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ARTICLE

E-Justice and Corruption Practices: Examining the Moderating Role of Leadership Commitment

E-Justice e Práticas de Corrupção no Judiciário de Gana: O Papel Moderador do Comprometimento da Liderança

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ABSTRACT | Purpose: This study examined the effects of e-justice on corruption practices and the role of leadership commitment on the relationship between e-justice and corruption practices in the Judicial Service of Ghana. **Design/methodology/approach:** The study employed quantitative analysis to assess the immensity and prevalence of findings. Data analysis was done using Structural Equation Model (SEM). **Findings:** The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between e-justice and corruption practices. The study also found that leadership commitment has a significant positive effect on corruption practices. Furthermore, it established that leadership commitment significantly and positively moderates the impact of e-justice on corruption practices. **Practical implications:** Leadership commitment is seen as the ultimate in the fight against corruption practices and that everything truly rises and falls on leadership. It is therefore recommended to, among other factors, view leadership commitment as the sole of anti-corruption campaigns/programs. **Originality/Value:** This study makes great contribution on the moderating role of leadership commitment in the relation between e-justice and corruption practices.

Keywords | E-justice, Corruption practices, Leadership commitment.

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RESUMO | Objetivo: Este estudo analisa os efeitos da e-Justice sobre as práticas de corrupção no Judiciário de Gana e investiga o papel moderador do comprometimento da liderança nessa relação. O objetivo central é compreender em que medida a digitalização dos serviços judiciais, associada à atuação da liderança, contribui para a mitigação ou, de forma paradoxal, para o agravamento de práticas corruptas no sistema judicial. **Metodologia:** Adotou-se um desenho de pesquisa explicativo, de natureza quantitativa e corte transversal. Os dados foram coletados por meio de questionários estruturados aplicados a servidores judiciais, gestores e usuários dos tribunais da região de Kumasi, totalizando 383 respondentes. A análise foi realizada por Modelagem de Equações Estruturais baseada em covariância (CB-SEM), com o uso do software AMOS. O estudo fundamenta-se na Teoria da Liderança Ética e no framework Tecnologia–Organização–Ambiente (TOE). **Resultados:** Os resultados indicam que a e-Justice apresenta efeito positivo e estatisticamente significativo sobre as práticas de corrupção, sugerindo que a digitalização, quando implementada sem supervisão adequada, pode criar novas oportunidades para comportamentos corruptos. O comprometimento da liderança demonstrou impacto significativo na redução da corrupção. Entretanto, verificou-se que esse comprometimento também modera positivamente a relação entre e-Justice e corrupção, ampliando seus efeitos, o que revela um resultado paradoxal quando não há alinhamento consistente com princípios éticos. **Contribuições:** O estudo contribui para a literatura ao demonstrar que soluções tecnológicas, isoladamente, não são suficientes para combater a corrupção, evidenciando o papel central da liderança ética na governança judicial digital.

Palavras-chave | e-Justice; Corrupção; Comprometimento da liderança; Governança judicial; Transformação digital.

1 INTRODUCTION

The judiciary is a fundamental institution in every democratic state, tasked with upholding justice, safeguarding public interests, and ensuring accountability (Moch, 2024). Its integrity is crucial for the stability and proper functioning of democratic societies (Komoliddin, 2024; Aguiar-Díaz et al., 2024; Owusu-Mensah, 2018). However, judicial systems worldwide have been vulnerable to corruption, undermining their ability to administer justice impartially (Butt et al., 2024; Mvula, 2024; Abonyi, 2023). Corruption within the judiciary not only erodes public trust but also compromises the rule of law, allowing private interests to influence legal outcomes at the expense of justice and fairness (Amagnya, 2024).

Globally, corruption remains a significant economic and social challenge, with an estimated $2.6 trillion, or 5% of the world's GDP, lost to corrupt practices annually (Teramura et al., 2024). In Ghana, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) reports that the country loses approximately GHS 13.8 billion annually to corruption, an amount exceeding 300% of its annual aid inflows (Anane, 2023; Awudu, 2024). These losses hinder socio-economic development, contributing to inadequate public services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure (Saeed et al., 2023). Corruption is a major driver of poverty, as it distorts resource allocation, weakens economic growth, and fosters inequality (Rose-Ackerman et al., 2016; Bardhan, 2017; Ahmed and Anifowose, 2024). In the judiciary, corruption threatens judicial independence, exacerbates crime rates, undermines security, and erodes public confidence in legal institutions (Odartey-Willington et al., 2017; Rose-Ackerman and Palifka, 2016).

To combat judicial corruption, digital transformation strategies have been increasingly explored as mechanisms for enhancing transparency and efficiency in judicial processes (Elsayed, 2023;

Sheikh et al., 2021; Wang and Han, 2023; Ismail et al., 2017; Gledson et al., 2024). One such strategy is electronic justice (e-justice), which leverages digital technologies to administer, deliver, and monitor judicial services. E-justice has been recognized as a potential tool to reduce corruption by minimizing human interactions in court processes, improving case tracking, and increasing accountability (Transparency International, 2023). In Ghana, efforts to curb judicial corruption intensified after the 2015 investigative exposé by Anas Aremeyaw Anas, which revealed widespread corruption within the judiciary (Odartey-William et al., 2017). Subsequently, the Ghanaian government launched the e-justice program in 2019 to modernize the judicial system and mitigate corruption risks associated with manual processes.

