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Evaluating the Quality of Corruption Surveys for Comparative Research and Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Reliable and accurate corruption measurement is crucial for effective governance, evidence-based policymaking, and the monitoring of global goals such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While perception-based corruption metrics are widely used, they face criticism due to conceptual ambiguities and vulnerability to societal biases. Experience-based corruption surveys offer a promising alternative, yet their methodological quality remains underexplored. To address this issue, this study evaluates 58 national and cross-national corruption surveys using a comprehensive framework based on six quality dimensions developed by the United Nations: relevance, accuracy, reliability, periodicity, accessibility, and comparability. Findings reveal that cross-national surveys excel in comparability and reliability, whereas national surveys face challenges in accessibility and periodicity. Specialized surveys generally outperform non-specialized ones. Regional disparities also emerge: European and Latin American surveys score highest in relevance and comparability, while Asian and African surveys struggle with accessibility and periodicity. By using this framework, academics and policy makers can promote input and output harmonization and thus enhance corruption survey methodologies and ensure better data reliability for anti-corruption policy.

1 | Introduction

In the era of sustainable development and effective governance, the measurement of corruption has emerged as a fundamental tool for policy development, decision-making, and advocacy (Chengalur-Smith et al. 1999). Reliable corruption metrics are essential for shaping evidence-based, effective anti-corruption strategies, ensuring accountability and complying with inter-organizational cooperation requirements (Batini and Scannapieco 2006). They play a crucial role in monitoring the progress of global initiatives, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs) (United Nations 2015). High-quality corruption data is also critical for enforcing international anti-corruption conventions, including the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention (OECD 1997) and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2004).

Despite the proliferation of corruption metrics indexes in recent decades, the systematic evaluations of their quality have lagged (Agerberg 2022; Bello y Villarino 2021; Delios et al. 2024; Mugellini et al. 2021; Wysmulek 2019). The accuracy and reliability of these measurements are often questioned due to conceptual ambiguities, methodological inconsistencies, and potential biases in perception-based and experience-based corruption metrics (Ko and Samajdar 2010).

Recent research has highlighted persistent challenges in operationalizing UN-SDG indicators across countries and sectors. For instance, Leal Filho et al. (2025) show that despite widespread rhetorical commitment to the SDGs, their practical implementation is often hindered by a lack of context-sensitive indicators and weak monitoring mechanisms. This underlines the importance of making available high-quality, comparable data.

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The United Nations (2019) has identified six critical dimensions for assessing data quality in general: relevance (whether the data meet the needs of users), accuracy/internal validity (whether the data reflect the reality of the phenomenon being measured), reliability (the methodological consistency of the instrument over time and across contexts), periodicity (the regularity of data collection), accessibility (the availability of methodological documents and raw data), and comparability (the extent to which the data collection method is standardized across countries and over time). However, evaluations of SDGs indicators in general, and corruption metrics in particular, using these quality criteria, are still underdeveloped (Mugellini et al. 2021; Berkachy et al. 2025). This lack of systematic quality assessment has significant implications for comparative research and context-sensitive anti-corruption policy design (Mugellini et al. 2021). Both require high-quality, comparable data collected from diverse geographical and institutional contexts. Inconsistencies in methodologies limit the accessibility of survey data, and the absence of standardized frameworks hinders efforts to compare corruption levels across countries and develop effective, locally anchored strategies. If the data underlying evidence-based policymaking is unreliable, anti-corruption interventions risk being ineffective, misdirected, or even misguided.

The need for rigorous data quality evaluation in comparative research is also acknowledged by studies on input (pre) and output (post) harmonization of data collections (UNODC and UNECE 2010; Wysmułek et al. 2022). Input harmonization ensures the standardization of data collection instruments before fieldwork, establishing a consistent framework for gathering data across diverse contexts. Output harmonization addresses potential distortions caused by contextual or technical factors, such as cultural norms, economic conditions, or data collection methods. These processes, done correctly, facilitate cross-country comparisons and the interpretability of data collections over time.

Drawing on the increasing need for corruption data quality and the importance of input and output harmonization, this study provides and tests a structured quality evaluation framework for corruption surveys that measure citizens' or businesses' experiences with corruption. This framework is meant to analyze and promote both input and output harmonization of corruption data. In terms of output harmonization, it can be used to establish which surveys are sufficiently robust and similar to be harmonized and synthesized across time and space. In terms of input harmonization, the framework can be used by institutions to adjust existing data collection efforts to comply with international data quality requirements while accounting for local peculiarities. Standardizing survey methodologies before data collection allows researchers and policymakers to ensure comparable data while accommodating country-specific contexts, ultimately enhancing the comparability and applicability of corruption data.

By promoting quality evaluation of open data for corruption research, this study also contributes to enhancing data-sharing mechanisms, reducing redundancies in data collections, and ensuring that policymakers and scholars can access high-quality, comparable data for informed decision-making. From a broader perspective, evaluating data quality on a transversal and complex phenomenon such as corruption provides insights for improving data collection and analysis across all UN-SDGs.

Two previous studies by Mugellini et al. (2021) and Berkachy et al. (2025) applied an adapted version of this quality evaluation framework (QUEST_16.5) to a smaller set of surveys. While these papers demonstrated the feasibility of assessing survey data quality through that framework, the present study goes further by applying the complete framework across a global sample of 58 surveys, covering 185 countries. It also explores variations by region and survey type, offering a broader empirical basis for comparative research.

The study is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the relevant literature, including the main challenges of comparative corruption research (Section 2.1), the opportunities and limitations of using sample surveys (Section 2.2), existing efforts to evaluate the quality of corruption data (Section 2.3), and the role of input and output harmonization in cross-national research (Section 2.4). Section 3 outlines the research objectives and methodology, including the quality evaluation framework (Section 3.1), the sample of 58 corruption surveys analyzed, and the selection criteria used to identify them (Section 3.2). Section 4 presents the results of the quality evaluation of corruption surveys in general (Section 4.1), compares the quality of national and cross-national surveys (Section 4.2) and surveys developed in different continents (Section 4.3). Section 5 discusses the main findings, and Section 6 concludes with reflections on the implications for future comparative research and anti-corruption policy design.

2 | Literature Review

2.1 | Challenges to Comparative Research on Corruption

Comparative research on corruption is not novel and can be traced back to 18th-century scholars such as Beccaria, Bentham, Voltaire, and Wilson. Its popularity has often been overshadowed by national studies, particularly those conducted in the United States. In the 20th century, a renewed interest in cross-national corruption research emerged across multiple disciplines, mainly driven by the globalization of research endeavors and significant advances in data availability. Technological developments, particularly improvements in the quality and quantity of cross-national quantitative data, further promoted comparative research (Jreisat 2012; Stamatel 2009).

Despite these advances, comparative corruption research faces theoretical and methodological challenges. Theoretically, the dominance of "Grand" theories, or meta-narratives, often rooted in national frameworks, primarily from the United States, has posed obstacles to developing context-sensitive comparative approaches (Neuman & Berger, 1988; Stamatel 2009). The adaptation of national theories to international settings without sufficient contextualization limits their applicability and can lead to misinterpretations of corruption dynamics across different governance systems.

From a methodological standpoint, the main challenge is obtaining reliable and comparable data sources. Recent critiques have highlighted the limitations of corruption indices in accurately capturing trends, particularly when comparing

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corruption perceptions and experiences across countries. Ko and Samajdar (2010) note that leading international indices frequently fail to disclose the methodological underpinnings of their scores and lack adequate differentiation between perception-based and experience-based indicators, raising concerns about their reliability for comparative analysis. Gutmann et al. (2020) and Roca (2011) underline how surveys' question phrasing, respondents' characteristics, country characteristics, and the method used for synthesizing indicators might lead to distortions that undermine the reliability of cross-country comparisons.

Measuring corruption in a cross-national context requires addressing significant substantive, legal, and statistical discrepancies that affect data comparability (Harrendorf 2018; Von Hofer 2000). Substantive factors depend on the likelihood of citizens reporting corruption to authorities, differences in law enforcement responses, and the prevalence of corruption. Legal factors refer to how corruption is defined legally across jurisdictions, affecting the classification and recording of corruption-related offences. Statistical factors refer to the methods used for compiling and elaborating corruption statistics, including variations in the counting rules used to collect crime data and administrative recording systems (Von Hofer 2000; Aebi 2008).

Given these challenges, sample surveys have emerged as one of the most effective tools for bypassing the limitations of official corruption data for comparative research (Lynch 2006; UNODC et al. 2018; Jandl 2013). These surveys interview a representative sample of individuals about their direct encounters with corruption and are easily standardized to obtain data comparable across countries. They are, therefore, supposed to produce crime measures independently of the legal system, police activities, and statistical counting rules used to collect administrative data.

2.2 | Opportunities and Limits of Sample Surveys for Comparative Research on Corruption

Sample surveys on corruption have emerged as a response to two main issues in measuring corruption: its hidden nature and the consequent focus on perception-based approaches and indirect measurement.

Corruption is often concealed and involves collusion, making it rarely reported to authorities (Rose 2017; Mugellini 2022). Consequently, administrative data on corruption collected by criminal justice institutions (i.e., police, prosecution, courts) and anti-corruption authorities significantly underestimate corruption prevalence, because they suffer from a very high "dark figure" (the difference between the number of crimes experienced by a specific subject in a particular context and the number of officially recorded crimes).

Several attempts have been made to overcome the hidden nature of corruption, most notably by relying on indirect indicators (such as expert assessments, citizens' perceptions or composite indexes based on contextual variables potentially linked with corruption) (UNODC et al. 2018) when direct measures of corruption experiences were unavailable or difficult to obtain.

Perception-based corruption metrics flourished in the 1990s to quantify subjective opinions and perceptions of corruption among citizens, business representatives, civil servants, or other stakeholders. The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index is the most well-known among these efforts. In the same period, indirect measures of corruption entailing a combination of experts' assessments, citizens' perceptions, and other contextual and institutional factors that might be linked to corruption (e.g., government transparency, judicial independence, digital access, economic development) also emerged. This led to the development of composite indices such as the *World Bank Control of Corruption Indicator*, the *Global Integrity Index* by Global Integrity, and the *Index of Public Integrity*. These methods are mainly used to advocate for the fight against corruption and for awareness-raising activities that guide policymakers, investors, and donors. Several scholars (Heywood and Rose 2014; Knack 2007; Mungiu-Pippidi and Dadašov 2016; Sequeira 2012; UNODC et al. 2018) have highlighted these methods' validity, accuracy, and explanatory shortcomings. From a conceptual point of view, indirect indicators were mainly criticized because they combine different types and shades of corruption and compile many variables referring to a variety of different phenomena (Knack 2007; Sequeira 2012; UNODC et al. 2018). Ko and Samajdar (2010) further argue that many international indices do not specify the source of data and the level of comparability of the information they aggregate. They also claim these indices suffer from selection bias, longitudinal sensitivity, and measurement errors (Ko and Samajdar 2010). Their analysis reinforces the need for transparent methodologies and detailed metadata, especially when this data is used to design anti-corruption strategies or monitor UN-SDGs.

Scholars mainly criticize perception-based corruption metrics for their conceptual ambiguity, sensitivity to media exposure and political rhetoric, and limited usefulness for policy design (Knack 2007; Sequeira 2012; Gutmann et al. 2020; Mungiu-Pippidi and Dadašov 2016). These indicators tend to mainly reflect administrative corruption and citizens' beliefs, but often fail to reflect experienced corruption (Roca 2011) and more complex forms of corruption such as "state capture" or corruption in public procurement (Knack 2007). A recent empirical work by Charron (2016) provides an important counterpoint. Using data from over 85,000 respondents across 24 European countries, he finds that citizens' perceptions of corruption are strongly correlated with their reported experiences, and that both align closely with expert-based indices such as the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and the World Bank's Control of Corruption indicator. Moreover, he finds little evidence that contextual variables (such as GDP, inequality, or political polarization) significantly bias citizens' perceptions. These findings suggest that perception-based measures may reflect actual governance conditions at least in relatively well-institutionalized contexts such as Europe. Nevertheless, Charron (2016) also acknowledges that experience-based measures remain crucial for understanding the actual level of corruption, particularly petty corruption, and for validating perception-based indices. He also notes that these surveys often lack consistency in question wording, coverage, and disaggregation of bribery types. This reinforces the need for a quality evaluation framework capable of assessing the internal validity, comparability, and reliability of experience-based corruption surveys, precisely the gap this study aims to fill.

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The use of "Big Data" to analyze corruption risks can be mentioned among the most recent and successful indirect approaches for measuring corruption. Notably, recent studies have applied machine learning to large-scale administrative datasets to identify risk indicators and estimate the price impact of corruption in procurement (Abdou et al. 2022). Others have analyzed the extra-legal governance structures (including criminal organizations) that facilitate systemic corruption in procurement settings (Fazekas et al. 2021). While these contributions significantly advance our ability to detect corruption risks in public procurement, they capture only a partial aspect of the corruption phenomenon, mainly focusing on elite-level, institutionalized forms of corruption. They do not directly address everyday experiences of corruption by citizens or businesses, nor do they account for less visible forms such as favoritism or sextortion. This underscores the need for complementary approaches, such as experience-based surveys.

