Bibliometric Analysis of Dividend Policy and Firm Value

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study conducts a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to map the intellectual landscape, research evolution, and thematic trends in the domain of dividend policy and firm value. Utilizing data from the Scopus database spanning 2000 to 2024, the analysis includes performance metrics, co-authorship networks, institutional collaborations, and keyword co-occurrence mapping, visualized through VOSviewer. The results highlight dividend policy, firm value, corporate governance, and capital structure as the most frequently studied and interconnected themes. A temporal overlay analysis reveals a recent shift toward emerging topics such as sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and information asymmetry, indicating a broader integration of ESG and stakeholder theory into dividend research. The study offers practical insights for financial managers and investors, emphasizes theoretical intersections between finance and governance, and outlines gaps for future scholarly exploration. Despite limitations related to database scope and keyword sensitivity, the findings serve as a valuable foundation for both academic inquiry and policy-oriented decision-making in corporate finance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dividend policy remains a cornerstone of corporate financial management and has long sparked debate in both academic and practitioner circles. At its core, dividend policy refers to the strategic decision regarding the portion of earnings distributed to shareholders versus the portion retained for reinvestment. Since the seminal work of [1], which suggested that dividend policy is irrelevant in perfect markets, a myriad of studies have emerged to challenge, refine, or support this notion under varying assumptions and real-world constraints. These discussions underscore that dividend decisions are far from trivial, they are deeply intertwined with firm value, investor perception, market signaling, and corporate lifecycle [2], [3].

Over the decades, theories such as the bird-in-hand theory, agency cost theory, and signaling theory have contributed to a more nuanced understanding of how dividend policy may influence firm value. For instance, dividend payments can signal financial health and stability, thus influencing investor confidence and market valuation [4]. Conversely, excessive dividend payouts may constrain future investment opportunities, potentially diminishing long-term firm value. The diversity of viewpoints and empirical evidence reflects the complexity of this relationship and the role of contextual factors

such as industry type, market conditions, ownership structure, and taxation policies [5].

In recent years, global economic uncertainty, technological disruption, and evolving investor expectations have further reshaped the dividend discourse. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, prompted many firms to suspend or modify dividend payouts, reigniting questions about dividend resilience and strategic flexibility in times of crisis [6], [7]. Simultaneously, the emergence of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) investing has pressured firms to reconsider the allocation of profits toward sustainable initiatives versus traditional shareholder payouts. Such developments have influenced both academic inquiries and boardroom deliberations on the optimal balance between dividends and reinvestments to sustain long-term firm value [8].

The evolution of this scholarly conversation can be traced and synthesized through bibliometric analysis, a method that enables systematic mapping of research patterns, influential works, authorship networks, and thematic clusters. Bibliometric techniques allow scholars to uncover how the field has developed over time, which regions or institutions dominate the discourse, and which theories or models are gaining momentum. In a domain as richly debated as dividend policy and firm value, bibliometric analysis offers a high-level view of intellectual structure while highlighting gaps for future exploration [9]. Despite the proliferation of literature on dividend policy and firm valuation, a comprehensive bibliometric study that captures the trajectory, collaboration patterns, and thematic shifts of this field is notably lacking. Prior reviews have typically focused on content-based syntheses or meta-analyses within specific time frames or contexts. However, a broad-scale bibliometric review is essential to grasp the global research landscape, identify the leading contributors and journals, and assess emerging trends. This approach not only benefits scholars seeking to position their research but also informs practitioners and policymakers aiming to ground their decisions in well-established or emerging evidence.

While the relationship between dividend policy and firm value has been extensively studied from theoretical and empirical standpoints, the absence of a bibliometric mapping creates a gap in understanding the evolution and structure of scholarly contributions in this field. Without a systematic overview of the academic landscape, it becomes challenging to identify dominant research clusters, underexplored themes, and evolving scholarly interests. This hinders the ability of researchers to navigate the literature effectively and contribute to areas of growing importance. Moreover, given the dynamic nature of financial markets and corporate governance, there is a pressing need to track how research on dividend policy adapts to new economic realities and methodological advancements. This study aims to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the scholarly literature on dividend policy and firm value.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a bibliometric analysis approach to systematically evaluate the structure, trends, and dynamics of academic literature concerning dividend policy and its relationship with firm value. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method used to assess the scientific output of a particular research domain by identifying patterns in publication, authorship, citation, and keyword co-occurrence [9]. It enables researchers to capture the evolution of a field, pinpoint influential contributions, and map intellectual linkages among studies. For this study, bibliometric techniques such as performance analysis and science mapping were employed to measure productivity (e.g., number of publications and citations) and explore relational patterns among keywords, authors, institutions, and countries.

