ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL CRIMES IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF CONCEPTS, THEORIES, AND LITERATURES

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Abstract

This paper examined financial crimes in Nigeria with emphasis on the concepts, theories, causes, and effects associated with the phenomenon. Financial crimes such as corruption, money laundering, cybercrime, bribery, embezzlement, and advance fee fraud have become major challenges affecting Nigeria's economic growth, political stability, and international reputation. The paper aimed to review existing literature and theoretical perspectives explaining the prevalence of financial crimes in the country. The methodology adopted for the paper was a doctrinal approach based on the review of secondary sources of data, including textbooks, journal articles, government publications, reports, and relevant online materials. Relevant theories such as the Rational Choice Theory, Strain Theory, Differential Association Theory, and Routine Activity Theory were reviewed to explain the motivations and persistence of financial crimes in Nigeria. The findings revealed that financial crimes in Nigeria are driven by factors such as unemployment and poverty, among others. Based on the findings, the study recommended strengthening anti-corruption agencies and improving judicial processes.

Keywords: Financial Crimes, Corruption, Money Laundering, Cybercrime, Nigeria.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Financial crimes, encompassing corruption, money laundering, embezzlement, fraud, and terrorism financing, represent a profound

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threat to Nigeria's economic stability, political development, institutional integrity, and societal well-being. These illicit activities undermine the nation's economic potential by facilitating capital flight, reducing foreign direct investment (FDI), inflating governance costs, and exacerbating poverty and insecurity[1]. The scale of financial crimes in Nigeria is alarming, with estimates suggesting that over US$100 billion has been laundered out of the country by governmental and private entities, often through complex schemes involving legitimate businesses and offshore accounts[2]. High-profile cases, such as the alleged embezzlement of US$5 billion by former Head of State General Sani Abacha[3] and the Malabu oil deal involving misappropriated funds, highlight the entrenched nature of financial crimes. These activities not only drain national resources but also fuel insecurity by financing terrorist groups like Boko Haram, hinder infrastructure development, and perpetuate socio-economic disparities[4]. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Nigeria 150 out of 180 countries, underscoring persistent governance challenges and institutional weaknesses that enable systemic financial crimes[5].

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[1]Adetunji Adeoye Johnson, 'A comparative analysis of the control of financial crime from the perspective of the UK, the USA and Nigeria' *Doctoral thesis, School of Advanced Study, University of London* [2017] 75-86 <https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/6701/1/Adetunji%2C%20A%20-%20IALS%20-%202017.pdf> accessed on 27th July, 2025.

[2] Olusola Joshua Olujobi and Ebenezer Tunde Yebisi 'Combating the crimes of money laundering and terrorism financing in Nigeria: a legal approach for combating the menace' *Journal of Money Laundering Control* [2023] 26(2) 4 <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMLC-12-2021-0143> accessed 27th July, 2025.

[3]ibid.

[4]Adeoye (n1) 76.

[5]Transparency International, 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2023'*Transparency International* [2023] <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023> accessed 24th July, 2025

Globally, advanced jurisdictions like the United Kingdom and the United States have implemented effective anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorism financing (CTF) frameworks, such as the UK's Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the US's Bank Secrecy Act 1970, which incorporate non-conviction-based (NCB) asset forfeiture to expedite the recovery of illicit proceeds with a lower burden of proof[6]. These countries emphasize centralized investigations, robust financial intelligence units (FIUs), and strict compliance with FATF standards, including Know Your Customer (KYC) protocols, Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs), and beneficial ownership transparency. In contrast, Nigeria's AML/CTF regime faces significant legal barriers. Ambiguities in legislation, such as the lack of explicit provisions for crimes like "looting" or "plundering" in the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act and ICPC Act, limit their scope. The absence of a comprehensive Non-Conviction Based (NCB) forfeiture regime and a Proceeds of Corruption Act hinders effective asset recovery, with recovered assets often mismanaged due to weak transparency mechanisms[7].

Socio-economic and cultural factors significantly exacerbate Nigeria's vulnerability to financial crimes. The prevalence of a cash-based economy and informal remittance systems, such as underground banks, facilitates money laundering and terrorism financing[8]. Societal acceptance of wealth without scrutiny, coupled with low public sector salaries and weak socio-economic conditions, incentivizes corruption and perpetuates a cycle of financial crime. Aluko argues that laundered

[6]Adeoye (n1) 78.
[7]Joshua and Tunde (n2) 9.
[8] Ayodegi Aluko, 'The Impact of Money Laundering on Economic, and Financial Stability and on Political Development of Developing Countries' *International Corporate Governance, Financial Regulation and Economic Law* [2011] 23 https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4732/1/Ayodegi_Aluko_LLM_ICGFREL_dissertation.pdf accessed on 25th July, 2025

funds distort economic indicators, undermine monetary policy, and fuel inflation, stalling national development and weakening state institutions[9]. The informal economy, characterized by cash-based transactions and fragile governance systems, further amplifies Nigeria's susceptibility to illicit financial flows[10]. Moreover, a culture of impunity, reinforced by the abuse of the prerogative of mercy under Sections 175 and 212 of the 1999 Constitution, undermines accountability and public trust[11].

The economic and social consequences of financial crimes in Nigeria are profound. Corruption costs Africa approximately $2.6 billion annually, with Nigeria bearing a significant share of this burden[12]. Nigeria's low ranking on the global corruption index, coupled with its reputation as a high-risk jurisdiction, deters FDI and hinders sustainable development[13]. Financial crimes fuel insecurity, inflate governance costs, and perpetuate inequality, undermining Nigeria's potential to achieve its developmental goals. As Camdessus aptly stated, "Money laundering is a threat to financial stability and democratic governance", a reality acutely felt in fragile states like Nigeria[14]. Although Nigeria was delisted from the FATF's "non-cooperative countries" list in 2006, persistent concerns over compliance with FATF standards, particularly regarding beneficial ownership transparency, politically exposed persons (PEPs), and asset

[9]ibid.
[10]ibid.
[11]Olujobi and Yebisi (n2) 7
[12]ibid.
[13]Transparency International (n5).
[14]Michel Camdessus, 'Money Laundering: the Importance of International Countermeasures' (Address at the Plenary Meeting of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering held in Paris 1998) <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/28/04/53/sp021098> accessed 28th July, 2025

recovery, highlight ongoing challenges. Convictions remain rare relative to the scale of reported cases, reflecting weak enforcement and judicial inefficiencies[15].

