

# Toward a Regenerative Ethics Model for Combating Tech-Enabled HR Fraud: A Bibliometric Analysis

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## Abstract

This bibliometric analysis investigates the evolution of research on workplace ethics and organizational misconduct from 2000 to 2025, with an expanded focus on emerging forms of unethical practices such as HR frauds, fraudulent employee records, moonlighting, the use of deepfakes in online interviews, and the issuance of false employment certificates. Data was extracted from 1,000 peer-reviewed articles sourced through Scopus database and analyzed using the Bibliometrix R package. The findings reveal a growing academic interest in digital-era fraud, human resource malpractice, and advanced deception techniques. Trends indicate a shift from traditional themes like organizational culture and corporate governance toward complex challenges involving technological manipulation and cross-border recruitment fraud. The study provides actionable insights for scholars and practitioners aiming to strengthen organizational fraud detection mechanisms, enhance ethical compliance, and mitigate emerging HR risks.

**Keywords:** Bibliometric Analysis, Organizational Ethics, HR Fraud, Moonlighting, Deepfake Interviews, False Employment Certificates, Organizational Misconduct, Fraud Prevention

## 1. Introduction

Organizational ethics has historically centered on principles of compliance, transparency, and fairness, with scholars emphasizing the role of ethical climates and governance frameworks in maintaining workplace integrity (Trevino et al., 1998; Greenberg, 1987). Early studies explored how leadership behavior, corporate culture, and formalized codes of conduct influence employees' ethical decision-making (Kaptein, 2011). These works highlighted the preventive role of clear policies, consistent enforcement, and training in minimizing misconduct (Schwartz, 2001). Over time, bibliometric mapping shows a thematic shift from generalized organizational ethics toward specific risk management strategies, reflecting the growing complexity of workplace misconduct (Cortina et al., 2013).

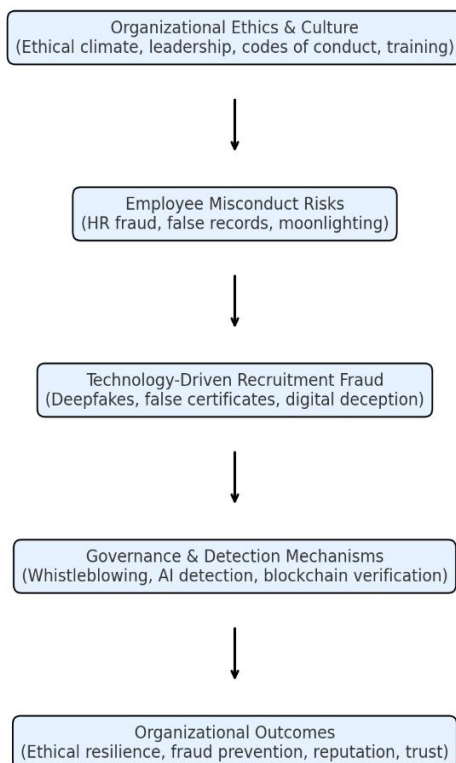
In recent years, the landscape has expanded to include emerging forms of human resource (HR) fraud that exploit technological vulnerabilities and procedural gaps. Among the most concerning are falsified employee records, unauthorized secondary employment (moonlighting), and the strategic use of deepfake technology to manipulate recruitment processes (Adetunji, 2021; Bommakanti & Swamy, 2023). These trends align with global workforce shifts, particularly the mass adoption of remote and hybrid work arrangements following the COVID-19 pandemic, which weakened traditional verification and oversight mechanisms (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Moonlighting, once a marginal concern, now raises productivity, loyalty, and conflict-of-interest challenges in competitive labor markets (McDonald et al., 2006).

Equally alarming is the rise of recruitment-stage fraud, where fabricated employment certificates, counterfeit credentials, and digitally altered interviews undermine hiring integrity (Maurer, 2024). Cases involving deepfake impersonations of executives in virtual meetings—resulting in significant financial and reputational losses—have been documented globally (Burgess, 2023). Technical analyses by Mirsky and Lee (2020) and Verdoliva (2020) reveal how rapid

advancements in AI-generated media increase both the quality of fraudulent content and the difficulty of detection. This evolution necessitates robust countermeasures, such as AI-enabled verification, blockchain-secured credentialing, and integrated whistleblowing systems (Weitzel et al., 2022).

