Emerging Technological Trends in Financial Crime and Money Laundering: A Bibliometric Analysis of Cryptocurrency's Role and Global Research Collaboration

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Abstract

This study explores financial crime and money laundering trends through a bibliometric analysis using Scopus and Web of Science databases. The primary objective is to assess research themes, scholarly contributions, and emerging topics in financial crime and money laundering, particularly those involving cryptocurrency. The methodology involves a comprehensive data collection process, with 1280 articles screened using inclusion and exclusion criteria, narrowing to 190 articles for in-depth analysis. Tools like VOSviewer, MS Excel, and Biblioshiny R package were employed for bibliometric coupling, keyword co-occurrence, and thematic clustering. Findings reveal the central role of cryptocurrency in financial crimes, with specific attention to techniques like fraud detection, cybercrime, and anti-money laundering. It highlights the rapid increase in publications since 2017, attributed to cryptocurrency adoption, regulatory developments, and the prevalence of financial crime. The USA, UK, and Australia emerged as major contributors, with the USA displaying the highest collaborative research efforts. Practical implications are significant for policymakers, offering insights to enhance digital transfer security and inform measures against money laundering risks. The study's social implications underline the need for robust cybersecurity and forensic measures to combat online financial crimes effectively. Limitations include its reliance on English-language documents and focus on specific publication databases, and generalizability. Future research directions suggest further investigation into cryptocurrency's psychological impacts, consumer trust, and geographical distribution of fraud activities. This study's originality lies in its bibliometric approach, combining quantitative and qualitative insights, filling research gaps on emerging digital financial crime trends, especially related to cryptocurrency and global collaborative research.

Keywords: Financial Crime, Money Laundering, Systematic Review, Bibliographic Analysis, Biblioshiny R package, Future Research.

Introduction

Financial crime, particularly money laundering, poses a significant threat to the integrity of global financial systems by enabling criminals to conceal the origins of illicit funds (Trozze et

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al., 2022) Effective detection and prevention strategies are crucial to disrupt these activities and maintain economic stability. While firms may be at different stages of technology adoption and have varying levels of enthusiasm and financial resources to execute initiatives, all enterprises can benefit from deploying technological solutions (Toufaily et al., 2021). Moreover, the benefits of technology can be amplified by fully embracing its application across the entire customer lifecycle (Palakurti, 2023). Trozze et al. (2022) has identified 29 distinct forms the scientific literature has addressed a limited number of 18 types of cryptocurrency fraud, whereas the non-academic literature has covered a broader range of 32 variations, with 14 of them not being documented in scholarly sources. The participants in the expert consensus exercise picked pump-and-dump scams and ransomware as the most profitable and feasible threats (Akter et al., 2023).

Wronka (2023) stated that DeFi is widely regarded as a significant advancement in the widespread acceptance of cryptocurrencies. DeFi is anticipated to have a substantial impact in it aims to provide a practical and effective alternative to the existing banking system, with a focus on the future (Gomber et al., 2017). Hence, it is imperative for the DeFi sector to tackle the primary dangers in order to guarantee complete adherence by its users (Akter et al., 2025). Gupta and Kumar (2020) designed to find out this text discusses the mechanisms of accounting policies and how potential vulnerabilities within these policies can be considered, leading to various strategies that can be employed to achieve specific outcomes in the creation of financial statements (Akter et al., 2023). Creative accounting, while legally permissible and widely accepted, exploits the loopholes in the regulations and guidelines guiding the preparation of financial accounts (Abed et al., 2022). This practice can ultimately facilitate financial crimes and have a detrimental impact on the whole economy (Hossain et al., 2025).

Festus and Samuel (2012) showed that Forensic accounting is a specialized financial methodology designed to prevent and resolve instances of economic and financial crimes inside the Nigerian economy. Nigerian government pass legislation to establish forensic accounting as a standard practice in the country. This will help eradicate economic and financial crimes (Abed et al., 2022; Bhuiyan et al., 2024). Sigertova et al. (2022) analyzed the literature sources discuss the movement of attention among current financial market scientists towards studying the characteristics of financial crime (Akanfe et al., 2024). The importance of identifying the most recent trends in financial crime stems from the fact that studying these trends enables the enhancement of awareness regarding financial fraud (Nicholls et al., 2021). This, in turn, facilitates the establishment of shared databases, the formation of alliances, and the identification of effective and efficient strategies to enhance the capacity to combat financial crime at both national and global levels ((Toufaily et al., 2021).

This research has made notable contributions to the academic literature in three separate manners (Wickert et al., 2021). Firstly, it provides insight into the significant geographical factors, scholarly publications, academic experts, institutions, publishers, and study fields that are gaining growing recognition in relation to the development of criminal activities involving cryptocurrencies (Toufaily et al., 2021). This would facilitate the generation of novel ideas and enhance the efficiency of research and development for prospective researchers (Akter et al., 2025). Furthermore, the study offers a thorough examination of the characteristics of financial crimes, potential causes, and hypotheses elucidating the fundamental conditions that enable unlawful conduct in the realm of money laundering (Abed et al., 2022). This will facilitate users and market participants in comprehending the interaction between various crime trends and

money laundering (Nicholls et al., 2021). Lastly, the study addresses crucial aspects that policymakers, users, regulators, and governments should openly deliberate on in order to enhance the safety of digital transfers and provide guidance by Krishna et al. (2023) for future measures aimed at mitigating potential dangers associated with money laundering (Akter et al., 2025). The following research objectives are determined to conduct this bibliographic analysis in this research.

RO 1: Discussing the academic research interests such as financial crime, money laundering, significant affiliations, global impact and research trends of money laundering on financial systems.

RO 2: Identifying the future research direction relating to opportunities, challenges, mitigating ways of money laundering in financial crime.

Literature Review

Xu et al. (2018) showed models that can predict the time intervals between arrivals and the sizes of breaches. Researchers analyze the dataset using both qualitative and quantitative trend analyses to acquire a more comprehensive knowledge of the trajectory of hacking breach incidents (Nicholls et al., 2021). Hossain et al. (2024) stated that the cyber security analysis was predicted to the frequency of cyber hacks when the severity of their impact remains comparatively unaffected (Corbet et al., 2019).

Ahmed and Anam (2022) conducted a study that the influencing factors were contributed to the involvement of highly sophisticated criminals involved in corporate financial crimes in Pakistan. The study results indicated that individuals belonging to the elite class tend to engage in criminal activities when they perceive a high likelihood of gaining significant benefits and a low chance of facing punishment (Islam et al., 2024). Moreover, social environment in cyber security plays a crucial role in the expression and development of criminal activity (Abed et al., 2022).

