USA, while developing regions like Africa remain underrepresented, as can be seen from the data analysed. The finding of the study corroborates with the findings of Safri, and Abdulrahman (2026); Ahmad et al., (2025); Chenet al., (2025); Pradhan and Zala (2025); Chen and Fang (2025); Chen et al., (2022); and Navaneelhakrishan (2014) who also found the USA to rank first in publication of articles in their various studies. However, Verma, Kumar et al., (2025) and Sofik et al., (2025) found China to rank with the highest number of publication in their studies, while Kirtania (2022) found India at the top with the highest number of publication.

Conclusion

The growth of literature in competition law fluctuated significantly, with highest publication output recorded in 2010, a renewed increase was observed in 2020. United State of America dominated the geographical distribution of publications, while Africa had the least contribution of research in developed countries. The study however was limited to 2010 to 2020 and in two databases.

The bibliometric analysis of competition law literature from 2010 to 2020 has shown a progressive evolution of research output in law discipline, characterised by uneven but generally growing publication trends. Publications are dominated by developed countries. Future research in the area of competition law should expand the data sources beyond Heinonline and JSTOR to include additional international databases to achieve more comprehensive global representation, also the time frame should be expanded beyond 2020 to capture more recent developments.

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