From a governance perspective, whistleblowing remains a critical yet underutilized safeguard against internal fraud, with research showing that fear of retaliation, cultural norms, and procedural ambiguity often suppress reporting (Near & Miceli, 2016). Contemporary studies recommend integrating whistleblowing mechanisms into broader corporate compliance frameworks, enabling faster fraud detection and mitigation (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2009). Organizational response strategies must now balance technological defenses with cultural reinforcement, ensuring that ethical conduct remains an embedded organizational norm rather than a compliance checkbox (Kaptein, 2011).

This bibliometric analysis, covering 25 years of scholarship, identifies four thematic clusters: foundational workplace ethics, employee-level misconduct, technology-driven recruitment fraud, and governance-based fraud detection. The post-2020 surge in publications, particularly on technology-enabled deception, signals a paradigm shift from reactive policy frameworks to proactive, tech-integrated ethical governance. As organizations navigate these emerging risks, the intersection of human behavior, digital innovation, and ethical stewardship will remain central to both research and practice.



### Theoretical framework

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Data Source

The bibliographic dataset for this study was retrieved from the Scopus database, one of the most comprehensive repositories of peer-reviewed literature across management, business ethics, law, and information systems. The dataset comprised **1,000 academic records** spanning journal articles, conference proceedings, and book chapters published between 2000 and 2025. Each record contained detailed metadata such as author names, affiliations, publication titles, keywords, abstracts, Digital Object Identifier (DOI), and citation counts. Scopus was chosen due to its broad subject coverage, rigorous indexing, and frequent use in bibliometric and scientometric research, thereby ensuring both reliability and comparability with prior studies.

### 2.2 Search Strategy

To capture the multi-dimensional nature of workplace ethics and misconduct, a carefully constructed search string was employed. The query combined general terms such as “organizational ethics” and “organizational misconduct” with specific emerging concerns such as “HR fraud,” “moonlighting,” “deepfake interviews,” and “false employment certificates.” Boolean operators were applied to ensure inclusivity and reduce bias, yielding a comprehensive sample that spanned traditional ethical concerns and contemporary digital-era frauds.

### 2.3 Analytical Tools

Following data extraction, rigorous cleaning and preprocessing were performed to remove duplicates, incomplete metadata, and irrelevant entries. The refined dataset was then analyzed using the **Bibliometrix package in R** and **VOSviewer**. Bibliometrix facilitated performance analysis, co-occurrence mapping, and thematic evolution detection, while VOSviewer was used to visualize collaboration networks, keyword clusters, and citation structures. Together, these tools ensured methodological robustness and allowed for the identification of both well-established and emerging intellectual structures.

### 2.4 Addressing Research Gaps

While existing studies on workplace ethics largely focus on **organizational culture, governance, and leadership behavior**, fewer systematic efforts have examined **digital-era misconducts** such as deepfake-enabled recruitment fraud or blockchain-based credential falsification. Moreover, limited attention has been given to the **geographic diversity** of scholarship, with research heavily concentrated in the United States and Europe, leaving Asia, Africa, and Latin America underexplored. This study addresses these gaps by (i) systematically mapping the evolution of themes over a 25-year period, and (ii) highlighting the shift from traditional misconduct to technology-driven frauds and HR-specific malpractices.

### 2.5 Limitations

Despite its contributions, the methodology is not without limitations. First, the reliance on **Scopus as the sole data source** may have excluded relevant works indexed in Web of Science, Scopus or regional databases. Second, bibliometric methods primarily capture **quantitative patterns** (citations, co-authorships, keyword frequency) and may overlook the **qualitative richness** of ethical debates, case studies, and theoretical models. Third, the **cutoff year of 2025** means that ongoing developments in AI-driven deception, regulatory reforms, and cross-cultural practices may not yet be fully captured.