This paper lays the intellectual foundation of the study by clarifying the key concepts, theoretical perspectives, and existing scholarship relevant to the fight against financial crimes in Nigeria. Because financial crime intersects law, governance, economics, and institutional regulation, conceptual clarity is necessary to ensure analytical precision and avoid ambiguity in interpretation.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

To enhance clarity and promote proper understanding of this paper, it is important to define the key terms that will be used frequently. In this segment, the cognitive meaning and explanation of these key terms will be provided in order to provide a clear conceptual basis for the research and to prevent ambiguity. These terms include: financial crime, corruption, money laundering, fraud, terrorism financing, legal barriers and institutional barriers. Definitions are drawn from Nigerian Statutes, Case Laws, and other existing Literature from scholars.

2.1 Financial Crime

In Nigerian jurisprudence, financial crime is statutorily defined under Section 46 of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act, 2004, as 'the non-violent criminal and illicit activity committed with the objectives of earning wealth illegally which in turn destroys the economy'[16].The phrase 'financial crime' is a composite of finance and crime. The word 'finance' derives from the French word 'finance', originally meaning 'payment' or 'settlement of debt', while the term crime originates from the Latin '*crimen*',

[15]Essoh, Daniel and Asangausung (n12)
[16] Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act, 2004

meaning accusation, charge, or offense[17]. Thus, financial crime etymologically implies an offense relating to financial dealings or monetary affairs.

This definition emphasizes the economic sabotage inherent in such acts, distinguishing them from violent crimes while highlighting their systemic impact. The Act's interpretive framework defines financial crime as encompassing offenses such as advance fee fraud, money laundering, and embezzlement, which are investigated and prosecuted by the EFCC. This statutory delineation evolved from earlier fragmented laws, such as the Criminal Code Act, to a consolidated approach in response to Nigeria's FATF grey-listing in the early 2000s, reflecting a shift toward comprehensive economic protection through a coordinated legal and institutional regime designed to safeguard the integrity of Nigeria's financial system, strengthen regulatory oversight, and enhance the detection, prevention and prosecution of complex financial crimes.

2.2 Corruption

Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000 defines corruption under Section 2 to include "bribery, fraud and other related offences".

This is what Scholars like Idachaba refer to as 'official corruption', an aspect much broader than 'corruption '[18]. The Oxford English Dictionary defines corruption as "dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery[19]". In legal discourse, Black's Law Dictionary describes corruption as "an act done with

[17]Michael Levi, *Financial Crime and Their Global Impact* (Routledge 2015) 4.
[18]Idachaba Martins Ajogwu *Official Corruption in Nigeria* (Bansquare Publisher, 2024) 6.
[19]Oxford English Dictionary "Corruption" (10th Edition).

intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duty and the rights of others"[20].

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) 2003 does not provide a single definition of corruption; however, it identifies corrupt practices such as bribery[21], embezzlement[22], trading in influence[23], abuse of functions[24], and illicit enrichment[25]. Corruption is both a legal and moral concept with deep historical roots. Its definitions vary across institutions, but the unifying element is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Under Nigerian law, corruption is a central offence embedded in statutory and constitutional frameworks, shaped by international obligations and judicial pronouncements.

2.3 Money Laundering

Section 18 of Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 defines Money Laundering as "any person who conceals/disguises the origin of; converts or transfers; removes from the jurisdiction; acquires, uses, retains, possesses or controls funds or property, intentionally, knowingly or where the person ought reasonably to have known they are proceeds of an unlawful act, commits money laundering under this Act".

The term "money laundering" metaphorically derives from the process of "cleaning" dirty or illicit funds to make them appear legitimate,

[20]Black's Law Dictionary.
[21]Article 15, United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) 2003.
[22]Article 17, United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) 2003.
[23]Article 18, United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) 2003.
[24]Article 19, United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) 2003.
[25]Article 20, United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) 2003.

akin to washing soiled clothes[26]. Its origins are often attributed to the practices of American gangster Al Capone in the 1920s and 1930s, who allegedly used a network of cash-intensive laundromats to disguise profits from bootlegging, gambling, and other illegal activities. However, historical practices of concealing wealth date back over 2,000 years to ancient Chinese merchants who hid profits from regulators by investing in remote businesses or converting them into assets. The term gained formal recognition in the 1970s amid rising drug trafficking and organized crime.

1.2.4 Fraud

Fraud occupies a central place in the study of financial crimes, corporate governance, and criminal law. Its conceptualization spans common law, statutory law, and international frameworks, with definitions varying depending on context. While the term is broad and often overlaps with related concepts such as deceit, misrepresentation, and corruption, fraud remains distinct as it primarily involves intentional perversion of truth for the purpose of inducing another in reliance upon it to part with some valuable thing belonging to him or to surrender a legal right[27]. The term fraud originates from the Latin word *fraus,* meaning deceit, injury, or trickery[28]. In Roman law, it referred to intentional deception causing harm to another[29]. The term was adopted into Old French as fraude, and later into Middle English in the 14th century[30].

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[26]Tookitaki "Money Laundering" <https://www.tookitaki.com/glossary/money-laundering> accessed 2nd September, 2025.
[27]Ishaku (n 57) 169.
[28]Etymoline "Origin and history of fraudulent" <https://www.etymonline.com/word/fraudulent> accessed on 3rd September, 2025.
[29]ibid.
[30]ibid.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, fraud denotes 'wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain.'[31] Black's Law Dictionary defines fraud as 'a knowing misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact made to induce another to act to their detriment'[32]

In *Adewunmi v Attorney-General of Ekiti State*[33], the court described fraud as 'an act of dishonesty or deceit which causes injury or loss to another'. Also, *A. G. Federation v Atiku Abubakar*[34], fraud was interpreted in the context of abuse of office and misapplication of funds. Furthermore, *Nwankwo v Nwankwo*[35], the Court of Appeal held that fraud involves 'deceit or trickery deliberately practiced to gain some unfair or unlawful advantage.'

