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THEMATIC EVOLUTION AND RESEARCH TRENDS IN BUSINESS CRIME: A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to map the intellectual landscape and thematic evolution of global scientific research on business crime from 2010 to 2025, in response to rapid technological, regulatory, and social transformations.

Research Design & Methods: Bibliometric analysis was performed using data obtained from the Scopus database. This study used descriptive statistics, keyword co-occurrence, author and institutional productivity mapping, and trend analysis techniques. Tools such as VOSviewer and Excel were used to visualize collaboration networks and thematic clusters.

Findings: The volume of academic publications on business crime increased significantly between 2010 and 2025, driven by new themes such as cybercrime, cryptocurrency fraud, and the use of AI and machine learning in criminal activity and prevention. While classic topics such as corruption and asset misappropriation remain relevant, recent studies increasingly adopt predictive analytics, forensic accounting, and geospatial mapping. The United States and the United Kingdom dominate contributions, reflecting their academic infrastructure and legal influence.

Implications and Recommendations: Academically, these findings lay the groundwork for systematic literature reviews and the setting of future research agendas. Practically, these results emphasize the need for evidence-based policymaking and strategic planning in business crime prevention, particularly through technology-driven compliance systems.

Contribution and Value Added: This study supports the development of a more cohesive, impactful, and integrated technological approach to tackling business crime in the digital age.

Keywords: Business Crime, White-Collar Crime, Bibliometric Analysis, Financial Crime

JEL codes: K42, G38, O33.

Article type: research paper

INTRODUCTION

Business crime encompasses a wide range of illegal activities in the commercial sector, representing a significant and growing challenge to the global economy and public trust (Crown Prosecution Service, 2025). The scale and complexity of these crimes continue to grow, with criminal networks operating across multiple jurisdictions and rapidly exploiting technological

advances. The economic and psychosocial losses caused by business crime, particularly white-collar crime, are substantial, often exceeding the costs incurred by conventional crime (Fredericks et al., 2016). This reality underscores the urgency of robust academic investigation to understand, detect, and mitigate such illegal activities (Kalaf and Al-Raggad, 2024). Corporate fraud is estimated to cause losses of around 5% of a company's annual revenue, with total global losses estimated to reach trillions of dollars annually. Among the various types of fraud, financial statement fraud has the greatest financial impact, although it is less frequent than asset misappropriation or other forms of operational fraud (Gryazeva et al., 2021; Sofianti et al., 2024).

At the same time, corruption has grown into a global security issue that not only affects economic development and political stability, but also undermines public trust in government institutions and corporations (Deniozos et al., 2018). Modern corruption is no longer limited to bribery or abuse of power, but is often intertwined with organized crime and complex cross-border money laundering practices (Rose-Ackerman and Palifka, 2018).

Financial statement manipulation remains a serious threat to corporate integrity and capital market stability. Despite tighter regulations and oversight systems following the 2008 global financial crisis, manipulative practices such as inflating revenues and concealing losses continue to occur, often escaping the scrutiny of regulatory agencies and auditors (Weske, 2013). Along with digitalization and financial technology developments, the modus operandi of business criminals has also transformed. Cybercrime targeting financial institutions, manipulation of digital transactions, and misuse of electronic payment systems are now common phenomena. Gaps in digital financial infrastructure have been exploited to commit fraud, identity theft, and money laundering through offshore entities and complex global financial networks (Gaumer et al., 2016; Granados and Vargas, 2021).

This situation is exacerbated by various global dynamics, including financial crises, pandemics, geopolitical conflicts, and weak governance in several countries, which open up wider opportunities for financial and business crime (Ryder, 2016). This situation calls for a more integrated global response, whether through the establishment of an international framework, enhanced cooperation between countries, or the use of cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and forensic analytics to detect and prevent business crime more effectively (Holzenthall, 2017; Krambia-Kapardis, 2016). Given the complexity and ever-changing dynamics, it is important to understand how business crime has been the focus of scientific research for over a decade (Florea et al., 2024).

Although business crime issues such as fraud, corruption, and financial statement manipulation have been a major concern in the last decade, academic studies remain scattered across various disciplines and focus on different areas. The existing literature discusses various aspects, ranging from economic impacts, perpetrator profiles, fraud detection techniques, to the relationship between business crime and political and social instability. However, the distribution of these themes remains largely fragmented and has not yet been integrated into a systematic and comprehensive knowledge framework. For example, studies on fraud typically draw on accounting and risk management approaches, while corruption is more frequently examined from legal, political, or development perspectives.