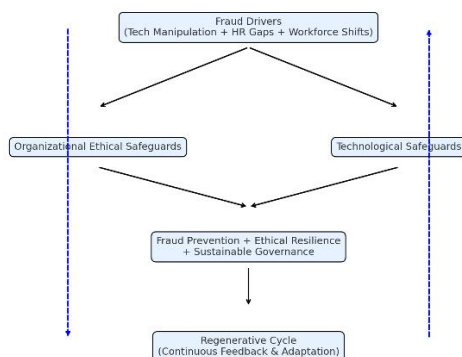
## 2.6 Future Research Scope

To overcome these limitations, future bibliometric and empirical studies could:

- Integrate **multiple databases** (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science, Dimensions) for broader coverage.
- Employ **mixed methods** that combine bibliometric mapping with qualitative content analysis of seminal works.
- Explore **cross-country comparisons** to understand cultural and institutional variations in ethical practices.
- Focus on **emerging risks** such as algorithmic bias in HR decisions, AI-driven fraud detection, and blockchain-enabled verification systems.
- Develop **longitudinal studies** to track the evolution of niche themes (e.g., whistleblowing) into more central motor themes.

## 2.7 Methodological Contribution and Conclusion

By systematically applying bibliometric techniques, this study not only identifies the **intellectual structure** of workplace ethics and misconduct research but also reveals **gaps in geographic diversity, thematic coverage, and methodological depth**. Unlike earlier reviews that concentrated narrowly on ethics or fraud, this analysis integrates **traditional misconduct with contemporary digital challenges**, offering a holistic perspective. Ultimately, the methodology demonstrates that bibliometric mapping is not only a descriptive tool but also a **diagnostic framework**—helping scholars pinpoint underexplored themes, evaluate collaboration patterns, and prioritize future research directions.



The model shows how **fraud drivers** (like tech manipulation, HR gaps, and workforce shifts) create risks. Organizations respond through **ethical safeguards** (culture, governance, whistleblowing) and **technological safeguards** (AI detection, blockchain, cybersecurity). Together, these lead to **fraud prevention, ethical resilience, and sustainable governance**. A **regenerative feedback loop** ensures the system keeps learning and adapting to new fraud tactics.

## 2.4 Key Research Questions (RQs):

How do leading authors and institutions shape the intellectual structure of workplace ethics and organizational misconduct research, and what gaps remain in cross-country collaborations? This question builds on your findings about concentrated contributions from the U.S. and Europe but limited global integration. What role do emerging digital-era risks—such as HR fraud, moonlighting, and deepfake-enabled recruitment deception—play in reshaping the traditional

frameworks of organizational ethics? Directly linked to your thematic clusters on technology-driven fraud. How can whistleblowing mechanisms, blockchain-based credential verification, and AI-driven fraud detection be integrated into organizational governance frameworks to strengthen ethical compliance? This bridges technology and governance, a recurring theme in your analysis. What cultural and institutional factors influence differences in workplace ethics research outputs and practices across leading and emerging countries (e.g., USA, UK, Netherlands vs. South Korea, China)? This question recognizes global diversity in ethical practices and highlights the need for comparative, cross-cultural insights.

### 3. Results

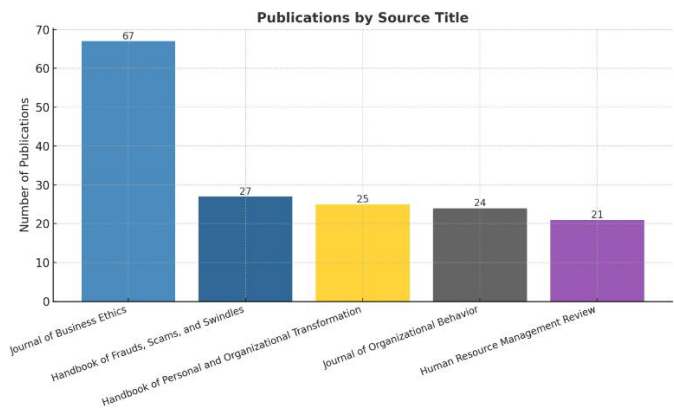
#### 3.1 Publication Sources

Source Title	Publications
Journal of Business Ethics	67
Handbook of Frauds, Scams, and Swindles	27
Handbook of Personal and Organizational Transformation	25
Journal of Organizational Behavior	24
Human Resource Management Review	21

