

ESJ Manuscript Evaluation Form

This form is designed to summarize the manuscript review that you have completed and to ensure that you have considered all appropriate criteria in your review. Your review should provide a clear statement, to the authors and editors, of the modifications necessary before the paper can be published or the specific reasons for rejection.

Please respond within the appointed time so that we can give the authors timely responses and feedback.

NOTE: ESJ promotes review procedure based on scientific validity and technical quality of the paper (not perceived the impact). You are also not required to do proofreading of the paper. It could be recommend as part of the revision.

ESJ editorial office would like to express its special gratitude for your time and efforts. Our editorial team is a substantial reason that stands ESJ out from the crowd!

Reviewer Name:	Email:
Date Manuscript Received: 21 st January 2016	Date Manuscript Review Submitted: 5 th February 2016
Manuscript Title: Season of Presidential Open Letters Revisited: Is Grand Corruption the Cancer of Nigeria? A Critical Reflection.	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 0211/16	

Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a brief explanation for each 3-less point rating.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Rating Result</i> [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.	2
<i>(a brief explanation for 3-less point rating)</i> The title broadly maps to the content, but the reference to the “presidential open letters” suggests that these letters would be the focal point of the discussion in the article. In fact, these open letters only receive relatively cursory treatment in the text. This is not necessarily a problem, but the title may need to be revisited or the discussion of the letters developed further. The subclause “Season of Presidential Open Letters Revisited” is somewhat awkwardly formulated. (I would suggest simply dropping it from the title).	
2. The abstract clearly presents objects, methods and results.	3
<i>(a brief explanation for 3-less point rating)</i> The abstract clearly presents the objects of the paper, but the reference to the presidential open letters suggests that these will be given more attention in the text. In fact, they are only dealt with briefly.	

3. There are few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	3
<i>(a brief explanation for 3-less point rating)</i> Generally, the paper is well written. I did not spot any spelling mistakes. There are, however, isolated grammatical errors that need to be addressed in the proof-reading/copy-editing process. These include lack of grammatical agreement, run-on sentences and missing words. There is a lack of consistency in using both single and double quote marks.	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	4
<i>(a brief explanation for 3-less point rating)</i> This is primarily desk-based research and, as such, the methodology is not in contention. The author generally supports her commentary with appropriate references.	
5. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	4
<i>(a brief explanation for 3-less point rating)</i> See the comments below.	
6. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	4
<i>(a brief explanation for 3-less point rating)</i> The referencing is reasonably comprehensive. That said, given the claims that are made in the text, it is particularly imperative that every claim is robustly backed up by thorough references using reputable sources.	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revisions needed	X
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

This is an interesting article, offering a hard-hitting analysis of the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria. It is engaging and thought-provoking. It draws on a wealth of material to paint a particularly vivid picture of corruption as a phenomenon. The conclusions are cogent and broadly follow from the content of the article (though the conclusion could do with more concrete suggestions for solutions).

While I believe broadly that it is publishable, I suggest there are a number of points that may need to be addressed for the article to reach its full potential:

1. The focus in the abstract and title seems to be on the open letters between the two former Presidents,

but there is comparatively little focus on these letters in the text. They seem to be used as a prelude to a general discussion on corruption, which is good, but both the title and abstract imply that they will feature more prominently. The abstract, in particular, suggests a deeper analysis of the letters. The focus on these letters may need to be revisited. Either drop discussion of them from the title and abstract, or develop the in-text discussion of these letters further.

2. The author's passion and conviction is much to be admired. She is thoroughly justified in her concerns. There is no reason why an academic article cannot take a strong stance on an issue such as corruption, provided that every claim is supported. Generally, the essay is referenced quite thoroughly. Nonetheless, in taking such a strong stance, great care is needed. In particular, every claim that is made needs to be thoroughly referenced, to support the author's claims. Where a claim is contestable or not solidly proven, it may be wise to exercise greater restraint and caution (for example, by using words like 'alleged' or 'reportedly'). I would, in particular, recommend that the author revisit aspects of the paper (particularly the claims on pages 11-12 in relation to the NSA and some points on pages 18 and 20) to ensure that she can robustly back up every claim she makes.

3. Some of the language used needs to be more objective and restrained. I understand the author's frustration at the endemic levels of corruption in Nigeria. Nonetheless, various words and phrases are used that suggest a lack of objectivity. For instance, terms like "cronies", "mind-boggling", "scourge", "evil", "inhuman", "phony", "kleptocrats", and "loot" are used. These words may well be deserved, but they are inappropriate in the context of an academic article. Passion is important in this context, but it needs to be employed in a measured fashion. There is a risk here that while what the author says is absolutely true, detractors may easily dismiss the work by focussing on the language used.

4. The point that corruption has human rights implications is a very good one, but I am not sure that the connection between corruption and human rights breaches is fully fleshed out in the text. I think the point deserves more attention, with more detail on how corruption has led to human rights breaches. The connection needs to be traced in a more overt manner, where possible.

5. Table 1 is very interesting and useful, but it appears to have been dropped into the discussion without any lead in or context, and is not directly referenced in the accompanying text. It needs to be introduced in the text, with follow up discussion of the implications of the table's content. In other words, it needs to be better integrated in the body of the essay.

6. The graphic used on page 13 is missing detail.

Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:

The recommended period of four days for a response is optimistic to say the least! It is very difficult (particularly during term and during exam correction periods) to turn around a considered response in such a short time. The impression is given that the review need only be cursory, though I am sure that is not your intention.