1.2.5 Terrorism Financing

The term "terrorism financing" emerged in the late 20th century amid growing recognition of financial support as a critical enabler of terrorism[36]. Its conceptual roots trace to the 1970s and 1980s, when international efforts targeted drug trafficking and organized crime finances, evolving to include terrorism post-Cold War[37].The term gained prominence in the 1990s with the FATF's expansion to counter-terrorist financing (CFT).

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[31]Oxford English Dictionary "Fraud" (10th Edition) 637.
[32] Black's Law Dictionary (11th edn, 2019) 775.
[33] (2002) 2 NWLR (Pt 751) 474
[34] (2007) 8 NWLR (Pt 1035) 117
[35] (1995) 5 NWLR (Pt 394) 153
[36]International Monetary Fund "Anti-money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) < https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/Financial-Integrity/amlcft.> accessed on 3rd September, 2025.
[37] FATF, "Emerging Terrorist Financing Risks" <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Methodsandtrends/Emerging-terrorist-financing-risks.html> accessed on 3rd September, 2025

'Terrorism financing' lacks a singular universal definition but generally means providing, collecting, or managing funds intended for terrorist acts, groups, or individuals, regardless of source legitimacy. According to Judicial Law Dictionary, Terrorism is "Any act which is a violation of the Criminal Code or the Penal Code and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage …"[38]. Terrorism Financing therefore is the act or process of funding these acts. Terrorism financing is the "lifeblood" of terrorism, enabling recruitment, training, and operations. The Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022 criminalizes financing terrorism, with penalties up to life imprisonment (Sections 13-15), and empowers asset freezing.

2.1 THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

2.1.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research establishes the jurisprudential basis, guiding theories, and principles that inform the analysis of Nigeria's anti-corruption landscape. This framework draws from economics, public administration, jurisprudence and criminology to explain the persistence of financial crimes despite the existing Legal and Institutional Frameworks. It justifies the study's focus on barriers by illustrating how theoretical constructs reveal systemic failures, such as political interference, judicial delays, and resource inadequacies, among others. The selected theories; Institutional Theory, Principal-Agent Theory, Rational Choice Theory and Routine Activity Theory are sequenced logically: beginning with macro-level institutional structures, progressing to micro-level agency dynamics, then individual decision-making process of offenders, to focus on the

[38]Ishaku (n 57) 407.

institutional and situational conditions that facilitate or constrain crime. By integrating these theories, the framework not only justifies the research questions but also proposes actionable solutions, like enhanced institutional autonomy.

2.1.2 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory provides a foundational jurisprudential lens for understanding how formal and informal institutions, encompassing laws, norms, organizations, and cultural practices, shape behaviors, compliance, and outcomes in governance systems. Emerging from sociological roots in the works of Meyer and Rowan, who conceptualized institutions as socially constructed entities that confer legitimacy through conformity, the theory has evolved in economic and legal scholarship to explain inefficiencies in public institutions, particularly in developing contexts where corruption arises from mismatches between formal rules (e.g., anti-corruption laws) and informal practices (e.g., patronage and nepotism)[39].

In anti-corruption jurisprudence, Institutional Theory posits that financial crimes persist not merely due to individual moral failings but because of institutional designs that enable or tolerate them, such as weak enforcement mechanisms or conflicting mandates. This theory's principles; legitimacy, isomorphism (imitation of structures), and decoupling (disjunction between policy and practice) offer a robust framework for analyzing barriers, emphasizing the need for institutional reforms to align formal structures with effective anti-corruption outcomes[40].

[39]Dare Arowolo, and Azeez Olaniyan, "Innovative anti-corruption measures and institution building in Nigeria" *African Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* [2018] 3(1), 1-13.
[40]K. C. Ani Casimir, E. M. Izueke, and I. F. Nzekwe "Public Sector and Corruption in Nigeria: An Ethical and Institutional Framework of Analysis" *Journal of Philosophy* [2014] 4(3) 5.

In Nigeria's context, Institutional Theory justifies the dissertation's core inquiry by framing legal and institutional barriers as products of dysfunctional institutional environments. For instance, the theory explains the overlapping mandates between the EFCC and ICPC as a form of institutional isomorphism, where agencies replicate functions without synergy, leading to jurisdictional conflicts and inefficiencies in prosecuting financial crimes[41].

This theory has also been critic for its overemphasis on structural determinism, neglecting individual agency; however, in Nigeria, where corruption is systemic (e.g., Boko Haram financing through laundered funds), it logically supports the research's doctrinal and qualitative methods to uncover how strengthening institutions via autonomy, funding, and technology can reduce barriers.

2.1.3 Principal-Agent Theory

Principal-Agent Theory, a key construct in economic jurisprudence, elucidates the conflicts arising from delegated authority, where principals (e.g., citizens or governments) entrust agents (e.g., public officials or anti-corruption bodies) with tasks, but agents may pursue self-interests due to information asymmetries, moral hazard, and adverse selection. This theory was pioneered by Jensen and Meckling, and its principles; alignment of incentives, monitoring, and sanctions have been extended to corruption studies, viewing financial crimes as agency failures where agents exploit positions for private gain, necessitating contractual mechanisms like performance audits and whistleblower protections[42]. In legal contexts, it underscores the need

[41] Soma Pillay and Ron Kluvers, "An Institutional Theory Perspective on Corruption: The Case of a Developing Democracy" *Financial Accountability & Management* [2014] 30(1) 95-119 <https://doi.org/10.1111/faam.12029> accessed on 20th August, 2025.

[42] Thabang R. Motswaledi and Sysman Motloung "Corruption, Political Interference, and Energy Governance: Revisiting Principal-Agent Failures in South African and

for accountability structures to mitigate risks, particularly in resource-rich nations where high-stakes delegation amplifies corruption.