The scope and complexity of financial crimes have grown alongside advancements in technology and globalization. Xu et al. (2018) emphasized the adaptive nature of cybercrime, with hackers exploiting weaknesses in digital systems. Technological progress, particularly in cryptocurrency, has facilitated crimes like money laundering, with Bitcoin enabling anonymous transactions (Nicholls et al., 2021). The three key stages of money laundering—placement, layering, and integration—demonstrate the sophisticated methods used to legitimize illegal funds (Castonguay & Stein Smith, 2020).

Cryptocurrencies play a dual role in the financial sector (Giudic et al., 2020). While they offer benefits like secure, decentralized transactions, they also open doors to illegal activities. Trozze et al. (2022) highlighted the rising use of cryptocurrencies in pump-and-dump schemes, ransomware attacks, and fraud, exacerbated by weak regulatory oversight. The decentralized nature of blockchain complicates anti-money laundering (AML) efforts, as observed by Kfir (2020). Privacy-centric cryptocurrencies like Monero and Zcash are especially attractive to cybercriminals due to their enhanced anonymity features (Hilal et al., 2022).

Financial crimes extend beyond direct theft to more complex schemes like creative accounting and insider trading. Gupta and Kumar (2020) describe creative accounting as exploiting regulatory loopholes to manipulate financial statements, a practice that, while technically legal, has severe economic implications. Similarly, insider trading undermines trust and market

fairness, as noted by Friedrichs (2019). Digital fraud, such as "double-spending," where a digital token is used multiple times, has also emerged as a significant threat (Li and Wang, 2022). Additionally, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), meant to enhance ownership verification, face challenges like unauthorized replication and manipulation (Mackenzie & Bērziņa, 2021), underscoring the need for advanced fraud prevention tools (Phillip et al., 2018).

The interplay between cybersecurity and financial crimes has become a key area of research. Ahmed and Anam (2022) emphasized the importance of advanced cybersecurity measures in identifying and mitigating risks associated with corporate financial crimes. Digital forensics plays a pivotal role in tracing electronic evidence and tracking perpetrators' digital footprints (Akter et al., 2024). Robust cybersecurity frameworks can help minimize risks such as identity theft and hacking, common in online financial transactions (Hossain et al., 2022; Nicholls et al., 2021). AML initiatives are essential in combating financial crimes, especially with the growing use of cryptocurrencies. Gaviyau and Sibindi (2023) discussed evolving AML strategies, including Customer Due Diligence (CDD) and Know Your Customer (KYC) protocols. Sun et al. (2022) proposed privacy-focused KYC-compliant identity systems to balance user confidentiality with regulatory requirements (Thakkar et al., 2024). However, existing AML frameworks often fall short in addressing the complexities of cryptocurrency transactions, calling for more innovative approaches (Hilal et al., 2022).

Geographical variations in research contributions to financial crimes are notable, with the United States and the United Kingdom leading in academic output (Härdle et al., 2010). This underscores the importance of global cooperation to tackle these crimes effectively (Nicholls et al., 2021). Collaborative efforts are particularly vital for standardizing regulations and sharing intelligence across borders (Touzaily et al., 2021). Socioeconomic factors also influence the prevalence and nature of financial crimes. Ahmed and Anam (2022) found that elites in Pakistan are more likely to engage in financial crimes due to low perceived risks of punishment and high potential rewards. This aligns with rational choice theory, which suggests individuals weigh the costs and benefits before committing crimes (Islam et al., 2024). Social learning theory further explains how unethical practices can become normalized within organizational cultures, as observed in Bangladesh (Ghose et al., 2025)).

Forensic accounting has proven effective in investigating and preventing financial crimes. In Nigeria, it has been institutionalized to combat economic and financial offenses (Festus & Samuel, 2012). This approach integrates accounting, auditing, and investigative skills to identify fraudulent activities (Abed et al., 2022). However, widespread adoption of forensic accounting requires significant investment in expertise and resources. Bibliometric analyses show evolving themes in financial crime research. Topics like machine learning, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity have gained prominence for their applications in fraud detection and risk management (Nicholls et al., 2021). Conversely, areas such as corporate social responsibility and tax evasion remain underexplored, offering opportunities for future research (Ye et al., 2020).

Current research has limitations. Many studies rely heavily on qualitative methods, which may not fully capture financial crime trends (Hilal et al., 2022). Additionally, the absence of centralized databases for tracking financial crimes impacts data reliability and comparability (Bhuiyan et al., 2024). The focus on English-language publications further limits the applicability of findings to non-English-speaking regions (Aivaz et al., 2024). The field of

financial crime research continues to evolve, with significant potential for further exploration. Scholars call for greater focus on the psychological impact of cryptocurrency fraud and its influence on consumer trust (Trozze et al., 2022). Additionally, more research is needed on the geographic distribution of financial crimes and the role of fintech innovations in combating them (Gaviyau & Sibindi, 2023). Increased international collaboration and advanced analytical tools are essential for addressing these challenges and building a more secure financial ecosystem (Akinbowale et al., 2020).

Sl No.	Category	Explanation	Source
1	Banking/Thrifts Crime: The Savings and Loan Mess	Banks play a crucial role in managing and safeguarding significant amounts of money, which makes them susceptible to fraudulent activities. Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, banks continue to maintain a prominent and advantageous position. Despite the challenges posed by the global health crisis, banks have managed to sustain their significance and influence in the financial landscape.	(Sudjianto, 2010; Uddin et al., 2024)
2	Insider trading	Investment managers engage in takeover transactions using privileged information to generate substantial profits for exclusive clients. Insider trading involves a significant breach of trust.	(Friedrichs, 2010)
3	Financial crimes and financial markets	Unlawful actions conducted through the involvement of brokerage firms, the foreign currency market, tax shelters, mutual funds, and hedge funds. Additionally encompasses fraudulent activities conducted by stock analysts and insurance companies.	(Bhuiyan et al., 2023)
4	Money laundering	Money is transmitted via ostensibly legitimate means, while the origin remains concealed. The current form of currency in circulation can be traced back to its origins in various illicit activities.	(Hilal et al., 2022)

Table 1: The Global Impact of Money Laundering on Financial Systems

Source: Author's Work

Methodology

The Web of Science and Scopus database were employed to gather all previous relevant publications on financial crimes related to money laundering. Bhuiyan et al. (2024) asserted that the Scopus and Web of Science databases are dependable selections for performing research in the investigative domain (Toufaily et al., 2021). Scopus and Web of Science is one of the largest databases available (Zhang, 2023), containing a wide range of abstracts and citations from peer-reviewed research articles from around the world (Bhuiyan et al., 2024). Moreover, there was a substantial convergence of around 88% between the Web of Science and Scopus databases (Aivaz et al., 2024). Scopus is more appropriate for our current research field since it proposals

a thorough comprehension of financial crimes and money laundering in the past (Shin & Rice, 2024), as well as aids in recognizing influential works conducted throughout the years (Hilal et al., 2022). This study retrieved historical academic journals from the Web of Science and Scopus databases on October 30, 2024. The PRISMA Bibliographic Methodology review was devised and illustrated in Figure 1.

