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AI WITH AN AFRICAN SOUL

Ubuntu Integrity and Gen Z in the OSP Youth Against Corruption Initiative

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Abstract.

The study explores the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) rooted in Ubuntu, an African philosophy that emphasizes humanity (*"I am because we are"*), focusing on communal values, ethical character formation, and collective action approaches in the fight against corruption. The paper critically examines the "Youth Against Corruption" (YAC) initiative by the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP), which falls under the mandate to prevent corruption and foster a culture of integrity. Using the qualitative and quantitative approach, the paper explores how Gen Z, as digital natives immersed in an online ecosystem, are uniquely positioned to capitalize on AI-driven tools, building subject matter expertise and other anti-corruption actions. The paper seeks to answer: How can AI infused with Ubuntu principles empower Gen Z in anti-corruption efforts?

Despite the global trend towards AI governance, only a few studies have been conducted on how African philosophies, such as Ubuntu, can shape the ethical integration of AI into grassroots anti-corruption initiatives. This study addresses this gap. With the pragmatic research approach, the paper adapts qualitative case study analysis of the OSP Youth Against Corruption Initiative, digital ethnography (Netnography), and Participatory Action Research (PAR) to explore the lived experiences of the participants. Quantitatively, the study adapts structured surveys to assess Gen Z's awareness, attitudes, and behaviors regarding Ubuntu-inspired AI tools and the OSP YAC initiative, comparing participants and non-participants to statistically evaluate the impact of AI-enhanced civic education on ethical engagement, integrity, and anti-corruption participation. A mixed-methods design is adopted to capture both the depth of youth lived experiences and measurable patterns of digital engagement.

The paper further highlights the AI integration of Ubuntu and African Cultural education as critical foundations for rehashing the contemporary anti-corruption drive in Africa's digital evolution. The merger of these two ideologies shifts the focus from purely technical efficiency of anti-corruption institutions to include the ideals of collective responsibility and shared integrity among the youth as key stakeholders in the fight against corruption.. Hence, the paper argues that African virtues such as Ubuntu, carefully integrated in Artificial intelligence tools such as e-learning, digital whistleblowing, gamified integrity education, digital cultural libraries, sentimental analytic tools, social media data mining, blockchain-integrated accountability systems, among others, enhance the efficiency of the OSP. The study expects to show that this integration not only enhances the legitimacy of anti-

corruption institutions but also collectively builds a society of integrity deeply rooted in Pan-African ideals. This case offers lessons for other African and global contexts seeking to blend cultural ethics with cutting-edge technology in the anti-corruption struggle.

Keywords: Ubuntu AI, Gen Z, OSP, Youth Against Corruption, grassroots, civil society, Ghana

JOURNAL ARTICLE

1.0 Introduction.

The capability for computerized systems to simulate human intelligence can be referred to as Artificial Intelligence (AI), as it allows the technology to learn, adapt, interact, reason, and plan to make predictions and recommendations while operating autonomously by extracting data from large volumes (African Union Commission, 2023; OECD, 2019). AI has emerged as a prominent feature of the 4th industrial revolution as it is constantly shaping how people live, relate with each other, and go about their daily work (Jaldi, 2023). As a response to the global inclination of AI governance around the world, Big Tech and AI companies have sought to expand their services to the African continent. As they race for the continent, envisioning themselves as charitably relieving “suffering” (Associated Press, 2023) or “bridging the digital divide” and “including Africa” (CNN, 2023), their rhetoric mirrors our own aspirations for development (Birikorang & Birikorang, 2024).

Ubuntu is an African philosophy that asserts that every individual's identity is derived from their relationship with the community, thus “*I am because you are, because we are*”. As a principle, Ubuntu centers on communal well-being, compassion, and interconnectedness (Mutongi & Rigava, 2024). According to Dumisa and Amao (2015), Ubuntu has emerged as a potential antidote to ameliorating the canker of corruption in South Africa. They further likened the fight against corruption to the computerized system by noting that the existing laws, anti-corruption institutions, policies, and procedures act as the “*hardware*” in the fight against corruption, while the inculcation of Ubuntu and other professional ethics backed by law and promoted by the government would act as the “*software*” of the system. In that instance, Ubuntu can be regarded as the “*computer programme*” that would support these professional ethics and prevent systemic malfunctioning. Although best known as a South African-originated philosophy, the essential epistemological elements of Ubuntu are shared by all African communities with some slight variations. Hence, the in-depth understanding of Ubuntu enhances the appreciation of the indigenous African restorative justice as it concerns the fight against corruption (Genger, 2018).

The preamble of the African Union Constitutive Act recognized the youth as crucial stakeholders in enhancing solidarity and cohesion among the general populace of Africa (African Union, 2000).

Furthermore, youth empowerment and development were considered as a top priority in the development of the African Union Commission's (AUC) strategic plan (2004-2007). In 2006, the African Youth Charter (AYC) was ratified by all Heads of State and Governments in Banjul, The Gambia, to solidify and acknowledge the role of the youth as partners in development (African Union, 2020). Furthermore, the African Union (2020) reports that most youth groups have recognized that corruption is both directly and indirectly becoming a major trigger for conflict, considering the negative effect it poses on society, the economy, and development. The percentage of the youthful population in Africa represents both a challenge and an opportunity for development (Odoh & Eme, 2014).

Generation Z (Gen Z) is identified as youth born between 1995 and 2010 (Bencsik et al., 2016). This generation represents the most digitally immersed and socially connected generation in modern history. All other previous generations somewhat adapted to the evolution of technology; however, the Gen Zs were born into it, hence technology does not merely represent a tool for them but an identity (Dabija et al., 2018). They have a depth and broader understanding of the intricate and complicated nature of technology, particularly physical and virtual realities, as they embrace the opportunities to mobilize, connect with others, engage with software and applications, while shaping their worldview and civic participation. Moreover, the opportunities presented for Gen Z are unique and unprecedented due to the ascendancy in globalization, multicultural exposure, and increasing awareness of human rights and civic duties. Bennet (2024) observes that Gen Z are quick thinkers, highly independent, assertive, and thrive excellently in digital communities. For instance, in Madagascar, a youth group called “Gen Z Madagascar” has emerged as a vibrant youth front championing effective governance and addressing the grievances on systemic corruption (The Guardian, 2025). Similarly, Gen Z in Kenya has been instrumental in protesting on the streets and on social media with hashtags such as #RejectFinanceBill2024 to demand accountability and transparency in the governance processes (Ndiema, 2025).

The Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) is the gold standard and flagship specialized anti-corruption institution in Ghana (OSP, 2025). The OSP is legally mandated to investigate, prosecute specific cases of alleged or suspected corruption and corruption-related offences in the public and private sectors, recover the proceeds of corruption, and take initiatives to prevent corruption. The OSP, as mandated by Section 2(c) of the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959), is to

take proactive measures to prevent corruption, hence the implementation of the Youth Against Corruption Initiative. The OSP is leveraging the power of Gen Z to drive positive change and advance the anti-corruption agenda through strategic programming, partnerships, and advocacy efforts. It is the vision of the OSP to transform the Gen Z population in Ghana to become agents of change, advocates for transparency, and guardians of integrity across Ghana (Citi News, 2024). Hence, the YAC initiative is deeply rooted in the foundation of Ubuntu, enabling Gen Z to actively participate in the fight against Corruption, fostering a culture of integrity, transparency, and social accountability. The YAC is implemented through strategic social media engagements, YAC Educational Curriculum, gamified education, digital cultural libraries, sentimental analytic tools, YAC clubs, and other long-term initiatives such as the OSP e-learning, specialized training sections, scholarship, and grants.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT.

According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2024, Ghana was ranked 70th globally with a score of 42/100, reflecting stagnation in anti-corruption progress in the past decade (Ghana Integrity Initiative, 2025). Yeboah- Assiahmah et al. (2016) noted that the prevalence of corruption is across all facets of society, private and public, manifesting within the culture, society, economy, politics, and religion. The pervasiveness of corruption has become deeply rooted and entrenched; it ranges from petty acts such as small bribes required by public officials through bureaucratic processes to grand corruption schemes that involve the embezzlement of public funds, procurement breaches, and other politically motivated corruption schemes (Nsia-Pepira, 2017). In the context of Ghana, the fight against corruption has been spearheaded with the technical efficiencies of anti-corruption institutions, including the OSP and other agencies like the Financial Intelligence Center (FIC), the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and the Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO), among others. These agencies have mostly focused on the punitive and adversarial approach of investigating corruption, prosecuting offenders, and recovering the proceeds of corruption, often neglecting the preventive aspects of corruption. The persistence of corruption in public offices has a rippling effect on the moral consciousness of the youth, thereby raising serious ethical and social concerns, as Gen Z represents both the future political leadership and moral compass of their societies.

Secondly, the incidence of corruption has evolved past the known forms, such as bribery, abuse of power, procurement breaches, and embezzlement, to newer, technological forms. Zekos (2025) reports that the advancement of digital technologies such as digital financial platforms, cryptocurrencies, blockchain systems, deepfakes, and artificial intelligence has created new avenues for concealment of corrupt transactions through money laundering schemes and illicit financial flows. For instance, cryptocurrencies have been used by many public officials in the transfer and storage of illicit financial gains across borders beyond the reach of anti-corruption institutions (Frebowitz, 2018). Other technological advancements, such as deepfakes and artificial intelligence, are increasingly being utilized to manipulate audio-visual and text information, falsify evidence, and doctor accountability mechanisms in both private and public sectors, thereby perpetrating acts of corruption (Masood et al, 2022).

Despite the global growth and the ascendancy of Artificial Intelligence research, very few studies such as Yilma (2025), Mensah & Van Wynsberghe (2025), Van Norren et al., (2023) have examined how indigenous African moral philosophies such as Ubuntu can inform AI-based anti-corruption strategies targeting the moral consciousness of Gen Z in Ghana. It is evident from the research of Jobin, Ienca, and Vayena (2019) that current global AI governance and algorithms are largely influenced by Western epistemologies that emphasize the autonomy of individuals, autonomy like the rights to privacy Justice, fairness, and equity, personal choice instead of communal goals. For instance, Jobin et al. (2019), after carefully reviewing the 84 ethics documents, observed that the six most prominent principles across national guidelines were transparency, responsibility, privacy, freedom, non-maleficence, and justice/fairness. In a sharp contrast, Odero et al., (2024) noted that most of these ethics have neglected relational ethics and community-centered values such as Ubuntu that main emphasize on mutual care, and social harmony and collective responsibility. Similarly Yilma (2025) observes that there is an epistemic injustice when it comes the integration of Ubuntu ideologies in AI governance initiatives as he further argues that the current AI governance system does not offer any clear, coherent and practicable framework for African AI ethics.

Ubuntu, as an African ethical philosophy, offers a more human-centered moral foundation aligning naturally with the pursuit of ethical and inclusive AI while emphasizing collective responsibility, interconnectedness, and mutual care. By strategically internalizing values of empathy, reciprocity, and social harmony, individuals guided by Ubuntu are disinclined to appropriate resources, money, or

opportunities meant for the collective thereby mitigating the selfishness and greed that often anchor corrupt behavior. However, a careful perusal of the ethical framework as presented by UNESCO (2021), EU (2020), and OECD (2019) reflects very limited integration of indigenous African moral frameworks like Ubuntu, thereby limiting the contextual applicability across African Societies. This gap underscores the need for empirical and theoretical research exploring how Ubuntu-informed ethics can be systematically embedded into AI-driven anti-corruption frameworks, particularly within the Ghanaian context, to promote moral accountability, communal integrity, and ethical governance

Therefore, the core problem of this study lies in the growing domination of Western-value-based Artificial Intelligence systems that are deployed across the African context without considering the indigenous ethical and moral frameworks. Without this careful integration of culturally grounded and ethically coherent epistemic balance, there is the tendency for the current AI governance system to perpetuate a form of digital neo-colonialism. Additionally, the lack of these Afrocentric ethical integrations in AI technologies could potentially cause a diminishing social accountability system and fail to address the issue of corruption as prescribed by these African communal ethics. Hence, the opportunity to embed Ubuntu-inspired ethical values into the governance of artificial intelligence systems is yet untapped thereby presenting a significant gap in both practice and scholarship. In implementing programs like the OSP Youth Against Corruption initiative, a culturally aligned AI architecture that is deeply entrenched in Ubuntu could foster transparency, moral consciousness and collective action approaches among the youth.

1.3 Research Aim.

To explore how Artificial Intelligence infused with Ubuntu principles can empower Gen Z in Ghana's fight against corruption while contributing to culturally grounded, ethical development and preventive anti-corruption strategies.