Sample surveys have emerged as a response to the limitations of indirect corruption measures. Indeed, they allow us to ask citizens, business representatives, or civil servants whether they were directly solicited or engaged in acts of corruption, and thus collect more concrete, standardized, and actionable data (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2023).

Measuring experiences of corruption is essential for several reasons. It allows corruption prevalence to be monitored and understood, helps to meet inter-organizational cooperation requirements, such as tracking progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and supports decision-making processes. They are based on solid and transparent methodology, often standardized internationally, and use practical rather than purely legal definitions and corruption cases (Mugellini 2022). Sample surveys also allow the gathering of micro-level data on corruption cases, affected individuals (bribe payers and receivers), and their demographic, social, and economic backgrounds (Lynch 2006; UNODC et al. 2018). This information is fundamental for creating effective policies and monitoring their effectiveness and efficiency. Experience-based measures are fundamental to monitor the effectiveness of anti-corruption interventions or inform evidence-based decision-making.

For all these reasons, sample surveys are widely recognized as the most appropriate and methodologically sound tool for collecting corruption data (UNODC et al. 2018; Jandl 2013). Sample surveys are also the suggested method for collecting data to compute the UN-SDGs indicators on corruption, for individuals (*16.5.1—Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months*) and for businesses (*16.5.2—Proportion of businesses who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months*) (Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators (E/CN.3/2017/2*)).

Despite their advantages, sample surveys also entail shortcomings. They are often accused of offering limited coverage of certain forms of corruption. This might lead to misinterpreting the prevalence and nature of bribery and potentially increase the focus on issues that might not be the most relevant for a specific country or sector of activity (Andersson 2016; Chabova 2017; Knack 2007). Chabova (2017) also highlights how public opinion surveys analyze mainly bribery and, in many cases, only passive bribery (i.e., whether the respondent has experienced a request or hint for bribery) (Chabova 2017, 1879). The focus on passive bribery also affects the choice of anti-corruption responses; being requested a bribe is a very different concept and entails different mechanisms and motivations than paying the bribe (Chabova 2017; Villeneuve et al. 2019). While bribery is easy to measure and identify, it leads to a focus on low-level corruption, thus disregarding potential problems of a more systemic nature. Surveys may offer insights into certain aspects of state capture, such as undue influence over laws and regulations affecting businesses (Knack 2007). However, they are unlikely to capture corrupt transactions that occur entirely within state institutions or those rooted in conflicts of interest (Chabova 2017).

The social desirability bias is a second critique. This bias is linked to the respondents' unwillingness to disclose socially undesirable behaviors. As corruption is recognized as a socially undesirable issue, fear or shame of admitting their experience of it may lead respondents to underreport bribery (UNODC et al. 2018). This bias varies across populations and depends on the type of corruption experienced. For example, extortionary corruption is usually reported more often than collusive corruption (Jancsics 2019). Other possible limitations relate to reporting bias as respondents can either misunderstand the question or fail to remember the correct answers (telescoping effect and memory decay) (UNODC and UNEC 2010, 47).

2.3 | Quality Evaluations of Corruption Surveys and Metrics

In a context where, despite their limits, sample surveys represent one of the best possible solutions to measuring corruption, it is fundamental to ascertain their level of quality and potential variations in quality levels across countries.

While perception-based and indirect indicators of corruption have been widely assessed (Bello y Villarino 2021; Charron 2016; Ko and Samajdar 2010; Sequeira 2012), experience-based surveys have rarely been methodologically and systematically evaluated. The present study addresses this gap by introducing and applying a framework that assesses such surveys against six quality dimensions defined by the United Nations (2019), and focusing on cross-national comparability.

Existing research on corruption metrics' evaluation has addressed specific quality dimensions separately. For example, Ko and Samajdar (2010) evaluated the validity, transparency, and utility of some of the most well-known corruption indices, highlighting the lack of systematic assessment practices in existing global corruption measurement. Other scholars have focused on the accuracy of international and European corruption surveys (Malito 2014; Chabova 2017). Delios et al. (2024) have evaluated the main methodological errors in corruption research, while Bello y Villarino (2021) have assessed the reliability and validity of two widely used corruption indicators (the *Transparency*

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International Corruption Perception Index and the *World Bank Control of Corruption Indicator*). Wysmulek (2019) has drawn attention to the impact of country representation on corruption in cross-national survey projects, identifying it as a prominent source of bias in comparative research that is frequently overlooked. Agerberg (2022) has focused on accuracy, political, and sensitivity biases in citizen surveys on corruption. De Sousa et al. (2023) discussed how corruption has been conceptualized and evaluated in survey research. Their DATACORR database systematizes over 3000 survey items from more than 300 rounds worldwide, highlighting the dominance of "Generic-Sociotropic" questions (those addressing corruption broadly and at the societal level) and the relative scarcity of "Specific-Egocentric" ones (focusing on individual experiences with clearly defined behaviors such as bribery). While their work offers an important empirical overview of corruption surveys, it does not assess the overall quality of the surveys themselves. Mugellini et al. (2021) and Berkachy et al. (2025) have focused on corruption surveys' evaluation but have not identified geographical variations in quality levels.

None of the above-mentioned studies has comprehensively assessed the six dimensions of data quality (United Nations 2019) across different types of corruption surveys and geographical regions. These elements are essential for adequately understanding, evaluating, and deploying context-specific anti-corruption policies.

2.4 | Input and Output Harmonization to Support Comparative Corruption Research Based on Survey Data

To improve the comparability of corruption survey data, researchers rely on two key processes: input and output harmonization (UNODC and UNECE 2010; Wysmułek et al. 2022). Input harmonization refers to standardizing the survey instruments before launching, ensuring consistent data collection across contexts. International organizations such as Transparency International, UNODC, and the World Bank provide pre-tested survey templates to facilitate this process. On the other hand, output harmonization seeks to mitigate potential distortions in survey responses caused by cultural, economic, or institutional differences and technical elements that influence how corruption is perceived and reported. For instance, drawing on the Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map (World Values Survey 7 2023), in wealthier countries with high levels of secular and self-expression cultural values (e.g., Sweden), where wealth is high and survival is less of a concern, citizens may perceive petty corruption as problematic, not necessarily because it is more prevalent but because people are more sensitive to it (Lambsdorff 2005). In countries with survival-oriented and traditional cultural values, citizens may underreport petty corruption because it is normalized and seen as necessary or because they prioritize more serious forms of corruption. Likewise, economic conditions, such as unemployment rates or the structural composition of the GDP, may also shape how corruption is perceived.

Input and output harmonization are complementary. The former ensures methodological consistency and comparability during data collection, while the latter allows researchers to adjust for contextual differences and variations in survey quality when interpreting results across countries.

A recent example of output harmonization is provided by the Subnational Corruption Database (SCD) developed by Crombach and Smits (2024), which systematically harmonizes survey-based corruption indicators across 1473 subnational regions and 807 surveys worldwide. Their approach involves aligning semantic definitions, survey items, and temporal units, allowing users to distinguish and compare petty and grand corruption both longitudinally and cross-nationally. This level of output harmonization significantly enhances comparability and usability, especially for researchers and policymakers working on SDG-related monitoring at both national and subnational levels.

The work of Crombach and Smits (2024) further underscores the importance of output harmonization, which enables researchers to reuse and refine existing data rather than collecting new datasets. This cost-effective approach supports longitudinal analyses and strengthens evidence-based policymaking by leveraging existing resources (Crombach and Smits 2024). Furthermore, it aligns with the broader agenda of open data practices that advocate for greater transparency, accessibility, and reusability of publicly available datasets (Zuiderwijk and Janssen 2014), especially in relation to anti-corruption research (Martinez and Whitley 2023). However, the Subnational Corruption Database does not systematically evaluate the methodological quality of the surveys it combines.

Tomescu-Dubrow et al. (2023) developed an output (post)-harmonization quality assessment framework and argue that data comparability is unreliable without transparent documentation and construct validation. Their work reinforces the importance of evaluating the quality of surveys before aggregating their data, a gap this study directly addresses by applying a framework across six UN-defined quality dimensions.

By systematically evaluating the quality of corruption surveys, researchers can identify surveys with consistent and comparable quality levels, thereby strengthening input harmonization and using output harmonization to refine cross-country comparisons. Ensuring methodological consistency and contextual sensitivity is critical for producing meaningful comparative analyses that accurately reflect corruption trends across different settings.

3 | Materials and Methods

This paper aims to assess the quality of existing sample surveys on corruption and how it varies across geographical regions, considering six dimensions of quality: relevance, accuracy, reliability, periodicity, accessibility, and comparability (United Nations 2019). The main objectives of the study are:

1. To identify variations in the quality dimensions (relevance, accuracy, reliability, periodicity, accessibility and comparability) of existing corruption surveys.
2. To examine how survey characteristics influence overall quality.

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3. To understand geographical variations of the quality dimensions.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, this paper follows five methodological steps:

1. Defining the analytical framework (Section 3.1).
2. Identifying the existing corruption surveys (Section 3.2).
3. Assessing the quality of surveys (Section 4.1).
4. Evaluating linkages between survey quality and characteristics (Section 4.2).
5. Evaluating geographic variations in survey quality (Section 4.2).

3.1 | Defining the Analytical Framework

This section briefly presents the framework used to evaluate the quality of corruption surveys, the "Quality Evaluation Framework for Sustainable Development Data on Target 16.5" (QUEST_16.5).

The QUEST_16.5 framework builds upon the United Nations National Quality Assurance Framework—UN NQAF (United Nations 2019) and incorporates international methodological guidelines on corruption measurement. According to the ISO guidance on quality management systems (Section 3.6.2), "quality" is "the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfils requirements." The UN NQAF clarifies that, for statistics, quality should be operationalized in a set of dimensions: relevance, accuracy and reliability, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, and coherence and comparability. These dimensions are adapted to corruption measurement using international guidelines and suggestions in the UNODC-UNDP Manual on Corruption Surveys. While the UNODC-UNDP Manual provides recommendations on how to conduct corruption surveys, it does not address the data quality issue.

As shown in Table 1, the tool integrates the six quality dimensions and contextualizes them to measure corruption. Mugellini et al. (2021) provide a complete presentation of the tool.

3.2 | Identifying the Existing National and Cross-National Corruption Surveys (Sample Description)

Four main selection criteria have been used to identify and include most existing corruption surveys in our sample. These selection criteria are in line with those used by Mugellini et al. (2021):

1. Scope: Surveys having as main scope the measurement of experiences with corruption (i.e., specialized corruption surveys), as well as other sample surveys, such as victimization surveys, governmental, environmental, and social surveys, that contain a minimum of two questions addressing experiences with corruption (non-specialized surveys) were considered.
2. Oversight Body: National surveys conducted or mandated by national institutional agencies (e.g., national statistical offices or governmental agencies) and cross-national surveys conducted by international intergovernmental organizations (such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the Organization of American States, the European Commission) or by internationally recognized non-governmental organizations (e.g., Transparency International).
3. Target population: Surveys targeting individuals and businesses have been considered.
4. Timeframe: Surveys conducted between 2005 and 2022 have been considered.

The search was conducted within electronic databases, journals, and websites. In particular, online websites and databases of (a) national statistical offices and other governmental agencies (e.g., Ministries of the Interior, Ministry of Justice, Anti-Corruption Commissions, etc.) from different countries; (b) international agencies (e.g., the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Economic Forum, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, USAID); (c) international non-governmental organizations (e.g., Transparency International).

The search was based on selected keywords (e.g., type of corruption, type of instrument, focus of the instrument, target population), which were searched separately and in combination. These keywords have been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Arabic.

Furthermore, the authors consulted a group of relevant scholars and international researchers on corruption (i.e., participants to the panel on Corruption measurement of the 2023 conference of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR); members of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNCAC Coalition, Transparency International, Open Government Partnership Initiative, and representatives of National Statistical Offices in countries with a long-standing experience in corruption surveys) to validate the completeness of the identified surveys' list.

The search identified 58 surveys, 40 national and 18 cross-national (see Table 2). The selected surveys cover 185 countries from all continents. The complete list of identified surveys is reported in the Appendix A.

In the selected sample, 22 surveys can be considered specialized as they focus on corruption and have been specifically designed to measure corruption. Thirty-six non-specialized surveys cover corruption, among other phenomena. Usually, these surveys cover corruption as one of the main factors in defining a country's economic and social situation (e.g., surveys on citizens' perception of public institutions, governance, integrity, and democracy, or victimization surveys).

Most of the specialized surveys have been conducted at the national level, and only four are cross-national: the Global Corruption Barometer (Transparency International), the Special Eurobarometer on Corruption, the Flash Eurobarometer

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TABLE 1 | The Quality Evaluation framework for sustainable development data on target 16.5 (QUEST_16.5).