Data Analysis Method

The investigator employed VOSviewer, Microsoft Excel, and the Biblioshiny R package software by Aboelfotoh et al. (2024) to conduct bibliographic analysis and content analysis on our final research sample (Bhuiyan et al., 2024). The network mapping investigation of green bonds in clean energy involved the use of VOSviewer software (Langley et al., 2023). This analysis encompassed bibliographic coupling and co-citation networks, as well as keyword co-occurrence (Bhuiyan et al., 2024). In addition, author employed three software programs to assess trends in publications (Firmansyah et al., 2024), sources, institution affiliations, and countries' research contributions to crimes related to money laundering and fraud (Nicholls et al., 2021). Content analysis was conducted on the bibliographic coupling of authors and clusters of keyword occurrences to identify the subareas of investigation and get insight into the research (Shin & Rice, 2024).

Identification

A total 1280 documents were retrieved from the Scopus and Web of Science database during the initial search in this research. Therefore, researcher utilized the inclusion and exclusion criteria to evaluate our primary search results (Langley et al., 2023) and identify more relevant peer reviewed papers (Abed et al., 2022). The researcher conducted a search in the subject areas of econometrics, economics, finance, accounting, business management, and social sciences in this research (Al-Raggad & Al-Raggad, 2024). The researchers utilized journal articles, review papers, and book chapters in their search and restricted the analysis to materials written in English and considered as final versions (Akter et al., 2025).

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Topic Identification:                │
│          Financial Crime and Money Laundering        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Database Selection: Scopus and Web of Science   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                         │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Article Identified N= 1280              │
│   TITLE-ABS-KEY (("Financial Crime" or "Money        │
│     Laundering" OR "Financial Frauds") AND           │
│   ("Laundering*" OR "Cryptocurrency*" OR "Crime*"))  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Identification / Screening / Eligibility / Final Selection

Article Excluded N= 878
Inclusion Criteria:
Subject Area: Econometrics, Economics, Finance, Accounting, Business Management, Social Science
Time Frame: 2016-2024
Document Type: Article, Review Paper and Book Chapter

Article Identified N=402
mostly relevant studies were selected for further Abstract screening and Title

Article Excluded N= 157
Articles excluded related with Abstract and title such as Financial Crime, Cryptocurrency, Crime, Money Laundering, Fraud.

Full Articles Identified N=245
Relevant articles are identified for full text screening.

Article Excluded N= 55
Relevant articles omitted relating with context, scope, area, and relevancy.

Final Document Selected N= 190
Relevant articles were finalized for content and bibliometric analysis in VOSviewer, MS Excel, and Biblioshiny R package
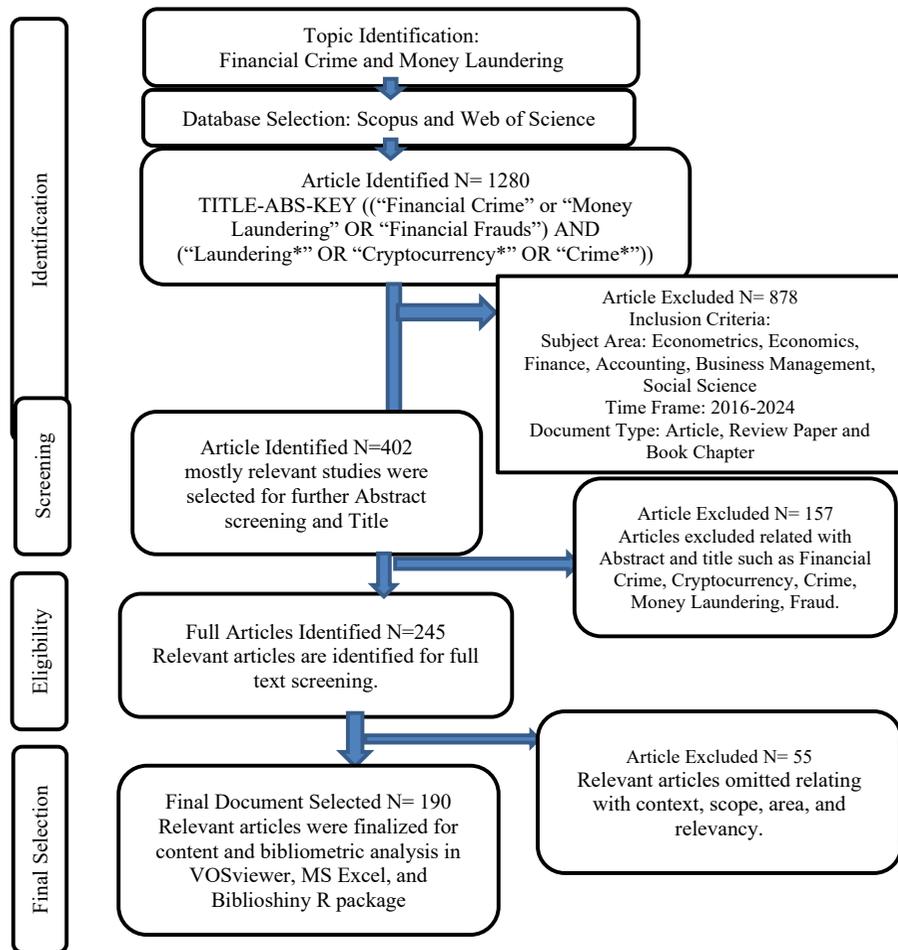
Figure 1: PRISMA Bibliographic Methodology

Source: Author Work

The usage of these inclusion and exclusion criteria resulted in the exclusion of 878 irrelevant papers (David et al., 2023), hence enhancing the quality of the paper sources (Bhuiyan et al., 2024). Consequently, the initial sample size was decreased to 402 articles for subsequent review (Shin & Rice, 2024). During the subsequent stage, researcher conducted a comprehensive analysis of the title, abstract, keyword, and conclusion of each paper (Ye et al., 2020). Research aim was to select only the most pertinent and closely associated literature for the study on money laundering, financial crimes, scams, and frauds etc (Akter et al., 2025). By excluding 157 papers that were irrelevant to this research issue, researcher successfully narrowed down our sample for comprehensive analysis of the full-text materials (Nicholls et al., 2021).