1.4 Research Objectives.

1. To examine the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating Artificial Intelligence into the OSP Youth Against Corruption (YAC) initiative.
2. To assess how Ubuntu-inspired AI approaches influence the moral consciousness, ethical reasoning, and civic responsibility of Gen Z in anti-corruption efforts.

3. To evaluate the effectiveness of AI tools such as e-learning platforms, gamified integrity modules, digital whistleblowing systems, sentiment analysis tools, and blockchain accountability mechanisms in strengthening ethical decision-making and integrity-driven behaviour among Gen Z.
4. To compare levels of ethical awareness, integrity perception, and digital civic engagement between YAC participants and non-participants, assessing the measurable impact of AI-enhanced civic education.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How do Gen Z participants in Ghana perceive the relevance of Ubuntu-inspired AI in fostering civic responsibility and anti-corruption engagement?
2. What are the existing barriers and opportunities for implementing Ubuntu-driven AI ethics among Gen Z in anti-corruption initiatives?
3. To what extent do AI-integrated mechanisms (e-learning, gamified integrity systems, or blockchain-based transparency tools) improve accountability and ethical awareness among Gen Z?
4. How do participants of the YAC initiative perceive changes in their moral consciousness and ethical behavior after exposure to AI-enhanced civic education?
5. What measurable outcomes (behavioral, attitudinal, or cognitive) demonstrate the YAC initiative's effectiveness in promoting a culture of integrity among Ghanaian youth?

1.6 Significance of the Study:

This study is pertinent to the development of AI policies in Africa as the region is currently evolving with and striking a balance between ethical principles and technological innovation. Using a culturally based framework, the study focuses on the creation of inclusive and moral AI by investigating and incorporating Ubuntu, a philosophy deeply rooted in empathy, community, and moral independence,

into AI systems. The study seeks to provide academics, policymakers, and anti-corruption institutions with an effective model that seamlessly harmonizes technical innovation with socio-cultural realities by acting as a moral compass for digital governance. The findings generated from these studies serve as a basis for national initiatives like Ghana's Digital Transformation Agenda and the African Union's Continental AI Strategies.

Aside from the continental perspective of this study, it presents an Afrocentric viewpoint that highlights shared accountability, community trust, and moral duty as essential components of ethical AI governance. By providing a guide for balancing AI ethics with conventional moral frameworks, the study contributes to a broader global knowledge of how cultural ethics might influence technical design. By doing this, it contributes to global discussions on governance and technology, demonstrating how African ideals may significantly influence the development of global AI ethics and anti-corruption innovation.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991), is a comprehensive framework for understanding human behaviour which are determined by three factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes refer to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of engaging in a specific behaviour; subjective norms relate to perceived social pressures to perform or refrain from the behaviour; and perceived behavioral control reflects the individual's assessment of their ability to execute the behaviour successfully (Ajzen, 1991). TPB has been widely applied in studies of ethical decision-making, pro-social behaviour, and digital engagement, including research on ethical consumption and civic participation.

TPB provides an analytical framework for analyzing how Gen Z engages in anti-corruption efforts via digital platforms within the framework of the OSP Youth Against Corruption (YAC) campaign. Research indicates that although Gen Z is quite engaged on social media, they frequently engage in clicktivism, which involves doing simple tasks like liking, sharing, or subscribing to information without further interaction or validation (PSB Research, 2025). According to TPB, this kind of passive engagement may be explained by attitudes (perhaps low perceived influence), subjective norms (engagement patterns pushed by peers), and perceived behavioral control (poor knowledge of successful behaviour).

A predictive and prescriptive knowledge of youthful conduct is made possible by combining TPB with Ubuntu-based AI solutions, such as gamified ethics education or AI-enabled digital whistleblower platforms. By showing that individual contributions have a significant impact on group outcomes, AI tools that, for instance, offer real-time feedback, emphasize the impact on the community, or reward moral decision-making can improve perceived behavioral control, align subjective norms with values of communal integrity, and positively influence Gen Z's attitudes towards anti-corruption initiatives.

2.2 Historical Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Anti-Corruption Curriculum

2.2.1 Artificial Intelligence and Ethical Governance

Prominent international frameworks, such as the European Union Artificial Intelligence Act (EU AI Act), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO)

Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework (NIST AI RMF) in the United States (AI NIST, 2024), highlight that ethical protections, accountability, and transparency are just as important for successful AI as technical accuracy (UN Heritage, 2014). The new African Union Artificial Intelligence Continental Strategy and the OECD Artificial Intelligence Principles, with their emphasis on inclusivity, equity, and alignment with socioeconomic priorities, further strengthen this argument, suggesting that globally, the governance of AI is moving toward frameworks that foreground human-centric values over purely technological efficiency (Styczewska, 2024). This indicates a paradigmatic shift: successful AI is increasingly defined not just by what it can do, but by how responsibly it does it.

Government-led initiatives, including the Digital Ghana Agenda, supported by the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, the National Information Technology Agency (NITA), and Digitalization, indirectly raised AI preparedness (Amoah, 2024). These initiatives enhanced talent development and digital infrastructure. Kwakye (2025) reported that Ghana's collaboration with external partners like UNESCO and GIZ strengthened its position within Africa's broader AI governance framework. These partnerships promoted information sharing, enhanced institutional and technical competency, and brought Ghana's policies into line with global best practices in ethics, inclusivity, and the responsible use of AI. In order to promote AI preparedness, develop early applications, and test solutions to local issues, startups and private organisations have been crucial.

The Digital Ghana Agenda, led by the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology, and Innovation and supported by the National Information Technology Agency (NITA), gave data infrastructure, e-governance, and the development of digital skills top priority, which indirectly improved AI preparedness. Ghana's Data Protection Act (2012), which is enforced by the Data Protection Commission, provided a legislative framework for the responsible use of AI and the protection of personal data. Since the Act complies with international standards such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), it remains crucial for the appropriate use of AI. It is constantly examined to ensure that it remains relevant in the face of emerging technological advancements, such as the rapid growth of generative artificial intelligence (Bedu-Addo, 2022).

Ghana finished the development of its national artificial intelligence (AI) strategy in October 2022. This strategy outlined Ghana's strategic orientation for 2023–2033 with the aim of positioning the nation as an innovator on the African Continent. The project carefully considers how the government views AI as a powerful tool for transforming society and the economy, enhancing governance, and advancing social progress in general. Ghana's Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology, and Innovation also highlighted the enormous potential of AI to transform a variety of industries, including financial inclusion, logistics, healthcare, education, and agriculture, at the first National AI Strategy Stakeholder Consultation Forum (Ministry of Communications, 2025). Thus, it is evident that Ghana's deliberate approach to developing a National AI Strategy shows a forward-thinking commitment to using globally renowned technology for sustainable development and equitable government.