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Operationalization	Categories
Relevance for SDGs Target 16.5 Evaluate whether the survey provides data that helps monitor corruption. Target 16.5. SDGs indicators on corruption.	UN SDG indicators for monitoring Target 16.5 on corruption[a]	Coverage of at least two of the three elements to compute the UN SDGs indicators of corruption (Target 16.5) for individuals and businesses: (a) Contact with public officials in the previous 12 months (b) Bribe paid to public officials in the previous 12 months (c) Bribe requested by public officials in the previous 12 months	1. Low = None of the three elements is covered 2. Medium = One of three elements covered 3. High = Two or all of three elements covered
Accuracy/Validity It refers to how well a concept, idea, or behavior is operationalized and translated into a functioning and operating reality. It assesses the number and types of questions on the experience of corruption and how they are formulated.	Questions Formulation	(a) Making respondents feel to have had a passive role in the corrupt transaction (victim) (b) Avoiding the terms bribery or corruption. Using instead a practical description of the events to be investigated (c) Defining the reference period to consider in the questions (e.g., 12 months)	1. Low = 1 out of 3 2. Medium = 2 out of 3 3. High = 3 out 3
	Follow-up questions	Number of follow-up questions on corruption events and forms and the level of data disaggregation included in the survey[b]	1. Low = less than 6 2. Medium = 12–6 3. High = 18–13 topics
Reliability Refers to the consistency and stability of the measurement over time and other conditions. It assesses the type of target population, sampling scheme, data selection, and collection mode.	*Methodological Recommendations* on target population, sampling unit, and respondents' selection	Surveys of individuals: – Sampling unit is an individual (person) and not a household – Target population refers to individuals aged 18 years or older – Sampling units are randomly selected Business surveys: – Sampling unit is an individual business establishment and not a business entity – The target businesses belong to specific economic sizes and sectors – Sampling units are randomly selected	1. Low = 1 out of 3 2. Medium = 2 out of 3 3. High = 3 out of 3
	Methodological Suggestions on survey mode, pilot survey, sample design, sample size	– Survey mode is either face-to-face, or CATI interviews (or both) – Pilot surveys have been conducted before the full survey – Results are representative in terms of main geographical conglomerates, based on the sample size – Stratification of the sample by the number of employees (only for business surveys)	Surveys of individuals:: 1. Low = 1 out of 4 2. Medium = 2 out of 4 3. High = 3 or 4 out of 4 Business surveys: 1. Low = 1 out of 5 2. Medium = 2 or 3 out of 5 3. High = 4 or 5 out 5

(Continues)

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TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Operationalization	Categories
Periodicity		Number of times the survey has been conducted	1. Low = once 2. Medium = twice 3. High = more than twice
Accessibility	Survey documents	Publicly accessible questionnaire, methodology, executive summary/introduction, and reports with primary results	1. Low = Neither full questionnaire nor methodological details 2. Medium = No full questionnaire but reports with main questions and methodology 3. High = Questionnaire, methodology, and analysis of results available
	Microdata	Publicly accessible microdata (e.g., online access of individual-level data, downloadable without restrictions)	1. Low = Not available 2. Medium = Available but restricted access 3. High = Publicly accessible
	Language	Language means whether the survey is conducted in the language of the concerned country and whether populations have access to and can understand the results of the survey	1. Neither the questionnaire nor the report are in the country's primary language 2. The questionnaire or the report is in the country's primary language 3. The questionnaire and the report are in the country's primary language

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TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Operationalization	Categories
Comparability Assesses whether the surveys follow international recommendations on how to structure corruption questions (coverage of SDGs 16.5 key elements and UNODC-UNDP recommendations) and on the data collection method (average of the score obtained for the UNODC-UNDP methodological recommendations and suggestions for reliability).	Standard Questions	Score based on "Items Covered" in the survey and "Question Formulation"	1. Low = None of the three elements of SDGs Target 16.5 are covered, and none or only one of the recommendations for question formulation are respected 2. Medium = At least two of the three elements of SDGs Target 16.5 are covered, and two recommendations minimum for question formulation are respected 3. High = At least two of the three elements of SDGs Target 16.5 are covered and all three recommendations for question formulation are respected
	Standard methodology	Score based on "Methodological recommendations" and "Methodological Suggestions"	1. Low = No methodological recommendations and suggestions are applied 2. Medium = Only one between methodological recommendations and suggestions are applied 3. High = Both methodological recommendations and suggestions are applied

[a]16.5.1: Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months. 16.5.2: Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months.
[b]The list of items of corruption can be found in the UNODC-UNDP Manual 2018 ([2]).

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TABLE 2 | Number of identified corruption surveys by selection criteria: Years 2005–2022.

	National surveys		Cross-national surveys		
	Business	**Population**	**Business**	**Population**	**Total**
Specialized corruption surveys	6	12	2	2	22
Non-specialized surveys	4	18	4	10	36
Total	10	30	6	12	58
Total	40		18		58

on Corruption among Businesses (European Commission), and the Bribe Payers Index (Transparency International). Most national surveys on corruption have been conducted by national statistical offices with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The higher number of surveys targeting individuals rather than businesses also emerges. This is due to delayed attention given to business corruption and the challenges in conducting business surveys.

The identified survey has been analyzed regarding methodological quality using QUEST 16.5. The following sections describe the main results of the quality assessment.

3.3 | Data Analysis Methods

A multi-step analytical strategy was adopted to analyze the methodological quality of the selected corruption surveys. First, descriptive statistics and boxplots were used to summarize and compare the overall quality scores across survey types (e.g., national vs. cross-national, specialized vs. non-specialized).

Second, a K-means clustering with Euclidean distance was conducted to visually identify patterns and groupings of surveys with similar quality profiles. This allowed for the detection of internal consistency and divergence among surveys.

Third, to explore potential relationships between the six quality dimensions, a set of Spearman correlations was computed, overall and disaggregated by continent. Only statistically significant correlations were retained and interpreted. Fourth, to reduce dimensionality and identify latent structures in the quality indicators, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed. Three principal components were retained based on their contribution to total variance. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's sphericity test confirmed the adequacy of the dataset for PCA.

4 | Results

4.1 | Quality Evaluation of Corruption Surveys

Surveys have been analyzed according to the QUEST_16.5 quality dimensions of relevance, accuracy, reliability, periodicity, accessibility, and comparability. Different colors and numbers indicate different levels of quality for each dimension included in Tables 3 and 4: high quality (dark green cells, score 3), upper-medium quality (light green cells, score 2.5), medium quality (yellow cells, score 2.0), low-medium quality (orange cells, score 1.5) and low quality (red cells, score 1.0). Blank cells indicate the lack of data to evaluate that specific quality dimension. An overall quality score has been computed for each survey as the average of the scores of the 10 quality sub-dimensions (indicated in the last column of Tables 3 and 4).

Among cross-national surveys focused on corruption, the Eurobarometer of the European Commission shows a high methodological quality for individual and business surveys. In addition, the Global Corruption Barometer of Transparency International (GCB_P_TI) can be considered good general quality, while the Bribe Payers Index is not.

The GCB_TI presents a very high relevance as it includes all elements to compute the indicators requested by Target 16.5 of the SDGs, but its accuracy is low. Indeed, even if the questionnaire covers favoritism, it uses the term bribery in the main question to measure experience. This is a negatively loaded term that might lead to social desirability bias and negatively affect the accuracy of the data collected. Its methodological reliability is good, as well as its periodicity, but the accessibility score is low as there is no public access to microdata (only data aggregated at the country level are publicly available).

When considering non-specialized cross-national surveys, the Life in Transition III (LiTS III) of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is among those showing the highest level of quality, together with the International Crime Victimization Survey. The Arab Transformations Survey and World Values Survey show the lowest level of quality, mainly for validity issues (i.e., how corruption is defined and operationalized). The World Values Survey (WVS_P) presents a relatively low-quality score (2.17) because of its low relevance to monitoring SDGs and accuracy. Indeed, it measures only indirect experiences of corruption ("people like you or your neighbors ...").

Most specialized national corruption surveys identified below (Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria, and the Western Balkans) have been conducted by national agencies with the support of the United Nations. This means they are aligned with international standards for accuracy and comparability, reflected in their high methodological quality score. It is interesting to notice the low-quality scores of non-specialized national surveys compared to specialized ones. This suggests a lack of

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TABLE 3 | Quality assessment of existing *cross-national* surveys on corruption.

Cross-national—specialized corruption surveys							
	Relevance	**Accuracy**	**Reliability**	**Periodicity**	**Accessibility**	**Comparability**	**Overall score**
EBS_P_EC	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	2.67
EBF_B_EC	3.0	1.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.67
GFS_B_EY	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	1.5	2.5	2.50
BPI_B_TI	2.0	1.5	2.5	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.17
GCB_P_TI	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.75
Cross-national—unspecialized corruption surveys							
	Relevance	**Accuracy**	**Reliability**	**Periodicity**	**Accessibility**	**Comparability**	**Overall score**
BEEPS_B_EBRD-WB	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.50
LiTS III_P_EBRD	3.0	2.5	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.58
AMEBAR_P_LAPOP	3.0	1.5	2.5	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.50
EQI_P_QoG	3.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.50
GEC_B_PWC	3.0	2.5	2.5	3.0	1.0	2.5	2.42
ES_B_WB	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.50
WCY_B_IMD	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	2.42
ICVS_P_UNIL	3.0	1.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.58
ARBBAR_P_ARB&AL	1.0	1.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.25
AFRBAR_P_AFR&TI	3.0	1.5	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	2.50
ARBTS_P_UABEU	2.0	1.5	3.0	1.0	2.5	2.5	2.08
GPS_SHaSA	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.0	1.5	3.0	2.50
WVS_P	1.0	1.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.5	2.17

awareness of how corruption should be measured appropriately to collect accurate, relevant, and comparable information on this phenomenon.

Figures 1 and 2 below present the boxplot of the quality score of the selected surveys, distinguished between cross-national and national and specialized and non-specialized surveys.

The mean quality scores of the cross-national surveys are higher overall than those of the national ones. Their scores are concentrated/clustered around 2.4 (out of 3) with one outlier (the TI Bribe Payers Index). Conversely, the quality scores of national surveys are very dispersed, from 1.5 to almost 2.4, with no outliers. This highest quality of cross-national surveys might be attributed to the fact that they are conducted by agencies that have also developed the methodological guidelines used to evaluate their quality.

The boxplot of specialized vs. non-specialized surveys shows that the specialized surveys are more concentrated than the non-specialized ones. The specialized surveys have overall higher quality scores between 2.1 and 2.5 with three outliers, while the non-specialized ones are more dispersed, ranging from 1.5 to 2.4.

To further explore the variation across surveys, we developed scatterplots based on the six quality dimensions and observed clear clusters of surveys. Figure 3 shows the clustering of surveys differentiated by their level of specialization and shows that specialized (on corruption issues) surveys tend to form tighter clusters in terms of quality score (methodological consistency) while non-specialized surveys are more dispersed. This evidence supports the boxplot comparison that showed greater heterogeneity among non-specialized surveys.

Figure 4 shows clusters differentiated by the surveys' geographical scope. Cross-national surveys cluster closely around higher quality scores, highlighting standardized methodological features. In contrast, national surveys exhibit wider dispersion, reflecting diverse survey designs.

Although these scatterplots were conducted separately, one by level of specialization, the other by geographical scope, they reveal a consistent pattern: cross-national and specialized surveys tend to show higher and more homogeneous quality scores, likely reflecting their alignment with international guidelines and standardized frameworks, whereas national and non-specialized surveys are more variable. This additional analysis

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TABLE 4 | Quality assessment of existing *national* surveys on corruption.

National—specialized corruption surveys	Relevance	Accuracy	Reliability	Periodicity	Accessibility	Comparability	Overall score
SCPP_B_ITA	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.4
SEC_P_PHL	3.0	1.5	1.5	3.0	2.0	1.5	2.1
ENCIG_P_MEX	1.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.4
SGNS_P_ZMB	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.3
CS_P_WBs	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.5
CS_B_WBs	3.0	2.5	3.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.4
CS_P_AFG	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.5
CIS_P_IRQ	3.0	3.0	2.5	1.0	1.5	2.5	2.3
CER_P_NGA	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.5
CS_B_NGA	3.0	2.5	3.0	1.0	1.5	3.0	2.3
NSCE_P_KEN	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	1.5	2.5	2.5
NSCE_B_KEN	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	1.5	2.5	2.5
CFI_B_ETH	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.5	2.1
ECT_P_TUN	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.5	2.2
PSPO_P_PSE	2.0	2.0	2.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.8
PSI_P_PSE	3.0	2.5	3.0	1.0	1.5	3.0	2.3
CEA_B_SYR	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
GIA_P_PSE	2.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	1.5	2.5	2.0

National—unspecialized corruption surveys	Relevance	Accuracy	Reliability	Periodicity	Accessibility	Comparability	Overall score
NSPS_P_CHL	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	1.5	1.92
SC_P_ITA	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.50
V&S_P_LUX	1.0	1.5		1.0	2.0	1.0	1.30
ENVE_B_MEX	1.0	2.5	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.17
ENVS_P_VEN	1.0	2.5	1.5	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.58
ENV_P_ARG	1.0	2.5	1.5	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.58
ENPEVI_P_GTM	3.0				1.0	3.0	2.33
ENVI_P_PAN	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	2.58
VS_P_KEN	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.17
VS_P_EGY	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.17
VS_P_TZA	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.17
VS_P_UGA	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.17
VS_P_RWA	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.17
SCC_P_CPV	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.25
SCC_B_CPV	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.25

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TABLE 4 | (Continued)

National—unspecialized corruption surveys							
	Relevance	**Accuracy**	**Reliability**	**Periodicity**	**Accessibility**	**Comparability**	**Overall score**
VOCS_P_ZAF	1.0	1.5	1.5	3.0	1.5	1.0	1.58
NCVS_P_JAM	3.0	2.0	1.5	3.0	1.5	1.5	2.08
BCS_B_ITA	1.0	2.5	3.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.83
ENCRIGE_B_MEX	1.0	2.5	2.0	1.0	2.5	2.0	1.83
ESP_P_LBN	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.33
CPI_P_IRQ	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.08
POS_P_KWT	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.42

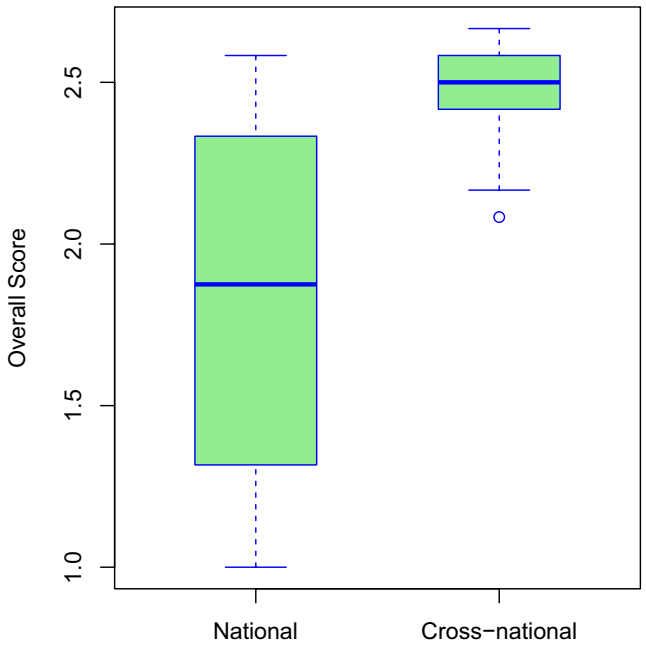


FIGURE 1 | Boxplot of the quality score for national and cross-national surveys.

