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Paper: “Rebuilding Public Trust Through Ethical Governance and Transparency: A Study of Nigerian Federal Ministries and Implications for Health Service Delivery”

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Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Karim Iddouch
International University of Casablanca, Morocco

Reviewer 2: Cruz García Lirios
Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México

Reviewer 3: Austin Uchegbu
National Open University of Nigeria

Reviewer A:
Recommendation: Revisions Required

The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.

The title is clear and is adequate, but require minor correction: I suggest that the phrase " mixed-methods" be removed to allow the flow as "A Study of..."

The ABSTRACT clearly presents objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.

The Abstract is Ok.

There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.

Nil

The study METHODS are explained clearly.

The study methods are explained clearly, however, I have issues with the literature review.

The results are clear and do not contain errors.

Yes

The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.

Yes.

The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.

Few references need to be cross-checked, to align with in-text citation.

Please rate the TITLE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the METHODS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the RESULTS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Overall Recommendation!!!

Accepted, minor revision needed

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

The Author should embed research questions, there is no hypothesis of the study. Please, author should provide the hypothesis; recap the significance of the study, improve on the academic structure of the research, and use prepare academic language of writing a research. He should do a literature review of the study.

Other comments are on the paper.

Reviewer B:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.

The title is clear and adequately reflects the content of the article.

The ABSTRACT clearly presents objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.

The abstract is clear and adequately presents the objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.

There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.

There are a few minor grammatical and spelling errors that should be corrected.

The study METHODS are explained clearly.

The methods are clearly explained and appropriate to the study.

The results are clear and do not contain errors.

The results are clear and do not contain evident errors.

The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.

The conclusion is accurate and supported by the content of the article.

The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.

The references are appropriate and consistent with in-text citations.

Please rate the TITLE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the METHODS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the RESULTS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.

[Poor] **1-5** [Excellent]

4

Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.

[Poor] **1-5** [Excellent]

4

Overall Recommendation!!!

Accepted, minor revision needed

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

This is a well-structured and relevant manuscript. Only minor language revisions are recommended to improve clarity. Overall, the paper makes a valuable contribution to the field.

Reviewer C:

Recommendation: Resubmit for Review

The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.

While the title is generally clear and addresses an important governance issue, I find that it is not fully adequate to the actual empirical content of the paper. In particular, the reference to health service delivery is not supported by the data or analysis, as the study does not include health-sector-specific institutions or service delivery outcome measures. I recommend revising the title to better reflect the actual scope of the study or, alternatively, expanding the empirical analysis to justify the current framing.

The ABSTRACT clearly presents objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.

The abstract provides a general overview of the topic and objectives; however, it overstates the strength of the empirical findings. In particular, it implies causal effects and public trust outcomes that are not directly supported by the cross-sectional and perception-based data. I recommend revising the abstract to more accurately reflect the study design, clarify that the results are associative, and avoid causal or policy-impact language that goes beyond the evidence.

There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.

Overall, the language is understandable, but I noticed several grammatical inconsistencies, awkward sentence constructions, and stylistic issues, particularly in the methodology and discussion sections. A careful professional language edit would substantially improve clarity and readability.

The study METHODS are explained clearly.

The methods section provides a general description of the survey, sampling strategy, and qualitative components. However, I find that important methodological details are missing, particularly regarding measurement construction, audit checklist scoring, qualitative interview procedures, and validation of survey instruments. As currently written, the methods section does not allow full replication and requires significant clarification and expansion.

The results are clear and do not contain errors.

The descriptive results are presented in a generally clear manner, and I did not identify obvious numerical inconsistencies. However, the statistical analysis is limited, relies heavily on bivariate correlations, and does not adequately address common method bias or potential confounding factors. As a result, while the results are internally consistent, their inferential strength is limited.

The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.

The conclusion summarizes the main findings, but I find that it overinterprets the empirical evidence, particularly by implying causal effects and institutional reform outcomes that cannot be inferred from the study design. I recommend revising the conclusion to more clearly distinguish between empirical findings and policy-oriented recommendations.

The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.

The reference list includes relevant sources; however, it would benefit from stronger engagement with recent, high-quality international literature, particularly from authoritative organizations and top-tier journals on public trust, integrity systems, and transparency reforms. Additionally, the authors should ensure consistency between in-text citations and the reference list.

Please rate the TITLE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the METHODS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

2

Please rate the RESULTS of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.

[Poor] **1-5** [Excellent]

3

Overall Recommendation!!!

Return for major revision and resubmission

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

I believe this paper addresses an important and policy-relevant topic and is based on valuable primary data. However, substantial revisions are required before it can be considered for publication. I strongly recommend improving the theoretical framing, strengthening measurement validity, clarifying the mixed-methods design, aligning claims with the empirical strategy, and resolving inconsistencies between the title, objectives, and analysis. With these improvements, the manuscript has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the literature on institutional governance and public trust.