The data source for this bibliometric analysis was the Scopus database, selected due to its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and global publication records across the fields of

finance, accounting, and management. The search query was constructed using a combination of relevant keywords such as "dividend policy," "firm value," "market value," "shareholder wealth," and "payout ratio," applied to article titles, abstracts, and keywords. The initial search was limited to English-language documents and publications between the years 2000 and 2024, ensuring both relevance and temporal depth. After an initial filtering process to remove duplicates, non-peer-reviewed material, and unrelated subject areas, a total of X articles were selected as the final dataset for analysis.

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer, a specialized software tool designed for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks. The analysis included several dimensions: (1) co-authorship analysis to identify collaborative networks between authors and institutions, (2) citation analysis to determine the most influential works and sources, and (3) keyword co-occurrence analysis to reveal prevailing and emerging themes in the literature. Visualizations such as density maps, cluster networks, and temporal trend overlays were generated to facilitate the interpretation of the intellectual structure and thematic evolution of the field.

3.　RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
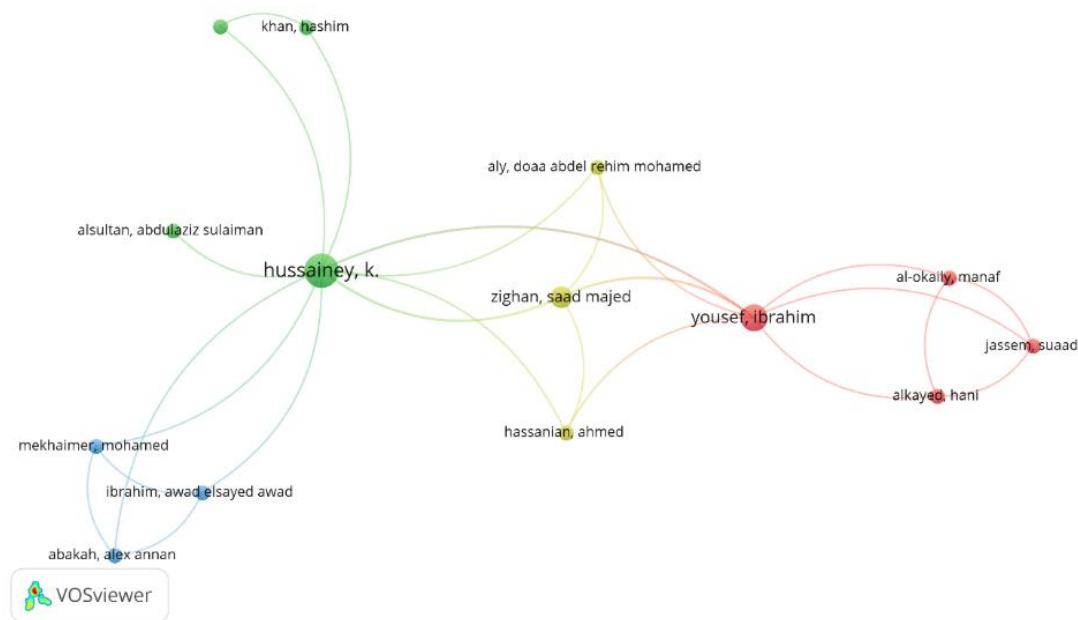### 3.1　Co-Authorship Analysis