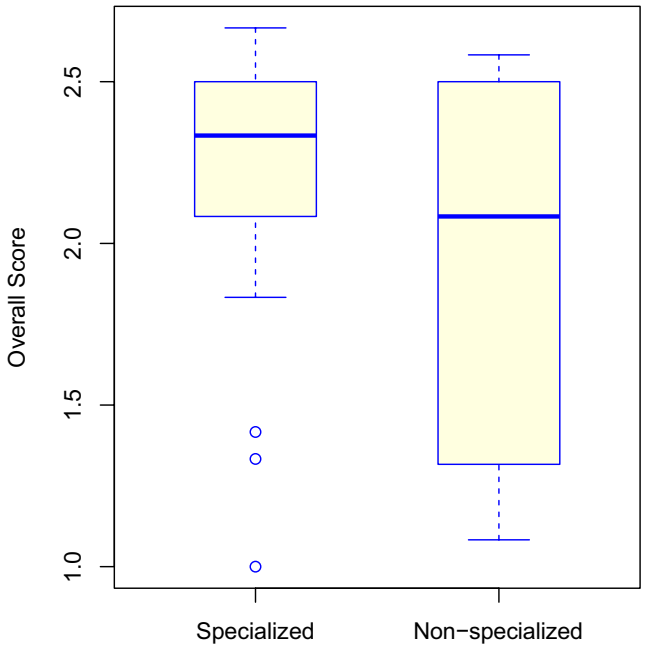


FIGURE 2 | Boxplot of the quality score for specialized and non-specialized surveys.

further supports the idea that survey type and scope affect quality consistency and comparability.

4.2 | The Different Dimensions of Quality Among National and Cross-National Surveys

4.2.1 | Relevance for SDGs

Considering national and cross-national surveys, 50% are highly relevant for monitoring SDG Target 16.5 on corruption. However, more than 40% do not provide relevant data for it. Indeed, even if the number of cross-national surveys collecting relevant data is very high (12 out of 16), when considering national surveys, less than half (16 out of 41) can provide data relevant to SDGs (see Figure 5 below). A significant issue with national, especially non-specialized, surveys is the absence of a screening question identifying individuals who have had contact with a public or private entity to obtain specific services during a specific reference period. This question is essential to identify respondents exposed to corruption risks, enhancing the accuracy of their responses. Without it, survey results may be less specific and inaccurate, affecting their relevance, validity, and comparability.

The Freeman–Halton–Fisher exact test and the pairwise Mann–Whitney *U* test show a significant difference in relevance between national and cross-national surveys at the 0.05 threshold, with *p* values equal to 0.0035 and 0.006, respectively.

4.2.2 | Accuracy/Validity

As shown in Figure 6, only 34% of all identified surveys show high accuracy/validity, while 43% suffer from inaccurate data. Indeed, in addition to the lack of a screening question, many surveys still focus on passive bribery, even if doing so

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may misrepresent the prevalence and nature of other forms of corruption. While easier to measure, this emphasis on bribery may result in overlooking systemic corruption problems and influence the choice of anti-corruption responses. The use of terms like "bribe," "bribery," or "corruption" is still often used in corruption surveys and may introduce social desirability bias, causing an underestimation of corruption prevalence. A more neutral and operational definition that refers to exchanging money, goods, or services is preferable, as explicit mention of bribery or corruption can deter respondents from accurately reporting their experiences. The level of accuracy is generally higher for national surveys than for cross-national ones. However, this difference is not statistically different (neither the Freeman–Halton–Fisher exact test nor the pairwise Mann–Whitney *U* is significant).

4.2.3 | Reliability

Overall, the selected surveys exhibit a high level of methodological reliability (Figure 7), primarily due to the involvement of national statistical authorities and international organisations in survey design and data collection. Many surveys allow for data disaggregation by socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, targeting different social and demographic groups in the population, thus aligning with international recommendations. The main methodological challenges relate to the target population's characteristics and respondent selection but can be addressed by looking at international Manuals. Cross-national surveys show statistically significant higher reliability than national surveys (both the Freeman–Halton–Fisher exact test and the pairwise Mann–Whitney *U*

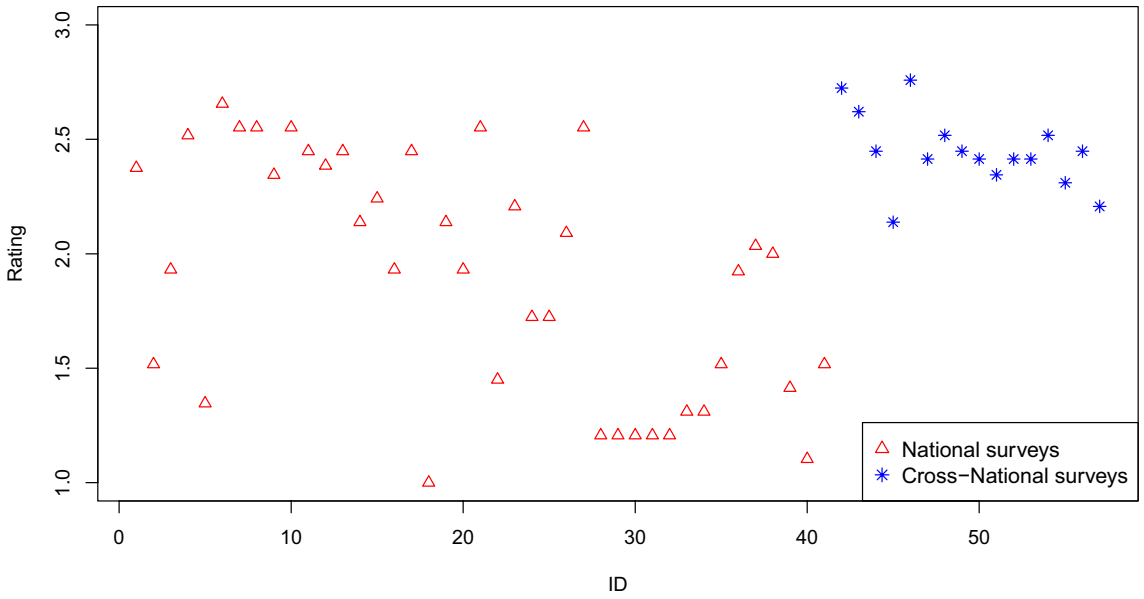


FIGURE 3 | Distribution of the overall quality score for cross-national and national surveys.

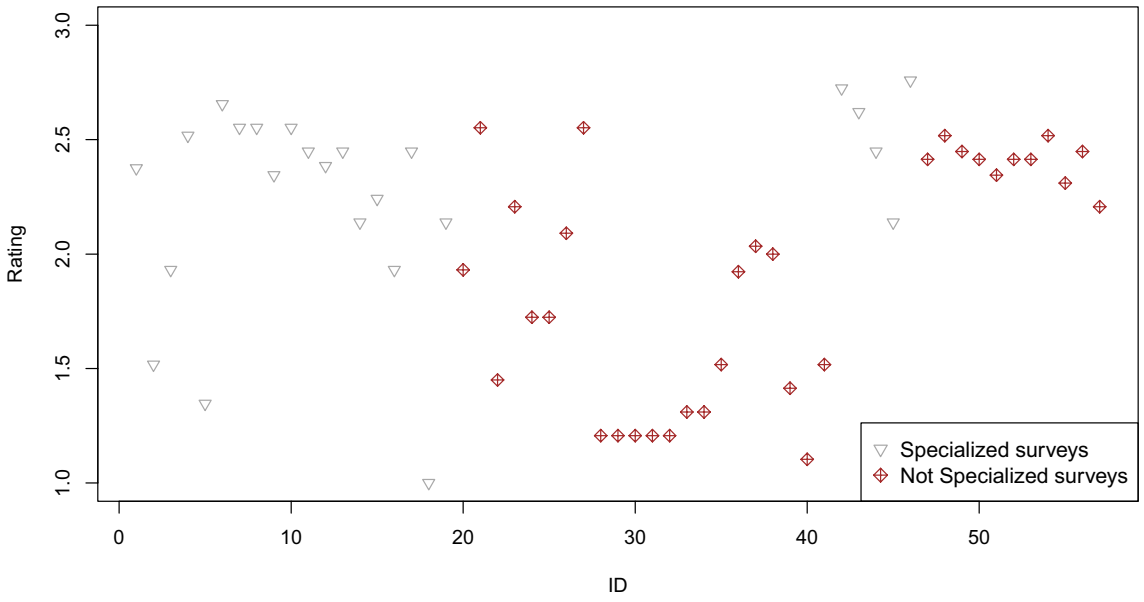


FIGURE 4 | Distribution of the overall quality score for specialized and non-specialized surveys.

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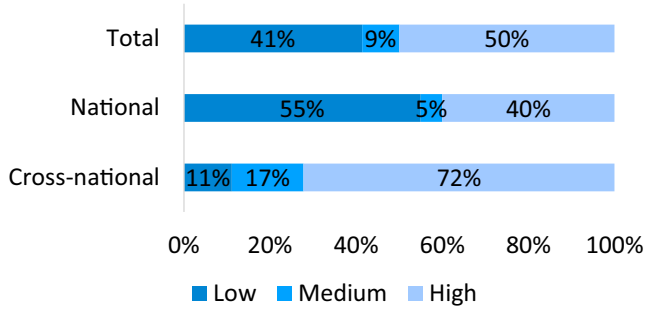


FIGURE 5 | Relevance for SDG Target 16.5—distribution of national and cross-national surveys.

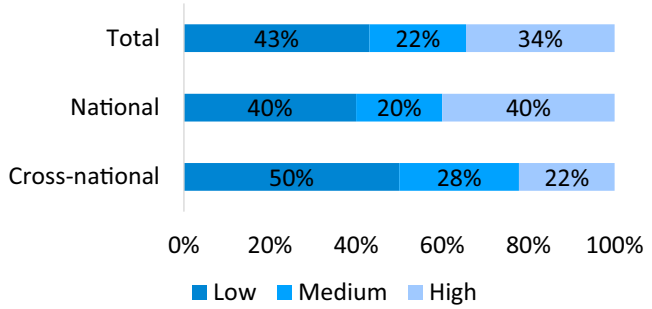


FIGURE 6 | Accuracy/validity—distribution of national and cross-national surveys.

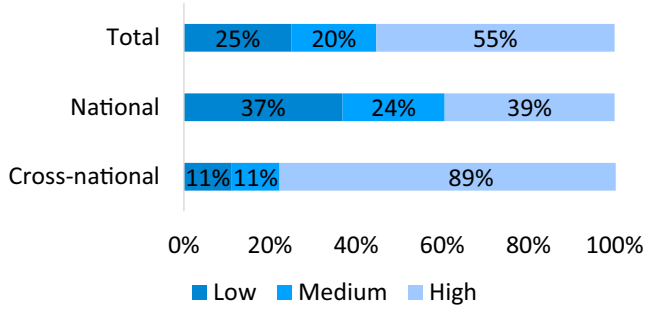


FIGURE 7 | Reliability—distribution of national and cross-national surveys.

test indicate an association between variables and a significant difference between national and cross-national surveys with respective p values 0.0012 and 0.024 at the significance level of 0.05).