This situation creates a gap in understanding the interrelationships between issues and disciplines, thereby hindering collaborative efforts to prevent and control business crime. A comprehensive literature synthesis and thematic mapping are needed to provide a complete and structured overview of the research landscape. Bibliometric analysis is an increasingly relevant approach to fill this gap, as it can identify trends, patterns of relationships between concepts, research gaps, and potential for cross-sector collaboration (Gottschalk, 2010; Reshetniak and Tarchynets, 2024).

Based on the background and research gaps outlined above, this study departs from the main question: What are the trends, distribution, and focus of business crime research in scientific literature during the period 2010–2024? This question reflects the need to understand the scientific dynamics in the field of business crime more comprehensively, across disciplines, and based on data. This study aims to analyze the structure, trends, and direction of development in business

crime literature through a bibliometric approach. By utilizing scientific publication data from internationally indexed databases and visual mapping techniques using software such as VOSviewer, this study will identify key terms, thematic relationships between studies, author or institutional collaborations, and citation patterns that form the scientific foundation in this field.

The main contribution of this research is to provide a systematic and evidence-based literature map, which is not only useful for academics in identifying research gaps and future research directions but also beneficial for policymakers, auditors, regulators, and business practitioners in developing more targeted strategies to combat corporate crime. This mapping is expected to serve as a reference source that strengthens organizational governance and promotes cross-sector collaboration in responding to the increasingly complex and transnational challenges of business crime.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition and Types of Business Crimes

The term white-collar crime broadly includes criminal acts in the business world (Kalaf and Al-Raggad, 2024). However, academic literature often uses overlapping and sometimes controversial terms, including white-collar crime, corporate crime, financial crime, and economic crime (Kalaf and Al-Raggad, 2024). The overlap and inconsistency of these definitions indicate ongoing academic debate, which can complicate comparative research and the development of integrated policy responses.

Table 1. Terminology and Types of Business Crimes

Terminology	Definition	Type
Business Crime	Criminal acts in the business world are often identified with corporate crime or acts committed by legal entities/non-legal entities (Geis, 2005). Exceeding the limits of humanity for profit, harming the public interest.	Insider Trading.
White-Collar Crime	Criminal acts committed by persons holding positions of authority or prestige, which are unlawful, detrimental to the state and society, and prohibited under criminal law (Wheeler and Rothman, 1982).	Counterfeiting, Fraud (medical, tax, election, insurance, banking), Embezzlement, Money Laundering, Extortion, Bribery.
Corporate Crime	Crimes committed by corporations or by individuals acting on behalf of corporations or other business entities (Haines, 2017). Considered part of white-collar crime.	Bank interest rate manipulation, insider dealing, illegal mergers/acquisitions, tax evasion, bribery, and illegal accounting.
Financial Crime	Crimes committed against property involve the unlawful conversion of property for personal gain (Gottschalk and Glasø, 2013). The majority of white-collar crimes fall into this category.	Corporate fraud, securities and commodities fraud (Ponzi schemes, pyramid schemes), healthcare fraud, mortgage fraud, insurance fraud, money laundering.
Economic Crime	A broad category that creates instability and insecurity in the economic system, leading to a decline in economic activity (Lakhdari, 2024). Involving multiple actors, broad scope, significant damage, organized or transnational nature, and use of cyber technology.	Fraud, corruption, money laundering, smuggling.

The Role of Technology in Business Crime

A fundamental development in business crime is the role of modern technology. The use of computers, satellites, and other technologies allows crime to occur at any time, anywhere, and

anytime (Lakhdari, 2024). Advances in technology have given rise to new types of white-collar crime, as seen in the rapid increase in white-collar crime in India and technological advances (Vinaya, 2022). This shows that technology is not just a new avenue, but a fundamental driver and changer of business crime, shifting the nature of criminal activity from traditional physical methods to complex digital schemes. Therefore, understanding business crime today is highly dependent on technology trends, and efforts to counter it must be technologically sophisticated.

Rapid technological developments, such as cybercrime supported by artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalization, directly trigger new forms of crime and increase their frequency (Lakhdari, 2024). As a result, the academic landscape tends to be reactive, responding to criminal innovations in the real world, which in turn drives research and has the potential to inform prevention efforts and policy.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative bibliometric approach to explore the development and dynamics of research on business crime in international scientific literature. The bibliometric approach was chosen for its ability to systematically and replicably analyze large-scale publication data, as well as its capacity to map the scientific landscape, identify thematic trends, and evaluate the contributions of authors, institutions, and countries within a field. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the direction, focus, and structure of scientific literature related to business crime during the period from 2010 to 2025.