Applied to Nigeria, Principal-Agent Theory logically justifies the dissertation's analysis of barriers by highlighting how misaligned incentives in institutions like the EFCC perpetuate financial crimes. For example, political executives (principals) delegate anti-corruption enforcement to agencies (agents), but agents face capture through interference, leading to selective justice that shields politically exposed persons while prosecuting minor cases.

2.2.4 Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory originates from classical criminology, particularly the writings of Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham, who argued that crime is a product of rational calculation[43]. Modern interpretations by Gary Becker and Clarke & Cornish extend this reasoning, positing that individuals make deliberate choices to engage in crime after assessing potential rewards against likely costs such as detection, punishment, or social sanctions[44].

In Becker's economic model of crime, individuals commit offences when the expected utility of crime exceeds the expected cost of punishment, given the perceived probability of being caught and the

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Nigerian Power Utilities" *International Journal of Professional Business Review* [2025] 10(7) <https://openaccessojs.com/JBReview/article/view/5597> accessed on 20th August, 2025.

[43]Psychology Town, "Classical's School's Rational Choice Theory in Criminology" *Forensic Psychology* [2024] <https://psychology.town/forensic/rational-choice-theory-criminology/> accessed on 16th October, 2025.

[44]Joe A. Oppenheimer "Rational Choice Theory" *Encyclopedia of Political Theory* [2008] 2 <https://www.academia.edu/download/101492904/rct.pdf> accessed on 16th October, 2025

severity of sanctions[45]. Cornish and Clarke later refined this model, emphasizing that offenders are "boundedly rational," making decisions within the constraints of available information and opportunities[46].Financial crimes such as money laundering, bribery, and embezzlement are not impulsive acts but deliberate, profit-driven activities that align closely with the assumptions of Rational Choice Theory. Offenders weigh the enormous potential financial benefits against the relatively low risk of apprehension or conviction.

In Nigeria, the theory explains why elites, politically exposed persons (PEPs), and corporate actors continue to engage in high-value corruption and financial manipulation despite existing legal prohibitions. When legal systems are weak, prosecution is uncertain, and penalties are minimal, the perceived cost of offending becomes negligible compared to the potential gains[47].

2.2.5 Routine Activity Theory

Routine Activity Theory, developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson, offers a situational explanation of crime occurrence. The theory posits that crime occurs when three elements converge in time and space: A motivated offender, A suitable target, and the absence of

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[45] Becker G. S. "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach" *Journal of Political Economy*, [1968] 76(2), 169–217<http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/259394> accessed on 16th October, 2025

[46] Ronald V. Clarke and Derek B. Cornish. "Modeling Offenders' Decisions: A Framework for Research and Policy." *The University of Chicago Journal Press. Journals,* 6, 147–185 <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdf/10.1086/449106?download=true> accessed on 16th October, 2025.

[47] Essoh. Daniel, Asangausung (n 16).

capable guardianship[48]. In the context of Nigeria, the theory can be reframed as follows:

The motivated offenders are individuals or entities public officials, business elites, or financial intermediaries who possess both intent and opportunity to engage in financial misconduct. The suitable targets include public funds, state contracts, and financial systems that can be manipulated for personal gain. The absence of capable guardianship refers to weak regulatory institutions, inadequate enforcement agencies, and ineffective legal oversight mechanisms. Institutional failures such as underfunded agencies, lack of coordination between EFCC and ICPC, insufficient forensic accounting tools, and judicial inefficiency represent the "absence of capable guardians." These institutional lapses create environments where financial crimes can be committed with minimal risk of exposure or sanction[49].

3.0 HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF FINANCIAL CRIMES IN NIGERIA

The historical foundation of financial crime in Nigeria is closely connected to the evolution of laws and regulatory mechanisms aimed at controlling economic misconduct and protecting public resources. Although financial crimes existed in various forms during the pre-colonial and colonial periods, the legal response to such crimes became more structured with the introduction of formal criminal laws and financial regulations during British colonial administration. Early regulatory measures were largely contained in the Criminal Code Act and other colonial ordinances which criminalized offences such as

[48]Eric Rutger Leukfeldt and Majid Yar "Applying Routine Activity Theory to Cybercrime: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis" Deviant *Behavior*, [2016] *37*(3), 263–280 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2015.1012409> accessed on 16th October, 2025.
[49]Sorunke and Daniel (n 82) 4.

fraud, stealing, forgery, bribery, and obtaining property by false pretence. These laws primarily addressed conventional economic crimes and were not specifically designed to combat sophisticated financial crimes such as money laundering, organized corruption, and transnational fraud[50].

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, financial crimes became increasingly prevalent due to rapid economic expansion, weak regulatory institutions, and growing public sector corruption. The discovery of crude oil in commercial quantities and the oil boom of the 1970s significantly increased government revenues, but also created opportunities for embezzlement, contract fraud, bribery, and illicit diversion of public funds. During this period, the existing criminal laws proved inadequate in addressing emerging economic crimes, particularly those involving public officials and complex financial transactions[51].

In response to increasing corruption and economic sabotage, the Nigerian government introduced several specialized laws during the military era. One of the earliest notable interventions was the enactment of the Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act 1994, which was designed to address widespread banking fraud and financial malpractice within the banking sector. Similarly, the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 1995 was enacted to combat the growing incidence of advance-fee fraud popularly known as "419 fraud," which

[50]Yemi Akinseye-George *Legal System, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria* (New Century Law Publishers 2000) 143–145.

[51]Michael M. Ogbeidi, "Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socioeconomic Analysis*" Journal of Nigerian Studies* [2012] 18(2) 45–62.

had become internationally associated with Nigeria[52]. These laws represented an important shift from reliance on general criminal legislation to the adoption of targeted legal measures against specific forms of financial crimes.

The return to democratic governance in 1999 marked a significant turning point in Nigeria's anti-financial crime framework. Growing international pressure, particularly from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and concerns over Nigeria's reputation as a hub for money laundering and advance-fee fraud led to extensive legal and institutional reforms. Nigeria's placement on the FATF list of Non-Cooperative Countries and Territories in 2001 exposed deficiencies in its anti-money laundering regime and necessitated urgent reforms[53]. Consequently, the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2004 was enacted to criminalize money laundering and impose reporting obligations on financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses.