4.2.4 | Periodicity

Periodicity is one of the most problematic dimensions of quality in corruption surveys. Repeated surveys conducted at least every 3 years are recommended to monitor corruption trends within the SDG framework, allowing for consistent trend analysis and practical policy adjustments. However, most national surveys have been conducted only once. Contrariwise, the periodicity of cross-national surveys is very high. A significant statistical difference in periodicity emerges between national and cross-national surveys, as evidenced by the p values of the Freeman–Halton–Fisher exact test (2.935e−06) and the pairwise Mann–Whitney U test (3.112e−06) (Figure 8).

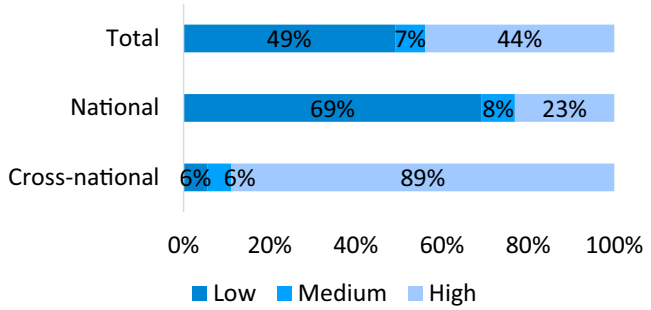


FIGURE 8 | Periodicity—distribution of national and cross-national surveys.

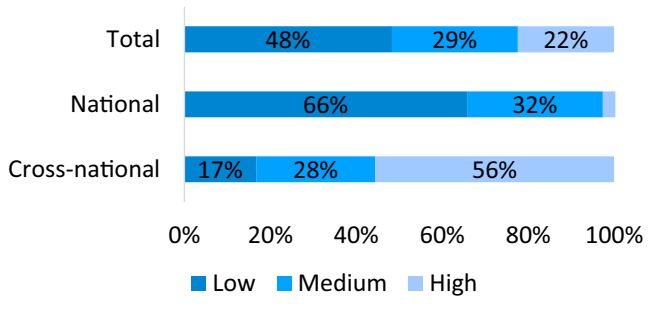


FIGURE 9 | Accessibility—distribution of national and cross-national surveys.

4.2.5 | Accessibility

Another relevant challenge is the level of accessibility of their raw data, especially for the national ones (Figure 9). This might hinder their practical or perceived scientific value and transparency. Increased data accessibility, including the release of microdata, is essential for promoting trust in survey results and aligning with the principles of openness and transparency within the SDGs framework. The findings from the Freeman–Halton–Fisher exact test and the Mann–Whitney U test for accessibility support this observation, revealing a significant disparity between national and cross-national surveys with respective p values of 0.00027 and 0.00018.

4.2.6 | Comparability

Comparability for almost all cross-national corruption surveys is very high, while national surveys, especially the non-specialized ones, in a 55% (22 out of 40) proportion, do not use standard methods to ensure that their data is comparable with similar surveys in other countries. A significant statistical disparity in comparability becomes clear between national and cross-national surveys, with the p values of the Freeman–Halton–Fisher exact test (0.01195) and the pairwise Mann–Whitney U test (0.0016) providing evidence of this difference (Figure 10).

4.3 | The Geographic Contextualization of National Corruption Surveys Quality

Figure 11 shows the number of identified corruption surveys by country. Most surveys cover European and South American

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countries, with Asian and African countries following in terms of prevalence.

Focusing on the overall quality score of national corruption surveys (Figure 12), Latin American and European experiences show the highest scores. However, when considering only national surveys specialized in corruption, African surveys also emerge as those of the highest quality. This might be mainly explained by the technical and economic support from the United Nations to national statistical offices to develop these regional ad-hoc surveys.

Looking at the dimensions of quality separately (Figure 13), national surveys that provide highly relevant data for monitoring SDGs on corruption are mainly developed in Europe and Asia.

When considering corruption operationalization, more accurate surveys are commonly found in Europe and Latin America. The use of well-defined corruption-related questions and the application of international guidelines to avoid social desirability bias and other potential sources of error enhance the reliability and validity of surveys in these regions. This contrasts with other parts of the world, where conceptual ambiguity, or negatively loaded terminology, in defining and measuring corruption often results in lower data quality.

Cross-national surveys conducted in Europe also exhibit higher methodological reliability as they target large samples and use data collection methods that ensure high response rates while minimizing biases and being economically sustainable (e.g., CAWI and CATI). This is primarily due to the strong institutional frameworks guaranteed by national statistical offices and EUROSTAT (the statistical office of the European Union) and the consequent adherence to standardized data collection methods.

Surveys from European and Asian countries show the highest levels of comparability. As mentioned above, these surveys are more likely to follow international guidelines, enabling cross-country comparisons and relevance for SDG monitoring.

However, accessibility remains a significant challenge, particularly for surveys conducted in Asia and Africa. Many of these

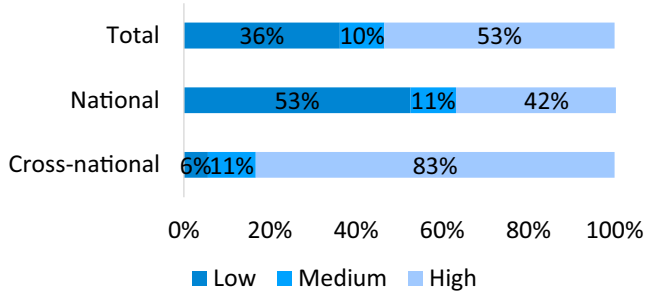


FIGURE 10 | Comparability—distribution of national and cross-national surveys.

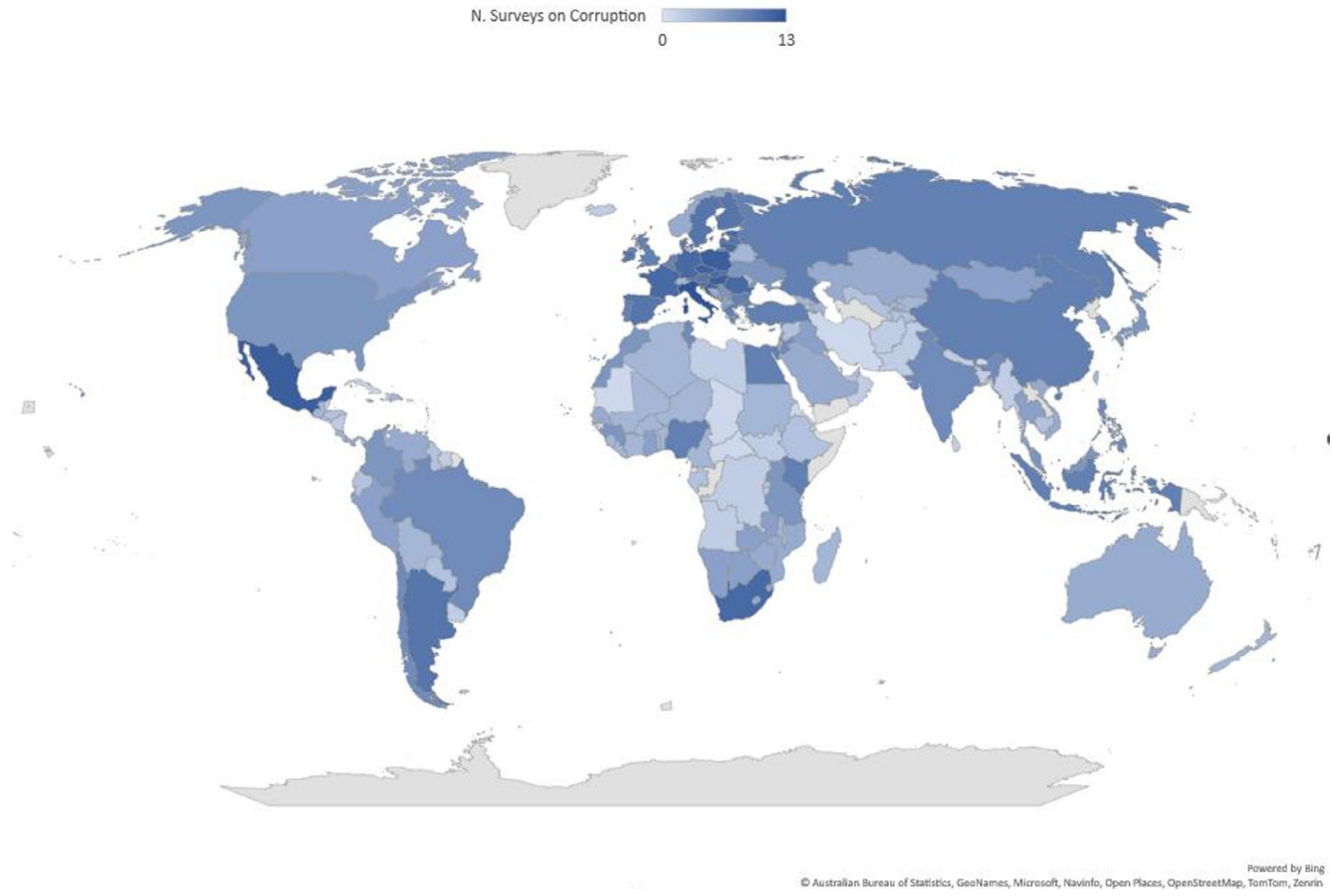


FIGURE 11 | Distribution of corruption surveys by country covered.

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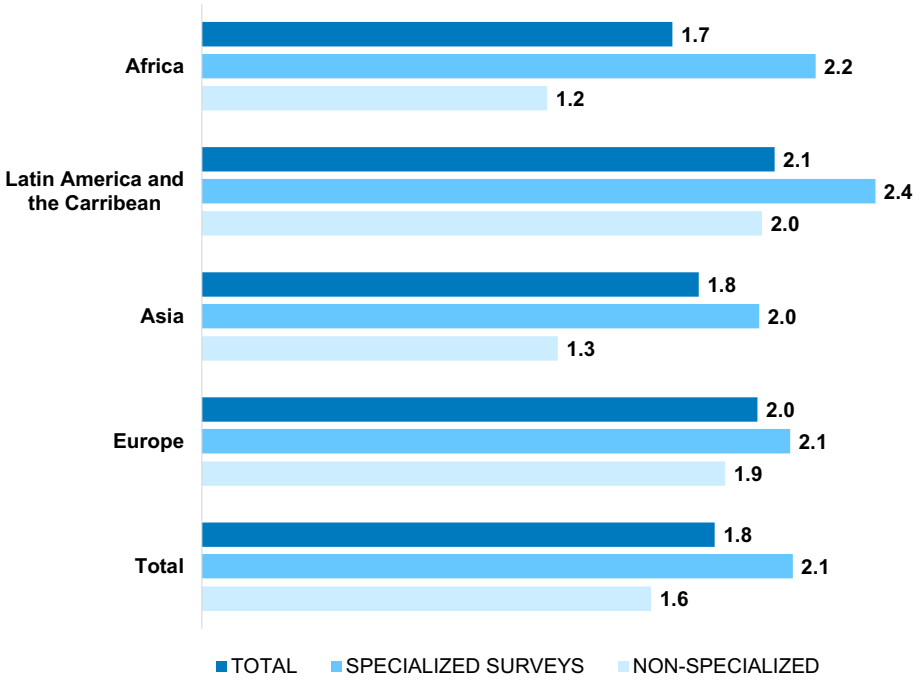


FIGURE 12 | Average TOTAL quality score of national corruption surveys by continent. Comparison between specialized and non-specialized surveys.

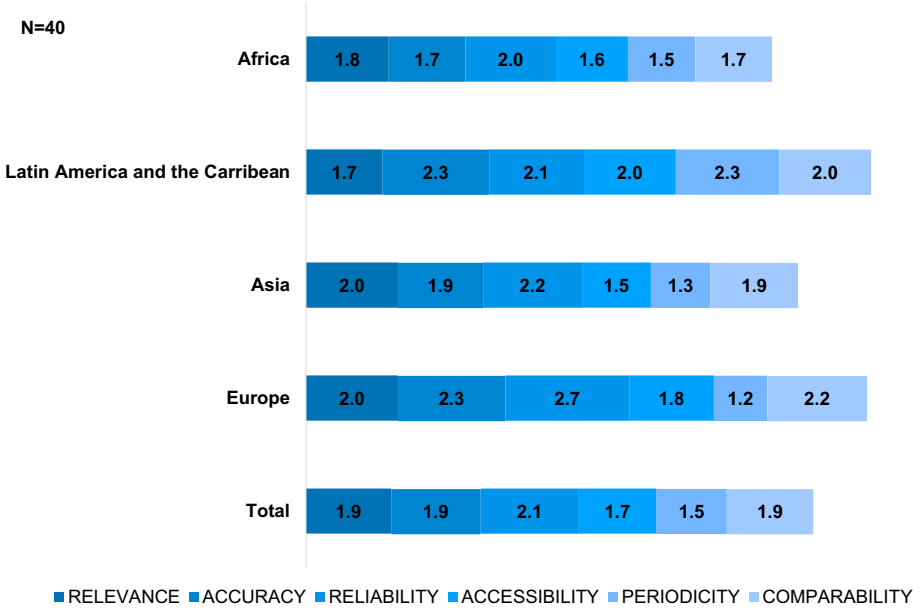


FIGURE 13 | Average quality score of national corruption surveys by quality dimension and continent.

surveys suffer from limited public access to data, making it difficult for researchers and policymakers to assess and compare results.