Data was collected from the Scopus database, which is one of the leading scientific reference sources with broad coverage and a rigorous indexing system. The search was conducted using the keyword string: "business crime" OR "corporate fraud" OR "white collar crime." The initial search yielded 748 documents. A screening process was then conducted using criteria including the publication year range 2010–2025, document type as scientific articles, final publication status, and use of the English language. After the final selection, 581 articles that met the criteria were obtained and used as the main units of analysis in this study.

The export data from Scopus is compiled into an aggregate summary that includes the distribution of articles based on year of publication, author institution, country of affiliation, funding sponsor, type of publication access, journal source, and the most frequently occurring keywords. The initial analysis stage is performed using Microsoft Excel to display descriptive statistics such as publication trends per year and geographical distribution. Next, the data is imported into VOSviewer software to visualize scientific relationships, including keyword co-occurrence analysis, co-authorship relationships, and identification of topic clusters and research collaboration patterns between institutions.

The study is expected to provide a structured and visual overview of the global business crime research ecosystem through this approach. The mapping results will serve as a basis for researchers, academics, and policymakers to understand the direction of literature development, identify research gaps, and develop a more focused and applicable agenda for further research.

RESULT

Annual Publication Trends

Based on the results of an analysis by Scopus Term Analyzer using the keywords "business crime," "corporate fraud," and "white collar crime," there has been a significant growth trend in publications between 2010 and 2025. Web of Science records that literature in the field of criminal law reached 10,475 publications in the period 2010–2019, reflecting not only an increase in the number of studies but also significant growth in the number of citations globally (Pramanik et al., 2025). Specialized journals such as the Journal of Money Laundering Control (JMLC) reinforce this trend with records of progressive growth since 2010 (Kalaf and Al-Raggad, 2024). At the beginning of the decade, between 2010 and 2012, the number of publications in this field was still relatively low. This reflects that scientific attention to the issue of business crime was not as intense as it is

today. However, from 2013 to 2014, there was a gradual increase, which then accelerated sharply during the period 2015–2017. This increase can be attributed to growing awareness of the systemic impact of corporate fraud, money laundering, and major financial scandals occurring at the global level.