2.3 AI Education and Training Programs

Nsoh (2023) observed that AI education is gradually becoming more popular in Ghana. The strategic incorporation of digital literacy and computational thinking into the core educational curriculum is becoming prevalent. Higher education institutions have begun to provide courses or modules on robots, data science, and machine learning that integrate technical education with social and ethical considerations. Ghanaian institutions are increasingly incorporating data science, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning (ML) into their undergraduate and graduate curricula (Mohammed, 2025). While some universities, like the University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, offer electives with an AI focus within more general computer science programs, others, like Ghana Communication Technology University (GCTU), Academic City, and Ashesi University, offer specialised degrees in AI and data science that are appropriate for industry demands. Additionally, many collaborate with global tech companies like Google AI, IBM, and Facebook AI Research to enhance program content and provide industry-accepted certifications. This trend is a reflection of a deliberate national effort to make Ghana a regional hub for AI talent, signaling both an awareness of global technological shifts and a commitment to producing ethically and technically competent professionals.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education has announced plans to introduce specific subjects in Artificial Intelligence Applications in Senior High Schools to support the new curriculum. The ministry further expressed the possibility of strategically integrating AI in curriculum resources, including teaching teacher manuals, lesson plans, and other tools for assessments. To ensure that these resources are

available to both students in rural and urban areas, the ministry plans to create a system that will work both online and offline. The Ministry of Education estimates that the integration of AI into the educational curriculum will support more than 68,000 teachers with planning of lessons, classroom delivery, and student assessments, ultimately benefiting over 1.4 million learners nationwide (Ghanaweb, 2025). This transformative shift in Ghana's educational and digital policy landscape signals the government's recognition of AI not merely as a technological innovation but also as an endless pedagogical prowess.

Additionally, in the move towards AI governance, the Government of Ghana has introduced the Ghana Artificial Intelligence (AI) Practitioners' Guide to serve as a strategic national blueprint for the responsible development, deployment, and usage of AI in Ghana. This offers a framework to assist stakeholders in navigating the vast complexities of AI in ways that are ethical, inclusive, and internationally acceptable. The foundation of Ghana's AI ecosystem is a vibrant, multi-stakeholder network including government agencies, academic and research institutions, startups, small and medium-sized businesses, civil society organizations, foreign development partners and the various communities (GIZ, 2025).

The creation of global policy frameworks and AI Ethics Councils is an approach by various governments across the world to support the moral, equitable, and responsible AI governance. For instance, UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021) has placed a significant emphasis on the protection of human rights, cultural diversity, and social inclusion. The OECD AI principles (2019), on the other hand, have mostly concentrated on human-centered values, accountability, and transparency in the use of AI. These multinational frameworks emphasise the global recognition that ethical AI governance is both a technological necessity and a moral imperative, especially in public sector settings where trust, justice, and transparency are essential. These frameworks represent a paradigm shift from innovation to value-driven governance, representing a very clear convergence of ethics and technology. Accordingly, this paper argues that the incorporation of such ethical principles into Africa's AI Ecosystem, particularly in the case of Ghana, would guarantee that technological innovations are consistent with the moral traditional doctrines like Ubuntu.

2.4 Ubuntu Philosophy and African Ethical Frameworks

Before the advent of Western ethical principles, the indigenous Africans possessed traditionally rooted and coherent indigenous ethical frameworks that guided how people lived in the community. Ajitoni (2024) recounted that these precolonial systems emphasized community, reciprocity, and moral responsibility as the foundation of personhood and civic life. Among the most prominent is the Southern and Eastern African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, which promotes the maxim “*I am because we are*,” a relational ethic that grounds morality in empathy, solidarity, and human interdependence (Metz, 2007). The belief that ethical maturity is necessary to become a whole person is further supported by the Akan moral system of Ghana, which places virtue in *suban pa* (good character) and moral worth in carrying out one's duties to others (Gyekye, 1997; Wiredu, 1992).

As a socio-political paradigm that promotes equality, fairness, and shared responsibility in East Africa, *Ujamaa* was defined by Julius Nyerere in 1968. It incorporates local community standards into a framework that upholds these values. In a similar vein, justice, truth, and cosmic harmony are expressed in the ancient Egyptian concept of *Ma'at*. It is considered to be among the first intellectual proclamations of moral order and social equilibrium in Africa. According to *Botho/Hunhu* ethics in Southern Africa and *Harambee* ethics in East Africa, moral and civic identity are similarly founded on collective personhood, cooperation, and mutual upliftment (Samkange & Samkange, 1980; Letseka, 2012). Throughout the continent, communism and the Palaver tradition solidified moral reasoning based on consensus, emphasizing dialogue and restorative justice above punitive actions (Asouzu, 2007). Lastly, the Akan concept of *Sankofa* serves as a reminder to Africans that they must “go back and fetch” ancestral wisdom in order to inform modern ethical renewal. This concept represents the continuity between traditional moral principles and the ethics of contemporary progress. When taken as a whole, these frameworks show how African moral systems have historically placed more emphasis on relational, community-rooted ethics than on individualistic moral autonomy in order to foster moral character development, promote societal peace, and defend justice.

2.4.1 Prioritization of communal well-being.

According to Mkhize et al. (2024), *Ubuntu* and other African traditions have a significant impact on the issue of corruption. The *Ubuntu* principle readily incorporates the focus on compassion, communal ideals, and the interdependence of every human. Due to the general perception that it promotes social harmony and accountability, many African communities have adopted it as a crucial

element. A multifaceted approach that takes into account cultural values and traditions, among other factors, is necessary to combat corruption, which is a widespread issue in many African countries.

Ubuntu is a concept that prioritizes the welfare of the community over the self-interest of an individual. Numerous academics have pointed out that the opinions of the community on matters such as corruption influence how the community views corruption and decides whether it is acceptable or not. Ngcetane-Vika and Pule (2025) investigated Ubuntu's ability to combat corruption in Africa. The results underscored that when Ubuntu is implemented, ethical leadership and the well-being of the group are prioritized. In order to address corruption and other societal issues, the report recommended that policy reforms be firmly anchored in Pan-Africanism, public partnership capacity building, and strategic partnerships with traditional authority. Furthermore, because nepotism prioritizes partial ties over the common good, Ubuntu moral theory denounces it as a type of corruption, according to studies on the practice in South Africa (Msibi, 2019). Therefore, by portraying corruption as a breakdown of social solidarity as well as an institutional failure, Ubuntu's emphasis on communal well-being provides a moral resource for anti-corruption initiatives.