Despite these initiatives, the effectiveness of e-justice in reducing judicial corruption remains inconclusive. The World Justice Project (WJP) ranked Ghana 7th out of 34 Sub-Saharan African countries in terms of rule of law and 6th out of 142 countries globally in 2023 (WJP, 2023). However, Ghana performed poorly in the absence of corruption category, ranking 101st out of 142 countries, highlighting the persistence of corruption-related challenges within the judiciary. While existing studies have examined digital transformation's impact on corruption in various institutions, research specifically linking e-justice to corruption reduction in judicial systems remains fragmented (Verhoef et al., 2021). Additionally, the role of leadership commitment in moderating the effectiveness of e-justice in combating corruption has received limited attention.

This study aims to address these gaps by assessing the impact of e-justice on corruption practices in Ghana's judiciary and examining the moderating role of leadership commitment. By exploring the conditions under which e-justice enhances judicial integrity, this research contributes to the broader discourse on digital governance and anti-corruption strategies in judicial systems.

1.2 Theoretical Review

Theoretical Background

The increasing adoption of E-Justice systems presents a promising avenue for enhancing transparency and reducing corruption in governance and judicial processes. However, the effectiveness of these digital interventions depends on various organizational and leadership factors. This study integrates Ethical Leadership Theory (Brown & Treviño, 2006) and the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) Framework (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990) to examine the role of leadership commitment in moderating the relationship between E-Justice systems and corruption practices.

Ethical Leadership Theory and Corruption Practices

Ethical Leadership Theory emphasizes the role of leaders in fostering ethical behavior, promoting transparency, and ensuring accountability within organizations. According to Brown and Treviño (2006), ethical leaders influence their subordinates through role modeling, ethical decision-making, and reinforcement of moral standards. In the context of E-Justice, leadership commitment is crucial for ensuring that digital tools are implemented with integrity and fairness rather than being manipulated

for corrupt purposes. Without strong ethical leadership, even the most sophisticated E-Justice systems may fail to deter corruption, as institutional actors could exploit system loopholes for personal gain.

Additionally, ethical leadership fosters a culture of accountability, reducing the likelihood of fraudulent activities within judicial and governance structures. Leaders who are committed to ethical governance ensure that E-Justice platforms operate transparently, with proper oversight mechanisms that limit the discretionary power of individuals who might engage in corrupt practices. This aligns with the view that ethical leadership reinforces institutional trust and legitimacy (Treviño et al., 2014).

The Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) Framework and E-Justice Adoption

The TOE framework provides a structured approach to understanding how organizations adopt and implement new technologies. It identifies three key dimensions—technology, organization, and environment—that influence the successful deployment of digital solutions like E-Justice systems (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990).

By combining Ethical Leadership Theory with the TOE framework, this study highlights the critical moderating role of leadership commitment in shaping the relationship between E-Justice and corruption practices. Ethical leadership influences the organizational dimension of the TOE framework by promoting transparent decision-making, ethical technology use, and regulatory enforcement. At the same time, the TOE framework contextualizes how external environmental factors and technological capabilities influence the effectiveness of E-Justice in combating corruption.

Thus, this theoretical integration suggests that while E-Justice alone may not be sufficient to curb corruption, the presence of ethical leadership commitment strengthens its impact by ensuring proper implementation, oversight, and adherence to anti-corruption policies. Understanding this interplay provides a holistic perspective on the factors that determine the success of digital justice initiatives in reducing corruption.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Key Concepts

2.1.1 E-Justice

E-justice refers to the application of digital technologies in the administration, provision, reinforcement, or monitoring of justice services. This concept encompasses tools and processes used by institutions, the public, and the media (Arseni, 2024; Yu et al., 2024; Reiling & Contini, 2022). It involves innovative strategies, process engineering, automation, data collection, system integration, online dispute resolution, e-filing, remote court processes, and technologies for digitizing and storing legal documents (Yu et al., 2024).

According to Arseni (2024) and Ontanu (2024), the effectiveness of these tools should be measured by their impact on access to justice, equality, and human rights protections rather than operational efficiencies. E-justice provides practical solutions for remote users and allows courts to offer alternatives

such as virtual hearings, reducing geographic, risk, and economic barriers associated with traditional court systems. The automation of court documents, case management with predefined timelines, and access tracking can mitigate opportunities for corruption, such as bribery (Miroshnichenko & Filonenko, 2020). Fabri (2024), Ontanu (2024), and Miroshnichenko and Filonenko (2020) argue that while e-justice improves efficiency and accessibility, success should not be solely measured by reduced court visits without closer scrutiny of its broader impact.

2.1.2 Corruption Practices

Corruption is a persistent phenomenon in various sectors of society (Damijan, 2023; Appau & Anku-Tsede, 2015). Transparency International defines corruption as the misuse of power for personal gain, while the African Union's Convention on Corruption defines it as the solicitation or acceptance of monetary value, gifts, favors, or advantages in exchange for preferential treatment (African Union, 2003, p. 8).