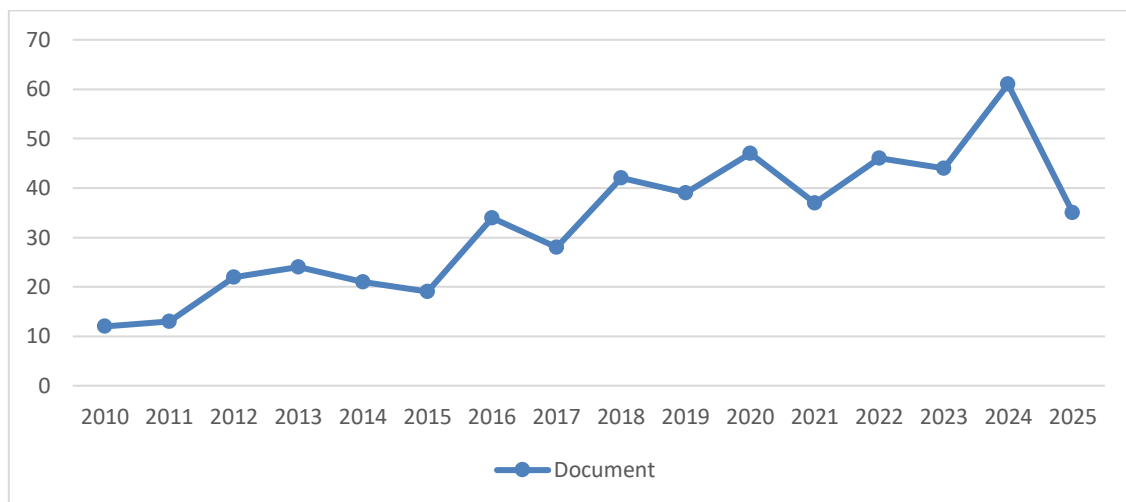


Figure 1. Annual publication trends in scopus

Based on the publication table from 2010 to 2025 in scopus, there has been significant growth. At the beginning of the decade (2010–2015), the number of publications was still relatively low and fluctuated between 12 and 24 documents per year. This reflects that academic attention to the issues being researched was still in its early stages. However, starting in 2016, there was a sharp increase to 34 documents, followed by consistent growth in the 2017–2019 period (28–39 documents). This growth is in line with the increasing attention to new issues in digital security, corporate governance, and the emergence of technology-based financial threats. The peak of growth was seen in 2018–2020, where publications jumped to 47 documents in 2020. This increase cannot be separated from the increasingly complex regulations related to financial technology, the adoption of cryptocurrency, and the global challenges that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, which also broadened the spectrum of research. Although there was a decline to 37 documents in 2021, the trend immediately rebounded in 2022–2023 (46–44 documents), indicating stable research interest in this field. The year 2024 recorded the highest number of documents in the period, namely 61, confirming the peak of academic attention to the topics studied. In 2025, publications declined slightly to 35 documents, but this figure remained higher than in the early part of the decade. This shows the consistency and relevance of the research topic, as well as a thematic shift from classic issues to more contemporary discussions, such as the use of artificial intelligence, blockchain, and predictive analytics in forensic accounting and digital financial security.

These findings indicate that academic research on business crime has grown rapidly and responsively to the dynamics of the digital age. The more than twofold increase in publications over a decade underscores the importance of a bibliometric approach in understanding the ever-changing scientific landscape. This trend also reinforces the urgency of systematic mapping to identify research directions, conceptual gaps, and potential for interdisciplinary collaboration in the future.

Most Productive Authors and Leading Institutions

Based on the results of Scopus publication analysis on the topics of “business crime,” “corporate fraud,” and “white collar crime” during the period 2010–2025, it can be concluded that Gottschalk, P. is the most prolific author with 39 documents, far surpassing other authors such as Pontell, H.N. (9 documents) and Piquero, N.L. (7 documents). Gottschalk’s dominance reflects a consistent focus on business crime research, likely from the perspectives of criminology and management. From an institutional standpoint, Handelshøyskolen BI (BI Norwegian Business

School) emerges as the most productive institution with 38 publications, indicating its position as a leading research center in this field, particularly in Europe. It is followed by Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (14 documents) in China and Pennsylvania State University (11 documents) in the United States, reflecting significant attention to corporate fraud and business regulation issues in a dynamic global economy.

The geographical distribution of authors and institutions reflects a strong global contribution to the literature on business crime, with a strong tendency toward countries with advanced financial systems such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, and China. Additionally, the presence of Asian universities such as Universiti Teknologi MARA, Renmin University of China, and Xiamen University indicates increased participation from the Asian region in academic discourse on white-collar crime and financial crime. The dominance of these top institutions also reflects interdisciplinary collaboration between criminology, law, economics, and technology, as well as the growing need to address the increasingly complex challenges of business crime in the digital age and economic globalization. Research from these institutions is not only descriptive but also supports predictive and policy-based approaches to modernity.

Journals and Main Publication Sources

Several journals and major publications consistently serve as important platforms for research on business crime, white-collar crime, and corporate crime. The journal with the most publications is the *Journal of Financial Crime*, which has 43 articles, demonstrating its role as a major center for academic study on financial fraud, anti-money laundering (AML), and institutional oversight of financial crime. Second place is held by the *Journal of White Collar and Corporate Crime* with 20 publications, which specifically focuses on exploring elite criminality, ethical violations in corporations, and the socio-legal dimensions of white-collar crime.

Furthermore, the *Journal of Business Ethics* recorded 19 publications that reflect the close relationship between business ethics, corporate governance, and issues of corruption or fraud. *Crime, Law, and Social Change* is also significant, with 15 publications discussing regulatory changes, legal policies, and social dynamics related to corporate and white-collar crime. Other journals that stand out in this context include *Finance Research Letters* (11 publications), *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade*, and *Security Journal* (each with 9 publications), indicating a growing focus on financial and security aspects in business crime research.

Additionally, journals such as *Criminal Justice Studies*, *British Journal of Criminology*, *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, and *Crime and Delinquency* demonstrate contributions from criminology and legal perspectives to this phenomenon. These journals feature numerous interdisciplinary studies that combine legal, social, and economic approaches. Overall, this distribution indicates that research on business crime is spread across various journals with different focuses, from business ethics and financial systems to law enforcement and criminology, reflecting this issue's multidisciplinary and complex nature.

Research Theme Dynamics

The research theme in business crime has undergone significant evolution, reflecting adaptation to constantly changing criminal *modus operandi* and technological advances. Based on data extracted from Scopus bibliometric files, the dynamics of research themes in the field of business crime from 2010 to 2025 show highly diverse and evolving trends in line with the complexity of contemporary crime. Based on the Author Keywords column, several main patterns can be observed that reflect changes in scientific focus and issues considered important over time.