2.4.2 Conflict resolution mechanisms and alternatives to corruption.

Ajakor and Ojukwu (2014) assert that traditional African conflict resolution techniques, such as mediation, the palaver tree, or council accountability, are not adversarial in nature but rather require communal accountability and reconciliation in the hopes of reaching a long-term agreement and enabling offenders to comprehend the true reasons why they should refrain from a particular action. By providing culturally acceptable means of resolving disputes, these processes may reduce the need to use unethical tactics like bribery, patronage, and favoritism to get around institutional red tape. For example, rather than paying a bribe to speed up a decision, parties may use respectable public forums that emphasize group responsibility and harmony restoration. Thus, the presence of community-based conflict-resolution procedures contributes to Ubuntu's emphasis on harmony, mutual respect, and communal responsibility.

2.4.3 Caveats & limitations.

Dumisa and Amao (2015) highlighted some caveats and limitations that Ubuntu and other African Philosophies offer. He admitted that even though these philosophies do not offer a one-stop shop and do not guarantee the total elimination of corruption, they place some key limitations on the

political, institutional, and economic architecture that promotes corruption within a given society. For instance, he references the external family system that is very predominant in Africa and noted that actions performed are usually targeted towards communal ethics that can exert pressure towards nepotism or favoritism. Hence, integrating indigenous ethical traditions must be complemented by strong institutions, transparency, enforcement mechanisms, and civic education to effectively reduce corruption.

2.4.4 Accountability through communal identity and moral responsibility.

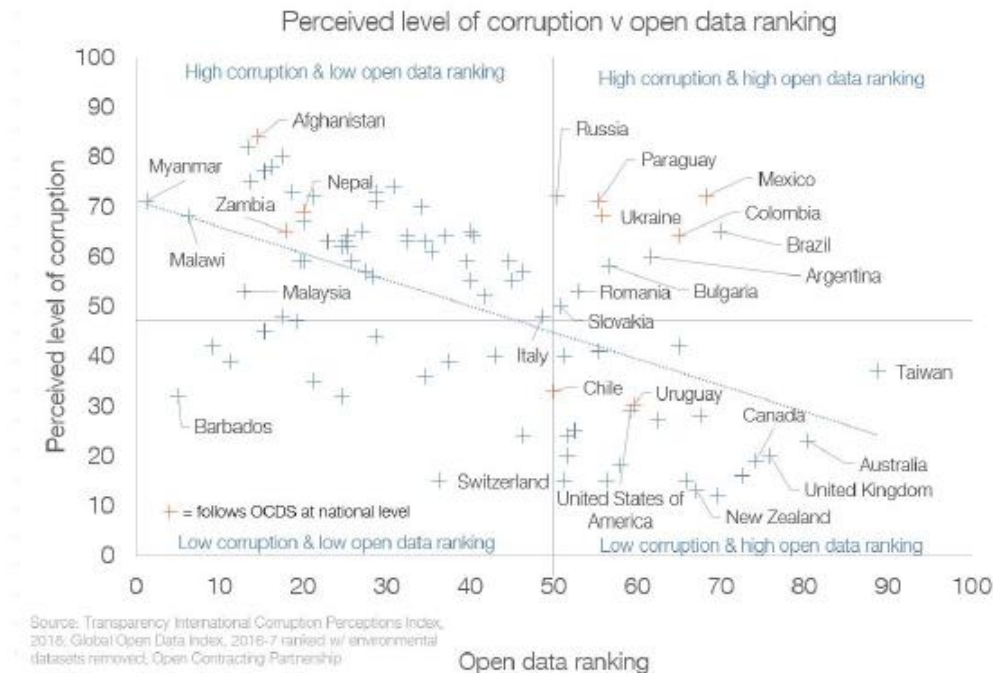
Zwaenepoel (2019) argued that there is a certain element of interconnectedness that is associated with Ubuntu, which largely says that what affects one affects the entire community. This interconnectedness gives rise to a heightened sense of accountability to one's community and reputation. In a similar opinion, Mangena (2013) argued that when individuals recognize that their potential actions have the potential to affect the entire community that they live in, they may be disincentivized from engaging in corruption-related activities that would tarnish the communal identity and trust. Hence, African ethical frameworks position integrity not as mere compliance but as belonging and moral worth in the community.

2.5 Conflict resolution mechanisms and alternatives to corruption.

2.5.1 The use of Open Data for Anti-Corruption.

According to Petheram et al. (2019), in contemporary times, there are a lot of prospects in reducing the incidence of corruption and enabling transparency in the public procurement process through Open Data. The improvement of digitization initiatives in the public services and governmental procedures has made it possible for countries to reproduce and disseminate information and datasets of superior quality, granularity, and variety. The increasing accessibility of open government data presents novel prospects for openness, accountability, and evidence-based governance. The Chart below demonstrates a negative association between the perceived amount of corruption and the number of open data disseminated by governments. While nations with higher corruption concerns usually restrict data transparency, those with lower corruption perception indices tend to offer more thorough and easily readable statistics. This pattern suggests that easily accessible data serves as a

strong disincentive to corruption by enabling citizen supervision, external examination, and data-driven accountability systems. It also symbolizes institutional integrity. This is seen in the following chart:



International Monetary Fund (2019), Fiscal Monitor: Curbing Corruption

In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of guides and standards aimed at assisting governments in publishing data for straightforward and efficient examination. The Open Up Guide: Utilizing Open Data to Mitigate Corruption has been established in Mexico as an 'official standard' within its open data policy, alongside the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS), a framework for disseminating contracting data in a structured format, employed in Mexico, Ukraine, Colombia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, among other nations. Nevertheless, referring back to Chart 1, several nations have elevated open data rankings alongside significant corruption levels, yet have not implemented these strategies (Petheram, 2019).

Advocates of open data contend that the regular publication of information on contract amounts, awards, and the number of bids will deter those considering corrupt activities. Their actions will be

observable by the entities that hold governments and politicians accountable. Conversely, if contracts are discovered to have been granted to close allies of officials, or if project expenses are evidently exaggerated, anti-corruption authorities will possess grounds for prosecution.