Data Screening

In the final phase of the data screening, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of the remaining 245 documents to determine if they were in line with the research objectives. The author meticulously evaluated each article independently and assigned a score of 1 to articles that were relevant and aligned with the conceptual framework (David et al., 2023); otherwise, a score of 0 was assigned. The majority of the excluded articles are to techniques used in financial crimes and technology oriented in money laundering (Bhuiyan et al., 2024). Author has also covered the process of cybercrime, algorithms, practices, historical development, various usages in financial crimes (Milon et al., 2024).

Eligibility

Bibliometric analysis is an influential approach for investigating and examining large amount of scientific data (Thakkar et al., 2024). This resource provides essential insights for researchers seeking to comprehend the complex developmental aspects of a specific field while identifying new areas of exploration (Shin & Rice, 2024). Bibliometric analysis, which utilizes statistical measures, holds significant promise for reshaping the evaluation of scientific research and related activities (Donthu et al., 2021). The technique it provides is transparent, systematic, and reproducible, and the potential to greatly influence the way we assess research and scientists such as money laundering, fraud, or other related offenses to identify gaps in current research and enable academics to make valuable contributions in this field (Akter et al., 2025). The researcher conducted a content analysis on this dataset to examine and assess significant study topics in financial crimes and money laundering (Rimi et al., 2025). Integrating the quantitative bibliometric method with the qualitative content analysis methodology was strengthened the reliability and validity of the study topic (Nicholls et al., 2021).

Final Selection

The final result is to complete recording to financial crimes, such as money laundering and fraud, for the purpose of conducting bibliometric analysis (Hilal et al., 2022). The review analysis resulted in the selection of 190 documents that the researcher deemed suitable for the final analysis selection.

Analysis and Discussion

This section delves into various aspects of financial crime and money laundering, with a focus on the impact of cryptocurrencies. It outlines key findings such as the leading publishers and countries contributing to research, including the USA, UK, and Australia. The section highlights a surge in publications from 2017 onward, especially after the rise of cryptocurrencies, reflecting increased scholarly interest. Tools like VOSviewer have been used to analyze research trends, identifying emerging topics such as fraud detection, anti-money laundering (AML) efforts, and the role of cybersecurity. The analysis underscores the importance of international collaboration, evolving research themes, and the need for further exploration of the psychological impacts of cryptocurrency fraud and regional variations in financial crime.

Journal Name and Topic and Publication Country

Figure 2 represents the three field plots. Journal of Financial Crime is the top-ranked publisher producing money laundering research in USA. The Journal of Money Laundering and Control is the second largest publisher producing on fraud research in UK. Crime related research were

mostly published in Security Journal in China in figure 2.
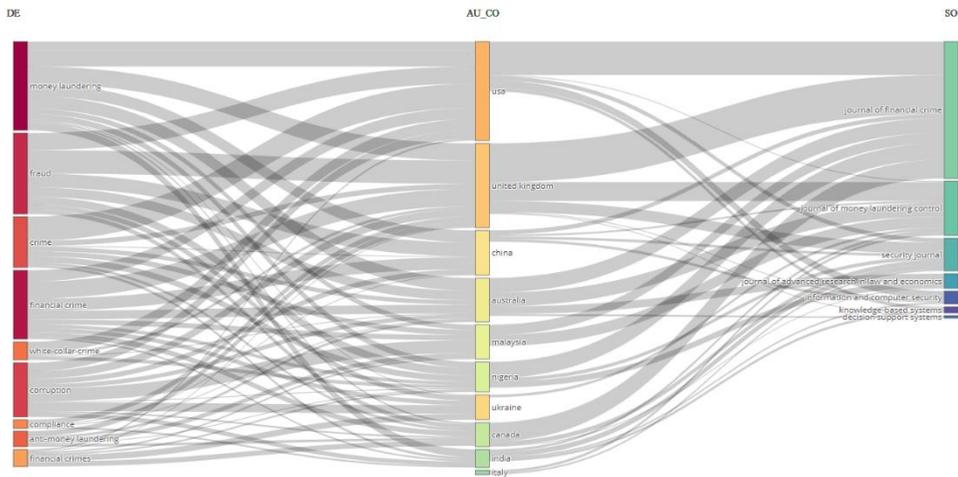
Three Field Plots

Figure 2: Three Field Plots

Source: Author Work

Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics has published mostly on financial crime in Australia. While color crime, corruption, crime, compliance, anti-money laundering, financial crimes were published. Malaysia, Nigeria, Ukraine, Canada, India, Italy were published a least number of publications above those topics in figure 2.

Annual Scientific Production

According to Figure 3, there is a clear representation of the publication trend in the field of financial crime and money laundering. A limited quantity of documents was published during the period from 2013 to 2017, indicating a relatively low level of scholarly activity. It is noteworthy that research efforts in this field did not gain significant momentum until after 2017, when pioneering work began to emerge.
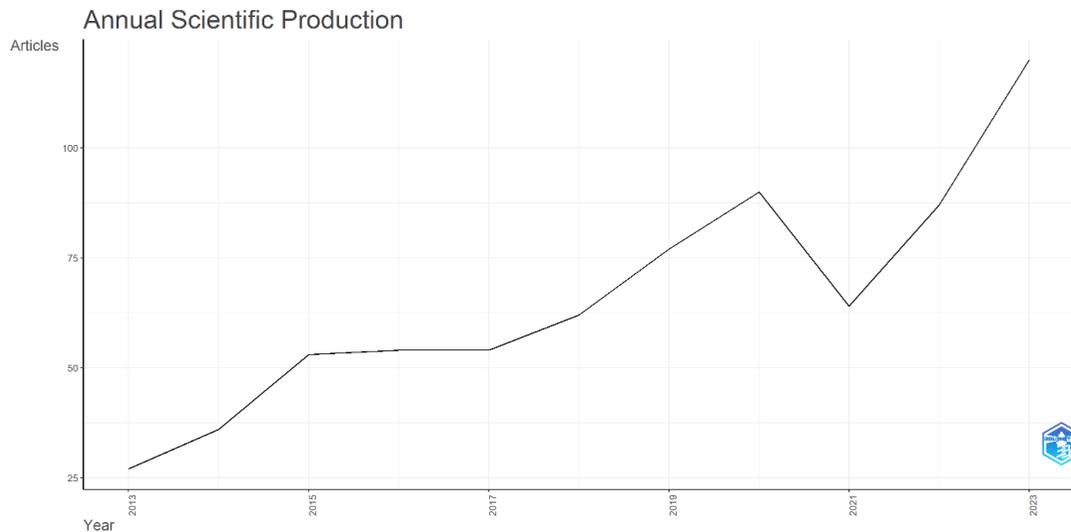
Figure 3: Publication Over Time