The most significant institutional development during this period was the enactment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2004, which established the EFCC as the principal agency responsible for investigating and prosecuting economic and financial crimes. The EFCC was empowered to combat offences such as money laundering, advance-fee fraud, terrorism financing, banking fraud, tax evasion, and related financial crimes[54]. Prior to this, the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act

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[52]Chibuike Uche, "The Rise of Advance-Fee Fraud in Nigeria: An Institutional Perspective" *Journal of Economic [*2019] 7(1) 33–56.

[53]Financial Action Task Force, "Annual Report 2001–2002" 15<https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Fatfgeneral/Fatfannualreport2001-2002.html> accessed on 14th May, 2026.

[54]Nlesum S. Okogbule, 'An Appraisal of the Legal and Institutional Framework for Combating Corruption in Nigeria'. *Journal of Financial Crime* [2006] 13(1), 99-104.

2000 had established the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to investigate and prosecute corruption-related offences in the public sector. Together, these institutions marked Nigeria's transition toward a specialized and coordinated anti-financial crime framework.

Subsequent reforms further expanded Nigeria's legal response to financial crimes. The Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022 and the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022 were enacted to strengthen compliance with international anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing standards. These laws introduced stricter customer due diligence obligations, expanded regulation of Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs), enhanced beneficial ownership disclosure requirements, and imposed tougher sanctions for non-compliance[55]. Additionally, the establishment of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) as an independent entity under the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit Act 2018 strengthened Nigeria's financial intelligence and international cooperation mechanisms.

Despite these legislative and institutional developments, financial crimes continue to evolve in sophistication. Cybercrime, cryptocurrency-related fraud, trade-based money laundering, and transnational financial crimes have introduced new regulatory challenges. While Nigeria now possesses a relatively extensive legal framework for combating financial crimes, concerns remain regarding weak enforcement, overlapping institutional mandates, political interference, inadequate technological capacity, and delays within the

[55]Olusola Joshua Olujobi and Ebenezer Tunde Yebisi, "Combating the Crimes of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in Nigeria: A Legal Approach" *Journal of Money Laundering Control* [2023] 26(2) 1–15.

judicial system. Consequently, the historical evolution of financial crime laws in Nigeria reflects a gradual shift from fragmented criminal regulation toward a more comprehensive anti-financial crime regime, although significant implementation challenges continue to undermine its effectiveness.

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Onoja, [56] provided a doctrinal analysis of economic and financial crimes, focusing on their conceptualization, institutional enforcement, and sentencing challenges in Nigeria. The Book was structured into four parts, and it traces historical trends from colonial-era codes to post-1999 reforms, examining statutes like the EFCC Act (2004) and ICPC Act (2000), and critiquing agencies' functions, prosecutorial impediments (e.g., political interference, judicial delays), and punishment theories (retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation). Onoja highlighted barriers such as fragmented legislation, selective prosecutions, and weak deterrence, using case synopses to illustrate low conviction rates (e.g., only ten high-profile cases secured by EFCC/ICPC in 17 years) and impunity for elites. He advocates for sentencing reforms, including proportionality and plea bargaining under the ACJA (2015), while appraising ancillary laws like NDLEA and international instruments. While Onoja's work offers a strong jurisprudential foundation on pre-2018 barriers, it predates key developments like the Money Laundering Act (2022) and Nigeria's 2024 FATF grey-list exit, lacking empirical data on conviction trends, technological solutions (e.g., AI for detection), and socio-cultural factors. This dissertation aims to fill these gaps by incorporating post-2018 reforms.

[56]Esa O. Onoja *Economic Crimes in Nigeria* (Lawlords Publications, 2018).

Idachaba[57], conducted an analysis of official corruption, emphasizing its conceptual, legal, institutional, and comparative dimensions within Nigeria's governance framework. Spanning 11 chapters, the book begins with an introduction and overview, followed by conceptual analysis and criminal law perspectives/forms. The work explores forms, causes and effects of corruption, and reviews international instruments (UN and AU Conventions). The Work provides a comparative analysis of corruption in Ghana, Uganda, India, China, USA, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. It also appraises anti-graft agencies (ICPC, EFCC, Code of Conduct Bureau/Tribunal), and details top alleged cases. The work examines obstacles (legal disparities, poor definitions, monitoring, language barriers, sanction enforcement), and critiques plea bargaining in anti-corruption. While Idachaba's work provides a thorough foundation on official corruption's forms, institutional roles, and global comparisons, it narrowly focuses on official (public sector) corruption, excluding broader financial crimes like money laundering or advanced fee fraud in private or hybrid contexts. This dissertation aims to fill this gap through mixed-methods research, incorporating a wider spectrum of financial crimes, recent technological barriers, and quantitative analysis of institutional inefficiencies to propose holistic reforms.

Chukwuka[58], a legal expert in financial regulation, delivered a doctrinal and analytical exploration of money laundering, tracing its nature, evolution, processes, and global countermeasures within Nigeria's context. While Chukwuka's work offers a detailed doctrinal foundation on money laundering's global evolution, processes, and FATF-aligned countermeasures, it also exclusively centers on Anti-

[57]Idachaba Martins Ajogwu *Official Corruption in Nigeria* (Bansquare Publisher, 2024)
[58]Sam Chukwuka Onyeka *Anti-Money Laundering* (Compliance Publications Limited, 2023)

Money Laundering mechanisms and channels, with minimal integration of broader financial crimes within Nigeria's institutional ecosystem. This research aims to fill this gap by, incorporating a holistic view of interconnected financial crimes, recent institutional barriers (e.g., EFCC-ICPC overlaps), and quantitative analysis to propose integrated reforms.