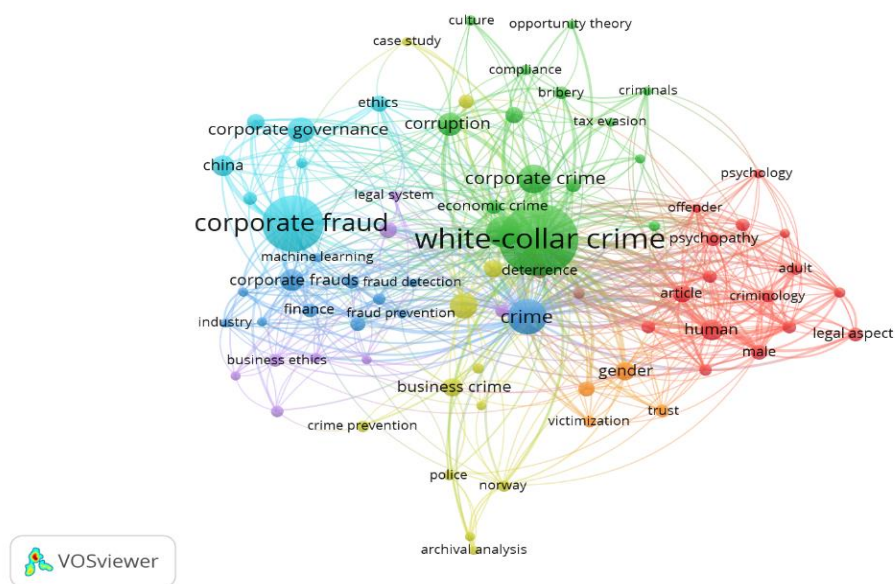


Figure 2. Keyword Co-occurrence Network on Business Crime Literature (2010–2025)

First, the theme of “white-collar crime” consistently appears as a dominant keyword in most publications. This term is often associated with topics such as fraud, corporate crime, and financial crimes, indicating that the main focus remains on abuse of power in corporate and public institutions. Themes such as administrative proceedings, SEC litigation, and organizational deviance indicate the involvement of regulation and law enforcement in academic discourse.

Second, emerging topics such as FinTech, identity theft, and digital transformation since 2020 signal an important shift toward the digital dimension of business crime. Keywords such as BP neural network, fraud detection, and intelligent optimization algorithm reflect the increasing adoption of smart technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in detecting and analyzing data-based crimes. This aligns with the scientific response to new challenges such as cybersecurity, identity theft, and vulnerable digital transactions.

Third, there have been significant developments in studies based on psychological and sociological approaches, marked by the emergence of keywords such as dark triad, subclinical personality traits, and convenience theory. This approach explores the characteristics of business criminals from the perspective of personality, cultural values, and behavioural motivations, indicating that the literature does not only focus on systems and regulations but also on the individual dimensions of the perpetrators.

Furthermore, topics related to corporate governance, internal controls, and auditing also received significant attention in the analysis of corporate crime, emphasizing the importance of strong governance in preventing fraud. Issues such as party direct control and state-owned enterprises also reflect the geographical and political context increasingly being considered in research. Finally, there is also a focus on international legal and regulatory frameworks such as the FATF, compliance, and monetary penalties, highlighting the importance of cross-border coordination in combating transnational crime. With the emergence of themes such as gender equality and citizen acceptance, the literature is also beginning to address the social dimensions and public perception in addressing white-collar crime.

Dominant Themes and Keyword Clusters

The theme of research into business crime has undergone rapid development, in line with changes in the modus operandi of perpetrators and advances in technology that facilitate digital-based crime. Along with globalization and the transformation of the digital economy, the academic focus on business crime has also shifted to adapt to modern crime patterns (Benson, 2015).

Recent research has identified several dominant themes in the literature on business crime. The first category is white-collar crime, which includes various forms of misconduct such as forgery, fraud, embezzlement, money laundering, extortion, and bribery (Singhania, 2024). Furthermore, corporate crimes include interest rate manipulation, insider trading, illegal mergers and acquisitions, tax evasion, bribery, and fraudulent accounting practices (Simpson, 2010). Meanwhile, financial crimes encompass a wider range of fraud, including Ponzi and pyramid schemes, securities and commodities fraud, fraud in healthcare, mortgages, insurance, and social welfare, as well as money laundering (Ünvan, 2020).