Corruption manifests in different forms, with bribery, extortion, favoritism, judicial fraud, influence peddling, and conflicts of interest being particularly relevant in this study (Rose-Ackerman et al., 2016; Resane, 2024; Qhobosheane, 2024). Empirical literature overwhelmingly highlights the negative impact of corruption on economic growth (Tawiah et al., 2024; Njangang et al., 2024; Ahmed & Anifowose, 2024). It distorts talent allocation, incentivizing rent-seeking over productive work (Bardhan, 2017). Corruption can also lead governments to prioritize large-scale projects with bribery opportunities over essential social welfare programs (Ahmed & Anifowose, 2024). Furthermore, it increases the cost and reduces the availability of social services (Dimant & Tosato, 2018).

2.1.3 Leadership Commitment

Leadership involves influencing followers toward achieving organizational goals (Dugan, 2024). It plays a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of resource utilization. The presence or absence of leadership commitment determines organizational success.

Commitment refers to dedication to a cause, whether good or bad. Leaders dedicated to fighting corruption employ the right tools to eliminate avenues for corrupt practices, while those benefiting from corruption maintain the status quo. Leadership commitment is, therefore, a critical factor in combating corruption. It provides the necessary vision, strategies, and resources to ensure anti-corruption measures are effective (Bachtiar et al., 2023; Roper, 2024; Mayberry, 2024). In conclusion, leadership commitment is central to the success of anti-corruption efforts.

2.2 Hypothesis Development

2.2.1 Relationship Between E-Justice and Corruption Practices

Research indicates that manual judicial processes, excessive human contact, and delays contribute to corruption worldwide (Amoh & Ali-Nakyea, 2019; Asiedu & Deffor, 2017; Swinko, 2017; Cappelli et al., 2024). Digital transformation, particularly e-justice, minimizes these inefficiencies and enhances transparency (Molomo et al., 2023). E-justice systems facilitate faster judicial processes (Pyrohovska et al., 2024) and reduce corruption (Roztocki et al., 2023). Transparency is improved when judicial proceedings are accessible on digital platforms, reducing interference and unnecessary hurdles (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016).

Hypothesis 1: E-justice has a negative significance on corruption practices.

2.2.2 Relationship Between Leadership Commitment and Corruption

Practices Leadership fosters creativity, vision, and innovation, ensuring organizations achieve their objectives (Dugan, 2024). Effective leadership is proactive and essential for driving change (Okolie & Igbini, 2020; Kretzschmar, 2020; Tetteh, 2023; Uy et al., 2024). Conversely, a lack of leadership commitment enables corruption. Leaders must provide vision, resources, and personal dedication to combat corruption (Kuwali, 2024; Olufemi, 2024; Mutema & Kanyane, 2024). Yap et al. (2020) and Kuwali (2024) argue that leadership is the primary factor in anti-corruption efforts, making other interventions ineffective without strong leadership.

Hypothesis 2: Leadership commitment has a negative significance on corruption practices.

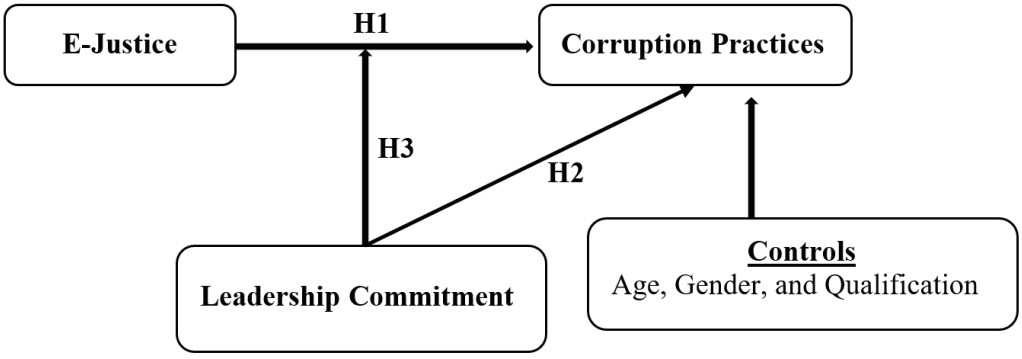

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's own work

2.2.3 Role of Leadership Commitment in the Relationship Between E-Justice and Corruption Practices

Leadership serves as the foundation for successful organizational transformation (Bachtiar et al., 2023; Roper, 2024; Mayberry, 2024). Research highlights the moderating role of leadership commitment

in the relationship between e-justice and corruption practices (Reuter & Floyd, 2024; Ismail et al., 2017). Leadership influences the effectiveness of digital transformation initiatives (Asif et al., 2024; Chiarini & Vagnoni, 2017). Organizations must establish a compelling business case for digital transformation, ensuring leadership commitment drives the process (Ismail et al., 2017; Cappelli et al., 2024).

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between e-justice and corruption practices is significantly and negatively moderated by leadership commitment.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study adopted a cross-sectional explanatory research design with a quantitative approach to investigate the moderating role of leadership commitment in the relationship between E-Justice and corruption practices within the Judicial Service of Ghana. An explanatory research design was selected based on Kumar (2014), who emphasizes its effectiveness in establishing associations between variables while considering potential mediators or moderators.

A cross-sectional approach was chosen due to resource constraints and the feasibility of collecting judicial data at a single point in time. This design enables a comprehensive analysis of how E-Justice systems interact with leadership commitment to influence corruption practices.

