

# Review of: "Corruption in the medical field: Facts from Nigeria"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting paper that documents the history of corruption in Nigeria's medical profession since independence in 1960, and the media's role in addressing this.

I have a number of recommendations to make for the revision of this paper. I will list the most significant structural issues first, and then I will address minor issues in the order that they appear in the paper.

**Major issue:**

This is a mixed-methods study, and the methodology of such studies tends to be more complex to describe than studies that are either just quantitative or just qualitative. This paper requires significant revision with respect to the description of the study, which is on pages 6 and 7 of the paper, under the heading 'Exploring research design, determining population size, and outlining sampling procedures'. These are the key questions that arose in reading the paper:

1. There is a description of the sample size (the number of respondents required overall), but this needs to be explained in terms of how many respondents were required in each category of participants – e.g., how many medical practitioners, how many medical students, and how many media professionals. Further, the reader needs to know how many of each answered the questionnaire and how many participated in interviews. The reader should also be told what the period of time for recruitment was (which months/years). Also, what was the temporal relationship between the different aspects of data collection – did the interviews occur first, for example, and inform the design of the questionnaire, or did the two forms of data collection occur simultaneously, or something else?
2. The abstract says that there were recent follow-up investigations in 2021-22, but these are not described in the methodology.
3. A separate but related issue is that in the results, it should be clear which results are reporting on the qualitative data and which are from the quantitative data. If the two kinds of data have been combined, that needs to be explained clearly in the methods section. I recommend that the results section should start with a new line stating how many people participated in the study overall, then break that down into the quantitative and the qualitative participants. The last line from page 7 should then follow (beginning 'The demographic characteristics...') as part of the results. The chart should detail the demographic characteristics of the quantitative and qualitative participants separately.
4. A third major issue with the study is that some of the references are very old, with some going back to the early or mid-2000s. Ideally, all references should be up-to-date, especially when they are critical to composing a picture of

what the Nigerian medical professional looks like. The problem with old references is that things could have changed significantly.

#### Minor issues

1. P1 - Avoid using 'her' pronouns for Nigeria – this is now outdated, and 'it/its' is preferred.
2. P1 - Avoid rhetorical questions – instead of asking what corruption in this context means, provide a definition.
3. P1 para 2, sentence two – replace 'see' with 'define.'
4. P 2, para 1, remove the word 'communication' in 'communication process' as the process described is bigger than communication alone.
5. P2, para 3, line 3 – replace 'her' with 'Nigeria.'
6. P2, para 3 - revise sentence about where Nigeria sits in terms of corruption to make it clear, up-to-date, and succinct.
7. P2, para 4, replace 'are of the opinion' with 'state.'
8. P2, para 4, replace 'random' with 'unpredictable.'
9. P3, para 4, replace 'this emerged from the study...' with, 'In 1999, Mabadeje, Taylor, and Ibrahim reported that...'
10. P3, para 4 – I recommend avoiding the word 'quacks' as it is informal and has various possible meanings in different contexts. If the authors think it is important to keep as it's used a lot, then define it clearly at first use here.
11. P3, para 5, 1st sentence after 'Additionally,' replace the word 'they' with the authors' names.
12. P 4, para 3 – what about the potential for misinformation on social media?
13. P 4, para 5 – ensure that tenses are consistent within the paragraph – e.g., in sentence 4 'identifies' should be 'identified.'
14. P 5, para 1, replace 'writing about' with 'with respect to'.
15. P5, para 2 – what is 'godfatherism'? Please define!
16. P5, para 5, first sentence: replace 'Coming' with 'returning,' then explain why and how you chose Kenya and Uganda randomly. What was the process? Why was it important to choose randomly?
17. P 6, bulleted list: revise wording, add to point 1: Impact on health services of backroom deals which can result in people being denied access to basic medical services...'; to point 2, Impact on public trust, with the result that people no longer trust....
18. P6, par 2 – don't use initials when citing authors in text – surnames only.
19. P6, para 3, replace 'leaves no doubt' with 'demonstrates.'
20. P6, para 3 – were all countries randomly selected? In the methods, it only said the African countries were. Check and ensure consistency throughout the paper.
21. P6, para 4 – the 2006 census data is too old!
22. P 7 – this whole paragraph needs careful revision. How did the overall number of respondents break down by the professional categories and geographical areas? What was the split between those that answered the questionnaire and those who were interviewed? Replace 'jotted down on a notepad' with 'recorded as contemporaneous notes using pen and paper.'
23. I don't understand the description of the qualitative analysis 'suing formal and functional indices' – what does this

mean? Is there a reference for the kind of qualitative analysis used?

24. P 9 – in the reporting of results, make it clear which came from the qualitative and which came from the quantitative element of the research.
25. P 10 – the term ‘quack’ is used - note my earlier concerns that this needs either to be replaced throughout or clearly defined when it is first used.
26. Throughout the results, ensure that it’s clear whether the results were from the qualitative or the quantitative research.