Research on anti-money laundering (AML) shows that there are six main clusters in academic literature reviewed from journals such as the Journal of Money Laundering Control. First, the theme of preventing corruption due to money laundering, which links money laundering to organized crime, corruption, and tax evasion (Prasaja and Razak, 2024). Second, money laundering regulation and compliance emphasize the importance of the legal framework and the role of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in harmonizing international policies. Third, AML control measures such as Customer Due Diligence (CDD), reporting suspicious transactions, and monitoring accounts belonging to Politically Exposed Persons (PEP) (Kalaf and Al-Raggad, 2024). Fourth, the role of the FATF in developing countries illustrates the increasing global intervention in shaping domestic AML policies. Fifth, the control of terrorist financing, including its link to cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin. Sixth, there is the role of money laundering in the proceeds of crime, particularly in the context of the seizure of illegal assets and the tracking of criminal funds (Reurink, 2018).

Additionally, forensic accounting has undergone significant development and has become an important focus in efforts to identify, investigate, and prevent financial fraud in corporate environments. Key areas of focus in this literature include the fraud triangle, financial statement manipulation, corporate governance, and the effectiveness of investigative audit techniques in detecting fraud (Dreyer, 2014). Forensic accounting has become an important tool in combating white-collar crime, both in the public and private sectors. Overall, the most frequently occurring keywords in the literature are money laundering, anti-money laundering, corruption, compliance, and FATF, reflecting a strong academic focus on the intersection of regulation, systemic risk, and global financial dynamics in the study of business crime.

DISCUSSION

Trend Interpretation

The consistent growth in business crime research publications from 2010 to 2025 is not merely an academic expansion, but a direct response to the increasing complexity of business crime in the real world, particularly that driven by digital technology and global events (Crown Prosecution Service, 2025). The dynamic interaction between the evolution of crime and the output of this research is a defining characteristic of the field. The thematic shift shows that research is moving from traditional types of fraud to more technologically sophisticated ones, driving a growing emphasis on technological solutions for detection and prevention, such as AI/ML in AML, forensic accounting, digital forensics, RegTech, and blockchain.

The geographical dominance of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia in this study reflects the concentration of research output in developed countries with mature financial systems and strong academic infrastructure (Kroll, 2025). However, industry reports indicate that other regions also face significant challenges in financial crime, suggesting potential for developing regions to become more prominent research centers in the future. The link between economic crime and broader social issues such as stability, security, sustainable development, and geopolitical tensions is increasingly recognized, adding another layer of complexity to the research landscape.

First, research trends show a shift from traditional focuses such as fraud, corruption, and classic white-collar crime toward contemporary issues triggered by technological developments. Since 2017, there has been a significant increase in the volume of publications discussing digital-based crimes, such as crypto-based money laundering, AI-assisted insider trading, and cross-border

financial crimes. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this shift by introducing new risks in online transactions and increasing the vulnerability of vulnerable groups to digital fraud schemes.

Second, keyword analysis and theme clustering show that AML, financial crime, and compliance have been the focus of literature in the last decade. The existence of institutions such as the FATF, which continue to tighten global regulations, has made this topic increasingly dominant, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries. This is reflected in the emergence of a new focus on the role of the FATF in developing countries, as well as issues related to terrorist financing and digital currencies.

Third, in terms of methodology, trends show an increasing adoption of data-driven and interdisciplinary approaches. The combination of bibliometric techniques, AI/ML-based predictive modeling, as well as network analysis and geospatial mapping marks a methodological shift toward more complex and automated research. This reflects the scientific community's efforts to respond to the increasingly hidden, transnational, and digital nature of business crime.

Fourth, geographical and institutional trends indicate the dominance of countries with established academic and financial infrastructure, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway. Authors such as Gottschalk, Pontell, and Piquero emerge as central actors in producing high-quality literature. On the institutional side, business schools and universities with a focus on criminology and finance, such as BI Norwegian Business School and Pennsylvania State University, continue to be the main centers of gravity for this research.

Finally, the shift in focus from analyzing the behavior of individual perpetrators to systemic evaluations such as corporate governance, regulatory frameworks, and institutional integrity reflects the maturity of this field as a scientific arena. Research increasingly emphasizes policy effectiveness, intervention evaluation, and corporate accountability, and shows that the study of business crime is no longer merely descriptive, but increasingly normative and applicative.

Thus, interpretation of this trend shows that business crime studies have evolved from a predominantly descriptive field into a complex, multidimensional area of research that is responsive to the challenges of the digital age. This opens up significant opportunities for further collaborative research across countries and disciplines to fill existing knowledge gaps, particularly in the context of financial technology, perpetrator behavior, and effective policy responses.