Source: Author Work

This observation suggests that the research field pertaining to money laundering is relatively nascent, thereby indicating a sense of novelty within this particular area of study. According to recent data, there has been a significant surge in the number of publications in 2018. This information can be attributed to the growing acceptance of cryptocurrencies as a potential mode of payment by the Chinese and South Korean governments (Nicholls et al., 2021). The research landscape on financial crime and money laundering experienced notable transformations between 2019 and 2021. These shifts were influenced by various factors, including differing views on cryptocurrency technology, regulatory concerns, instances of liquidation events, and the impact of the "fear of missing out" (FOMO) phenomenon (Rahman et al., 2024). Between 2021 and 2023, there was a marked increase in the volume of research articles focusing on cryptocurrency. This surge in academic output reflects the rising interest and growing significance of this area of study. Between the years 2017 and 2023, there was a significant increase in the number of publications, as showed by Figure 3. Specifically, the number of publications nearly tripled over this seven-year period.

Countries Number of Publication Over Time

Figure 4 depicts the countries that have made significant contributions to the field of money laundering and financial crime research. These countries have not only published a substantial number of articles but have also garnered a considerable number of citations in this area of study. According to our research findings, the United States of America has emerged as the leading country in terms of article contributions on a global scale.
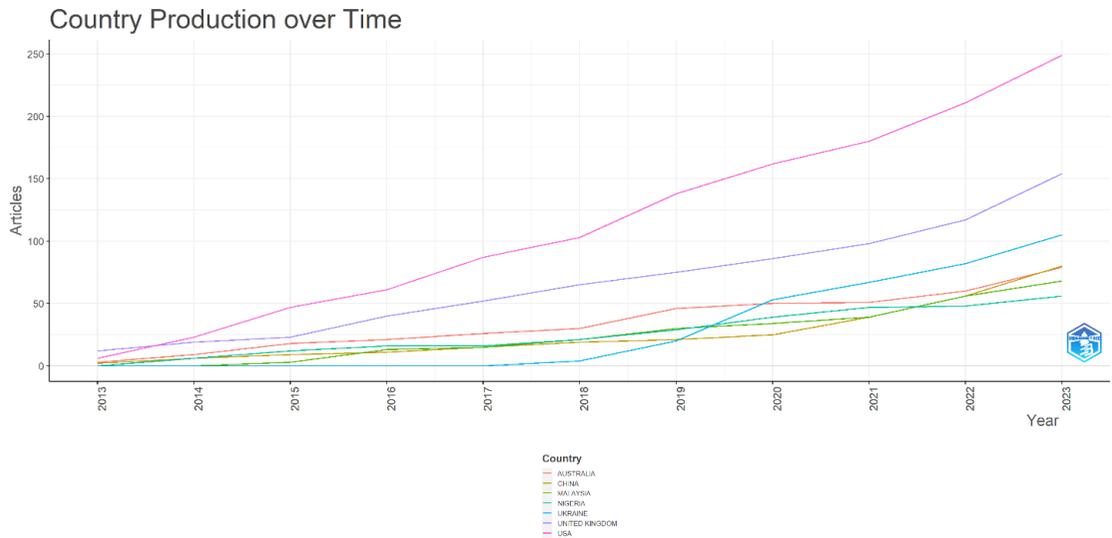
Figure 4: Countries Number of Publication Over Time

Source: Author Work

Our data indicates that from the year 2013 to 2023, a remarkable total of 250 articles have been published by researchers affiliated with institutions based in the USA. According to our research findings, the United Kingdom has emerged as the second most prolific country in terms of academic papers published over the past decade, with a total of 130 papers. The countries of Ukraine, Nigeria, Malaysia, China, and Australia have collectively contributed a significant number of articles to the academic and business research field. Between 2013 and 2023, Ukraine contributed 100 research articles, while Nigeria, Malaysia, China, and Australia produced 75, 75, 60, and 52 articles, respectively. These statistics underscore the significant emphasis placed on scholarly citation and research within these countries.

WORDCLOUD/ WORD Cluster (which words are frequently used)

Figure 5: WORDCLOUD/ WORD Cluster

Source: Author Work

Tools such as VOSviewer have been utilized to analyze and visualize word clouds or clusters (Ejaz et al., 2022), aiding in the identification and interpretation of research trends (Akter et al., 2024). The summary statistics from the bibliometric analysis on financial crime and money laundering are illustrated in Figure 5. The word cloud in figure 5 prominently featured terms such as money laundering, financial crime, fraud crime, and corruption, indicating their prevalence in the analyzed data.

Trending Topics

The software tool known as VOSviewer has been employed in order to ascertain the prevalence of certain keywords and to discern patterns in research endeavors (Ye et al., 2020). The summary statistics of the bibliometric analysis of financial crime and money laundering conducted between 2015 and 2023 are presented in Figure 6. The term frequency of research data obtained from the Scopus database exhibits a range of values, specifically 25, 50, 75, and 100. The figure 4 depicts the trends in topics related to financial crime and money laundering. Figure 6 reveals that the topic of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) has the lowest trend among the topics analyzed. It is noteworthy that this topic was predominantly published between 2015 and 2017, with a total of 25 occurrences. A significant number of publications, exceeding 100 in total, have been dedicated to the topics of money laundering, financial crime, and fraud. These publications have predominantly emerged between the years 2017 and 2022. Recent research has focused on the utilization of machine learning, fraud detection, and artificial intelligence as prominent keywords. These terms have been observed to have a term frequency of 50 publications, indicating their significance in the field. Financial crime and cybersecurity emerged as equally significant topics in the field of publication from 2019 to 2022, as depicted in Figure 6.
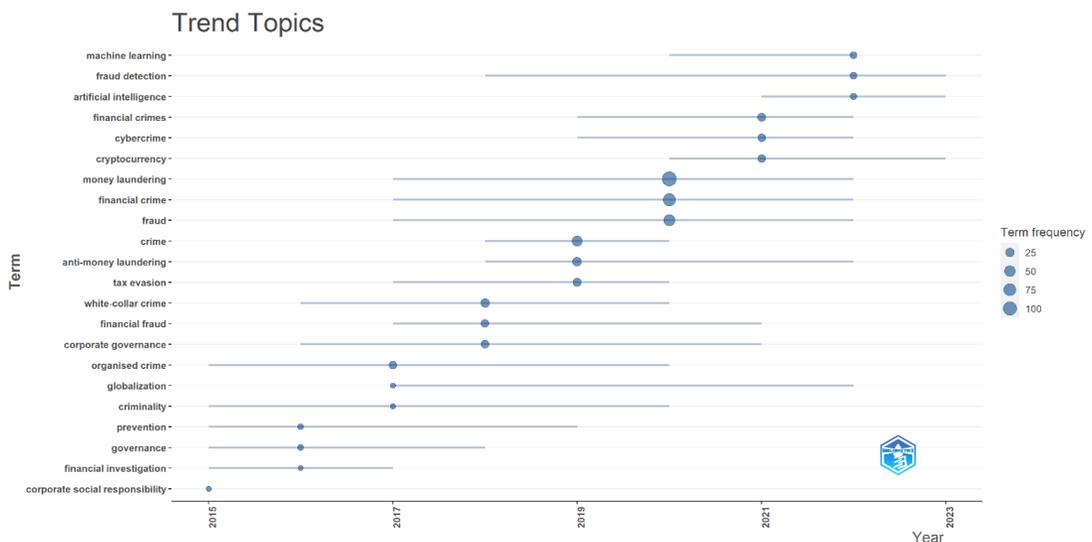