Lastly, a lack of periodicity mainly affects European national corruption surveys, with many conducted only once or irregularly. This limits the ability to track progress over time, making it challenging to implement evidence-based policy changes.

To further explore the geographical distribution of survey quality, this section investigates correlations among the 10 quality dimensions across different regions and survey types. Since the data did not follow a normal distribution, Spearman's rank correlation was used for the full sample and for regional subgroups.

To validate the suitability of correlation analysis, a Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of sphericity were conducted. The KMO value of 0.675 confirms sufficient sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test was highly significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and is, therefore, appropriate for further analysis.

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TABLE 5 | Set of Spearman correlation between specific dimensions of quality, by continent.

Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Continent	Spearman's rank correlation
Relevance	Question Formulation	All	0.46*
		Cross-national	0.63*
		Europe	0.07
		Asia	0.92***
		America	−0.75*
		Africa	0.84***
Periodicity	Microdata	All	0.44*
		Cross-national	−0.24
		Europe	0.85***
		Asia	
		America	0.07
		Africa	
Relevance	Standard questions	All	0.84***
		Cross-national	0.68*
		Europe	0.81***
		Asia	0.95***
		America	0.58*
		Africa	0.97***

Note: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.005$.

Table 5 shows a set of correlations between selected dimensions of quality. The correlations marked in bold are statistically significant. The correlation between "Relevance" and "Question Formulation" is strong and significant for international (cross-national surveys) surveys conducted in Asian, American, and African countries. All these correlations are positive except for America. This means that when a survey shows high quality in question formulation, this positively affects its relevance and alignment with SDGs 16.5 requirements, and vice versa.

The correlation between "Periodicity" (i.e., the number of times the survey has been done in the past) and "Microdata" (i.e., the availability of raw data on the survey results) is strong for surveys conducted in the European continent. This suggests that for surveys that are periodically conducted, it is potentially also more frequent to find access to microdata. This result points to the importance of institutionalized data transparency frameworks to ensure the sustainability of surveys. Adopting open-data policies with anonymized microdata, as exemplified by Eurostat and specific National Statistical Offices (e.g., ISTAT, INEGI), could serve as a model for enhancing data accessibility in other regions. These policies not only support data transparency but also survey reproducibility and accountability.

A robust correlation between "Relevance" and the use of "Standard questions" appears across all regions and survey types, indicating that when a survey is relevant for monitoring SDGs 16.5, it is also more likely to include standard questions on corruption that ensure cross-country comparability.

To delve further into these correlations, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted. Three components were retained based on their contribution to the overall variance explained in the statistical model. Collectively, these components account for 75% of the total variance.

- The first component (PC1), *International Methods*, is associated with methodological standardization, as it includes those surveys following international methodological best practices, recommendations, and suggestions for measuring corruption. It explains 46.856% of the total variance.
- The second component (PC2), *Target 16.5*, captures alignment with SDG Target 16.5 indicators on corruption. It is composed of the dimensions "Standard questions" "Question Formulation," "Items covered," and "Relevance" and explains 17.166% of the total variance.
- The third component (PC3), *Accessibility and Usability*, reflects survey periodicity, availability of microdata, and documents. It explains 10.968% of the total variance.

Figure 14 illustrates the PCA projection on the Principal Component 2 (*Target 16.5*) and Principal Component 3 (*Accessibility and Usability*). International surveys tend to group closely around Principal Component 2, indicating strong alignment with SDG 16.5 indicators. European

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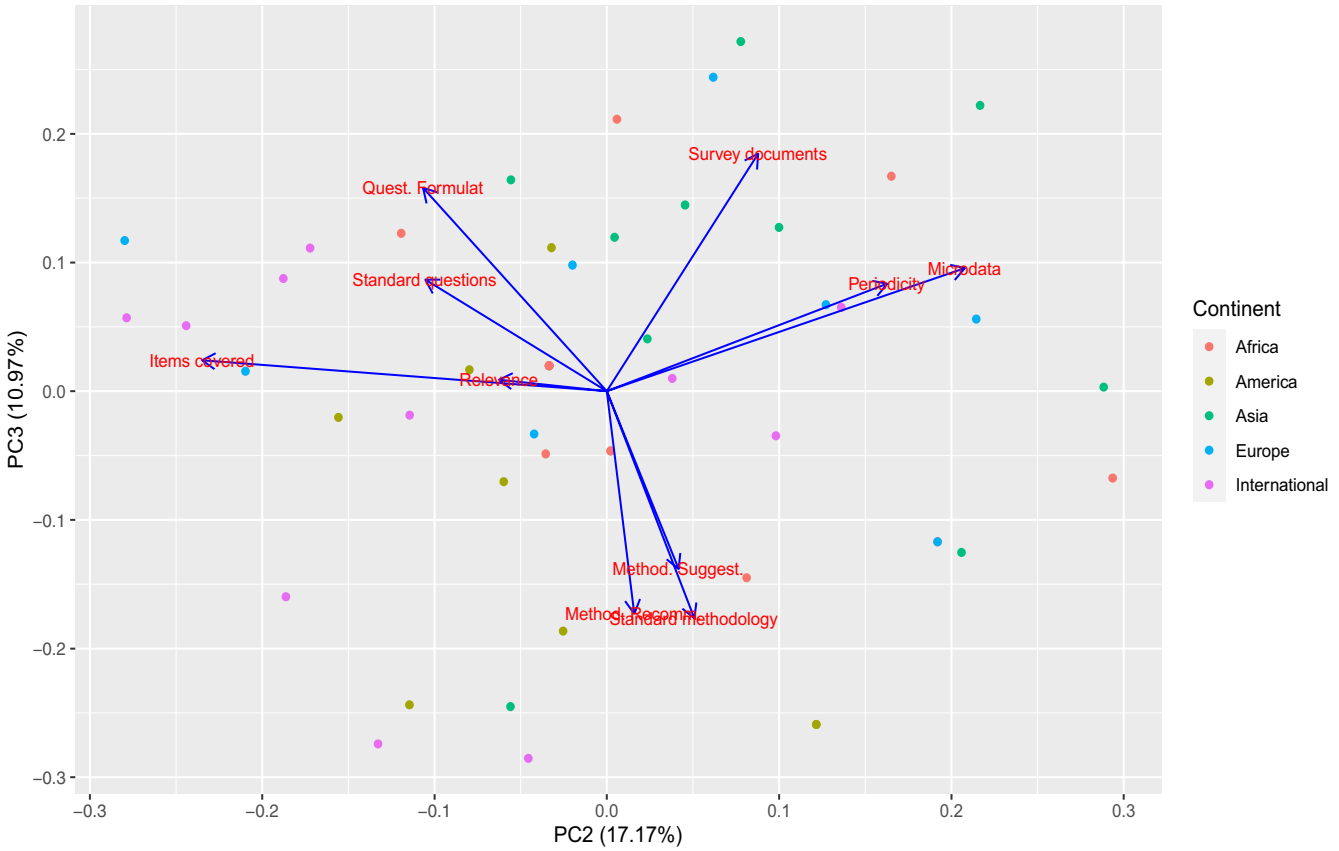


FIGURE 14 | Scatter plot of Principal Component 2 and Principal Component 3 by Continents.

national surveys tend to cluster more tightly around Principal Component 3, reflecting best practices in accessibility, transparency, and documentation.

To complement these results, a clustering analysis has been performed on the PCA components. Two different plots have been drawn to illustrate the distribution and separation of observations according to pairwise components. This helps to highlight underlying clusters and patterns in the data.

Figure 15 projects the first (International Methods) and second (Target 16.5) principal components, highlighting how international methodological standardization (PC1) relates to alignment with SDG 16.5 (PC2). Surveys conducted by international organizations appear in the lower-right quadrant (Cluster 1-Red), showing good quality and a strong association with both dimensions. National surveys, particularly non-specialized ones, appear more scattered. They are dispersed in both Cluster 2 (green), including surveys with low quality, and Cluster 3 (blue), covering medium to good quality surveys. This reflects variability in both methodological standardization and SDG 16.5 alignment. This further confirms the dual gap between international and national practices in corruption survey design.

Finally, Figure 16 shows the cluster analysis results on the PC2–PC3 projection. This confirms the patterns already detected: international surveys cluster strongly around SDG-relevant design (PC2), while specialized national surveys, mainly from Europe, cluster near accessibility and usability indicators (PC3). The three identified clusters broadly map onto (1) good quality cross-national surveys, (2) low-quality not specialized national surveys, and (3) medium to good quality specialized national ones.

These findings align with the correlation analysis and reinforce the interpretation that different regions and survey types tend to prioritize different aspects of survey quality. These findings also confirm that different types of surveys tend to emphasize distinct quality aspects. Cross-national surveys reflect stronger conceptual and methodological alignment with international standards, whereas European national surveys tend to prioritize transparency, periodicity, and data accessibility. This demonstrates that methodological quality in corruption surveys is not randomly distributed. Instead, it reflects deeper structural divides across institutional levels (national vs. international) and regional practices (especially in Europe vs. other continents).

5 | Discussion

This paper assesses the methodological quality of 58 corruption surveys conducted by national statistical offices, governmental agencies, or international organizations. It depicts how the quality of these surveys is structured across six main dimensions and how it varies across types of surveys (specialized or not, national or international) and continents.

One of the first results points to the uneven diffusion of corruption surveys. Even if the sample might not fully represent

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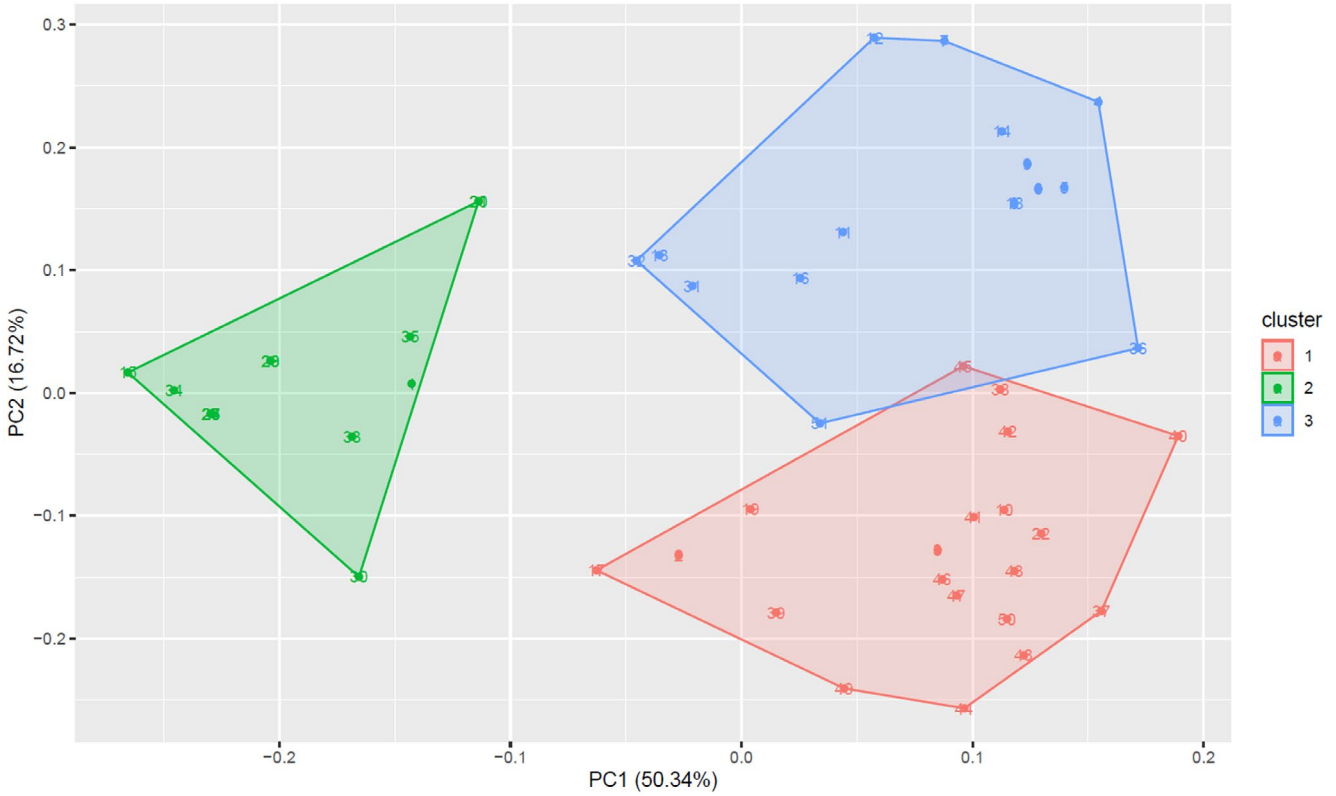


FIGURE 15 | Clusters of observations in the projection of PC1 and PC2.