The Role of Technology and Geopolitics

Digital transformation has been a major driver in shifting the focus and expanding the scope of research related to business crime. One of the most influential technological elements is cryptocurrency, which since 2017 has played a central role in various forms of financial crime, including investment fraud, money laundering, and tax evasion. This phenomenon has led to a surge in academic publications focused on detecting cybercrime and developing more adaptive anti-money laundering frameworks for decentralized technologies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum (Pramanik et al., 2025).

Furthermore, artificial intelligence (AI) has become the focus of modern cybercrime studies. AI is now used by both criminals—to automate attacks and accelerate digital social engineering—and by financial institutions and regulators to detect suspicious patterns in real time. The two main causes of the projected increase in financial crime by 2025 are the escalation of cyberattacks and the use of AI by cybercriminals, as reported by industry executives. Nevertheless, AI is also seen as a key solution in strengthening compliance programs and preventing economic crime, with 57% of executives expressing confidence that this technology will significantly enhance the effectiveness of their internal control systems (Kalaf and Al-Raggad, 2024).

This has encouraged a wave of investment in AI solutions, including non-AI technologies such as automated transaction monitoring and cash flow tracking systems. Early detection systems such as the White Collar Crime Early Warning System (WCCEWS), which utilizes random forest algorithms, have demonstrated predictive accuracy of up to 90.12% in identifying high-risk zones (Lavigne et al., 2017). The use of AI and ML in AML systems is also growing: 62% of financial

institutions have adopted them, and this figure is expected to reach 90% by 2025, covering real-time transaction monitoring and AI-based text analysis ([Silent Eight, 2024](#)).

The phenomenon of Fintech and the digitization of the KYC (Know Your Customer) process has contributed to disruption in the traditional financial system, while also giving rise to new risks. Systemic challenges such as regulatory gaps, declining public trust, and security issues are the main concerns. Currently, over 70% of KYC onboarding processes are projected to be automated using biometrics and digital identity verification by 2025, creating both opportunities and risks in mitigating financial crime ([Ai Money Matters, 2025](#)). Meanwhile, global geopolitical tensions complicate law enforcement efforts and cross-border coordination in combating financial crime. Political leadership changes in major economies have the potential to influence the direction of global regulation and strategy toward large-scale international illegal activities ([Ballis, 2025](#)).

Overall, the thematic shift in business crime research confirms a transition from classic issues such as fraud and corruption to more technologically complex topics. The focus has now shifted to digital solutions such as AI/ML for AML, forensic accounting technology, digital forensics, RegTech, and blockchain. This indicates that economic crime is increasingly intertwined with global social issues such as security, stability, sustainability, and geopolitical tensions, thereby enriching yet also complicating the academic structure within this field.

Additionally, the emergence of financial technology (Fintech) has enriched the dimension of business crime research, particularly in terms of systemic risk, consumer trust, digital security, and regulation. The rapid digitization of financial services has created regulatory gaps that are often exploited by criminals to create shadow banking systems, take advantage of peer-to-peer lending, and engage in algorithmic manipulation in digital exchanges. In the midst of these dynamic technological changes, geopolitical factors are also becoming increasingly relevant. Tensions between major countries and election results in key economies are predicted to influence the direction of regulatory policy and law enforcement against global financial crime, complicating the landscape of cross-border risk mitigation.

The use of AI/ML technology in the context of financial crime prevention still faces serious challenges. The risk of algorithmic bias can lead to inaccurate detection results, especially if the training data is not representative. In addition, AI-based AML systems are prone to generating high false positives, thereby increasing the operational burden on financial institutions in verifying suspicious transaction reports. Furthermore, the issue of transparency (explainability) is a major obstacle: many AI models operate as black boxes, making it difficult to explain to regulators or auditors how a decision was reached. These limitations emphasize that the effectiveness of AI in practice depends not only on the sophistication of the technology, but also on regulations, governance, and the readiness of institutions to adopt it.

Key Gaps in the Literature

Dynamics of business crime research in the digital age show rapid development, but also highlight a number of significant gaps in the literature. Digital transformation has been a major game-changer in the business crime landscape, giving rise to new forms such as crypto-based fraud, cybercrime, and digital money laundering. The emergence of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and digitization of the Know Your Customer (KYC) process has shifted the focus of research from conventional crime schemes to tackling crime with advanced technological approaches. Systems such as the White Collar Crime Early Warning System have even been developed to identify high-risk zones using high-accuracy random forest-based predictive algorithms ([Kalaf and Al-Raggad, 2024](#)). Additionally, increased digitization in the global financial system has broadened the discourse on Fintech, with a focus on systemic risk, security, trust, and regulatory challenges. On the other hand, global geopolitical tensions have further strengthened barriers to the enforcement of transnational crime.

