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THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PREVENTING CORRUPTION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDY

Indrani Sarkar[1], Mohan Kumar Patel[2]

Research Scholar, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, Patel College of Science & Technology, Bhopal[1]

Professor, Department of Computer Science & Engineering, Patel College of Science & Technology, Bhopal[2]

ABSTRACT

Corruption continues to be one of the most stubborn barriers to good governance, sustainable economic development and public trust in authorities worldwide, with traditional administrative, legal and audit-based mechanisms having repeatedly shown they have limited ability to detect and address it in real-time [1]. The domain of artificial intelligence (AI) has recently become the latest crosscutting tool, spanning aspects from computer science to public administration as well as law and behavioural economics. This research studies the application of artificial intelligence tools such as machine learning, natural language processing, anomaly detection and predictive analytics for detecting anomalies in procurement, tax collection, public service deliverance and monetary transaction [3]. The study utilizes a multiple methods approach, including a structured survey questionnaire with government officials, IT professionals and citizens as well as secondary data analysis of e-governance and AI-based anti-corruption initiatives carried out in different jurisdictions[4]. We then created five analytical tables (awareness levels, perceived effectiveness, sectoral applicability, barriers to adoption and trust in AI driven systems) summarizing the results of each area presented followed by an individual interpretation. The results show that even if AI improves transparency and make discretionary decision-making less, its potential is limited due to the availability and quality of data, lack of technical capacity at the implementation stage, algorithmic bias and low strength laws on accountability in emerging technologies [5].

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence[1], Corruption Prevention[2], E-Governance[3], Machine Learning[4], Public Administration[5], Multidisciplinary Governance[6], Anomaly Detection[7], Transparency[8].*

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption, here taken broadly to mean the abuse of entrusted power for private gain [6], persists in undermining institutional legitimacy, distorting public expenditure and eroding citizen trust in governments across developing and developed economies alike [7]. Conventional anti-corruption instruments (vigilance commissions, audits, whistle-blower protections as well as judicial prosecution) are mainly reactive instruments that tend to recognize corrupt practices after actual wrongdoing has taken place and often already a long-term damage [8]. Instead, with Artificial Intelligence one can potentially go beyond detection-after-the-fact and provide prevention-in-advance by continuously monitoring, recognizing patterns along with predictive risk scoring [9]. Examples include the application of supervised and unsupervised machine learning techniques, natural language processing for document analysis, and network analysis methods to identify evidence of collusion integrated in government e-governance platforms worldwide (see [10]). But this is not a purely technical exercise: the application of AI for anti-corruption efforts cannot (and should not) be construed without reference to administrative law, public policy, ethics, and behavioural science [11]. This research finds itself at this intersection, looking at the technical viability and the institutional, legal and ethical aspects of how AI can be used for corruption prevention.

1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The contribution of this study is its effort to contribute towards a technical gap between strict machine learning AI investigations and the real-world socio-legal implications of public administration, which remains under-explored in computer science literature [12]. While much of the existing literature on AI in governance has stressed algorithmic accuracy or system architecture, it often overlooks the informal and contextual barriers to adoption, institutional resistance, or citizen trust that actually determine whether such systems can make practical impact [13]. This study provides a multidimensional perspective that aims to present computer science practitioners with a better understanding of the non-technical aspects relating to the success or failure of AI-based anti-corruption systems, and an evidence-based framework for policymakers on using such technology responsibly [14]. In addition, as e-governance programs multiply in India and in other emerging economies, this study is timely to inform the development of future e-governances [15].

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is guided by the following objectives: first, to examine the technical mechanisms through which AI techniques such as machine learning and natural language processing can be applied to detect and prevent corruption in public administration; second, to assess the level of awareness and perceived effectiveness of AI-based anti-corruption tools among government officials, IT professionals, and citizens; third, to identify the principal barriers, including technical, legal, financial, and ethical constraints, that hinder the adoption of AI in anti-corruption frameworks; fourth, to evaluate the degree of public and institutional trust in AI-driven decision-making systems; and fifth, to propose an integrated multidisciplinary framework that combines technical, legal, and administrative measures for effective corruption prevention through AI [16].