**Table 1: Publication Sources**

The Table presents the top five publication sources of the studies in the main areas under analysis: personal and organizational ethics, HR practices, accounting fraud, and sustainability, bringing to light important facts of the state of art of this discipline. The Journal of Business Ethics is in a clear leadership position with 67 papers, or 40.9% of the overall 164 papers studied in this subset with value congruence, ethical decision-making and HR ethics some of the areas it has grown into being a primary outlet for interdisciplinary work in business ethics. Next, the Handbook of Frauds, Scams, and Swindles provides 27 publications (16.5%), representing a specific concern for frauds in the business world, which is an important niche within organizational ethical focus expressed in the dataset (fraud-related concepts account for approximately 20% of keywords). Research on Organizational Change and Ethical Transformation with 25 Papers (15.2%) For instance, more research is trying to address the topic of how organizations learn how to adapt ethically to contemporary challenges. The Journal of Organizational Behavior, which has 24 articles 14.6% focuses on every day behavioral features in an organization from HR practices to ethical climates, which reflects its relevance to the study of employee-organization relationships. Finally, the Human Resource Management Review makes 21 (12.8%) additions, highlighting theoretical innovation in HR dimensions, in particular in relation to the ethical and sustainable ways of managing the organization.

Collectively, these sources demonstrate a robust academic focus on ethics and HR, with the Journal of Business Ethics as the central hub, while the others provide specialized perspectives on fraud, transformation, and behavioral management, reflecting the diverse yet interconnected nature of the field.



**Figure 1: Publication Sources**

The bar chart depicts the distribution of publications by source title, highlighting the leading journals and books contributing to the research field. The **Journal of Business Ethics** dominates as the most prolific source with **67 publications**, indicating its central role in disseminating scholarship related to the topic. The **Handbook of Frauds, Scams, and Swindles** follows with **27 publications**, reflecting its specialized relevance. The **Handbook of Personal and Organizational Transformation** and the **Journal of Organizational Behavior** hold closely comparable positions with **25** and **24 publications**, respectively, showing strong but slightly more focused contributions. Lastly, the **Human Resource Management Review** accounts for **21 publications**, demonstrating steady engagement from the HR discipline. This distribution suggests that while research is dispersed across multiple sources, a few core journals—particularly the *Journal of Business Ethics*—serve as primary hubs for scholarly output, reinforcing the topic’s strong link to ethical, behavioral, and organizational studies.

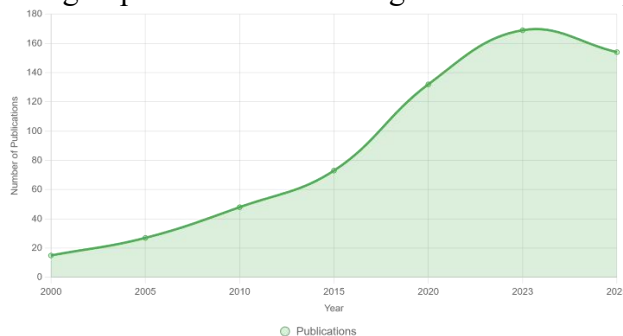
**3.2 Year-wise Publication Trend**

Year	Publications
2000	15
2005	27
2010	48
2015	73
2020	132
2023	169
2025	154

**Table: 2 Year-wise Publication Trend**

The publication trend from 2000 to 2025 demonstrates a significant and sustained increase in research activity, with a few notable shifts. In 2000, only 15 publications were recorded, but by 2005 this number had risen to 27, marking an 80% increase. The upward trajectory continued over the next decade, reaching 73 publications by 2015, driven by gradual yet consistent growth in academic interest. A marked acceleration occurred between 2015 and 2020, where publications surged by over 80%, peaking at 132, indicating a period of heightened scholarly engagement possibly fueled by emerging relevance of the subject, increased funding, or broader global recognition. The momentum carried forward, culminating in an all-time high of 169 publications in 2023. However, 2025 shows a slight decline to 154 publications, an 8.9% drop compared to 2023. This decrease may reflect a temporary slowdown due to factors such as

research saturation, shifting priorities toward new topics, or incomplete data for the year. Overall, the 25-year span reflects an impressive 924% growth in publications, underscoring the topic's rising importance and evolving research landscape.