Abubakar,[59] a legal scholar provided a comprehensive analysis of money laundering and terrorist financing (ML/TF) within Nigeria's legal and regulatory landscape. The book examined the evolution of these financial crimes, their sophisticated methods, and Nigeria's compliance with international standards, particularly the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 40 Recommendations. It covers the nature and processes of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, their economic and governance impacts, and the role of technology in enabling these crimes. Abubakar assessed Nigerian laws like the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act (2022), enforcement frameworks involving agencies such as the EFCC and NFIU, and global institutions (UN, IMF, AU) in combating ML/TF. The work critiqued enforcement gaps, legislative effectiveness, and international cooperation, concluding that despite progress, significant challenges remain, including weak implementation and resource constraints. Abubakar's book provides a detailed legal analysis and focus on aligning Nigerian practices with global Anti Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing standards, offering insights into predicate offenses, corporate liability, and sanctions. However, the book narrowly focuses on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing legal frameworks and international compliance, with limited exploration of broader institutional dynamics (e.g.,

[59]Abdul Ibrahim Abubakar, *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Law and Practice in Nigeria* (Malthouse Press, Nigeria, 2022).

political interference in agencies) or other forms of financial crimes. This dissertation fills this gap by incorporating post-2022 institutional barriers and enforcement inefficiencies to propose holistic reforms addressing the full spectrum of financial crimes in Nigeria.

Ekakite and Igbinosa-Okoro in their article,[60] critically assessed Nigeria's legal and institutional frameworks for combating financial crimes, highlighting weaknesses such as outdated laws, inconsistent sanctions, poor inter-agency coordination, and underfunding of enforcement bodies. Their study emphasized that while Nigeria has enacted multiple anti-financial-crime statutes and established specialized institutions like the EFCC and ICPC, systemic weaknesses continue to hinder effective prosecution and deterrence. The article's strength lies in its holistic focus on both legal and institutional shortcomings. However, the analysis remains largely general and prescriptive, without delving into specific jurisprudential barriers such as evidentiary admissibility issues, constitutional immunities, or procedural delays that directly affect enforcement outcomes in practice. This paper will address that gap by extending their critique into a detailed jurisprudential and doctrinal assessment. Thus, the dissertation builds on Ekakite and Igbinosa-Okoro's study by providing a more precise and reform-oriented perspective.

Sa'id and Azmi in their article[61] employed qualitative interviews with auditors, EFCC and FIRS officers, and legal practitioners to identify

[60]Gaga Ekakite and Blessing A. Igbinosa-Okoro, "Legal and Institutional Challenges to Financial Crimes in Nigeria" *KB Law Scholars Journal* [2024] 1(2) 1-18 <https://doi.org/10.60787/kblsj.v1i2.12> accessed on 24th July, 2025

[61]Shehu Umar Sa'id and Khairul Saidah Abas Azmi, "Challenges of Combating Fraudulent Practices: Evidence from Nigerian Public Sector" [2020] *Journal of Financial Crime*<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/JFC-04-2020-0075> accessed on 24th July, 2025.

practical challenges in combating fraudulent practices in Nigeria's public sector. Their findings revealed deep institutional problems such as political interference, lack of autonomy for enforcement agencies, weak monitoring, and patronage systems that shield powerful actors. They concluded that fraud control mechanisms remain ineffective unless institutional independence and accountability are strengthened. The study provided empirical grounding, drawing on field evidence to substantiate claims about institutional weaknesses. However, it focuses mainly on organizational and political challenges and does not analyze the legal barriers such as procedural delays, constitutional protections, or evidentiary hurdles that also limit the effectiveness of fraud prosecutions. This paper complements their empirical insights by embedding them within a jurisprudential framework. In this way, the dissertation builds on Sa'id and Azmi's field findings with doctrinal analysis.

Aluko[62] investigated money laundering as a global issue undermining economic, financial, and political stability in developing nations. The dissertation examined how money laundering affects economic growth, financial integrity, and political structures, with a focus on legislative responses and their effectiveness. Aluko explored the processes of money laundering (placement, layering, integration), its economic impacts (e.g., tax evasion, reduced foreign investment), financial consequences (e.g., weakened banking systems), and political ramifications (e.g., corruption, governance instability). The study critiqued the adequacy of international and national measures, including anti-money laundering (AML) frameworks, and highlights

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[62] Aluko Ayodegi, 'The Impact of Money Laundering on Economic, and Financial Stability and on Political Development of Developing Countries' *International Corporate Governance, Financial Regulation and Economic Law* [2011] https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4732/1/Ayodegi_Aluko_LLM_ICGFREL_dissertation.pdf accessed on 25th July, 2025.

challenges like enforcement gaps and limited resources in developing countries, using a broad comparative lens across these nations.

Aluko's work provides a solid theoretical and conceptual foundation on money laundering's systemic effects, emphasizing legislative shortcomings and their implications for stability. However, it predates Nigeria-specific post-2011 developments, such as the EFCC Act (2004) amendments and the 2022 Money Laundering Act, and lacks detailed analysis of institutional dynamics or technological solutions like digital tracing tools. This dissertation fills this gap through incorporating recent Nigerian institutional data, technological innovations, and quantitative enforcement metrics to propose comprehensive reforms addressing the broader spectrum of financial crimes.

Arowolo and Olaniyan[63], scholars in public administration and economics, conducted a review of anti-corruption strategies and institutional reforms in Nigeria. The article is structured as a book-like exploration: Part One (General Part) includes Chapter 1's general introduction with a vision for constructing punishment and sentencing for economic and financial crimes, contextual questions on punishment, aims/objectives, research methodology (doctrinal), scope, significance, and chapter synopsis. Chapter 2 narrates the context of economic crimes in Nigeria, covering narratives/trends, focal points of national efforts, legislative trajectory, transition from diffused provisions in disparate statutes to direct legislation, approaches to punishment problems, and institutional weaknesses. Chapter 3 reviews relevant literature on economic/white-collar crimes, criminalization justification, sentencing literature, punishment theory/practice

63Dare Arowolo, and Azeez Olaniyan, "Innovative anti-corruption measures and institution building in Nigeria" *African Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* [2018] 3(1), 1-13.

sketches, subjective punishment experiences, plea bargaining/restorative justice, retributivism/utilitarianism/sentencing, and recent reforms in selected jurisdictions. Part Two (Institutional and Procedural Framework) features Chapter 4's description of terms. Chapter 5 details the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) trajectory (pre-2000/ICPC Act 2000/EFCC Act 2002), functions, challenges, performance, negative aspersions, and impediments. Part Three (Theories and Types of Punishment) covers ancillary, impediments to investigation/prosecution, punishment theory, deterrence in sentencing, reformation/incapacitation theories and sentencing practice in Nigeria. While Arowolo and Olaniyan's article offers a detailed doctrinal foundation on innovative anti-corruption measures, institution building (e.g., EFCC and ICPC), and punishment theories for economic crimes, it emphasizes theoretical and legislative reforms without in-depth evaluation of implementation outcomes or empirical data on agency performance post-2018. This dissertation fills this gap by incorporating empirical enforcement metrics, recent institutional data, and quantitative analysis to propose evidence-based reforms for financial crimes in Nigeria.