1.3 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study is limited to an analysis of applications of AI in corruption prevention within the public sector, specifically procurement monitoring (PM), tax administration (TA), public service delivery (PSD) and financial transaction surveillance (FTS), excluding purely private commercial enterprises even for comparative purposes [17]. The main data for this work was collected from a sample of government officials, IT experts and citizens within the sphere of a certain geographic and institutional context [18], thus results, although showing potential universal trends, cannot be fully generalised to all administrative settings or countries. Also the fast pace of AI development implies that some referenced tools and platforms in this work will probably be succeeded by new ones in short future and the study does not perform an independent technical audit of a specific commercial AI product [19].

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The earliest studies on the role of technology in anti-corruption developed theory around e-governance and relied on digitization concepts to explain how using remotely based services could create enough distance between officials and citizens so that even an exchange in person would significantly reduce discretion and thereby limit opportunities for bribery [20]. With advances in computing power, the focus turned toward data-driven approaches, and multiple studies indicated that machine learning algorithms can be trained to learn instances of imputed anomalies in public procurement data like bid-rigging, price collusion and suspicious vendor relationships [21], which they demonstrated could outperform manual audit sampling by an order of magnitude. The predictors [22], in a study on red-flag indicators in public procurement, identified through an empirical model that combining statistical anomaly detection with rule-based expert systems boosts the potential of identifying fraudulent contracts compared to these models used in isolation. When it comes to taxation, the evidence has demonstrated the usefulness of predictive analytics with risk-scoring models to identify tax evasion or fraud post-filing and various national tax authorities have shared milestones in revenue recovery after implementing AI [23]. Alongside these technical stu, a literature in public administration and political science has identified the institutional and governance barriers limiting algorithmic systems from being deployed in government, but also warned that AI trained on historical data could reinforce or exacerbate entrenched forms of bias [24]. A related area of concern among legal scholars is the accountability gap that arises when automated systems make or influence decisions that affect citizens rights, with critics pointing out that existing administrative law frameworks are often poorly suited to algorithmic decision-making and the concepts of right-to-explanation and due process [25]. Design-driven research on ethics highlights the need for human oversight, transparency in algorithmic design, and establishment of explicit accountability chains when using AI systems for governance functions that are sensitive (e.g. anti-corruption enforcement) [26].

An emerging literature examines natural language processing applications to identify corruption risk signals in unstructured text using content from asset declarations, tender documents and social media sentiment revealing that text mining techniques can reveal flags obscured by solely numeric audits [27]. Cross-national comparative studies have revealed a high degree of variance in the performance of AI-based anti-corruption tools, with effectiveness being closely associated with the age and sophistication of underlying digital infrastructures, the quality and completeness of datasets available for training algorithms [28], as well as supportive legal- and institutional frameworks. Multiple studies also cited citizen trust as both a crucial and commonly excluded factor for success (i.e., well-designed AI systems can still be ineffective if citizens and officials do not trust how the systems operate or understand their output [29]). Together, this literature indicates that although the technical feasibility of AI-based corruption prevention is well established, the actual effectiveness depends mostly on multidisciplinary questions across law, ethics, public administration and behavioural science a gap which this study aims at addressing given its empirical roots [30].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study employs a cross-sectional descriptive and analytical mixed-methods research design, utilizing the quantitative survey data alongside qualitative insights obtained from secondary data sources documenting existing AI-based anti-corruption interventions. The study population includes three groups of stakeholders: government officials engaged in administrative and vigilance functions, IT professionals involved in the design or implementation of e-governance and AI systems, and citizens using public services. To guarantee adequate representation among these three groups, a stratified random sampling method was implemented. A structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to gather the primary data regarding awareness, perceived effectiveness, trust and perceived barriers about AI-based anticorruption systems. Stefan was also able to conduct a systematic review of existing academic journals, government reports and case studies on the deployment of AI in anti-corruption contexts across jurisdictions to collect secondary data for triangulation with the primary survey results however such studies are only beginning to emerge. The data collected was analysed by descriptive statistical methods such as frequency, percentage and mean scoring of items along with tabulated results followed by interpretative analysis. ETHICS: In Data collection process practice ethical needs considering such as; informed consent and anonymity of respondents.