2.5.2 AI Machine Learning in Anti-Corruption Efforts

Rahwan (2022) identified the Autonomous Learning (Machine Learning) abilities of AI to independently execute various tasks previously reserved for human actors. Researchers such as Mattoni (2020) and Adam and Fezekas (2018) have observed that, unlike static information communication technology (ICT), the AI ACT can solely and independently predict the risk of corruption in any given situation. This is done by automatically learning how to detect these risk zones for corruption and already using a large corpus of news media reports, investigative reports, internet archives, and data from law enforcement agencies to predict the probability of corruption occurring. Recent empirical studies have reiterated the fact that AI and Machine learning are becoming very capable of identifying corruption risk autonomously. For instance, Ash, Galletta, and Giommoni (2025) used a gradient-boosted tree classifier to predict corruption in Brazilian Municipalities using budget data and showed that ML can significantly aid in the fight against corruption compared to the traditional auditing processes. Similarly, Aldana et al. (2022) employed ensemble models using Mexican public contracting data to identify probable corruption, whereas Doria et al. (2022) developed an XGBoost model applied to Brazilian procurement situations. Benimana and Mbonigaba (2025) demonstrate that AI-enhanced forensic accounting systems significantly improved fraud detection in Rwanda.

2.5.3 Large Data Set Analysis and Predictions

Secondly, Artificial Intelligence has the potential to analyze data sets of unprecedented size. According to Rahwan (2022), this computing capacity is essential for monitoring recently developed sophisticated corruption schemes, such as kleptocrats concealing their illicit wealth through elaborate networks of shell corporations. Transparency International observed that as the world becomes more digitally connected, combating crimes like corruption becomes a technological arms race, which increases the need for artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to combat corruption. AI technologies can assist in the classification and detection of corrupt actions thanks to an expanding corpus of available data (Köbis et al., 2022). Microsoft, for example, just revealed its Artificial Intelligence Technology Solutions

initiative, which would provide governments with its anti-corruption solutions. AI algorithms can also find corrupt trends in massive data releases like the Pandora Papers, which is impossible for humans to perform alone (Bishop, 2019).

2.5.4 Impartiality of Artificial Intelligence.

Rahwan (2022) observes that human decision makers in public offices are often plagued with conflict of interest situations that humans tend to bend moral rules for their benefit, especially when (financial) temptations. Unlike the algorithms of machines, there is no tendency for machines to pursue self-serving interests and process information in a “disinterested” way (Guibilini & Savelescu, 2018). Additionally, researchers like Kahneman et al. (2021) noted that there is a flaw in human judgment that the machine seeks to correct and rectify, as Artificial intelligence can make consistent decisions that are unaffected by pressure or fatigue. Consequently, substituting human decision-makers with AI is attractive, particularly in environments characterized by pervasive corruption. In these situations, those assigned to combat corruption frequently succumb to significant degrees of corruption themselves, resulting in the emergence of a so-called corruption trap. It includes police personnel discontinuing investigations in exchange for payments and prosecutor generals selectively pursuing charges influenced by political motives. Artificial intelligence possesses unparalleled potential to facilitate an escape from this corrupting entrapment. Specifically, in the absence of human intervention, the AI-ACT process remains impervious to manipulation by human decision-makers.

2.6 Challenges of AI integration into the fight Against Corruption.

Kerry et al. (2020) observed the tendency for “*AI Winter*,” where technological advancement in AI does not live up to the high expectations. Three key challenges have been identified; first of all, there is the challenge of obtaining data that are valid and reliable to establish any empirical grounds, particularly in the complicated subject matter of corruption. Extensive research by scholars such as Schwickerath et al. (2016) questioned the indicators of corruption that could be used as universally valid proxies, particularly in measuring a phenomenon that is mostly concealed. An interesting case is from Brazil, where the MARA project uses machine learning to compute an individual-level corruption score based on historical conviction data. Training a machine-learning algorithm on historical convictions yields benefits when authorities impartially penalise corrupt practices. Nevertheless, these data sources often exhibit biases, particularly when political objectives influence

investigations, prosecutions, and convictions related to corruption (Marzagao, 2017). Starke et al. (2016) similarly pointed out that most media reports about corruption reflect a biased journalistic viewpoint and media freedom rather than what could be described as the accurate representation of facts.

Cheng et al. (2021) similarly raised the question of algorithm challenges. Decisions made by sophisticated algorithms frequently yield significant, value-infused repercussions, particularly with corruption (Rauh, 2018). Similar to any classification method, AI systems attempting to classify situations as “true” or “false” encounter a trade-off between false-positive and false-negative mistakes. In the context of AI-ACT, false positive mistakes, which include the erroneous designation of innocent persons as “corrupt,” carry a notably severe stigma. Upon being published, those suspected of corruption are sometimes subjected to premature prosecution in the court of public opinion. Consequently, they incur irrevocable damage to their reputation. Unjust allegations may further diminish citizens' confidence in an AI-ACT. Conversely, false-negative mistakes result in the undiscovered presence of genuine corrupt situations, incurring significant costs for public institutions or society (Jobin et al., 2019). Contemplate the implications of a government algorithm's failure to identify overt instances of corruption. The public may swiftly oppose it, fearing that authorities manipulate the AI system. Therefore, mitigating backlash against AI-ACT necessitates a delicate equilibrium between minimizing false-positive and false-negative error rates.

Odilla et al. (2023) examine the emergence of unfairness in AI-based anti-corruption tools (ACTs) in Brazil, focusing on predictive systems used to estimate corruption risks in public procurement, public office, and electoral processes. As part of the study's methodology, Odilla (2023) conducted some interviews with law enforcement officials and examined other academic literature to reveal some grey areas. The study found and established that the Anti-Corruption Tools have the propensity of reproducing biases embedded in historical data and institutional practices, leading to disproportionate and potentially discriminatory outcomes. The authors argue that while such AI systems enhance detection capacity, their lack of transparency, fairness safeguards, and ethical reflection poses significant challenges to the legitimacy and accountability of digital anti-corruption efforts.

2.7 Generation Z, Digital Citizenship, and Civic Engagement

According to Suhariyanto & Rozak (2025), technological advancements in contemporary times have transformed the political and civic participation of the youth. Gen Z, as a generation born between 1995 and 2010, grew up in an environment that is connected to the endless possibilities of the internet and other social networking platforms. Technology has been fully integrated into the daily lives of Gen Z and ultimately shaped the way they live. Mandrysz (2020) reported that the emergence of social media plays a key role in how Gen Z perceive the world and how they contribute to the discourse they find on social media. Xenos et al (2014) similarly argue that Gen Z gets a better appreciation of their rights and obligations as citizens as they participate in civic education and other strategic youth advocacy programs, particularly through social media. Benito-Hernández points out that the most predominant social media platforms utilized by this Gen Z include, but are not limited to, X (Twitter), TikTok, Facebook, among other platforms, allowing them to share opinions, follow developments in political issues, and interact with politicians.