Figure 1. Author Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 1 above represents a co-authorship network among scholars contributing to the field of dividend policy and firm value. The network is structured into several colored clusters, each signifying a group of authors who frequently collaborate. The most prominent nodes (Hussainey, K. (green cluster) and Yousef, Ibrahim (red cluster)) act as central figures, indicating high publication or citation counts and a significant role in connecting other scholars. Hussainey, K. shows strong collaborative links with multiple authors, such as Alsultan, Abdulaziz Sulaiman, and Khan, Hashim, reflecting a well-established research network. Meanwhile, Yousef, Ibrahim is deeply interconnected with authors like Al-Okaily, Manaf, and Jassem, Suaad, forming a distinct collaboration group. Some smaller clusters like the blue group (e.g., Mekhaimar, Mohamed and Abakah, Alex Annan) are more isolated, suggesting niche or regional research efforts. The interconnecting lines (edges)

visualize co-authorship relationships, where the thickness of the lines reflects the strength or frequency of collaboration.
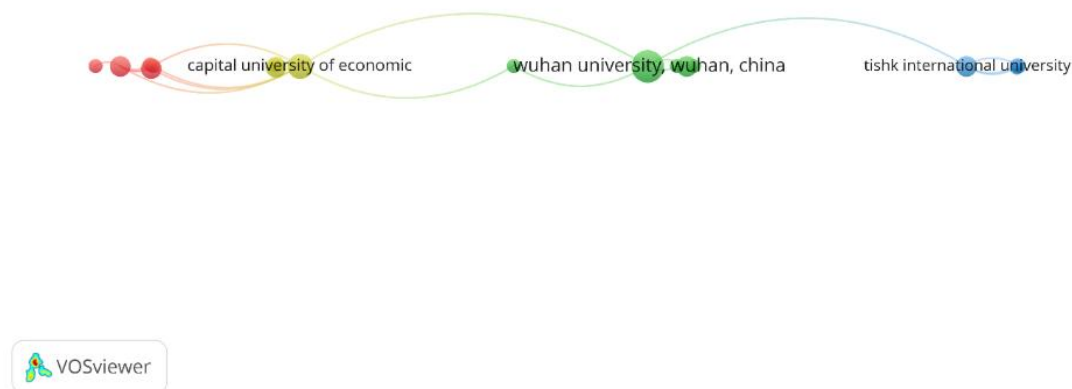

Figure 2. Institution Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 2 above depicts a co-authorship network by institutional affiliation in the field of dividend policy and firm value research. The map highlights three main institutions that act as central nodes: Capital University of Economics, Wuhan University (Wuhan, China), and Tishk International University. Each colored cluster represents groups of researchers affiliated with the respective institutions, with Capital University of Economics (orange cluster) showing the densest concentration of collaborations, suggesting it is a key hub in this domain. Wuhan University (green cluster) serves as a bridge institution, connecting both the Capital University of Economics and the more peripheral Tishk International University (blue cluster), indicating its strategic role in fostering international academic collaboration. The presence of cross-institutional links implies an emerging trend of global partnerships and multi-regional co-authorship, although the relatively linear structure of the network also suggests that collaboration is still limited to a few bilateral connections rather than a widespread, integrated scholarly network.
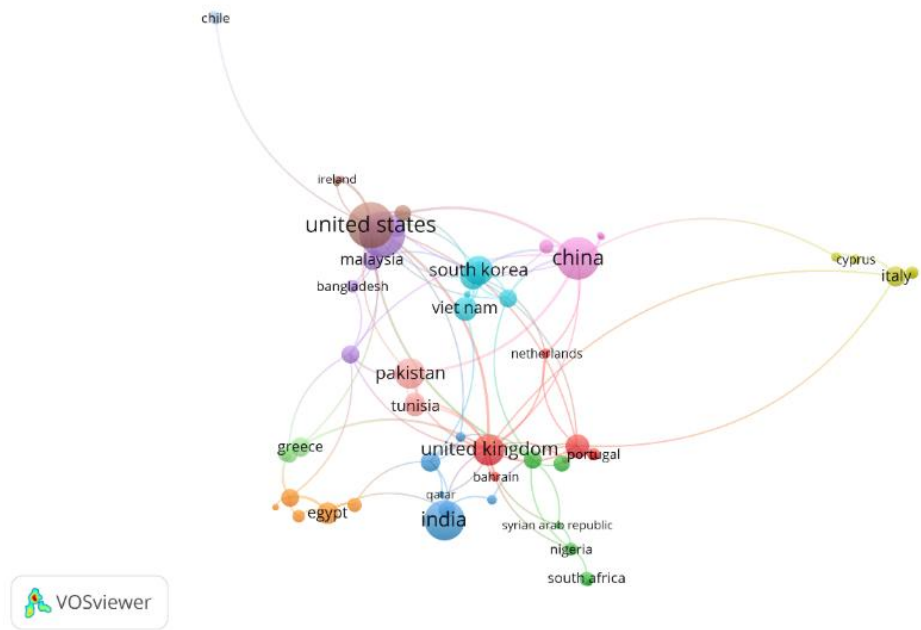
Figure 3. Country Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 3 above illustrates a country-level collaboration network in the research domain of dividend policy and firm value. Each node represents a country, while the lines (edges) between them show the intensity and frequency of international research collaborations. The United States, United Kingdom, China, and India emerge as the most influential and central actors in this network, indicated by their large node sizes and extensive links to other countries. These countries act as global hubs, connecting various regional clusters including South Asia (e.g., Pakistan, Bangladesh), East Asia (e.g., South Korea, Vietnam), and the Middle East and North Africa (e.g., Egypt, Tunisia, Qatar). Meanwhile, Italy and Cyprus form a more isolated cluster, suggesting a focused bilateral collaboration pattern, while Chile remains a disconnected outlier with minimal international co-authorship. The map reflects a growing trend of cross-border academic collaboration, with a notable concentration of activity among Anglophone, Asian, and European countries. However, opportunities remain to enhance integration with underrepresented regions such as Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.2 Citation Analysis