However, despite the significant growth in publications, several important gaps in the literature remain unaddressed. First, the issue of definitional ambiguity is a fundamental challenge. The lack of a universal definition of economic and business crime continues to hinder the development of a legal framework and complicates cross-country comparisons. Second, the

psychological aspects of white-collar criminals have not been extensively explored empirically. Many assumptions are still based on stereotypes or anecdotes rather than strong psychological evidence. Third, studies on victimization are also very limited. Although white-collar crime can cause significant losses for both individuals and society, attention to the impact on victims still lags behind that given to conventional crime (Fredericks et al., 2016).

Furthermore, evaluations of the effectiveness of crime prevention programs and policies are also relatively rare in the literature. The lack of cost-benefit analysis of prevention strategies hinders the optimization of public policy (Jibran et al., 2010). The situation is exacerbated by poor data accessibility and quality. There are still gaps in the systematic collection of crime data, and there is no accessible centralized data repository to support comprehensive empirical research (Jibran et al., 2010). In terms of research methodology and approach, another challenge is the low level of integration between disciplines. Although criminology should be interdisciplinary in nature, connections between fields such as economics, law, psychology, forensic accounting, and information technology are often not optimal (Silent Eight, 2024).

Additionally, several areas of research are still relatively new and not yet fully developed scientifically. For example, financial fraud targeting vulnerable groups such as the elderly has only recently received serious attention in the past few years, particularly since the pandemic and the increasing digitization of financial services. Lastly, gender disparities in white-collar crime are also an overlooked area. There is still little research specifically addressing women's involvement in business crime, as well as gender roles in the context of digital crime and the history of cybercrime (Dearden, 2025).

Thus, although research on business crime has made significant thematic and methodological progress, particularly driven by digital transformation, this literature still requires refinement in terms of conceptual and methodological aspects, as well as greater attention to the diversity of social and cultural contexts. Efforts to strengthen data, develop interdisciplinary approaches, and explore marginal issues in business crime will be key to filling the knowledge gaps that remain open.

CONCLUSION

A bibliometric study of global literature on business crime during the period 2010 to 2025 shows that this field is developing dynamically, both in terms of publication volume and thematic complexity. The significant increase in the number of scientific articles during this period reflects responses to global changes, such as technological advances, the emergence of cryptocurrencies and artificial intelligence, and major events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Research focus has also undergone a substantial shift, moving from classical issues such as corruption and asset misappropriation to contemporary issues such as cybercrime, digital money laundering, and the use of technology in preventing financial crime. Methodologically, recent studies show a trend toward the use of advanced approaches, including software-based bibliometric analysis, AI/ML-based predictive modeling, network analysis, and geospatial mapping. Countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom still dominate contributions to this literature, reflecting the strength of their financial systems and academic infrastructure. However, amid this growth, serious challenges remain, such as the lack of a uniform definition of business crime, limited exploration of the psychological aspects of perpetrators and victims, and the scarcity of evaluative studies on existing prevention policies. These findings have two main implications. The academic implication lies in providing a strong foundation for the preparation of systematic literature reviews and the development of a more focused research agenda, based on empirical trends and identified gaps. Meanwhile, the practical implication concerns the formulation of more evidence-based policies and strategies for preventing business crime, using bibliometric findings as a reference in identifying priority issues, utilizing technology, and determining relevant regulatory directions.

Therefore, several strategic recommendations are proposed to encourage future research and policy development related to business crime. First, collective efforts are needed to standardize the definition of business crime to ensure consistency across studies and support the formation of a more cohesive legal framework. Second, investment in systematic data collection and provision

needs to be increased through the development of a centralized, globally accessible data repository. Third, future research should prioritize studies on the impact of current technologies such as AI, ML, and blockchain—both as tools and as potential loopholes for crime. Fourth, research should focus more on human aspects, including perpetrator motivation, gender differences, and the psychological impact on victims. Fifth, policies should be rigorously evaluated to empirically and comprehensively measure the effectiveness of prevention programs. Sixth, cross-disciplinary and cross-border collaboration is increasingly important given the complex and transnational nature of business crime. Finally, understanding the dynamics of organizations and internal decision-making processes also needs to be deepened, given that business crime is often linked to specific power structures and organizational cultures. By following this direction, research on business crime will not only be more academically relevant but also more practically impactful in helping to build transparent and accountable governance in the digital age.

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