Figure 6: Trending Topics

Source: Author Work

Thematic Study

A thematic study employs the method of keyword co-occurrence analysis to unravel the progression of research themes within a specific domain (Nicholls et al., 2021). These themes are categorized into four distinct quadrants, namely motor, niche, emerging or declining, and basic, as described by Nasir et al. (2021) and Kashi & Shah (2023). Research focus within a particular field can be assessed by examining the density and centrality of these four topologies, as noted by Abhilash et al. (2022). Density reflects the importance of a specific theme within a given context (Hilal et al., 2022), while centrality represents the level of research activity and the potential for further exploration in that area (Akter et al., 2025). The objective of this analysis is to identify potential research advancements in the thematic areas of cryptocurrency as depicted in Figure 7.
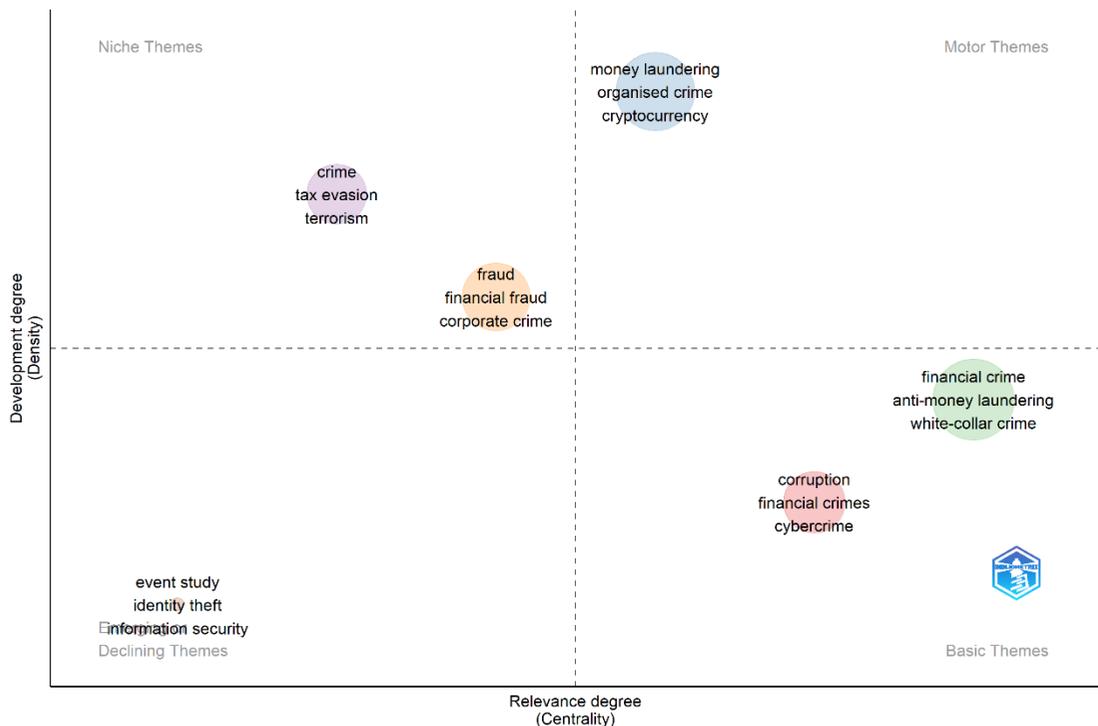

Figure 7: Thematic Map

Source: Author Work

In the first quadrant, the motor themes are characterized by their notable density and centrality. These themes have been extensively investigated, thoroughly developed, and are considered fundamental to the field of study (Nicholls et al., 2021). The prevailing topics within the realm of financial crime encompass various key terms, notably money laundering, cryptocurrency, and planned crime (Ejaz et al., 2022). The phenomenon of money laundering involved the intricate interplay between the perpetration and operation of illicit activities, including the utilization of emerging financial technologies such as cryptocurrency (Ye et al., 2020). Thus, the topic of cryptocurrency in the is ongoing discourse in cryptocurrency industry currently lacks sufficient

regulatory measures, which consequently increases the potential for illicit activities like money laundering (Ejaz et al., 2022). This particular aspect had been extensively explored and remained a prominent topic of interest in the field of cryptocurrency research, as depicted in figure 7.

The second quadrant of the investigation landscape is characterized by niche themes that exhibit a high degree of density but a low level of centrality (Sood et al, 2021). This observation underscored the significance of these essential themes, which had received relatively less attention in the field of study. Based on the data presented in the graph, there is a noteworthy level of development in various topics including crime, tax evasion, terrorism, fraud, financial fraud, and corporate crime. Nevertheless, additional linkages to research on financial crime are required. Cybersecurity and digital forensics have been found to be effective in mitigating monetary crimes in the field. These tools are designed to detect and prevent cyberattacks, as well as investigate and gather evidence in cases of financial fraud (Akter et al., 2024). By implementing robust cybersecurity measures, organizations can significantly reduce the risk of monetary crimes, such as hacking, identity theft, and online scams. Additionally, digital forensics techniques enable investigators to analyze digital evidence, such as computer logs and network traffic, to identify perpetrators and gather evidence for legal proceedings. The use of cybersecurity and digital forensics tools has proven to be a valuable The examination of these particular topics holds great importance in the context of money laundering. Further investigation and analysis in these areas would undoubtedly contribute to the advancement of knowledge and understanding in the field, as depicted in Figure 7.