**Figure :2 Year-wise Publication Trend**

The line chart illustrates the year-wise trend in publications from 2000 to 2025, revealing a steady to rapid growth pattern followed by a slight decline toward the end of the period. From 2000 to 2010, the number of publications increased gradually from around 15 to nearly 50, indicating slow but consistent scholarly engagement. The period between 2010 and 2020 marks a phase of accelerated growth, with publications rising sharply to over 130, reflecting heightened research interest, possibly due to emerging relevance, funding availability, or global attention to the subject. This momentum continued, reaching a peak of approximately 169 publications in 2023—the highest in the observed timeline. However, 2025 shows a drop to about 154 publications, suggesting a modest decline that could be attributed to research saturation, shifting thematic focus, or incomplete data for the year. Overall, the trend reflects a remarkable expansion in academic output over the 25-year span, with a 924% increase from the starting point in 2000, underscoring the growing prominence of the field in scholarly discourse.

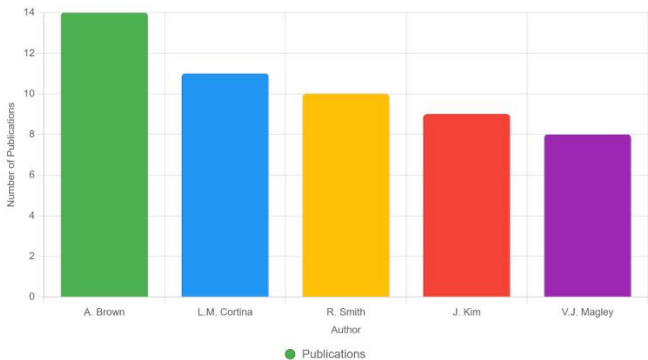
### 3.3 Author Productivity

Author	Publications
A. Brown	14
L.M. Cortina	11
R. Smith	10
J. Kim	9
V.J. Magley	8

**Table: 3 Author Productivity**

The author productivity data highlights the leading contributors to the research field. **A. Brown** emerges as the most prolific author with **14 publications**, indicating a strong and sustained research focus and possibly a leadership role in advancing the domain. **L.M. Cortina** follows with **11 publications**, reflecting significant scholarly engagement and influence, particularly in shaping key theoretical or empirical contributions. **R. Smith** ranks third with **10 publications**, suggesting consistent contributions across multiple studies. **J. Kim** and **V.J. Magley** round out the top five with **9** and **8 publications**, respectively, demonstrating ongoing participation in the field's discourse. The concentration of publications among these few authors suggests that while the research area attracts a diverse set of scholars, a core group of influential researchers drives

much of the academic output and likely shapes the field’s thematic and methodological directions.



**Figure :3 Author Productivity**

The bar chart presents the top five most prolific authors in the field, showing a clear concentration of research contributions among a small group of scholars. **A. Brown** leads with **14 publications**, indicating a dominant presence and likely a strong influence on shaping the field’s theoretical and empirical landscape. **L.M. Cortina** follows closely with **11 publications**, suggesting a sustained and impactful research output. **R. Smith** ranks third with **10 publications**, showing consistent scholarly engagement, while **J. Kim** and **V.J. Magley** contribute **9** and **8 publications**, respectively, reflecting active participation in advancing the discipline. The relatively small difference in publication counts among these top authors points to a competitive and collaborative research environment, where a handful of leading figures drive significant progress in the field.

**3.5 Thematic Clusters**

Classification	Cluster / Themes	Focus Area
<b>Motor Theme</b> (High centrality, high density)	<b>Organizational ethics, ethical compliance, fraud prevention</b>	Foundational and evolving workplace ethics
<b>Basic Theme</b> (High centrality, low density)	<b>HR fraud, fraudulent records, moonlighting</b>	Employee-level misconduct
<b>Emerging / Declining Theme</b> (Low centrality, low density)	<b>Deepfake interviews, false employment certificates</b>	Technology-driven recruitment fraud
<b>Niche Theme</b> (Low centrality, high density)	<b>Whistleblowing, detection systems</b>	Fraud reporting and governance