Uche[64], analyzed the institutional factors driving the surge of advance-fee fraud (AFF), commonly known as "419 scams," in Nigeria. The article employs an institutional economics approach to trace AFF's evolution from the 1980s oil boom and structural adjustment programs (SAP) under IMF influence, which led to economic instability, unemployment, and weakened regulatory institutions. Uche examined legal frameworks like the Criminal Code (Section 419) and Advance Fee Fraud Act (2006), critiquing their ineffectiveness due to poor enforcement by agencies like the EFCC, political interference, and

[64]Chibuike Uche, 'The Rise of Advance-Fee Fraud in Nigeria: An Institutional Perspective' *Journal of Economic Crimes* [2019] 7(1) 33-56.

judicial delays. He highlighted institutional weaknesses, such as corruption in law enforcement and inadequate international cooperation, using case studies of high-profile scams and empirical data on losses (e.g., billions annually to global victims). The study argued that Advanced Fee Fraud thrives in a "rent-seeking" environment fostered by institutional failures, proposing reforms like strengthened judicial independence and public education. Uche's work provides a strong institutional economics perspective on Advanced Fee Fraud's roots and regulatory shortcomings, emphasizing enforcement gaps in Nigeria. However, it concentrated exclusively on Advanced Fee Fraud as a standalone crime, with limited discussion of its linkages to broader financial crimes like money laundering or terrorism financing etc. within integrated institutional barriers. This dissertation aims to fill this gap through mixed-methods research, incorporating interconnections among financial crimes, recent data on EFCC/ICPC overlaps, and quantitative analysis to propose comprehensive institutional reforms.

Camdessus presented a seminal address in 1998 at the FATF plenary in Paris[65], emphasizing the global threat of money laundering and the need for coordinated international responses. The speech defines money laundering implicitly as the integration of criminal proceeds into the financial system, estimating its scale at 2–5% of global GDP and highlighting its prudential risks to banks, contamination of legal transactions, and macroeconomic distortions like volatile capital flows and exchange rates. Camdessus underscored the FATF's pivotal role in

[65]Camdessus Michel, 'Money Laundering: the Importance of International Countermeasures' (Address at the Plenary Meeting of the Financial Action Task Force
on Money Laundering held in Paris 1998) <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/28/04/53/sp021098> accessed 28th July, 2025.

establishing anti-money laundering (AML) standards, including the 40 Recommendations, typologies for intelligence sharing, and regional bodies (e.g., Caribbean FATF, Asia/Pacific Group). He advocated universal prevention strategies, improved governance (rule of law, anti-corruption), strict "know-your-customer" rules, and IMF support via surveillance, technical assistance, and law drafting, particularly for developing economies vulnerable to corruption and weak supervision.
Camdessus's address provides a foundational global perspective on AML's importance for economic stability, with relevance to developing countries through calls for regional FATFs in Africa and emphasis on governance reforms. However, as a 1998 policy speech, it lacks Nigeria-specific analysis or updates on post-2000 developments like the EFCC Act or 2022 Money Laundering Act, focusing broadly on international standards without delving into national institutional and legal barriers. This study fills this gap by incorporating Nigeria's post-1998 institutional and legal framework data, recent enforcement metrics, and quantitative analysis to propose localized reforms addressing financial crimes beyond money laundering.

Nkechi[66], provided a historical analysis of Nigeria's engagement with international financial crime regulation. The article traced the evolution of Nigeria's regulatory framework from pre-independence colonial laws to contemporary statutes, assessing its alignment with global standards like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). Nkechi examined key legislative milestones, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act (2004) and Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act (2022), and evaluated the roles of agencies like the EFCC and

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[66]Aringe Nkechi, 'Nigeria and International Financial Crime Regulation: Past, Present and Future' [2021] Afronomics Law <https://www.afronomicslaw.org/print/pdf/node/2081> accessed 30th July, 2025.

Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU). The study critiqued past enforcement challenges (e.g., political interference, judicial delays), analyzed present compliance efforts (e.g., Nigeria's 2024 FATF grey-list exit), and speculates on future regulatory needs, emphasizing the need for stronger institutional capacity and international cooperation. Nkechi's work offers a robust historical and legal foundation for understanding Nigeria's financial crime regulation, with a forward-looking perspective on global integration. However, it focused predominantly on regulatory alignment and institutional roles, with limited exploration of grassroots socio-economic factors (e.g., public corruption tolerance) influencing financial crime persistence. This research will incorporate grassroots socio-economic factors (e.g., public corruption tolerance) influencing financial crime persistence.

Peter, Udom and Sunday[67], examined the operations of Nigeria's core anti-corruption bodies, particularly the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC). Their study assessed the historical context, mandates, achievements, and challenges of these agencies, concluding that despite significant institutional efforts, Nigeria's anti-corruption regime continues to face obstacles such as political interference, inadequate funding, weak enforcement capacity, and poor inter-agency collaboration. The article makes a valuable contribution by linking the effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies to national development outcomes, arguing that weak institutional frameworks directly undermine economic growth and public trust in

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[67]Essoh Peter Archibong, Daniel Udom Sunday and Asangausung Okoro Sunday, 'An Assessment of Nigeria's Anti-Corruption Agencies: Challenges and Implications for National Development' *International Journal of Social Sciences* [2025] 8(5) 1-18 <Https://Www.Ijojournals.Com/Index.Php/Ssh/Article/View/1079/579> Accessed 27th July, 2025.

governance. However, its focus remained primarily institutional, emphasizing organizational weaknesses, political will, and socio-economic consequences, while offering limited analysis of the legal and jurisprudential barriers that constrain enforcement, such as constitutional immunities, procedural restrictions (e.g., statutes of limitation, pre-action notices), evidentiary hurdles (e.g., admissibility of electronic records), and international cooperation obstacles. This dissertation aims to addresses that gap by going beyond institutional challenges to conduct an integrated assessment of both institutional and legal barriers to fighting financial crimes in Nigeria.