Upon analysis, it has been observed that the themes present in the third quadrant exhibit characteristics of low centrality and low impact. These topics exhibit potential for further investigation in the future or may experience a decrease in prominence within the existing body of literature. Themes such as event study, identity theft, and information security are among the key areas of interest for researchers studying cryptocurrency crimes. These topics have garnered significant attention and continue to be actively explored in the research community. Researchers are dedicated to investigating the various aspects and implications of these themes within the context of cryptocurrency crimes (Nicholls et al., 2021).

Within the fourth quadrant, one can observe the presence of fundamental themes that exhibit a significant level of centrality, yet display a relatively low density. The aforementioned topics, namely financial crime, anti-money laundering, and white-collar crime, are of utmost importance in the existing body of literature. They play a pivotal role in the advancement and establishment of the field. The themes of corruption, financial crime, and cybercrime are significant factors that drive the progress of research on money laundering, as depicted in Figure 7.

Anti-money laundering (AML) is widely recognized as a valuable tool in the efforts of lawmakers to mitigate financial crimes associated with money laundering (Castonguay & Stein Smith, 2020). Given the prevalence of criminal activities in the field of cryptocurrency, it is imperative for researchers to emphasize these subjects in their studies. Upon analysis, the thematic map reveals that the predominant focus of research on cryptocurrency is centered around the topic of financial crime, specifically money laundering offenses. The subjects encompassed in this study consist of money laundering, cybercrime, phishing, cybersecurity, digital forensics, anti-money laundering, and financial crime, as identified by Castonguay and Stein Smith (2020). Although certain topics have been extensively studied and are considered

pertinent to the field of cryptocurrency research, there is still room for researchers to delve deeper into these areas.
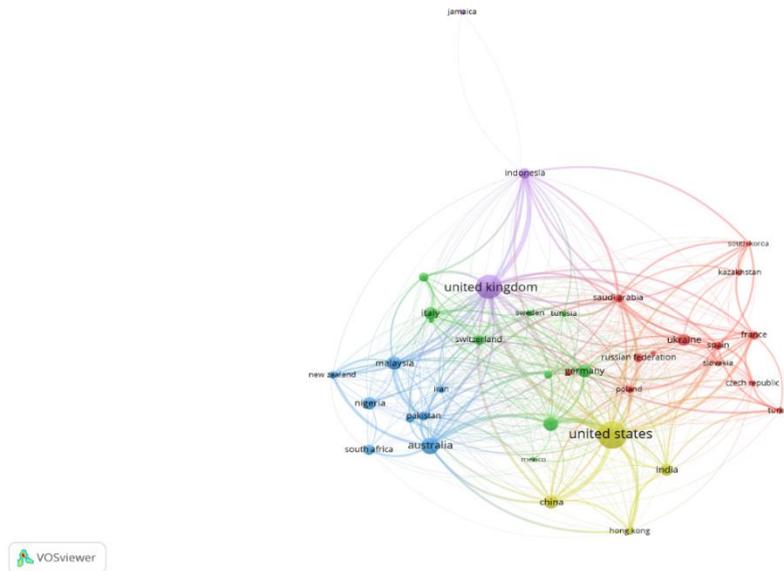
Country Coverage Map

Figure 8: Countries Clusters

Source: Author Work

Figure 8 provides a visual representation of the country collaboration map, which displays the affiliations of the author with various countries engaged in research on financial crime. Within the context of the collaboration map, the varying thickness of lines serves as a visual indicator of the frequency of collaborations between authors from different countries. Similarly, the intensity of the color employed in the map corresponds to the number of publications originating from a particular country. Our analysis reveals that the collaboration between the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) exhibited the highest level of robustness, as evidenced by the production of 5 joint research papers. This was closely followed by the collaboration between the USA and China, as well as the collaboration between Australia and Canada, both of which resulted in the publication of 4 joint papers. Our observation reveals that the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), and Australia emerge as the leading nations in terms of collaborative efforts with researchers from other countries. Figure 8 illustrates that the USA has engaged in 18 collaborations, followed by the UK with 9 collaborations, and Australia with 8 collaborations.

Keyword Clustering

Figure 9: Keyword Clustering

Source: Author Work

Cluster (Red): Financial Crime and Fraud

In the study, financial crime research included analyzing money laundering techniques, identifying cybersecurity vulnerabilities, examining regulatory challenges, and understanding how cryptocurrencies impact illegal financial activities (Ye et al., 2020). A central focus is on anti-money laundering (AML) strategies and the role of digital forensics and cybersecurity in detecting and mitigating financial crimes.

Fraud-related studies encompassed various deceptive practices, including insider trading, securities fraud, and innovative fraud types within digital currencies. One prevalent example in cryptocurrency is "Double-Spending Fraud," where a user may spend the same digital currency multiple times due to vulnerabilities in the transaction confirmation process (Li & Wang, 2022). Nonfungible Tokens (NFTs) had also emerged as tools for preventing fraud by creating verifiable ownership records for digital assets (Papel et al., 2024). Nevertheless, issues like unauthorized copying, modifications, and deletions continued to pose challenges for NFT trustworthiness (Mackenzie & Bērziņa, 2021).

A common form of fraudulent activity in the cryptocurrency sector is referred to as "double-spending fraud" (Li & Wang, 2022). Nonfungible Tokens (NFTs) have emerged as an innovative development in the cryptocurrency space, designed to mitigate fraud by providing a reliable system for verifying ownership of digital assets (Chergarova et al., 2023). However, challenges such as unauthorized copying, alteration, and deletion of digital assets linked to these tokens remain significant barriers (Mackenzie & Bērziņa, 2021).

Cluster (Green): Anti-money laundering

Gaviyau and Sibindi (2023) conducted an in-depth study on the advancements in customer due diligence (CDD) within the context of the fintech era, exploring recent trends and developments in this domain. Their research examined the impact of technological innovations on CDD processes, particularly in the realm of anti-money laundering (AML). Sun et al. (2022) and Sabuj et al. (2024) proposed a KYC (Know Your Customer) compliant identity framework designed to maintain user privacy and confidentiality. This scheme ensures that only users have access to their identities and wallet account information, safeguarding personal data. However, it also allows supervisors to track and identify suspicious interpretations for enhancing the overall security of the system. The development of technological solutions for implementation in the field of anti-money laundering is currently ongoing. Although most current legislation decreasesd short in effectively handling money laundering through cryptocurrency, the Tokens and TT Service Provider Act has emerged as a potential solution (Hilal et al., 2022).