The study is anchored in Ethical Leadership Theory (Brown & Treviño, 2006), which explains how institutional structures, such as E-Justice, shape ethical behaviors and influence corruption practices within judicial systems. Additionally, the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) Framework (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990) provides a systematic perspective on how organizational factors—particularly leadership commitment—can enhance the effectiveness of E-Justice by reinforcing accountability and reducing corruption risks. By integrating these two theories, the study offers a theoretically robust foundation for understanding the interplay between digital governance, ethical leadership, and corruption mitigation in Ghana's judicial sector.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population comprised judicial staff, management, and court users within selected courts in Greater Kumasi, Ashanti Region, Ghana. This region was chosen due to its high judicial activity and historical relevance in addressing corruption-related issues.

A disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation across different stakeholder groups in the judiciary. The strata were based on professional roles within the courts:

- Court officials
- Court users

The sample size was determined through power analysis using G*Power 3.1 software, ensuring a minimum statistical power of 0.80 at a 5% significance level. Based on this, a sample of 383 respondents

was deemed appropriate to detect meaningful relationships between variables. Table 1 provides a demographic breakdown of respondents.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Sample and Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	180	47.0
	Female	203	53.0
Age	18–25 years	66	17.2
	26–35 years	83	21.7
	36–45 years	66	17.2
	46–55 years	94	24.5
	Above 56 years	74	19.3
Qualification	Uneducated	65	17.0
	Junior High School	142	37.1
	Senior High School	120	31.3
	Bachelor's Degree	30	7.8
	Master's Degree	14	3.7
	PhD	9	2.3
	Professional Qualification	3	0.8

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered during regular court sessions over a two-week period. Prior approval was obtained from court authorities, and data collection was conducted by trained research assistants under strict ethical guidelines.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

- Section A: Demographic information (age, gender, educational background).
- Section B: Constructs related to e-justice and leadership commitment (measured using validated scales).
- Section C: Items assessing corruption practices within the judicial system.

To minimize nonresponse bias, multiple follow-ups were conducted. Response rates were monitored, and additional participants were recruited, when necessary, to maintain the sample size.

3.4 Variables and Measurement Instruments

All variables were measured using five-point Likert scales (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The constructs were adapted from established literature and subjected to validity and reliability testing.

- E-Justice *(Amoh & Ali-Nakyea, 2019)*
  - Assesses the use of digital technologies in judicial processes (e.g., online case filing, electronic payment systems, and automated case distribution).
  - 6 items, Cronbach's α = 0.824.
- Leadership Commitment *(Yap et al., 2020; Kuwali, 2024)*
  - Measures the dedication of leaders in fostering ethical judicial practices.
  - 5 items, Cronbach's α = 0.812.
- Corruption Practices *(Rose-Ackerman et al., 2016)*
  - Examines unethical behaviors such as bribery, extortion, favoritism.
  - 6 items, Cronbach's α = 0.791.
- Control Variables
  - Demographic factors (age, gender, educational qualification) were included as controls based on prior studies indicating their influence on corruption perception in judicial settings (Treisman, 2000).

3.5 Reliability and Validity Testing

To ensure the reliability of the measurement model, Cronbach's alpha (CA) was computed using SPSS (version 25). The minimum expected threshold of 0.70 was met for all constructs, indicating good internal consistency.

- Convergent validity was established, as all standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.50, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were greater than 0.50 for all constructs.
- Discriminant validity was confirmed using Fornell-Larcker criterion, where the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlation with other constructs, ensuring construct distinctiveness.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity and Multicollinearity Test

	Age	Gender	Qualification	JUS	COM	COR
Age	_					
Gender	.048	_				
Qualification	.083	-.050	_			
JUS	.032	.047	.082	***.899***		
COM	.078	.034	.008	.380**	***.799***	
COR	.006	.021	.034	.206**	.478**	***.833***

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).; *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).; √AVE ~ Bold, Italics and underline.; Partial correlation scores are above the diagonals
For model fit, several fit indices were examined. CMIN/DF was less than 3, PClose was not statistically significant (greater than 0.05), TLI and CFI were greater than 0.9, and RMSEA and RMR were less than 0.08, all of which indicated that the model fit the data well. These results confirmed that the model was valid and reliable for further analysis.

Model-fit Indices **CMIN=120.924; DF=84; CMIN/DF=1.40; GFI=.934; PClose=.645; TLI=.973; CFI=.978; RMSEA=.046; RMR=.044**	
E-Justice (JUS)	
JUS1: The e-justice system is easy to access and navigate.	.852
JUS2: Information and resources on the e-justice are readily available.	.921
JUS3: The e-justice platform facilitates clear communication between legal parties	.946
JUS4: The communication tools on the e-justice platform enhance my ability to collaborate on legal matters.	.904
JUS5: The e-justice system reduces the delays typically associated with legal proceedings	.868
Leadership Commitment (COM)	
COM1: The leaders have declared their support for E-Justice	.813
COM2: The leaders encouraged us to use the E-Justice platform	.890
COM3: The leaders organize training programmes for E-Justice implementation	.808
COM4: The leaders invest in E-Justice platforms	.669
Corruption Practices *(COR)*	
COR1: Bribery is at minimal since the adoption of E-Justice	.864
COR2: Court proceedings have been transparent	.911
COR3: The general public has confidence in court outcomes	.811
COR4: Both parties to the court are treated equally	.737