On the issue of the quality of debate and participation of Gen Z on social media activities, Kosach et al. (2022) raised a key concern. They noted that the phenomenon of "Clicktivism," where Gen Z only takes minimal action of liking, sharing, and subscribing to content on social media without verifying its authenticity or otherwise of such information, thereby causing a high rate of dissemination of fake news. The Media Foundation for West Africa (2025) found out in the State of Mis/ Disinformation Polarization Research in Ghana that the four kinds of Mis/Disinformation are political disinformation, scientific disinformation, economic disinformation, and religious disinformation. The study admitted that mis/ disinformation is becoming a very common phenomenon, and it has a great tendency to create hatred, dislike for groups and individuals who are victims of those narratives. Additionally, the African Youth Survey (2025) conducted by PSB Research established the fact that 4 in 10 Ghanaian youth, or Gen Z, believe that fake news has a significant effect on them, as the various social media channels represent the number 1 source of information or news (Ghanaweb, 2020). It is evident from these sources that the pattern of passive digital engagement among Gen Z raises very significant concerns about the depth of their civic consciousness and digital literacy. This underscores the urgent need for a more robust and comprehensive digital literacy, strategic interventions, and educational frameworks such as those inspired by the principles of Ubuntu.

Historically, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) has served as an indispensable force in Ghana's Anti-corruption strategy. Article 231 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana established

the NCCE and tasked it with the mandate to educate the general public about their rights and obligations, advancing democratic virtues, and fostering youth involvement in advocacy (Bawa, 2011). The primary goal as set out is to develop civic consciousness, provide Ghanaians with the skills, principles, and dedication necessary to maintain integrity and hold leaders responsible.

In contemporary times, key institutions such as National Development Planning Commission, Technical Committee, Federation of Persons with Disability Organisations, Youth Groups, Youth-Focused Civil Society Organisations, Women Groups, the United Nations Systems, Guild of Professional Youth Workers, Academia, STAR Ghana, ActionAid, Commonwealth Secretariat, Traditional Authorities, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies and Political Parties in Ghana in shaping Civic participation and ethical consciousness of the youth in Ghana (National Youth Authority, 2022). The creation and execution of youth-centered initiatives, strategic planning, and public funding are all motivated by this vision, which emerged from in-depth stakeholder engagements. It offers a cohesive framework that harmonizes the different pull and push elements affecting the goals and developmental paths of young people. Under this framework, the ideals of humility, justice, fairness, peace, transparency, and accountability serve as a guide for the youth as they take ownership of their personal development and national contribution. Thus, the National Youth Policy (2022–2032) clearly states the goal of the state and other important youth development stakeholders: to establish an environment that enables young people to reach their full potential, actively participate in the development of the country, and help to forge a prosperous and peaceful society.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study uses the Mixed-Method design to integrate the findings of both qualitative and quantitative research. Using the Sequential Exploratory Mixed Methods Design, the study first collected qualitative data from the respondents through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. After that, the study collected quantitative data to test the initial qualitative findings. Gufran and Rostati (2025) agree that combining both approaches allows the researcher to capture the complex socio-technical and cultural systems that are associated with a particular phenomenon. Similarly, Creswell and Clark (2018) emphasized that using a mixed-method approach is a great emphasis to gain a comprehensive understanding rather than limiting the study to only one design. This approach has been adopted by other anti-corruption researchers, including Johnston (2014), who used mixed methods to explore institutional and cultural dynamics in corruption control, and Doig and Riley (1998), who combined qualitative case studies with quantitative indicators to assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies. Likewise, Kpundeh (2004) integrated qualitative stakeholder interviews with survey data to evaluate governance reforms in sub-Saharan Africa,

3.2 Qualitative Approach

Qualitatively, the study employs three main strands, namely case study and digital ethnography (Netnography). According to Fenton and Parry (2022), netnography is a branch of ethnography that is specifically developed to monitor the interactions of people through participant observation and other methods. With Netnography, the internet is used as the primary source of collecting data through online social media networking, with a focus on culture and understanding a focal phenomenon, sites, topics, or people. Netnography, therefore, helps with the triangulation of data by comprehensively understanding the subject matter through a careful review of what is happening on social media. In this study, the Netnography phase spans 12 months and will examine the activities of OSP/YAC and other anti-corruption–related hashtags. Over 5,000 data points will be systematically analyzed to assess sentiments and insights related to anti-corruption engagement.

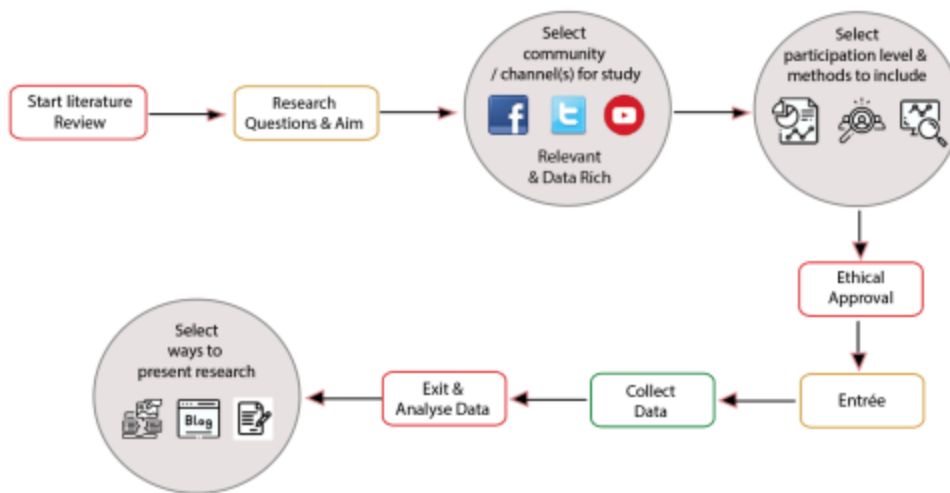


Figure 1 – The process of netnography research

Source Fenton and Parry (2022).