Table 1. Most Cited Article

Citations	Author and Year	Title
134	[10]	Internal controls, risk management, and cash holdings
74	[11]	The impact of R&D intensity, financial constraints, and dividend payout policy on firm value
56	[12]	Value creation, innovation practice, and competitive advantage: Evidence from the FTSE MIB index
55	[13]	Impact of dividend payouts and corporate social responsibility on firm value â€" Evidence from India
50	[14]	Impact of board attributes on the firm dividend payout policy: evidence from Malaysia
46	[15]	Ownership structure, board characteristics and dividend policy: evidence from Turkey
46	[16]	Dividend policy and investor pressure

Citations	Author and Year	Title
46	[17]	The impact of earnings quality on firm value: The case of Vietnam
43	[18]	The COVID-19 Pandemic and Corporate Dividend Policy
41	[19]	Dynamics between ownership structure and dividend policy: evidence from Bangladesh

Source: Scopus, 2025
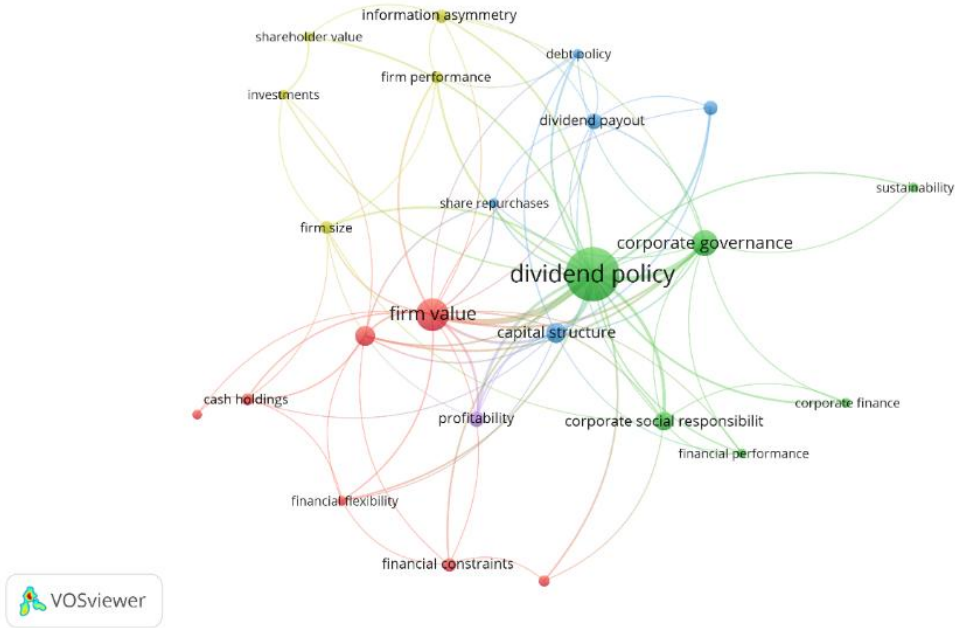
3.3 Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis

Figure 4. Network Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 4 above represents a keyword co-occurrence map within the scholarly literature on dividend policy and firm value. At the center of the network, the keyword "dividend policy" emerges as the most dominant and highly connected term, indicating its centrality in the research domain. It is closely linked with "firm value", "corporate governance", "capital structure", and "corporate social responsibility", which collectively represent the thematic core of the literature. These strong connections suggest that dividend policy is often studied in relation to broader corporate finance decisions, stakeholder theory, and firm valuation metrics, highlighting the integrated nature of dividend strategy within overall financial management.