Source: Authors' own work

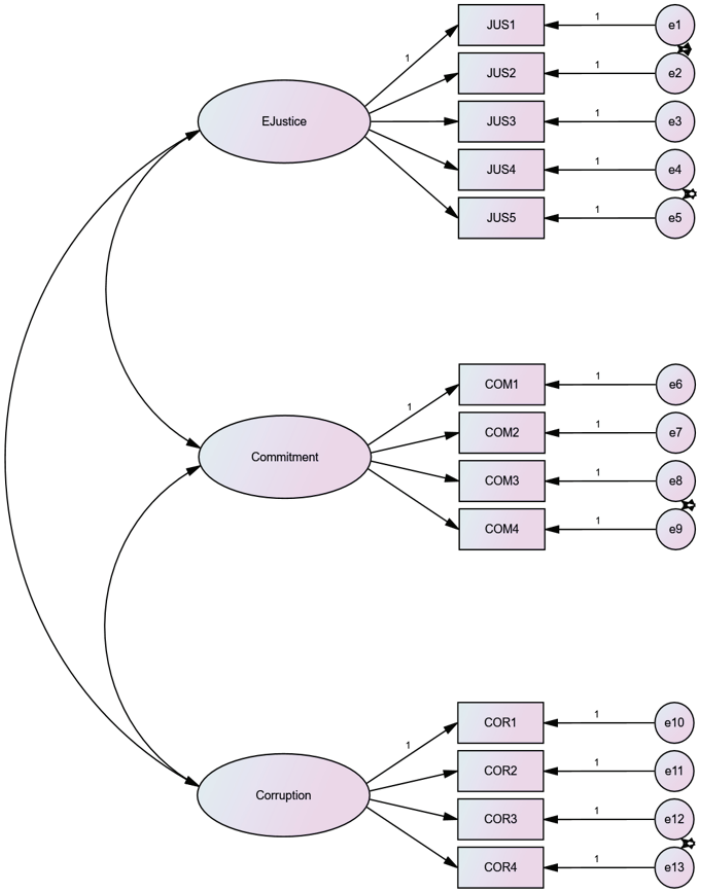

Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

4 RESULTS

To test the study's hypotheses, covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) was conducted using Amos (version 23). The bootstrapping method (Bias-Corrected [BC] percentile with 5000 bootstrap samples and a 95% confidence level) was employed to obtain robust parameter estimates. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4 and Figure 4.1.

4.1 Control Variables and Their Effects

The study controlled for age, gender, and qualification, as these variables have been suggested to influence corruption practices. The findings indicate:

- Gender had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on corruption practices ($\beta = 0.033$; $p > 0.05$).
- Qualification had a positive but statistically insignificant effect on corruption practices ($\beta = 0.015$; $p > 0.05$).
- Age had a negative but statistically insignificant effect on corruption practices ($\beta = -0.026$; $p > 0.05$).

Since none of these control variables exhibited statistical significance, the study finds insufficient evidence to conclude that age, gender, or qualification influence corruption practices.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

H1: The Effect of E-Justice on Corruption Practices

The analysis revealed that E-Justice had a positive and statistically significant effect on corruption practices ($\beta = 0.023$; $p < 0.01$). This implies that a 100% increase in E-Justice implementation leads to a 2.3% increase in corruption practices. Thus, H1 is supported.

This finding aligns with the study by Amoh and Ali-Nakyea (2019), which also reported a significant positive relationship between E-Justice and corruption practices. A possible explanation for this counterintuitive finding is that while digital justice systems improve transparency, they may also introduce new avenues for corruption, such as the manipulation of digital records or cyber-related judicial fraud.

H2: The Effect of Leadership Commitment on Corruption Practices

The study found that leadership commitment had a positive and statistically significant effect on corruption reduction ($\beta = 0.466$; $p < 0.01$). This does not support H2.

The results reinforce existing literature that underscores ethical leadership as a critical anti-corruption factor (Kuwali, 2024; Olufemi, 2024; Mutema & Kanyane, 2024). Leadership plays a pivotal role in setting the tone, allocating resources, and implementing anti-corruption strategies but ethics

is the sole of every anti-corruption program. Studies by Yap et al. (2020) and Chikere (2024) argue that ethical leadership is the primary driver of anti-corruption efforts.

H3: The Moderating Role of Leadership Commitment in the Relationship between E-Justice and Corruption Practices

The interaction term (JUS_COM) between E-Justice and Leadership Commitment showed a statistically significant positive effect on corruption practices ($\beta = 0.178$; $p < 0.01$) This does not support H3. This indicates that leadership commitment enhances the effect of E-Justice on corruption practices by 17.8%.

From Figure 4.2, the red line (high levels of E-Justice and leadership commitment) corresponds to an increase in corruption practices, whereas the blue line (low levels of both E-Justice and leadership commitment) corresponds to a decrease in corruption practices. This suggests that leadership commitment amplifies the effect of E-Justice on corruption practices, whether positively or negatively.

The study's findings reinforce prior literature emphasizing leadership as the cornerstone of institutional transformation (Bachtiar et al., 2023; Roper, 2024; Mayberry, 2024). Leadership commitment has been widely recognized as a moderating factor in digital transformation and organizational efficiency (Reuter & Floyd, 2024; Ismail et al., 2017). This study extends that discourse by demonstrating leadership's moderating effect in the context of E-Justice and corruption practices.