Secondly, the qualitative research will feature the Participatory Action Research. Creswell (2018) defines Participatory Action Research as “an approach in which researchers and participants work collaboratively to identify a problem, collect and analyze data, and take actions that lead to social change or improved practices” (p.582) Similarly, Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) describe PAR as “a form of collective, self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which these practices are carried out” (p.5) This approach is best suited for this study as it actively engages and takes the views of the Gen Z participants, anti-corruption stakeholders, and educators in the co-creation and testing of AI-driven, Ubuntu-inspired interventions that could promote ethical awareness and civic responsibility. To implement this PAR, the study engages participants who are part of the OSP Youth Against Corruption initiative and those who are not involved to compare levels of ethical awareness, integrity perception, and digital civic engagement.

Focus group discussions, also known as FGDs, will be a form of data collection. These discussions will be held with the Gen Z in order to create an atmosphere that encourages discourse, reflection, and collaborative learning. Selected participants in of the Youth Against Corruption movements in various Senior High Schools will be selected to partake in the Focus Group Discussion to discuss their lived experiences, perspectives, and changes in conduct that have occurred as a direct result of their participation in AI-enhanced civic education and anti-corruption efforts. In the opposite

direction, the group that did not take part in the study will share their perspectives and understandings on civic ethics and corruption outside of the context of the Youth Against Corruption Initiative. Through a comparison of the two groups, the research will investigate the ways in which artificial intelligence systems inspired by Ubuntu can have a different impact on moral consciousness and ethical participation among both cohorts. Each focus group will have 6-8 participants purposively selected.

To examine the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating Artificial Intelligence into the OSP Youth Against Corruption (YAC) initiative, the study will employ in-depth interviews which will provide a deeper understanding of implementation bottlenecks, capacity gaps, risks, and opportunities for strengthening AI-driven preventive strategies in Anti-Corruption efforts.

3.3 Quantitative Research Approach.

The quantitative aspect of the study would take into consideration structured surveys that would be implemented to align with the three core objectives of the study. First, to analyze the effectiveness of AI tools such as e-learning, digital whistleblowing, gamified integrity education, sentiment analysis, and blockchain accountability systems in strengthening ethical decision-making and integrity-driven behaviour among Gen Z. Respondents will rate their exposure to and confidence in these digital tools as mechanisms for fostering integrity and ethical awareness.

Secondly, the quantitative component will involve a comparative survey measuring differences in ethical awareness, integrity perceptions, and levels of digital civic engagement between YAC participants and a matched group of non-participants. This will enable a rigorous assessment of the measurable effects of AI-enhanced civic education on Gen Z. In addition, a participatory action research (PAR) approach will be integrated into the study, whereby the AI-supported YAC intervention will be implemented and tested over the course of one year. After this intervention period, follow-up surveys and reflective participatory sessions will be conducted to evaluate changes in attitudes, behaviours, and engagement patterns attributable to the AI-driven programme. This combined design strengthens causal inference and ensures that the voices and lived experiences of youth participants actively shape the evaluation process.

Target population and Sample Size.

For the qualitative component, the study will conduct 10 Focus Group Discussions. Five FGDs will consist of YAC participants, while the remaining five will comprise non-participants. Each discussion group is designed to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward ethical participation, digital civic engagement, and the role of Ubuntu-inspired values such as empathy, solidarity, and collective responsibility in shaping moral consciousness and promoting integrity. These discussions will provide rich, contextual insights into how youth interpret and engage with anti-corruption efforts.

The target population for this study comprises Gen Z individuals, both participants and non-participants of the OSP Youth Against Corruption (YAC) initiative. A mixed-methods approach will be employed, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection. For the qualitative component, eight focus group discussions will be conducted, with four groups of YAC participants and four groups of non-participants, to explore perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward ethical participation, digital civic engagement, and Ubuntu-inspired values such as empathy, solidarity, and collective responsibility. Additionally 15 in-depth interviews will be conducted with Anti-corruption officials, Civil society organizations, Tech and AI specialist and Educators

For the quantitative component, structured surveys will be administered to 200 respondents from both groups to assess awareness, attitudes, and behavioral intentions toward ethical participation, evaluate the impact of AI tools integrated with Ubuntu values on transparency and accountability, and compare the effectiveness of the YAC initiative in shaping moral consciousness and promoting integrity. This combination of methods ensures both in-depth qualitative insights and statistically robust quantitative findings.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval will be obtained from the relevant institutional review boards. Participants' consent, anonymity, and data security will be ensured throughout the study. The study also incorporates **Ubuntu-informed ethics** in its engagement with participants, emphasizing respect, communal responsibility, and collaborative knowledge production.

3.5 Data Sources and Collection

This study relies exclusively on primary data collected through Netnography, In-depth interviews Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and structured surveys to comprehensively examine the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) infused with Ubuntu principles in empowering Gen Z within the OSP Youth Against Corruption (YAC) initiative. Using a mixed-methods approach ensures triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of findings. Netnography will be employed to analyze online interactions and digital narratives surrounding anti-corruption engagement and Ubuntu-inspired ethics. FGDs and In-depth interviews will capture participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and behavioral changes regarding AI-driven civic education, while structured surveys will quantitatively assess attitudes, awareness, and ethical participation among both YAC participants and non-participants. This exclusive reliance on primary data allows the study to integrate in-depth qualitative insights with measurable quantitative evidence, providing a robust and contextually grounded understanding of how Ubuntu-infused AI influences Gen Z's moral consciousness and participation in anti-corruption efforts in Ghana.

Data Analysis.

The data from the three primary sources Netnography, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and structured surveys will be analyzed using complementary qualitative and quantitative techniques to ensure triangulation and comprehensive interpretation. Netnography data collected from social media platforms will undergo thematic and sentiment analysis using NVivo and Python to identify patterns of digital engagement, Ubuntu-related values, and public perceptions of anti-corruption initiatives. FGD transcripts will be thematically analyzed through a combination of deductive and inductive coding to uncover participants' experiences, attitudes, and behavioral changes resulting from AI-enhanced civic education, with comparisons made between YAC participants and non-participants. Quantitative survey data will be analyzed statistically using SPSS, employing descriptive and inferential techniques such as correlations, regressions, t-tests, and ANOVA to measure relationships between Ubuntu-inspired values, AI tool engagement, and ethical participation. Findings from all three sources will then be integrated through triangulation to provide a holistic understanding of how Ubuntu-infused AI can influence Gen Z's moral consciousness and participation in anti-corruption efforts in Ghana.

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