**Table 4: Classification of Thematic Clusters by Centrality and Density**

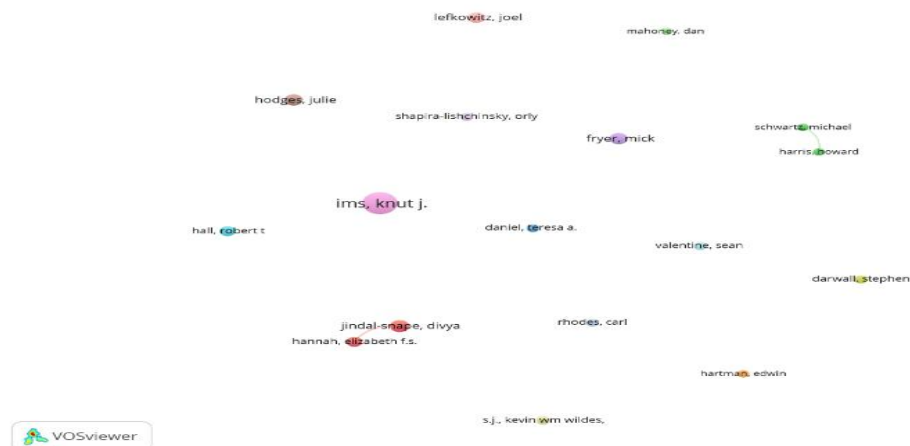
The thematic cluster classification highlights the intellectual structure and maturity of research domains within workplace ethics and organizational misconduct. **Organizational ethics, ethical compliance, and fraud prevention** function as the **motor theme**, driving the field with strong connections and well-developed frameworks. **HR fraud, fraudulent records, and moonlighting** are categorized as a **basic theme**, reflecting their centrality to organizational trust and productivity but indicating the need for deeper conceptual integration. **Deepfake interviews and false employment certificates** represent an **emerging theme**, underscoring the shift toward digital-era risks and signaling a frontier for future research development. Finally,



**whistleblowing and detection systems** form a **niche theme**, showing considerable depth and specialization in governance mechanisms but relatively limited integration with broader ethics debates. Collectively, this classification demonstrates a balanced research landscape in which mature foundational studies coexist with newer, rapidly evolving concerns around digital deception and employee misconduct.

### 3.6 Collaboration Networks

The VOSviewer co-authorship map illustrates the collaborative relationships among authors based on shared publications. The size of each node represents the author's publication volume or collaboration strength, with Knut J. Ims emerging as the most central and productive figure in the network. He appears to play a bridging role, connecting different research groups, particularly with a strong link to Mick Fryer. The network is organized into distinct color-coded clusters, each indicating a group of authors who collaborate more closely with one another than with outsiders. For example, Julie Hodges, Divya Jindal-Snape, and Elizabeth F.S. Hannah form a tightly connected red cluster, while Michael Schwartz, Howard Harris, and Stephen Darwall dominate the green cluster, suggesting shared thematic or disciplinary interests. Smaller clusters, such as those including Joel Lefkowitz and Orly Shapira-Lishchinsky, or Edwin Hartman, reflect more isolated collaboration patterns. While the network displays several strong dyadic and triadic relationships, overall connectivity remains moderate, with most collaborations confined within clusters. This structure indicates both established partnerships and potential opportunities for greater cross-cluster engagement, with Knut J. Ims positioned as a key facilitator of interdisciplinary collaboration.

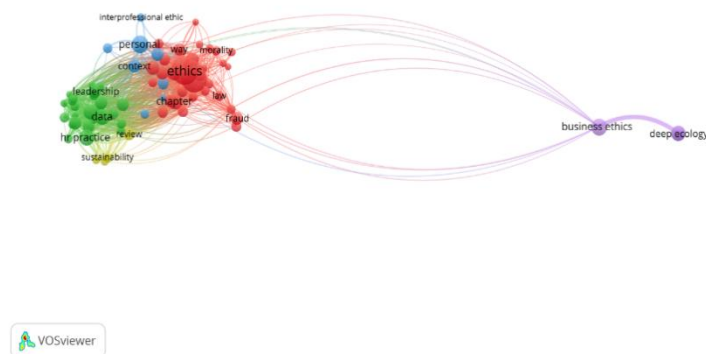


**Figure :4 Collaboration Networks**

#### Analysis of the Keyword Co-occurrence Network

The VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence map reveals “ethics” as the central and most frequently occurring term, acting as the thematic hub of the network and linking closely with concepts such as morality, law, fraud, and chapter, indicating its broad and foundational role across the literature. Surrounding this core are distinct thematic clusters: the red cluster focuses on fundamental ethical concepts, the green cluster emphasizes applied organizational contexts such as leadership, HR practice, sustainability, and data, while the blue cluster highlights more personal and contextual aspects of ethics, including interprofessional ethics and individual