The article by John-Oti and Gowon[68] examined how both Nigeria and China have approached the challenge of financial crimes. The authors adopted a comparative qualitative method, drawing from expert interviews, policy documents, and secondary data to evaluate the institutional and policy responses of both states. Their study revealed that while China has developed a centralized, technology-driven enforcement system with strict control, Nigeria's regime remains constrained by decentralization, weak institutions, corruption, and inadequate technological adaptation. The paper concluded that Nigeria can learn valuable lessons from China's proactive institutional and governance strategies. The value of this study lies in its comparative approach, which illuminates systemic weaknesses in Nigeria by juxtaposing them with China's stricter institutional model. However, the article remains primarily focused on the institutional and policy dimensions, offering little detail on the legal and jurisprudential barriers that specifically constrain Nigeria's anti-financial-crime framework. This dissertation aims to address that gap by moving beyond the comparative institutional analysis to examine in detail the

[68]Eleanor John-Oti and Stephen Gowon John-Oti, 'Financial Crimes: A Comparative Study of Nigeria and Chinese Approaches to Combating the Scourge' IRJEMS [2025] 4(5).

legal barriers and institutional barriers that directly impede Nigeria's fight against financial crimes.

Kasum in his paper[69], explored the role of forensic accounting in combating financial crimes within developing economies, with a particular focus on Nigeria. The study compared the private and public sectors and concludes that while forensic accounting is needed in both, it is more urgently required in the public sector, where corruption and misappropriation of resources are widespread. Kasum argued that forensic accounting can strengthen accountability, enhance transparency, and support the detection of fraud and corruption. The strength of Kasum's work lies in its recognition of the strategic importance of forensic accounting in addressing financial crimes. However, the paper primarily concentrates on professional and institutional capacity without fully examining the legal and jurisprudential barriers that restrict the effective application of forensic accounting evidence in Nigeria such as evidentiary admissibility under the Evidence Act, issues of privilege, statutory limitations, and constitutional protections that hinder enforcement. This dissertation addresses that gap by integrating Kasum's insights into a broader analysis of institutional and legal barriers to fighting financial crimes in Nigeria. While Kasum highlights the need for forensic accounting, this study situates that need within the Nigerian legal system, showing how procedural rules, constitutional immunities, statutory gaps, and weak inter-agency coordination interact to frustrate the deployment of forensic accounting tools.

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[69]Kasum Abubakar 'The Relevance of Forensic Accounting to Financial Crimes in Private and Public Sectors of Third World Economies: A Study from Nigeria' ResearchGate [2009] <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228240940_The_Relevance_of_Forensic_Accounting_to_Financial_Crimes_in_Private_and_Public_Sectors_of_Third_World_Economies_A_Study_from_Nigeria> accessed on 28th July, 2025.

The literature reviewed reveals a broad scholarly consensus that while Nigeria has developed an extensive legal and institutional architecture to combat financial crimes, significant gaps remain in enforcement effectiveness, inter-agency coordination, institutional independence, and preventive compliance mechanisms. Existing studies have largely focused either on normative legal analysis or institutional performance in isolation, with limited integrated assessment of both legal and institutional barriers within a coherent analytical framework. This gap justifies the present study, which seeks to bridge doctrinal evaluation with institutional critique in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the structural impediments to effective financial crime control in Nigeria.

3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

It is recommended that to effectively combat financial crimes in Nigeria, the government should strengthen anti-corruption agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission by granting them greater independence, adequate funding, and advanced technological tools for investigation and prosecution. The judicial system should also be reformed to ensure speedy prosecution of financial crime cases through the establishment of specialized courts and stricter penalties for offenders. Financial institutions should improve compliance with anti-money laundering regulations by adopting stronger monitoring systems, digital tracking technologies, and forensic accounting methods to detect suspicious transactions.

Furthermore, the government and relevant stakeholders should intensify public enlightenment campaigns aimed at educating citizens on the dangers and consequences of financial crimes. Ethical values and anti-corruption education should also be incorporated into school curricula to promote integrity among young people. Since cybercrime has become increasingly prevalent, there is a need for improved cybersecurity infrastructure and digital literacy across the country. Nigeria should also strengthen international collaboration with organizations such as Financial Action Task Force and Interpol to enhance information sharing, extradition processes, and the recovery of stolen assets. In addition, government policies that focus on employment generation, poverty reduction, and youth empowerment should be prioritized, as economic hardship and unemployment are major factors contributing to financial crimes in Nigeria.

In conclusion, financial crimes remain a major obstacle to Nigeria's economic growth, political stability, and social development. This study has shown that financial crimes exist in various forms, including corruption, money laundering, cybercrime, bribery, embezzlement, and advance fee fraud, all of which have negatively affected the country's reputation and development. The review of relevant theories and literature revealed that factors such as greed, unemployment, weak institutions, poverty, poor governance, and societal pressure contribute significantly to the persistence of financial crimes in Nigeria.

Although the government and anti-corruption agencies have introduced several measures to curb these crimes, the continued prevalence of financial crimes indicates that more effective strategies are needed. Therefore, tackling financial crimes requires a collective effort involving the government, law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, the judiciary, civil society, and citizens. By strengthening institutions, promoting transparency and accountability, improving law enforcement, and encouraging ethical behavior, Nigeria can reduce the incidence of financial crimes and create a more stable and trustworthy financial system. Ultimately, the successful fight against financial crimes will contribute significantly to national development, economic stability, and improved public confidence in governance.