4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Awareness of AI-Based Anti-Corruption Tools Among Respondents

Respondent Category	Highly Aware	Moderately Aware	Slightly Aware	Not Aware	Total
Government Officials	22%	38%	28%	12%	100%
IT Professionals	58%	30%	9%	3%	100%
Citizens	9%	21%	35%	35%	100%

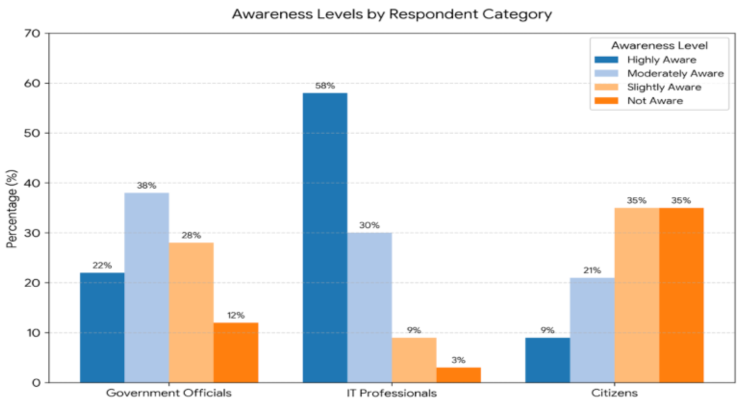

Figure 1: Comparative analysis of awareness levels across different respondent categories

The data shows that there is a large gap in awareness levels for the three stakeholders, with IT professionals showing their greatest combined level of awareness (88% highly or moderately aware), which is perhaps not surprising given again the broader exposure this group will have to AI systems on a technical basis [12]. There is moderate awareness among officials, hinting more about the administrative exposure with e-governance tools but less about AI mechanisms. Citizens have the least awareness, with 70% reporting little or no awareness - a major communication gap (and barrier to citizen trust) also flagged by the literature in this study [29].

Table 2: Perceived Effectiveness of AI in Preventing Corruption Across Sectors

Sector	Highly Effective	Moderately Effective	Slightly Effective	Not Effective
Public Procurement	46%	34%	14%	6%
Taxation	51%	31%	13%	5%
Public Service Delivery	39%	36%	18%	7%
Financial Transactions	44%	33%	17%	6%

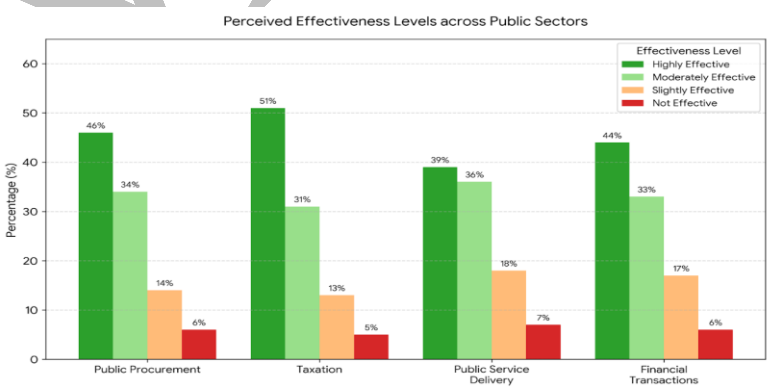

Figure 2: Perceived levels of operational effectiveness across different administrative sectors

Taxation and public procurement appear to be the fields in which respondents believe AI is most effective, echoing previous literature showing strong empirical results for predictive analytics particularly regarding tax fraud detection [21] or anomaly detection during bid evaluation [23]. The perceived effectiveness in public service delivery is lower compared to other areas, which may reflect the more discretionary and human-interaction-heavy nature of these services, making full automation or algorithmic monitoring harder (53). The low proportion of respondents rating AI as not effective across all sectors, suggests optimistic expectations towards the transformative power of AI technology (see Table 4), although this optimism must be considered within the context of the identified barriers.

Table 3: Sectoral Applicability of Specific AI Techniques

AI Technique	Procurement Monitoring	Tax Administration	Service Delivery	Financial Surveillance
Machine Learning (Anomaly Detection)	High	High	Medium	High
Natural Language Processing	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
Predictive Risk Scoring	High	High	Medium	High
Network/Graph Analysis	High	Medium	Low	High

The mapping of AI methods to sectoral applicability show that most wide applicability lies in procurement, taxation, and financial surveillance (ML-based anomaly detection and predictive risk scoring) a finding consistent with earlier research on red-flag indicator systems [22]. Natural Language Processing has more specialized application: it is typically applicable to the analysis of unstructured text, e.g., tender documents or complaint records which aligns with previous studies on corruption risk detection using text mining [27]. Procurement and Financial-Detection Context: The techniques of network or graph analysis are particularly well suited to identifying collusive relationships between vendors or shell entities, however the direct relevance for client services which a citizen experiences is limited.