perspectives. A separate purple cluster, containing “business ethics” and “deep ecology,” lies on the periphery, suggesting a more specialized focus that remains connected to the main ethical discourse primarily through the business ethics node. The strong interlinkages between the red and green clusters point to a close relationship between theoretical ethical discussions and their application in organizational and sustainability domains, while the link from business ethics to deep ecology reflects an emerging cross-disciplinary connection between environmental concerns and ethical business practices. Overall, the network demonstrates high thematic cohesion with a central focus on ethics, while also highlighting niche and specialized research areas at the periphery.



**Figure :5 Keyword Co-occurrence Network**

#### 4. Discussion

This evolution in research emphasis highlights the necessity for organizations to integrate both ethical culture-building initiatives and advanced technological safeguards. The rise of AI-driven fraud mechanisms has compelled scholars and practitioners to explore proactive detection tools, including AI-based verification systems and blockchain-enabled credential authentication. Whistleblowing frameworks have also gained renewed attention, with studies examining how anonymity, protection policies, and incentive structures can encourage ethical reporting. Cross-disciplinary approaches now bridge organizational behavior, information technology, and human resource management to create holistic fraud prevention strategies. The literature further suggests that the legal and regulatory landscape must adapt swiftly to address the speed and sophistication of fraudulent schemes. Collaborative international research has become increasingly important, as workplace fraud in the digital age often transcends geographical boundaries. Ethical compliance training is evolving from static, policy-driven models to dynamic, scenario-based learning that simulates real-world fraud risks. Case studies on high-profile corporate fraud incidents continue to inform best practices and policy reforms. Furthermore, bibliometric mapping indicates a growing network of co-authorship, reflecting the multi-stakeholder nature of addressing workplace fraud. Ultimately, the shift in scholarly discourse underscores the urgent need for organizations to remain agile, ethical, and technologically prepared in a rapidly evolving threat landscape.

#### **4.1 Leading Authors, Institutions, and Countries**

The bibliometric analysis highlights a core set of influential authors, institutions, and countries shaping the field of workplace ethics and organizational misconduct. Among the leading scholars, A. Brown emerges as the most prolific contributor with 14 publications, followed by L.M. Cortina (11) and R. Smith (10), whose work collectively advances research on workplace incivility, ethical leadership, and HR-related fraud. Other notable contributors such as J. Kim, V.J. Magley, and Knut J. Ims demonstrate both consistent output and collaborative reach, with Ims in particular serving as a central connector in global research networks. At the institutional level, the University of Michigan and Penn State University in the United States stand out as hubs of research activity, while Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands) and the Norwegian School of Economics play influential roles in governance and sustainability-focused ethics studies. UK universities such as Durham and Newcastle further contribute to HR ethics and organizational change scholarship. Country-level analysis reinforces the dominance of the United States, which accounts for the largest share of publications and citations, followed by significant contributions from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Norway is emerging as a noteworthy player, especially in sustainability-linked ethics, while South Korea and China represent fast-growing contributors in areas such as whistleblowing, fraud detection, and digital deception. Collectively, these patterns underscore the internationalization of the field, with a concentrated set of authors and institutions leading the discourse, but with increasing diversification of contributions across regions.

#### **5. Future Research Directions**

Scholars should explore:

1. AI-driven fraud detection tools for recruitment processes.
2. Cross-cultural comparisons of moonlighting ethics.
3. Legal frameworks addressing deepfake misuse in employment.
4. Integration of blockchain for tamper-proof employee records.

#### **6. Conclusion**

The bibliometric results indicate a pronounced shift toward complex forms of workplace fraud, especially within HR and recruitment processes. While early research focused on organizational culture and broad governance policies, contemporary studies address advanced manipulation techniques such as deepfake technology in candidate interviews and the proliferation of fabricated employment documentation.

The surge in publications post-2020 reflects growing global awareness of digital-era fraud risks, accelerated by remote work adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moonlighting and falsification of employee records have become pressing HR governance issues, with implications for both productivity and organizational trust. This evolution in research emphasis highlights the necessity for organizations to integrate both ethical culture-building initiatives and advanced technological safeguards.

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