The green cluster, centered around "corporate governance", includes keywords such as "sustainability", "corporate social responsibility", and "financial performance". This cluster reflects the growing interest in aligning dividend decisions with governance standards, ethical practices, and environmental-social outcomes. Research in this area explores how well-governed firms use dividend payouts not only as financial tools but also as signals of transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability. The inclusion of keywords like "corporate finance" and "CSR" shows a convergence of traditional finance with modern ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) frameworks. The red cluster surrounding "firm value" encompasses keywords like "cash holdings", "financial constraints", "profitability", "financial flexibility", and "firm size". This group indicates a strong

focus on how internal financial dynamics influence or mediate the impact of dividend policies on firm valuation. Studies in this cluster often investigate the causal pathways between payout policies and firm value, especially under conditions of liquidity constraints or capital market imperfections. The frequent co-occurrence of "profitability" and "financial flexibility" underscores their role as key determinants or outcomes of dividend strategy, particularly in high-growth or capital-intensive firms.

The blue cluster includes terms like "dividend payout", "share repurchases", and "debt policy", highlighting alternative payout mechanisms and financing strategies that intersect with dividend decisions. This cluster reflects the literature stream that contrasts dividend payouts with stock buybacks, or explores the interplay between leverage and dividend commitments. Research here often addresses signaling theory, the pecking order theory, and agency costs, exploring how firms choose between returning capital to shareholders or retaining earnings for strategic reinvestment. The yellow cluster, consisting of terms like "information asymmetry", "investments", "firm performance", and "shareholder value", indicates an overarching theme of market signaling and investor perception. Studies in this stream explore how dividend announcements influence investor behavior, reduce information asymmetries, and align managerial actions with shareholder interests. The emphasis on "firm performance" and "shareholder value" suggests that dividend policy is often evaluated not only in terms of firm-level financials but also from a market-facing and behavioral finance perspective.
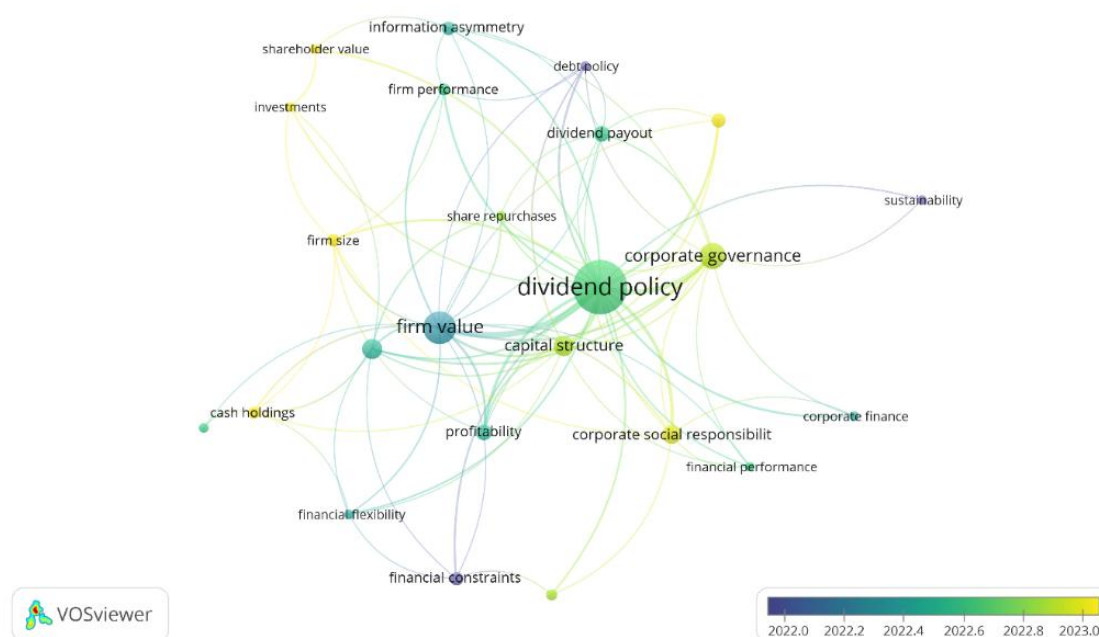