Table 3. Path Coefficients

Paths	Unstd Estd	S. E.	C. R.
Age → Corruption Practices	-.026	.033	-.778
Gender → Corruption Practices	.033	.092	.363
Qualification → Corruption Practices	.015	.039	.378
E-Justice → Corruption Practices	.023	.003	7.666**
Leadership Commitment→ Corruption Practices	.466	.067	6.997**
JUS_COM → Corruption Practices	.178	.038	4.722**

Bias-Corrected (BC) Percentile Method; 5000 Bootstrap sample; 95% Confidence level
** ~ P-value significant at 1% (0.01)
Source: Researchers' own work

5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study provides critical insights into the relationship between E-Justice, leadership commitment, and corruption practices, offering both theoretical contributions and practical implications. The findings reveal that E-Justice, leadership commitment, and their interaction significantly influence corruption practices, albeit in nuanced ways.

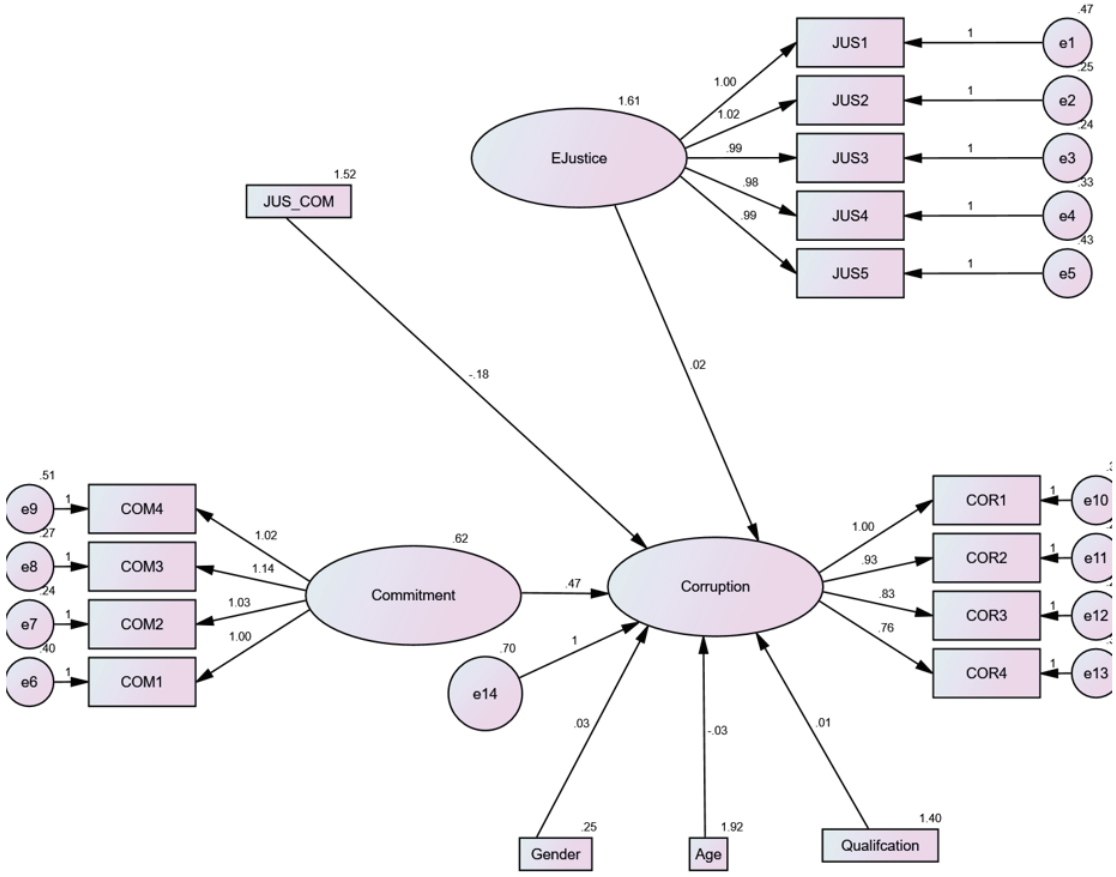

Figure 3. Structural Equation Modelling

Source(s): Authors' own work

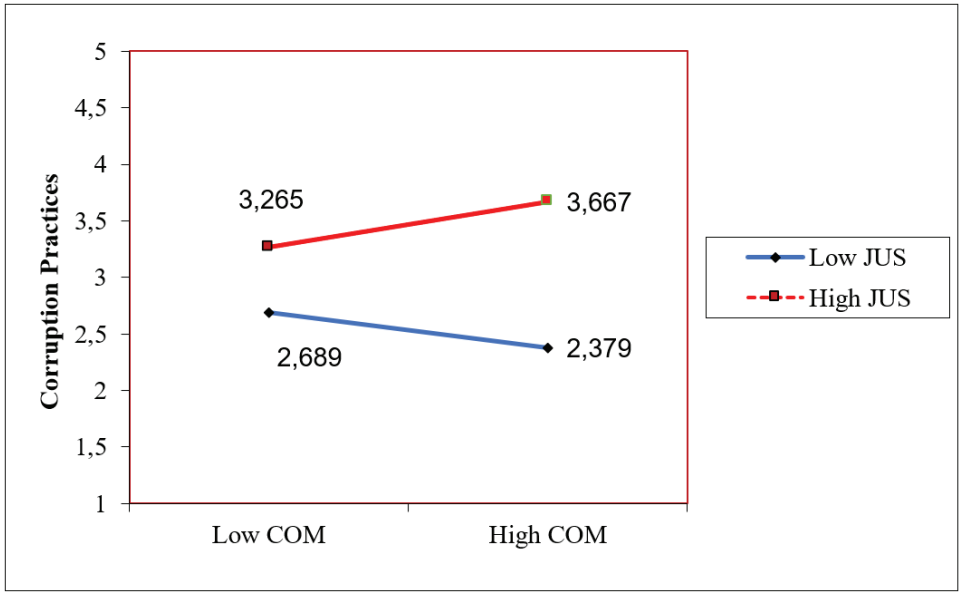

Figure 4. Two-way Interaction Graph

Source: Authors' own work

5.1 The Effect of E-Justice on Corruption Practices

The study reveals that E-Justice has a positive and statistically significant effect on corruption practices ($\beta = 0.023$; $p < 0.01$), implying that increased reliance on E-Justice systems is associated with a marginal rise in corruption practices. While this finding appears counterintuitive, it aligns with the argument by Amoh and Ali-Nakyea (2019) that while digital justice mechanisms are designed to enhance transparency and efficiency, operational loopholes, poor implementation, and weak oversight mechanisms may inadvertently create new opportunities for corruption.

This result underscores the dual-edged nature of technological interventions in governance—while they aim to enhance accountability, they can also be exploited if not properly managed. This highlights the urgent need for policymakers and judicial administrators to strengthen the design, implementation, and monitoring of E-Justice platforms to maximize their intended anti-corruption benefits.

5.2 The Role of Leadership Commitment on Corruption Practices

The study finds that leadership commitment significantly positive impact corruption practices ($\beta = 0.466$; $p < 0.01$). This aligns with prior research (Kuwali, 2024; Olufemi, 2024; Mutema & Kanyane, 2024), which underscores the central role of leadership in fostering ethical governance. Leaders are responsible for establishing a vision, allocating resources, enforcing ethical standards, and ensuring accountability, all of which are essential in curbing corruption.

The study supports the view that leadership acts as a moral compass, guiding organizations toward ethical behavior and institutionalizing anti-corruption measures (Yap et al., 2020; Chikere, 2024). Without strong leadership commitment, anti-corruption efforts are likely to be superficial and ineffective. This finding reinforces the argument that sustainable corruption reduction requires proactive leadership engagement, policy enforcement, and continuous oversight mechanisms.

5.3 Moderating Effect of Leadership Commitment on the E-Justice-Corruption Relationship

The study further establishes that leadership commitment positively and significantly moderates the relationship between E-Justice and corruption practices ($\beta = 0.178$; $p < 0.01$). This suggests that leadership commitment amplifies the effect of E-Justice on corruption practices.

From Figure 4.2, two key insights emerge:

- When both leadership commitment and E-Justice are high, corruption practices tend to increase rather than decrease.
- When both leadership commitment and E-Justice are low, corruption practices decline.

This paradoxical finding suggests that strong leadership commitment, when paired with E-Justice, does not automatically reduce corruption. Instead, it may strengthen existing institutional

frameworks in ways that inadvertently enable corrupt practices, particularly if leadership commitment is misaligned with ethical objectives or if E-Justice systems are exploited for personal or political gain.

6 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This study makes significant theoretical contributions to the fields of leadership, organizational ethics, and the intersection of technology and governance.

6.1 Leadership and Ethical Governance

The study reinforces the pivotal role of leadership commitment in combating corruption, extending leadership theories that emphasize a leader's ability to shape an ethical organizational culture. By demonstrating that leadership commitment directly reduces corruption and enhances the effectiveness of E-Justice systems, this research contributes to the broader discourse on leadership as a fundamental driver of ethical governance (Yap et al., 2020). It also aligns with and enriches the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990), which suggests that organizational factors, including leadership, shape the effectiveness of technological implementations.

6.2 Rethinking Anti-Corruption Models

This study challenges traditional anti-corruption frameworks by revealing that E-Justice, despite its intended transparency-enhancing function, can inadvertently increase corruption. This unexpected finding highlights the necessity of robust oversight, ethical leadership, and institutional safeguards to prevent digital systems from being exploited (Amoh & Ali-Nakyea, 2019). The research expands anti-corruption theories by emphasizing that digital tools alone are insufficient; they must be integrated with strong ethical leadership to yield meaningful outcomes.

6.3 Leadership as a Moderator in Digital Governance

The study's finding that leadership commitment moderates the relationship between E-Justice and corruption practices contributes to a deeper understanding of interaction effects in organizational behavior. It aligns with emerging research emphasizing the synergistic relationship between human and technological factors in ethical governance (Reuter & Floyd, 2024). Leadership's ability to either amplify or mitigate the effects of digital interventions underscores the importance of contextual leadership approaches in technology-driven governance reforms.

6.4 Demographic Factors and Corruption Practices

The study broadens theoretical perspectives by demonstrating that age, gender, and qualification have no statistically significant impact on corruption practices. This challenges demographic-based theories of unethical behavior, shifting the focus toward structural and leadership influences rather than individual attributes. It suggests that organizational and systemic factors play a more dominant role in shaping corruption-related behaviors, advancing theoretical models that prioritize institutional governance over demographic predictors.

By integrating these insights, this study contributes to the development of holistic theoretical models of ethical governance, emphasizing the interplay between leadership, technology, and institutional frameworks in shaping organizational practices.