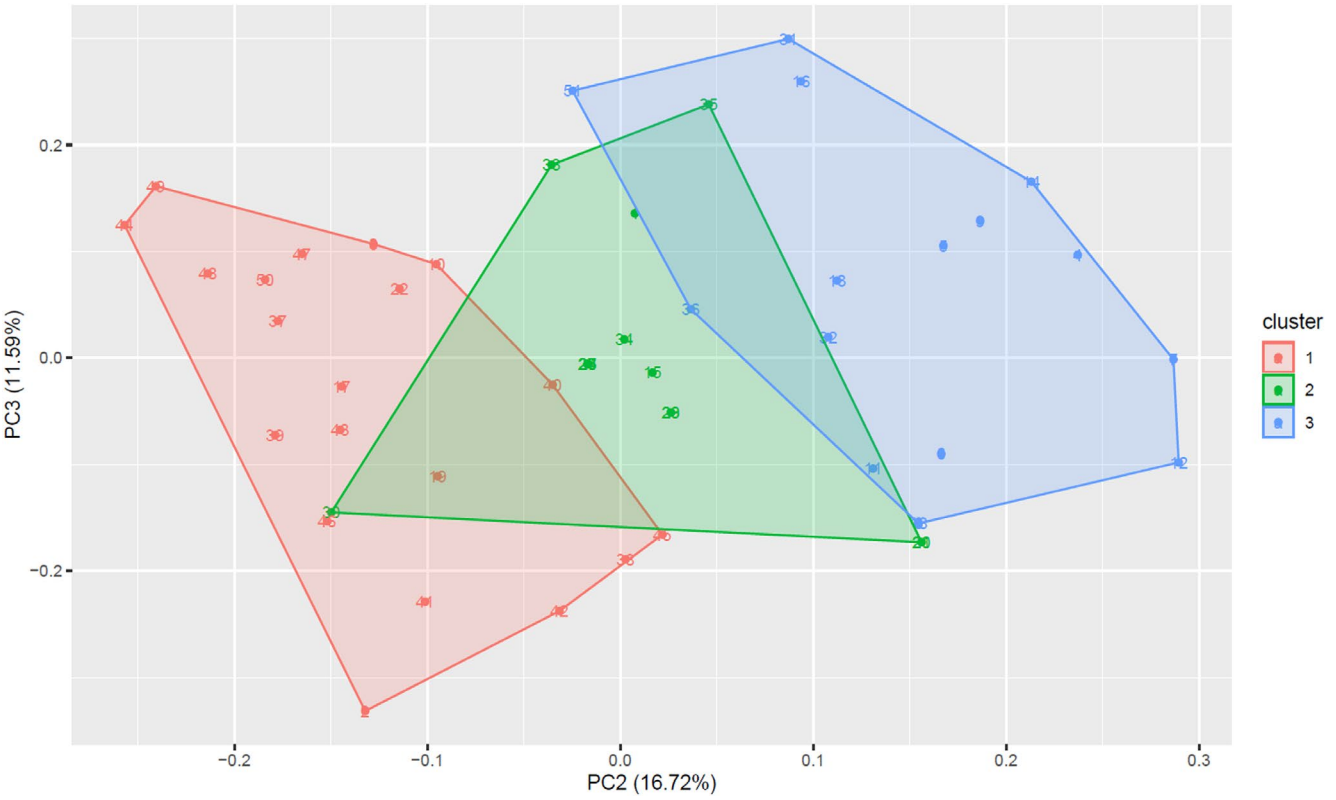


FIGURE 16 | Clusters of observations in the projection of PC2 and PC3.

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all corruption surveys, most identified surveys mainly cover European and Latin American countries, with Asian and African countries following in terms of prevalence. This uneven coverage might bias comparative research because it limits our knowledge of less-covered countries. Countries not well-represented in corruption surveys, particularly those in Asia and Africa, are at risk of being under-researched. This data coverage gap limits policymakers' ability to develop effective, evidence-based strategies to combat corruption in these regions, where corruption may be just as prevalent but less visible due to insufficient data collection efforts. This situation can be attributed to two main factors. First, Europe has established itself as a pioneering continent for conducting crime and victimization surveys. For instance, the International Crime Victimization Survey originated in Europe during the 1980s, and subsequent rounds and similar initiatives have followed. This extensive experience with such surveys has likely increased the expertise of official institutions in using this tool to monitor corruption alongside other forms of criminal activities. Similarly, the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) Americas Barometer has measured crime victimization in Latin American countries since 2010. Secondly, in recent years, African nations have received substantial support from the United Nations to encourage data collection efforts related to crime and corruption. This support has been a driving force behind the comprehensive coverage of corruption surveys in Africa. This might also be considered a sign that international organizations have noticed this disparity and have decided to invest more resources in regions lacking robust corruption survey coverage. Failing to address this imbalance perpetuates the issue of "blind spots" in global corruption research. It may lead to disproportionate blame on regions with higher data availability, such as Europe and Latin America, while downplaying corruption in less-studied regions. Ultimately, this could result in misinformed policy decisions that are not grounded in a holistic understanding of global corruption patterns (the well-known North–South divide) (Graycar 2015).

A second issue concerns the uneven methodological quality (mainly about surveys' relevance to monitoring SDGs, accuracy, and data accessibility) of existing corruption surveys. The higher quality of specialized surveys (as opposed to those with general corruption-related modules) highlights the need for a focused approach to corruption measurement. Specialized surveys are more likely to use rigorous, targeted methodologies, increasing their accuracy, reliability, and relevance, particularly when monitoring SDG progress. This reinforces the importance of designing surveys that are specifically tailored to measure corruption rather than relying on broad surveys that only tangentially address the issue. In particular, national specialized surveys on corruption in Latin America and Africa are of high quality. In these cases, the technical and financial support given by the United Nations to national statistical offices to develop these ad-hoc surveys in these regions might have played a crucial role in ensuring this quality. In this regard, the cluster analysis and the correlation of survey quality dimensions provide further insights. Clustering reveals distinct quality patterns across survey types: cross-national surveys tend to group together based on more consistent methodological practices, while non-specialized national surveys display more variability. This is supported by correlation analysis, which shows that dimensions such as "relevance" and "question formulation" are positively associated in most regions, especially in cross-national surveys. These patterns suggest that surveys aligned with international standards are better designed and more reliable. This raises important questions about the sustainability of these efforts. What happens when external funding and technical support are withdrawn? Will national institutions be able to maintain the quality of corruption surveys independently? This implies a need for capacity-building initiatives to ensure national statistical offices in these regions can sustain high-quality data collection efforts in the long term.

The high comparability of almost all cross-national corruption surveys suggests that they have adopted more standardized methodologies that align with international recommendations. The highest level of cross-sectional comparability (across different samples) is attributed to European and Asian corruption surveys. However, the low level of periodicity of European and Asian national surveys on corruption negatively affects their longitudinal comparability (over the years).

The low level of comparability among national surveys, especially the non-specialized ones, points to a lack of harmonization in national corruption data collection practices. The fragmentation limits the ability to draw reliable comparisons across countries, which is essential for global efforts to address corruption. Greater harmonization of survey methodologies, particularly in regions where surveys are less comparable, is needed to support the development of more unified anti-corruption policies and allow for the evaluation of practices across different contexts.

In addition, the low periodicity of national corruption surveys negatively affects the possibility of tracking changes in corruption levels over time, which weakens the ability of policymakers to assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption initiatives. This suggests that countries and international organizations should prioritize more frequent survey cycles, for example, by developing regional surveys and collaborations (e.g., EU surveys, LAPOP, African barometer) and/or considering integrating more periodical survey modules on corruption into other more regular national data collections (e.g., social surveys, labor force surveys, etc.). Doing so would enhance the long-term comparability of data and allow us to relate data on corruption issues to the national socio-economic context. This would provide an even stronger empirical foundation for policy adjustments.

These differences are further illustrated in the principal component analysis (PCA), which shows that cross-national surveys are primarily associated with components related to SDG-targeted design (e.g., standard questions and question formulation), while European national surveys are more strongly linked to dimensions of accessibility and usability, such as periodicity and availability of microdata. This triangulation of results (clustering, correlation, PCA) reinforces the idea that comparability and usability are shaped not only by survey type but also by broader institutional and regional data practices.

In summary, these findings indicate that while significant progress has been made in corruption measurement, particularly in Europe and Latin America, substantial gaps remain in global coverage and methodological consistency. Addressing these issues will require increased regional collaboration, enhanced

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capacity-building efforts, and a more concerted focus on ensuring the sustainability of high-quality corruption surveys. Without these changes, the global understanding of corruption will remain fragmented, limiting the effectiveness of both research and policy interventions.

6 | Conclusion

The contextualization of the methodological quality of existing corruption surveys provides a valuable foundation for academics and practitioners to interpret the reliability and comparability of survey results. Practitioners and policymakers can use these insights to identify weaknesses in their current data collection instruments and make more informed, evidence-based decisions, being aware of the limitations and potential biases of the data. This is particularly important in the context of SDGs monitoring, where assumptions of data quality, especially when produced by national statistical offices or international agencies, can be misleading. Sound statistical information must be methodologically consistent and comparable across countries and over time. The paper offers recommendations for addressing these issues by aligning with international guidelines and requirements. It emphasizes that data quality should never be assumed, even for data produced by national statistical offices or international agencies.

This paper highlights several shortcomings of national surveys related to SDG alignment and methodological coherence. While international guidelines can help address these issues, the limited number of identified national surveys also acknowledges the tendency for an internationalized approach to data collection on corruption when national governments rely on corruption information obtained from established global surveys. This reliance might pose a risk to the autonomy and context-sensitivity of national data, along with the risk of politicizing the measurement process itself (Wickberg and Mugellini 2020). Some governments may be tempted to obscure uncomfortable realities through standardized indicators rather than adopt robust and realistic measures. The limited accessibility of several national corruption datasets confirms this issue. In this sense, the transparency, professionalism, and independence of national statistical offices become crucial for ensuring that data collection meets global standards without ignoring local relevance (Merry 2019; United Nations 2019; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2023).

Furthermore, the analysis of the existing surveys shows variations in corruption definitions and operationalizations, especially across national surveys. This draws attention to the need to balance international standards with specific local measurement needs. The main challenge in ensuring data quality often involves translating complex phenomena, like corruption, into clear, actionable, and context-specific indicators. Oversimplified and over-standardized measures run the risk of leading to policies that are too narrow in focus, overlooking crucial aspects of corruption that are harder to quantify but equally important to address.

To address this tension between international standards and local measurement needs, this paper proposes a dual-level approach to corruption measurement. First, a core standard module with questions on corruption (especially bribery) to achieve international standards. Second, context-specific modules capture the most urgent local realities of corruption. For example, in addition to the standard questions on bribery, the Italian Citizens Safety Survey includes questions about vote buying and favoritism (ISTAT 2024). The corruption survey in Ethiopia addresses favoritism and nepotism (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2014). The Global Corruption Barometer develops regional add-ons to capture local corruption peculiarities. It includes questions on favoritism and the use of personal connections to access public services (Kukutschka 2021), as well as on vote buying (Kukutschka 2021) and sextortion (Feigenblatt 2020). The latter can be measured by including "sexual favors" as an option for the range of benefits exchanged during corrupt transactions. This approach, blending global standards with local adaptations, allows for comparability and policy relevance. This enables policymakers to allocate resources more effectively and target the most pressing forms of corruption in their context.

In terms of theoretical contributions, this paper bridges two complementary areas of the literature: conceptual frameworks for assessing corruption metrics' quality and survey harmonization. While earlier research has evaluated a few quality aspects of perception and experience-based corruption measures (Charron 2016; Ko and Samajdar 2010), this study develops a more comprehensive and structured framework to evaluate the quality of surveys measuring corruption experiences, based on the six UN-defined data quality dimensions. By providing a repository of existing national and cross-national corruption surveys, and encouraging the use of secondary data on corruption in comparative research, this paper aligns with current discussions on output harmonization of survey data, reinforcing the idea that methodological transparency and post-survey adjustments are vital for comparability (Wysmułek et al. 2022). At the same time, it adds a missing element to the existing literature on survey harmonization, which mainly focuses on output/post surveys comparisons (Crombach and Smits 2024) without considering the survey methodological rigor. By identifying which experience-based surveys are sufficiently robust to be reused, compared, or synthesized, the framework offers another criterion to implement output harmonization effectively.

This paper also points to the uneven implementation of input and output harmonization practices. While cross-national surveys often follow international and standardized approaches and benefit from substantial input harmonization, national surveys, especially in Africa and Asia, frequently lack comparable post hoc adjustments. Output harmonization remains underdeveloped in these regions, limiting the possibility for retrospective comparability. A possible way forward involves developing regional guidelines and technical protocols for output harmonization, tailored to existing data infrastructures and national contexts. This would enable policymakers and researchers to align diverse survey sources retrospectively and promote greater regional comparability, particularly in contexts where collecting new, fully standardized data is not always sustainable. Building on initiatives such as the Subnational Corruption Database (Crombach and Smits 2024), DATACORR (De Sousa et al. 2023) and the post-harmonization frameworks developed

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by Tomescu-Dubrow et al. (2023), such regionally adapted efforts could strengthen data integration while supporting more local and effective policy responses.

Finally, we acknowledge that the analysis presented in this paper also has some limitations. For instance, it does not consider surveys conducted by private research institutes or national bodies whose documentation is unavailable or published in languages inaccessible to the research team.