Figure 5. Overlay Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 5 presents the temporal progression of keywords in the research landscape of dividend policy and firm value between 2022 and 2023. Central terms such as "dividend policy", "firm value", and "corporate governance" are displayed in green, suggesting they have maintained steady attention over the last two years. These keywords remain core anchors in the field, forming bridges to various subthemes like capital structure, profitability, and corporate social

responsibility. Their size and location in the center of the network reinforce their foundational role in connecting diverse research streams within the broader discourse of corporate financial strategy.

More recent and emerging topics are shown in yellow, notably keywords such as "sustainability", "corporate social responsibility", and "firm size". These indicate a shifting research emphasis toward integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into traditional financial decision-making. The emergence of these themes suggests scholars are increasingly exploring how dividend decisions intersect with sustainable corporate practices and stakeholder expectations. This evolution is in line with global trends pushing for ethical finance and transparent

governance, showing that dividend policy is now viewed not only from a financial optimization lens but also through the prism of long-term societal value. In contrast, some keywords like "financial constraints", "financial flexibility", and "debt policy" appear in darker blue hues, indicating that their prominence was greater in earlier publications (circa early 2022). These terms represent more traditional corporate finance concerns and have likely matured as topics or been integrated into broader frameworks involving corporate governance and ESG. The gradient progression from blue to yellow across the map offers valuable insight into the thematic transition in the literature.
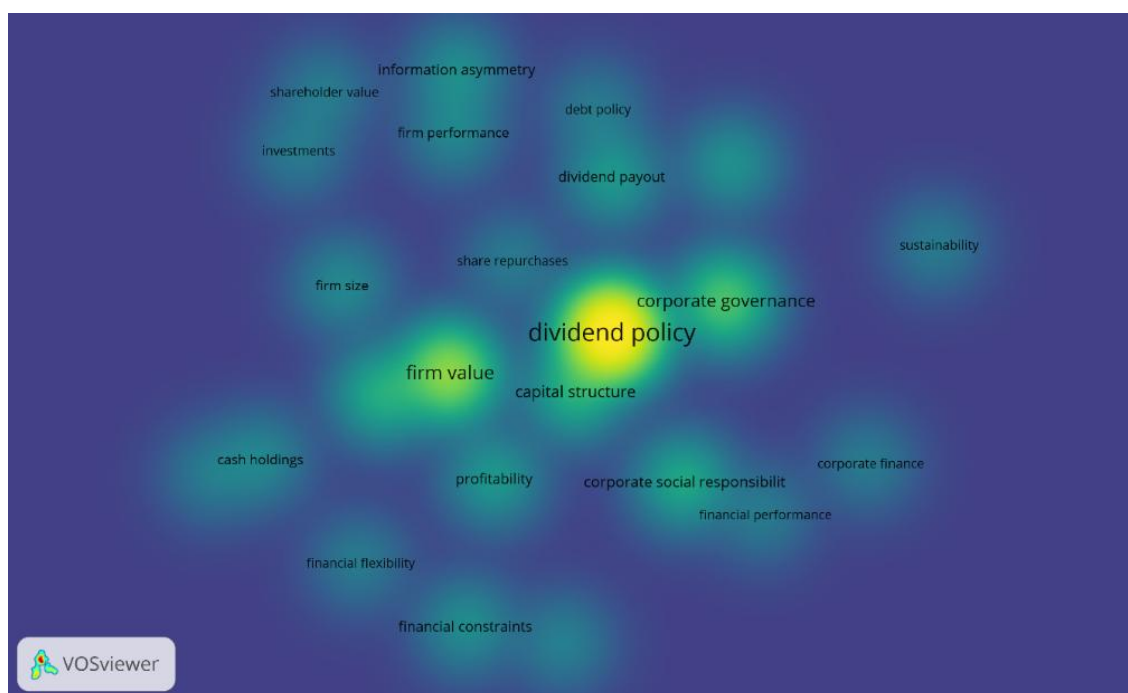