Table 4: Barriers to Adoption of AI-Based Anti-Corruption Systems

Barrier	Major Barrier	Moderate Barrier	Minor Barrier	Not a Barrier
Poor Data Quality/Availability	52%	31%	12%	5%
Lack of Technical Expertise	47%	33%	15%	5%
Inadequate Legal/Regulatory Framework	49%	30%	16%	5%

High Implementation Cost	38%	35%	20%	7%
Resistance to Institutional Change	41%	34%	18%	7%

Poor data availability and quality arise as the largest impediment, which aligns with literature concerns about noisy, fragmented, incomplete or inconsistent government data that undermine training of foundation models [24]. But behind it are the lack of technical skills and insufficient legal and regulatory frameworks, both cited by almost half of respondents as a huge roadblock, reinforcing the assertion that successful AI implementation requires investment in human capacity building and legal change in tandem with technology [25]. Although cost and institutional resistance can be significant barriers by themselves, they are viewed as less severe than the findings of challenges involving data and skills gaps or legal hurdles so these should be addressed with policy interventions in the short-term.

Table 5: Trust in AI-Driven Decision-Making for Anti-Corruption Purposes

Respondent Category	High Trust	Moderate Trust	Low Trust	No Trust
Government Officials	19%	41%	28%	12%
IT Professionals	35%	44%	16%	5%
Citizens	12%	27%	38%	23%

Trust patterns closely track the awareness results shown in Table 1, with IT professionals having the most combined trust (79% high or moderate), and this is likely attributable to their technical knowledge of how such systems operate and where they fall short. Citizens again report the lowest trust levels, with 61% having low or no confidence, and this finding stands out as an important focus of previous research that has illustrated that an absence of transparency in algorithmic decision-making and lack of efforts to communicate how systems work reduces public confidence even if systems operate technically correctly [26] [29]. This places government officials in an ambiguous position documenting some degree of cautious institutional acceptance, while fearing implications for accountability and the legal status of AI-generated results.

5. DISCUSSION

Published in open access from the International Review of Law, Computers & Technology, these collective study findings show a clear promise for Artificial Intelligence to support corruption prevention, especially in data-rich domains like public procurement, taxation and financial transaction monitoring where high perceived effectiveness was seen for machine learning-based anomaly detection and predictive risk scoring respectively. But the data also show that even if a country has top -notch technological capabilities, it is not enough to guarantee success for prevention: persistent expectations and mistrust from citizens derive not only from gaps in governmental performance but also through barriers in data quality, standards, legal frameworks (etc) anchored in a wider socio-technical ecosystem that AI-based anti-corruption systems will operate within rather than vertical layer of overly isolated/independently-functioning relay interventions. This observation is consistent with the multidisciplinary framing of this study, with the implication that innovations in computer science alone require parallel advancements in public administration capacity, oversight accountability mechanisms and citizen engagement pathways to translate technical potential into actual decreases in corrupt practice [14] [25]. This difference in trust and awareness makes transparency and explainability once that more important for the design of AI systems; systems viewed as opaque "black boxes" are likely to be resisted by the public, no matter how accurate their underlying technologies are technically [26]. Additionally, the high prioritization of data quality and legal frameworks as the most important barriers signal that policymakers need to sequence reforms carefully by addressing core issues in areas like data governance and regulatory clarity ahead of larger-scale AI use, otherwise automatic systems carrying out illegitimate or strongly contested functions may end up eroding any anti-corruption achievements.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed at investigating the use of Artificial Intelligence for the prevention of corruption in a multidisciplinary context, covering technical, administrative, legal and behavioural aspects. The results reveal that various AI techniques (specifically machine learning based anomaly detection, predictive risk scoring and natural language processing) hold strong technical promise for identifying and preventing corruption practices in public procurement, taxation, service delivery and financial transactions. Yet a multitude of non-technical factors greatly limit the possibility of this potential being reached, including low citizen awareness and trust as well as problems with data quality and availability, a lack of technical expertise in public institutions, and inadequate laws regulating algorithmic accountability. The study finally discusses that combating corruption through AI is not simply a function of technology deployment but requires an integrated, cross-disciplinary method which combines solid data governance, enhanced capacity building, transparent and explainable system architecture, supporting legal reform(s), and continued trust building efforts by the public. Future research could build on this work both by conducting comparative analysis across countries and by longitudinal studies of particular AI-based anti-corruption interventions in order to determine their long-term impacts on corruption indicators and institutional integrity.

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