To address this gap, future research could extend to corruption surveys developed by national research institutes and private organizations. In addition, it would be interesting to understand the impact of the surveys' methodological quality on their results by running quantitative tests and assessing their consistency over time and across countries.

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Appendix A

List of existing national surveys including questions on corruption developed by national institutional agencies: Years 2005–2022.

Name of the survey	Country covered	Year	Responsible agency	Specialized on corruption	No. questions on corruption (experience)	Acronym[a]
Specialized corruption surveys						
1. Anti-Corruption Behavior Survey	Indonesia	2012–2015	Badan Pusak Statistiks Indonesia	Yes	Questionnaire not found	ACBS_P_IND
2. L'INDAGINE IMPRESE VALUTAZIONE QUALITA' INFORMAZIONI DIFFUSE DALLE PUBBLICHE AMMINISTRAZIONI NEGLI APPALTI PUBBLICI (Business Survey on corruption in public procurement)	Italy	2014	The Italian National Institute of Statistics; Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC)	Yes	22	SCPP_B_ITA
3. National Household Survey on Experience with Corruption	Philippines	2010; 2013; 2016	Philippine Office of the Ombudsman; Philippine Statistical Authority	Yes	7	SEC_P_PHL
4. National Survey of Quality and Government Information (ENCIG)	Mexico	2011; 2013; 2015; 2017; 2019	National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI)	Yes	15	ENCIG_P_MEX
5. State of Governance National Survey	Zambia	2008	Central Statistical Office of Zambia	Yes	5	SGNS_P_ZMB
6. Corruption in the Western Balkans: Bribery as experienced by the population	7 Western Balkans countries[b]	2011	NSOs & UNODC	Yes	16	CS_P_WBs_
7. Business, Corruption and Crime in the western Balkans: The impact of bribery and other crime on private enterprise	7 Western Balkans countries[b]	2013	NSOs & UNODC	No	16	CS_B_WBs
8. Corruption in Afghanistan	Afghanistan	2010; 2013	NSOs & UNODC	Yes	11	CS_P_AFG
9. Corruption and integrity challenges in the public sector of Iraq	Iraq	2013	NSOs & UNODC	Yes	7	CIS_P_IRQ
10. Corruption in Nigeria. Experience and response to bribery	Nigeria	2016; 2019	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); National Bureau of Statistics	Yes	38; 49	CER_P_NGA
11. Business survey on crime and corruption	Nigeria	2007	The Economic and Financial Crime Commision (EFCC); The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS); United Nation Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC)	Yes	8	CS_B_NGA
12. National Survey on Corruption and Ethics	Kenya	2005; 2012; 2014, 2015	Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC)	Yes		NSCE_P&B_KEN[c]
13. Survey on Perception of the level of Corruption by foreign Investors	Ethiopia	2013	Federal Ethics and Anti- Corruption Commission and Joint Governance Assessment and Measurement	Yes	10	CFI_B_ETH
14. Enquête sur la corruption en Tunisie	Tunisia	2019; 2020	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	Yes	Questionnaire not found	ECT_P_TUN
15. Perceptions Survey of Public Officials on the Prevalence of Corruption in the West Bank	Palestine	2013	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and The Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission	Yes	Questionnaire not found	PSPO_P_PSE
16. Perceptions Survey of Individuals on the Prevalence of Corruption in Palestine	Palestine	2013	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and The Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission	Yes		PSI_P_PSE

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Name of the survey	Country covered	Year	Responsible agency	Specialized on corruption	No. questions on corruption (experience)	Acronym[a]
17. Corruption in Syria Causes, Effects, and Anti-Corruption Strategies	Syria	NA	Syrian Economic Forum	Yes		CEA_B_SYR
18. Public Officers Survey for Governance Indicators and anti-corruption	Palestine	2010	Bureau of Statistics and The Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission	Yes		GIA_P_PSE
19. Corruption and integrity challenges in the public sector of Iraq (from the old version)	Iraq	2013	NSOs & UNODC	Yes	7	CIS_P_IRQ
20. Enquête sur la corruption en Tunisie	Tunisia	2019; 2020	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	Yes	Questionnaire not found	ECT_P_TUN
21. National Survey of Public Safety	Chile	2003–2014; 2015; 2017, 2018	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE)	No	4	NSPS_P_CHL
22. Sicurezza dei cittadini (Safety of citizens)	Italy	2015/2016	Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT)	No	94	SC_P_ITA
23. Victimization and Safety in Luxembourg—Findings of the "Enquête sur la sécurité 2013"	Luxembourg	2013	STATEC (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg)	No	10	V&S_P_LUX
24. Encuesta Nacional de Victimización a Empresas—ENVE (National business victimization survey)	Mexico	2012–2014; 2016, 2018	National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI)	No	5	ENVE_B_MEX
25. Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción de Seguridad Ciudadana (National Survey on Victimization and Perception of Public Safety)	Venezuela	2009	National Institute of Statistics of Venezuela; National Council of Prevention and Public Safety	No	15	ENVS_P_VEN
26. Encuesta Nacional de Victimizacion (ENV)	Argentina	2017	INDEC and UNOCD-INEGI CoE	No	9	ENV_P_ARG
27. Encuesta Nacional de Percepción de Seguridad Pública y Victimización (ENPEVI) de Guatemala	Guatemala	2017–2018	Ministerio de Gobernación (MINGOB), Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) de Guatemala, USAID, UNDP, UNODC-INEGI (CdE)	No	9	ENPEVI_P_GTM
28. Encuesta Nacional de Victimización y Percepción de Seguridad Ciudadana (ENVI)	Panama	2011, 2013, 2015, 2017	Sistema Nacional Integrado de Estadísticas Criminales (SIEC) del Gobierno de Panamá y el Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo (INESC) and UNODC and EU	No	9	ENVI_P_PAN
29. Victimization survey in Kenya	Kenya	2010	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	No	2/3	VS_P_KEN
30. Victimization survey in Egypt	Egypt	2009	National Centre for Social and Criminological Research (NCSCR) in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	No	2/3	VS_P_EGY
31. Victimization survey in Tanzania	Tanzania	2009	Government of the United Republic of Tanzania through the Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG) in collaboration with UN-Habitat and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)	No	2/3	VS_P_TZA
32. Victimization survey in Uganda	Uganda	2008	United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI)	No	2/3	VS_P_UGA

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Name of the survey	Country covered	Year	Responsible agency	Specialized on corruption	No. questions on corruption (experience)	Acronym[a]
33. Victimization survey in Rwanda	Rwanda	2008	NGO Together Against Impunity in the Great Lakes Region (TAIGLR) in collaboration with the National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA) and the National Institute of Statistics	No	2/3	VS_P_RWA
34. Study on Crime and Corruption in Cape Verde	Cape Verde	2007	Comissão de Coordenação de Combate à Droga (CCCD)—ENLCDCC; ANTRAF, UNODC	No	5	SCC_P&B_CPV
35. Victims of Crime Survey	South Africa	1997; 2003; 2007; 2010–2017[d]	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA)	No	5	VOCS_P_ZAF
36. National Crime Victimization Surveys	Jamaica	2006, 2009; 2013	Ministry of National Security; Statistical Institute of Jamaica	No		NCVS_P_13_JAM
37. National Crime Victimization Surveys	Jamaica	2019	Statistical Institute of Jamaica; LACSI initiative with UNODC CoE	No		NCVS_P_19_JAM
38. Business Crime Survey in Italy	Italy	2008	Italian Ministry of the Interior and Transcrime	No	8	BCS_B_ITA
39. Regulatory Quality & Governmental Impact on Business (ENCRIGE)	Mexico	2016	National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI)	No	2	ENCRIGE_B_MEX
40. Study of Perceptions and Attitudes of Lebanese Citizens Towards the Economic, Social and Political Situation in Lebanon	Lebanon	2021	Statistics Lebanon and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung	No		ESP_P_LBN
41. Changing Perceptions of Institutions and Standard of Living in Iraq	Iraq	2010–2019	World Bank Group	No		CPI_P_IRQ
42. KUWAITI PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY REPORT	Kuwait	2005–2006	Kuwait Economic Society	No		POS_P_KWT
43. Victimization survey in Egypt (from the old version)	Egypt	2009	National Centre for Social and Criminological Research (NCSCR) in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	No	2/3	VS_P_EGY

[a] The acronyms of national surveys include the following information: Acronym of the survey_Target population (P or B)_Acronym of the country. The acronoyms for the national surveys have been created using the official surveys' acronyms, when available. In case an acronym was not available, an ad-hoc acronym has been created. The difference between population and business surveys is also indicated (P or B). The country code, based on the ISO 3166 alpha-3, has been also added.
[b] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of North Macedonia.
[c] This survey covers households, businesses, and public officials. The data in the report are presented in an aggegated form and it is not clear if they data can be disaggregated by the three different populations.
[d] Corruption questions included until 2016.

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List of existing cross-national surveys including questions on corruption developed by international intergovernmental organizations or internationally recognized non-governmental organizations.: Years 2005–2022.

Name of the survey	Country covered	Year	Institute	Specialized on corruption	No. questions corruption (experience)	Acronym[a]
Specialized Corruption surveys						
1. Special Eurobarometer—Corruption among the population (374; 470)	EU28[b]	2013; 2017	European Commission	Yes		EBS_P_EC
2. Flash Eurobarometer—Businesses' attitudes towards corruption in the EU (374; 428; 457; 482)	EU27[c]	2013; 2015; 2017; 2019	European Commission	Yes		EBF_B_EC
3. Global Corruption Barometer	It depends on the year	2003–2013; 2015/16/17; 2019; 2021	Transparency International	Yes	10	GCB_P_TI
4. Global Fraud Survey	62	2009–2016	Ernst and Young	Yes		GFS_B_EY
5. Bribe payers index	30[d]	1999; 2002; 2006; 2008; 2011	Transparency International	Yes		BPI_B_TI
Non-specialized surveys						
6. International Crime Victimization Surveys	41	1989; 1992; 1996; 2000; 2004/2005	UNICRI/UNODC	No	5	ICVS_P_UNIL
7. Enterprise Surveys	149[e]	2002–2016; 2021	The World Bank	No	5	ES_B_WB
8. Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS)	30[f]	1999/2000; 2002; 2005; 2008/2009; 2011/2014	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development & The World Bank Group	No	5	BEEPS_B_ EBRD-WB
9. Life in transition survey	35[f]	2006, 2010, 2016	The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	No	5	LiTS III_P_EBRD
10. Afrobarometer	37[g]	2001–2021	Afrobarometer and Transparency International	No	2	AFRBAR_P_ AFR&TI
11. Americas Barometer	29 (2019)[h]	2004–2019 (every 2 years)	LAPOP—Vanderbilt University	No	9	AMEBAR_P_ LAPOP
12. Arab Barometer	7[i]	2006–2009; 2010–2011; 2012–2014; 2016–2017; 2018–2019; 2020–2021	Arab Barometer Middle East Partnership Initiative Princeton University University of Michigan United States Agency for International Development	No		ARBBAR_P_ ARB&AL
13. Arab Transformations Survey	6	2014	University of Aberdeen funded by the European Commission	No	6	ARBTS_P_ UABEU

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Name of the survey	Country covered	Year	Institute	Specialized on corruption	No. questions corruption (experience)	Acronym[a]
14. Modules GPS-SHaSA (Governance, Democracy and Multiple Dimensions of Poverty in the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa):	8[j]	2001/2003; 1995–2012 (Madagascar)	National Statistical Institutes & AFRISTAT & General Secretariat of the Andean Community	No	5	GPS_SHaSA
15. European Quality of Government Index Survey	24	2010, 2013, 2017	European Commission	No	8	EQI_QoG_EC
16. Global Economic Crime Survey	99	2001; 2014; 2016; 2020; 2022	PwC Pricewaterhouse coopers	No		GEC_P_PWC
17. IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook	64[k]	1989–2021	IMD—IMD World Competitiviness Center	No	5	WCY_B_IMD
18. World Values Survey	It depends on the year	1981–2022	World Values Survey Programme	No	1	WVS_P

[a] The acronyms of cross-national surveys include the following information: Acronym of the survey_Target population (P or B)_Acronym of the responsible agency. The acronyms for the cross-national surveys have been created using the official surveys' acronyms, when available. In case an acronym for the surveys' name was not available, an ad-hoc acronym has been created. The difference between population and business surveys is also indicated (P or B). An acronym of the responsible agency has also been added (i.e., AFR&TI-Afrobarometer and Transparency International; EBRD-European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; EC-EuropeanCommission; LAPOP-LAPOP&Vanderbilt University; WB-WorldBank; UN-Unite Nations; TI_TransparencyInternational).
[b] Austria; Belgium; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Cyprus; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; The Netherlands; United Kingdom.
[c] Austria; Belgium; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Cyprus; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; The Netherlands; United Kingdom.
[d] Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.
[e] Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Dem. Rep., Congo, Rep., Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, CR, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Korea, Rep., Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Fed. Sts., Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Somaliland, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, West Bank and Gaza, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
[f] Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, FYR Macedonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.
[g] Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leona, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
[h] Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela.
[i] Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia.
[j] Benin; Burkina Faso; Côte d'Ivoire; Mali; Niger; Senegal; Togo; Madagascar.
[k] Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China Hong Kong, China Mainland, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea Rep., Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, UAE, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela.

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