Figure 6. Density Visualization
Source: Data Analysis

Figure 6 above illustrates the density of keyword occurrences in scholarly research on dividend policy and its related concepts. The central term "dividend policy" appears in bright yellow, indicating it is the most frequently used and intensively studied keyword in the field. Closely surrounding it are other high-density keywords such as "firm

value", "corporate governance", and "capital structure", which appear in shades of green to yellow, reflecting their strong association and frequent co-occurrence in the literature. This suggests that these themes are consistently central to discussions about how dividend policy affects financial strategy and organizational value. The outer areas of

the heatmap, shown in darker blue and green, contain keywords like "sustainability", "corporate finance", "information asymmetry", and "financial constraints"—terms that are less frequently studied but still relevant. These lower-density zones indicate emerging or more specialized research niches within the broader domain. Notably, the appearance of "corporate social responsibility" and "sustainability" on the map implies a gradual integration of ESG themes into traditional corporate finance discussions.

3.4 Practical Implication

This study offers meaningful insights for corporate managers, investors, policy makers, and financial consultants by highlighting how scholarly attention around dividend policy has evolved, particularly in relation to firm value. The findings demonstrate that dividend policy is not an isolated financial decision but is increasingly connected with broader themes such as corporate governance, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility. For practitioners, this reinforces the importance of integrating dividend strategies into holistic financial planning that aligns with long-term firm value creation, stakeholder trust, and ethical governance. Additionally, the study maps emerging trends which can guide financial executives in adapting their capital distribution strategies to match shifting investor preferences and regulatory expectations. Investors may also benefit from this knowledge by refining their evaluation criteria for dividend-paying firms, considering not only payout ratios but also governance strength and sustainability orientation.

3.5 Theoretical Contributions

This bibliometric study contributes to the academic literature by providing a systematic, visual, and quantitative overview of how research on dividend policy and firm value has developed over time. The study identifies key clusters of knowledge, influential authors, top collaborating institutions, and emergent themes in the literature. It contributes theoretically by confirming the interdisciplinary nature of dividend policy research linking corporate finance with governance, behavioral finance, and stakeholder theory. Furthermore, by integrating overlay and density visualizations, this study uncovers a thematic shift from traditional constructs (like profitability and capital structure) toward more contemporary issues such as sustainability and CSR, highlighting how dividend decisions are increasingly contextualized within broader ethical and governance frameworks. This offers a meta-theoretical lens for future studies to reconsider the role of dividend policy not just as a financial signal, but as a strategic narrative that reflects firm identity and stakeholder engagement.

3.6 Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, it relies exclusively on data retrieved from the Scopus database, which, while comprehensive, may omit relevant publications indexed in other databases such as Web of Science, Google Scholar, or SSRN. Second, the bibliometric approach focuses on quantitative and relational patterns—such as co-authorship, citation frequency, and keyword co-occurrence without assessing the qualitative depth or methodological rigor of individual studies. Thus, this analysis does not capture nuances in theoretical framing or empirical findings. Third, the keyword-based search strategy may inadvertently exclude studies that address dividend policy and firm value under different terminologies or interdisciplinary contexts. Lastly, the visualizations, while insightful, are time-bound and reflect trends up to the selected cutoff year (e.g., 2024), potentially overlooking newly emerging discussions post-data collection. Future studies could address these limitations by expanding database sources, integrating content analysis, or conducting longitudinal trend

comparisons across a broader temporal frame.

4. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure and evolving trends in the field of dividend policy and firm value. Through performance analysis and science mapping, the study highlights the dominance of key themes such as corporate governance, capital structure, and firm profitability, while also revealing emerging interests in areas like sustainability and corporate social responsibility. The visualization of author collaborations, institutional networks, and keyword co-occurrence patterns underscores the interdisciplinary and globally distributed nature of research in this domain. Importantly, the study shows a gradual shift from traditional financial perspectives toward broader, stakeholder-oriented considerations, reflecting the changing landscape of corporate finance. By identifying influential contributions and thematic gaps, this research offers valuable guidance for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers aiming to deepen their understanding or shape future inquiry in this critical area of financial management.

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