7 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study provides valuable practical insights for managers and policymakers regarding the role of leadership commitment and technological interventions (E-Justice) in mitigating corruption within organizations. By aligning ethical leadership with robust digital governance mechanisms, organizations can create a more transparent and accountable operational environment.

First, the findings highlight the necessity for leaders to actively demonstrate commitment to ethical governance. To achieve this, managers must articulate clear anti-corruption policies and ensure their consistent enforcement. Leadership by example is crucial, as research suggests that visible commitment to ethical standards significantly reduces corruption (Yap et al., 2020). Additionally, fostering a culture of accountability and integrity ensures that ethical governance becomes ingrained in the organization's values and daily operations. Leadership development programs should be implemented to reinforce these values across all levels of management.

Second, although E-Justice systems are intended to enhance transparency, their positive correlation with corruption practices suggests that digital interventions require careful implementation. To mitigate risks, managers should establish robust safeguards such as regular audits, compliance checks, and fraud detection mechanisms. Providing employee training and digital literacy programs is essential to prevent operational loopholes from being exploited for corrupt activities. Furthermore, continuous monitoring and evaluation of E-Justice systems will help identify vulnerabilities and enhance their effectiveness, ensuring they serve their intended purpose without unintended consequences.

Third, the study indicates that E-Justice alone is insufficient to combat corruption; it must be supported by strong leadership oversight. Organizations should align technological interventions with ethical leadership strategies to amplify their effectiveness. Leadership involvement in the design, implementation, and monitoring of E-Justice systems is crucial to prevent these technologies from becoming tools for bureaucratic inefficiencies or digital corruption. Encouraging cross-functional collaboration between IT specialists, legal teams, and senior leadership will help create an integrated approach to digital governance, ensuring that technology serves as an enabler of ethical governance rather than a vulnerability.

Fourth, findings from the study suggest that demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational qualifications have limited influence on corruption practices. This highlights the need for managers to focus on systemic and organizational strategies rather than relying on demographic attributes. Instead, organizations should prioritize leadership development programs that build ethical and competent leaders at all levels. Institutional reforms emphasizing transparency, accountability, and ethical decision-making should be implemented. Furthermore, digital tools should be leveraged responsibly by integrating them with best practices in anti-corruption and leadership-driven oversight.

Finally, to foster a long-term ethical work environment, organizations should develop comprehensive anti-corruption frameworks that integrate leadership commitment, technology, and institutional accountability. Establishing whistleblowing mechanisms with strong protections for employees who report corrupt activities is crucial to encouraging ethical behavior. Investing in ethical leadership training will ensure that leaders are equipped to navigate complex governance challenges effectively. Ultimately, organizations must adopt a holistic approach that combines ethical leadership, strategic use of technology, and institutional reforms to create a sustainable culture of integrity and accountability.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

One major limitation of this study is the restricted generalizability of its findings. The research focused on a specific sample population, which may not fully represent other industries, organizations, or cultural settings. To improve generalizability, future studies should conduct cross-cultural and multi-sectoral analyses to determine whether the observed relationships hold in diverse geographical regions, governance structures, and institutional settings.

Methodologically, this study relied on a quantitative approach, which, while useful for identifying statistical relationships, does not fully capture the nuanced, process-driven aspects of E-Justice and leadership commitment. To address this limitation, future research should incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews, case studies, and focus groups to gain deeper insights into stakeholders' lived experiences. A mixed-method approach that integrates statistical validation with qualitative narratives would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how digital interventions and leadership dynamics unfold in practice.

Another critical area for future research is the mechanisms underlying the relationship between E-Justice and corruption practices. While this study established a link between digital judicial systems and corruption, it did not explore the specific pathways through which E-Justice might inadvertently facilitate corrupt activities. Future studies should investigate mediating and moderating factors such as technological literacy, institutional support, regulatory enforcement, and socio-political influences that shape the effectiveness of digital governance. Additionally, research should examine system vulnerabilities and operational loopholes that may be exploited, potentially leading to unintended increases in corruption.

Leadership commitment was found to play a moderating role in the relationship between E-Justice and corruption, but the study did not differentiate between leadership styles. Future research should examine how transformational, transactional, or servant leadership styles influence the effectiveness

of E-Justice in mitigating corruption. Furthermore, organizational culture and governance structures may affect the interplay between leadership, technology, and ethics, making it essential to assess how cultural variations impact the success or failure of digital justice initiatives.

A potential bias in this study stems from its reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Respondents may have provided answers that reflect socially acceptable positions rather than their actual experiences. To mitigate this limitation, future research should incorporate objective data sources such as organizational performance metrics, external audits, corruption case records, and whistleblower reports to triangulate findings. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs could also be employed to establish causal relationships between E-Justice, leadership commitment, and corruption outcomes.

Finally, with the rapid advancement of emerging technologies, future research should investigate how artificial intelligence, blockchain, and big data analytics can further enhance E-Justice systems. AI-powered decision-making tools could improve judicial efficiency, blockchain technology could ensure tamper-proof records, and big data analytics could help detect fraudulent activities in real-time. However, it is also crucial to explore the ethical challenges associated with these technologies, including data privacy concerns, algorithmic bias, and the risk of digital tools being manipulated for unethical purposes. A deeper understanding of these dynamics will help policymakers and judicial institutions design more effective, transparent, and ethically sound digital governance systems.

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