Cluster (Blue): Cryptocurrency

Within the context of previous research clusters, there has been considerable attention given to the discussion of cryptocurrencies and their association with illicit activities such as money laundering, ransomware, malware, and cybercrime, as depicted in figure 9. However, the 'Blue' cluster, as identified by Chergarova et al. (2023), specifically delves into the research trends pertaining to cryptocurrency, fraud, and various forms of criminal behavior. Cryptocurrencies rely on networks, such as the Internet, which can be characterized as an imperfect network due to its inherent limitations in terms of incomplete information, uncertainty, and delays. The existence of such drawbacks presents an opportunity for individuals engaging in fraudulent activities (Nicholls et al., 2021). Double-spending fraud is a commonly observed fraudulent activity in the cryptocurrency space, as highlighted by Li and Wang (2022). Nonfungible Tokens (NFTs), a recent innovation in cryptocurrency, aim to reduce fraud by providing a reliable system for authenticating ownership of digital assets (Hilal et al., 2022). However, challenges such as unauthorized copying, modification, and deletion of associated digital assets remain significant hurdles (Davidescu & Manta, 2023). Additionally, cryptocurrencies like Monero and Zcash are known for their enhanced privacy features, which limit the exposure of user information. While these characteristics appeal to users seeking greater confidentiality, they also attract individuals involved in fraudulent activities, leading to complex regulatory scrutiny (Kfir, 2020).

Cluster (Yellow): Money Laundering and Corruption

Castonguay and Stein Smith (2020) identified specific characteristics of cryptocurrencies that make them vulnerable to manipulation and misuse. Money laundering through cryptocurrency typically follows three distinct stages: "placement," "layering," and "integration." Criminals have exploited the confidentiality, security, and privacy features of cryptocurrencies to facilitate illegal activities, often using virtual exchanges, mixers, and even online video games like Fortnite (Sanz-Bas et al., 2021).

Research on corruption in financial crime highlights how both digital and traditional financial systems are exploited for bribery, illicit transactions, and corporate fraud. Chergarova et al. (2022) examined the role of cryptocurrency in corrupt practices, emphasizing that its decentralized and private nature can obscure illicit fund flows (Hossain, 2025). Castonguay and

Stein Smith (2020) also pointed to the vulnerabilities of digital assets in facilitating money laundering and corruption, exacerbated by weak regulatory oversight (Hilal et al., 2022). Mackenzie (2022) explored the regulatory challenges associated with cryptocurrencies, emphasizing the need for enhanced digital forensic tools and international regulatory cooperation to combat corruption effectively.

Implications

The bibliometric analysis of financial crime and money laundering underscores significant policy, social, academic, and industry implications. From a policy perspective, governments and regulators must strengthen Anti-Money Laundering (AML) frameworks by integrating advanced technologies like digital forensics and machine learning (Gaviyau & Sibindi, 2023). This can improve detection and prevention efforts, particularly as cryptocurrency continues to be exploited for illegal activities (Hilal et al., 2022). Fintech ecosystems need to balance privacy with compliance, implementing robust Know Your Customer (KYC) and Customer Due Diligence (CDD) protocols while safeguarding user information (Sun et al., 2022). Academically, the study identifies that while much research has focused on AML strategies, there is a pressing need for further exploration into the psychological impacts of cryptocurrency fraud, consumer trust in digital currencies, and regional crime patterns (Trozze et al., 2022). For the private sector, organizations must adopt cutting-edge technologies like blockchain and AI to enhance fraud detection, but human oversight remains critical to addressing emerging vulnerabilities (Li & Wang, 2022). International collaboration is vital for establishing standardized global regulations and sharing intelligence to combat financial crime effectively (Nicholls et al., 2021).

Recommendations

1. Strengthen AML measures by incorporating AI and machine learning to detect fraud in real-time, improving the adaptability of systems against evolving threats (Thakkar et al., 2024).

2. Enhance regulatory frameworks for cryptocurrencies by creating clear policies for their usage, ensuring that they do not serve as tools for money laundering (Giudici et al., 2020). Additionally, establishing international standards can provide greater consistency across borders (Rahman & Mia, 2025).

3. Increase academic research on the psychological impact of cryptocurrency fraud, focusing on consumer trust, which is crucial for the future of digital currencies (Trozze et al., 2022).

4. Foster collaboration between governments, regulatory bodies, and financial institutions to establish a global approach to financial crime and to share best practices for tackling emerging threats (Touzaily et al., 2021).

5. Integrate digital forensics and cybersecurity tools to improve the detection of online financial crimes, such as fraudulent cryptocurrency transactions and cybercrime (Akter et al., 2024).

Conclusion

The study purpose was to examine the occurrence of financial misconduct by individuals and

enterprises in Bangladesh. This study identified the rational choice theory and social learning theory as the explanatory frameworks for understanding the motivations behind criminal behavior, following a thorough scams scrutiny (Nicholls et al., 2021). Individuals engage in criminal activities when they see a significant advantage and few consequences (Islam et al., 2024). Furthermore, the social milieu within organizations in Bangladesh (Ye et al., 2020) compels individuals to engage in criminal behavior since they witness others participating in such activities and observe a lack of legal consequences for such actions (Ullah et al., 2024).

Limitations and Future Direction of the Study

There are multiple constraints included in this study. Firstly, this study is not comprehensive and does not accurately represent the greater population, thereby limiting its generalizability (Hilal et al., 2022). Based on the research argument, this qualitative study adds to the existing body of literature and its findings can be applied to many situations where it is utilized (Poli, 2024). This comparison is an additional constraint on the study due to the fact that criminal justice practitioners' function across both state and federal jurisdictions (Nicholls et al., 2021). The primary objective of this research was to examine the prevalence and characteristics of financial crime (Ye et al., 2020). It is important to note that this study specifically excluded any nonfinancial scams or frauds from the analysis.

The present research emphasizes the need to experimentally examine the advantages and disadvantages of such agreements. Future research on the topic is challenging because there is a lack of a centralized database that provides comprehensive information on it (Bhuiyan et al., 2021). The future study indicates that the final decision on it is inconclusive, with over half of the study's criminal justice experts pushing for their ongoing and potentially heightened utilization (Hilal et al., 2022). Subsequent studies may investigate the potential correlation between specific aspects of an organization's past and the manner in which financial misconduct is dealt with within the framework of corporate ethical guidelines. Further research can be conducted to delve into the psychological aspects of cryptocurrency fraud, explore consumer trust in cryptocurrency, and categorize instances of cryptocurrency fraud according to geographical locations and fintech-based methods.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to publish this article in this journal.

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